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SERIES



POET AND MERCHANT

B. AUERBACH



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# POET AND MERCHANT

*A PICTURE OF LIFE FROM THE TIMES OF*

MOSES MENDELSSOHN

BY

BERTHOLD AUERBACH

*Author of "On the Heights," "The Villa on the Rhine," etc.*

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES T. BROOKS



NEW YORK  
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1877

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## POET AND MERCHANT.



### 1.—THE GUESTS.

“**H**E *shall be swallowed up like Korah!*”  
“*All the plagues of Pharaoh shall light upon him!*”

Such and still more bitter were the curses that issued from a group of beggars, wending their way on Friday afternoon toward the so-called “sleeping-place” (or lodging-house) in Breslau. These beggars, with their wives and children, had just come from the Jewish church-warden, who had been distributing among them meat-tickets for the next Sabbath.

The endless banishments and persecutions which their race had suffered had driven many Jewish families to the necessity of leading, in the midst of civilized Europe, like their forefathers in the Arabian desert, a nomadic life; they had neither home

nor fixed abode, but went their way begging from city to city, from village to village, wherever they found a settlement of their fellow-believers. Many there were who, for generations back, could trace their ancestors to no definite dwelling-place; their marriages were consummated on the country roads by the simple transfer of a ring and the presence of two witnesses. Such a marriage was perfectly lawful according to the original principles of the Jewish religion, for marriage, as a purely civil contract, needed no clergyman, and even by the clergy was not consecrated in the synagogues, but outside under a canopy stretched for the purpose.

It was a rare case for scions of those beggar-families to work their way out from the gypsy life; habit held them firmly fixed there, and their maintenance was a perfectly organized thing in the churches. These vagrant people were designated by the honorable title of "Guests;" not till later was this mild expression made to convey or cover an ignominious meaning. In every place the settled families were obliged to entertain during the Sabbath a greater or smaller number of "guests," according to their ability, and on Sunday morning provide them with traveling money. On week days their support was left more or less to private charity.

The most thankless office in connection with this Sabbath-quartering fell to the church-warden, who distributed the tickets; he could not suit anybody; the beggars cursed and reviled him,—for it was none other than the unhappy almoner who was the object of the above-quoted imprecations.

The Jewish poor-house-of-entertainment at Breslau was situated on Charles Street in the so-called fencing-school, a sort of barracks enclosing a large area like a market-place, in the middle of which was a kind of store-house of goods, with a small tower and a striking-clock; in the circumjacent houses, of which one row abutted against the ramparts, lived forty or fifty Jewish families; and in one of the court-yards stood the so-called Lissa Synagogue, into a dirty room opposite which the beggars above mentioned now entered.

“With whom do you dine, Schnauzerle\*?” asked a burly fellow with a rattling in his throat.

“With whom do I dine? with whom do I *starve*?—you’d better say! Once more I say, let him be swallowed up alive, if he sends me to Lämmy Bär, who looks like a time of famine, and his wife like a smoked herring, such a great long-legged, raw-boned, sixteen-hand-high old cook.”

Such was the answer of the party spoken to, a man with a desperate face, who was further distinguished from his companions by wearing leather breeches with broad red stripes on the sides and a row of brass buttons; the silver ear-rings, which peeped out from under the black frizzly hair might have served as a special mark of his individuality.

“I’ll tell you what!” said a little man with a peaked beard, whom they called Mendel Felluhzer—“I’ll tell you what! If you’ll give me two good

---

\* Or, literally, SNOUTY, in allusion to a protruding moustache giving his face the look of a dog’s nose.—*Tr.*

groschen to boot, I'll swap with you, and give you my billet to the rich widow of Aaron Wolf, who has the richest dried-meat in all Breslau, and every Sabbath a smoked tongue with a sauce that tastes like pure Malmsey."

"I'll give you a groschen and a half," replied Schnauzerle; and his wife howled and scolded and beat her children for having such a spendthrift of a father, till they all yelled in chorus.

"One and a half?" smiled Mendel, "well, I don't care; you see I hate long haggings; but you must pay first."

"I ha'n't a bloody penny, and if Amalek, the poll-tax-gatherer should come and should say: Victor, [or Schnauzerle, for all I care], you may put my eyes out with a red farthing—(Lord knows I'd be glad enough to do it)—I should have to let the Titus run. You're all witnesses, that till Sunday morning I owe one and a half good groschen." Mendel shook his head negatively, and Schnauzerle went on: "You may cut off my right ear, ear-ring and all, if I don't pay you honestly." Mendel again shook his head, and Victor laid himself on the bench behind the table, stretched his legs out and whistled the Dessau march.

"A good fat billet,  
And a soft bed at night,  
And a cozy bench,  
And a buxom wench  
To help me fill it,—  
Is my delight"—

declaimed a sly little man out of a corner of the apartment.

“Stop your clack, you ninny-hammer,” cried Löbel Schackern, interrupting the rhymer, for he had been obliged to laugh at those verses, and that made him cut a piece out of his chin, as he was just at that moment in the act of twitching out before a broken looking-glass some of the hairs of his beard with a pair of scissors.

The unlucky poet, Israel Possenmacher of Dörzbach in Franconia, answered promptly:

“Howl of dogs and tom-cats’ din  
At the gate of Heaven will never get in.”

Whereupon, like a marksman, he drew his eyelids down over his (always half-hidden) little gray eyes, took out of his mouth the quid of tobacco which he was chewing and threw it in his reviewer’s face, who in return flung at him the scissors, which unfortunately, however, hit a little maiden, who, holding a violin in her lap, sat cuddled up in a corner. The child screamed, blood ran from her forehead, and Schnauzerle sprang up in a fury, and leaping down from the table away over them all to his little daughter, boiling with rage, he lifted the deathly-pale child with one hand in the air, while with the other he shook his fist at the by-standers, then he pressed the bleeding face of his child to his lips, and perceiving no longer any breath, he yelled and raved and cursed again aloud, and swore to massacre every one of them.

“My best child! my best child! Wait, Löbel, I’ll bite your throat in two with my teeth! She was as gentle as a lamb, every farthing she earned by

singing she brought to me," cried Schnauzerle, and his voice began to quiver.

Meanwhile several had gone to find an old beggar-woman, called *tall Vogel*, who came, snatched the child from Schnauzerle's arms, breathed softly three times into the wound on the forehead, the blood ceased running, she took a flask from her pocket, sprinkled a few drops on mouth and temples, the child opened her eyes, Schnauzerle gave a scream of joy and gave Löbel a kick, nobody could tell whether from rapture or revenge; the latter, however, took off his yellow neck-handkerchief and gave it to the old man as a bandage for the child; he also unfastened his little gold ear-rings and put them on to the sleeping child, and to make all good, he gave Schnauzerle his better meat-ticket and took *his* poor one instead. All at once an altered tone, a certain tenderness of mood, seemed to have come over the whole company; of all the curses and bitter jests there was no longer any sound or sign. The sense of having just escaped a calamity excites even in the most hardened natures a slight shudder of awe, and who can tell how much of pardonable selfishness may not on such occasions be awakened in the soul? Every one could now with undisturbed contentment surrender himself to the pleasure of the coming Sabbath, a great part of which would have been utterly spoiled if a little corpse had been lying on the boards of the lodging-house. All united in the praise of the little ten-year-old Mattie (Matilda); they extolled her cleverness, her gentle good-nature, and

her talent in singing and violin-playing, and pronounced Schnauzerle happy in having such a daughter. The child woke up; all caressed her; she stood smiling before the broken looking-glass and feasted her eyes upon the yellow fillet and the golden earrings; the pale face and the delicately formed little mouth seemed as if they had seldom been lighted up with a gleam of pleasure. The child bound the handkerchief more neatly around her forehead, the bandage became an ornament, and with a graceful fling and flourish she skipped out of the door to show her pretty things to the other children.

“That Schnauzerle is a speculating head,” said Elias Rosznitzer, “that child may yet make a rich man of him some day. It doesn’t look as if it were your child; I believe you stole her.”

“When you were born they must have fired a salute—you *didn’t invent gunpowder*,” replied Schnauzerle; “you can get you a dog to eat your ideas for you. When one hasn’t enough for himself, will he go to stealing children for a luxury?”

“Some other folks are speculative too,” began Mendel; “if you’ll keep still, I’ll show a little arrangement of mine.”

He pulled a dirty little book out of his pocket, and the curious by-standers formed a ring round him, and thrusting their thumbs on both sides into the arm-holes of their waistcoats, looked at the speaker with distorted features.

“You know,” continued the subject of this honor, “everybody is acquainted with me where two roads

meet, so I have laid out my brokerage-business on an extensive scale. See here! On the left hand side of the first page are the fellows, and on the right the girls, of marriageable age; we'll leave them side by side; I'll introduce to you presently the second set; on these leaves you find the sons and daughters of families; they are marked with only one star, they are of middle standing, say from two to three thousand dollars; down below are the honeysweet children; I should be sorry to have to choose, if I must choose one of them. But the worst of them are the middling sort, checked off in the margin down here; they belong neither exactly above nor below—they're too small for the cart and too large for the wagon; it's a troublesome piece of business till one gets them fairly harnessed in. But now, dear children, look out! here come my goldfish, my pearls, my sugar-plums, my rose-buds; for two hundred miles round there's not a young lad or lass that I havn't in my sack. Brothers, this runs up high, to the seventh heaven, even to twelve thousand thalers! higher than *that* nobody ever got. There is the daughter of Meyer de Castro in Hamburg, only fifteen years old, but a golden child, eighteen carats fine, who looks so fresh and healthy one could almost take a bite of her, and she has a pair of eyes in her head, coal-black and with a fire in them—the great diamond of the King of Portugal (I wish I had it) can't have a brighter lustre; a mouth and a chin, and in fact her whole person—one can't paint anything finer; and, brothers, twelve thousand thalers! Dear Lord! if I had twelve thousand



thalers, I'd ask if Breslau were for sale. I should be the greatest merchant in the world; I should be better off than the King of Prussia! I must say, I pity the young creature; her father has wanted with all his might to get a scholar for his son-in-law. I have ordered such a dried-up little Rabbi from Fürth; I make a nice bit of money by the operation, and while we are talking here, perhaps the match is already concluded.—The double-under-scored one here—that is the daughter of Raphael Löbell of Treves; her name is Taübchen; she is one of those who find many electors and no purchaser—one of those market-day jades, that everybody has trotted out, inspects them and then goes away; she is half-and-half new-fashioned; she parley-vous' High-German like a countess, and is a somewhat considerable person withal, only she has a bit of cock-a-doodle-doo in her head. Na! Well, before twice twenty-four hours, she's provided for."

He held up for a moment, and took in with a smile the tribute of approval from the surrounding company, and then proceeded:

"Brothers, now attend! here on these three leaves I have marked such articles as are spotted, and what one commonly calls *Bavel*;\* and there is the most profit on them, for the very reason that such things are not what everybody will buy. There is the daughter of Maier Karp of Cologne; she has lost a shoe, because she has served in the cavalry. I've given her father a promise to get her a clever young

---

\* Damaged or unsalable goods.

fellow, and if he has nothing but the shirt on his body, he'll get her, and a thousand dollars, cash down, and a share of the business, besides inheriting some day a handsome little property, and what more can one wish? There is the daughter of the holy Rabbi, Aaron Efringen of Strasburg. The daughters of the Rabbis are none of them worth a groschen; their parents, from sheer piety, have no time to look after them; she is no more valued than sour beer, but still I've a husband for her already; she gets a cattle-dealer from Speier.—See, here are the hump-backed ones whom one can look at only in front, and next to them those that have a wen on the neck or some such superfluity; here are such as only look at one side-wise; here those whom, like a gift-horse, one must not look in the mouth; but here at last comes a capital person; this one can do a feat that no one can come within a thousand miles of imitating.”

“What's that?” eagerly cried all the bystanders.

“*What's that?*” replied Mendel, smirking, while he held his peaked chin in his left hand for some time in silence, “why, she can kiss her elbow, so beautifully are her arms set into her body. Against every married man I mark a star here in my register; why not? I have been already cursed more times than there are days in the year, but what of that? all I say is: marriages are made in heaven, and it is also written: at the very same hour when one is born, it is proclaimed in heaven: such and such a man gets such and such a woman—how can I help that?—*A propos!* Don't any one of you

know a widow or a half old maid,—but she must be baited by all the dogs and have hair on her teeth;—*Veitel Ephraim* in Berlin is now happily a widower, and I should be glad to hang another domestic devil on his neck.”

“*Mon cher cousin!*” cried Schnauzerle, “this day fortnight I was at my dear cousin’s. I’ll soon pluck a feather or two out of the gold-pheasant, that’ll make him leave off mousing.”

“There, you’ve got the right pig by the ear,” said Elias Rossnitzer; “you see by *Veitel* how things go when the beggar gets on horseback; he can’t carry his crest high enough, but towards whom? towards us!—towards the gentry he can bow and duck, as if his joints were all fish-bone. I guess we all know his hens and his geese; his father was not a bit more or less than one of us; he has always taken what has been given him, and what has not been given him.

“There was his sister Sara that’s dead now—the wife of the rich Moses Daniel Kuh near by here,—she hadn’t a drop of shabby blood in her veins; that was the best ticket in all Breslau; she was a real lady, such a one as the Thora [Holy Scripture] speaks of: *whoever goes into her house hungry, comes out well-filled.*”

“I wish such a woman would die every day,” growled David Schmalznudel. “I happened to be here just as she was buried; a good deal of money was distributed among the poor in the good-place [church-yard], every one, I think, got a dollar and

two or three good groschen over; she had had thirty gold ducats lying with her grave-clothes, with directions that, at her funeral, they should be distributed among the poor."

"When her last-born in the cradle lay,  
 Did I not sing to the child and say:  
 He must not shed too many tears  
 If sorrow should come in after years.  
 Believe me, brothers, a rarer sport  
 Was never seen at King Arthur's court,  
 Nor finer songs went round the board,  
 Nor ever a nobler wine was poured.  
 But oh, that Veitel, the scape-grace,  
 He always wore a sour face,  
 And yet I do not hate him—oh no!  
 Only you see I love him so,  
 I wish I had *something* that would be  
 As good for him as it would for me"—

declaimed again the sly little man from the corner of the room.

"What is that you'd like?" all with one voice interrupted the happy improvisator of rhymes.

"A keg of powder—that would be  
 As good a joke for him as for me."

"Far too expensive a luxury," remarked Schnauzerle, yawning, "but, brothers, Mendel has set me upon a speculative track; you shall hear presently what I have in hand."

At that moment, a blow with a wooden hammer, four times repeated on the house-door, gave the signal that it was time to go to the synagogue. The beggars started, but at the door a Pole encountered them, who was just in the act of making a hasty en-

trance. Schnauzerle turned round and seizing the stranger by the coat, asked him:

“Rabbi, can’t you get me a copy of the Sixth Book of Moses? A treasure-digger has promised me twenty dollars for one; you shall be paid for your trouble, if you can procure me the Sixth Book of Moses.”

“Are not five enough for you?” answered the Pole, angrily, and immediately departed, so soon as the matron of the shelter had insured him a night’s lodging.

“You see, Sary,” said the matron to her daughter, a girl of eighteen, who had been scouring the room and now stood at the window, her eyes red with weeping, and gazed out into the snow-flurry,—“you see, the proverb says:

‘Twixt guests and servants, bewildrin’,  
Small chance for the poor children.’

And now you have heard a proof of its truth.”

Sary turned round and wiped a tear from her eye with her apron. Mattie, the wounded child, came in and played on the violin; the matron took the instrument out of the child’s hands and struck her.

“Don’t you know it is the Sabbath now, and no music is allowed on the Sabbath?” said she. The two girls went silently out of the door; the old mother spread white linen on the table, and lighted, praying the while, her seven Sabbath-lights, and spreading out her two hands pronounced a blessing upon the candles.

Quiet and friendly neatness reigned now in the sabbatically-illuminated apartment.

Schnauzerle and his comrades, meanwhile, were standing in the synagogue, not far from the entrance; they kept up an incessant chattering during the prayer, criticising the members of the holy congregation of Breslau, as, with profound bows and a low murmuring, they betook themselves to their seats.

“Do you see,” said Schnauzerle to Mendel Feluhzer, “that tall Meier Lämmle dawdling along? he does well to hide his thievish hands in a fox-skin muff. Couldn’t find anything else to steal, so he stole himself away from Warsaw. Ha! that Moses Ganz bends down right bravely; is it your gallows crooks you over so, which is branded upon your back? *Sacre nom de Dieu!* there comes Levi Wolf; he steps off as if he had pinchbeck feet, instead of four pinchbeck watches in his pocket, which he is going to sell for gold ones; see, out of each pocket hangs a seal: I believe, if ever our Lord God should no longer know what time it is, that Levi Wolf would sell him a watch and gabble Him into taking pinchbeck for gold eighteen carats fine. The best trade after all is that of a Rabbin; to soldier and pray, that is all a very easy business; it is true Rabbin Tobias is a fine man, but the devil may thank him for that; a great art, forsooth, to sit at table all the year round with enough to eat and drink and a handsome wife!—heart! what more do you want? If that were my case, I’d be as pious as the prophet Elias himself.”

“Hold your scurrilous jaw, will you?—you are a great hand for sticking nicknames on to everybody,” cried Maier Schmalznudel, and Schnauzerle kept still awhile, for many others as well as the Pole, hissed Silence!

The Pole stood aside in a corner, far from the other beggars. The blazing brass lamps, which hung down in long chains from the ceiling of the synagogue, but faintly illuminated the form of the singular stranger. He maintained during the whole prayer a bending attitude, keeping the upper part of his body the while in a steady and measured oscillation. When the schema (Deut. VI, 4–10 and XI, 13–21) was chanted, he raised himself high on his toes, clasped his hands spasmodically over his head, compressed his lips tightly, drew down his eyelids, and with a long deep inspiration sought to excite himself to an intense ecstasy. It was as if, challenged by this acknowledgment to the only God, a whole host of thoughts, doubts, sorrows and hopes contended together in a mingling throng upon his face. He stroked himself slowly with his left hand from brow to chin, and a cleared and calm, almost radiant, expression again came to the front upon his countenance; he played carelessly with his rich, black beard, which, flowing down in neatly curled locks from the temples, formed a setting to the contour of his fresh and manly face. The small mouth was all enclosed with coal-black hair, which covered even the chin; a finely chiseled aquiline nose, somewhat prominently projecting, imparted to the physiognomy a peculiar

and characteristic foreign and oriental expression; the dark-glowing eye, shaded with long lashes, and the fine sweep of the rich brows that darkly arched over them, betrayed an intense, but repressed and sullenly silent, passion; the broad bonnet sat more on his neck than on his head, and exposed the high lily-white forehead, copiously marked with the scars of thought, to full view; not in open battle, in the face of nations, did these honorable scars seem to have been won; the thorny crown of a solitary and outlawed warfare had with its sharp spines torn these wounds.

The precentor had complacently drawled off his songs, which were an odd compound of sacred melodies and street-ballads; he troubled himself very little about the assembled hearers, who, in perpetual motion, trotted to and fro before their desks, and blew into their hands to keep them warm. And now, swinging backward and forward before his pulpit, and with an unrestrained familiarity smoothing out his rumpled felt-cap, he sang the closing strain. The congregation meanwhile was already in full motion, only holding in at the door of the synagogue to seal the conclusion of the prayer with a general Amen; the children must say the Amen particularly loud, for the Talmud significantly teaches: Upon the Amen of little children the world rests.

At this moment a large, stout man, leading a boy by the hand, left his place, which was immediately beside that of the precentor, and walked toward the door. All anticipated him with the salutation, "A



good Schabbes," (Sabbath) and with a friendly goodwill he immediately returned the greeting; at the door there was a great crowding; all reverentially made way for the great man and even the Pole gave him a lowly greeting.

"Have you already received your invitation?" the great man said to him.

"I only arrived this Sabbath, and so have not yet had time," answered the Pole, in bad German, somewhat disfigured with Hebrew phrases.

"Well! then come with me," the other replied.

"There are no two ways about it, I mean to be a Pole," cried Schnauzerle, when the crowd had melted away; "the goat's beard is sure to get the best crib! Don't you know him then? that is the rich Moses Daniel Kuh, who has got him by the halter. I once heard say, that at the creation, our Lord God pickled the leviathan, as a delicacy for the saints in the next world; I believe, if we ever get there, the Poles will contrive to eat the flesh and leave us all the bones."

"I would gladly have stopped at Moses Daniel's," said Mendel Felluhzer; "I should then have had a fine chance to intimate to him that I have a grand match for his eldest son."

The crooked Meierlè, who, as sexton, came out last and shut up the synagogue, stirred up still more the envy of the beggars and inwardly feasted himself upon their curses and imprecations which they exploded upon the Poles, as "God's body-guard."

The Polish tramps had, by specious and real learning and piety, contracted in some measure the aspect

of mendicant monks, and were by their lay-brothers in the German Empire envied and hated in manifold ways. To this was added, that in the Jewish district also, a gradation according to nationality of honors had become established; as the more eminent Portuguese Jews looked with contempt upon the Germans, the Germans, in turn, held toward the Polish Jews the same attitude.

Under the common yoke are still the degrees of higher and lower.

And as, according to the legend, even the damned in hell have rest on the Sabbath, so seemed, at last, the envious and calumnious spirits in the beggars silenced, as they betook themselves to their several homes.

## 2.—THE SABBATH.

THE Pole, answering as he went along the usual questions about his adventures and his antecedents, had gone with his entertainer to the latter's house. The nature of these questions had already convinced the Pole that he had a layman to deal with; for from the old time when God with his angels came to be a guest to Abraham, the pious principle has continued that not till after the guest has eaten and drunk to his satisfaction, is one allowed to ask his name and lineage; and for these modern times, when miracles have ceased, it is further specially added that one shall exercise benevolence without asking questions, in order that its purity may not be impaired by his knowing whether he is harboring or not an enemy or a transgressor.

The handsomely built house of Moses Daniel stood close by the so-called fencing-school; the keeping-room was sabbatically adorned; the savory smell of the viands cooking in the stove-pans, which diffused itself through the whole apartment, might if possible have redoubled the Pole's appetite.

“Two demons accompany man on Friday evening home from the synagogue. If they find the table spread, the lights burning and all well arranged, then the good demon says: God grant that all may be so again on the next Sabbath; and the evil demon, against his will, has to say Amen to it. But if it is otherwise, then the good demon must in like manner say Amen to the wish of the bad one.” Such is the teaching of the Talmud.

Rubbing his hands together complacently, Moses Daniel, with his four sons, paced round the table, and sang to a cheerful and solemn melody the Hebrew prayer of acknowledgment:

“Welcome, ye Spirits,  
Sent by your Master,  
King of all Kings,  
Lord and Maker of all.”

The Pole sat down on the wooden bench which stood before the hot stove, and hummed, in like manner, his prayer to himself in a low tone; and now he had leisure the while to examine attentively his environment. Exactly over the middle of the table hung a brass lamp, provided with many ornamental appendages, and seven lights burned in its circularly projecting sockets; and beside these stood two silver candle-sticks, with lighted wax candles, on the table; brightly glistened the pewter platters on the red-flower-embroidered linen, and before every plate stood a huge goblet. The Pole observed that no mention was made, in any quarter, of him, nor any preparation for seating him at the table. Already

in silence he began to murmur at the prospect of being left in the background, perhaps of having to eat at a side table, or even, according to a new fashion fast prevailing, in the kitchen. He knew not that here it was an old hereditary usage of the house every Sabbath to keep two covers open for any friends or poor persons who might happen in. How joyful, therefore, was his astonishment, when, after the washing of hands, he was, by silent gestures (for no one, from this time forward until the blessing was pronounced over the bread and wine, was allowed to speak a profane word) motioned to his place, immediately beside that of the master of the house. Now all the goblets were filled, each grasped the one set before him and held it in the hollow of his hand, enclosing it with his fingers claw-wise, so as to form a mystical sign. All now solemnly arose; the master of the house pronounced aloud the consecrating blessing, which all present in a low tone repeated after him; then they sat down again, and after another blessing each drank some drops out of his goblet. Thereupon the master of the house laid aside the napkin placed before him, and lifted in the air the two uncovered loaves, which were twisted lengthwise and strewed with poppy grains; choosing the goodlier one, he cut off a piece of it, once more said a blessing, and broke a bit for himself and one for each of the company. Now, at length, they could speak again and sit down with content. The maid, sitting at the table, rose up to take the soup out of the oven, pour it out into a dish on the wooden bench

and place it smoking on the table, so that the lights in the lamps only dimly glimmered through the ascending cloud of steam. The master of the house had also stood up to take off his heavy three-cornered hat, retaining on his head only the peaked cap, which it had half hidden; the long-skirted, reddish frock coat was exchanged for a quilted waistcoat; the great buckled shoes gave place to green slippers. Now at last one could sit down contentedly at table. Dumpling-soup, sour fishes with almonds and raisins, meat, sausages and sweetly seasoned onions were consumed amidst familiar conversation. The "Schabbes-maid," an old wrinkled Christian woman, had sat cowering behind the stove, eating of the dishes which were brought to her; only sometimes she crept forth from behind the stove and came unbidden to the table to trim the lights. The meagre, wasted form of the old *Crescentia* contrasted singularly with the comfortable and cheerfully lighted aspect of the whole surrounding. None present seemed, however, to think of that, for when the dinner was over, washing water was handed round, and the whole family sang several festive songs to old airs; the master of the house forthwith said the long grace with a loud voice, during which he held the goblet up in the hollow of his hand, then drank again of the wine, spake in a low tone one more closing benediction, and finally all rose from the table.

"One must not betray to any out of the fold what a blessedness such a Friday night is. Even if the Christian has everything else," said his host to the

Pole, "even if he wants nothing which can make life agreeable this side of Heaven, one thing he lacks, which I would not exchange with him for all his enjoyments, and that one thing is: such a Sabbath and such a Friday evening; when one has fagged himself out the whole week, so that he hardly knows where his head is, then comes Friday evening; all cares and torments are gone, one is an entirely fresh man; and not only with me is it so: the poor among the poor, who has hardly salt for an egg, who the whole week through has dragged himself round in wind and weather, almost bent double, and must let himself be kicked and spit upon by every boor so that he may earn a couple of farthings, who all the week long has not a warm bit, nothing but dry bread and a glass of schnaps, in a better case only roast potatoes or at the very best a cup of coffee;—how could he stand it without a Sabbath? But Friday evening comes, and he sits at home in his keeping-room, makes himself comfortable, and refreshes himself again till Sunday morning, then takes his staff in hand, and his bundle on his back, kisses the holy law which is written on the door-posts,\* the wife stands on the threshold and prays softly the 'God bless thee and keep thee,' but he goes on his way, takes his prayer-book out of his pocket, hums to himself the pious traveler's-songs, and so enters again upon his painful pilgrimage."

The Pole shrewdly calculated: "Whoever with such reflecting self-consciousness surveys the neces-

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\* The Jews have, attached to all their doors, in little capsules, various passages of Scripture written on parchment.

sity and relations of things, must know a point of view beyond and above them, or perhaps have such within himself; to him an outlook into a larger life must already have been opened." With cautious Hebrew turns he responded how delightful it was to find that the individual man and whole classes always grow into their conditions; at first the shoe often pinched, but gradually the toes crooked and crippled themselves to it, and in this way one learned by degrees to run well and even to dance.

The cunning Rabbi had, however, reckoned falsely, for Moses Daniel shook his head with a dissatisfied air, whether because he understood not, or because he disapproved the words, was uncertain.

"A second soul enters into the body on the Sabbath,—that is a striking sentence of our wise men," (church fathers) the host resumed.

The Pole fell in with his assent in a tone of solemn pathos, and remembering his traditionary duty, as learned guest, to speak out of God's word for the edification of the house, he quickly quoted, with a reference to the page, a variety of proof-texts from the Talmud, particularly that memorable saying from the Tractate on the Sabbath, *Fol.* 73: "If Israel should only hallow *one* Sabbath with all its observances, the Messiah must needs come." He explained this to mean, that if men could bring themselves for a single day to put away all worldly anxiety and all confusion of heart, to be of one mind and to feel themselves purely in God, the Messiah would already have come and must also come out-



wardly.—Again, however, it was unmistakable that the much extolled ingenuity of Talmudic exposition here also missed the mark; he only added further how, according to the interpretation of the wise men the Sabbath was an emblem of, as well as preparation for, the eternal rest in the kingdom of blessedness, and began thereupon to relate some wonderful examples of the inexplicable magic power of the Sabbath.

“In Spain the monks had in old times a tribunal called the Inquisition; by which all Jews were compelled either to be baptized or to languish for years in prison, and finally to be burned. Once a holy Rabbi was immured in a subterranean hole, where not a ray of light could reach him, so that he knew not when it was day or when it was night. Nothing tormented him so much as the thought that he was now hindered from celebrating the Sabbath with song and prayer, as he had been wont to do from his youth up; beside this an almost unconquerable longing for his cigarettes caused him much heart-felt pain. To breathe in and out tobacco smoke was to him almost as necessary as air is to men in general; he worried and reproached himself that he could not conquer this passion, when, all at once, he perceived that it suddenly vanished; a voice said within him: ‘Now it is Friday evening! for this was always the hour when my longing for a thing forbidden at this season regularly left me.’ Joyfully he rose up and with loud voice thanked God and blessed the Sabbath day. So it went on from week to week; the longing for tobacco regularly tormented him and

regularly vanished at the coming in of the Sabbath.—In our days, however, as great miracles happen. I myself knew a miser in Cracow—he is dead now—who all through the week had a heart like Amalek, but on the Sabbath he was mercy and generosity itself.”

“Thank you for nothing !” cried the boy, named Ephraim, who had been attentively listening, “anybody can be as good as that, for on the Sabbath one is not permitted to give or even bind himself by a promise to give anything to anybody.”

The father reproved the pert boy’s forwardness, but the Pole pinched his cheek good-naturedly after the manner of the Rabbins, and after a short pause continued: “In Posen, I have heard tell, there still lives an old woman who, as soon as the Sabbath comes in, and as long as it lasts, can dispute with the Rabbins upon the most mysterious teachings of the Talmud and the Cabbala, but at the expiration of the Sabbath becomes again the simple ignorant woman of yesterday. It is well known that the river Sambatjon, which all the week throws out fiery stones, on the Sabbath is quiet. Having just spoken of Posen reminds me, have you heard yet of the resurrection affair said to have occurred there last atonement day ?”

“No, what was it ?”

“You know that when the dead are laid in the grave, they are clad in a white linen death-robe, and the Tallis\* spread over the head; for so they must ap-

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\* A white woolen prayer-mantle edged at the bottom with blue stripes.

pear before the judgment seat of God; on the day of Atonement we all regard ourselves as dead or dying, and clothed in the same dresses as the dead, we appear before the face of the Lord in the synagogue. Such is the custom in all countries.

“It was atonement eve; the whole congregation of Posen stood in the synagogue in their grave-clothes, the head veiled with the tallis, ready for prayer and humiliation. Suddenly all felt an indescribable squeezing and pushing, they felt as if pressed by demons; the sweat ran down from them in streams, and all their limbs were as if lamed; so crowded, crammed full was the whole synagogue, that a needle could not have dropped to the ground. The synagogue could have held more than thrice the whole population of Posen; this press was inexplicable. Many turned to their neighbors to express their astonishment at the thing, but these stood veiled, motionless, speechless. The Rabbi pronounced the first prayer, an Amen as if uttered by millions of voices rang through the building; the walls began to tremble, thereupon it was still; all present felt as if throttled. Then there sounded a voice from Heaven: The dead are risen, they stand in the midst of you, to pray with you!—As if struck by lightning, every one felt that he must sink to the earth, but it was as if invisible hands lifted them up by the hair of the head, and wrung from them the sweat of agony. No one dared to lift his eyes or open his mouth, for every one feared the veiled skeleton that stood beside him. All was as silent as the

grave. At last the Rabbi raised himself up and by the ineffable name of the All-merciful conjured the dead to depart thence; a distant Hallelujah was faintly heard, and the congregation stood there again calm and undisturbed."

"Look, father! there are three lights in the lamp going out at once!" cried Ephraim. Moses Daniel was for a moment violently startled, but quickly collected himself and gave the boy a box on the ear, because it endangers one's life to look at the extinction of a light, for that is like the decease of a mortal and may by being looked upon and "called out" become a premonition. In fact, however, Moses Daniel, besides being agitated by the Pole's narrative, had, by the sudden and significant extinction of three lights, been affected with awe. The further explanation of the Pole, that since that occurrence they were no longer permitted in the synagogue of Posen to wear death-robcs, he heard with only a divided attention; such a thing seemed to him, however, a sin, and he bethought himself now in good time that he must show this pearl of a scholar to the Rabbin who lived in his neighborhood.

"We must not fail to go over to the Rabbin's," said he, putting on his hat and coat, but his look meanwhile glanced round in a manner that seemed to imply a still further meaning in his words. Old Crescentia behind the stove understood; quickly she lighted her candle, put it in the lantern and preceded the two men to light their way. A magnificent sight met their eyes on stepping out of the house;

from the lowest story of the Fencing-School up to the gable, light glistened from all windows, and behind these windows sat hundreds of happy people, rejoicing in their God and singing their songs of praise. The Pole sighed deeply; without uttering a sound he walked beside his friendly host across the so-called Jew's place. The crying, screaming, crowding and jostling and running to and fro of light-tongued and perpetually moving triflers, which usually filled the place, had vanished; like a fairy bride the Sabbath had suddenly charmed away all the motley baggage which they had dragged about with them all the week long; not a sound was audible; only the snow creaked under the tread of the late visitors, who turned into Antonia street and stopped before the house of the Rabbin. Old Crescentia rang, not from forwardness or politeness, no, she well knew that Herr Moses Daniel was forbidden by an injunction of his religion from touching a bell-cord on the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a day of rest for the much tormented Rabbi also, for the law expressly commands that on Friday evening one shall not pursue any solitary study, because one might easily in his zeal and absence of mind commit the sin of snuffing the light. The old Rabbi, who had just been hearing from his wife the secret affairs of the congregation, received the two visitors cordially, yet with a certain proud self-consciousness. Soon after the first greeting there grew up a dispute, between the two experts in Scripture, about a passage of the Talmud referring

to the morrow's weekly section. Both were very vehement, and it seemed often as if their lively gestures must result in actual collision. Moses Daniel sat in a great arm-chair at some distance, following with an eager countenance their mutual objections; even though they relied on arguments which passed his knowledge or his power of reasoning, he well remembered that it was a holy and meritorious work to be present at a learned conversation, even though one did not comprehend it, if in so doing one only sanctified his will; but to this was added the further reason, that he was enjoying in silence the thought of being permitted to entertain such a paragon of erudition at his own table. At a late hour, when the lights in the chandelier had gone out one after another, they took their leave in a friendly manner, for the dispute had turned not upon a difference of principles and purposes; it was a pious fencing exercise; so much the more cordially could the Rabbi accede to the request of the Pole, and allow him to deliver a pilgrimage sermon at the morning service the next day in the Lissa Synagogue (for there were at that time already several in Breslau).

On the following morning there was only one voice among those who left the synagogue respecting the distinguished learning and the brilliant wit of the Polish stranger. He had adorned his delivery with all kinds of parables, such as the mass of people can easily carry away in their pockets.—Moses Daniel was not a little proud of taking the Pole home with him (for before the morning service no

food could pass any one's lips) through the submissively greeting groups. Hardly an hour after they sat down to dinner, where, with slight modifications the usages of the previous evening were repeated; the distinguishing feature of this meal was, however, a religious dish of a peculiar kind; namely, a fat pudding, which, as the Polish Rabbi explained, was eaten in memory of the heavenly manna with which God had fed the children of Israel in the wilderness, which tasted like coriander in pure honey, as it is written in the Scripture; and the Rabbinical writings ambiguously add that the heavenly manna tasted to each one as the food which he most fancied and coveted in his private imagination. The Rabbi meanwhile knew how to touch up this interpretation with such colors that to the attentively listening boy it easily grew into a "table-spread-thyself!" kind of story.

After the dinner, for the better digestion of the heavenly manna, they drank of the western *water of strife*. The Pole drained at a draught the cup of schnaps which had been set before him. Moses Daniel made a wry face at that, but filled up the glass again, and thereupon commanded his sons, who had previously had to receive the Pole's blessing by imposition of hands, to let him "hear" (*i. e.* examine) them. With especial complacency did the father listen to the recitation of his son Ephraim; and when the boy had gone out, he said to the Pole:

"What in my case was neglected through the necessitous circumstances of my parents, I will, since

God has given me the means, fulfill with my son Ephraim; my other sons I need in my business, but Ephraim, God willing, I will make a Rabbin; I can say, with Holy writ: Ephraim is my beloved son (*Jer.* 31, 9), in him is my soul bound up (*Gen.* 44, 30). I will gladly close my eyes when I have once seen him honored and exalted among the brethren of our faith. See, here on the first leaf of my Chumesch (Pentateuch) it is recorded, he is now just twelve years old, for he was born in the year 5491 after the creation; am I not right—it is not yet too late to make a clever Rabbi of him?" the father concluded, relying on an affirmative answer. The Pole poured himself out with great eloquence and volubility upon the glowing expectations which the acute remarks, the lively genius and the astounding knowledge of the lad justified.

"All that he has," said Moses, "he has got from his old and recently deceased teacher; the present incumbent is too easy and too conceited. However—I have something to say to you. This evening, after Hafdalah" [the ceremonial separation of the holy Sabbath from the profane week days] "we will conclude the matter."

Moses Daniel knew not that the Talmudists expressly allowed the exception that of all commercial transactions the sole and only one that might be settled on the Sabbath was a contract with a son's teacher. The Pole, although he perceived Moses Daniel's drift, was nevertheless shrewd enough not to make him aware of his ignorance, but rather to



await till evening the overture of such a welcome proposition; he therefore soon withdrew, as he observed that Moses Daniel would fain enjoy his Sabbath siesta. On the steps he met Mendel Felluzher, who was on his way to see Moses Daniel. Having gone in, after a short prelude, Mendel said, scratching his left arm: "I get a club foot by you.\* I have a splendid match for your daughter, Violet; the man has money and goods and a house fitted up in widower's style."

"Too late," replied Moses; "my daughter is betrothed at Dresden with a grandson of the great Rabbi Moses Isserlein."

"I am sorry,—I would say, I congratulate you," replied Mendel, "but I must still earn a broker's fee with you; my budget is not empty yet. Your oldest son, Chajem, is a capital tradesman; I could supply him with something quite select, a damsel with five thousand thalers and three hundred ounces of silver into the bargain, and a dowry which, between brothers, is worth its thousand dollars."

"That's worth thinking of;—where is she from?"

"Where from? she comes of the first family, land in, land out; she is the daughter of the late Moses Löbell of Treves, an only child, and all her mother has she gets after a hundred years, as the saying is, but it can't last a hundred years longer; and figure—a figure, I say, like a princess! Your daughter, Violet—her enemies cannot dispute it—is a hand-

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\* A misfortune which, according to a Jewish proverb, falls upon *pimpa*.

some maiden, but, don't take it ill of me, before this one she dare not show herself. She has an air about her as if she had lived all her life long among none but dukes and princes. She knows Latin, French, cooking and—in short, there's nothing wanting, you have it all in a lump; and the main thing is: five thousand thalers free from taxes ! And the family ! ! All *folks*, every one richer than the last, not a poor relation to the hundredth degree.”

Noticeable were the movements of Moses Daniel during this luxuriant description; at the mention of every virtue in the panegyric catalogue: dowry, family, expectations, he made, with assenting look and friendly smile, a punch with his finger in his left hand; at the portrayal of the person he swayed to and fro as if uncertain; at last a finger was again clapped down; but at the mention of mental accomplishments he was raised above all doubts, these were to him decidedly indifferent, if not absolutely evil; he talked with Mendel for some time, till the latter retired, and he could take his noonday nap. It was a refreshing one, for he saw in dream his son Ephraim, preaching as Rabbi, at Chajem's marriage with an Empress who was made of pure gold; to be sure he was troubled about his daughter-in-law's having so many crosses hanging upon her; however, no dream without its nonsense—according to the Talmud, he said to himself as he awoke, and he was gay and happy.

During the whole Sabbath white linen cloths had always to be spread on the table. The family table

was on the Sabbath peculiarly the altar of the Jewish household; it must be kept adorned all the time, and a temple-like frame of mind, joined to a quiet sense of satisfaction, reigned uninterruptedly in the house and all its inmates.

When at length night fell, the blessing was said over wine and lights, the latter were quenched in wine, which was sprinkled over the table, and every one smelled of dry myrtles held in readiness for this very purpose, to remind themselves of the perfumes of Eden and the lost felicities of Paradise, of which the Sabbath is both after-taste and foretaste.

Not till now was work-day labor again permitted, but a pious usage enjoins, and promises thereby a blessing on all doings, to begin even at this time with a holy work.

Moses Daniel had come to an understanding with the Pole that the latter was now to stay with him, and beside good board, clothes, etc., might also count upon a moderate salary and munificent presents. For this he was carefully to instruct the young people, particularly little Ephraim, and for the welfare and prosperity of the house himself to study diligently in the sacred books.

The State, which concerned itself about the civil interests of its Jewish members only in those affairs in which it was important to maintain proper restrictions, troubled itself still less about any provision for the instruction of the youth. So it came about that full liberty and accountability to himself alone were left to the parent. This gave rise to a variety

of strongly marked individualities, which in its defects manifested itself in the form of a want of discipline, but these were far outweighed by the advantages of originality and independence.

Into a conservative and orderly house the father had now introduced a tramp as teacher, and it soon began to appear that he would be the instrument of bringing into the house something of the restlessness and instability of a strange and hitherto unknown life.



### 3.—RABBI CHANANEL.

FROM early morning Ephraim sat with the Pole, named Rabbi Chananel, who struck out with his pupil an unusual course of instruction. The common course being to study the natural meaning of the Bible, together with the odd additions of the commentators, or, beginning with the Talmud, to deduce its meaning from that, the Pole likewise pursued a method for centuries unused in the Jewish schools, which in our days has been revived under the name of the Hamiltonian system. He did not, however, omit meanwhile, according to the precedent of the Spanish and Italian Jews, to expound therewith the fundamental rules of grammar. This study was with the Polish-German Jews almost universally in bad repute, for a fine tact had often led the guardians of orthodoxy unconsciously to hit the nail on the head: so soon as one learned to dissect and put together again the words and sentences of Holy Scripture according to the rules of grammar, gradually the heavenly glory which floated over all, melted away; for after that every word no longer

contained in itself a hundredfold hidden significance; the simple and natural sense with its local and temporary applications stood out in full view.

Rabbi Chananel wrote also an elegant Hebrew; he had, after the manner of the liberals of that day, made divers poetical essays in that language and adapted rhyme and rhythm of the classic forms to the Oriental speech; Ephraim, too, soon succeeded in composing a little Hebrew poem; this artificial poetry could not, however, any more than that which sprang up simultaneously on Christian-German ground, put forth any fresh blossoms from the depths of the soul; one only manufactured artificial flowers on which there rested no enamel of emotional life. Without any genuine stir of soul or spirit had these little poems of Ephraim's been written. The whole object was, if one may use the expression, to weld together a classic Hebrew. Moses Daniel, indeed, understood nothing of all this, but the new grammatical study, because it was a new one, did not satisfy him, and in his usual practical way, he asked the Pole, What was the use of all that?

Rabbi Chananel, who had often availed himself of his rich fund of anecdotes and parables in bringing home to a man bitter truths in the most agreeable and impressive manner, replied with perfect composure:

“There was once a man who had a goat which he would gladly fatten, either to sell, or to slaughter for his own use. So he goes to market and for a few

pence buys a great head of cabbage, with which he hastens to the stall and cuts it up for the goat; he looks on with pleasure to see her devour the rich leaves one after another, and when she swallows, he himself for sympathy seems to swallow, too. Hardly has she got down the last mouthful, when he lays hold of her to see, by feeling of her sides, whether she has grown any fatter.”—

The Pole was silent, and left his hearer to make for himself the inference and application; Moses Daniel understood, and henceforth left the shrewd man undisturbed sway.

Rabbi Chananel was in fact a remarkable man. From the time of his residence in Berlin he had been member of a secret smoking club; this was no offshoot of that celebrated Potsdam Tobacco-College of Frederick William I., but a fraternity with independent principles and objects. Every Sabbath morning after divine service there assembled ten or twelve pious men in the most retired room of a street remote from the synagogue; the prayer-books and prayer-mantles which they brought with them were laid aside, and each one took a pipe in his hand on which were written in Hebrew the words: “Ye shall light no fire in all your dwellings on the Sabbath day” (*Ex.* 35, 3), and then each one smoked to his heart’s content. This was done from repugnance to the prohibition. One was obliged to have given valid proofs of his free-thinking spirit before being admitted into this club; one must at least have written some alphabetical letters on the Sabbath, or have

partaken at Easter of leavened bread. Frivolous, witty expositions of the Holy Scriptures, or the reading aloud of the writings of Voltaire (if any one was present who could read German or translate French), were parts of the entertainment at these meetings. While the rest strove to outdo each other in the wordy war of wit, Rabbi Chananel was almost the only one who could not rid himself of a serious, nay, a painful sense of the position. With embittered zeal he often expressed his conviction how the all-narrowing religious oversight changed men back again to school-boys, who think it a great thing to be able secretly to transgress restraint and discipline.

It created, by the quizzical way of putting it, a diverting, and yet, at the same time, an uncomfortable impression, when Rabbi Chananel on a certain occasion communicated a satirical delineation conceived in the spirit of Voltaire, in which, with truly demoniac irony, he depicted a pious Jew, who dies by starvation, because it is made logically conclusive to him that he is forbidden by the Talmud to eat bread, and all sorts of acute reasons were assigned therefor; potatoes must be put under ban and exterminated from the earth, for the Bible, which knew and determined everything, had never known them. With exhaustive daring Rabbi Chananel sent his imagination into the last hours of a man who pines with hunger at the table of life till he himself becomes food for the worms.

Rabbi Chananel had exhorted his associates to follow out his plan and to introduce these modes of



exposition in Rabbinical language among their brethren in the faith, but Rabbi Chananel was "unstable and flighty" in his plans and still more so in his life.

But now he had found once more a place of rest, and he would not let its opportunities of refreshment escape him.

Even in the house of Moses Daniel the Rabbi indulged himself, though not without great danger, in living up to the rules of his order. When Moses Daniel on the Sabbath noon lay down to his siesta, the Pole under a similar pretext would go to his chamber, carefully lock himself in, disrobe himself, and proceed to smoke his pipe. Not more anxiously beats the heart of the lover, when in the hush of the sequestered bower he hangs on the lips of his sweetheart and hears treacherous steps approaching, than Rabbi Chananel trembled, if, during his sinful practice he heard the slightest motion in the neighborhood of his chamber; not more anxiously or cautiously does the murderer annihilate all traces of his deed around and upon him, than the Pole drove the infernal odor from his garments, and not without a motive did he offer every one who met him on the way to the synagogue a pinch of snuff.

One Sabbath afternoon, after Ephraim had recited in the presence of his father and teacher the weekly section from the Bible together with the commentaries, he was sent out by his father into the street to play.

"I am very well satisfied with you," said Moses

then with cloudy looks to Rabbi Chananel, "but,—but, many a one has been deceived; the firmest pillars of the synagogue, the Polish Rabbins themselves, have been known to totter. The Liberals—may their name be exterminated from the earth—are getting more and more the upperhand, and are promoting the downfall of our religion. Such times have never been since the world stood; if things go on so, it will come to such a pass in a hundred years that a Jew will be exhibited in a show-box for a strange monster."—A bitter smile played round the lips of Moses, as he thus spake.

"If only God, praised be his holy name," he continued, "shall first have called me to Himself before I have lived to see the falling-away of my children."

The Pole availed himself of a pause. "I see," said he, "that I have been slandered, and that the story of my life has been falsely or only half related to you; I will speak with you openly and undisguisedly, and you may then decide whether you have reason to resign yourself to any such apprehensions respecting me." He lifted up his eyes, which had hitherto been devoutly buried in the Bible which lay before him, and with a proud and free glance, continued: "My father was one of the most wealthy and influential Jews in Warsaw. Every means was taken for training me up from early youth to be a learned Talmudist. I was not allowed to take upon me the smallest part of the household or family work, but only to read alternately with the Rabbins, and in my chamber in the

holy books. In my fourteenth year I was married for the first time; my wife died after a childless wedlock of four years; I married a second time and had the good fortune to become the father of two lovely boys. Not long after the birth of my Hillel I found one day a Christian youth asleep on the threshold of my chamber; when I awoke him, he threw himself on his face before me and kissed my feet, as if they were those of an angel or a prophet. It was clear to him now, he said (when I had at length brought him to his senses), why he had so earnestly besought his uncle to let him redeem for him his pledge to my wife; but that he still had the money with him, for the sadly sweet melody of my recitation had, at the very moment of his entrance into the house, seized upon him as with a magic spell. This was a heavenly influence. In his sleep he had dreamed that he had become a Jew, and had read in the holy books, and the angels of heaven had come down to him, and had been just on the point of revealing to him the most secret mysteries of the universe, when he was awakened.—I will not burden you with all our conversations, pro and con; it availed nothing. Chulicki, that was the name of the young adherent of the oppressed dissenters, came henceforth to see me daily, seated himself in the arm-chair which stood ready for my father, shut his eyes, and then I had to read to him a portion of the Talmud; he understood nothing of it, but the wondrous ring of the words, he said, touched him like heavenly music. If from weariness or necessity I left off, he would often

start up stamping and staggering as out of a dream. Thrice a day at the hour of prayer he went to the synagogue, and seated himself as a penitent on the threshold; his usual diet consisted of fruits and vegetables, nothing that came from a living creature passed his lips. To me he clung like my very shadow.

“Long was I in doubt about this incident, still I stoutly withstood the prayers of Chulicki to admit him into our religion, or at least to teach him the holy usages that he might one day practice them; he would submit to all trials; but I resisted, although I must confess I had many a secret feeling of joy over his battlings against his religion. One day after his repeated passionate demands, there fell, as it were, scales from my eyes; I had no longer a doubt: The soul of a truly pious Jew has for some sin been compelled to enter into this Christian body, and now awaits through me a release. I talked the whole matter over with our much experienced oldest Rabbi, and he conjured me not to delay a moment to give a soul, which had now been nineteen years in torment, and could find no peace, save by returning to our holy religion, as soon as possible its deliverance. I will make a short story of it. After some months Chulicki was, by a senate of Rabbis, myself and the old Rabbi among them, at night, after being dipped nine times in fresh spring-water, admitted into our religion. But at length, through the negligence of Chulicki, who delayed his flight, the affair was discovered; Chulicki was ar-

rested, I was declared an outlaw, and had to forsake father and mother, wife and child, to save my wretched life. Happily I succeeded in crossing the frontier; meanwhile my innocent father and the old Rabbi were thrown into prison; an amount of money beyond the means of the whole congregation was demanded for their ransom, but the Lord delivered them; they soon died, and my whole patrimony was confiscated. Of Chulicki nothing more has ever been heard; the story went that he had escaped from prison and traveled to Jerusalem. But the hardest lot was mine, who stood out in the world, as one fallen from heaven. I had never in my life left the Jews' street; I knew nothing about money nor anything else that belongs to life; a crafty fellow countryman who attached himself to me robbed me at the inn of my kutka, [spencer] in which were sewed three hundred ducats, together with all I had of any money value. Half naked, tormented with cold and hunger, I traveled on. A book might be written about it, so much have I suffered, till at last I reached Berlin, where Rabbi Alexander Sussman took me into his house."

"There, I was told," said Moses, who had hitherto been a silent and attentive listener, "that you publicly indulged in wanton expressions respecting our holy religion, and that you only escaped the Cherem [excommunication] by your remoteness from Berlin."

The capacious brows of the Pole drew themselves together like dark clouds, beneath which his eyes shot forth fiery glances, yet he soon collected himself again.

“I certainly, in Berlin, acquired different views of our holy religion,” said he, with both hands proudly stroking back his beard; “I should certainly at this time have converted my young dissenter very differently, but my principles are as certainly no less religious and grounded no less in the Holy Scriptures. At a public disputation I sought to expose the ignorance of an itinerant Rabbin, which he endeavored to cover up under an intolerant zeal; I conquered, and now I was a heretic. It is true, I ought to have gone to work with less heat, but how could I dream that I should incur the charge of impiety? I was a stranger and an outcast; was compelled to take my pilgrim’s staff, and arrived at your hospitable home. My blood has since grown cooler, I let the mighty rule; the Lord God, praised be His name! will guide things according to His good pleasure, all is in His hands. His counsels it is not for me to forestall. I live in peace and tranquillity, as becomes a Jew, and teach nothing but the pure essence of our holy religion, as you will have abundant proofs.”

A better physiognomist than Moses Daniel would easily have observed that these rapidly uttered words accompanied by a twitching of the facial muscles, might well veil something more than the Pole cared distinctly to divulge. But Moses begged of Rabbi Chananel, who sat there with his eyes fixed upon the ground, a thousand pardons.

“Do you not think then,” he asked, “that our religion is threatened with imminent destruction?”

“I will relate to you a parable from the Midrasch,” replied the Pole. “Once on a time they were driving through a forest several wagons full of sharpened axe blades; when the trees saw that, they all began to howl and lament. Alas! all cried, alas! our last day is come, we are all lost;—only a tall oak on the top of the mountain, which had seen its leaves fall and sprout anew more than a hundred times, he alone stood up calmly and thoughtfully shook his head. Be quiet and undismayed, he cried with a mighty voice, which subdued all to silence, not all these axe blades can harm you, unless you consent to supply them a *handle*.”

The parabolic superiority of Rabbi Chananel again, in this instance, made itself manifest, ambiguous as the meaning of the simile remained, whether by the axes, Voltairianism, by the oak, one or another positive religion, were intended; Moses Daniel fancied he had hit upon the right interpretation, and assured the Rabbi renewedly of his entire confidence. Rabbi Chananel, however, made use of this not in the most suitable manner.

Ephraim had passed his fourteenth year, and there was already some talk of sending him to the great Talmudic school at Prague, Presburg, or Warsaw. Rabbi Chananel knew his pupil well, who had hardly a will of his own, was easily led, but withal of an excitable disposition, and with something of the precocity of a spoiled child of fortune. With increasing confidingness he now devoted himself to his pupil, at first allowing himself to make some light

jest before him about minute ceremonies; imperceptibly he slipped a small dose of bitter doubt into the vessel, when he let him drink of the sweet water of the pure heavenly fountain; step by step he paved the way for him to free-thinking, and the boy, at last, stood trembling before his former holy things, which he now regarded with dislike and horror; with tears he unveiled his whole inner being to his teacher.

“It is decided,” he cried exultingly, while he kissed him on the forehead, “thou must not, canst not, be a Rabbi. See! thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased; to thee I will make over the possession of my sorrowful life, for thy salvation. It was in the eighth year of my life that I went for the first time on the Sabbath into a garden, where flowers in beautifully arranged beds smiled upon me in the full splendor of their hues. I could not comprehend what came over my feelings. I could gladly have kissed all the flowers, and yet I knew that the Talmud forbade touching a flower on the Sabbath, because thereby one might be tempted to commit the sin of plucking it; but I could not resist the impulse, and as I was not observed by my father, I quickly broke off a flower and hid it in my bosom. My longing was appeased, but a painful uneasiness was awakened; I had brought on myself the heavy sin of Sabbath-breaking. After a sleepless night I disclosed, the next morning, my guilt to a comrade; he in his childish zeal devised an atonement. The hand which has done the wrong must be cut off, he said, in the words of the Scripture. I was determined to let this expiation take effect in my



own case. My fellow pupil ran home, took the little knife which his father had brought him as a present from the fair at Frankfort; we stole out to the yard. I laid my hand on the baluster of the steps, and with the customary words at the slaughter of an animal: Praised be Thou, O Lord, our God, who has consecrated us with Thy precepts, and hast given us the command to slaughter—he cut vigorously into my wrist; I began to scream with pain; he stopped short; the people came running out. Dost thou see,” continued the Pole with a bitter smile, while he pulled up his sleeve and showed a scar across the whole upper side of the wrist, “dost thou see? that is the monument of my youthful zeal for religion. I had not the courage to endure all; now I am cowardly and worn out; who knows what I might have become had I been born under other circumstances; had seen a great career opening before me; a bright goal forever beckoning me onward; who knows where I might have stood, and where my name might have been named; but all that is gone by. I was doomed to be a Rabbi, but thou—thou shalt not, thou canst not. I tell thee, to be a Rabbi means to keep the soul in a perpetual cramp; there he sits, the holy man, and before him lie the folios with their Babylonian superstition, and around him from floor to ceiling but black, smoky book-cases, in which the fresh life of Judaism lies dried up, like a plant torn up by the roots and withered. The chaffering wife or the congregation that adores him cocker the Rabbi with meat and drink; spring, summer, winter, war, and

peace, all may pass by, he knows nothing of them; he sits in his cell, and the congregation gather around him, to pray with him; he can never go out of the house alone, and only when he conducts a dead body can he come to the door. I knew a Rabbi who ate nothing all his life long but white sugar, and once, when some one asked him where this sweetness came from, he quietly replied, 'Where, then, should it come from? sugar-loaves grow on trees just as much as onions do.' I knew another, who when one came running to him and said, full of terror, The Turk was at the gate and was trying to get in, replied calmly, 'Well, what of that? Let the Turk live here too.' Being told that there were a good many of them, and that they wanted to destroy the inhabitants, said he, 'That is easily helped; just shut the great gate and open the little one, and let in one after another and so slaughter them all in succession.'

"Oh, that is a life more like death! Well for those who in harmonious content with themselves and their environment know not how the world outside of them is daily renewing its youth. Well with them! they live in peace, studying and praying, till death shuts their mouths and closes their eyes, and they exchange their cell for a narrower one; but evil to them, who, like me, with discord in their hearts, stirred by a freer impulse are doomed to such life, to such death. I tell thee, I hate and despise all the quiddling of such a ceremonial sanctity, and yet I must cherish and patronize it before the world, because through it alone I can pay our tyrant the stom-

ach his tribute.—But why all this? Because I have not learned to earn my own bread, and now stand here with empty hands. In my travels hither I worked for two days in a mine, but I was more awkward and weaker than a boy of six years. I broke a leg, and yet they thrust me out when they discovered me to be a Jew. O God! how gladly would I labor, till the blood ran out from under my nails; but I am condemned to live by spiritual deception.—“True, it is not absolutely so,” he continued after a pause, sophisticating with himself. “I have a right to do as I do; the people have, indeed, nothing to do with my sentiments, only with my knowledge and my outward deportment; people ask not me, but the books in me which I have studied; I can, in this way, at least save them time and perhaps do them some good, yes, yes, indeed! that I can.”—He sank into deep reflection.

“So, my dear son,” he continued, as if waking up, “courage! there is still help for thee. O God! if at thy age any one had spoken to me so! but if only thou art saved, then I die happy; my life has not been in vain, for I have delivered a young and fresh soul out of the bonds of spiritual distraction. Learn a trade, let no one dissuade thee from it, and if thou feel’st a yearning and a calling that way, seek light and truth with the wise men of former times; then shalt thou live happily and shalt not need to die first in order to be blest. But give me thy hand, that thou wilt never betray me,—never—hearest thou?”

Ephraim grasped, weeping, the hand of his teacher,

and laid upon it his burning cheek. The Rabbi drew him close to his heart and he fell asleep on his bosom.

When a few days after he communicated to his father the resolve which he had formed, the latter was profoundly affected; he saw the offering which he would have made to God despised; but soon he rose erect again in his strong faith. "God's will be done!" said he. "It is all for the best; the Lord must certainly have meant to deny me this heavenly joy, because I have often been too lax in the fulfillment of his commands."

Whether now we assign hypocrisy or pastoral policy as the basis of Rabbi Chananel's character, certain it is that he wanted uprightness and straightforwardness; the deep grubbings of doubt had undermined no less his faith than his courage; without faith and courage how shall one become a martyr; must he not be a hypocrite?

For all that, the burden of his lot weighed more heavily on him than that of his error.

Joy and pleasure reigned in the house of Moses Daniel, for his eldest son Chajem had, through the mediation of Mendel Felluhzer, been betrothed to Taübchen Löbell, of Treves, and they were celebrating the nuptials. Notwithstanding that, according to the Jewish law, Taübchen's dowry, as that of a fatherless child, was held as tithed, Moses Daniel did a work of supererogation, and according to the tradition which enjoins to bestow the tenth part of all earnings upon the poor, he caused the correspond-

ing sum to be distributed on the marriage day in front of the synagogue, and his already honored name rose yet higher in the public esteem.

At the wedding-feast Rabbi Chananel sat at a corner of the table on the left of the bride, on whose right sat the bridegroom. The bride was richly and rarely dressed. An eastern turban, wound together of a variegated cloth, and held together in front by a great diamond-studded agraffe, covered her hair, and bordered the lovely forehead, on whose temples blue veins, that pulsed strongly, shone through. A white, finely embroidered veil hung down on both sides of the turban over the whole body. Under the long black lashes the fire of her dark eyes gleamed forth; the dark complexion, the somewhat arched nose, the round chin, all conspired to present in her person the image of a perfect oriental beauty. It struck one unpleasantly that she was always endeavoring to refresh her finely curved but somewhat pale and dry lips by biting them with her teeth. In her mien and whole manner a conscious self-mastery made itself clearly conspicuous. The pearl necklace, on which hung several gems beside, the bunchy hoop-petticoat figured with large flowers, the white Jewish bride's-girdle, from which hung many silver coins, all that formed a singular mixture of oriental and European-French toilet.

The bride, who had to go to and fro from one guest to another and thank them for the rich wedding presents, understood how, in walking, so to lay her veil that she seemed as in a cloud and was sure of admiring glances.

Then when she went back and sat beside her bridegroom, she outdid herself in railleries, and with a daring sauciness managed often to give him graceful slaps on the mouth.

In the beginning the Pole seemed to remark with displeasure this want of modesty, but soon the bride contrived to gain over him too by her raileries. She called him to her assistance, to make her bridegroom transpose his insipid name of *Kuh* into *Huk*, and hardly had she mentioned that *Arouet* had been changed about into *Voltaire*, when the Pole expressed his enthusiasm for the French poet and philosopher. She managed by nods of assent to make the singular Pole still more communicative. Her whole counter-talk was only like the touching of the flask standing before her, from which the Pole at this signal repeatedly filled his bumper and drank more and more recklessly.

All the while the synagogue-precentor, sitting at the table, sang in the name of each of the company, each time in a different melody, a Hebrew blessing upon the youthful pair, and each time there rang at the conclusion a Hoch! and they drank to each other.

The Pole had afterward to pronounce the long Hebrew grace, but hardly had he ended it when he again sallied forth against the young bride in the Voltairian play of wit. At that moment he felt some one touch him behind; he turned round startled; little Ephraim stood behind him.

“Some one is waiting for you below, Rabbi,” he

said, "you must come down immediately." The Pole went down; before the house stood a Polish car with the so-called *blahe*\* spread over it, to which was harnessed a little horse. A plump little lady, with the whip in her hand, sprang down with one leap from the chariot and reached the Pole her left hand, holding the whip in her right.

"Schalom alechem!" (peace be with you!) "Rabbi Chananel," she cried, "dost thou not remember thy wife? Dost thou see, I have traveled hither alone; to-morrow we go back together. The king has pardoned thy old offense; thou art called as Rabbin by the congregation at Schluzke."

The Pole stood there pale as a corpse. Without waiting for an answer his wife unharnessed her horse, led him into the stable, and then went with her husband to join the marriage-guests.

The next day Rabbi Chananel sat in the little chariot with his wife, without a murmur, without a will of his own. However much pain and sorrow reigned in his soul, he could not give them utterance; not even at the moment of bidding farewell to his dear Ephraim. The tears burned in his eyes, but he could not weep.

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\* A cloth covering or sail. A word derived from *blähen*; to blow out

#### 4.—ALL FOR THE BEST.

IT was the autumn of the year 1745. War had, within a year, again invaded the land. Under the pretext of securing to Charles VII. the imperial throne, Frederick II. contended for the second time with Maria Theresa for the possession of Silesia; the Protestant inhabitants of that country awaited for the most part with glad expectation, the Catholics mostly still with anxious distrust, an issue favorable to Frederick. And the Jews? No one thought of them, and they themselves looked indifferently upon the struggle. Nay, many were glad of it, for in war possession changes and easily passes over into new hands; whether the garrisons wore Austrian bear-skin caps or Prussian tin helmets, could at most exert an influence on the market price of peltry or tin ware. Even the few enlightened ones, and those who were striving for freedom, looked upon a change of government with that indifference with which the pale prisoner, leaning against the bars of his iron grating, stares out into the street where, at the stated hour, they relieve guard.



In the house of Moses Daniel, however, the new turn of affairs created great distress. Already, for several days, they had been waiting in vain for the arrival of Veilchen's bridegroom from Dresden, and this evening, it being the holy Feast of Tabernacles, they had most confidently expected his arrival. Notwithstanding that it was beginning to freeze out-of-doors, Moses Daniel had left the comfortable quarters of his sitting-room, and sat, with his whole family, in a sort of summer-house of boards, slightly put together, which stood out in the yard; for such is the injunction of Holy Writ: "Seven days shalt thou dwell in booths." (*Ex.* III, 17.) The inner walls of the hut were hung from top to bottom with white linen; the roof, made of twigs of trees, was so transparent that the stars in the sky could be seen glistening through; gilded fruits and variegated paper-cuttings, which were fastened by threads to the twigs, hung down for decorations. Particularly conspicuous among them were two onions, one of which was stuck full of barley-corns, and the other had a cock's feather in it. These might have been mystical signs, like the Pentagram made of golden-rods stuck together, and called the shield of David, in which hung the brazen lamp with the seven lights. Supper was ended; Chajem had gone out with his wife, who had made fun of this Arcadian shepherd's hut. The festal tone of gayety was nowhere discernible. Moses Daniel sat in the great arm-chair, with the broad cheek-pillows; drawing a deep breath, he sought to suppress his

sighs, for between his knees stood his little son Ephraim, and beside him sat his fifteen year old daughter Violet, who had clasped his hand and leaned her forehead upon the arm of the chair.

“Be quiet, child,” said Moses. “Ephraim, bring the book of the ‘Soul’s joy’ and read us something out of it.”

Ephraim did as was commanded him, and read, half-singing, the translation of a Talmudic legend:

There lived a holy man of yore,  
Whose praise I will endeavor;  
The Lord laid on him plagues full sore,  
Yet murmur breathed he never.

Stone-blind he was—he had no feet—  
His skin and flesh were wasted—  
And nothing he did drink or eat  
To him with relish tasted.

He said, “*All’s well*, O Lord, my God!  
Thy work is naught but kindness;  
A blessing blossoms from thy rod,  
Thou sav’st me from soul-blindness.

“The body, full of base desires,  
Thy mercy all hath wasted;—  
Eyes that had darted envious fires—  
Feet that to mischief hasted—

“The maw, whose greed no bounds doth know,  
Which *belly’s slave* man calls well!”  
So spoke the man each hour, and so  
They named him: *Nahum All’s well*.

Once over land he had to pass,  
To comfort a sick neighbor;  
He sat himself on his she-ass,  
His crutches rest from labor.

He also had with him a cock,  
To give him timely warning,  
That he with God in prayer might talk  
At earliest gleam of morning.

He reached an inn at close of day,  
But shelter was denied him ;  
He lit a torch and jogged away  
Within a wood to hide him.

A puff of wind his torch out-blew,  
But this nowise dismayed him.  
Said Rabbi Nahum : "All's well—this too !"  
And on the ground he laid him.

A Fox crept slyly up and stole  
The cock, and quick retreated ;  
"All for the best !" thus in his soul,  
The pious saint repeated.

A Lion came with mighty roar,  
And the she-ass devoured ;  
Spake holy Nahum, as before,  
"All's well !" and journeyed forward.

At morn a tale of woe he learned :  
Last night armed men descending,  
Had sacked the inn, and killed and burned,  
Like beasts their victims rending.

"Now see," said Nahum, "what good care  
The Lord for me hath taken ;  
All in the dark to leave me there,  
By Ass and Cock forsaken.

"Wind, Fox and Lion, each one came,  
God's angel, to stand by me,  
And guard me—blessed be His name !—  
That harm might not come nigh me.

“If at the inn I’d lodged at night,  
A corpse they would have made me,  
And in the wood the torch’s light  
Would surely have betrayed me.

“The cock’s loud crow, the ass’s bray,  
My death-knell would have sounded;  
My God! I own thy wondrous way,  
Thy wisdom is unbounded.”

Take pious Nahum, dear young Jew!  
And make him thy example,  
Then shalt thou be right blessed, too,  
And build up Zion’s temple.

“Dear children, let that be a lesson for us,” said Moses, and laid his hand upon the head of his daughter.

“This is where Herr Moses Kuh lives,” some one was heard to say outside. The house-door opened; a stranger stood amazed and as if spell-bound on the threshold. It was a small, undersized person; the Prussian military cap on his head ill-assorted with the remaining civil garb; a serene kindness beamed from the features of a face full of youthful beauty, and particularly from the bright blue eye. He looked bewildered as if into a dream-world, so strange and romantic might this whole spectacle to him well be.

“What is your wish? Walk in,” said Moses, rising. The stranger entered with hesitation. At the same time a dealer in old books and broker, known by the name of the Wag, Heymann Lisse, who had pointed out to the stranger the house of Moses Daniel, entered the door.

“This strange gentleman here,” said he, “brings news from Dresden from the bridegroom.”

“A letter?” asked Moses Daniel and his daughter, simultaneously.

“An absurd question,” answered Heymann; “my father has been dead these ten years, and I have never yet got a letter from him. The bridegroom has only been dead a couple of days, and you want to have a letter from him already.”

A conflict of emotions darted through the hearts of the hearers, and showed itself in their countenances. Laughter and tears—one stood almost as near as the other, and who could decide whether, at such a burlesque dressing-up of Job’s-messages, he ought first to weep or smile? Wit has not only its peculiar sharpness as a weapon of attack, but also the power to break or bend the point of a wounding truth.—The stranger, however, seemed to be no friend to this species of weapon, and interrupting the painful stillness, he said, in a soft, almost tremulous, tone: “War severs so many a fond tie with its unmerciful sword! one must needs accept all with composure and pious resignation.”

“Alas! alas! my dream!” cried Violet, sobbing. Her eyes staring wide-open looked widely into vacancy. Not a tear fell from them. A pause of dumb silence again ensued; only the sobbing of the bride was audible. The stranger could only express himself in general words.

“Her dream of love was short,” said he, “but—”

“What didst thou dream, then?” said Mosés.

“On atonement day, exhausted with fasting, I laid myself down, to sleep away the remaining time, on the bed. Then I dreamed. I found myself, handsomely dressed, with Daniel, on a great meadow; more than a thousand fiddles struck up; we began to dance, all alone, more and more merrily. Then suddenly Daniel let go of me; I stood as if nailed to the spot, unable to stir a limb, but he kept on dancing, leaped up in the air, and at last sailed away in perfect freedom, over the ground, till at last I saw him disappear behind a tree on a high mountain. I would fain have screamed, but could not; then, full of anguish, I awoke. It was night; they went to the table. Now this is the reason why, after a long day of fasting, I have been able to take nothing but a cup of coffee.”

“Sit down and tell me the particulars,” said Moses to the stranger; “when and how did Daniel die?”

“It was four days ago, the afternoon of the 6th instant, that his young life was snatched from him.”

“O wonderful coincidence! that was precisely the hour of thy dream, my child,” cried Moses. “But say, who are you and what tokens of his death do you bring us?”

“My fate has been changed by his; here are the prayer-book, and the golden chain intended for his bride, which he gave me and which I promised him I would faithfully deliver.”

“Thanks, you are a worthy man; but say on.”

The young man appeared to seek for a setting in which he could present the terrible picture; then he began, at first in a low tone:

“I had gone into the war joyfully as secretary of staff to Prince Leopold of Dessau. We were encamped at Dieskau, when, one morning, a Jew was brought in, who the day before had been prowling in a suspicious manner around the outposts, and was said to have counted the cannon which had been mounted.

“‘You are a spy, you damned soul of a Jew!’ the Field-marshal said to him, ‘just confess, you scape-grace! then I’ll see what shall be done with you; so, out with it freely!’ The accused answered nothing; he wept like a child, begged and supplicated. ‘You infernal scoundrel!’ cried the General, ‘you don’t confess? Then we’ll make short work with you. Give that mute throat of his a little snugger neck-tie and hang him up on the first tree you come to, that he may have a better view for his spying purposes.’ At this the young man suddenly assumed a proud bearing; he raised himself from his submissive attitude, and turning to me said: ‘Dear sir, here is my pass, can I be sentenced to death?’ I represented to the General how this young man had done nothing more than hundreds of curious persons had done, and how his pass precluded suspicion. ‘Is that subordination?’ cried the General, turning upon me sharply. ‘By all the fiends! the young military fellows will come to reasoning by-and-by, and when the command is given to Right-about face! they’ll ask, why not Left-about? That’s making brotherhood with Jew and Turk; as soon as one gives up saying: Render to Cæsar the things which

are Cæsar's, one has long since given up the Render to God the things that are God's.' He snatched the pass out of my hands. 'What witch's signs are these?' he asked the accused.

"'It is my name. I cannot write German, and so wrote it in Hebrew,' he answered.

"'It is all a lie and a cheat,' cried the General, tearing the paper to pieces: 'You're a spy; wait a moment—I'll have a private message whistled into your ear by a dozen gun-barrels! But no! that is fit only for a soldier; take the halter from some old dead horse and hang him up, between two dogs, on the first tree.'

"I conjured the General not to condemn an innocent man.

"'Let him be hanged! Right-about! March!'—The superstition reigns among the soldiers that the old Dessauer is bullet-proof; I have experienced the truth of that in another sense.

"I stood there almost senseless, as if struck with apoplexy, till at last the General, with bitter words, reproached me for my intercession. Without replying, I hurried out and found the hangmen, who, lying around a tree, mocked their victim. The young man lay on his knees, murmuring a low prayer, at every word beating his breast; when he had ended, I stepped up to him and begged him to impart to me his last commissions. Amidst asseverations of his innocence and assurances of his profoundest gratitude, he gave me those love-tokens which I have handed to you; a few minutes after he breathed his last."



The stranger, with visible emotion, had ended his narrative. All had relapsed into silent meditation, when Violet, who, with sighs, had, during the recital, been playing with the gold chain, broke the silence.

“Dear father,” said she, “I suppose we are to send this chain, and this ring that I have, back to Dresden?”

A cold shudder crept over the stranger when he heard these words; scorn and indignation burned upon his naturally mild and lovely face. He had thought to execute a chivalrous service, such as are sung in the lays of the minstrels: to deliver the last greeting and the last token of affection from the dying bridegroom to his bride; only for the sake of alleviating the terrible sorrow of the forlorn one had he attempted to bring the old Dessauer into the foreground and so give to his narration a tragicomic coloring. But now what did he find?—A bride who, at the death of her bridegroom, saw only the diamond ring vanish from her finger, and the gold chain from her neck. Nevertheless the indignation of the stranger was unjust; Violet had never loved her betrothed; she had only seen him once for a few hours, at a time when, by the agreement of the fathers of both parties, she had long since been made a bride; she lost in him, therefore, only a bestower of costly finery; however nearly his death may have touched her, it was after all merely general compassion, which could not reach the innermost depth of her soul.

“All for the best—it is hard, however, to say ‘all

for the best'”—began Moses Daniel, passing his hand across his forehead, and then continued: “If one could even have dreamed of such a thing, and the affair had not passed so suddenly; my brother-in-law in Berlin is as well acquainted with the old Dessauer as if he had been a child in his own house; I have also myself once had business with him; the thing might have been prevented. I see him before me, grasping with both hands the windmill wings of his monstrous mustaches, and thundering and yelling as if he would upset the world; but for all that he is not so bad a man, only somewhat hasty and headstrong. But pray tell me, how did you get away from him?”

“When I saw the poor innocent fellow foully murdered I rushed back to the General, full of rage, broke my sword and flung it at his feet. The day following I got my leave, and, after I had buried the dead, I took my departure.”

“I should have done the thing differently”—little Ephraim put in the remark here—“I should not have broken my sword; I'd have stabbed the General with it, and when I am big enough I'll kill him.”

“You must not suppose,” continued the stranger, “that the General executed martial law upon the poor fellow because he was a Jew. Perhaps one might say that he manages with his Christianity as he does with his smoking. In the famous Potsdam Tobacco-Parliament of the late king, he was the only one who did *not* smoke, but he kept all the while a cold pipe in his mouth. There is a singular

mixture of faith and superstition in him. For instance, he once prayed on the eve of a battle: 'Dear God, graciously assist me to-day, or if it be not Thy will, at least do not help those rascals, the enemy, but just stand off and see how it comes out!'"

"Pardon me, dear sir," began Moses Daniel, "you are at present without employment; I know not what your circumstances are; if I can do anything to serve you, I will take your honest face for security till you can repay me. Speak out then, openly and freely."

"I shall be able to make my own headway well enough, and thank you for your confidence," replied the stranger, blushing, as he rose for fear of being intrusive.

"No thanks are needed on your part. Another might have kept the chain, and nobody would have been the wiser. Only stay a little longer, I pray you. Tell me at least your name; perhaps I may one day be able to serve you."

"My name is William Gleim," he replied, stretching out his hand to Moses Daniel to take leave, and kissing the shy Ephraim on the forehead. "God grant thee a bright future," he said, laying his hand as in benediction on the boy's head; "mayst thou never have to experience injustice and violence, and if thou shouldst, be strong and noble, and then thou art armed for defense and offense."

With visible emotion Gleim gazed into the dark eye of the boy, whose true-hearted look yet rested unsuspectingly on the world around him. He might

have been constructing before him with prophetic eye the changeful life and trials of this young soul. He once more kissed Ephraim and then left the hut.

"All is for the best," said Moses Daniel, with a heavy sigh, when the stranger had departed. "Dear children, let us say, *It is all for the best.* Who knows, dear daughter, what a misfortune may not have awaited thee if thou hadst wedded Daniel Isserlein? All that God sends is good. Let us keep the feast in peace and joy."

The celebration of a feast ordained by religion has a peculiarly controlling power. The Law not only enjoins to subdue sorrow, but also, what is yet far harder, to awaken gladness; and such a joy awakened by piety becomes an inwardly growing one, just as the dew and rain from heaven stream through stem and twig a quickening juice of life.

Moses Daniel was able to maintain the festive spirit, and on the morrow in the synagogue he waved up and down, all the more fervently, the southern palm-branch, on whose lower end were woven myrtle and willow twigs, with the paradise-apple resting upon it, praying meanwhile toward all the four quarters of the heavens. He himself seemed like a broken-off twig in the hand of God, swaying and yet steadfast, turned up and down, to and fro, in every direction. And there, in the booth, Moses Daniel sat and reflected, not with sadness, but with glad resignation, that the children of Israel dwell in tents as exiles and fugitives till the Lord shall one day grant them again a settled abode in the land of Canaan.

To little Ephraim the four days' half-holiday, which came in the middle of the eight days' feast, had been usually a special joy, as one could carry on all the occupations of week-day life; and yet it was a festival; the youthful spirit was not restrained by a thousand little prohibitions; but this time he could not drive his sorrow for the dead man out of his thoughts, and he was angry with every one who forgot him.

There are natures which are suddenly and violently wrenched by a sorrow out of the self-forgetfulness of a life that drifts on aimlessly, and to which all becomes thenceforth a painful enigma. As if he were going through them for the first time, Ephraim fulfilled the singular usages which the last days of the feast brought with them. Judaism has its emblematic works, which must be carried out into the most minute particulars. One must cut willow twigs by the water-side, bind them in bunches and strip off the leaves, praying meanwhile, in the synagogue. They did not wait till autumn plucked off the yellow leaves, they tore them off with violence, while they were yet green. And on New Year's Day they had gone out to the running water, shaken out their garments, and at the same time said a prayer, that God would bury the sins which each had committed in the depths of the flood. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, called the "Joy of the Law," they danced round in the synagogue amidst songs of gladness, with the parchment rolls of the Law in their arms. In this they often alternated

with each other, and Ephraim was permitted to take the roll of the Law, engrossed by his family, and ornamented with golden crown, and golden shield and index, and carry it three times round the synagogue.

The load was heavy, but a three times heavier one lay on Ephraim's heart.

A profound sadness, a nervous anxiety, coupled with a silent grudge against the outward world, planted itself in the heart of the boy, now awakening into youth. At night the spectre of his murdered brother-in-law intruded into his dreams, and if he went along the street by day he saw himself derided by his Christian townsfellows and pelted with dung. He always purposed to run through the very first one who should touch him again; nay, he even carried a knife with him, but he never dared to use it, but fled when he saw ever so far off a Christian boy coming in his direction.

There are natures which, aroused to consciousness in the full tide of life's energies, can hardly contain all the joy and jubilation, all the pomp and din and splendor which the wide world on all sides opens before them. How different is it with a nature which, awakened by a cry of grief, another's and its own, becomes for the first time conscious of an incurable imperfection. It points to a mournful trailing along through life on crutches, and melancholy or frivolous mockery of the world forms the escort.

Upon the first bloom of Ephraim's spirit fell an autumnal frost. Young's Night-Thoughts came into

his hands. If, as often happens, a fruit-tree is found in the midst of a forest, we say, a bird must have carried the seed there. Still more strongly are the products of the spirit transplanted this way and that.

Often did Ephraim venture to ask of his inner man how he had deserved this fate, why the world should be his enemy; he questioned the Eternal Justice, a nameless agony came over him, burning tears rolled down his cheeks, he accused the Rabbi as his seducer, he denounced himself as a God-forsaken reprobate—and then he ventured a decisive step.

One evening, it was in December, he left his father's house under the pretext of intending to go to the synagogue; he looked back upon it sadly, but soon gathered up his courage, ran boldly through the streets beyond the walls and out before the gate, for it was there he proposed to accomplish the act. He had once happened to hear that death by freezing was the least painful method; in the darkness of the night, stretched out on the white sheet of snow, he would sink to sleep, to awake on the morning of redemption free from all the racking pains of life and thought. He had hurried across the fields and laid himself down in a ditch, and there he lay with his face fixed upon the stars, that glistened from between torn clouds; already it seemed to him as if he caught a distant chime of bells, a confused hum and murmur; all was still and lifeless around him; his whole past life, his purpose, the sorrow of his father, all swept in a whirl through his brain; his

forehead burned with a fever-heat, he rolled over in the snow, but he could not quench the fiery glow within him. All rigid he raised himself up; his eyes rolled like those of a madman; he was on the point of jumping up and flying from his evil demon. "Coward!" he cried out to himself, "thou hast not the courage to die." He tore the clothes from his breast, threw himself down again upon the ground, closed his eyes and fell asleep. He could hardly have slept but a few minutes when he heard foot-steps approaching; involuntarily he raised himself up; a little burly figure stood not far from him; it aimed a murderous weapon directly at him with the challenge: "Who's there? answer, or I shoot thee dead!"

"For God's sake, don't shoot me!" cried Ephraim, with all his might. The little figure drew nearer to him and emitted a peal of laughter. It was our old acquaintance, Heymann Lisse, a little man of a rotund figure, who distorted his naturally friendly face into an almost gnomish expression, and continued to hold his great Spanish cane, with its broad shaggy tassels, as if in readiness.

"Ha! is it thou?" cried Heymann, raising the half-stiffened Ephraim. "I really believe thou wouldst fain have gone rumbling into the next world as a *dead-head*; or hast thou not yet learned of thy father to sort wool well enough, but that thou must take a field of snow for a wool-magazine? Seest thou? that is true mortling,\* but one can't get it to the fair."

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\* Or *morling*: wool taken from a dead sheep.



After Ephraim had drunk a swallow of brandy out of the little flask which Heymann carried with him, he was able to go forward again on his way. He now related how an inexplicable impulse had driven him forth into the open air; by degrees the idea grew under his narration to an incarnate demon, who threw him down half suffocated into the snow and lamed all his limbs; the incidents grew ever more and more romantic and ghostly; the simple matter of fact withdrew more and more into the background.—Ephraim certainly manifested in this a shaping and coloring fancy, which even verged upon the poetic, but it was not that childish sort of fiction which reaches out into the infinite and believes in the shapes that rise up. The Talmudic dialectics and the modern liberalism of the Rabbi had stripped off from him all the mysteriously magical; his present narrative had grown out of their combination and had had for its design the palliation of his purpose.—At this moment when Ephraim had become conscious of a deliberate lie, an irreconcilable breach took place in his soul. The curtain before humanity's holy of holies was at this hour from top to bottom rent bleeding in twain. The oneness and innocence of the young soul was sacrificed to the world, the bodily suicide was averted, but another seemed accomplished.

He never could struggle through to that lowly and pious state of resignation in which, like his father, always expecting the bitterest afflictions, he could still say, under every blow of destiny, "It is

all for the best," but his once having dared to attempt self-murder put into Ephraim's hands, under all wrongs with which his later lot encompassed him, a two-edged weapon, namely—the thought of taking vengeance upon his adversaries, and then throwing himself into the arms of death as the only deliverer. Or is there a life which may be called a long-continued suicide? Is the inability to achieve a unity of life such?

It is impossible to fathom the hidden ways of thought which may wind themselves together in a youthful soul so as to lead it to the purpose of suicide. One thing, however, may be regarded as settled: it is, for many, a wholesome thing to be shut up into a system of life which takes away the power of self-determination.

The disposition of Ephraim's spirit to prey upon itself gave way again to the readiness to let men and circumstances dispose of him, and obedience became to him a conscious bliss.

He who had proposed to fly from life itself must now—learn to write German.

The exclusion of the Jews from the busy stir of public life had generated legitimately in them an exclusiveness which grew to obstinacy and received from ecclesiastical orthodoxy a religious stamp. Whoever sought to speak good German was an "innovator," a reprobate. The Jewish jargon was, so to speak, the spiritual dietetic-law, according to which only one could take or give thoughts; but an unconscious stir of awaking mind, which fortunately

linked itself in with the claims of business life, broke through, here also, the bounds of custom. Moses Daniel could venture, though still timidly, yet without scruples of conscience and without endangering his reputation with the congregation to have his son—regularly taught German.

## 5.—THE CALIGRAPHER.

HERR PETZHOLD was at sword's points with everybody, because he took for granted that every one he met valued Writing not as an art, but only as a knack; and he had the usual vanity of all those who apply themselves to a kind of activity hovering between art and trade.

While, therefore, he shaved off with the back edge of his knife the curling flakes from the barrel of his quill, he began to say to his new pupil:

“What is man without the art of writing? A featherless\* biped in the nakedest sense of the word; only through the art of writing does he become feathered, and his proper manhood fledged. The entire intellectual world is drawn with hair-lines and heavy strokes, and in the letters of the alphabet lie the abstract forms for conceiving the infinitude of the mind's ideas. The art of writing stands high up among the plastic arts as philosophic painting; for not only do the forms of writing do most to shape the human character, it is also most clearly revealed

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\* Feder (feather) means *pen* in German.

by them; the written lines are the facial lines or lineaments of every human soul, and not without significance are written signs called *characters*. I will decipher you the temperament, disposition, history and circumstances in life, yes, even the bodily figure of a man, from the lines of his handwriting." And while with a sure hand he cut the quill, and gave it the proper split, and shaved off the beard, he continued, speaking considerably:

"As touching the history of the chirographic art, it has been cherished with equal veneration by Egyptians and Jews, Greeks and Romans, and in hoary antiquity the scribes stood side by side with prophets and kings. But the art of writing celebrated its most brilliant apotheosis in the cloisters of the Middle Ages; in which matter there are great mysteries yet to be explored, for it was in the hands of a family guild. Those saints, such as a Hieronymus de Scala, who could write the Lord's Prayer in Greek or Latin in the space of half a farthing; or that heroic conqueror, Bernhardus de Santa Fide, who founded the majestic realm of the German Text, whose citizens, like the Roman senators, may be likened to a people of kings; or that noble monk (whose name is unhappily forgotten) who mortified himself two months till he could draw the U in the shape of a dove;—what, in comparison with them, is a Cato or an Epaminondas? True, since the invention of the art of printing, the glory of the art of writing has been somewhat shorn of its lustre, but its holy memory still endures. So long as the world

stands, men will say of the word of God: 'It is WRITTEN,'—never: 'It is *printed*.' Upon the inventors of the chirographic art, let me to-day be silent. I could not to-day for vexation draw an oblique hair-line without a tremble, if I brought up vividly before me the fact that the Chinese still continue to be ignored as its original authors—here you have three well-made pens."

So said Herr Petzhold, concluding his discourse as he now nibbed the pens on the thickly scarred nail of his left hand, drew them through his mouth, and then, according to his custom, took with three fingers a pinch of snuff. Ephraim had been sitting before him at the table, uneasy and only half-attentive, having before him a sheet of white paper. He thought he must now, as he did with the Pole, at every lecture, as a proof of attention, put in an objection.

"In the Second Book of Moses it is said of the Ten Commandments that they were written by the finger of God," said his pupil. Ephraim had forgotten that his teacher was deaf, and had therefore a double love for the written word. He had now to learn how one must lay the right arm on the table, how one must move the wrist freely, and must let the pen play freely between the three fingers. The first strokes would not come quite right, and the teacher, according to his wont, plucked him angrily by the eyebrows, and he had to hear many a scolding lecture upon his clumsiness.

"You Jews are the most incorrigible fellows so far as writing goes; that comes of the good-for-nothing

Hebrew way of writing from right to left; you always have the world upside down. In that way the right hand is forever writing to the left, so that no one standing by may find out anything, and all may be kept nice and snug among 'our folks.' Until you are forbidden, on pain of losing the right hand, to write Hebrew, there is nothing to be done with you. And then there is absolutely no accustoming you to rule and order, since in your gypsy speech the letters stand as in a Jewish school; one stretches his legs before him, another yawns, a third lies down on the other, and the fourth turns a somersault. In the German script the word is, Attention! there the letters stand in rank and file, not one of them can say a word; like the soldiers at Potsdam on drill-parade."

By degrees, however, Ephraim succeeded in winning his teacher's approval. One day he brought him an English copy—he stared at it for some seconds.

"Who did that?" asked the teacher, sharply.

"Pardon me. I—I certainly cannot do any better."

The teacher turned aside and with vehement gestures, imitating the lines of the writing in the air, he cried: "Is it possible? Those boldly sweeping strokes, that audacious boldness of concatenation, that rounding and fullness, every stroke flowing from the pen like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, like Venus gliding forth out of the foam at once and in all the fullness of immaculate beauty, and above all,

this height of Chinese security and repose! Such a thing has for me been scarcely possible in the happiest hours of poetic inspiration. One could hardly dare attempt that even with the graver. Oh unhappy me!" he cried, letting the paper slip from his hands and seizing himself by his two eyebrows, "the curse of the Atrides weighs like the Himalaya upon my soul, my own flesh and blood are in rebellion against me; but she shall atone for it." He stormed out of the door, a distant scream was heard, it drew nearer, the teacher returned jerking along a sobbing maiden of slender stature, who was hiding her face and drying her eyes with her apron.

"Sit down here, Rosa," said the teacher. "Write your A B C for her, Mr. Kuh. She shall sit by at every lesson and learn to write. Art thou not ashamed, my own child? Thou wilt be next week fourteen years old, and makest letters that crawl about among one another like a swarm of ants! See! the young gentleman has only been learning to write with me for six months, and this is his writing; he might place himself beside the cabinet secretaries of the Empress Maria Theresa. Once more then for the A B C."

Ephraim was now promoted to be law-giver, for he had to set his newly-gained fellow-pupil a "copy," as Herr Petzhold called it. Often, during this occupation, would he look up and contemplate Rosa, who, with her chin resting on her hand, looked defiantly on the ground, the lips of her little mouth angrily or pensively compressed, her full cheeks kindled with



an intense glow, while in her eye-lashes a tear hung trembling. Ephraim felt the disagreeableness of being compelled to assist in this way in a severe administration of discipline. What sweet and heavenly words of excuse and encouragement could he have composed out of these letters, which he was now indifferently and inexpressively placing beside each other, and when he had now regularly shaped his L, he could hardly resist the temptation to make the word *Love*. He raised his eyes, his look met Rosa's, which rested upon him sadly and reprovingly. He considered what he should say to her; the teacher certainly could not hear him; but anything seemed to him too poor and feeble. He kept on and finally ended with Z. With the words: "Do me the kindness to write, please," he handed her the paper. Rosa laughed.

Far happier was he two days after, for now he had to prepare a copy in words for Rosa. Herr Petzhold handed him his favorite book from which to write out something for this purpose; it was "The Sententious Heroids of Mr. Christian Hoffmann of Hoffmannswaldau, with other elegant poems." Ephraim opened the book, and took it as a good omen that his eyes fell upon the following lines, which he now wrote off in a handsome hand:

Hard shell-walls must he unclose  
Who the precious pearl desires;  
He that seeks the glowing rose,  
Finds her girt with prickly briars.  
Without bees no honey hast thou;  
Would'st in Canaan find thy home,

First be slave in Egypt must thou,  
And through sea and desert roam.

He handed Rosa the book and the writing, saying at the same time that he would gladly have copied the verse that followed, but dared not; she must read it. Rosa obeyed the advice, and read shyly:

Written in my heart I cover  
This true maxim well and deep:  
Glow of fire and pangs of lover  
Sacred hands must watchful keep.

Rosa, shamefaced and silent, closed the book.

Herr Petzhold at this moment left the room for several minutes. Ephraim knew not how it happened; he had clasped Rosa, he hung on her neck, he clung to her lips; but soon a black demon disturbed their childish bliss; they heard something fall on the floor, the inkstand lay broken, and "the many-armed flood of black fate coiled itself round their feet." Both were still standing there bewildered, and looking at each other with amazement, when the avenger appeared.

"Who did that?" asked Herr Petzhold, and immediately seized his daughter by her lovely eyebrows. Weeping and trembling, Ephraim snatched away the father's arm, and cried with all his lungs: "For God's sake! she is innocent—it is I—I—tear *my* eyes out!"

How sweet to him was the thought of being permitted to suffer for Rosa. Raising his eyes to her, he would gladly have seen death and night come upon him, but Herr Petzhold denied him the pleas-

ure of martyrdom; he was obliged to go home without having endured any punishment.

Rosa threw, one day, a little slip of paper on his writing-desk, on which she had written only her name, Rosa Matilda Marie, and that of Ephraim under it. What more was needed? In those words lay indeed the most glowing revelation of a secret which still labored shyly to veil itself. For hours now did Ephraim sit lonely in his chamber conjuring upon paper the rapture and wretchedness of his agitated heart. It was not poems he wrote down, in which his love poured itself out; where could he find the right words and how could he put them together? he had only just learned to shape handsome letters. So there now he sat and wrote innumerable times over the name of his Rosa; in black-letter, German, English and Hebrew, in all positions and connections. How happy he was! The handsomest letters of the alphabet had united to represent the most glorious thing on earth. He made the ground-strokes of pierced work, and in the vacant space he wrote with a raven's quill his own name; every letter, again, formed a special frame for a new symbol; now he chased a flying arrow through each letter, now he nestled down contentedly therein with his full name; his hand never once trembled, even in the dangerous attempts. Then in a hundredfold love-nets he imprisoned her name; numberless wreaths he wove round it; this bold oval flourish with which he enclosed it and which ended in a loop, that fluttered far away, this was the most blissful embrace. These

arrows, with vines twined around them, which he arranged as an impenetrable wall about her name, were they not heralds of his exulting soul? These softly upsoaring, lightly and tremulously dotted twirls, that swept in spirals about her name, and would fain hover away beyond the narrow rim of the paper, were they the tones of the lark, on which she climbs to heaven?

Others might celebrate their beloved in well-turned songs and sonnets, in pictures crowned with the glory of perfection, in battles fought for her honor; Ephraim could justly say that never was the name of a maiden more beautifully delineated than that of Rosa.

To the walls of his chamber, and to the sand in the garden, nay, even to the table, he entrusted the sacred letters. Since he had begun to practice the fine art of caligraphy, he had contracted the bad habit, whenever he sat before a newly scoured table, of scratching upon it, with his nails, the word Rosa; to be sure he had done this, as by prophetic inspiration, long before he knew and loved Rosa Petzhold; but he then immediately wiped this name out again, for he might otherwise easily betray himself in this way.

One Sabbath noon he stood thoughtfully at the window. Without knowing it he had breathed on the panes and written the name Rosa innumerable times over and over. Just then a hand grasped him by the neck. "Impious boy, what art thou doing there!" cried his enraged father, "dost thou know that to-day is the Sabbath, and one must not write?"

Ephraim quickly rubbed out again with his hand what he had written; he was glad his father had not noticed the precise word, and endeavored now to prove to him, out of the laws of the Rabbins, that one might write a writing which was not permanent, even on the Sabbath. Now, for the first time, at this trifling circumstance of his having called the name of Rosa a transient thing, and placed it in connection with the law of the Rabbins, suddenly the consciousness of the self-contradiction into which he had fallen awoke in his soul. One might have said of him with Hoffmannswaldau: in the rose-colored robe of his life's happiness, "snapped the thread of times in twain." Ephraim was sorely troubled, his father no less so, but for quite different reasons.

Hardly had Ephraim himself learned to read and write German, when he had, in turn, to teach it; Violet, his sister, begged him incessantly to give her instruction, and nights, when all in the house were asleep, the seventeen-year-old damsel sat with her brother and had him teach her the signs in which the world's children write down their thoughts and experiences; those lips, ripe for kissing, labored stammeringly to spell; Lessing's comedy, "The Jews," which Ephraim had bought, with the consent of his father, served as A B C book. With astonishing rapidity Violet learned to read and write German. But the farther she pressed on in the coveted Eldorado of the new knowledge, the more unhappy she became; everything cramped, crooked and rude

that she saw appeared to her Jewish; everything free, natural, joyous and tender, that she read and imagined was to her Christian; she envied the poorest Christian girl, and when she imparted to Ephraim her sorrow, the latter scolded at her, perhaps because he himself was ailing with the same malady. Moses Daniel had to-day, on the holy Sabbath, found Violet weeping over a German book. Despite all threats Violet asserted that she had taught herself the useless and reprobate stuff. This is why Moses Daniel was to-day sorely troubled.

The whole subsequent unhappiness of Violet's life finds its origin in the innocent circumstance that she learned to read and write German.

## 6.—BOOK-KEEPING BY DOUBLE ENTRY AND JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

EPHRAIM was now a finished caligrapher, and passed in all the congregation of Breslau for “a good German,” a phrase in which the German Jews comprehended the mastery of all profane learning. Ephraim’s entrance upon counting-house life coincided with the date of a great revolution in commercial history. The Frenchman, De la Porte, had been the first to base the arrangements of mercantile business on principles, to reduce it to a system, and raise it to a science. Herr Petzhold was an inspired annunciator of the new doctrine of salvation. He was also Ephraim’s master. Poor Rosa was almost entirely forgotten. Her father had sent her to an old aunt who lived at Brieg. She had left Ephraim without leave-taking, nay, without even giving him the slightest intimation of her departure. The youth, daily growing more practical, looked upon it as a fortunate turn of destiny, thus to be set free at once from all internal discord; he endeavored to bring himself to the point of regarding their whole

relation as a piece of childish thoughtlessness—the first entry in his Ledger was a Bankruptcy.

Many a time, indeed, there still came over him a frightful sense of his Deficit; he felt himself impoverished and forsaken; but in this period of growth in knowledge and strength, at which Ephraim had now arrived, a new book, a new realm of knowledge lifts one suddenly into quite another atmosphere, till life's joy and sorrow almost entirely disappear. The learned by profession remain in some measure forever at that stage of scholasticism, and because their existence is exclusively learning and not action, they are in view of life children, calm indifferentists, or what one commonly calls happy men.

Of foreign languages Ephraim knew only the two great words: DEBIT and CREDIT. Hardly could he yet, in his mother-tongue, express himself fluently on paper, when he began already to learn French also. Only he who was a *fond* in French was accredited with the great world, for from France was imported the fitting out of the *Esprit*. Ephraim learned not only the mercantile active and passive (assets and debts), but the grammatical also.

A true learning-fever took possession of him, such as is found only with self-taught men who have not been methodically schooled. In a few years he learned French, English and Italian; he could, also, on a pinch, read a Latin author. With the knowledge of languages and their forms, were unlocked to him also, by degrees, the treasures of art and science which the minds of past times have brought



to light. The heroes of antiquity he first learned to know, it is true, under the classic powder of Louis XIV.; the free, natural life of the Greeks was compressed into little strait-laced French bodies; the naked beauty of form was over-spun with delicate silk, and breathed over with lascivious veils, as we see it most strikingly in the paintings of that day. All this troubled the youth very little. That world was so fresh and joyous, so full of glowing life; it was so remote from all that surrounded him, from that petty religious slavery in which life does not begin till after death; it was so exalted above all the chase after gain, all the weighing and counting and calculating, that he looked upon his whole environment with pain and contempt. He was a stranger in his own parental home.

Again, on a still higher plane, he reproached the fate by which he had been born a Jew. The people outside, he deemed, were the heirs of that brilliant life as it stood delineated there in the books. The life of the peasant seemed to him as yet that peaceful idyl, in which one scatters the seed in the furrow, singing and shouting, and where nothing but peace and pleasure dwells under the straw-built roof; in every officer, nay, in every soldier, he seemed to see an Epaminondas, a Cæsar. Such illusions, however, could not last long, for a walk through his father's wool-store taught him how the boors, who came to sell their wool there, scattered to the winds his dreamed ideal of simplicity of manners; a walk to the counting-room, where the officers raised loans

on their monthly wages, taught him that under the wadded collars throbbed no Cæsars' hearts.

“Ideals and reality must be kept distinct; once in distant days things were otherwise, and at some distant day they may be so again,” thought Ephraim, and this saddest of all half-true experiences gave him confidence and peace. When he had been all day long entering in his day-book or ledger, as historian and prosaist, the current incidents of the day, had received and answered business letters of every kind, then in the evening he would receive, postage-free, in his still chamber, the poetic epistles of remote and yet related spirits; he accepted, *prima vista*, the intellectual exchanges which the classics of antiquity or the modern author drew upon him; then he bade adieu to double and single book-keeping, and applied the treasures of others at high rates of interest in carrying on his mental *operations*.

Thus he lived a happy life, for it was the time when one's leisure hours play with redoubled colors.

It is worth remarking that Ephraim, with peculiar predilection, transported himself into the life of idyllic poetry; for the very reason that in the purely ideal character which his imagination lent it, it lay so far from his whole outward life, did he love all the more to enjoy in it an undisturbed refreshment. Those nations whose knowledge of divine things has been handed down in books, are removed from the free life of nature. The Jews in particular, whose life in the west resembled a vegetation creeping out from among ruins, knew absolutely nothing of that

joyous growth and bloom, and so a double enchantment irradiated all to Ephraim's youthful fancy. The vicissitudes of seasons and weather, all that in the business life and courtings of the Jews passed almost unnoticed, formed now often the focus of his existence.

One day he sat in the wool-store, on a great bale, with the invoice-book in his hand, to "control"\* accurately the quantity and quality of the newly arrived wool. It was a tedious operation, and Ephraim's fancy soon set itself to work replacing all this array of wool upon the backs of the sheep, and making them leap and dance gayly on the green meadow, Ephraim himself being the shepherd who blew the *Syrinx* and woke the babbling echo, while the lovely Chloe, who came with winged step, was Rosa bringing him goat's milk and honey, and her kisses were still sweeter than honey, and her words more refreshing than the milk of goats—

"God-a-mercy! if there isn't the young one lying asleep! Thou shouldst have been a Rabbin, for thou dost not properly understand anything about business." So spake Moses Daniel, shaking his son, who rubbed his eyes with staring astonishment, and had to hear a mild castigating sermon from his father.

"When I have turned for the second time the key of my counting-room door, I am quite another being," he had only yesterday boasted to his sister-in-law, and explained to her how he had found a way to separate the higher and the every-day life, and

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\* Check off and verify.

now, to-day, was this proud maxim of the practical reason melted to nothing.

Täubchen, or, as she liked better to be called, Theodolinda, was Ephraim's only confidential friend. He fancied himself to stand with her in a kind of brotherly and sisterly relation, and to her he unveiled his whole inner being. Ephraim was still at that first stage of the pleasure of communicating when we fancy ourselves understood and comprehended by every one in the very innermost core of our being and made one with them, because they listen to us attentively, reciprocate our confidence, and often only give back to us the same thing that, a few minutes before, we had ourselves expressed; the discovery, following sooner or later, that we have been looking upon the image in the glass as a real form, is as bitter as it is inevitable. Ephraim imparted to his sister-in-law all that he read, felt or thought, in its freshest impression; as by this impression before her he first clearly recognized what had gone on with him; he fancied that through her he had come to the understanding of himself. Doubly painful was it, therefore, to him when he discovered that he was not really understood by her.

One day he spoke to her in enthusiastic terms of the exalted beauties that revealed themselves in the *Iphigenie* of Racine, and told how the profound tragedy of this subject had filled his whole soul.

"Yes, it is a beautiful book; it has given me great pleasure, also," she answered, with a gay smile. She thought she had made a profound observation, and

one that harmonized perfectly with the views of her learned brother-in-law; but the latter suddenly recoiled when he felt that he had been squandering a treasure of unreciprocated feelings, that had sprung up out of his most glowing time of youth, upon an unworthy object. His former respect for her changed almost into contempt; what he had read with anxiously-beating heart and tearful eyes, all that agonizing sorrow which lies in the unhappy entanglements of life's relations, as the poet nakedly and with severe truth had represented—all this was to her only an amusing play—a mere pastime! From day to day he grew colder towards her; but she, without suspecting what repelled him from her, persecuted the fair and well-formed youth with more and more ardent looks and sweeter words.

Täubchen, or, as we too will now call her, Theodolinda, had been, accidentally, in her childhood, enticed into a sphere of knowledge which then lay outside of the Jewish circle. Her predominantly sensuous nature, had permitted her to recognize only the outward necessity of these elements of culture. She read the books and spiced her conversation with French phrases, just as she imitated Christian women in her costume, and even went beyond them in the brilliancy of her colors and the extravagance of make and material. She had never loved, not even her husband; she had only married him, and was by him submissively respected. He liked to hear people say he was not worthy of so handsome and cultivated a lady. "But she is mine for all that," his

smirking looks seemed to say, and then he would give her tender cheek such a pinch that she often, half in earnest, called him a nasty, vulgar man. While every other Jewish house for the most part was so far an open one that every one of the congregation came and went at pleasure, and without excuse, Theodolinda had established the innovation of having visitors announced; many were denied and others stayed away of themselves.

Chajem was not a little proud of this distinction of his house, and there was much ridicule of Theodolinda in the congregation. The chief wag, Heymann Lisse, said of her: "Her whole accomplishment consists in nothing more than her wearing a bracelet as savages do a nose-ring." This remark quickly spread abroad, for it was no less happy than malicious, and a saying of the church wit was indelible. Theodolinda had also achieved through the submissiveness of her husband, deviations from Jewish usage; she went out of the house without an apron, yes, even into the synagogue, and in the chambers of her house hung colored pictures; an unusual innovation, for it is written: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus.) Old Moses Daniel shook his head dubiously at these new fashions, but he would not disturb the exceedingly happy marriage of his eldest son, and he remained silent.

In the little chamber, with the colored engravings, Ephraim communing sat and spoke of the joys of his soul; the eye of his listener darted unsteady flames; Ephraim enjoyed these signs of attention. Theodo-

linda allowed herself with her youngest brother-in-law all the light familiarities of relationship; she scolded at his threadbare attire, smoothed back the locks from his forehead, she tied his cravat in a more graceful knot, she lifted up his chin and taught him an erect posture; Ephraim stood there with unmoved coldness, as if he must let all this be done to him, while Theodolinda often fixed upon him her glowing eyes; often, as in silent sorrow, drooped her lashes and bowed her head. This youth had been the first to open her eyes to the infinite, glimmering realm of poetic fantasy; through him she might have been transplanted into a life borne onward by higher wishes and hopes, and once when, as Ephraim sat before her, she had clasped his temples with both hands, seemingly to put his locks in order, she imprinted a kiss upon his forehead; the youth trembled, his forehead grew red, he cast down his eyes; she raised his head, when suddenly his eye caught sight of a picture which hung above him,—it had been an awkward thing in Theodolinda hanging it there—for it was the story of Joseph and Potiphar. As with heavenly power the pious feelings of his childhood awoke within him; full of shame, he covered his eyes, tore himself away from Theodolinda and rushed out of the chamber. He fancied he heard laughter as he shut the door behind him.

Theodolinda soon contrived, however, to restore the former harmlessness of her relations with her brother-in-law, and even to strengthen them. She had the wit to represent herself as a misunderstood

nature, and displayed all sorts of sentimental conceits and fancies. Ephraim felt a satisfaction in being able to give her a partial guidance, and only once did he come upon a reminder of the otherwise forgotten entanglement, when she called him her "dream-interpreter Joseph."





## 7.—EXODUS FROM EGYPT.

“**A** YEAR hence—in Jerusalem!” Such was the exclamation of Moses Daniel, as he raised himself up from his oriental couch, and lifted on high the full beaker, as if he drank to the invisible spirit of God. Ephraim contemplated in thoughtful silence the arabesques on his golden goblet.

It was the first evening of the Passover. Since the going down of the sun, Moses Daniel had sat, or rather reclined, singing and chatting, on the gold-brocade-lined pillow of the ottoman that stood behind the richly spread table. Before him lay, piled up in white napkins, three cakes of that “Bread of Poverty” (*Deut. XVI, 3,*) which the children of Israel had eaten at their exodus out of their Egyptian house of bondage, as well as a piece of flesh roasted on the naked coals, in memory of the Passover Lamb. It was a symbolic supper; raw horseradish was eaten, in remembrance of the bitterness which the Children of Israel had to swallow in Egypt; they feasted on raw parsley dipped in yellowish electuary, in remembrance of the clay which the Children of Israel had

in Egypt to stamp. Next after the many prescribed prayers and recitals, there was also much conversation upon the history of the exodus from Egypt, and Moses Daniel enjoyed it all, according to the prescript of the Rabbi, as profoundly as if he himself had come out from Egypt.

On Passover-eve every Jewish father of a family is an oriental king, and so, too, was Moses Daniel. He rose not from his divan to wash his hands when the viands were served up; he had the silver wash-basin brought before him, and hardly raised himself from his proud seat. In order, however, not to fall into presumptuous sin, Moses Daniel had, after the manner of the Chasidim (Jewish priests), put on his full-flowing white death-robe; such contrasts were agreeable to the Jewish sentiment. Ready to follow the call of the Messiah, like his forefathers in Egypt, "his loins girt about, sandals on his feet and staff in his hand," (*Exod.* XII, 11,) so, too, was Moses Daniel prepared for the breaking-up. It might well have caused a shudder of awe when one saw his bony hand, with its swollen veins, reach forth from the *Tular* to grasp the full beaker; but such a feeling came into the mind of no one who sat at the table. Beside Ephraim, his three brothers and his sister, there sat also at the table two Poles, dressed in black silk kaftans, with curling locks on their temples, and our already well-known friend Schnauzerle, with his wife and children; nor was the maid of the house absent. This last related during the meal, that so late as since last evening the son of

a rich Christian citizen had disappeared utterly; he had gone out of his house at night, after the gates of the fortifications had been already closed, and no trace of him had since been found.

“God be praised and blessed,” said Moses Daniel; “aforetime such a history would have cost the goods and blood of thousands of Jehudim.\* God be praised! He has made the yoke of exile much lighter for us.”

“Yoke is yoke still,” answered Ephraim. “I cannot say, thank God for it, that on all walks and ways manacles and man-traps are set for us.”

“If thou art not still, thou may’st soon get a gag, too! For what then should we be in exile and hoping for the Messiah, if we were not oppressed? God forgive me, the boy disturbs even my holy feast-days.”

The entrance of the Christian shop-boy interrupted the holy discoursings of Moses Daniel and the deprecations of the Poles.

“They have just brought a sack of wool and unloaded it down below in the yard,” explained the boy. “The teamster said he would settle with the master right after the holidays.”

“I wish I could stuff the sack of wool down thy throat and choke thee,” cried Moses Daniel, springing up and clenching his fists. “Haven’t I told thee ninety and nine times, never to admit anything Saturdays or feast-days that had relation to business? It seems as if all the infernal spirits had got

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\* The expression by which the Jews designate themselves.

into my house, and would turn everything topsy turvy. Even Sambatjon has rest on Saturdays and holidays; I have no longer a holiday nor a Sabbath, and my children, especially my respected High German son"—

"Dear father! but thou art really too irritable to-day," said Violet, and sought to withdraw the wine from her father, who had now grown more calm.

"It is true, I am so out of temper this evening, and it ought not to be so; it must be the effect of the wine," said Moses Daniel, quietly resuming his seat.

As the Law prescribes, each one at the table had already emptied three beakers of red wine. Only from a tall gilded cup, which stood beside the father of the family, no one had yet drunk a drop, and yet every time the other goblets were filled, some had been poured into this cup likewise. The legend names this beaker that of the Prophet Elias, since that personage, who must precede the coming Messiah, always joins invisibly in the celebration of the Feast of Redemption; hence in the hovel of the poorest Jew on this evening a goblet of wine stands ready for the Prophet.

After the grace the beakers were again filled; all rose.

"A year from this—in Jerusalem!" cried Moses Daniel, raising himself up from his oriental couch, and lifting on high the brimming beaker, as if he drank to the invisible spirit of God.

After that exclamation Moses Daniel paused, and

listened with bated breath, as if to hear whether the heavens would not send down the air-shattering trumpet-blast of the Redeemer, who should make the earth quake with joy and terror, like a bride who hears the ringing and singing which announces the coming of the bridegroom who is to lead her to the altar; he listened with hushed breath, as if he expected to hear the summons that should gather together all Israel from all the four quarters of the world; all was still, not a breath was audible; only from the fencing-school over the way came confused sounds of singing and gabbling, then a horn sounded—Ephraim could not forbear a bitter smile; it was the night-watchman.

Moses Daniel pressed his left hand against his eyebrows and bowed his face over the full beaker, his image looked up at him out of it. It was no dead man's grimace that stared at him there, and by this unmistakable sign, so the cabalistic tradition teaches, he had the assurance that he should not die this year, and might still tarry into the next year to the coming of the Messiah. Moses Daniel was just in the act of sitting down quietly, to drain in composure the last prescribed goblet, when they heard the window panes of the fencing-school rattle, uproar and alarming cries in the streets and howling in the houses. "Down with the Jews! We'll give them their own blood to drink! Death to Moses Daniel, who has made away with Fritz Posch!" Stones rattled against the window shutters of the apartment in which the peaceful family were assembled. All

quaked and quailed and thought only of saving themselves from the approaching danger, when Moses Daniel raised his head, his eye flamed, his lofty forehead was irradiated as with a flood of light.

“Peace!” he said, and his lips shaped themselves as if for a serene smile, “as God will; if it be His will that we should die, let us die like pious Jews, in God, with God; Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelu El!” Like a prophet stood Moses Daniel there in his white talar, his hands raised aloft to God, singing the Psalm. All were seized with a holy awe and involuntarily joined in the song; even Schnauzerle who, at the first tumult, had crept with his silver knife and fork under the table, came forth again softly and cut a wry smile as he struck into the chorus.

The house-door was burst open; a mass of men was heard thumping up the stairs; the room-door flew open; Moses Daniel went on uninterruptedly singing the Psalm, and, as if spell-bound, there stood the rough intruders. No one dared to set foot over the threshold. Only a few moments were these rude spirits awed by the omnipotence of the Holy. “I believe the fellow has a stolen priest’s robe on his mangy Jewish hide,” cried one of those who had been crowded back, and pinched his front-man’s ear so that he gave a loud scream. A peal of laughter broke forth, and all reverence for the holy presence had vanished away.

“See,” said the ringleader, as he pressed forward

upon the singing group; "see, each one has a goblet in his hand; here stands a big one which is not for anybody at the table, for that contains the blood of martyrdom, which they have drawn from Fritz. There, wash yourself with it, you accursed Judas!" He took the great cup and splashed the wine in Moses Daniel's face, so that he fell back on the ottoman, his white dress running all over, as if with blood.

"Life for life!" cried Ephraim, and seized the villain by the throat; "follow me, my brothers! The times are gone by when we let ourselves be hewed down without resistance. If we must die, these bloodhounds shall lead the way!"

A frightful wrestling and fighting, screaming and wailing ensued in the room. Violet clung weeping to the knees of her half-senseless father.

"Hold!" cried Moses Daniel, suddenly waking up. "Hold there! Ephraim! Ephraim! wilt thou be the death of us all? Thy hand may grow up out of thy grave, the knife run through thy heart, if thou dost not abstain from the sin of resisting evil with armed violence. Christians, here I am, bind me, take me prisoner, kill me; I will not ask you why you do so! I am a Jew—only spare my children; they are young, they would fain live longer."

Ephraim heard his father weep; the knife fell from his hands; he wept too. They heard the patrol down at the door; the rioters took advantage of the moment and thrust whatever of value they could lay hold of into their pockets. Violet was almost

strangled by an impudent fellow, who tore from her throat the coral necklace.

“Property without an owner, it is no harm for me to take either,” thought Schnauzerle, thrusting into his pocket a gilded cup, and the knife which Ephraim had let fall. “That is a good weapon,” thought Schnauzerle, “especially as it has a silver handle.”

Again there arose a confused uproar, then all was suddenly still again, and the patrol came in.

Moses Daniel was dragged rather than led away by the mob, till, in the yard below, they halted, and there the ringleader stepped forth with a knife and cut open the bag of wool that lay there. There lay wrapped up in the wool the dead body of the missing Fritz Posch, with three deep dagger wounds in his head. The severed arteries and gashed temples showed that he had died an agonizing death.

“You have drawn the blood of a martyr for your Passover, you Judas,” cried all, and struck and kicked the old man, who bore all without answering a word; still dressed in his grave-clothes, he was thrown into prison as a murderer.

Summer had come and gone; autumnal mists lay silently brooding over the earth; from the prison walls oozed out drops like tears. Moses Daniel sat cowering in silence in his dungeon. He had no tears left, no thoughts to cling to; all swam round within in a confused and chaotic whirl. Only at times his lips moved as for a low prayer; he peered out of his little window only to note the solstice, and then utter the customary prayer. All the mis-



eries of a prison life and a criminal trial had he endured; even the horrors of the rack had come near him; true, Frederick II. had, soon after entering on his administration, abolished that mediæval barbarity, but it was done in a secret cabinet-order to the magistrates; the people learned nothing of it; the threat of torture might still serve a good purpose for a scarecrow. With Moses Daniel, however, it was in vain, since whatever pangs might await him, not the remotest chance was there of a confession. He had taken the Jewish oath, bristling with awful curses, in which, according to usage, he must lay open his breast, and stand barefoot upon a hog-skin, but still he could confess nothing, and so the inquisition dragged along.

Moses Daniel had a brother named Abraham, a man of great cleverness and worldly experience. "Gold will stop the mouth of ever so great a split-throat, and if one rings with ducats the dumb will come to confession," he used to say, and his rule of life in the present case proved its wisdom. He succeeded by degrees in procuring for his brother all possible comforts, nay, he would even have secured his liberation if the judges had not feared the disgrace of palpable bribery. Abraham, therefore, publicly offered a great sum of money to any one who would give the least clew to the murder of Fritz Posch.

One evening an old beggar, enveloped in a torn soldier's-mantle, came in to Abraham and demanded a secret interview. Abraham regarded the beggar with searching glances; on his head he wore a parti-

colored peaked cap, which he would not take off because *his hairless skull was disfigured with scars*; a great white beard covered almost all the lower part of his face; with all this the fresh blue eyes with their bright pupils formed a singular contrast. Abraham, however, commanded his wife and his two children to go out. After many promises and assurances, the beggar now, with wheezing voice and laboring breath, told the following story: The murderer of Fritz Posch was the linen-weaver Leneke, in the Rear-houses, who for some time had been enrolled among the pious ones, the Quietists or "Quakers," the people who were "at rest in the land;" that Fritz had been "honorably" the lover of Leneke's wife, but in a fit of jealousy Leneke had stabbed him and smuggled the body into the house of the Jew. Leneke had then "honorably" availed himself of the King's Dispensation and got a divorce from his wife. Abraham asked whether the beggar, as he absolutely refused to give any personal testimony, had not then any sign or decisive mark; upon that the beggar gave him a silver ring with the words: "After this he certainly will not be able to deny it."

Abraham stepped into the next room and was heard to speak softly. The beggar quickly rose and hearkened. Abraham came out with a great bag of money and counted down several hundred dollars on the table. The beggar stretched out an exceedingly small hand from his cloak to scrape up the shining coin. Abraham walked up and down the room with

visible impatience, placed himself sidewise at the window and looked toward the street, still keeping an eye on the beggar; the latter had put up the money and was just on the point of going when Abraham sprang forward, drew a pistol from his pocket, and grasped the beggar by the throat. A scream died on the beggar's tongue; trembling he struggled under Abraham's hands. At that moment the door opened. "Jesu Maria! the police!" cried the beggar, but with the shriek of a female voice. Abraham tore off the cap from the head of the masked figure, and fair blonde locks fell down; he tore the mustaches from the lips, a fair female form disclosed itself. The officers of justice recognized her as Frau Leneke, who since her divorce had gone round as a player in the neighboring towns. She was arrested, as well as her late husband, who soon confessed his crime; he was condemned to death. Frau Leneke, after several months' imprisonment, was banished the country; Moses Daniel was set at liberty.

"All for the best," said Moses Daniel, with a heavy sigh, as he sat again, for the first time, in his arm-chair, and had his family gathered around him. "Children, let us too say, All is for the best. It might, indeed, have gone much worse with us. The Lord lets me expiate my sins here below that I may up yonder partake so much the more largely of the heavenly felicity. Thanks be to Him, and praise, that He has restored me to quietness and freedom."

Moses Daniel enjoyed his freedom--if one may

apply that sacred name to the defenseless condition of a Jew-protégé of the police—but a short time. On the first Sabbath he had his sons lead him to the synagogue, and there before the assembled congregation, he pronounced the blessing upon the Torah, and all who heard it wept for emotion; and as he himself sobbed, there came here and there an answering sob from the congregation, when Moses Daniel, thereupon, uttered the customary prayer of thanksgiving to God for deliverance from impending death. But more than all did Ephraim weep; he felt now, for the first time fully, what death is, and he looked upon his father as one risen from the dead, and kissed his hands as he went back to his pew.

Yet another incident a short time after deeply moved our Ephraim's heart. It was the day on which master-weaver Leneke was executed. In the house of Moses Daniel there was, on that day, a shuddering and a silent sorrow; it was as if one heard the death-sword whistle, which had been swung over the head of the family, but which the divine justice had averted, which, however, still cried for a living victim. It was as if there had been renewed in the house the wonderful dispensation in Egypt, when the avenging angel passed over and spared the dwellings that were marked with the sign of the blood of the Passover-lamb. Moses Daniel fasted from morning till evening, and murmured to himself unceasingly the prayer appointed for the Day of Atonement.

No one was permitted to leave the house, and Ephraim was profoundly affected by the remark of

the Christian serving-maid, that the head of Leneke was the hundredth head that had been cut off by the sword of justice, and that now the executioner must give it eternal rest.

Moses Daniel did not leave his bed again for the whole winter; Ephraim had, at every leisure hour, to read to him out of the sacred books, and if, at any time, the old man fell asleep from weariness, Ephraim would quickly draw a profane book out of his pocket and read on for himself; at such moments the love-stories of Boccacio or Ariosto would lie on the open pages of the Talmud, and the rattling in the throat and talking in sleep of the sick man seemed often like a demoniac protest against such companionship, till Ephraim recoiled with a shudder and closed the book; but soon he opened it again, smiling, and quickly read on. A consuming fever gradually wore away Moses Daniel's life.

The first Passover-evening had come round again, the table was richly spread, numerous lamps diffused a festal brightness. Moses Daniel commanded that they should put on his grave-clothes and carry him to the gold-brocade ottoman; he would sit once more on the throne as king in his own house. The usual songs were sung; Moses Daniel lay on his ottoman and joined in with a low murmur: it was to-day no oriental kingly pride that forbade his rising, he had not the strength for it; but after the grace he rallied all his energies, and, supported by Ephraim and Nathan, he succeeded in raising himself. He grasped the beaker, lifted it on high, as if he drank to the

spirit of the invisible God: "A year hence in Jerusalem!" he cried, with a mighty voice; he rested his brow on his hand and looked into the beaker; the beaker fell from his hands.

Once more was the death-robe reddened with wine, once more he sank back lifeless on the ottoman, as he had done the year before at the same hour. But this time he did not wake again. After a few hours the mourning was now only for the dead Moses Daniel.

### 8.—DIVISION AND DISPERSION.

A FEW weeks after the interment of Moses Daniel the whole family were sitting in the parental house. The division was over, the strangers had departed; only the four brothers, their sisters and Taübchen-Theodolinda sat there; they each had golden goblets, jewelry and the like lying before them; for Moses Daniel had almost a third of his property in personal goods and chattels, as he, sincerely and faithfully expecting the coming of the Messiah, meant to be always in marching order; for which reason, also, he had left no will.

Twilight threw its shadows into the apartment; a soft spring breeze streamed through the open window; all was still.

“Brothers,” began Ephraim, “the division is completed, but *we* will not divide.”

“That is my mind, too, that we continue the business under a common firm,” observed Chajem.

“I was not speaking of business,” continued Ephraim; “the father, who hitherto has had us all about him, is no more. Shall we now break up and

each go his own way, and no meeting-place make us one any longer? What is man, the Jew especially, —who is excluded from all civil and public life— without the blessings of the family? Let us then be one heart and one soul; every year, on the evening of our father's death, we will assemble here with our wives and children, and no shadow of ill-will shall arise among us. The religious festivals have lost their sanctity with many; we will regain it through the family festivals."

The brothers pressed each others' hands warmly without saying a word. Violet fell on her brother Ephraim's neck, kissed him and wept.

A pause ensued; no sound was audible, but in his innermost soul each exchanged with the others words and signs of plighted affection. Such scenes cannot, save on the highest or the lowest grade of cultivation, last over many minutes; in the middle class reflection presently comes in, and then the words of Scripture are verified: "And they saw that they were naked, and they hid themselves." Not seldom one is ashamed of his soul's nakedness, and so it comes about, that often the most touching moments pass over into their opposites.

"The fairest jewel," began Ephraim again, "the talisman which shed beauty in his eyes on all the evils of life, no one of us, unhappily, has inherited from our dear, departed father—I mean his motto: 'All is for the best.'"

"This optical view of life must, however, be classed among the *rayons* of *préjugés*," remarked Taübchen-Theodolinda, with an intellectual smile.



“You meant to say *optimistic*,” observed Nathan, “nor am I in favor of a grateful submission to our stern Lord God, and I often ask: Why these frightful afflictions?”

“That we may keep alive in us the sense of our need of redemption,” answered Ephraim, “and wait patiently for the Messianic times, when Reason and Humanity shall reign.”

“But I do not see at all why we should be the mortars of Judaism,” observed Chajem. A laugh ensued, which Nathan sought to allay with the words:

“Thou wouldst have said *martyrs*, and hast in some measure the right of it. What obliges me, nay, I go still farther, and ask, what gives me the right to sacrifice my inborn claims to the enjoyment and the pleasures of life, to a free activity and resignation, for the sake of appeasing the restless ghost of an antiquated faith? Is it not my right, nay, even my duty, to free myself from these fetters,—bend or break? I am in the world to enjoy it. Religion is made for me, not I for it; in order to be able really to enjoy life, one must therefore go over to the ruling church.”

“The ruling one,” cried Ephraim; “that is the true word, thou art honest enough after all to speak it out plainly. To rule! that is to egotists the only saving power of the Church. I should have to despise myself, I should do despite to my innermost thought and being, if I ceased to be a Jew, if I gave in my adherence to another confession in which I did

not believe; if I should let the holy organ-clang of the churches be turned for me into dancing-music, to dance by it a gay, life-long minuet. And yet, the very hour I discovered that Judaism hindered my fulfilling any human or civil duty, I would hasten to the church, and not close my mouth nor rise from my knees, till I had found salvation; but, as it is, Judaism can insure me all the virtues of a man and a citizen as well as any other religion, and it has for thousands of years poured out upon us even the rare power of endurance; only human doctrines, set up within it and against it, have obstructed its fresh and sunny plan of life. I am proud to be a Jew, one of the oppressed, I love Judaism—”

“But you will not surely call this Jewish pride a virtue?” said Nathan. “This eternal self-complacent endurance and compassionating one’s self is nothing more than vanity and love of approbation, as I once knew a beauty to whom mourning was very becoming, and who, therefore, wore it all her life long to show her grief for her brother, whom she had never so much as loved. Thou lovest Judaism? Why? Didst thou love our old teacher, who gave us whippings whether we had learned our *Pensum* [task] or not? On the whole thou hast a singular kind of tactics; thou turnest thy back upon thy adversary and aimest thy blows in another direction where there is only an adversary of straw. What I really said was—”

“Neither wouldst thou let me finish my talk,” interrupted Ephraim. “I am certainly no Jew in the

sense of believing the superstitious legends or even of regarding them as beautiful, just as hundreds of thousands of Christians are in this sense no Christians; I can and will, however, abide in Judaism, because within its limits, also, the possibility and opportunity are offered of a preparation for the true and universal Messianic kingdom of the Religion of Reason. Before this—”

“The Religion of Reason!” said Nathan, laughing, “art thou too, one of the alchemists, who will be dabbling in Nature’s handiwork? Religion of Reason! There is no more a Rational Religion than a Rational Love. Wast thou ever in love? One falls in love without knowing how or why; and so it is with the religious man; he believes without knowing how or why he does so. So soon as the one or the other inquires into the why or wherefore, the one is no longer a lover nor the other a believer. Religion establishes itself *a conto suo* [on its own account] and not on the account of Reason. Supposing, however, one could light fire with water, that is, that there were a Religion of Reason, or a Religion in harmony with Reason,—as, to be sure, one may fall in love with a rich and handsome maiden as well as with a poor and ugly one. This new religion, with its book-keeping by doubly entry is, nevertheless, not yet in existence. I know very well the Liberals say: With us every one can sometime or other make a Religion for himself. But I say, every one is not a tailor, and every one cannot dress himself according to his own sartorial ideas just as he pleases; there-

fore, one bespeaks his clothes as the fashion is, with a man who carries on that special business, and just so it is with Religion."

"Thou art right," said Ephraim, smiling; "with the common people the *costume* [or custom] and with the cultivated the style emanating from the leaders of fashion, makes up for the want of individual taste, and in the province of faith for that of individual conviction."

"Thou huntest my simile to death,"\* rejoined Nathan, with a repudiating gesture. "I repeat in other words: If I am a bondsman and can be free, shall I not accept the chance, because I will wait till, in a thousand years, perhaps, a Republic may come into existence? I would, if I were a Catholic, become without hesitation a Protestant, because I hold it to be freer and more serviceable, though not the most so; upon the same principle, I may, if I am a Jew—"

"I pray thee for God's sake do not speak it out," screamed Ephraim. "So then, thou holdest it to be no sin to make confession of something in which thou dost not believe?"

"If I choose to do it, and harm no one by it, I commit no sin thereby. I know I fall five and twenty per cent. if I become a Christian; if I wish to marry to-day, I am, among the Jews, one of the first in point of respectability; among the Christians I have a long job of it before I can attain a middling position; but, nevertheless, what are fame and

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\* Or, "run it into the ground," as *we* say.

money to me, so that I can once get out of the Jews' street?"

"*Je vous assure*, I have *découvert* this view to my husband long since; is it not so, Mousy?" So spake Taübchen-Theodolinda, as with her left hand she flatteringly stroked the chin of her husband, who was quite put out of humor by the laughter which he had just before provoked; in the other hand she held an exceedingly rich pearl ornament which had come to her from the effects of Moses Daniel. "You are a *coulant* man of the world, and have an *esprit* that sends up rackets," [meaning rockets] she continued; "one cannot live in this world but once, why shall not one enjoy it? I always say: *Enfin*, what do we get with all our gains? I wear handsomer blond-caps than the wife of Maier Lippmann. I am certainly not a fine figure, but we have money and culture, we can and dare make our appearance in society and move in different *cercles*. This beautiful pearl-tedeum—"

An explosion of laughter interrupted Taübchen-Theodolinda, who looked around with amazement and compressed her lips more emphatically than usual; her eyes rested inquiringly on her youngest brother-in-law.

"What did you call that ornament?" asked he, waggishly.

"Well, *pearl-tedeum*," was the reply, which was received with still louder laughter. Taübchen rose, put the pearl-*diadem* in her pocket, and with her husband took a hasty *French leave*.

“Let her go,” said Nathan, “the Tree of Knowledge of which she has eaten is a clothes-tree; she only wants to display her gibberish wardrobe before the court-councillor’s lady and Mrs. Major.”

“I see not,” replied Ephraim, “what right one would have to laugh at that; the material makes no difference; it is all the same whether it is this kind of thing or a routine of life contracted by foreign tour, that one seeks to have stamped with the seal of general recognition.”

“I am not so studied as thou, nevertheless, I can tell thee something,” replied Nathan, and drawing his watch from his pocket, held it in his hand as he continued: “Seest thou? whatever time the hands point out on this dial-plate is to the very second the time at this moment on the town-clock of the Elizabeth church. Why? Because I regulate mine by that. But perhaps my pocket-watch goes more correctly than the town-clock? May be so; but when other people have noon, I too will have noon. I know well the Liberals say: Judaism rightly understood is far in advance of Christianity; but I cannot do with a watch that gains time any better than with one that loses.”

“I understand thy longing to be in harmony with the world,” supplemented Ephraim, “and in the striving after external recognition lies also the great and sublime consciousness of feeling one’s self contained within the creative spirit of History, of being absorbed into one with that innumerable multitude of aspiring spirits, of working and sharing with them their homes and their hours of festive recreation—”

“Yes, I had the same feeling once,” said Violet, who, with her brother Maier, had, till now, been listening with mute attention to the unwonted dialogue,—“when two years ago at Whitsuntide I journeyed to Glogau to the funeral of our deceased aunt. It was Sunday morning. Not far from Glogau we came upon a rising ground; such a glorious, freshly-breathing balmy morn I had never before enjoyed. The sun stood in full splendor in the blue heavens, not a cloud was to be seen, all around glistened and sparkled, a solemn stillness brooded over the endless expanse with its meadows, woods and villages, and here and there a lark climbed upwards on her tones, till she was lost to sight, as if a magic breath had drawn her up to heaven. Suddenly the morning-bell pealed out from the church tower of a neighboring village, a second, a third, replied, ten, twenty, from all quarters, from far and near, chimed in; the drops of tones floated together over the whole plain into one holy stream; it was as if millions of peace-angels rocked upon these tones, and spread peace and joy and tranquillity over the whole earth; all was so holy, no wheel rattled, no bearer of burdens wheezed under his load, everywhere was music and light and splendor; as with a low whispering the flowers bowed their heads and prayed; a holy awe crept through my whole being. Ah, my heart, weeping, said within me, The happy Christians! Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, for they have heaven on earth; such a festival, which the whole earth conspires to celebrate, when the holy

stillness of the streets, the glad faces of released and gayly-dressed people proclaim: To-day is Sunday!—how blissful it must be! A Jewish festival, spent by the men only within the damp walls of the synagogue and by the women only in their kitchens, how close and depressing that is! O, how happy were I had I been born a Christian woman! We came through the village; gayly-dressed, each with a fresh nosegay in her bosom and a prayer-book in her hand, the country lasses tripped along joyously to church. With what magic chords did the tones of the organ draw me to the church; they rang, roared and quivered through all my veins and filled me with a nameless tremor. I did not feel the glow of my cheeks till I wiped from them the tears. O God! why hast thou given me no church, in which I might adore thee in deep contrition and lift myself to Thee? What care I for the ordinances of the priests; why hast Thou shut against me the gates of Thine own Synagogue? Thus I prayed and yearned, and since then I have never been able to go by a church, but that the swelling tones of the organ wrung from me sighs and tears. When on Sunday I see a Christian maiden come out of church, her black-bound prayer-book, with a neatly folded white handkerchief lying upon it, pressed to her bosom, and mark how quietly and contentedly she walks along—ah God! I am so wicked then, that I almost feel envious.—How beautiful it is when all keep a festival together, as we saw last Whitsuntide, when our holidays and those of the Christians coincided; I persuaded myself the bells rang for us also, all was so lovely!



“Woe! woe! that our father is dead!” cried Maier, rising up, deadly pale and trembling. “Alas! if thou wert not dead, venerable old father, thou wouldst die now for grief, or wouldst tear the tongues of thy recreant and apostate children from their throats! I have suffered you all to speak out and speak on; I cannot dispute with you; you have read many God-ac-cursed books!” He seized a knife that lay on the table and brandished it as if to make an attack; all shrank and shuddered. “If I knew that a drop of your veins, a word of your thoughts clung to me, I would cut them out with this knife and bury them like spoiled flesh; I dispute not with you, you know more than I, but this much I know, that we live in a frightful time, else God, the Lord, must needs command his earth to open its jaws and swallow you up like Korah and his cursed crew. Who has made you men masters and judges (*Ex.* II., 14.) over the Jewish Religion? Can such speeches be made in this room, and fear you not the shade of your dead sire? I repeat still his own motto: All is for the best. Praise to Thee, O God, Lord of the world, that Thou hast taken our father so speedily to Thyself, that he might not live to see the falling-away of his children! I am going to the synagogue to evening prayer, to say the *Kadisch* \* for our father.”

Maier’s voice trembled, he left the room; the three brothers and sisters sat in the dark, face to face in silence.

“Light! light! Violet let a light be brought!”

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\* A kind of mass for the soul.

cried Nathan, at last, "I suffer not my head to be turned by such stories. The saddest thing about conversion always is, that, as at the exodus out of Egypt, the converts have in a two-fold regard to die first in the wilderness and not arrive at the promised land; only to the second generation is this privilege really granted."

No one made any reply. Ephraim rose and strode several times up and down the room.

"I should only like to know," said he, "how we ever fell into this conversation and how we ever carried it to such a point. It began so peacefully and had such a hostile end."

He too left the apartment; soon after Nathan also departed, only Violet remained alone and wept.

The brothers and sisters were all very much out of tune and temper. Ephraim and Nathan had, in their quarrel, risen to a height beyond their usual energy—as indeed one will always find that in a contest, whether physical or mental, his forces rise and are redoubled;—nevertheless, both felt that they had not mutually maintained and sustained at all points their several views; all had been only half said, and yet discord had grown out of it. The feeling was of the most tormenting kind. Chajem and Maier were each in his way injured and affronted. Violet conceived that she had once more revealed her innermost soul and self, without being understood.

No Passover-evening ever again assembled the brothers and sisters around one table; the bond which Ephraim would fain have wound around them was soon snapped asunder.

### 9.—NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

IN the Brody Synagogue the seat of Moses Daniel had for thirty days been turned top downward; no one could occupy the place, for the Kabbala teaches: For thirty days from the hour of death the soul of the departed continues to come, morning, evening and night, when the congregation is assembled, into the synagogue, takes its customary place, and joins in the devotions.—The second sign of the death of Moses Daniel was a wax-candle, prepared by pious women, which burned before the holy ark; every time that one wax-candle was on the eve of burning down, the next was lighted, and so they kept up this “soul’s light” during the whole mourning-year.

It was on the Friday evening after this first thirty days of mourning, that Ephraim, Chajem and Nathan walked into the Synagogue, with an attire which these walls had never before witnessed. Maier was in another synagogue; they stationed themselves in their father’s place; a buzzing and hissing arose among the assembled multitude, for

the three brothers wore—queues, and whoever wore a queue was a “new-fashioned” person, which was synonymous with apostate, free-thinker and blasphemer. During the low prayer, in which all the assembly stood facing the East, where the holy ark is, the torches burning there were heard to snap and crackle with unwonted liveliness; a low murmur arose, the whole assembly pointed to the three brothers. Nathan stood smiling, Chajem looked out with a dull stare; only from Ephraim’s looks there spoke thoughtfulness and inward commotion; because a bold orthodoxy manifested itself here in a mythical way, he willingly supposed himself to be impressed by it, he willingly made himself believe that the “soul’s light” of his father protested against the fashionable innovations of the children. This belief had really so much of magic beauty for him, he would gladly have taken his queue from his head, and made an offering of it, had he not been ashamed of such repentance; here, for the first time, he felt the embarrassment which the consistency of a conscientious course of action brings with it, and which involves the less strong characters in internal discord.

When, at length, the congregation broke up, a universal murmur encompassed the brothers Kuh; no one returned their greeting; suddenly a voice was heard calling after them derisively: cow-tail! [Kuh-schwanz!] it was the voice of Heymann Lisse, who, though himself inclined to free-thinking, had not the courage to carry out his ideas, and could not

suppress a witticism against his own party. Hardly had the crowd caught the hostile watchword, when all, laughing and jeering, cried out after the three brothers: "Cow-tail! cow-tail!" The victims of this persecution were saved by their wealth from actual violence; they took refuge from the popular scorn in their near home.

The Sunday after the three brothers of the queue were summoned before the Rabbin, but despite all exhortation, they stuck to their *frisure*; the Rabbin was too tolerant to visit them for that with an ecclesiastical penalty, but the first public step, which separated the brothers from the manners and customs of the congregation, had now been taken. It might, perhaps, seem strange that Jewish orthodoxy should prescribe not only diet but dress, but for the consistent coherence of the ghostly authority, Jewish or Christian, nothing is too small to come within the sweep of its net; the Polish-German orthodoxy had a rule by which it forbade many things, not because they were of themselves contrary to the law, but because they were the fashion of the non-Jewish nations, by the adoption of which their rigid exclusiveness might be broken down, and the way prepared for an alliance with them. Among these outposts, which covered the camp proper, one was the regulation of dress. If once the fashion and the way of the world were allowed the least influence, the moment one sought by dress and external usage to associate himself with the nations among which they lived, that moment the Jew lost his iso-

lated position, and there was no calculating how far the spirit of innovation might extend.

Ephraim, meanwhile, sought not merely to conform to the outward conditions of worldly culture, he strove for the inner and intellectual; an original passion was hereby developed within him. So long as Moses Daniel lived, Ephraim had been allowed to buy only a few books that related to business; but now in the free possession of a large property, his first thought was to procure himself a choice library. With a true greed he sought to carry out this plan, so that among the Breslau Jews the witty saying circulated, started by Heymann Lisse, that Ephraim had left sheep's-wool and taken to hog's-skin.

Seldom did it occur among the Jews that a man of property had any special fancy upon which he spent considerable sums of money; the prevailing practical spirit, the want of that leisure and freedom, which comes only with inherited, not acquired wealth, are the chief reasons of this. Since they had ceased to be a nation, the Jews had not been able to trace back an uninterrupted possession beyond three generations; but he who has gained his wealth has seldom the inner capacity and outward opportunity to enjoy it freely.

Ephraim's passion for books gave rise to much gossip among the Jews of Breslau; they generally set it down as a crazy extravagance, and the fathers and mothers were no longer eager to get the rich youth as a son-in-law, for now, when a war had broken out that threatened to be of long continuance, hard cash had a double value.

Ephraim was at a great book-auction; he had already laid out over a hundred dollars. "*Martialis Epigrammata*," cried the auctioneer, and praised the manuscript annotations of the learned testator, from whom the copy came.

"Six dollars," answered carelessly a young man who was chatting with Heymann Lisse.

Ephraim observed the man more narrowly; his whole exterior, despite the semi-military dress, betrayed a certain genial freedom; over the clear blue eye with its unfathomable mildness, wandering *ignes-futui* seemed to shoot occasionally, and over-mastering aspiration and discontent quivered in the muscles of his face, which were now unusually animated and anon relapsed into languor; only about the corners of his mouth seemed to be the eternal seat of gay genii; that smile was the smile of a deep and loving soul. Ephraim knew not how it was that the face of the stranger, which struck one as by a peculiar transparency, should not sooner have attracted his notice; the stranger, also, fixed his penetrating look upon Ephraim, and the latter thought to manifest a kind of secret recognition by continually bidding more and more for the book.

"That is, literally, a martial book, Mr. Secretary," said Heymann Lisse; "is it for his Excellency, the commandant, and does it relate to the war?"

"No. I want to secure it as a recruit for my regiment. There is a bold sharp-shooter inside there," replied the Secretary; "last night in the battle at *Faro*, I took over a hundred *Prussian* prisoners, a

mere hap-hazard pack of fellows, mostly copper, but boiled white, in good uniform. Money is growing worse every day, and on the whole, what could I do with the money, if I didn't buy books?"

"Well, I always say: one of these poets is a very different man from other folk," concluded Heymann, and, as he always did in speaking, kept his head and hands moving up and down, and then looked away over his glasses, with open mouth, up at the Secretary, for his trick had succeeded; while he chatted with the Secretary, the book had been knocked off to Ephraim for sixteen dollars.

Ephraim now committed a somewhat awkward mistake, while only meaning to show his politeness, for he offered the stranger the free use of the volume; the latter seemed to notice the *faux pas* and asked Heymann who the gentleman was.

"A namesake of yours," replied Heymann; "that is *Ephraim* Kuh, a book-keeper, as you see, for he holds a book in his hand."

"Ah," said the stranger, "you are the person through whom I received the seventh scolding letter from Mendelssohn; will you visit me sometime, then we will talk about Martial? I have hunted up a Silesian rival, whom I will edit, in connection with Ramler; we possess in him alone a Martial, a Catullus and a Dionysius Cato. Do you know Logau?"

"No.—Where shall I call upon you?"

"I live in the Junkerstrasse with the commandant, General Tauenzien, and I am Secretary Lessing."

Violet trembled with a melancholy pleasure when



Ephraim came home and told her with whom he had to-day spoken. A man who had written a book seemed to her a demigod, a saint, who did not live at all like other men,—and this man, too! the one who had first labored to appease the sorrows of her kindred in the faith, whom she loved with the holiest veneration, whose words she had first learned to lisp with stammering tongue;—her cheek glowed, she kissed her brother on the mouth, for this mouth had spoken to him words of intelligence. Violet begged her brother, when he went away, to carry her respects to the poet, but hardly had he gone when she hurried down the steps after him, and begged him to do no such thing.

Ephraim found Lessing at home.

“In good time,” said the latter, after the first greetings. “Here is a letter for you to read from my Moses, but it was said long ago in the Bible: When Moses came to Egypt and wanted to deliver the slaves by King Pharaoh, or King *Faro*, they hearkened not unto him, for short breath and hard labor.”

Ephraim read that memorable dedication of Mendelssohn’s minor philosophical writings “to an extraordinary man” [Lessing], only a few copies of which had been printed, and which closed with those words of Lichtwer:

“If he don’t hear, nor see, nor speak, nor feel, then, pray,  
What does he do? what *does* he do? why, play!”

“He plays,” repeated Lessing, smiling, as he walked up and down the room. “Good, I will write the Phil-

osophy of Gaming so clearly and concisely that men shall speak in future of the four Holy Kings; Cross, Spade, Heart, Diamond, are symbols of the four elements of the spiritual and material worlds; my French adventurer is not without meaning reported to say: *Tous les gens d'esprit aiment le jeu a la fureur*. Say, if you will, that the first remark about gaming should be: one must not play at all, and think of it, perhaps, still less. Play combines the excitements of chase, battle and fireside; these people do not know that they sit and show their very soul, also, on the card before me; I see all its quiverings. If I would not stagnate I must play, that sets the waves of life in motion. Do you play, too?" These last words were addressed to Ephraim, the rest had been half in soliloquy.

"I am *played*," replied Ephraim. "My name is *Cross-seven*, because I have many crosses on my back, or *Seven of Diamonds*, because I am always hitting against something or somebody with my sharp corners."

"Witty, too," said Lessing, "exactly like Heymann, but with a mixture of bitterness. That is not good. One must swallow pills and not chew them. It is a matter of serious question, too, whether an unhappy man can be quite an innocent one. I think not. He has either been wanting in wisdom, or continues to be so, as he does not rally himself."

Ephraim was startled at this challenge, but in a peculiar way of his own, he strongly emphasized in his reply his repudiation of any comparison of himself with Heymann.

Ephraim shared in this unseemliness of so many people who begin their intercourse with a new acquaintance by immediately talking of some old acquaintance of both parties, and in fact censuring him; Lessing observed this, and did not immediately reply; he wanted to allow Ephraim time to find a milder transition.

“I like to see Heymann sometimes at my quarters; he is not only accomplished in the tactics of chess-playing, he is also a clear head generally,” said he, at last.

“I cannot help wondering,” said Ephraim, “that a man like you can keep up an intimacy with such people without either bearing the sole expense of entertaining them or else of being bored.”

“I am never bored by anything or anybody,” said Lessing, and a gleam of displeasure stole over his countenance, “else, in my busy times, I must have died of inner dryness, if I had not for two days had either a scientific or a poetic work in my hands, or been much engaged upon one. Now, when I look around me into the Library of Life, I find no book so stupid that it may not at least be the occasion of some sensible thought. The contrast keeps me active. I have long had a desire to edit a journal, that should bear the title: *The Best things out of poor Books*. When I have reached the point with any man where his individuality promises me nothing more, or even repels me, I instantly place myself on a higher, I might say, artistic point of view with regard to him; he becomes to me a study of charac-

ter; I contemplate him as a special and original formation of the one eternal primitive Human; I trace out the logical sequences in his nature, throw all abstract categories aside, and search after the natural right and natural law of each. I demand not of any bird in the world one single feather other than he has. As the landscape painter on the barrenest heath can still make studies of the clouds and atmospheric tints and tones, so, too, can he who would sharpen his eye for the conformations of the spirit, find everywhere studies a plenty."

"But does not such study, as an egoistic one, exclude love?" asked Ephraim, half aloud.

"You understand Latin?"

"Yes."

"Then you must be aware that *study* here means originally *love*,—without love one can never become acquainted with anything truly; I love the universal human in each, in the very fact that I strive to know him. Only he who loves men with pure good-will, who unites himself with them by sympathy, by that very act gains their soul. I mean the inward knowledge of it. How delighted would my Dervish Heymann Lisse be," Lessing concluded abruptly, "if he knew how we had raised ourselves on his back to a subtle discussion."

A pause ensued; the first nearer acquaintance of Ephraim seemed not very encouraging.

"Here is the Martial which I have brought you," said Ephraim, at length; "it was a whim of mine to want to possess all the editions of my prototype."

"Your prototype? You are a brother in Apollo?"

Ephraim handed him shyly and with downcast eyes, a handsomely-written paper.

“Bravo!” said Lessing, as he read, “cutting wit, not yet perfectly sharpened and polished.”

“Do you think rhyme indispensable?”

“In this, as in all things, I am for republican freedom, but it is a merit not to let one’s self be carried away by rhyme, but by skillful turns to give it the stamp of necessity. You also show me that Wernike is wrong, in the opinion that the German language, on account of its many circumlocutions is not adapted to this species of poem. Ramler and I have changed even Logau somewhat, without modernizing him in the least. The reader is nowhere so unpleasantly rebuffed as in an epigram which is quite too short to permit one to overlook its unevenness. Logau will, perhaps, in every respect, give even you more freedom of mood and movement.”

Ephraim was enraptured. He now related how, in his leisure hours, he had been in the habit of giving vent to his disgust at the world and its perversities; he had lately begun to learn Latin, and in fact with Martial; he had ventured to imitate him; and now life had grown lighter with him, since he had found a weapon against it, else he should have wept and wailed; but now he could not compose a jeremiad; all day long he might be full of mourning and melancholy, but when at evening he walked up and down his chamber, he often had to laugh out loud at the witticisms that shot through his head; he would then jump up and in the fullness of his exultation and joy

of life leap over chair and bench, then sit down and whittle out an epigram, and then he would feel as light and happy as if his whole being had gained wings.

Lessing reflected upon the psychological phenomenon, that the men who are in life the most tender-hearted, when they begin to write are often the bitterest and most overbearing, and *vice versa*.

“You know I do not generalize,” he said at last, “and make every Jew I come across a type of the entire confession, but still I think the Jews, by their position, have a vocation for wit, satire and epigram. Wit, like salt, is not satisfying nourishment, but it seasons food and keeps it from corruption. Have not you, too, been struck with the fact that wit, in your nation, is more the small change, but that your great minds are rather pathetic, or subtle logicians? For instance Spinoza, Mendelssohn. Does this, perhaps, lie in the contrast which—”

“Wit is often only the ape that squats upon the back of the camel and makes faces,” said Ephraim, unfitly interrupting the speaker, “but what cares the great world, the camel, what the ape carries on up there?”

“You, perhaps, support yourself in this depreciation of wit by the Swiss clown, Bodmer, who calls wit the itch of the human mind; but wit is in the mental life what lightning is in the life of outward nature; it cleanses the air, it arises, as lightning does, from the conflict of two electricities.”—

Ephraim had a bad habit of seldom letting any one

say out his say. Lessing would have gone on to show how scarcely ever happy nations or persons are at the same time the witty ones, the Athenians being the only exception to the rule.

“Now I understand,” said Ephraim, “why my sister Violet (who, by the way, is an enthusiastic admirer of yours,) has an equal dread of wit and lightning both; if a tempest comes up, she, who is otherwise so courageous, shuts herself in a solitary chamber and closes her eyes that she may not see the flash; but she has often complained to me that every time it lightens she involuntarily *opens* her eyes; whenever one undertakes by a flash of wit to set any of her superstitious feelings in the right light she begins to weep or leaves the room.”

Lessing begged to hear more about Violet, and Ephraim told him among other things: “My sister was a singular child; as early as her sixth year she was in love,—and with whom, think you?—with none less than God Himself; when she felt so very happy, she would raise herself on her toes, stretch her little head forward, make up her mouth and kiss into the empty air. Once when I asked her what she did, she said: ‘I was kissing the dear God.’”

Lessing grew more and more pensive. “I will visit *you* next time,” he said to Ephraim, as the latter took his leave.

## 10.—VIOLET.

THE house of Moses Daniel had worn since his death a peculiarly free, one might say, bare aspect. While the father lived, his own strict order reigned even in his absence; but now the children, who had grown up to independence, knew no longer any limitation.

As Lessing entered this house for the first time, his glance wandered and it seemed to him always as if he must ask for father and mother, though Violet's fine sense of order gave all an air of neatness and comfort.

Ephraim had introduced Secretary Lessing to his sister as his "namesake and brother in Apollo," laying his hand familiarly the while on Lessing's shoulder.

Ephraim knew only two forms of intercourse: either to be stiff and reserved, or to be thoroughly familiar. This fault will be found among most men who live in narrow circles, and particularly with most Jews, on their first entrance into a wider range of life; partly, their hot blood and lively mobility



lead them, as soon as the first barriers of social manners are down, to leap over to the other extreme of familiarity; partly, custom brings this about, because their former social intercourse was confined to Jews only, with whom they were on terms of intimate familiarity, and had no forms to observe; and, as a final reason, may be assigned, that a certain kindly cordiality which knows no formal limitation is a fundamental trait of the Jewish character. That higher third step, at which, within the sphere of social laws the unrestrained force of thought and love can freely unfold itself, can be the product only of a higher social life.

Violet, however, was the precise opposite of her brother; she was shy and timid, and hardly dared to lift her long lashes when Lessing spoke to her; only when she thought he was not observing her, her looks would linger with silent satisfaction on his noble features. But Lessing could well feel at such times that Violet was looking at him, for in the look of friendly partiality lies a peculiar magnetic power, and without our seeing it, we feel when a look of affection is fixed upon us.

Lessing could not avoid confessing that he missed here the father and mother of the home, and he asked Violet about their life and death. Violet recognized in this inquiry the tender consideration of the newly-introduced guest, who would, by a kind of appeal to the sainted ones, surround her, the unprotected and unguarded, with their shielding spirits, and conjure them to be the witnesses of his intercourse with her.

With the whole sincerity of her filial love, Violet now related the history of her father and mother, and particularly did she dwell on the former and called it a loss both for him and the guest that they had not known each other.

Lessing had a peculiarly happy way of listening, which encourages the speaker, and, as it were, releases every word from his lips.—Thus was their first meeting on both sides a refreshing one, and one which had the interest of a long-wonted and only renewed relation.

It may appear, to be sure, only as a relic of oriental usage, at all events it struck Lessing very agreeably, that on his oft-repeated visits he was always entertained with something to eat and drink. This hospitality gave at once the feeling of homely welcome. Once when Lessing spoke his mind playfully about this, and remarked how sensible and kindly it was to entertain each other not merely with words, but also to quicken life with bodily nourishment, and how to this naturally associated itself the symbol of the love-feast, Violet said, with a face beaming and streaming with joy:

“How glad I am that you do not decline with the usual excuses. But the poets have, to be sure, the happy mission to accept with new recognition and love what is done involuntarily or from habit, and teach us to do it in a Jew’s spirit.”

Lessing was once alone with Violet; they talked of the prejudices, favorable or unfavorable, which the first impression on meeting with strangers left

behind it. Violet maintained that one had, as a child, the true feeling in this matter; that we knew at once who loved us and who not; and that one might keep this childish tact for after life; that the last resort, the feeling, from which there was no longer any appeal, had in this case become the first, and that it was a fine victory of feeling, that with a healthy glance it discerned more than reason with all its microscopes and spy-glasses.

An ambiguous smile hovered round Lessing's lips as he answered: "You peel off for yourself the bright red side of the fruit of the tree of life, forgetting that there is also another dark side. Were the prepossessions of the first impression always favorable, one might perhaps venture to let it have its course; but consider those capricious prejudices which often attach themselves to the merest trifles; our momentary ill-humors, which we often lay at the door of the stranger's appearing, and again, a secret embarrassment, unconscious, perhaps, even on the stranger's part, which shuts him up within himself and prevents his revealing himself freely. My way is, in this matter, when a new phenomenon, which comes into the circle of my acquaintance, inspires me with a so-called idiosyncrasy or inexplicable repugnance, to take all possible pains to be toward this stranger all the more polite and amiable; he will thereby turn to me his better side, which is never wanting, and I have, by my own power of will, and not by undetermined feeling, gained a new human being to love."

“Ah! you are, to be sure, a dear, heavenly-good soul,” said Violet, and pressed her lips together, just as if she would recall the hastily-escaped word and refasten it to its source.

So long as the Jews have not risen into general, social life, every conversation of a more general kind which is carried on with them may very easily take a turn and reference to Jewish relations, as they can seldom let this point of view pass out of their sight. In part involuntarily, but partly also with the design of giving her unguarded words another connection, Violet mentioned that she had learned to read German out of Lessing’s Comedy of “The Jews,” and she closed with the question: “You never had any prejudice against the Jews?”

“O yes, indeed,” answered Lessing, “not one of those prejudices against the Jews with which we are inoculated by education and history has been a stranger to me. I do not generally care to speak of my own things, I have long since put them away, and I see their faults better than any one can; but to you I may explain myself. I endeavored, first of all, to emancipate myself from the limitations of my class, and that I have attempted after my own fashion in the comedy of the ‘Savant.’ I went on farther, to free myself also from the limitations of my Confession, and to show that the highest virtue is independent of every positive creed, and hence arose the comedy called ‘The Jews.’ What we do honestly, and though the immediate occasion related only to ourselves, becomes also a blessing to others. That

maxim which I named to you in connection with freedom from prejudice, approved itself to me most strikingly in my acquaintance with the Jews; I am persuaded that all Jew-haters, if they knew the Jews, if they would regard with undiseased eyes their history and present state, would love and respect them as they do other human beings. The Jews have one virtue which they practice with enduring constancy; they are grateful for every kindness, every favor from a Christian, and never forget it. I learn to copy them! I have already been repaid manifold for my striving after freedom," continued Lessing. He grasped the hand of Violet; it trembled in his, but she dared not draw it back. "Without this freedom it would never have been my lot to gain so sweet and estimable a friend."

Violet cast down her eyes and Lessing imprinted on her lips, which did not resist it, a hearty kiss. Violet shrank and shuddered, she covered her eyes with her left hand, her right still lay in that of Lessing, which held it fast; no sound was audible.

"Do you love me then?" Violet at last whispered softly, keeping her face still covered. Suddenly the consciousness awoke in Lessing of what had here taken place; he saw the flame which he had kindled; to play with the highest and holiest feeling of love, to degrade it to mere toying, or to make it a lever of ignoble wishes,—that was far and foreign from so noble a spirit as Lessing. He stood there in a painfully dumb pause; gladly would he have let go the hand of Violet, if it might be. She may have

felt that, and softly withdrew her hand. A half-rhetorical expression came at last to Lessing's aid.

"I love beauty, but also truth," said he at length, "and so I must confess to you--"

"O! you are a glorious man," Violet broke in, "this free confession that you do not love me makes me, compels me,—if possible—to love you the more. Fear not! fear not for me! it is quite another person who says that to you. It is not I; the Christian countess says it to you. My only wish is, I might be double on earth,—on the one hand,—let it be, for so indeed it must—trodden down, miserable, full of endless yearning, immured, in one word: a Jewess; and then on the other hand, a Christian countess, free, bold and brilliant, full of joyous life and refined culture, that I might fill your whole soul. How would I sit beside you on horseback and sweep through wood and pasture, how proudly would I enter with you the sparkling hall, I would sit with you beside the still fireside, but a look should tell you that my soul was rooted in yours, firmly, deeply, eternally. Ah! I cannot say what I would, I am already talking too much; but one thing I know: only my heart would I fain have in the other guise; I would bless you as never man was blest, I would love you as God loves—but God loves us not. He wills not that on earth a creature should be entirely happy—"

Violet sank exhausted into herself, she pressed her hand to her forehead and sobbed aloud.

"Dear friend," said Lessing, with a voice of ten-

der emotion, "what I feel I need not tell you; here, where we now stand, there needs no word more of union, only of tender mutual intelligence."

"Not even that," cried Violet, rising erect; her countenance was transfigured, a tear hung like a dew-drop upon the lashes, but her eye beamed bright and clear, like the sun after a tempest; she spread out her arms and embraced Lessing and kissed his eyes and lips; "Farewell, forever farewell!" she sobbed out, and tore herself away from him.

For a few moments the two stood face to face with each other; from the man's eye also there stole a tear.

There was a knock; Taübchen-Theodolinda entered. Violet stood motionless, only her bosom heaved and sank more violently. Lessing turned aside and pressed the tear from his eye; it pained him anew that this tender soul could not have even the sweet sadness of farewell and renunciation pure and undisturbed. Violet, meanwhile, quickly collected herself, she took off her sister-in-law's shawl, admired her beautiful toilet, her fine appearance, asked after the health of her neighbor, her present reading—all in one breath. Taübchen absolutely could not recover her senses; she looked, however, upon Lessing, who, gazing down on the ground before him, admired and compassionated Violet's ready presence of mind.

He saw all the inward struggle of her soul, and Violet rumbled up the ribbon of her apron, and finally tore it in two with a gnashing of the teeth, out quickly said, smiling:

“Ah, dear sister, I must certainly have a lover, and one, too, who thinks of me, for my apron string has just snapped asunder; is not that an unfailing sign?”

Tying up her apron again, she introduced Lessing to her kinswoman; the latter was highly delighted to become acquainted with the celebrated *auteur* and praised his writings.

What to Lessing was now all literature and all his own creative effort, here, where, not by free, poetic combination, but immediately and almost against his will, he had drawn a soul into a conflict which approached the verge of frenzy?

“There are moments,” said Lessing, “when I would joyfully sacrifice all I have produced, if I could secure to a soul forever dear to me peace and tranquillity.”

A look of Violet’s expressed to him inmost thanks, and Taübchen-Theodolinda succeeded, unconsciously, in making a witticism when she called this speech “the *calumination*-point of all modesty.”

So soon as propriety permitted, Lessing withdrew; he would gladly have stayed still longer, for he had said to himself in spirit that he could never more return to these scenes, but the presence of Taübchen was uncomfortable to bear; with a simple farewell he took leave of Violet, they gazed into each other’s eyes, they never met again. . . .

Thoughtfully, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, Lessing was crossing the Jews’ place, when he heard a repeated call from behind him:



"Mr. Secretary!" He turned round—the mint-farmer, Veitel-Ephraim, from Berlin, Violet's uncle, stood before him. Lean and flabby, shook the wrinkled skin of his tawny, pock-marked, and as if worm-eaten visage, his eyes seemed as if they had been pushed far out of their sockets by insatiable greed, the receding high forehead, the pouting bluish lips, seemed to betray cunning and slavish submissiveness; the fine three-cornered hat, whose front peak stood up in the air like an open bill, sat low down on his neck and rested on the white neck-cloth; a fur-lined brown coat with long skirts encased his middling-sized form; his hands thrust into his side-pockets, jingling his money, stretching forward the lower part of his body, rocking himself proudly to and fro on his widely-parted legs, so stood Veitel-Ephraim there, an incarnate calculating-machine, whose dial-plate, the face, showed only the per cents. gained. Lessing found a moment's pleasure, for the sake of the contrast of his own present mood, in observing this face more closely; he therefore listened calmly to the inquiries of Veitel touching the sentiments of General Tauenzien as to the proposed renewal of the mint-contract, and finally, instead of giving an explicit answer, passed his hand across his forehead. "To-morrow, to-morrow," said he, "I will tell you all about it, I cannot now," and quickly ran away from him and out into the open air.

"An unpractical fellow, who never will come to anything and I would gladly have put him in the way of earning something," said Veitel to himself

and looked compassionately and contemptuously, but in fact angrily, too, after Lessing, for Lessing had never let himself be prevailed on to lend the mint-farmers any aid in their dealings with General Tauenzien, who was at the same time General Mint-Director.

Veitel now turned back and went to visit the children of his deceased sister.

After Lessing's departure, Violet had sat awhile in silence with her sister-in-law; she rubbed her forehead with *eau de Levante* in order not to have to say the few words that she had a headache.

"*Entre nous soit dit,*" said Theodolinda, "I fancy thou art in love with the Secretary; he has certainly an entertaining *air*."

Violet smiled. "How canst thou think that a Christian—"

"*Pourquoi pas?*" said Theodolinda. "I tell thee, in thy *position* I would not *hesiter* a moment to become a Christian; thou canst then marry an officer, and, only think! to be a Mrs. Captain or Mrs. Major, ah! I should be in *exilium* [elysium] for joy! I'll tell thee whom thou must marry: the handsome captain of Hussars, with the coal-black mustache. How politely he saluted us last Sunday evening as we went out of the Nicolai-gate; what eyes that man has! So full of enthusiasm, and with what *grace* he sits on horseback, what a fine figure, how splendid!"

Without any preparatory knock, the door opened; Violet sprang to meet her uncle Veitel with a "Wel-

come-in-God's name!" she was glad to be released from the talk of her sister-in-law.

"Since thou art so *apart* friendly to-day, Violet," said Veitel soon after the first greetings, "I have brought thee a pretty present; what shouldst thou say to a diamond set in gold, that one might wind round one's finger?"

"Please, give me the ring!" said Violet to her uncle, who teasingly kept his hand in his pocket, and at last replied:

"It is a thing, 'tis not a ring, yet has a ring."

"A chain, then, do give it me!"

"'Tis not a chain, for it is not drawn, it goes alone."

"A watch, then? Ah! please, do not torment me any longer!"

"It is not a watch, for a watch is wound up every day, and this thing is put on every day."

Violet sat down again, displeased and silent; Veitel stepped up to her smirking and laid his hand upon her smoothly parted hair:

"Na! ninny!" said he, "must one give thee a *broad hint*, then, with the poker? It is a bridegroom that I have brought thee; he gives thee ring and chain and watches, and all thy heart can wish! But *apropos*, I presume thou canst write and read German well?"

"Yes, indeed. Shall I read you a business letter?"

"No, not this time, but I congratulate thee, for now the thing is as well liquidated as a thrice se-

cured mortgage. Thy bridegroom must have *partout* a girl who can read and write German; for the very reason that he himself understands nothing of it, he wants a wife to look after the business letters; he could have girls with three times as much money as thou hast, for it is Herz Moses Helft, whose uncle, Levi Gumperz, was, under our former King, the greatest man. Thou needst not long to consider, thou hast a quarter of a century on thy back, and every year thou remainest single and growest older thou depreciatest fifty per cent."

Violet made no reply, and when, at last, Veitel had departed, Taübchen cried: "*Aide-toi et Dieu t'aidera!* Thou canst escape this *calcul* by a *coup*; go with me and my husband to church."

Violet thanked her sister-in-law and begged to be left alone; she betook herself to her chamber and threw herself with a loud cry upon her bed. Her whole previous life passed by before her like a cloudy dream; she had hovered between longing and mourning ever since she had come to consciousness, and when her recollection brought before her the last hours, then, for the first time, she began to weep.

"Farewell!" she repeated, "farewell!" She kissed the bed-quilt, in which she had hid her face, shut her eyes tight, and in her innermost soul beholding *his* image, she smiled a still and blissful smile. It had become evening, the moon shed her pale light through the casement and transfigured the reposing maiden as with a tender glory.

“I was created for renunciation,” she said to herself. “Were I permitted to live alone with my sorrow, it were well for me; could I die, it were better for me. Had I never dreamed that there is a fairer life, I were happy. No, I had never found him, and without him never this hour, which outweighs a thousand lives—him, who never can be mine; farewell, bliss of love! But is not this love for him a spoken, a settled thing? No, no! God! no! Since he is not to be mine, I will spend my days in lowliness and renunciation. God! Father, good, Heavenly Father, take me now to Thyself; send Thy Death-angel and release me; All-gracious One, take pity on me!”

She threw herself on the bed, on her knees, she buried her head in the pillows, sobbed and wept and prayed a long time.

All night and the whole day following Violet lay in bed, weeping and wringing her hands; she scarcely knew any longer that the tears ran down her cheeks, she neither ate nor drank, and hardly answered a question. At last, on the second evening, she sank to sleep from exhaustion, and the next morning awoke, as one renewed in strength. Her relations besieged her more and more, entreating her to decide upon Herz Helft, and begged so fervently and represented to her that their only care was for her welfare, that she was touched in her inmost soul by this sympathy, and wished with all her heart she might be able to live acceptably to these good friends. Had she known that the chief reason why her rela-

tives beset her so was their having observed that the suitor was not disinclined to wed the daughter of the rich Bärmann Fränkel, who would have put no constraint upon her feelings. How could she ever have given a moment's thought to a man to whom it was all one whether he possessed this or that woman as wife, who at this hour followed one, and the next another, marriage-broker?

Ephraim also urged his sister; at the same time conjuring her by no means to suppress her feelings, but she should only see the new suitor and become acquainted with him, that she might have no reproaches to suffer from herself or others. Violet consented.

How her heart beat, when, sitting at her work-table, she saw her Uncle Veitel enter with the stranger; with downcast look she returned his greeting. She dared not raise her eyes. By degrees she peeped up from her needle-work and confessed, to herself, that she had fancied the stranger much worse-looking; she could not help smiling at herself. Veitel fancied that referred to the rough jokes with which he had introduced the interview. Soon, however, the sly old fox betook himself with his two nephews to the adjoining chamber; Violet trembled through her whole frame when she saw herself alone with the stranger. The latter drew near her and spoke of the piece of muslin which she had just been hemming; he went on to talk of Berlin, and how much larger that city was than Breslau. Violet plucked up courage and asked after his parents and

brothers and sisters. The stranger spoke with touching tenderness of his good mother. Violet breathed easier. He who is capable of such filial love must be a good man, she thought, and let herself be drawn unreservedly into the strange windings of the conversation.

Truly, wasting sorrow and self-sacrifice have their aberrations no less than a reckless flying-out at others; only it is harder, in the former case, from sympathy and mild forbearance, to exercise justice.

Who knows whether Violet in her renunciation and subjugation of her heart's wishes was not glad to set these wholly aside, and assume the right to sorrow and its burden by the imposition upon herself of a new duty?

Violet in listening to the fervent words of her suitor was conscious of only one thing, that the world was not so dark and utterly dead as it had seemed to her; there were still human beings who pitied her desolate condition; she opened her eyes to light and life.

Violet shuddered inwardly, when, for the first time, her bridegroom kissed her, and that as unceremoniously as if he had a year-old right to do so; she now for the first time recognized what she had done.

Three days later Violet was the bride of Herz Helft; she had freely confessed to him that she did not love him, but that she would try with all her heart to live in harmony with him and be true to her plighted faith; without making any reply to that, he smiled and hung on her neck a beautiful gold chain.

The saddest was, that after Violet had become a bride, the good people in Breslau heartily pitied her; those who knew her and those who did not, praised her goodness, her gentleness, and her tender soul, and were sorry that she had not found a better lot—to the *dead* the good people are always just, nay, even merciful.

Violet had cause to be very unhappy.

The same day on which Violet had become a bride, Chajem and Taübchen had, in a village near Breslau, very quietly gone over to the Christian Church; Chajem received the name of Christian Achilles Gottfried, and Taübchen that of Marie Christine Theodolinda.

The dream of Moses Daniel had, in a peculiar manner, been fulfilled.



## 11.—WOMAN'S LIFE.

VIOLET was born for a life of still contemplation, almost for that of a nun, and she was to be a Jewish trades-woman. Nothing strips off the magic flower-enamel from the womanly nature like bustling behind a shop-counter, or in the bar-room of an inn; this haggling, chaffering kind of life and this being on familiar terms with everybody, and having a constant eye for bargains and profits, all this is so opposed to the true womanly sentiment that it needs a profound character of native delicacy or a quick-witted gayety of disposition, not to fritter away the inborn nobility of one's nature and toss it into the scales of trade. What a long way from the trades-woman to the nun!

When Violet, however, on her wedding-day was dressed by the women, it struck her that this ceremony resembled the arraying of a nun. She had to put on her grave-gown with the black lace cuffs; her fairest ornament, her rich brown head of hair, with the softly flowing locks, was mercilessly cut off, and the ends bound with a white ribbon; a rich

blond lace cap was drawn over her head; and as in the case of the nun, not a hair of her head must any longer be visible, for "dressed hair is immodest in a woman," say the Babylonian Talmudists. A tear swam in the eye of Violet, when she saw her face, so changed, in the glass: had she known how her bridegroom at the same moment in another chamber was quarreling with her uncle about the not yet completed payment of the dowry, she would have wept still more.

Violet had, in a twofold manner, been implicated in the paragraphs of a business contract; Veitel sought to supplant his rivals in the matter of the mint-agency, the Itzig company; while he now alienated from them a mainstay, Herz Helft, he sought also to hold him fast to his side by family ties.

Violet's wedding took place in Deutschlissa, a small town only a few leagues distant from Breslau; Veitel had arranged to have the wedding-feast held there in the saloon of a Christian inn. They were just drinking, after dinner, the black coffee (for the Jews are forbidden, after eating animal food, to drink milk in their coffee), when the cat-gut-scraper, whom the reader cannot have forgotten, Jissroele Possenmacher, entered, placed himself in a chair with his fiddle in readiness, began to cut his grimaces, and begged in Jewish-German doggerel a theme for his improvisations.

"Coffee," cried Ephraim, and immediately the scraper drew his fiddle-bow, and rhymed the while, to the effect that the coffee was the man, the sugar

the woman; one first took the woman with the silver tongs, but then afterwards one seized hold with his hands; many a one made a mistake and took salt instead of sugar, etc. These fooleries delivered in Jew-gibberish greatly enlivened the company. Veitel listened, leaning back in his chair and picking his teeth; the hostess, a round, robust figure, came in; Veitel arose and went to meet her; there followed the hostess shyly a poorly-clad wife, as she seemed, in her best years, with a homely face, on which care and sorrow had left their traces. Veitel, with a jingle, took a piece of money from his pocket, for he loved to exercise benevolence before many witnesses; the landlady signed to him confidentially with a wink of the eye; Veitel put his counterfeit fippenny back into his pocket.

“Na! Frau Annelisa,” said the hostess to her follower, “the people have had their fill and won’t eat her up; she needn’t make a face like a cat, when it thunders; just put on a brave face and make two or three nice verses on the pretty young lady bride and the handsome gentleman bridegroom, then she, too, will get a *douceur*.”

The bashful female, thus rallied, opened her eyes; a bright gleam flashed out from them, and turning to the bride she said:

“Little bride, so wondrous fair,  
Pray, to me thy name declare.”

“Violet.”

Turning to the bridegroom she went on:

“Bridegroom, who for her dost burn,  
Thy name also let me learn.”

“Herz Moses Helft.”

The rhymer pressed her sun-browned and toil-hardened hand tightly over her eyes, and when she drew it away again, her whole face seemed transfigured, and she began:

“Rose’s red and lily’s whiteness  
On lip, cheek, brow, are all vain show,  
And eyes that shine with noontide’s sunny brightness  
Give but a faint and short-lived glow;

“But heavenly Violet, gentle creature,  
Born to be loved of all thou art!  
Nature has written on thy every feature  
How sweet the graces of the heart!” \*

A loud “Ah!” and “Brava!” crowned the singer; even Possennacher executed a flourish on his fiddle that made all the strings snap, cutting grimaces at the same time. Ephraim took a platter, laid a ducat in it, and collected contributions from the rest; Violet tore a keepsake from her bridal girdle, and placed it in the plate; her spouse made a sour-sweet face at it. When Ephraim came to Veitel, he said:

“Well, was not that magnificent, Uncle?”

“This is paying too dear for the façon,” replied Veitel, rummaging about in his pocket for several small coins, in order to make a great clatter on the plate, “as I was saying, it’s paying too dear for the façon, as if it were in pierced silver-work; if you melt down what the woman has said, and deduct the rhyming style, the net proceeds will not amount to

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\* The bridegroom’s name, *Herz*, means *Heart*.

much. I hear thou, too, makest verses. Shall I tell thee how verses strike me?"

"Well, how?"

"Where we live, in Prenzlau, a horse went by one day with a man on him. 'Where you going Mousey?'"\* all called after him. 'How do I know? the horse knows'—was his answer. Say now: isn't it just so with verse and rhyme? Must not the thoughts of people who make verses go whither the rhyme will carry them?"†

"You are a great critic," said Ephraim, smiling, and brought the donations to the poetess with the words:

"Take thou, we pray,  
The gift we bring:  
No hireling's pay—  
But grateful offering."

"That's right," cried Veitel, "she began with Thou, and thou must pay off the balance in full; *whatever one shouts into the wood is shouted back again*—says the proverb."

A quiver round the corners of the poetess's mouth betrayed that she was on the point of again expressing her thanks in verse, but a correct feeling told her that this would now be improper, and with a polite courtesy she retired.

Ephraim stole after her as soon as was practicable; he found her in a corner of the lower room of the inn, with greedy appetite devouring a loaf of

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\* Or Smouch—nickname for a Jew.

† "Rhymes the rudders are of verses."

bread and taking at intervals a swallow of beer. When she saw him, a flush suffused her cheek. He sat down confidentially beside her, and soon they were engaged in a close conversation, as if they had been two old acquaintances. The stranger told all about her youth, how she had tended cows all the summer long—

“Ah!” cried Ephraim, “it must have been pleasant for you despite all the hardships, to live undisturbed and be able to dream on the sunny mountain-meadows—”

“Yes, in thought that is more beautiful, but I had to look after my cows and knit my stockings the while, and if I came home and had forgotten my knitting over a book, then I had more scoldings or even blows than potatoes to eat; but still out-of-doors there I was always gay and merry; I sang to the valley down below the songs out of our hymn-book, almost all of which I knew by heart; and then all became so fresh and fragrant and lovely again; I ventured to make a new verse to the church-song and finally to compose a new hymn myself. God will forgive me, I am no longer as pious as once, for often the tempter asks me: Wert thou not happier as a stupid peasant-girl? Are not the songs that live in thee thy torment? But no, without this heavenly faculty, I should long ago have broken down, for my cross is heavy—I hope my Saviour will appear; only I would sing once, with free voice, the praise of our immortal hero, the great Frederick—”

“What has the great king done for you?” asked Ephraim.

“For me?” asked the poetess, and a flush shot through her face, “for me has this earthly god performed his exploits, greater than all miracles of old time, so that I am astonished at them and adore him. Hail to the hero, who against a world of infuriate enemies stands immovable! hail to us that over him and us the same sun shines!”

Ephraim looked thoughtfully and with shame to the ground; he reproached himself with his selfishness, and yet he could not love this “great Frederick;” to this woman he was a hero of the faith, for she was a Protestant. He compared his course of training with that of the poetess, and here the new position in which he stood, revealed to him again its new trial; doubt forced its way into the very holiest of holies within him; the fount of the Muses, from which he had hitherto drunk, appeared to him as a cistern in the desert, which might easily dry up and waste away: here he found a live, bubbling spring which meandered away in shady valley-grounds, through the flowers. Even the poor solace of being exalted in hours of devotion above his fate and his circumstances, seemed to him hereby still more impoverished. By a singular chain of ideas he suddenly saw how four rivers had poured forth from the Paradise of poetic inspiration: God, Freedom, Fatherland and Love. He was no longer young, and not yet old enough to sing of God alone; Freedom and Fatherland he knew not, and Love had hitherto hovered before him only in formless longing.

“Is it not love that has taught you to compose

such beautiful poetry?" he asked the stranger, and she replied:

"Without love, which I describe so often,  
With no tender tie my heart to soften,  
I became a wife—a mother, too!  
What can maidens know of Love's sweet blisses,  
Whom a rude and daring soldier kisses,  
Who in war a city's wall breaks through?"

"When Love's songs to loving hearts I render,  
Then I think of him, the man most tender,  
Whom I ever longed for—vainly sought;  
Bride ne'er kissed with holier desire,  
Than my soul, in Sappho's tender fire,  
Kissed the lips I felt not but in thought."

The dusk which had gradually stolen in saved the blushes, which she unnecessarily covered with her apron, from being recognized.

She related simply that she had been twice wedded; her first husband had divorced himself from her, and now she was married to a tailor named Karsch, and lived in a village not far off. Her voice trembled more vehemently as she mentioned her present condition. They continued for some time longer to converse confidentially, and Ephraim rejoiced, "to-day, when his sister in the flesh was separated from him, to have found a sister in Apollo."

"And let this be a brother of ours," said the poetess, drawing from her bosom a loose sheet. It was the first "Songs of a Prussian Grenadier," whose author was then not yet known.

She took a little bundle with some bread and



meal under her arm, extended her hand to Ephraim with the words: "Remember sometimes the unhappy Frau Karsch," and left the room.

Ephraim went out into the garden behind the house; it was a fine autumn evening and a moonlight night lay upon the earth. From the kitchen was heard the jesting of the servants and carriers with the maids; he went on to where no human voice could reach him, he looked up to the eternal stars, he looked down into the deepest recesses of his soul, where the waves of his spirit moved to and fro in their crystal bed. Suddenly sounded from the silent town the evening bell for prayer. Ephraim almost involuntarily took off his hat; he spake to that Being who dwells above the stars and down in the depths of the human breast: "Lord God, there is much sin and sorrow on this fair earth; I too am sinful; Lord God, let me find her in whom I shall find life and love; lo! my heart is full of love; give me the spouse whom thou hast created for me, before I seek her in erring ways and am lost!"

He stood there leaning calmly against a tree; his glance swept away into the distance, into the infinite, and already the doubt like a green lizard rustled with bright eyes through the flowers of his faith and his love: What has Love to do on this earth, where all turns upon its own axis, selfishness? And the stars overhead there, they march on in their measured course, whether we in joy or sorrow, war or peace, creep round on this earth.

Suddenly it seemed to him as if he heard behind

him the voice of an angel calling his name; he passed his hand across his forehead, as if he would scare away the dream, but the call was again and again repeated, and nearer and nearer and more and more sweetly. At length Philippina, his uncle Abraham's little child of thirteen years, stood before him and told him how she had seen him go into this garden. He must come now, for the carriage was harnessed, and they must reach home before the gates were shut.

Ephraim laid his hand upon the head of the child, whose black locks fell to her shoulders; with a penitent look of thanks he glanced upward, then bent down to the child, who gazed up at him gayly and innocently with her clear brown eyes, in which scarcely the least white could be noticed; he imprinted a kiss on the smooth white forehead, over which no care or compunction had ever passed.

"Wilt thou be my little bride?" he asked the child, and she replied:

"Shall I too get such a fine chain and such good sweet things, as thy Violet has from her bridegroom?"

"Yes, and a thousand times prettier and sweeter," said he, and offered to kiss the child again; but as if from some mysterious feeling she resisted with all her might. So Ephraim took the little maiden by the hand, and went with her to the house. Philippina skipped and danced merrily along by the hand of her musing cousin, for her inward liveliness never let her walk quietly and with measured steps.

Ephraim asked his uncle Abraham, the father of his young elect lady, where then was his sister Violet? He learned that she had gone off secretly and without taking leave of any one. Ephraim was sad; now, when she was taken from him, he felt all at once what he might have been to this sister, who had so deeply loved and understood him, and whom he had so often thrust from him.

Ephraim knew not fully the unfathomable sorrow of this lost soul. Since the hour of her betrothal, when she felt she must obey an unchangeable necessity, Violet had yielded without a will of her own to all the consequences of that moment; nay, she took pleasure in this martyrdom; but still the consciousness of her fall from her own better self stirred within her; she feared an unguarded word might betray it, and therefore she thanked her husband with tears in her eyes when he complied with her first request, and secretly went off with her on a journey.

Peace and rest to their extinguished life!

The wedding guests all made ready to return home, only Veitel remained behind.

Ephraim was sitting in the carriage with his uncle Abraham and wife and little Philippina.

"It will soon be time for thee to look about for a spouse," said Abraham to his nephew.

"I have done so already, and here she sits," said Ephraim, pointing to Philippina. Abraham smiled, for he took it as a joke; but his shrewd wife silently calculated that Philippina in three years would be sixteen, exactly the age at which *she* was married.

It might have been regarded as prefigurative, that Philippina during this longer conversation had already dropped to sleep; her gay childhood could not guess what preparations were going on around her, and when she awoke to conscious life, Ephraim would fain clasp her in his arms.

It may in manifold ways be regarded as a sign of one's having morally or physically outlived himself when mature youths or men take their wives from the nursery. It is a new charm to the *blasés*, a safe security for the deceived and disappointed; very seldom is it a consequence of original and untouched purity; disguised cowardice or self-complacency lies very often in the background. One is here so certain of his victory; the striving after direct overmastery, built upon an accustomed relation of dependence, is not seldom the secret motive of those child-loving men. Only two equally developed spirits, at a corresponding stage of maturity, can clasp each other in genuine and enduring love; but that that higher similarity, which is at the same time the true unity, must rule in love as in marriage, this is a point to which but few men can attain.

Ephraim, in his continued attachment to Philippina, was conscious of the noblest motives: he would educate for himself a wife, pure, free and full of fresh life, he would early open her eye and heart to life's finest meanings; he would lead her youth consciously into riper age; he would bend back before her the branches which hit us in the face when, in the woods of error, we seek the tree of truth and

knowledge; with the noblest and purest sentiments of his own life he would nourish her virtue; but above all, he would let her feelings and hopes, her love and longing, ere yet the breath of a stranger had touched or a passing cloud brooded over them, find in his spirit a resting-place and an echo.

Great and incessant, however, as were the pains Ephraim took in the training and teaching of Philippina, nevertheless he could not succeed in keeping in his hands the bridle of her spirit and guiding it at his will. The coy and wayward nature of Philippina often threw suddenly his artistically modeled ideals topsy-turvy; the elasticity of her spirits caused his exhortations at such times to bound off without a trace. The natural tact of children often makes them the quickest to discern the faults and whims of those around them, especially their teachers. Philippina had soon observed that her master, who led her through the story of Telemachus, took pleasure in the dissection of feeling, in coquetting with sorrow. The headstrongness and the overflowing raillery of Philippina, whose mind rapidly developed, often brought Ephraim to the brink of despair, for he was at this time doubly sensitive and susceptible.

In a life wherein every new morning offers new strife and struggle, when one feels himself not unconsciously nor heedlessly borne along by the stream of universal excitement, there will be formed a steady observation, adjustment, and in a certain sense, a book-keeping of one's own nature, which may lead to self-education, but at the same time to self-torment.

Though nearly thirty years old, Ephraim still believed he had mistaken his position in life; the occupation of a merchant seemed to him to contradict his inner nature; he deemed himself born to be a *littérateur*; a born poet he no longer held himself to be, for he very seldom succeeded in "flying to the land of Poesy." He consoled himself with thinking that he had enough sense of poetry and its tenderer stirrings to enable him to enjoy life and love in their deepest felicities; the consciousness of neglect, the still mourning over the disorders of life, should find in love their expiation and exaltation. Born of resignation, love should nevertheless open to him her inexhaustible fullness; and hence he became chagrined and sad when he fancied Philippina indifferent to the tenderer aspirations of the genial life; he had been compelled to give up general society and poetic creativeness, and now he must renounce love also.

If Ephraim's vision had not been wrapped in manifold mists, he could not have failed to recognize the true nature of Philippina and to appreciate her healing-power for his sickly inner condition. A disposition like that of his sister Violet, in whom his melancholy and his wailing had found only an answering echo, would only have aggravated his morbid tendencies, not appeased them; here in Philippina was youthful buoyancy and vigor of life; what cared she for Judaism or Christianity? The sun was bright, the flowers fragrant, her songs rang out clearly, and sky-blue became her right well.

The Italian songs which Philippina, with fresh and sprightly voice, sang to the lute, had now become almost the only thing that made his intercourse with her cheering to Ephraim; they were mostly of a sportive, bantering character, and Ephraim silently made the observation that even the bird in the cage can dream himself away on the wing of his song into the free, murmuring wood, and rock himself there in the branches. If Philippina remarked his being out of humor, she imperceptibly struck a minor key, and sang a love-song full of melting fervor; stealing the while sly and roguish glances at him, she would see how his eye lighted up and his whole being became animated, for where such tones issue from the soul, there must, he said to himself, be a deeper recognition; but suddenly the spirit of wantonness got the upper hand, and she not seldom parodied what she had just sung.

When Ephraim delivered his ideas and information with all earnestness, Philippina would often take pains to misunderstand him; when in the course of conversation he would unfold to her a new view, she would glide over it without attention.

Once, as Ephraim was analyzing to Philippina in inspired words the loftiness of the productions of Racine and Corneille, she seemed to be listening attentively, but said at length: "I do not know whether these heroes can eat soup and meat and wear stockings. I cannot imagine what they have to occupy themselves with in life."

A profound grief gnawed at Ephraim's soul. When he was at home, he used, in the spirit, to converse by the hour with Philippina; the roundness and freshness of her nature grew more and more clear to him; with heart beating high he went day after day to her house, and left it again, silent, self-absorbed and desolate, to pursue again the same path the next day with the same hopes and disappointments.

Nothing is easier for a man of some intellectual ability, but nothing more dangerous, than in a limited sphere of life, and one devoted to the gaining of a livelihood, to make himself felt as a superior mind, a genius, and to appropriate to himself the social and royal prerogatives of such majesty. Hardly had Ephraim in the silent consciousness of his higher aspirings overcome the incipient jeers at his unpractical crotchets, when he already began to take pleasure in this antagonism to his circumstances, and to take pains to bring it out in sharper relief; he was even gratified at times to be called unpracticable, transcendental and enthusiastic; he would then smile silently, for he saw therein only the confirmation of what he ascribed to himself as a just pride. Often he would go into Philippina's room, hastily throw off his hat and cloak, seat himself musingly in a corner, or stride up and down the room, raking his hair with his hands; then when Philippina modestly asked the cause of this, he generally said: "Let me be, I am excited, it will soon die out, of itself."



Once, when at twilight he had entered her room in this style, Philippina stole softly to the chair, took his cloak, wrapped herself up in it, and storming up and down the chamber, tearing through her locks with her hands, she cried: "Leave me, I am excited, my name is Narr \*—cissus, Narr—cissus!" She swung herself about with such inexpressible grace, her perfectly developed form moved so harmoniously and freely, on her arch face lay such a lovely smile, that any other would have clasped her with rapture; only Ephraim sat there cold and grim. Philippina quietly took the cloak off again, and from that hour there was a gulf between her and Ephraim. She perceived that he would not recognize her proper and peculiar nature, and wanted tyrannically to remodel her after his own wishes. The railleries and little quarrels which the two now continually kept up on both sides divided them more and more widely, and Ephraim at last withdrew from the field.

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\* German for *fool*.

## 12—THE PRACTICAL HEAD.

EPHRAIM formed the resolution to retire from business and live a life of leisure; he had been disappointed in the hope of being able to build himself up a domestic life of his own on the firm ground of love; he needed now no longer any increase of property, for the satisfaction of his own wants his present means were fully adequate. Lessing had advised him to make himself master of the rules of German prosody, and now when he had been all day long counting, weighing and verifying moneys, he went in the evening to a similar labor with words and syllables; each must legitimate itself as to extraction, character and current value; here too he cultivated his most frequent and finely measured intercourse with the female sex—the accented syllables. All went on after the strictest order of precedence, for up at the head sat Themis in the form of Professor Ramler on Parnassus, that is, in his critical chair, and behind him a great blackboard, on which the sins of all heedless or willful traitors to the law were chalked down.

Under the pretext of illness Ephraim sat at first, by way of experiment, for some days in his chamber. He waits the coming of a heavenly visitor: there he sits at the table,—all is still around him, not a murmur of the eternal rush and roar of the world's life reaches him, he can listen to the lightest whisper of his inner being; from all experiences, references, and connecting links with every-day life he has disentangled himself entirely; he will soar freely into the free ether, into that higher stratum of the atmosphere where the mists and vapors of this lower sphere are melted away, there will he absorb a luminous ray of genius, of divinity and of original humanity and bind it as a halo around his brow. But suddenly there starts up before him some memory, some thought, some person from the terrestrial region; his father, or Heymann Lisse stand suddenly before him, and he finds himself creeping and panting on the ground. This overstrained, every-day, life-despising ideality had suddenly sprung back to its opposite; for the very reason that he fancied he might and must poetize outside of, and above, his life and work, for the very reason that he did not attempt to glorify and harmonize this life itself, so much the more forcibly did it fasten itself upon him as an avenging spirit, and lame his flight.

The nicely-made pens and the fine white paper still lay untouched before him; he leaned back smiling in his chair, and sadly contemplated his environment and his miserable efforts; he scrawled grotesque figures on the paper, he chewed the pen as if

it were the end of reflection; still the holy spirit of Poesy seems farther and farther from coming upon him; he paces up and down the chamber, takes a book and reads, but knows not what he has read; he copies one of his own poems, in a very beautiful hand, in German text, and framed with the boldest strokes, and at last he succeeds in addressing an apostrophe to God, to Spring, or to his own spirit in the form of an ode. He had pretended a sickness as an excuse for his seclusion; he knew not, himself, how little of poetic license there was in this.

Ephraim called on Lessing; he showed him again several of his poems and bewailed his unhappy fate.

“No man can serve two masters,” said Ephraim; “if I would strike Apollo’s lyre, immediately Mercury strikes in with his wand, or yard-stick, on which the two snakes are called *Debit* and *Credit*, and hiss a catch between them.”

“It is a very fine touch in Homer,” said Lessing, “that Ulysses, even when he is now in Ithaca, wails and laments and does not recognize that he is already at home; so it is with you, you worry yourself in vain to hang upon your spirit the toga or chasuble of the ode, and make it swing the censer; the wooden sword and the motley jacket of Harlequin would fit you much more naturally: meanwhile you can very well exchange the wand for the sword. Let us take the nearest example: my friend Mendelssohn serves in the silk-establishment of the widow Bernhard, and is, withal, an able philosopher; I write here orders and all that sort of thing, and I know how much more

insignificant occupations weary one than the most intense study, and how this round of pretended enjoyments and diversions upon diversions shatter the blunted soul. O my time! my time! my all that I have! and that I should sacrifice it so utterly!"

Lessing looked down dejectedly, and suddenly was silent.

"Perhaps it lies in the character of our times," suggested Ephraim, "that no one can be quite complete. Our king himself is both soldier and philosopher, and yet the two properly exclude each other; the Prussian Eagle also has two heads, only he has skillfully hid the one behind the other and is not so open as the Austrian."

Lessing started at this bold view of the matter; he seemed, however, unwilling to fall in with it, for still keeping to the nearest subject he continued: "I told you before, at our first interview, that you seem to me to have a pre-eminent talent for the Epigram; that is to say, I see in the Sententious Poem, or, according to the old usage, in the Epigram, a poem in which after the manner of the *inscription* proper, our attention and curiosity are drawn to some individual object, and kept more or less in suspense, that they may content themselves with one thing. I differ herein from Scaliger, Boileau and Battaux. We will talk over that subject more fully. What I would say to you now is that you must recognize your capacity gratefully; your calling in life will not hinder, nay, it will much rather help you. Who would be all day long making epigrams? Do you

see, these little verses are more pithy than all your bucolic poems:

“TO ROSALIE.

“In a true maiden, Rosalie, I own,  
A type of Paradise is shown;  
We learn too oft its fitness to our cost,  
So soon this Paradise is lost.”

“Ah, that was meant for a long-vanished flame, the daughter of my writing-master,” said Ephraim.

“All the better,” said Lessing; “no incident occurs just in the way that the poet can use it. All poesy creates out of truth and fantasy a third thing, which is neither of the two and yet both. I like this too very well,” continued Lessing after a pause; “here you certainly stand on your own ground:

“THE GOOD PEOPLE.

“This race God’s image show, from whom they came,  
To their poor brothers merciful and mild men,  
They heal the sick, no fee they claim,  
What is this singular nation’s name?  
Jews are they? Christians?—They are Wild-men.

“Here you have got above the point of view of mere specialty: Poetry is the herald of Humanity; I will attempt that in a larger work, but first of all my soldiers here must sit to me for a picture, which I draw fresh from the life and the times. Perhaps I may then find a higher, a heavenly Jerusalem where the great dissensions of the world are healed.”

Lessing’s eye shone; his whole countenance was radiant in the light; it seemed as if, at this moment, in the lively conversation, as he for the first time,

in words that to him only were intelligible, touched upon a secret silently carried in the depths of his heart; he now saw also the ground and the forms wherein he was to cause a new revelation to rise.

Lessing had gazed into the face of the pure spirit and his face shone, and the word "Nathan" means in Hebrew, "He has given it."

Lessing had now to follow a different discussion.

Ephraim mentioned how the delineations of the life and manners of savage nations, particularly those of Otaheite, always made a powerful impression on him;—virtue and moral purity without priests, obedience to law without police,—here was found the genuine and healthy human nature; and that he often felt in himself an almost irrepressible impulse to wander forth, there to lead among the simpler children of nature a peaceful and healthful life.

Lessing had spoken of the truth regarding the fictitious natural state of the philosophers and the actual condition of the wild men, when the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Veitel Ephraim.

"Only I beg you not to spoil my nephew any more," said he to Lessing, half smiling, in the course of the conversation; "he is already unpractical enough and only half a scholar; the Christian can be a scholar, what harm can it do him? he, to be sure, is treated well, and is in good repute; but a Jew who has no money and earns none, is a cipher. The only practical literate who has yet come to my knowledge was Voltaire."

“How so?” asked Lessing.

“How so?” replied Veitel; “he got money enough together, like a genuine practical man.”

They talked now of the falling-out of Voltaire and Frederick, and Veitel remarked:

“Every man has his fancies: other kings—one has his pleasure in handsome women, another in the chase, or he plays with soldiers, or is a horse-jockey; a third makes his hobby-horse of religion, of antiques or of painted canvas. Our king cares for none of those things; he finds his enjoyment in handsome dogs, in monkeys and in jokers; Voltaire was his court-fool; if one should barber an ape and put a ring on him, you could not tell one from the other; you know the story, of course, how at a review he was taken for an ape. I tell you, he was a fellow no dogs could catch, a shrewd, speculative head; he tried to cheat Abraham Hirsch himself with Saxon bank bills and false jewels, but though they were ever so cunning, the Jew is seven times their match; in a matter of bargain, they must get up early before they outwit a Jew.”

Ephraim rumbled a paper which he held in his hands, and bit his lips till they almost bled; the repulsive and unblushing self-complacency with which many trades-people set themselves off against unpractical men and phantasts, as they call all men of an ideal aspiration, stood out sharply before his view; he despaired of a spiritual elevation of the Jews, as he saw their whole invention and industry diverted only to gain.



He feared for the favorable sentiments of Lessing.

“What is your opinion of the Jews?” he asked him one day, when Veitel had gone to the General’s.

“You mean to ask,” replied Lessing, “what I think of your uncle. The pre-eminence of man over the beast is commonly argued from the fact that man alone has reason and a thumb. Your respected uncle uses his human reason in very shrewd business speculations, and his thumb in very industrious counting of money. Such a use of man’s pre-eminent endowments you find in thousands of forms among the most divers confessions of faith. Characters of this kind may, however, be of great use to you in your poetry.”

“But my uncle exasperates and disgusts me every time I dispute with him.”

“Then leave that off,” said Lessing, smiling. “It is an old law of honor in the duel, that one shall fight only with his equals in birth; apply the same rule so far as possible in the intellectual contest.”

Ephraim smiled contentedly; he saw in this admonition a covert praise also, and with the characteristic turn which his mind took from every outward joy, he said: “That’s good. You are right. I too, as often as I bring in a knave caught in verse, will exclaim as our king did at the sight of the captured Pandour: ‘And is it with such rascals that I must take up the cudgels!’ That helps one; and our king has after all gained greatness and renown even from his contest with the rascally Pandours. You shall have your satisfaction in my prisoners.”

Ephraim went from Lessing contented and happy; he had been brought by him to a nearer view of life and had at the same time been furnished with a magic cap, which warded off all blows and arrows of custom.

At home he stitched together a neat blank book, and wrote on the cover with a raven's quill in very elegant German text the word "EPIGRAMS." As a motto he composed:

TO THE FOOLS.

The canvas is ready, the ground is laid,  
I hold in my hand the brush;  
Come, fools, and be painted—be not afraid,  
It will not cost you a rush.

### 13.—THE UNPRACTICAL HEAD.

WITH a radiant face, Ephraim walked up and down his chamber; he thought he had now found the Art of Poetry, in which light and joy were to open to him; at that moment Veitel entered with a look full of gayety. "Congratulate me, I have concluded the contract, and thereby *contracted* [cramped] my rival, Itzig, very decidedly. I have just come from the king," said Veitel.

"From the king?"

"Aye, from the king, who is like the wise Solomon: there is absolutely nothing hidden from him; he understands all trade, all handicraftsmen, all sciences. He now holds possession of Saxony, and will have a great deal of money that is two-thirds below par stamped with the Saxon mark. I have undertaken the delivery; to children's children it shall be enjoined by testament that they are to have dealings only with distinguished gentry; *from a golden wheel there falls a silver nail*, says the proverb; there is always some profit to be picked up in such cases. I have talked with the king for almost an hour on all possible matters."

Ephraim soon forgot that he had selected the nature of his uncle for a study of character, as the "motive for a picture" as the artists express it; he suffered himself to be excited, and lost thereby his point of view and his temper.

"You never speak of this," said he,—and a glow of indignation kindled in his face—"that the king is to remove the stigma on our hearts, which disgraces him more than us; that he is to make us free, if reason and humanity are not to be a mere sound of words upon his lips. O! how gladly would I, too, go to the war and shed my blood, and if I should die, I would cry out to him: See, even a Jew can be brave!"

"Youngster, youngster," replied Veitel, "thy words gilded in the fire, thou art, after all, in a general way, clever enough, but I think thou hast a crack in thy noddle. Thou art, to be sure, so expert with the pen and all that—where is it written, that I should mix myself up with the war between the king and Maria Theresa? Let them defend themselves, I will see who is master. I tell thee, I am glad that no Jews are wanted in the war; fellows who have nothing else to do may shoot each other dead for *passer le temps*. I have some better business." Upon this he jingled the money which he kept about him for any occasion of bribery.

"And the disgrace and the being held cheap?" cried Ephraim.

"We hold a man cheap," replied Veitel, "when he has no money. I tell thee thousands of them will

put up with anything, if they can only get money; that is the main thing; all else—I wouldn't give a pinch of snuff for it." And he took one out of his gold box, snuffed it contentedly, and offered a pinch to his nephew.

Although provoked with himself for being drawn on into such a long discussion with his uncle, Ephraim nevertheless almost involuntarily continued: "And the highest good, honor, is nothing to you? and of your suffering fellow-men you take no thought?"

Veitel smiled silently awhile, and shook his head, and then replied: "What, honor! Eat of thy honor if thou hast nothing, or go into thy counting-room and get it exchanged; thou shouldst be glad that our Lord God has not brought thee and thy kindred to that pass; the rest must see to it how they get themselves out. I tell thee, if our king (God preserve his life to a hundred years!) should say to me: 'Veitel, I will make thee a baron, but thou must give up thy business.' I tell thee, I'll snuff up with this snuff poison and operment,\* if I would say another word than what I did say: 'The baron I accept most submissively, your Majesty, (why? because, as baron, I can deal better with the barons,) but I must beg your Majesty to leave me to carry on my trade and traffic, as I have been accustomed to do.'" At these words Veitel took off his hat and made a low bow, as if he really stood before the king. Laying his hand on his nephew's shoulder, he

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\* Orpiment: sulphide of arsenic.

then proceeded: "I see already how thou wilt have come to have quite other ideas, when thou standest one day in my shoes; I've heard a good many birds whistle this tune in my day—na! na! we know their story: I would rather starve and gnaw off my fingers than follow anything else but truth and honor. What is truth, at bottom, and what, honor?—money! Look thou! I can give thee the best example in that tall Emanuel whom I have with me, and who writes up there in the little corner room. When we were yet young, say about sixteen or eighteen years old, my father and his were still living in Prenzlau; his father was the richest man in the whole place. How often was I made glad when his mother gave me a good dishful of soup. Now just look at it! then he was rich and I poor, and now he is glad to have found a situation under me; but I never let him want for anything, so long as I have an eye open; he fares with me as a child in the house, and has already served faithfully and honestly for fifteen years. I can say of him, as it is written in the *Thorah*: 'He is faithful in all mine house' (*Numbers*, XII., 7.)—But to come back to the point for which I introduced the story. Emanuel was rich and learned much of the pastor in the place, both German and French; he reads French like water [fluently], he knows Voltaire and Homer (I know the names of all the hocus-pocus-makers as well as I know my own sins), he has them all by heart; the whole country round rang with the praise of Emanuel's cleverness, and how beautifully he

could play on the violin, what a favorite he was with all the gentry and ate and drank with them what God has forbidden. This much must be said for him, he never was proud; he would often entertain himself for hours with a parcel of ragged children; but his father died too early, and he did not understand economy, and went off with his money to Berlin. There he once handed in a petition to King Frederick William, that he would remove the ban which had been pronounced against the Jews, that it was unkingly to oblige the Jews to buy wild boars from the chase, and many other points, and finally, that the youth should be educated and enlightened. But there he wakes up the right passenger, one that will have nothing to do with all that nonsense about enlightenment, and likes best to see every man stick to his last; and once when Emanuel had an audience with him, he sent him off with a flea in his ear. It is not generally safe to speak about that, and it will not do to remind him of it, unless one wants to put him into a rage, but once in a confidential moment he told me how he had been treated. So there he stands before the king, jabbering about Jews and what all—about learning trades, school instruction, virtues of citizens, and all the rest of the schemes and fiddle-faddle and *pour rien dits*. When he had got through, the king walks up and down the room, and brandishes his Spanish cane, which has an enameled head eighteen carats fine (I had it in my hand only four weeks ago). ‘Pity! It’s a pity!’ says the king, with his eyes fixed on

vacancy, 'but it will not do, it cannot be.' My Emanuel was quite delighted that the king was so gracious, and said: 'Thus and so one might manage it, and your Majesty will be adored as a Messiah, as a father by his children.' Then the king turns round and looks upon him, with a pair of eyes, Emanuel himself told me, and if one had gashed all his veins, there wouldn't have come a drop of blood. 'What does he\* say?' cries the king. 'He will dictate to me what I shall do? What then does he understand about my notions? It is a pity, I've been thinking to myself that he is a Jew. He is just the right height for my *garde du corps*; there, too, they would drive his good-for-nothing reasoning out of his head, but there is no making anything out of you Jews; you are damned here and hereafter. But let me say this to him, not to trouble himself about things that do not concern him; let him stick to his business, as he has liberty to, and as becomes him, or—another word, and I'll have him paid on account five-and-twenty on the *ff*;' †—with that he shakes his Spanish cane at him so significantly that my Emanuel's back already burns. Do you think he was glad when he had got the palace behind him? But Emanuel is nothing if not a Hotspur. What does he do but run round through the whole town among all the faith preaching and threshing away how all the Jews were good-for-nothings because they didn't emigrate to America. Isn't that nonsensical?"

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\* Addressing his inferior in the third person.

† Musical abbreviation of *fortissimo*.



“I think, too, that one cannot expect of every one that he shall forsake his fatherland.”

“Fatherland—don’t take it ill of me—that again is so, so—a studied word. What have I to do with fatherland? But what more do I want? Can one do more in America than eat and drink and sleep?”

“How did it fare with Emanuel after that?” asked Ephraim, diverting the discourse.

“Yes, I will go on with my story. In a night he packed up everything, and was up and off. What were a couple of hundred dollars to him? Some good liquid debts, that he hasn’t time to collect, he sells for a bagatelle; with one of your ne’er-do-wells he quits Berlin to make a straight track to America, among the wild men, where one carries his life in his hand; but now, no begging or praying is of any avail: the free-thinking fellow that had tacked himself on to him—a plague on it that I have forgotten his name! this comes of age and care; na, what matters it?—that free-thinking chap continues to talk it all out of him, and they go straight off to Amsterdam. Here they stay two or three days. One morning my Emanuel wakes up, looks round for his chum—do you see, now the name comes to me: he was called Mardon—thinks to himself: Well, he’s nothing to do, so he’s sleeping it out there; but he finds the nest empty; still my Emanuel suspects no harm, and rings; up comes butler: Where is Mr. Mardon? He went down to the wharf to see the ships go off; still my Emanuel never suspects anything. It is to me incomprehensible to this hour, how a

man can be so stupid, and that, too, on a journey. At such times a man will certainly every morning look out for his money. But so it had to be with him; it could not possibly be otherwise. Dinner passed, and still no Mardon. My Emanuel goes singing and trilling up to his chamber to get some pocket-money. He opened his box, where he knows he has a thousand pure Holland ducats of the good old sort stowed away; it is a miracle that he didn't fall down dead in a fit; he opens it wide, searches in front and behind; the sweat of agony stands upon his forehead; he knows the very spot where he laid it, but there is no trace of it anywhere; he pulls out all the drawers, throws them on the floor—nothing anywhere. Now at last a light suddenly flashes upon him, but instead of running instantly to the police, he tears his hair, throws himself on the ground and screams so that even the very child unborn might have pitied him. Everybody in the house comes running in; he tells his misfortune, and keeps on tearing bushel after bushel of hair out of his head. The people who hear him going on so, part of them believe it and part not. To make a short story of it, with close pinching a man of Mayence, who had known the family, releases Emanuel and takes him into his business. But see what an honest simpleton of a Schlemihl is? His wages which he has saved up for a year and a half, he takes and pays with them the scot for himself and Mardon; there's a story for an inmate of the lunatic asylum! After that he left Amsterdam and be-

gan cruising round through the world. So he is now unsettled and flighty, and, if one considers rightly, for what cause?—because he didn't sweep before his own door, but went to meddling with things that didn't concern him. What have I to do with suffering humanity? If it is ailing, let it put on a plaster. Had he done like one of us, had he let seven be an even number, and done a good business, he would still have his golden ducats, and three times over, would have wife and children, and not need to let himself be hustled about among strange people; he would now be one of the first in the congregation, not a bit less than one of us. Now take heed, thou hast here an example. I advise thee, as thy uncle, see that thou makest a good investment of thy money and let other things take care of themselves."

Ephraim fixed his eyes upon the ground when his uncle had ended, and without raising them again he asked: "How then did Emanuel come to your house?"

"Four weeks from to-morrow we have Purim [the feast of Haman]; it will then be sixteen years, just as many as my little Zerlina has lived her irreproachable life. It is then Purim; in the morning I go home from the school [synagogue] troubled in mind how I shall get another book-keeper—I know, as certainly as I know that I shall get into Gan Eden [Paradise] that my old book-keeper has embezzled a ten-dollar-bill—I was walking along, lost in thought; it was a grim cold morning, enough to freeze stone

and bone, when I saw a large man. He had on a coat that eight years before had been new on another body; ten cats couldn't now have found a mouse in it; he had a hat on his head—I wouldn't pick it up in the street; his hands it was impossible to see, he had drawn them up in the sleeves of his coat because he had no gloves. I looked at my man, who for all that marched along as proud and bolt-upright as a grenadier; his face was familiar to me. I thought I ought to know him, as when one says: I ought to know you, but I can't exactly locate you; we pass each other, I turned round again, he did the same. 'Emanuel!' says I—'Veitel!' says he, and is about to fall on my neck; think now—in the open street, with a man in such a rig—so I kept him back and said: 'Emanuel, if thou wilt come to me in half an hour,—I live at such and such a place.' A little while after I hear a noise out in the kitchen; my wife was at that moment in the pangs of childbirth. I go out to command silence; there I find Emanuel in trouble with my cook, who will not *partout* let him in to me, and will give him his good half groschen, which every respectable beggar gets in my house; I have strictly forbidden her to let any beggar in to me. Then they come and cry one's ears full, and every one of them claims to be your relation: thank you for nothing for your relationship! If one has a couple of groschen, all the world will be one's relation; so I have always one principle: All comes from God, He wills that one shall be rich and another poor. I dare not alter it!

—It were tedious, if I undertook to tell you all the tests I tried with Emanuel; canst imagine for thyself that I would not entrust my books to every fellow that comes along; but Emanuel is thoroughly honest, and so has been now sixteen years with me, has his clothes and his board, sits at table with me; I tell thee I never taste a bit but that he has part of it; at New Years he has a handsome *douceur*; he lives a pious and retired life, and often plays the fiddle half the night in his chamber without any light; within about two years he has gone out to walk every Thursday after supper; I don't look after him, he can do what he pleases; but I believe he has got among the free-masons; well, one thing is pretty certain, they can't swindle him out of much money. Ah, yes, one thing I had almost forgotten: why, dost thou think, Emanuel has come back again to Berlin? To get in his outstanding debts? God help us! Under the gray hairs of the simpleton the same whimseys lurk as under the black hair of the young one; he fancies our present master has nothing else to do than first of all to set the Jews free; but he has soon discovered how the thing is. How a man can ever bother himself about such things! And his whole equipage which he brought to my house in a red handkerchief was two old books, a black shirt and an old fiddle; including what he had on his body. I wouldn't buy the whole at five dollars: and still he worries himself about such things! He has always talked of his longing so to tread once more native soil; well, that good fortune has come

to him, and how? in a very genuine manner, for his boots have had no soles to them, and so he has literally run on native soil.

“Just consider now how things go in the world; Emanuel is so clever, well, and what is he? A rag-amuffin! As for me, I never learned anything in all my life; when I was only eleven years old my father sent me out to trade with old iron, horse-hair, and a couple of pocket-handkerchiefs; where could I find time to learn, except to reckon a bit? By dint of hard labor Emanuel has taught me to write my name in German—well? and now they call me and Itzig the Jew-princes of Berlin; I have it as good as in my pocket that I get a patent of exception from the king, whereby my whole family is exempted from all the burdens of the Jews: I am looked up to, am a cultivated man, for I can converse with the greatest dignitaries, and Emanuel no man ever looks at. There, follow me, and don't give your understanding away for shruff;\* then all will go well with thee too.”

It was with a cunningly exalted and sweetly smirking look that Veitel ended his instruction in worldly wisdom. During his whole discourse he had strutted proudly up and down the chamber, stretching his paunch far forward, now swinging his arms with great pliability backward and forward like the ends of a balance pole, now standing still and rocking himself to and fro on his legs, planted widely asunder; thus he now stood before

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\* Broken plate, which is sold at a reduced price for melting up.

his nephew, playing with his watch-seal, with a challenging look.

“Now I can explain to myself,” said Ephraim at last, “why Emanuel always smiles so singularly and says so little: it is a pity that you are going off again so soon; I should like to become better acquainted with the man.”

“Dost thou know what I think?” said Veitel, in a triumphant tone; “thou canst become acquainted with him inwardly and outwardly; he must certainly regard it as an honor if thou, my sister’s son, shalt favor him with thy company: don’t think long about it, strike the bargain,” he cried, stretching out his hand; “come along with me; besides, Emanuel is no longer quite well posted; I am just establishing a gold and silver lace factory. I will make over to thee a part of the business and the treasurership; thou wilt get a thousand dollars salary and canst invest thy money at good interest in my business. Besides, it were a good thing for thee to separate from thy brothers. Chajem has already made a blot on the relationship, and I fear Nathan will make another too. How will my children rejoice with thee, and particularly my Zerlina! She reads all thy letters seven times. I tell thee, my Zerlina is a golden child. I will not praise her, she is my own child, but she is faultlessly beautiful, fine-natured and intelligent, and such a housekeeper! She turns a penny over ten times before she parts with it. She can sing as if she had nothing but organ-pipes in her throat; she has cost me a nice penny, as true as I shall live to be a hun-

dred years old, and my Lord God shall let me live to take pleasure in you both—three dollars currency per month; but for my Zerlina no money is too much; thou, too, wilt take pleasure in her; thy Violet was a nice girl, but as tender and affected as an egg without a shell; my Zerlina is five per cent. handsomer and stronger; na! who knows—it has long been a sore thought to me that my good money that I have had such hard work to scrape together should be so alienated; she could make matches enough, but where is there a family that can come near ours in wealth and respectability? Well, now, all can be brought about beautifully. I feel certain that thou and I are not to part from this time forth. Thou wilt go with me then?”

Ephraim gave no decided answer in the negative, and when he was alone in his chamber he wrote the following verses:

THE LAST WILL OF HARPAX.

I die, my son! then hear, now, my last will;  
 This world's best good—more sweet than honey—  
 Despite the prating moralist—is money;  
 Be all thy care thy coffer, then, to fill!  
 Eat not too much; thy father was a faster;  
 And in that way much gold collected;  
 The more I had the more was I respected.  
 Money makes wise; money is all men's master;  
 Instead of books, I heaped up ducats round me;  
 And of the Muses many a son  
 Set me up high upon his Helicon,  
 And as his erudite Mæcenas crowned me.  
 Yield not to womanish commiseration:  
 He whom God loves his grace receives;



He hates all those to whom he nothing gives ;  
Who gives the poor provokes His indignation.  
I never shall repent what I have willed thee,  
If thou know'st how to make it more,  
My spirit rest on thee—a double store!  
And interest thousandfold, son! may it yield thee!

#### 14.—ON NEW PATHS.

IT was late at night; Ephraim still sat pondering and ruminating in his chamber, when suddenly he heard music, which rang out from the little attic chamber overhead, where Emanuel lodged. Ephraim opened the window and looked out; only at intervals between rent clouds the moonlight gleamed down on the snow-clad earth; here and there drops were heard falling in regular pauses from the roof, or a little avalanche of melted snow rolled down. No stir of human life was audible, only above him sorrow kept its vigils and poured itself out in harmonious tones. These tones of a violin built up a Jacob's ladder on which tearful angels went up and down; then it sounded again like the wrestling and groaning of an imprisoned soul; silently muttering, cowering on the ground, it languished out its life in monotonous sorrow; forever and ever the same sound repeated itself, until at last, growing ever fainter and fainter it wholly died away; but suddenly it gathered up all its powers again, all the tones woke up, and unitedly renewed their conflict, helping, supporting

each other, flying to each other's aid; wailing it wrung its hands over its head, it clambered down along the grim prison walls, it clung to them and raged and raved, to tear through the walls and wrestle out into light and air; but its strength was exhausted, and now the battle seemed to burst out only in single storms of fitful fury, till at last in a heart-piercing cry it fell back again upon the ground; it seemed utterly dead, but the old monotonous anguish woke again, and writhed out and tangled itself up, like a coil of snakes; again as from a volcano the embers of a lusty exultation flew up therefrom, life's-woe and death's-rapture, all floated together chaotically, and a universal tempest of tones was finally succeeded by silence and death.

Ephraim saw no more the world around him, his eyes swam in tears; his spirit had gazed into the deepest abyss of a soul, where unsightly monsters swim over coral reefs, crystal temples and glistening sea-flowers. The last tones had long since died away, as Ephraim still stood there spell-bound; at last he roused himself, ascended the shaky stairs and stood before Emanuel's door; it was open, there was no light in the chamber; he almost dreaded to enter with his light, when Emanuel hastily raised himself up in his bed: "Who's there?" he asked, harshly.

"A good friend," Ephraim answered, mechanically, and then added: "One, indeed, whose highest happiness it would be, if he could be really a good friend to you."

"Good youth, it is bed-time and thou wilt catch

cold staying with me," answered Emanuel, with a singular smile and raised his hand, meanwhile, as if repellingly. Ephraim supposed he meant to offer it to him and reached out his own to take it.—If in every-day greetings or in leave-taking, it is a painful sensation to have to draw back the hand stretched out in confidence and left untouched, this uncomfortable feeling is greatly aggravated in a position of excitement.

"Give me your hand," said Ephraim, therefore, trembling.

"My hand is dry and bony, it no longer feels soft, but I offer it to thee, and will, so far as I can, be thy friend. Behold, in a warm pressure of the hand lies the symbol of friendship; it is the sign of spiritual and practical union, and not without significance is it, in secret societies, made the token of brotherhood." So spake Emanuel and stretched out his hand to Ephraim, who fervently held it fast and threw all love into his expression as he gazed upon the face of Emanuel, whose features had been hardened and, as it were, hammered by storms.

"What spyest thou in my face?" said Emanuel. Ephraim pressed his hand to his heart and wept.

"Art thou in love?" said Emanuel; "then marry, and thou wilt be released from love; if thou art not in love, thou shouldst certainly marry."

"I will not put my neck into the yoke of a commonplace marriage, but neither is it love I seek any longer; it is false, nothing but a fleeting self-delusion; love, as I cherish it in my bosom, as it stretches

out its thousand-armed, yearning desires into the distance to clasp a loving heart, as it makes me long to wind my way through all the veins and pores of a beloved soul, that I might fill it wholly and forever—ah! it is a phantom which I chase after; this love I have buried in still solitude in the grave-yard of my heart. It is only friendship that I any longer hope from life; by that will I grow strong; that is the sun by whose rays the bowed and bruised flower of my life shall lift itself up again; do not, then, move away from me, I know all about you, be my father, be my friend.” Ephraim laid his hot forehead upon the hand of Emanuel, which he still held fast.

“Young friend,” said Emanuel, “there is still a violent ferment going on within thee, thy speech is feverish. I like not to put on the grandfatherly look, which always nods to youth self-complacently and seems to say: Wait awhile, after a few years thou wilt smile at thy present storms; the storm is now upon thee, and lashes with mighty waves the ribs of thy bark, but survey thy past life, and learn to perceive that all excitement is only transitory. Thou hast love, that I perceive, but thou hast not found that love in return which thy pride, thy overweening passion dreamed. Love is lowliness; thou wilt find the genuine reciprocal love, and then with bliss and sadness wilt cry out: That first love was not the true. God keep thee from having to repeat this experience. But demand not of friendship what only love can offer thee, nor prepare for thyself diligently later disenchantments.”

“Gladly would I stay with thee forever,” said Ephraim; “do not you also advise me to accept the position of treasurer in my uncle’s silver manufactory? Then, too, I shall go away from here, where every stone says to me: Once thy look fell on me when thou wast happier than now; ah! I know not what I want, but I would willingly die, to be rid of all at once.”

“It is well that the stars overhead there keep on in their bright path, and we petty worms crawl round on this little ball of earth; could we clutch the stars with our hands, we should long since have plucked them down and bedaubed them in this commonplace worldliness; that higher thing which thou wilt and shouldst aspire to, let it shine, like the stars above thee; confound it not with the noisome vapor that broods over the lower stratum of the atmosphere, and, if thy sight is veiled in darkness, then look up to the stars, let a ray from their eternal light fall into thy heart, and abide in thy lot, till thou shalt rise into the primal source of the light eternal.—Good night!”—So spake Emanuel and withdrew his hand from Ephraim’s and buried his head in the pillows.

Ephraim, with deep emotion, left the chamber; for a long time he could not sleep, and in dream he journeyed from star to star, but everywhere his uncle followed him, showing him how some of the stars had dark spots; when he awoke he felt his cheeks burn.

Emanuel presented during the next day an almost

wholly changed appearance; he entered into no conversation except on matters of business, and then he spoke with such zeal and such insight that no one would have supposed him susceptible to any higher interest. Ephraim could not yet explain to himself this double state; he began to mistrust his judgment more and more in regard to the individuality of others, and strangely enough, his love for Philippina hereby started up again within him; he again approached her, and sought to rectify his former hasty judgment. Ephraim was highly delighted to have found so valid a ground for reviving his old love. He loved Philippina more than he chose to confess to himself. How heroic he appeared in his own eyes when after his first return he often omitted to visit Philippina for two or three days together; how he counted the days, how his heart beat, when he then entered her house; how many sophistical will-o'-the-wisps he followed on their zigzag paths, only that they always led him to her house at last.—All this might have enlightened Ephraim long ago upon the true condition of his inner man; he contented himself with the silent consciousness that it was not yet too late. Repentance almost always follows a breach with a loved one; one reproaches himself for having let a mere trifle part him from the dearest object, one longs to return, and promises to himself charity and tender tolerance, but a false relation which has rooted itself for months in the disposition can scarcely be extirpated, and without our being aware of it, it puts forth new germs from the old root.

We often recognize the soonest our mutual harmony by the harmony of our judgments upon third persons, and however easily, often, personal gossip degenerates in censoriousness, nevertheless, its original ground is a necessary and mutual one.—Ephraim spoke in enthusiastic terms with Philippina about Emanuel.

“If I might venture to give him a nickname,” said Philippina, “I would call him the Darkener. When he comes into the room the lights burn dimmer, when he looks at a thing, I feel as if it must turn gray. I can imagine that he always weeps on his violin. I have never seen him laugh; he is like dry biscuit, it is all good and fine, but one cannot enjoy it.”

Ephraim made no reply, but laughed immoderately. This laugh, however, was not a joyous and healthful, but a forced and spasmodic one; he went so far in his injustice as to consider Philippina as even unworthy his regard; he compared her in his thoughts with his uncle, and felt that nothing but the interest in business was wanting to make her perfectly like him. In such arraignment he again and forever thrust out Philippina from his heart.

Ephraim went to Lessing's, and announced a desire to advise with him, whether he should enter into the business of his uncle in Berlin; but Lessing soon perceived that the decision was a foregone conclusion, and did not condescend to seal it with his authority; he simply let Ephraim state his objections, and when these were once stated, they readily, by a



series of rapid mutual questions, received their refutation, for Ephraim explained that he should only co-operate as subaltern in the business operations of his uncle, and not undertake any kind of moral responsibility.

Lessing closed by saying that he would give Ephraim a letter to take with him to Mendelssohn, and hoped himself soon to follow it.

It was with a refreshing cordiality that Lessing in simple words spoke of his Moses, and his justice and generosity. Lessing smiled at the idea when Ephraim said that in Mendelssohn the Demon of Socrates seemed to have transformed itself into an ethical compass. How strange that one can rightly recognize and designate in others what one wants himself, and yet does not recognize as a deficiency!

The mention of Mendelssohn, meanwhile, kept its hold upon him, and he declared that in one thing he agreed with Mendelssohn, namely, that the latter, as a self-taught man, had never been caught by systematic and school-wisdom, from which he sought zealously to keep himself free.

Toward the end of April, 1763, Ephraim sat with his uncle in a carriage, which took the road to Berlin. It was in the midst of a disagreeable snow-flurry that he left his paternal city, in which he had so long lived and suffered; every one went on his way to his business or his pleasure; no one troubled himself about him, who took his departure with a bleeding heart.

Veitel had in March, 1761, received from the king

a letter-of-patent, that is to say, he had no longer to pay Jew's tribute, etc.; he therefore leaned proudly out of the coach-door, as he passed the city gate. Ephraim sat wrapped in his cloak in a corner, without saying a word. Thus they arrived at Deutschlissa, where they halted. The host, the hostess and the servants, all sprang forward to welcome Veitel in most friendly manner. They walked into the bar-room; here were peasants dicing and drinking. "Here goes for three doublets!" cried one, and threw a leaden-sounding two-groschen piece on the table. "Hollo," cried the others, "away with the Jew that's not worth anything; nail the false churl to the table, it's nothing but an Ephraimite."

"Bright on the outside, but inside all dim,  
Outwardly Frederick; inside, Ephraim,"

recited, with pathos, the sexton who sat in the corner, then, taking his neighbor's glass, drank to him and went on to relate: "Old King Frederick *primus* of Prussia once ordered an alchemist, who had cheated him, to be rigged up in a dress of gilt paper, to have a gilt-paper crown put on his head, and to be hanged on a gallows lined with gilt paper. I tell you, after a while, it will come to pass, and the Jew Veitel Ephraim will hang on a gallows-steel-yard and its tongue will never waver, for in the day of judgment they will find his works too light. So it happened not more than four-and-twenty years ago with an old wizard in Swabia, the Jew Süß; the devil's grandmother was his mother and the wandering Jew was his father."

“Where then is Veitel to be hanged?” asked one of the peasants; all laughed.

“On the gallows,” replied another; “it is all one, where he stands; the king himself, indeed, is much to blame for it, but Veitel must after all pay the piper. That’s as it should be, the Jews are at the bottom of everything.”

A Jew peddler, who happened in and offered his wares for sale, was derided and insulted by the boors.

“Na, Smouch,” they cried, “hast thou also a handsome profit from the money Veitel has stole? He collects, you know, for you Jews.”

One of the boors splashed beer down the peddler’s neck, whereat the fellow screamed and all the rest laughed and jeered.

During this whole scene, Veitel, with his nephew, had been sitting at the table of distinction, which was separated from the rest of the room by a board partition; they listened there in silence to the conversation. Ephraim was still, and Veitel commanded in a lordly tone to harness the horses.

“A pack of ragamuffins,” said Veitel, when they had left the town behind them; “with three measures of beer I could make them drink me a vivat; why, now, do the people insult me? Am I king of Prussia? Have I to determine what percentage of silver a coin shall have? If I do not undertake the supply another will. What is it then I do? What the king wills; and what can it matter to these men, whether the money is good or bad? If they

only get brandy for it, it is all one. I have a good mind to turn round again and show them the master."

Veitel was glad when his nephew decidedly opposed this last proposition.

They had come to a hill; the two travelers alighted and went up on foot, without saying a word. When they had reached the top, Veitel turned round toward the valley, and laying his hand on his nephew's shoulder, said with a deep sigh:

"One has to endure a great deal of hardship and anxiety in this world; if it were not for one's children and family, one would often wish rather to be dead."

Ephraim looked into his uncle's face; a tenderness one would never have dreamed of hovered over it; he looked down into the valley; all was still and peaceful; the evening bell sounded for prayer, the sky had cleared up, the air was pure and transparent; on the snow-clad hills opposite lay the glowing red horizon with its more and more softly melting tints, into which trees, standing simply, lifted up like spectres their snow-enveloped skeletons.

"See the sun sinking with his last glow yonder in the west," said Ephraim; "I feel such a sweet sadness, that I, too, were fain at this moment of rapture to expire with him."

As Veitel made no reply, Ephraim continued:

"And yet, on the other hand, nature is our only comforter, she stays by us when all else forsake or cast us off. Let us thank God, who has given us all this. Spring—"

“Nonsense,” interrupted Veitel, “the weather pleases me, also, just now, not a speck of cloud to be had in the sky for a thousand dollars, but thy Nature is something I can’t understand; how canst thou take pleasure in fields and woods that belong to strangers?”

They resumed their seats in the carriage; Ephraim feigned sleep.

The journey to Berlin was long and laborious; Ephraim occasionally took his memorandum book out of his pocket and noted something, but especially did he often look at the letter to Mendelssohn, which Lessing had given him. This was that letter of the 17th of April, 1763, beginning with the words: “Herr Kuh, also, is about journeying to Berlin and kindly offers to take a letter for me to you. I must not let an opportunity of this kind slip through my fingers; it is rare, and mails do not go to Berlin, never have gone to Berlin, because in that case I certainly should have written to you.” Thus wrote Lessing playfully, but this letter contained also a discussion of Spinoza’s theory respecting the oneness of body and soul, regarded as only two different modes of manifestation of one and the same substance. Lessing opposed this theory to the *harmony* maintained by Mendelssohn and sustained by an appeal to Leibnitz, and sharply distinguished Spinoza’s view from that of Leibnitz.

This letter may be regarded in some measure as a picture of the whole relation between Lessing and Mendelssohn; free and sincere personal conjunction

with persistent following out of the higher philosophical questions to the end of mutual stimulation and enlightenment.

Ephraim was the bearer of the exposition of the anathematized philosopher and patriot of the last century. He cherished no desire to enter into his doctrine; the whole age of Frederick the Great was disinclined to this systematic study, and partly incapable of it, and even Mendelssohn, whose teaching and influence the king rejected, stood, notwithstanding his difference, on the same point of view with the king, inasmuch as he conceived philosophy pre-eminently as a wisdom for the world or for practical life. Often and devoutly did Ephraim hold Lessing's letter in his hands and thought, meanwhile, of a beautiful Jewish sentiment, for it is an old established usage to commit to one who undertakes a long and laborious journey a gift, which, immediately on arriving at the place of his destination, he must deliver to some needy person; the dark powers of destiny, which preside especially over journeys, are thereby appeased, for the traveler is, according to the Jewish expression, a "messenger of virtue," who is sheltered from every dark power.

No one had dared to give such a commission to Ephraim, as a presumed free-thinker; but he seemed to himself now, by virtue of his bearing Lessing's letter, as a higher emissary; he carried the comforting expression of friendly sentiment, the exalting expression of unconstrained thought from one mind to another.

Our two travelers arrived at length in Berlin.

As Ephraim for the first time walked through the streets of Berlin, he must have been struck by the number of women dressed in mourning, whom the war had robbed of husbands, brothers and sons.

In the bright spring sunshine the signs of mourning stood out all the more sharply, and here and there lounged about men in military coats, on whose faces the word *discharge* was legible; these went about with anxiously inquiring look toward the future, seeming almost to envy those whom shots had made cripples, yet who were provided for, and practiced with their unwonted crutches, or rested on a bench in the sun.

Ephraim sought to lift himself above the contemplation of the universal destiny, and musing on the chances of his own life, said to himself: The people with whom my future will be bound up, dwell here and there, they are still far from me, perhaps they will soon be so again.—So be it! These streets, how often will they see me trudging along, busy, composing, filled with joy and sorrow, perhaps arm in arm with a friend, a loved one, perhaps I shall be following the loved one's bier, or a child's. I may, myself, be soon borne along a corpse; be it so! I will clasp the joy to my heart and set a chair for the sorrow, as for an old acquaintance. Remove thy veil, disguised future, whatever face thou hidest I know it, and am ready to meet it.

Presumptuous one! he did not learn till later to perceive what he had arrogated to himself, and how

useless it is, in the sunshine of fortune to encumber one's self with the rain-mantle; the storm will only be caught the more in the mantle's wide folds.

Ephraim had found old Emanuel sick; full of sorrow he sat by his sick-bed, and admired the heroism with which he bore his pains. Ephraim took it as a good omen, that his first employment on entering these new paths of life was privileged to consist in reaching the friendly hand to the forsaken.



### 15.—DE AMICITIA.

EPHRAIM'S first visit was claimed by Moses Mendelssohn. The house, in Spandau street, was easy to find, for the inn of "the Golden Star," which was not far from it, served as a guide. According to his habit of always seeking after significant emblems, he found such a one in this way-mark. It was, therefore, in a doubly exalted frame of mind that Ephraim entered the house.

Mendelssohn had just returned from the counting-house of the widow Bernhard, where he was book-keeper and partner; several visitors were with him and were conversing in a low tone.

The almost gnome-like form of Mendelssohn might have appeared disagreeable, had not mildness and philanthropy, which, like smiling genii, sat throned upon his countenance, instantly prepossessed every one in his favor.

The disproportionately broad head, as in the case of all humpbacks, sat low down between the shoulders; a beard kept neatly cut on cheek and neck, and running out to a point at the chin, might have

passed for the sign of Rabbinical dignity and observance; the prominent and boldly arched nose, with its broad nostrils, further completed in this countenance the stamp of the Jewish character. The two finely-cut lips projected themselves in parallel lines; in the deep-set black eyes gleamed the light of a truth-loving soul; the noble arch of the forehead, whose whiteness the black velvet cap made still more conspicuous, might have served as the sign of antique clearness and repose. Thus did Ephraim discover in this countenance a mixture of classic and rabbinical elements, which he would fain recognize in Mendelssohn's whole method of working.

In the externals of the room, also, the same doubleness manifested itself, for near the bust of Socrates, on a pillar in the corner, hung the Jewish, so-called, *Misrach*, a framed Hebrew memorial tablet, with the indication that here was the Eastern side, toward which one has to turn his face in prayer.

Mendelssohn had only been married a year; he was in his thirty-fourth year, Ephraim was only two years younger; though the latter seemed very raw and youthfully unsettled compared with the former, he, too, meant henceforth to be more firm.

Mendelssohn, with a certain measured movement like that of a man of the world, yet with a stuttering peculiar to himself in his speech, excused himself to Ephraim and the rest of the company, while he read the letter he had just received; from the changing expression of his features, beginning with a radiant smile, presently passing over into severe philosophic

meditation and shakings of the head, one could read off pretty nearly the general drift of the letter.

He folded the letter up again and went into the adjoining room. Ephraim now learned that Mendelssohn's object was to look after his wife and his little daughter three days old.

Among the visitors were the two Doctors, Bloch and Gumperz, elder friends of Mendelssohn, and the mathematician Abraham Wolf, called Abraham Reekoner, who had grouped themselves around a lean figure who reported with much self-complacency that the "Letters touching the latest Literature" had just appeared in a third edition, but now, and with the consent of Lessing, had been brought to a close; that now it was important to unite all minds striving after freedom, in order to achieve, partly in a critical but partly also in a positive way, a work which should serve, more thoroughly than the French Encyclopædia, to cultivate and organize the provinces which had been conquered in the interest of free thought and good taste. He named the "Universal German Library."

It soon came out that the enterprising reformer was the bookseller, Nicolai.

He addressed his exposition to a man of extremely quiet and composed bearing, who only nodded assent from time to time, and who in his reserved and measured manner contrasted singularly with the restless and fiery Nicolai.

Ephraim started when the name of *Professor Ramler* was whispered to him.

In a corner sat a Pole in a dirty *kutka*, crouching in a chair; he seemed not to notice the company nor was he noticed by them.

“Our Mendelssohn is certainly passing fortunate,” said Doctor Bloch; “it is fitting that after such sore conflicts he should enjoy at last the joys and comforts of life; he has a clearly defined path of thought, a moderate income, a healthy little daughter—”

“And a brave housewife,” cried another.

“And a clever and estimable sister-in-law,” put in a third.

“Are you nearly done with your balance-sheet?” cried Doctor Gumperz; “the best thing of all you have forgotten to note, and that is: true friends.”

“Aye, he has only too many friends; he might continue Plutarch’s treatise on *Polyphilia*,” said one of the company; “I always think he who is so hail-fellow-well-met with all the world, great and small, old and young, rich and poor, cannot be really intimate with any one; I will not reason the matter, but—”

“Only envy or short-sightedness can pass such a judgment,” said Doctor Bloch, with vehemence; “in that case every one would gladly claim the ground-plot of his friendship as his own domain, and if that were impracticable, he says it must, besides, be unfruitful land, since it is perverted to a common highway.”

“For such disquisitions, my dear colleague,” said Doctor Gumperz in a refractory tone, “this is neither the time nor the place; let us drop all personalities; I should incline to assert that the revival of the

sentiment of friendship is a blossom from the shoots and slips of the classic culture of antiquity, which we have imported into our times; antiquity alone understood friendship; the middle ages, whose gate of exit has closed behind us, knew only woman's love; men were comrades, but seldom friends in the deeper sense of the word; in our day the true philosophy and poetry bloom out again, and with them friendship also. It might be shown statistically that there are more voluntary bachelors or so-called *crab-sticks* in our times than in any former; this certainly has its deeper cause in the newly awakened life of learning and friendship."

"Magnificent!" cried Bloch; "whoever now remains a bachelor, obeys a universal-historical necessity."

"Our friend Mendelssohn works-over Plato's Phædon in a way of his own; would not you work-over in a similar manner Cicero's treatise on Friendship? I'll publish it," said Nicolai.

Mendelssohn entered, and Nicolai said to him: "We were just speaking of friendship; Herr Gumperz demands in this also the study of the ancients."

"Have you then settled an idea or found a definition of friendship? else all will come back again to a war of words," said Mendelssohn, and the Pole, who sat in the corner, rose and joined the circle, in which for a while silence ensued.

"What need is there of any long thinking here?" said the Pole, with the characteristic accent of Polish Jews; "Friendship is the practical union of independent and consentaneous persons."

“Bravo, my dear Herr Maimon,” said Bloch; “I could not at this moment find any flaw there.”

“If one adds egotism, sympathy, and weakness, friendship will be the result,” said Abraham Reckoner.

“You must not imagine that the man is so bad,” whispered Bloch in our Ephraim’s ear: “he has formed the habit once for all of shrugging his shoulders at everything, and now he has got a chronic jerk and cannot get rid of it.”

“I miss in your definition, dear Herr Maimon,” said Mendelssohn, holding, as he spoke, his chin with its peaked beard in the hollow of his hand, “I miss in your definition the basis of genial activity,—good-will; firm alliance of two merchants for business purposes may also be called an actual union of independent and consentaneous minds on the practical side, which is certainly the main thing, as, indeed, one speaks of *business-friends*; but Aristotle himself justly calls friendship for a common external object, be it political or commercial, merely agreement, and rightly distinguishes it from friendship proper. Friendships, also, formed for the sake of pleasure or profit, these in age, and those in youth, are, like their basis, transitory. With friendship, as the free union between creatures of the same species, man rises above the bestial nature, and above his own individuality; the attachment of different sexes the beast also experiences, and we know how many in our time will not allow that love has any further significance—”

“Aristotle and Cicero,”—Ramler here interpolated the remark—“characterize the quality of friendship, primarily, in showing its distinction from blood-relationship.”

“And in their way, justly,” continued Mendelssohn. “Through friendship, the bond between persons who are immediately connected neither by the tie of consanguinity, of sex, nor of state, man rises out of rude nature into the realm of consciousness, of the free spirit.”

“The realm of the free spirit,” said Nicolai, “is still, up to this time, the Polish Elective Empire; unreason, superstition and superannuated prejudice have the last and loudest word, therefore we must root them out and annihilate them with all our might, for not even friendship can thrive among them.”

“There are two sides to the question,” said Gumperz; “whether prejudiced persons may not be friends, for one may certainly always call the original ground of that good-will which cannot give any account of itself, prejudice. But let us rather ask: can only virtuous men be friends?”

“That is like putting a light into the tube to see the sun by,” said Maimon, laughing; “friendship is in itself a virtue, therefore only virtuous persons are friends.”

“That last remark is also made by Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics*, and almost in the same words,” added Mendelssohn. With a seemingly self-mocking and yet bold tone, Maimon rejoined: “If Aristotle said that, he, too, is a clever man. But I

think, also, for the same reason, that if two robbers are pledged to one another with heart and hand, they, too, are friends as much as two philosophers."

"Right," said Mendelssohn; "if one robber-friend keeps truth and faith with another, saves him from the danger of imprisonment and death, he has so far come back upon the stand-point of virtue, of mutual aid and comfort; that this act, in the case supposed, sets itself in contradiction to the arrangements of society, makes no change in its original ground as such. The robber can perform a virtuous action, but he is not therefore virtuous. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, also, Socrates shows that one can have only a virtuous man for a friend, and if one will call such a friend his own, he must himself also be virtuous or strive to be. A friend takes another's justification of him as his own, as I was once delighted by the words of a friend who wrote to me: 'Your better thoughts are nothing more than my second thoughts.' A friend is our objective and incarnate conscience; we rejoice with him when we do a good deed; our life is in him, and his life in us; we mourn and grieve in him and through him, over an action which contradicts our inner aspirations. As we are happy in the thought of God who is above all life and through his Providence acts for us, so have we in a friend a faint type of the sway of a spirit out of ourselves, which belongs to us, and to which we belong. Even if a vicious man may have a friend, yet he cannot keep him; some collision or other will separate them; for there is wanting to them the guar-



anty of the law which rests in virtue, and vice is lawlessness in its widest sense."

Ephraim listened with greedy attention; the academic life of the serene Greeks seemed risen again before his eyes; at first shyly and softly, but then more and more loudly and with increasing inspiration, he said: "I cannot comprehend how you would hold the question concerning the highest good as an open one; certainly there may be differences according to time, place and personality; but one thing is eternal and universal and for all: that is, a friend. To know one's self doubled and yet one, all our loving, suffering and hoping safe in a Beyond which we can clasp to our hearts, not merely a certain idea and aspiration, abstracted from personality, but to know that this personality with all its slugs and peculiarities is taken up, cherished and loved by another—"

"That shows a tincture of love," interrupted Gumperz. "You prescribe too much *succus liquoritiae*, which, if not quickly enjoyed, in a few days grows sour; if one mixes up with friendship what the world calls love, but what is certainly only a sexual relation, it will soon die out. Take now youthful friendships; the attractive impulse is there, but it knows not yet its object; so one hugs and kisses his young friend; but how few such friendships can pass over into life. Friendship is only a product of the ripe and self-conscious spirit."

"I am of your view, also," said Bloch, "that you should widen this idea of friendship so far as to

make out that it thrives only between ripe and free spirits, for this also is to be taken into the account, that, in contradistinction to love, it may and must be based on reflective and intelligent recognition. If the friend is our second, and often our better self, so is the loved one a part of our very self, and in a legitimate relation the half of our self; our care for the loved one lies immediately in the principle of self-preservation; for the friend, only indirectly. To the second self a third and fourth may associate themselves; the second half of the self can only have one other, the first, for its own; for that reason, too, love is jealous, friendship not."

"Herr Kuh, however, is very right in bringing in the personal element also," said Mendelssohn; and Ephraim felt himself wonderfully moved at hearing his name mentioned approvingly by the venerated philosopher. All listened attentively as Mendelssohn went on: "I must refer again to Aristotle, who sharply and decidedly distinguishes between benevolence and friendship; the former takes into consideration only the general good qualities of another and wishes and offers them encouragement; it may be as general as possible; benevolence is the starting-point of all friendship, but the former does not always attain to the latter; benevolence intensified is not friendship, which needs a thoroughly new element; it demands a personal inclination, a love for and pleasure in precisely this special manifestation of the universal humanity. Very many personal relations stop at the stage of general human benevolence."

“And just that is a bitter experience,” Gumperz broke in, “when a relation makes no progress, when it always remains what it was at the beginning.”

“That is never the case,” replied Mendelssohn; “only one must not be provoked because one does not attain what one wished and hoped; one must not transform the false assumption into a disappointed expectation. Human life has its parallel in nature. Why do the trees grow in the forest?”

“To yield useful wood.”

“And the orchard trees?”

“To bear fruit.”

“Very well. But now he who expects apples and figs of a forest tree, does he not do wrong if he complains of disappointed expectation and condemns the tree?”

“Don’t you see,” cried Nicolai, triumphantly, who loved to publish even the oral productions of his friends, and looked upon them with joyful inspiration as his own editions, and bespoke an interest in them by explanatory prefaces: “Do you see, there you have the essence of the new humanity: to postulate the natural results of things and to search out their nature. It is explicable, taken emblematically and applied to man, with the power of free-will, that when the fig-tree is cursed, which, at the appointed time, when one needs it, bears no fruit, it should be condemned to wither away. Every one must work and be useful.”

The conversation suddenly came to a stand, as so easily happens in the free intercourse of many; they

had got upon a by-way; they stood as men lost in a strange region, and must first take their bearings; they felt the discomfort of aimless digression, and no one ventured to offer himself as guide, till at last Mendelssohn, with a characteristic shaking of the head, took up the word again.

“Let us stick to our subject. We have seen that benevolence can be unlimited, whereas friendship, in which the whole personality, with all its attributes, unites itself to another, must, in the nature of things, have its limits; a full personality, to be accepted on the one hand, must be made over on the other. Classic Antiquity, which developed, far more than that of Love, the essence and idea of Friendship, has recorded I know not how many instances of pairs of friends.”

“There are three or even four pairs,” said Ramler, “Achilles and Patroclus, Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias;\* Plutarch adds a fifth to the number in Pelopidas and Epaminondas.”

“The fundamental condition of friendship is likeness,” said Mendelssohn, and Ramler, by way of confirmation, added:

“Cicero laid down as a condition even similarity of pursuits and of natural dispositions.”

“And those good sisters of Mother Nature, dear Aunt Custom and wise Aunt Sophistics, are the best corrupters and pimps in the matter,” whispered Abraham Reckoner in Ephraim’s ear. The latter

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\* *Phyntias* is Auerbach’s reading.

turned away, disgusted as well at what was said as at the impoliteness of attempting a whispered dialogue, where all were united in a loud thinking. He turned his attention to Gumperz, who now resumed:

“That may well be the reason, too, as I was going to remark some moments ago, why our friend, Maimon, included the word ‘independent’ in his definition of friendship; equality alone makes men truly independent. Between teacher and scholar in the broadest sense of the word, between superior and inferior, master and servant, rich and poor, no friendship is possible. No friendship can be built on gratitude, though perhaps love may, which as a creature of the affections overleaps all differences; in love one hears of *mine* and *thine* only when the lovers whisper to each other: Thou art mine and I am thine.—A rich man who will have a poor one for a true friend must not leave him to his poverty and distress, and he will not demand any thanks for relieving it, because he is conscious that in a like case he should expect the same treatment; gratitude takes away independence, free judgement and equality at once.”

“You reverse the king’s motto, and say instead of *suum cuique—meum cuique: mine to each*,” interposed Maimon, turning his hand rapidly over and over as he spoke, and moving it to and fro after the manner of Talmudists. “There was a fellow-countryman sent to me yesterday, with a letter of recommendation that I should help him. I was still in bed

studying, because I had no wood to make a fire with. 'I'll tell you what,' said I to the stranger, 'I will move to one side; you get in by me and warm yourself; that is all I can do for you.'

There was a laugh, but the earnest physician would not let himself lose his composure and went on:

"The Pythagorean society was based upon practical friendship, and Pythagoras lays down the fundamental condition: Friends must have all things in common. The poor man who receives from the rich, as his friend, can do so independently. The free and generous man takes just as freely as he gives; it is only a more refined egotism when people would rather give than receive; it requires a freer soul to receive."

"I accept," Maimon again interrupted, "and now I am even proud of it." And again Gumperz continued:

"But I would like to propound one more question: Can a grandee, a mighty ruler, have a friend? Has our King Frederick a friend?"

"I think not, but you mix too many things up together," said Mendelssohn.

"What of that?" rejoined the impetuous physician; "every one can pick out for himself what he likes: I simply say: a genuine king, who will himself, and only out of himself, govern, can have no friend, for the friend has the right and duty to exert upon his friend's disposition and conduct an immediate influence; an autocrat cannot allow that, and so he

stands alone on his dreary height; our incomparable King Frederick is jealous of his sole sovereignty, he despises avarice and self-interest, he will have no favorite and he has—no friend; those marshals, Jordan, D'Argens, D'Alambert, and so on, with whom he is personally or epistolarily in friendly alliance, are they friends? Though he makes ever so many poems of friendship, still that, after all, is only a poetic pastime. You, yourself, Herr Mendelssohn, have pointed out to him in your critique of his poems, that he puts thoughts into verse, which cannot be his own, and he has justly taken it ill of you, that you have submissively exposed to him where lie the gaps and logical contradictions. What can a prince do with an independent friend who is a friend of truth? A king could only have youthful friends, but one forgets the anti-Macchiavellis and the friends of his youth, when one is king.”

“Friendship is the highest good, it is an angel,” said Abraham Reckoner; “but unhappily, we with our spectacles can no longer see angels. The strong needs no angel and no friend; he can support himself: a so-called friend is only a staff for the weak to lean on—”

“And which, like the rod of Moses, becomes a serpent when one throws it away;” observed Ephraim. A keen glance from the eye of Mendelssohn smote Ephraim and pierced him to the heart, but Mendelssohn turned to the well-known mocker, and explained to him how friendship did not spring from helplessness, and Ramler backed him in this with a pretty citation from Plato's *Lysis*.

Mendelssohn had now another little skirmish with Doctor Gumperz upon the relation between friendship and honor. The modern Socrates applied herein, not only the intellectual midwifery of the Master, but also a piece of Talmudic tactics, in provoking his opponent to uncovered sallies, in order at last to take him prisoner; but it was a mild imprisonment, in which the parties at last concluded a mutual peace.

Ramler once more directed attention to another side of the conversation, while, bearing in mind its extended literary references, he started a discussion upon the justification of a breach of friendship and again represented the opinion of Aristotle, who designates inequality in the progress of intellectual culture as justifying its dissolution.

Mendelssohn seemed to himself to have lingered too long in classic antiquity; with a characteristic devoutness he brought out the Bible and explained that Judaism also set friendship in high honor, and speaking of David and Jonathan, he readily found the passage in the penitential Psalm of David respecting his lost friend, (II. Samuel, I, 26.) "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." But coming back also to the living present, and as if he would conjure up at length the intimate friend from whom to-day he had received new tidings, he repeated with a voice of emotion the aphorism of Lessing:

"He who seeks friends, deserves a friend to have;  
He who has none, a friend did never crave."



This was the closing strain and key-note.

The company retired; it was as if a church of the spirit had been dismissed with a blessing.

On the stairs Gumperz said to Ephraim: "We can enlarge the friendly couples of the ancients with one more beautiful example, the two intellectual heroes, Lessing and Mendelssohn, who were born in the same year. It is not without significance that these two members of different confessions stand at the gate-posts of the entrance into the new age, or, more properly, are themselves such."

With an inward exaltation never before experienced, Ephraim left the house of Mendelssohn; all refraction was forgotten and he felt his whole being bathed as in a pure ether; he found himself suddenly plunged into the onward sweeping stream of mighty intellects which aspired to the highest and noblest achievements of humanity, and stood in living intercourse with the best minds in the past. New and fresh ardor inspired him. It was not merely that joy which we feel when we go away from a company richer in thought and with deeper incitements; in this case the special circumstance was added that Ephraim felt himself brought into a circle of superior minds; whereas in Breslau, excepting his rare meetings with Lessing, in his former circles of acquaintance he could make his own superiority felt.

Add to this, that in his native town he always regarded himself as measured under conditions and by standards which in his development he had al-

ready surpassed; but here, now, he entered as a susceptible nature, without the drawback of any retrospective reference into a society of elevated minds, and the value which was assigned to him became his worth in his own eyes. To one honestly striving to improve himself it became thus a true exaltation to be able to look up to highly exalted characters; the view grows large and extensive, as in the contemplation of mighty mountains, whose summit receives the earliest greeting of the sun.

And, while in the world of thought freely aspiring minds strove to fathom anew the meaning of life and its eternal norms, while they tested the current intellectual coinage, now rejecting these as worthless counters, now determining there the worthless alloy, and stamping all anew; the business world was also agitated. The law which made uncurrent all moneys coined during the war, changed the usual and supposed secure state of property through all strata of society. There were now discharged men and invalids of quite another kind from those made so by sword and bullet. A hero of the Berlin exchange and one of the most respectable citizens of the place, John Gotzkowski, was reduced by this stroke, in connection with other misfortunes, to the beggar's staff. As after an earthquake, people looked round to see whether this or that house were still standing, and many a one could only be kept up by a swift application of outside props.

Ephraim had, as cashier of his uncle—who, as one “in good favor,” seemed by his high connections to

have anticipated the surprising emergency—a heap of business on his shoulders in connection with the financial operations bearing upon it; and often was he tried by the painful feeling in what kind of an activity he was engaged, but Emanuel consoled him with the thought that, once enlisted, he could not, as a good soldier, any longer ask for a justification of the campaign.

Simultaneously with Ephraim a young Italian had entered his uncle's counting-room; the feeling of strangeness and of a common necessity of accustoming themselves to the yoke first brought the two into intimacy. Ephraim had at once the sense of home and of strangeness, for he was with his relations; and to this was added his special knowledge of the Italian language; he could meet the handsome young man with the glowing look in the familiar sounds of home, and they attached themselves to each other with the ardor and delight with which one forms a first friendship.

The contrast of age between Emanuel and Ephraim made it impossible that they should be in all ways friends and companions. Emanuel, too, was sickly and was already entering on that last turn of life where it bends round again toward its starting point; he had worked himself, so to speak, into the conscious state of growing childishness; he let every-day life in many ways go unregarded, and gave himself up exclusively to particular ideas and amusements. But Ephraim, however well advanced he was into the age of manhood, nevertheless was

just entering properly upon the great stage of life. Trevirano was here the very guide he wanted: he was young, bold and handsome. When Ephraim went arm in arm with his friend through the streets, he smiled quietly within himself, for he knew that he should now be made doubly interesting through his companion to the fair damsels of his own faith, and that they now for three days would talk of nothing else at their gatherings but of Zerlina's cousin and the pale, interesting Christian who walked with him. Malicious enviers did, indeed, spread abroad the report that Trevirano was a baptized Jew, and hence his affability towards that nation; but Ephraim knew, to be sure, that his comrade was an Italian noble and emigrant, and only by the circumstances of the times had been driven to his present occupation.

Ephraim would no longer suffer anything to grow under the protection of dark powers; he felt of the young germs to crush them, if any harm to him could unfold itself from them. Trevirano should be to him a comrade, to accompany him in the glad enjoyment of life. With Emanuel he would maintain a soul-understanding, and in him would collect himself: the two should be to him the unity of that which he had conceived as the ideal of a friend; in these two should the double demand of his nature be satisfied. "Thou canst not form the least idea," he once said to Trevirano, for it was a way he had, that he must forthwith address any one with whom he was closely associated with the familiar thou—

“Thou canst not conceive how I envy thee thy unbroken spirits. You Christians do not at all know what a happiness you enjoy in every way. These churches, these streets, these council-houses and halls of justice are yours; you are everywhere at home; the officials are to you no unapproachable spectres, the sabre-bearers no contemptuously staring insolent were-wolves; they are your fathers, brothers, uncles; the wide open world is your family home. But a Jew, who is conscious of his position, and I have known that from a boy, goes cowering round with the everlasting question: What have you against me? What have I done to you? He imagines that looks and glances mean him, which perhaps have no thought of him. And all this trembling, with the inward consciousness all the while of being fit for any refined human society. It is a deadly pain, it eats out the best energy of life. I try to free myself and to mock at the follies of the world, but thy supreme buoyancy, thy gay and careless playing with the world, is something I can never reach. I shall forever envy thee.”

Trevirano could not understand what so tormented Ephraim; he knew not what answer to make, except to disclose to Ephraim all the secrets of his life, his present trouble, and his hopes. For hardly any reason save to make some response to this, Ephraim gave parallels from his own history, and sought thereby to manifest his sympathy and his intelligence; but soon he too came down to the present, and related how he had originally come to

Berlin to contract a so-called marriage of reason with his cousin Zerlina, but how the majestic presence of Recha, the sister-in-law of Mendelssohn, had made so deep an impression upon him; how beside that he had taken a fancy to the pale chambermaid in the house of his uncle; how it was properly his unalterable purpose not to fall in love again any more: and a good many other contradictions of the same kind. Suddenly he felt how disagreeable it was to have a confidant. If he had already feared that by the abuse of his experiences to the purposes of poetry he should compromise his own individuality, and therefore loved to represent in poems their reverse side, he now saw in these everlasting communications to his comrade the last intrenchments of an inner individuality give way. In all the disasters of life he had hitherto been able to exclaim to himself: "Thou hast a wealth within thee which the world has thus far neither understood nor misunderstood;" but now he had no still and secret consciousness any more into which he could retreat at the loss of this new friend, and collect himself within himself; if he lost him or was deceived and betrayed by him, he had lost his whole man.

That is the profound misery of skepticism, that it sees behind every ripening friend, death lurking, and willfully casts him off, only for the sake of being able to say to himself: I foresaw that this would come of it. A strong mind will draw back in self-satisfied renunciation; a weak one will, with fear and trembling, set its foot over the threshold of a

new relation, and not even enjoy undisturbed the short pleasure of illusion. Ephraim needed an attachment to another, and yet could not attach himself with unreserved surrender. And as he nevertheless in continued confidence imparted to his new friend thoughts and feelings which he once dared not confess even to himself, he not only lost the inner prosperity and virgin intactness of thought and sensibility, living in secret silence within him, but confession passed over into his life, and a bespoken sin loses often the terror of the act. Ephraim felt also his moral foundations giving way, for his friend's principles were elastic as those of a man of the world always are.

## 16.—DE AMORE.

THE Peace of Hubertsberg was followed by an intense stir and activity all through Germany, but especially in Prussia and its capital; the latter had been, in comparison with the other cities, but little distressed by the war, and its awakened energies could therefore develop themselves the more readily in their organic fullness. It was as when, after tempestuous weather, the sky clears up again: fresh blossom-dust floats from trees and flowers, shaken by the wind; the birds, which had crept away into silence, encourage and cheer each other with their songs and flutter merrily forth; a refreshing vapor issues from the drenched earth; brown torrents gush forth here and there, where once had been a dry desert, and if here and there are seen trees and flowers bowed down, and dams broken through, the swifter flow of sap will soon replace what is lost, under the direction of one mighty will. Even during the war had begun a new era of science and poetry. The poetic fraternities in Leipsic and Göttingen stirred up and cultivated new life;



but, above all, antiquity was to celebrate a new resurrection. Frederick II. was called now Alexander, now Cæsar, now Marcus Aurelius, and the whole Olympus was put in requisition for him alone. Klopstock was to be a new Homer, Lessing a Sophocles, Uz and Willamov Pindar, Ramler Horace, Gessner Theocritus, Mendelssohn Socrates, Gellert Æsop, Karsch called herself Sappho, Gleim was Tyrtæus, and our Ephraim would be a new Martial.

Out of the rich stir of life in the Seven Years' War Ephraim had reaped no poetic spoils but two epigrams:

TO FREDERICK II. AFTER THE VICTORY OF LEUTHEN.\*

Too many godlike deeds thou doest,  
Great King! 'twere well if this thou knewest;  
Hold up! thou lessenest thine own praise;  
Like fables from the classic days,  
Which, to amuse men, poets told them,  
Posterity will, else, behold them.

HIPPOCRENE; IN GERMAN, ROSSEBACH.†

At Rossbach, French, ye dreamed, victory your arms would follow?

At his own fountain-head ne'er could succumb Apollo!

The massive life of state and nation was too mighty for the pretty play of wit in epigrams and *conchetti*; he now fastened his satires to the thousand little threads and knots of which social life is constituted. Still, after all, his nature was more an elegiacal and lyrical one, and well might he say of himself:

\* Dec. 5, 1757.

† In English "*Horse-pond*." (Coleridge's School-master.)

“Wherefore, O Sybarite,  
My epigram defame?  
The glass is not to blame  
For what it brings to light.”

It was more a kind of extraneous or exotic raillery which, like a bee, he imported into the carefully arranged cells of his verse; in connection with all incidents and conversations he made a note for himself, in order not to let them slip out of his memory.

One will very frequently find among the Jews wits and witlings, more frequently among the men, seldomer among the women. Wit is that form of intellect in which blank coins of thought are the most rapidly stamped, and with their easily recognized nominal value are most speedily set in circulation. With these lively minds, not yet drilled in by any regular school-training, it must needs spring up all the more briskly; add to this their peculiar jargon, bristling with Hebraisms, with its capricious accents, the confusion and dilution of different forms of speech, giving easy occasion often for the most comical plays upon words. When we consider further, that the new culture was mostly based upon Talmudic dialectics, that wit is a successful weapon in the outpost skirmishes against insipidity and hollow ceremonies, and that a certain Voltairianism had also penetrated into the deeper minds, we have the elements of that intellectual epoch of Jewish history from which our fathers and grandfathers can report to us so many keen specimens of play on words and surprising turns of thought.

Nothing is so contagious as wit; as its effect, laughter, easily and involuntarily transmits itself from one to another. So does its cause, the inner mood, easily become a common condition; each outbids the other in crazy hide-and-seek; an application which, on sober reflection, were meaningless and almost absurd, becomes in the whirl of hilarity a happy hit and is crowned with universal plaudits. In this new intellectual atmosphere Ephraim drank in its characteristic element; he soon passed, in the Berlin congregation, for one of the cleverest, that is, wittiest, heads, for Abraham Diogenes had said: "There is a whole cow's\* hide full of art in his skin."

Ephraim now went on his way radiant and smiling; he was conscious of his superior understanding, and as, in the days of his childhood, he had dared to lay hold of bodily suicide as a weapon against life, so now he had a new weapon, but was it not that of spiritual suicide, which, for a momentary show, willingly sacrifices and perverts into their opposite the deepest emotions?

In his own eyes he seemed to himself so flat and stale, for it takes two to make a laugh; in solitude he was sad and melancholy; it was like the breathing out of a sigh for the excitement of laughter; he laid the blame of this, again, at the door of his mercantile sorrows; so soon as possible he meant to close the account with this false relation of his.

"I often wonder," Ephraim once said to Trevirano,

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\* Alluding to his name.

“when I get up in the morning, that I can walk, can speak, that I know thousands of things; I always feel as if I must begin my whole being over again; my life crumbles to pieces. What is there, then, that can or should hold me together any longer?”

His friend ridiculed him for such splenetic whimses, but all that did not set him free. When he woke in the morning he asked himself: Why do I get up? To work. And why work? To get money? And why money? To live.—Untired life, that devours itself!

While others, with purely intellectual occupations, often long for that which shall by outward evidences manifest itself as action, Ephraim felt the opposite longing, forgetting the while, as they do, that in either case, not the thing accomplished, but the pleasure taken in activity, as an expression of life, is the true life itself, and that the happiness of life is only the demonstration of power and its relation to others, or in other words, the fulfillment of duty.

Ephraim was now entangled in a new love affair. From his confessions to Trevirano we have seen that Recha, the sister-in-law of Mendelssohn, had made a deep impression upon him. Relying upon the coolness of his judgment, he gave himself up unreservedly to friendly intercourse with Recha; he buried his gaze in the still glow of her black eyes, he contemplated the quiet, tranquil beauty of her features, and the rich fullness of outline, and delighted in the luxuriance of the tresses which in

soft ringlets floated over her whole head. He trusted all the more to his self-control, that many things about Recha displeased him; the drawing of her eyebrows, which vanished almost at the middle of the eye, the marked projection of her lower lip, and particularly a crack which she seemed to have in her organ of speech, whereby all sound came out as if shredded, he found great fault with. For his frequent visits, meanwhile, he made this excuse to himself, that he sought the company and conversation of the philosopher; by-and-by, however, he would go to Mendelssohn's house even when he knew that the philosopher was at that very moment busy in his counting-house; by degrees he forgot his former criticisms altogether. How his heart beat and his breath trembled, as he thought of the hour when he should appear before Mendelssohn to ask of him the hand of his sister-in-law, embrace him as brother and then kiss the trembling Yes from Recha's lips; in what brilliant colors he painted to himself his future life, fresh and fiery activity coupled with thoughtfulness and tender sincerity. Full of impatience and internal excitement he paced up and down alone in his chamber whenever the gracious images of such a future rose more and more distinct and definite before his inner eye.

This, now, it was, that held him fast again to the mercantile desk; for his own daily necessities his means were adequate, but for the support of a family he needed a steady income. "Love's bliss is higher than poet's bliss," he said to himself; "nay

it is the highest; a father's joy in fine children is more enduring than in his poetic offspring;" and he attached himself more and more ardently to Recha.

The solid and independent nature of Recha exercised a refreshing influence, and one blessed with a thousand quiet joys, upon Ephraim. Here, for the first time, he recognized that it was not the essence of womanhood to be a soft echo of the stronger mind, but in its own original form to apprehend and organize the relations of life; he could here no longer oracularly pronounce and like a fast-day preacher give admonitory lectures on the perversities of the uncultured, as with Philippina and Täubchen. With sound and uncorrupted glance, Recha saw through what was presented to her, and compelled the giver to a closer insight into himself and others. He felt himself thereby uplifted and invigorated; the slumbering productive power stirred itself in his soul, and soon was a new spring-time of love to arise in full-blooming splendor.

The subject of conversation with Recha was mostly the affairs of the Jews and the enlightenment of the age. On one occasion they spoke of the remarkable incidents, which often, like a lightning-flash, loosed the fetters of free consciousness. Ephraim told about his Polish Rabbi, and how he himself, exhausted with his soul's conflicts, had fallen asleep on his bosom. Recha's countenance lighted up as she listened; in Ephraim's voice and look was such a tender sincerity and sadness, Recha might well feel how gladly he resuscitated his whole past

before her, in order to lay not only his present being, but also his vanished past on her heart; he spoke of the spirit of freedom and meant the spirit of love; he spoke of the hand which the Rabbi had laid upon his forehead, and thought of the hand of Recha which, with a soft touch, was to quiet the feverish pulses of his throbbing temples.

“Ah, how charming!” said Recha, when Ephraim had ended, and looked on him, as she spoke, with an eye full of loving sweetness, till he felt a blissful shudder thrill through his whole being; he passed his hand across his face, his cheeks burned; how gladly would he have kissed the sweet “charming” from her lips and folded her forever in his arms, but he restrained himself, for he dreaded the presence of the sister, and no mortal eye but that of his beloved should see how he infolded her into the paradise of his soul. He soon took his leave, and Recha mused much upon this sudden withdrawal.

In the street Ephraim kept repeating to himself the words: “Ah, how charming! ah, how charming!” and dreamed himself the while into such a mood of bliss and freedom, that he was almost compelled to shout for joy; he ran swiftly through the streets, that no one meeting him might wake him out of his rapture. All the sweet dreams and sentiments which he imagined had long since died out with him, erected their heads again like flowers on their stems, fresh and free; no frost of doubt could settle again on the newly opened flowers. “When I am so wholly dissolved in love,” he said to

himself, "must not reciprocal love be to me the fullest satisfaction? How childish, indeed, was that which I had hitherto taken for love; she, she loves me, ah, how dearly!" No one in the house could guess why Ephraim was so gay, and as the treasure-digger must, with mute lips, lift the gold out of the earth, so Ephraim fancied that by even a sound he should cause all the sweet enchantment suddenly to disappear. Only with pain did he conceal this new turn in his life from the good Emanuel; he was sensible that he hereby almost forfeited his friendship, but he also felt that another might perhaps smile at his enthusiasm and so brush off the tenderest enamel of the flower. He kept silent. Often, too, he longed to know what misfortune would now befall him, for he knew the might of the envious gods, who suffer no fortune to continue unalloyed, and into the midst of the clearest day send a hail-shower; therefore, he always pictured to himself, when he went home with a bosom swelling with joy, some misfortune or other, which might come upon him. He knew not what he feared, but he feared, and that was enough.

Ephraim could never speak with Recha alone, there was always either her sister or a friend present with her, and most of all did he feel himself embarrassed by the presence of his cousin Zerlina. Nevertheless, he had the most confidential interviews with Recha, when he went to walk alone or when he rested alone on his couch. What sweet words he then exchanged with her, and how glittered everywhere



the tenderest pearls of dew in the variegated blossom-cups! Often, too, he fixed these moments in poems, but as if he feared to betray her name to paper, he celebrated her with all sorts of strange names; all, however, pointed to her:

“Among all Flora’s children fair,  
In wood and mead and vale I culled for thee the rarest;  
But, Chloe, look not in the glass, I pray, my fairest!  
Else thou for them no more wilt care.”

“Will my Amelia bless me, say, ye eyes!  
No, tell me not, ye lovely eyes, I pray!  
Hell-pains will kill me, if ye answer, Nay!  
If Yea, with ecstasy your victim dies!”

One must not forget, too, that these poems originated at that time, when, after the lays of the minne-singers had long died away, woman’s love could not yet be celebrated in song. They sang friendship and virtue, nature and joy, but purely personal feeling could not venture to express itself in melodious words, till Klopstock first, in lofty strains, published his love to the world.

We find Ephraim truer and nearer to his proper individuality, in the two following poems:

“Thou’rt silent, sweet, bewitching face!  
And yet I know full well what aileth thee;  
Love’s very silence speaks more potently,  
Mirena, than all Suada’s words of grace.”

“Heaven’s wrath shall cruelly be reaping!  
By day flies from me Saccharissa,  
And that in dreams I cannot kiss her,  
Prevents me all night long from sleeping.”

Ephraim felt the inadequacy of such verses, mere-

ly pointed to a neatly turned conclusion. But what cared he now for the worth of his poems? Did not love dwelling within him penetrate with an inner glow all his dreamings and his doings? How often and with what joy did he read the sonnets of Petrarch, the singer of love; the thousand songs which he felt out, no sound nor sign of them remains. He renounced the thought of ever arriving at a full representation of his very self; what of tender perception, of susceptibility to the softer emotions of the spirit possessed him; in a word what of poesy lived within him, he would pour into the cup of love and dedicate it to her, that it might remain forever a fresh love-draught. Poetry should be to him only sport and jest; in love his existence had fulfilled its end; he felt that he had found the bond of unison between love and poetry in subordinating and sacrificing the one to the other.

All this and a great deal else he had talked over in a hundredfold ways with Recha; she understood him so perfectly and almost never contradicted him; for Ephraim regarded his internal soliloquies as a dialogue with Recha; he fancied that she must needs have become as much wrapped up in his spirit as he lived in her. For that very reason he was almost always out of humor and irritated; when he met with Recha, he hoped for a confidential continuation of the dialogues which he had fondly carried on with her in his inner man, and she asked him about the events of the day, or she sought, as formerly, to enrich her knowledge and her intellect by his conver-

sation. Recha spoke often and with delight of the writings of the men who went out and in at Mendelssohn's house, and that with a modesty which disclaimed, and yet could not help clearly revealing, the silent interest she took therein. Particularly of the writings of her "honored brother-in-law" she loved to speak as of the children of the house, whose mother, indeed, she was not, but whom she nursed and tended. Of the announcements for the next Michaelmas fair she spoke almost as one would of gathered and preserved fruits, which one is already beginning to consume, and she knew its preparation and progress.

Ephraim saw in all this only the intellectual animation of Recha, which all the time stimulated to wakeful alertness. He gladly followed her in all discussions.

Did she never dream of what passed between them, and had he deceived himself so infinitely? He could not believe it; no, it was only a playful teasing and ingenious concealment of her inner being, when she threw out to him, as so many toys, extraneous matters which had no bearing upon their real relation; she certainly loved him—that was written in her eyes, which looked down upon him so tenderly.

Zerlina, Ephraim's cousin, remarked his inclination almost sooner than he did himself; for the outside spectator can more easily distinguish where general social references pass over into personal ones, whence it often happens that the lover is surprised at finding his secret recognized by others

sooner than by himself. Zerlina was a friend of Recha's; she visited her at least twice a week, on parade-day, as well to enjoy her society, as for the sake of seeing, on the long way to the house, her fine figure, her little foot and her tasteful toilet admired by the gaping multitude; not seldom, also, had she a roll of notes in her hand, and Abraham Reckoner said: "She meant thereby to notify people of her musical culture." Zerlina often gave her cousin commissions and compliments to Recha. On the whole she deported herself as if it were a matter of course that she understood the whole situation. Ephraim accepted all without remonstrance; the gay and childlike disposition of his cousin delighted him greatly. If he had formerly approached her only with discomfort, because she had been destined for him by his uncle, the mutual complacency now dawning between them in a new point of view, gradually led to a certain brotherly and sisterly familiarity, nay friendship between cousin and cousin, in which still a polite attention is enough to distinguish it from the friendship proper of men and from the love of brothers and sisters. Ephraim behaved towards his cousin as if he lived in the most blessed state of mutual understanding with Recha, and was only sometimes disturbed by little irritations; he made this confession with inward trembling, and only upon the promise of the strictest secrecy, for he knew how he hereby destroyed every bridge for his retreat, but could he have helped being ashamed to confess the truth that he had surrendered so at discre-

tion? Ephraim even went so far as to beg his cousin to invite Recha to meet her in her father's garden, which lay before the Brandenburgh gate; he hoped here or on the way home to come to an understanding with Recha; he would not any longer content himself with the sweet game of "loves me—loves me not," he must have speedy and reliable assurance. Recha came, and with her Frau Mendelssohn. Ephraim saw, here in the garden for the first time, his beloved in a light and bright summer dress under trees and on the lawn; she appeared to him like a new creature; a fresh breath of spring rested on her countenance; the soft and full outlines of her lovely form flowed all the more sweetly under the light veil; she was to him as one new-born. He gazed upon her with a look full of love and ardent desire, but she looked thoughtfully to the ground and dug with the point of her foot a little hole in the sand. Frau Mendelssohn reported with rapture the news of the arrival of her husband's friend, the Secretary Lessing; in her picturing of the amiableness and gay humor of his manner, it seemed as if she could absolutely find no last word.

"How dost thou like him, Recha?" asked Zerlina, as she stood behind her friend and placed a blooming twig of syringa in her hand.

"I?" said Recha, lifting up her blushing face, "very well, but I have not yet spoken with him."

"Heigh! what a cat's-memory thou hast," said Frau Mendelssohn; "did he not beg permission to steal thy name from thee, and baptize with it a child of his muse?"

“Do you hear—a *cat's-memory*?” said Ephraim, laughing immoderately. He fancied he had concealed his easily provoked jealousy. All looked at each other.

The conversation would not flow on easily, and Zerlina told about the handsome wedding-clothes which her future sister-in-law was having made. They came unexpectedly upon the subject of the happiness it is when two married people love each other so devotedly.

“I know not for the life of me how one can help being happy with a husband,” said Zerlina; “one does what he likes, and so he, too, will do in his turn what pleases me.”

Recha embraced Zerlina, kissed her and praised her happy disposition. She then talked with Ephraim about *naïveté*, and how beautifully it idealized everything when the understanding only sees caricatures. Ephraim did not succeed in bringing his heart's affairs to a decision, especially as still other company arrived.

They separated in bad humor. Ephraim went home to send Recha his Petrarch which she had asked him for. “If she does not love me,” he said to himself, “with the same fast and fervent love with which I am drawn to her, she is not worthy of my love; I must cast her from me, as a piece of glittering glass which I had mistaken and laid up for a diamond; what is more despicable than a lover without reciprocated love? out of self-respect I must tear her from my heart—but does she not love me

then?"—He could not rescue himself from the sophistry of the heart.

When he reached home, he found his chamber open; through the half open door of his side chamber he saw Matilda, the pale handsome chambermaid, standing before the book-case and reading a book; he had often surprised her at this occupation; a tender relation had grown out of it, for Ephraim recognized in Matilda a strong propensity for poetical enjoyments; he often gave her books and talked with her about them, but he was compelled to find that Matilda drew from them only food for her sorrow; if she read of gilded princesses and flower-crowned shepherdesses, she sighed still more over her fate, which had given her so dark and dreary a childhood, and which, when it freed her, left her to become a servant-maid. Ephraim knew her history only superficially, that she was the child of a wandering beggar, who had fled without leaving any trace of him and had left wife and children behind in Berlin; from sympathy and because she was a distant relation, Veitel had yielded to the urgent entreaties of his daughter Zerlina and taken the child into his house. Matilda never loved to speak of her youth, and particularly would never confess how she came to have that broad scar on her forehead. Zerlina gave her new playmate (for so she regarded Matilda) instruction in reading and writing, and Matilda, who possessed a ready aptness for all things, learned with astonishing rapidity, so that Zerlina soon had the pleasure of lending her all the books

which she herself read. Matilda everywhere read her own evil fate between the lines, for everywhere she found it indicated how happily other people lived. There was nothing she wished on earth but to be a shepherdess; when the sun rose, she would sally forth with her sheep; at noon she would lie beside the fountain and enjoy her bread with a fresh draught, and when the evening bell tolled, she would come home, crowned with flowers; ah! and then, if a Daphnis met her,—she blushed at the thought, and her heart beat faster. Ephraim knew well why Matilda, when she had to hand round the meats at the table, shut her eyes with shame, and why in all the motions of her fine figure sadness and melancholy expressed themselves; Veitel named her nothing but “the disguised Countess of Have-naught.” Had Ephraim found Matilda at the time when he met with Philippina, he would have fallen enthusiastically in love with her; now he could only gather up for her the crumbs of a dish long since consumed. But Matilda saw that he comprehended her sorrow, and loved him with all her soul. Now when he saw her again before the book-case, as she with a down-cast face repeated over in a low tone with her pale lips every word she read, he crept up to her on his toes and would have clasped her hand.

“Please not,” said Matilda; “it is too rough from labor; but tell me, why have you never confessed to me that you were in love with Recha Guggenheimer? If you are only as happy as you deserve to be, and Recha loves you sincerely, then if it were



proper, I could go and say to her how dear and good you are, that she too may rightly know what a treasure she has in you; I could be maid to your wife and serve her with pleasure because she made you so happy, and if you had children, I would nurse and tend them like a mother”

“O thou heavenly sweet girl,” cried Ephraim, and kissed her coarse hand, which she drew back with shame and hid under her apron. Ephraim could not set forth to Matilda his relation to Recha, nor did he combat her own so deeply expressed affection. “This is, indeed, the only foothold on the quaking ground of her existence,” he said to himself; “I dare not rob her of it; on this noble self-delusion she climbs and clings, let her do so!” She now told him how much attached to him old Emanuel also was, and how they often chatted together about him. “Yes,” said she, “I think too much of you all the time; that is not good, I know very well, but can I help it? At night when old Emanuel plays the violin so mournfully, I often lie for hours at my open garret-window, and listen, and look up at the stars that glisten so lovely. Ah! I then often say to myself, one day when thou shalt see him no more, these stars will still continue to shine over thee, and so often as thou seest them thou wilt think of him and pray for him.”

Her bosom heaved more rapidly, her voice trembled. “Hark!” she suddenly interrupted herself, “I hear the door-bell; mistress is coming back from the garden. Farewell, now, I must go down, but

you—be right glad and happy.” With these words she slipped out through the door, and made a forced face of playful archness.

Ephraim smiled sadly at the fearful irony of fate, which sent him yonder in search of love, restless and in uncertain paths, and let him find such love here without his seeking it, and that he must receive merely as if in compassion all the golden treasures of a heartfelt affection.

## 17.—POOR SOULS.

EPHRAIM had almost forgotten that he was not properly a stranger in Berlin, that in fact his dearest relative, his sister Violet, lived there; but this was once for all his peculiar way, always to seek what belonged to him among *foreign* elements, and there, where it lay near him, not to recognize it. As the often deceptive resemblance of our features to those of others cannot be perceived by ourselves, but only by third persons, so Ephraim did not see that his own nature, both in form and in spirit, was repeated in a female way in his sister. She appeared to him too effeminate and morbid, and therefore he neglected her in an unseemly manner; hardly anything but his ill-humor did he transfer to her and then let it have its way, and he was vexed that she did not give him pleasure in return, nay that she even, herself, claimed sympathy.

It is a wide-spread and yet in many ways false maxim, that partners in sorrow are a comfort to each other; we should rather say, there are peculiar natures, and in all at times special moods, to which

another's sorrow is inconvenient and vexatious, especially when there is nothing to be done for it. Ephraim was almost angry with his sister for being unhappy.

In this frame he now went to see her again. Violet had received news from home; she told him, as a preparation, that Philippina had become the bride of a capital man, named Ries.

"I congratulate him," said Ephraim, laughing.

"Even when she was a child, I prophesied to her that she would be fortunate," added Violet; "she has so much careless gayety, and such people are always happy."

"Happy!" echoed Ephraim, "happy! What dost thou know of happiness? When any one has thrown himself into the water with a stone round his neck, and the rope to which the stone is attached does not break, call him happy, no one else. Wast thou ever once happy?"

"Yes, I can truly say, I have been, and I fancied I should be able to live on the remembrance of that happiness all my days. Thousands of times I repeated those blessed moments and lived them over again perfectly, but unhappily I had to learn that the present claims its dues. Does the cold make our teeth chatter any the less because in the midst of ice and snow we can remember a mild spring day? The remembrance of that happiness, conjured up a hundred times, became a pale spectre, a reality interwoven with dreams, in which I knew no longer what was truth and what was dream. Alas! I am

too weak, not even the bare recollection could I grasp if I stretched my hand after it."

"Thou art right," added Ephraim, in wild mockery; "whoso feeds upon memory, upon the carcass of the past, may live to be a hundred or die at once, it is all the same. But fresh life is a beast of prey, it requires all the time fresh life, which it may strangle and devour."

Violet was used to have her brother fly out into all sorts of extravagances; she let him have his way and now only led him back gently by saying: "Ah! I should be much happier if I had a faith to which I could make a pilgrimage. I would I were a Catholic and could find rest in believing—I would not have been a Protestant, like our brother Nathan."

"Nathan?"

"Yes, he has married a young widow of an official from Brieg, and has gone over to the Protestant church."

"I congratulate him, too; Nathan believes neither in wedded bliss nor in Christianity, therefore he has done right to put his neck into both yokes."

"Thou, too, hast the bad habit of the people in this place to snap the fingers at everything in a witicism. I confess that, after all, the defection of our brother troubles me sorely; he has cut himself loose from us, from our sorrows and our hopes."

"But I must tell thee news, too," began Ephraim again, now in a milder tone, feeling, no doubt, how he had pained his sister. "The Secretary Lessing

has arrived here from Breslau. I shall see him to-morrow evening at Mendelssohn's. Only think whom I shall see there besides; dost thou remember the lady that made such fine verses about thee at thy wedding? She lives here now, celebrated and honored as a poetess. A Baron Kottwitz, a true nobleman, has rescued her from her needy condition. Also the grenadier-poet, Gleim, who, at the Feast of Tabernacles, brought thee the souvenir from thy first bridegroom, will be present. He is now secretary of the cathedral in Halberstadt, and is building out of poetic epistles a cathedral of friendship. It is not wise in thee to keep thyself aloof so from all companies; thou denyest thyself many a pleasure."

Violet fell into deep thought when her brother had gone; she reproached herself for immuring herself so in her domesticity, but she could no longer extricate herself. She had, in marrying her husband, married into a whole circle of sisters-in-law and aunts, and it was impossible for her to sacrifice to each one, with the expense of time, a piece of her life; she had always come home so unsettled and empty from the so-called social entertainments, as she could take no pleasure in all the clack of gossip, criticizing of dress and firing off of small witticisms; she buried herself in a reclusé life of reading. "He is here!" she now said to herself; "I wonder, does he dream that I am so near him, does he, perhaps, any longer remember me? Ah! that I could see him, only once see him!" She raised her head; she was sitting directly opposite the looking-glass, and

now, when she saw her red cheeks and her glistening eyes looking at her out of the mirror, she veiled her face with shame and remorse, for she had become conscious of unfaithfulness to her husband. "But," said she again, "he has, indeed, no claim to my heart, he never demanded that." She considered in what way she could see Lessing to-morrow evening, without committing herself to the constraint of society and thereby giving up her whole previous mode of life.

Whoso observed Violet only superficially, would have agreed with the opinion of the Berlin Jews, that she lived in a happy wedlock, which, in order to be perfect, needed only the blessing of children; in fact, children would have attached Violet more closely to her husband, and prevented her sorrow from coming to an outbreak; it would not thereby have been appeased. However repulsive to her in the beginning had been the counting-room business, which she had to superintend for her husband, she, nevertheless, became subsequently in the same degree gratified by it, for she derived from it the consciousness of a profitable activity, and could thereby devote herself the more freely to the only passion which she could pursue with unalloyed pleasure, that of benevolence. Not seldom, however, did she spoil this pure pleasure of hers by hypercritical misgivings; she felt herself obliged to confess that she should be less susceptible and helpful to the sorrow and distress of the afflicted, if she herself led a happy life; she would insist on extorting

selfishness out of her actions. For the most part, however, the inner truth conquered, and she enjoyed that radiant angelic joy which always accompanies beneficence. How she rejoiced to be able to set it high on the list of her husband's good qualities, that he left her beneficence absolutely an unlimited range! Unfortunately, she could add but little else. Herz Helft was, indeed, an upright man, but that concerned his business relations with the external world. Love may, indeed, find in the general respect for character a fair ground to build upon, but it does not absolutely require that condition, for genuine love detaches not its affection from its object, even though he bore the Cain's-mark of universal scorn. Through her immediate entanglement in business matters Violet had also to endure all the whims of her husband, arising out of the manifold fluctuations of trade. In view of the many good qualities of her spouse, Violet had in the beginning unfolded all her tenderness and good nature, in order to bring her husband and herself into a warmer and more cordial relation, but Herz Helft took it all with cool composure, and Violet, perceiving her pains to be wasted, gradually ceased her little tender attentions. Her husband seemed hardly to notice it, he was the same afterward as before.

Herz Helft was a practical man; he had only married when he had fully sown his wild oats. Marriage was with him an insurance-office for careful nursing in age and sickness; the wants of Violet's soul he could not discern, because nothing of the



kind stirred within himself; he often beheld her with silent sorrow, for she was childless, and he saw in prospect his painfully-earned possessions passing one day into the hands of laughing heirs. He redoubled his business activity for the additional purpose of forgetting his domestic trouble. One could not in his presence venture to speak of children, who would not willingly see him put out of humor, and when any one of his nephews or nieces approached him he would kiss them and then softly push them away from him. Violet, also, desired nothing more ardently than to possess a daughter, whom she might train up to freedom and love; for such a one she would provide everything which birth and fate had withheld and wrested from her.

So lived the happy wedded couple which prudent mothers held up to their daughters as an example, how beautiful and blessed marriages of convenience were.

Violet thought of the ways and means of seeing Lessing the following evening, and when she had at last found them, she was singularly stirred up and went about through the rooms singing in a low tone. The poor who came to-day to get their weekly allowance received a double portion. She took down Lessing's writings from the book-case and read in them.

Ephraim, too, made his preparations for the coming evening. He had mentioned to Recha several times his making verses. She begged him to let her see some of them, and he promised to. Here, now,

he had found a way that should lead the most speedily to the long-sought decision. Instead of the poems he would hand her a letter; in this explanation no one could interrupt nor any stranger's presence embarrass him. Five—six beginnings of a letter lay round him; this one was too cold, that one too passionate, a third too intellectually elaborated, etc. At last he surmounted the obstacle by making it a lever and fulcrum; he began with depicting how hard it was for him to fix to-day the look, in which the soul reposed, upon paper; he pictured his whole inner life; every word breathed love. Nevertheless, he asked not openly and outright for her love, he begged for a candid confession of what she felt for him; he imagined thereby to save himself from the self-reproach of having inconsiderately placed his whole being at the mercy of a maiden's hand, and possibly having to take it back rejected. He said he only wanted, like Archimedes, a point outside of the earth, and he would lift it off its hinges; the love of Recha was to him this point, and sheltered in her, he would as a Jew, an outcast from the whole community, learn to conquer, renounce and despise the world. Finally he conjured her, in case of a refusal, simply to return this letter to him after three days; that would be answer enough.

With anxious beating of the heart he stood the next evening in his chamber, for he had to confess to himself that he had set his foot in the decisive path of his life.

Not for the sake of reviewing his dress, but in mere

absence and absorption of mind, he stared at his image in the looking-glass, and yet he would also fain take a free observation of his personal appearance. How would this tall haggard form be likely to strike others? Would they recognize the disharmony of the lengthy face, which now loose and now tight, quivered in painful woe, where others only feel pity?—In silent thought he blinked with his dark-glowing eye, and a sarcastically melancholy expression made itself visible in the little wrinkles.

A loving eye will look upon me, thought Ephraim at last, and its consecrating glance will reconcile me to sincerity and unity with myself.

As he left the house, Matilda opened the window and for a long time looked after him. “Ah, I am nothing but a poor soul!” she sighed, after he had disappeared round the corner.

18.—AN EVENING WITH MOSES MENDELSSOHN.

ON the way to the house of Moses Mendelssohn, Ephraim met Dr. Bloch, who was just on his way thither and told him that a Protestant deacon from Zürich, named Lavater, who had made himself known by his Swiss hymns, had with several friends been at Mendelssohn's with the express design of converting him to Christianity; that only with the greatest reluctance had Mendelssohn entered into the discussion; but then, and after the repeated assurance of discretion on the part of Lavater, Mendelssohn had defended himself with decided frankness, so that the zealous Deacon could at last only exclaim with tears in his eyes: "Would God, you were a Christian!"

"Mendelssohn has been unhappily very much exhausted by this discussion," Bloch continued; "when he sent for me to-day, he said to me: 'I am as little made for an athlete in my moral as in my physical constitution.'—Now you must stand by us, Mr. Kuh, in case of any new attack which the Deacon may at-

tempt this evening. We must cover Mendelssohn, and should sooner expose ourselves than our generalissimo."

It was with a peculiar reverence that Ephraim, on entering the sitting-room, grasped the offered hand of Mendelssohn; he would fain, indeed, in a twofold sense, earn the right to be near him.

The friends were already assembled, Frau Karsch only was yet wanting; she was in company at Count Herzberg's, where, agreeably to the fashion, people were admiring her impromptu versification. Mendelssohn stepped into a side-room to offer the prayer which was usual at that hour, for it was Saturday evening. Lessing and Gleim expressed their pleasure at being able to greet Ephraim as an old acquaintance; Gleim, in particular, remembered with deep interest that hour which he had spent in the booth at the Feast of Tabernacles, at Ephraim's father's.

The company was, as yet, at that first stage of buzzing talk to and fro, which may be regarded as a preliminary tuning and trying of instruments, and here one saw that a consonance was sought after, for Mendelssohn loved to make conversation social and lead it out to the discussion of a definite object.

Ephraim talked with Gleim and Nicolai, but he listened toward the other end of the apartment, where Lessing was joking with Recha and Frau Mendelssohn. Had Ephraim still doubted of his love, this jealousy must have convinced him of its power. He felt repeatedly after the letter in his

side-pocket, as if he feared that it would be snatched from him by a strange hand.

"It is surely handsome of Frau Karsch," said Recha, "that after my honored brother-in-law"—so she always called Mendelssohn—"has criticized her so unmercifully, in which I did not quite agree with him, she, nevertheless, comes to us without any grudge, and so modestly asks advice."

"Ah! I understand that," said Lessing, laughing, "there are persons, who, with the greatest deference, go from house to house and ask every one importunately: What do you think of what I have done or produced? Speak to me frankly and advise me what I shall do next. I am without sensitiveness and grateful.—But inwardly they only want praise\* and think that when they have expressed modesty they have done enough; all that most care to do or can do, after all, is to go on in their old way."

Ephraim had just been presented to Deacon Lavater, whose glance rested searchingly on his face, when Mendelssohn came in again and in a friendly tone inquired: "Where is Frau Karsch all this time?"

"Thyrsis may answer where his Chloe drives her flock so late in the evening," said Lessing to Gleim.

"If she knew that a *God is so gracious*† to her she would not seek the favor of a king;" answered Gleim, with an allusion to Lessing's Christian name.

"The king will do nothing for her; she is a German and a woman," said Nicolai.

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\* "We ask advice and mean approbation." (Lacour).

† *Gott-hold* (God-gracious).

“And she takes the liberty to be a believer,” added Lessing; “and here the popular thing is to bring to market as many absurdities against religion as one will. One will be ashamed ere long to use such freedom as this.”

“Where is there then a freer land?” asked Nicolai, and Lessing replied:

“You just try to tell the court-rabble a truth; let any one come out, here in this Frenchified Berlin, and undertake to raise his voice for the rights of the subject, and against blood-sucking despotism, and you will soon see which is the most enslaved country of Europe. Your free-thinkers are like the priests; they will believe in private what they please, so long as the dear common people keep nicely in the ruts in which they know how to lead them. The way in which your review of the king’s poems was received, dear Mendelssohn, doesn’t that show what kind of freedom they will allow? They have overlooked all the expressions of your sincere respect, and cannot pardon you for having shown by the standard of an infrangible logic what it is these *messieurs* put into verse, and how they often do not themselves know what they think. Is that freedom, that one will teach others, but will not let himself be taught?”

“You are too passionate, dear friend,” said Mendelssohn, with his mild timidity, and Lessing replied:

“If one may not be warm in speaking of what one sees to be an abuse of truth and reason, when and

where can one be? I do not mean any longer to be cold and indifferent. I say with Luther: Necessity breaks iron, and feels no anger."

All were silent awhile, but Lavater, who always loved to draw out a lively expression of sentiment, and with all his inward inspiration to bring to light, also, the power of his personality, now said:

"Your King Frederick may be called a great man; from my point of view I must say: Without faith and humility there is no true greatness. Give God above the glory, the Scripture teaches."

"The inventor of the Prussian monarchy," began Bloch, with a visible pugnacity, "has certainly no faith nor love, either towards God—"

"Or women," inserted Abraham the Reckoner, whom, in the friendly circle, they also called Diogenes.

"Or the physicians," said Lessing, satirically, to Bloch.

"I think," began Mendelssohn, with a commanding motion of the hand, and, as he always stuttered, particularly in the beginning of a speech, the attention of all rose to the pitch of a certain joint helping-out; "I think, that Frederick's isolated position conditions the basis of his character. He is just and tolerant, not from magnanimity or philanthropy, but from a sense of duty; he is unweariedly active for the mass, and yet is a misanthrope."

"He himself proves his principle," interposed Maimon, "that the actions of men are not properly determined by their maxims."



“There we must discriminate;” Mendelssohn again took up the discourse. “In our actions we are led by motives, in our sentiments by reasons; the former create the state, the latter religion, which constitutes itself as church, synagogue and mosque. But to return to our king; he wants the central point from which all life proceeds and to which it returns. He has never known the love of children or of woman; the friend of his youth was sacrificed to his father’s rigid notion of duty; to parental love he was equally a stranger; love of country and of glory cannot satisfy the lesser relations of existence, which, nevertheless, are a necessity to all; so then, nothing remains but the doing of duty, which perpetuates itself like the breathing of the body, and it is a no small glory of human nature that duty is so firmly rooted in the spirit as to hold its place undisturbed by all extravagances of opinion.\* I say the situation in life of Frederick permits him in his general thinking frivolity and mockery. Every great king of France has therefore been more worthy of respect, because as great king he played with his children on the floor. I should be inclined to assert that only in the family is man truly moral, there he is in the natural spiritual connection with the order of the universe.”

“Let us be married as quickly as possible, dear Gleim, else we shall even be excommunicated by our friend Moses from the church of morality.”

Gleim was ill at ease, for he who sang “God and

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\* See an eloquent passage in Brown’s “Philosophy of the Mind.”

Frederick," had to be one of the listeners to all this; he therefore kept his lips pressed together sullenly, and Lessing went on:

"But friend Moses only means to tease us. He knows that the standard of family welfare is not always adequate; there are natures and relations which demand a different measure. Whoso always lived only for the community, without the least self-reference, always under the point of view of what is universal and eternal, would live in God. I pledge myself in this sense not only to defend King Frederick, but to prove him holy."

"There again you are practicing your sham-fight gymnastics," rejoined Mendelssohn. "I will not rob you of the honor of espousing your favorite side, that of the assailed. Let us drop all personalities. You know very well that what I properly mean to say is: outside of society—the first point or inner circle of which is the family—man cannot fulfill his duty to his fellow-men or his God. Care for others, benevolence, makes one at bottom happier than self-interest, but we must, withal, still feel ourselves and the expression of our powers; our action would have no worth nor merit, unless it flowed from the free impulse of good-will. Other standards may hold good for those who stand at the head of society. I let that be with granting it—I only say, for us in the rank of citizens, the family unites equally duty and natural impulse. It is a question whether any but he who lives in family relations has a right to speak in the great council of humanity, of science,

to partake in the great festival of humanity, of art, or to take part in the great battle of humanity for right and reason."

All were silent, even Lessing kept his thoughts to himself; he may have felt that shyness which often comes over a friend, when before others he has fallen into an exclusive dialogue with his intimate: either it becomes a mere spectacle to the idle by-standers, or there comes in a consideration which prejudices the matter. With contemplative calmness Lessing looked into the shining face of his friend, who had suffered himself to be transported beyond his quiet and measured style of speech.

"Excuse me, respected brother-in-law, if I ask a stupid question," began Recha.

"Speak up," replied Mendelssohn, encouragingly, and both look and word expressed that friendly interest which treats a wife and sister with the familiarity of a relative, and yet again with a polite attention. "Thou regardest thy question as a very wise one, because thou callest it foolish, but let us hear it."

All eyes were directed to Recha, who said:

"Is not the idea of the family life, as you have laid it down, a reproach against our religion?"

"Express thyself more distinctly."

"I remember your once explaining to me that the Romans had used the word Family, in the first instance, for the company of household slaves; still harder than Rome was Judaism upon women; were they, then, much more than slaves? Has not

Christianity first redeemed woman from the state of slavery, laid the foundation of equality before the law, and thus founded the family?"

Lavater rose from his seat, and Ephraim trembled as he met the eye of Doctor Bloch, who was making signs to him; he fancied his love was betrayed, and thought now that the physician was hinting to him how the real fight was only just beginning.

"That is a delicate subject," said Mendelssohn, looking down a little uneasily; "that does not admit of being explained in few words, how far revelation is in itself perfect and eternal, and yet again in its temporal mode of manifestation capable of being perfected. Judaism has, with the disintegration of state life, cast off the elements of political nationality, and must now let other national elements, as Germanism—for this is here the standard—act upon it in regard to the position of woman. But I must beg that our conversation shall not be diverted in this direction. In these hours of recreation which my business allows me, I would gladly forget all difference, all discord, that has ever made man the enemy of man, and I always endeavor at such times to wipe out all experiences which I have had through the day, on that subject, from my memory."

"Disrespectful as I must seem to my host, I cannot agree with that," protested Lavater. "We have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. That is man's calling and dignity! We must always confess the name of the Lord, at every hour and in every place. I cannot, I must not spare you. You

evade the truth again, in ascribing to Germanism what belongs to our church."

"Either you or I," said Mendelssohn, "one of us is a memorable example of the power of prejudice and education itself over those who with sincere hearts seek the truth. But let us for that very reason leave all attempts at proselytism. The mass of all religions hold very much to conversions, but not the philosophers. You are a Christian preacher, and I a Jew; what of that? If we restore to the sheep and the silk-worm what they have lent us, we are both *men*. Were I from the heart brought over to another religion, it were the most contemptible pusillanimity, in spite of the internal conviction to be unwilling to confess the truth."

"Do you honestly ask yourself whether you are willing to own your prejudices in favor of our religion?"

"I know there are in my religion human additions and abuses which greatly obscure its brightness. Whether I have prejudices in favor of my religion I cannot myself decide, any more than I can know whether my breath has a bad odor. I will not insist upon it as an advantage of my religion, but only let it have its weight as a fact, that its revelation claims to be binding as a doctrine only on those of Jewish descent, and no others, for every other man in like manner can, as even King Frederick expressed himself, be saved in his own *façon*; Judaism has no revelation of exclusive saving truths which are necessary to happiness; these are not revealed by sound and

written sign, here and there, intelligible to this and that man, but through the creation itself and its interior relations, which are legible and intelligible to all men.

“For myself I set up this criterion in religious matters : as men must be all designed by their Creator for fraternal happiness, and exclusive religion cannot be the true one, no revelation can be the true one which claims to be the only saving one, for it does not harmonize with the designs of the all-merciful Creator. I hold the middle ground between dogmatic and skeptic ; I know, every other reasonable man, starting from another point and following another clew, may rightly come to an opinion exactly opposite to mine. Herewith, stormy friend, let us, I pray, at last conclude. The truths which we confess in common are not sufficiently diffused to justify us in leaving them for the disputed points.”

Doctor Bloch would not be satisfied with a peace so concluded ; he wanted also to have the victory, and therefore he kindled the strife anew by triumphantly exclaiming : “All religions, Judaism, Paganism, Christianity, all have brought upon the world more general mischief than blessing in particular.”

“Not so,” Mendelssohn once more protested ; “we should not yield to the propensity to set certain things very much too low because others have rated them very much too high, for thereby we keep the scales in a perpetual fluctuation and never bring them to an even balance. And radical negation lends a pretext to superstition. One will

then rather be surrounded by spectres than pursue his way in a dead nature through the midst of nothing but corpses. Do not assail the man-ennobling and exalting power of religion—”

“That I certainly do; it has deterred men from relying on their might and honor; the world is sick; it cannot rid itself of the fixed idea that there are Jews, Christians, and Heathen; Humanity alone must be henceforth the rallying cry.”

“And the position of the Jews,” Ephraim here ventured to put in his word, “is always the index to the state of the barometer of humanity—”

“I too am a globule of quicksilver,” Maimon here interpolated in a whisper to Abraham Diogenes, and Ephraim continued :

“Here is a gaping wound, into which the incredulous Thomas can thrust his hand; the Jews have no martyrologies, for they are all martyrs, more or less; they attest a high calling, which the world’s history has reserved for them, that in the midst of all storms and streams of the times they have stood fast and are now awakened to fresh activity. It is important first of all to insure an acknowledgment that in Judaism and the Jews, magnanimity and philanthropy have struck their roots no less firmly than anywhere else.”

Recha held her hands clasped while Ephraim was speaking, and looked down into her lap; this Ephraim had remarked, and took it as a proof of sympathy, or an anxiety about him, and in the midst of the fiery zeal of his speech the thought darted up that

he was showing himself here in a tournament before his beloved ; this was at those first words, where he properly repeated himself, but he quickly banished all side-considerations and plunged the more impetuously into the subject. Recha now looked up, as Mendelssohn added:

“Yes, one must guard himself from the blasphemous ingratitude with which one would oftentimes curse the gift of intelligence, for the position in which we Jews stand does not increase contentment if one learns to discern the rights of humanity on their true side. They go on to cut us off from all arts, sciences and other useful professions and occupations of men; block up against us all ways to useful improvement and make the want of culture a ground for our further oppression. They bind our hands and then reproach us for not using them. But I wish above all that we might refute the contemptuous opinion which they have of us Jews, not by contest and the like, but by virtue and integrity.”

“What do you want of recognition?” rejoined Abraham Diogenes. “By whom then would you be recognized? By the blockheads? They would need to be sensible. By the aristocrats and priests? They would have to cease being what they are. What remainder will there be then, when you subtract this sum total? Two or three people—”

“No, the state,” interrupted Ephraim.

“Thank you for nothing. What does the state concern me? I can live and think—”

“No, that only is life which knows itself as part



of the community, that only is thinking and feeling which turns toward a common shrine."

"You are nearer salvation than you dream," said Lavater, grasping Ephraim's hand; "a man who thinks of himself as an image of the Supreme Power becomes a transparent medium of the source of Light and of the most living Love, which he conceives as cause of all causes. And out of lowliness and a sense of the need of salvation blooms the flower of Faith, awaked by the Sun of Grace to life, and flooded with the pomp and splendor of the Light. You are a substantive in the grammar of humanity; unhappily the grace has not yet revealed itself to you, but it will do so, it must do so in prayer; for without grace, which the Lord pours out upon us, there is no faith."

Lavater spoke with so much unction and with a tone of such profound conviction that even the pugilistic Doctor Bloch would not oppose him; but Maimon alone cared nothing for the apostolic zeal of the Deacon and went blustering on:

"There we have it again, *new children of God, elected by grace*. Why am I a step-child of grace? What have I done, and all the millions of heathen with me? But I do not think much of the sharp opposition of many Jews, who would willingly have turned to Christianity as it is if they themselves had been allowed a hand in making it, but now that it has become so powerful without their doing, love to pick flaws in it. There must lie in Christianity a high historical idea, since it has received so high a

significance in the world's history, as a Jew was once converted to Christianity by the recognition of the fact that it forever and ever remained holy in despite of good-for-nothing and hypocritical priests. As the Christians call everything that they find good in Judaism and the Jews Christian, so too, do many Jews turn the tables upon them; at anything which pleases them in Christianity, they cry out like the clown in the circus, when his master does a mighty feat: 'Attention! he has learned all that of me.' But why hast not thou mounted the rope, thou wise clown?"

There was a general laugh, and Nicolai remarked that that mode of a Jew's conversion was related in Boccaccio's Decameron. Hereupon Maimon proceeded:

"I cannot ascribe all to the circumstance that the Greek and Roman gods were just on the eve of dying out when Christianity arose; accident is a maker of opportunity, but will and necessity must first be there to grasp it. For aught I care, Christ may have abolished the Jewish ceremonies or not, enough that they do not exist in the Christian church; religion is freed from all nationality, and the idea of humanity is saved. The only question with me is: Can I not also achieve that out of my own thought?"

"No," cried Lavater, "not without grace, and even if you could, still you are only a lost, lone lamb; you know not the way to union with the flock and the shepherd: the dogma and the symbol. I

will not now dispute the question whether the criterion of our friend Mendelssohn in reference to the exclusively saving power will bear examination; I will also let it stand without admitting it, that one can in any other way attain to salvation, but this is my conviction: through Christianity one can reach the highest moral perfection of which he is capable in the easiest and speediest way."

"Waiving every other consideration," said Ephraim, "I could not become a Christian, as I, being a German, cannot become a Frenchman or an Englishman, even though I held those peoples to be mightier and happier, and should be glad to have sprung from them; nor could I change my inner religion of language; I must remain a German and I am a Jew, and if I should be a deserter from Judaism, my life's roots would be torn up and torn to shreds. Of course this is only personal, and has for others no rational ground of universal validity, but is it anything different with faith, and is not the saving of personality the highest and the inalienable thing? If Christianity will have the free personality, the free man, well then, she must allow him a validity also outside of her church."

"This is precisely the miracle of the new birth through baptism, that you become another man;" replied Lavater; "that you become something which you cannot be nor attain through the deductions of overweening reason; faith is a miracle, and its interior force is the miraculous creation; it creates man also anew, and hence it is said in the Scripture: Faith can remove mountains."

Gleim now started up from his silence and with a smile declaimed:

“I, dwarf in faith, of thee, in faith a giant, pray:  
For me the Hoppelsberg of Halberstadt convey,—  
'Tis sure an easy thing for thee,—  
This day to Sans-Souci.”

A merriment offensive to Lavater seemed about to relieve the air for the company, when Ephraim once more took up the word, and, in speaking of the martyrdoms which chain us to the historic past, he told of the imprisonment and the death of his father on account of the superstitious legend of the passover-blood. The hands of Mendelssohn trembled, his lips turned pale, as he now cried aloud:

“And all this was done and is still done upon the strength of the most devilish lie, which has not even the shadow of a foundation. Rabbi Menasse Ben Israel asseverated before the English Parliament in the time of Cromwell, with the highest oath, that the alleged crime of blood-letting can never be practiced by a Jew for his passover, for the law forbids us even the blood of beasts. And I stand here and invoke all the curses of Heaven upon me, if Rabbi Menasse has not spoken the whole truth. I repeat his oath for myself, and my tribe, and all Israel. I bring no charge against the Christian religion; not it, but its priests have loaded us with this lie. What is too bad for the thirst of blood? But now, let us keep our religion, and do not hinder us from being honest.”

All were moved at the sight of Mendelssohn, who

sat down again, trembling in his whole body. A long silence ensued, till at last Recha said softly:

“It is the most painful of questions: Why is it precisely the holiest thing that has brought forth the monstrosities of crime?”

No one answered, when Mendelssohn spoke again with calm voice:

“The answer to this question is given by one of those martyred ones, a Hebrew writer, for he says: ‘The nobler a thing is in its perfection, so much the more awful in its corruption. A rotted wood is not so repulsive as a decayed flower; the latter is not so disgusting as a putrefied beast; and this again is not so ghastly as the human body in its corruption.’ So too, we may add: The fairest bloom of reason is culture, and proportionately the more hideous in its decay as moral corruption and dissolution; and the sublimest fruit of human intellect is recognition of God and love of man, and the most detestable in its decay and dissolution as fanaticism and misanthropy.”

“So, dear Moses, so we are now on the mountain-peak and survey the chain of heights and its cross-cuttings of valleys,” cried Lessing, at last, turning to and fro with nervous mobility. It was as if fresh choice troops marched upon the battle-ground and renewed the conflict, when Lessing now gave up his previous position of suspense and brought forward a new banner in saying: “I cry with Ulrich von Hutten: O century! Minds are awake, it is a joy to live! In the storm begins the true life. Fools, who

would be glad to banish the storm-wind out of nature, because it there buries a ship in the sand-bank, and here dashes another to pieces on the rocky coast! It is not that they care for others, it is only because it has unroofed their summer-house and shaken too violently the loaded fruit-trees—”

“Whither are you drifting?” asked Mendelssohn.

“Into the open sea, where the national emigrations and confining settlements of men, the funeral piles and devout pilgrimages with fluttering banners disappear. A great and holy plan runs through the life of humanity, as it rises and falls, and yet comes forth continually enriched. It may lie in the plan of the divine education of mankind, that each individual shall have had to go over the road on which the race arrives at its perfection, for only so do their results become livingly his own. It may lie in God’s educational plan, to let imperfect truths at first sway the world, in order gradually to clarify them—”

“But there does not appear to be any reason in the nature of things why error and halfness should at first prevail, why the direct way—”

“Because it is not true that the straight way is the shortest. Providence has, on its eternal road, so much to take along with it, so many side steps to take. The world is the life of multiplicities, of individualities. The holy sources and traditions are the elementary books of humanity, the revelations are the foregone results of the truths of reason, which are to be such in time; they are the amount which the arithmetical teacher tells his scholars be-

forehand, that they may calculate by it; they are the rules which a father gives his child as law, that he may find them himself later in life and verify them out of his own experience. We must wait patiently. Beware, thou more capable individual, how thou stampest and flamest at the last leaf of the elementary book; beware how thou let'st thy weaker fellow-pupils perceive what thou forebodedst or already be-ginn'st to see."

"This pictistic regard is beautiful," said Mendelssohn, "but I cannot allow any valid ground for it, for do you believe that humanity will ever be able to attain what floats before you as the goal of what you term the divine education?"

And Lessing with out-spread hands cried:

"Shall humanity never come to the highest stage of enlightenment and purification? Never? Let me not think this blasphemy, Gracious One! There will come a new and everlasting gospel for humanity, ripened into manhood, which shall no more need the elementary books, which will and must do what is good, no longer for the sake of arbitrary rewards, which are assigned to it, but for its own sake, simply because it is good."

"It will be hard for me," said Mendelssohn, "to set myself in opposition to your Messianic inspiration, and yet I cannot help it. As in the state man is the end, and society the means, so, also, in the greatest unity, the one under consideration. New human beings are ever coming on the stage, and their progress is not essentially conditioned by the

state of the community. I have no idea of this education of the human race you talk of. One represents to himself the collective thing—the human race—as a single person, and fancies Providence has sent it hither as if to school, to be trained up from child to man. The fact is, the human race is, in almost all ages, if the metaphor may be allowed, child and man and old man at once, only in different places and quarters of the world. The individual advances, but that the whole of humanity here below must be always going forward and perfecting itself does not seem to me to have been the object of Providence, at least that is far from being so clearly made out and so necessary to the vindication of Providence as one loves to imagine. Man advances, but humanity fluctuates continually up and down between fixed limits, and maintains, on the whole, regarded in all periods of time, about the same grade of morality, the same measure of religion and irreligion, of virtue and vice, of happiness and misery—and in fact needs as much as the individual for his education here below does, in order to approach, as near as is allotted him, to perfection.”

Lessing had just collected himself to reply to this view of a question, forever dividing the world of thinkers, where on the one side humanity with its recognizable joint-life and in itself is held to be the problem and end of its development, while on the other hand the individual man is made the prominent end, and his development into an indefinite region is the chief object of contemplation; but—and



this is prophetically significant for Lessing's life—he was interrupted by the theologian, for Lavater came to the front with the question:

“You deny then the eternal validity of the Bible and the divinity of the Saviour?”

“Deny! Deny!” rejoined Lessing. “O you inquisitors! But even if one does deny the divinity of the Bible, is the Bible religion? The inner truth of all religion, and so, too, of Christianity, still stands, though all that is external and the Bible itself should fall. Were this not so, then all the human beings who had lived for four thousand years before Christ are damned. Christ presented himself to his disciples as Redeemer and Restorer of the Jewish kingdom, and not till after his death was he sealed as the purely spiritual Saviour. This happened not in the way of intentional deception, but developed itself in the natural course of history. Whether Christ was more than man is a problem; that he was very man, is established. Consequently the religion of Christ and the Christian religion are two quite different things. The religion of Christ is that which he himself, as man, also recognized and practiced, which every man can have in common with him—and that is love and humanity; the Christian religion is that which assumes it as true that he was more than man, and which makes him as such an object of its worship. Spinoza before me lays great emphasis on the fact that religion is independent of the Bible, and he justly points to the

place where it is said of the eternal law: \* 'It was in the world and the world knew it not;' which is the true religion must be decided by the fruit of conduct, not otherwise."

"I know," Lavater still replied, "every one sees the universe through his own universe. Do you imagine in this way to attain to salvation and eternal truth?"

"To *truthfulness*," replied Lessing, "and this alone is enough. Thousands hold the place to be the goal of their thinking, which they happen to have reached when they were tired of thinking. But one must precisely there gird up his loins afresh—inexorable to all pleas of laziness and comfort, on his guard against custom and tradition. Let every one speak what is truth to him, and leave the truth itself in trust with God. Not the truth which a man presumes to be possessed of, but the sincere endeavor he has used to come at the truth, makes the worth of man. For not by the possession, but by the pursuit of truth, are the faculties expanded—possession makes one quiet, lazy, proud—"

"Have you not here caught yourself in a contradiction?" asked Mendelssohn, making a sign with his finger. "You adopt, with me, Leibnitz's individuation in opposition to Spinoza's universal substance, and yet you come back again with your collective or even unitarian humanity to the universal substance, and lose the individual. You were going to assign to humanity the conceivable attainment of

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\* The Logos.

its end, therefore, absolute truth and happiness, and now do you content yourself with the relative, subjective?"

"Possibly the progress of knowledge may let that which we contemplate as complete have only a conditional existence; every step in life is transition and terminus at once."

"In the walk of life the pleasant road is an end, of itself," remarked Maimon, and Lessing continued:

"It is only enthusiasts who can not wait the future. The ripe manhood of humanity—"

"At last, at last, thank Heaven, you have come," cried Gleim, rising up, and all eyes were turned toward the door; "only come nearer, Frau Karsch; chase out with your muse Christianity and Judaism and philosophy, and let us be joyous like the ignorant heathen."

The ladies present quickly clustered around the entering poetess; they seemed, notwithstanding all their respect for the men and their words, glad, nevertheless, to be relieved of the discussion, which had by such singular involutions lost itself in the most uncanny realms of inquiry. The men seemed, on the contrary, to feel that dissatisfaction which at the unavoidable interruption of an oral discussion always causes it to end without a firm final accord.

Lessing sat with his arms crossed upon his breast, and looked downward.

Doctor Bloch said softly to Ephraim in remembrance of their purpose: "When a general, as in old times, decides the battle for himself alone in single

combat, we soldiers' boys must modestly retire into the background."

Ephraim could not reply, his feelings were too much agitated.

Only Maimon seemed in the midst of all to have kept his characteristic humor, for he said: "Such religious conversations are to me always as if one were performing in a dream a heavy, painful labor; one wakes up bathed in perspiration, weary and bruised in all his limbs, and yet has brought nothing under way. Is it not so? Where are we now? Where we were. He is a parson, you are a doctor, you a rich man, and I a poor Schlemihl. The forms of religion are nothing but empty nests, in which one has hatched truths; the young have flown off and must build themselves new nests. Where? How? Let them see to that. In the place where I live they once put an intoxicated man into a dark cellar and surrounded him with none but people in grave-clothes; when he wakes up he imagines nothing else than that he is dead, and asks the oldest: You, you, must be well acquainted here in heaven—say, where can I get a good glass of brandy? What can I make of all your philosophizing! I, too, ask: Where can one get in life a good glass of brandy?"

The grotesque capers of Maimon's thoughts brought back cheerfulness and gayety to these exhausted minds, and all found themselves again in the accustomed world. All crowded round the Frau Karsch, for her appearance, as of one who had not participated in the recent discussion, gave the wholesome shock

to every one, which reminded him of another life out in the world and in his own being.

The silken dress of Frau Karsch rustled conspicuously in her somewhat rustic movements; her face was sad and excited, her cheeks burned visibly, her eyes rested often with melancholy love on Gleim, for she loved her Thyrsis hopelessly.

Ephraim greeted her as an acquaintance of earlier times, and stood by as she assured Mendelssohn that she found his criticism of her poems thoroughly just, only men were too hard, and that the remark that an accidental stroke of the brush might happily imitate the light foam on a horse's bit, but could never produce a rose, was one which it took her a long time to get over. With discreet wit Mendelssohn replied that it was a peculiarity of critics to keep in memory their little malicious discharges less than the poets do who are the subjects of their strictures.

Ephraim saw Recha alone and, turning to her suddenly, said that he was almost ashamed in the midst of the most elevated discussions to think of himself, and yet he looked upon it as an inexpressible blessing now in the invisible church of the spirit to kneel down and gain a new being.

He handed Recha the letter. She took it trembling and with downcast eyes and quickly mingled again in the company, in which the most careless gayety now reigned.

Contrary to all usual custom, it was near midnight when the company left Mendelssohn's house.

The moon shone clear, the houses across the street threw dark shadows. They talked of the surprising meeting of so many old acquaintances.

"Pray, tell me, dear Mr. Kuh," said Lessing, "you had an extremely lovely sister; I have often thought of her with the deepest interest; what has become of her?"

"She is married here in Berlin."

"Has she children?"

"No."

At that moment there glided out of the shadow of the opposite houses a veiled figure and disappeared round the corner. No one dreamed that it was Violet, who had stood there looking up at the bright windows; she darted through the streets, fearing Lessing might have recognized and followed her. Not till she opened her house-door did she look round, and was not after all very glad to perceive that she had only trembled at her own imagination.

Lessing spoke with warmth of the lively interest of Jewish matrons and maidens in intellectual productions and expressions generally, and the awakening of a German national literature in particular, and said that a similar sympathy was seldom found in the corresponding circles of Christian society. Ephraim added the explanation that the social and political sympathies lying fallow turned over all their vitality into that field; exclusion from direct life created an exaggerated inclination for the more vivid reflection of it in poesy; and with the echo of this evening's discussion vibrating in his soul he con-

cluded that the reason why the Jews were in every respect more wakeful to every flutter of the divine genius's wing was that they still turned in every direction their waiting eyes for the Messiah.

Ephraim now remained the only speaker, and he spoke with the more freedom and inspiration that no one looked in his face. He disclosed his longing, after such a revelation, that he might gain a new life, follow a master and do all for his pleasure; whereas now nothing remained but to resume tomorrow the old mode of life.

Lessing was the only one who answered.—The master whom one now followed, he observed, was the thought of truth; the way in which the spirit now showed itself could not at once bring with it a new change of life; the great thing was to affirm it in individual and seemingly secluded forms of activity.

At the house of Frau Karsch the party separated. Ephraim still accompanied Lessing to his dwelling at the Nicolai church-yard. Lessing pressed his hand in silence, but Ephraim would not yet let go, and complained that it seemed to him a sin to go to bed now; he would gladly keep awake henceforth and forever, and live on in this way uninterruptedly till death in holy enthusiasm.

And as it often happens that one knows no other way of requiting an ardent affection than by expressing one's innermost motives and purposes, and imparting them to those to whom no inner impulse would otherwise have drawn us, so now did Lessing

perform this act of involuntary confidence, by relating to Ephraim how he had "stood asking work in the market place;" how, at the exhortation of his friends, only with the greatest repugnance he had applied for a place in the royal library, that Quintus Icilius (Guichard) had nominated, but King Frederick had twice rejected him. Lessing spoke of it as a satisfaction that he had tried to do what seemed to him a duty of life, but said he was well content not to come under "the slavery of office," and that now he should settle in Hamburg.

Lessing went with Ephraim a little way farther, and the latter escorted him back again.

It seemed as if Ephraim could not tear himself away from the height of existence which he had now ascended; and when at last he went homeward alone, there came over him a presentiment of the most painful desolation. He was alone in the world. The flower of his life had bloomed and withered.

But did not love, then, beckon?



## 19.—SUICIDE.

O THE blissful waking, the child-like smile of recognition at the brightly breaking morn. Thou feelest as if thou couldst shout for joy into the young sunlight; fresh waves of light course through the veins; thou wishest thyself the pinions of an eagle, to soar away over the transfigured earth—and dost thou ask: What is it that wakes in me a thousand new lives and cleanses and new-creates me and the world? It is love which has sent her blissful spirit to thee in dream, to sing their heavenly harmonies into thy soul.

Whoso has ever been made blest, whether by the favor of fortune, by a prosperous deed, or by the deliverance of the inner man, summoning the energy of life to fresh proof of itself, such a one knows that the first opening of the eyes, the waking hour, unlocks anew all the treasures of happiness, and calls the soul to a pure communion with the transfigured world.

Thus did Ephraim awake on the following morning; the sun beamed as bright and friendly through

the chamber as if it celebrated with him his bridal morning. He was obliged to attend to the business and cares of the day; he did so with a quiet obedience, nay he was even glad to have an outward occupation. No one in the house observed what was going on with him, and why he was to-day so exceedingly gay, and the next moment smiled to himself silently; Matilda alone guessed the true reason, for she saw how sedulously he avoided meeting her or exchanging with her a single word.

In the midst of his joyful suspense and strain of feeling, it was a comfort to him to watch by Emanuel's sick-bed. It seemed to him like a divine service before receiving his good fortune, a lowly offering in the fore-court.

One evening when he entered Emanuel's chamber, he found a man whom the latter always called *brother*, and who played to him on the violin. In spite of the August heat, the stranger wore a heavy old military cloak, above which rose a face that looked as if it had been wasted in a prison, and was surmounted by a bald skull; in the twilight that reigned in the chamber, he appeared like a night-spectre, and at every sweep of the bow his features distorted themselves and his whole body under the flapping cloak seemed to fall into convulsions. When the stranger observed Ephraim, he laid aside the violin, gave Emanuel his hand, and departed.

"There is no misfortune so great," said Emanuel, "but there is a still greater to which it must yield the palm."

“That is what I call pouring gall into the worm-wood potion to sweeten it. What is the name of the man who just went away?”

“It is even he of whom I speak. I remember him still in the good old times. Hast thou never yet heard of the man to whom Berlin, at the time it was occupied by the Russians and Austrians, owed everything, in whose house they not only deposited the moneys of the congregation, but even private persons placed their possessions in safe keeping; who was a truly patriotic citizen, to whom the magistrate himself bore witness that he had given an example without example, and who yet was shamefully betrayed? Hast thou never heard of the rich John Gotzkowski?”

“Yes, indeed, and I cannot comprehend how it is that he still lives.”

“Because he is not yet dead,” answered Emanuel, who turned to the wall and gave no further answer to any of Ephraim’s words.

On the third day, at noon, Ephraim sat sad and disturbed in his chamber; he wrote a letter, not to take leave of any one, but to dispose of his property, of which he bequeathed a third to Emanuel and the other two-thirds to Matilda; the amount which Trevirano owed him he remitted to him. He locked up the papers in his desk and went down to his uncle’s keeping-room. Matilda sat alone at the window, sewing.

“May I not know, then, what ails you?” she asked; “trust me, I can do much. I would go for you as far as my feet will carry me.”

“I thank you, dear Matilda,” rejoined Ephraim, “I must make the rest of this journey for myself and by myself alone, but tell me: have I then a bill of lading in my face, so that every one knows what is in me? Do I then look so sad?”

Matilda could not so readily answer. At that word “dear” which Ephraim had just used for the first time, instead of his usual “good Matilda,” she had suddenly started and thereby pricked her finger and was now sucking the blood.

“Ah God!” she said at last, “you look as if you were going to your death!”

“Really? That is true; and I am always going to my death; have I lived to-day? No, I have died to-day; our life is only a creeping to the grave! How would it be, Matilda, if I should die to-day?”

Matilda could not answer for sobbing and weeping. “I do not understand what you are thinking of,” said she, finally, “but I feel so anxious, so anxious. I conjure you to be frank with me.”

Ephraim gazed on her with a melancholy look, then turned away with a deep sigh. At the door he stopped, as if he would once more turn back, but suddenly he collected himself and ran down the steps. Matilda looked after him, as he went up the street; he turned round. She thought at that distance she saw a tear glimmering in his eye. Quickly Matilda shut down the window, tossed the bunch of keys which hung from her apron into a corner of the chamber, threw her cloak over her and stole after Ephraim.

Twilight had long since set in, when Ephraim turned into Spandau street and entered the house of Mendelssohn; he found Recha and her sister, with several other women, and a lively little girl of about five, sitting around the tea-table. Recha turned deathly pale at the sight of Ephraim. However, she rose instantly, handed him a cup of tea, and withdrew to an adjoining room, from which, however, she soon returned; but at the threshold of the door she breathed into her handkerchief and pressed it to her eyes. Ephraim saw that she must have been weeping.

The ladies were intellectual and æsthetic; the conversation turned upon the theatre. The Cinderella at the Court of Frederick, German Poesy, was suddenly, through Lessing, greeted in her splendor. Döbbelin had conquered all obstacles, and it was an unprecedented event, that six times in succession and each time with increasing interest, Lessing's masterpiece, "Minna von Barnhelm," had appeared on the boards.

All were under the overmastering spell of the work which, drawn from life, acted upon life and moved men's souls by holding up to them the mirror of their own being. But one is always, to be sure, more important in a critical attitude than in inspired self-surrender, and so some of the ladies did not find a proper *gout* in the piece, because there was not enough in it to laugh at. One burly dame, as rotund as she was sensitive, who had never yet tied a shoe-string with her own hands, turned up her

nose because there was so much talk of that prosaic thing, money, in the piece; she ridiculed the pawning of the ring, and the full pockets of the sergeant. Another lady smiled at the luxury of magnanimity displayed, and incidentally at the reference which Lessing had woven in, to his native Saxony, and that it was surely improper, the way Minna threw herself upon the neck of that noble Tellheim. A native Saxon woman observed, however, that Lessing had also expressed in the character of the Count of Bruchsal the regret of a non-Prussian, that Frederick the Great was not the hero of all the Germans. Meanwhile they passed from this subject and discussed the question why Lessing should term coffee a melancholy beverage. One lady who affected great modesty explained timidly that Lessing was this Tellheim himself, that he had once loved a countess. She played the mysterious, and assumed an air of secret intelligence, but asserted that she could not say more, as she must use discretion.

Once more the conversation came back to a question touching the main point of the piece, when they sought to ascertain whether Lessing had conceived Tellheim as a born prince. Recha was disposed decidedly to deny it; she appealed to the bitter mention of Othello, and to that final explanation of Tellheim's, when he says: "I became a soldier from partiality, I know not to what political principles, and from the whim that it was well for any honest man to try himself for a while in that

calling, in order to familiarize himself with all that is called danger, and to learn coolness and decision. Only the extremest necessity could have constrained me to change this trial into a destination, this occasional occupation into a trade." She spoke with much spirit of the soldier's life, and how Tellheim must be a man of sensibility, because the final result of this war had been nothing but honor, and no change in the state of the world bearing upon human freedom.

Ephraim smiled bitterly that Recha could now enter upon a foreign subject with such coolness and composure, now when a question of life and death was pending.

He constrained himself, however, to enter into the conversation, and explained that Lessing had indeed expressly designated Major Tellheim as a native Curlander, as the servant just said the Major had sent him twice in six months to his family in Curland.

Recha expressed her thanks with peculiar friendliness for this new light; she seemed full of zeal, and when the conversation turned again from the poetry to the poet, and faint attempts were made to find flaws in him, Recha said with a glowing countenance:

"Lessing unites in himself the noblest qualities: clear understanding and profound warmth of heart, nay, passionateness for his convictions; calm, mild judgment and unbending integrity of character; unswerving firmness and gracious tenderness. I owe to him a great life-maxim, which he has perhaps for-

gotten, for he once said in an off-hand way: 'Many men take excitableness for feeling.'

*Does that mean me?* Ephraim asked himself. In this portrayal is she holding up to me a mirror? But Recha now turned to him with the concluding words:

"I know you also venerate Lessing with all your soul."

Ephraim nodded assent and succeeded in rising above the sense of being hurt, that Recha had praised so highly before him another, however highly placed; nay, he even raised himself to the pure devotion which joyfully does honor to a true spirit, and with this feeling he now said: •

"In Lessing's country there are in the mines men whom they call markers; they know how, deep down, in the dark shaft, to determine exactly where in the daylight the boundaries of the several fields begin, and whoever calls a piece of earth his own, to him belongs so far as it reaches, all, even up to heaven, and down to the most unfathomable depths."

Ephraim turned a glowing eye upon Recha, and collecting himself, again went on: "So, too, is Lessing a marker in the realm of mind; he knows how, in the most nightly depth, where, in the light overhead, is a church, a hovel, a palace, and where the bounds of an individual property; and he also decides and divides rightly."

With still glow, the look of Recha rested on Ephraim, and it seemed as if the two lovers found themselves in the joint veneration of an exalted man as



before an altar. But the world seems not to recognize, or absolutely to deny, the shrine in the midst of its commonplace life.

After a short pause they glided away over all deeper suggestions, and the ladies soon came in the course of their "entertainment" upon another theme; one of them, in whose house Professor Ramler lived, in the upper story, asserted that every time the Professor walked, she knew by his step in what metre he was at that moment composing his verses. All giggled; they went on to talk of Voltaire and the Marquis D'Argens, and told how one had no time nowadays to read all the *interessant* things, because household affairs were so engrossing; and now they passed on to the subject of washing. Ephraim took Mendelssohn's little child in his lap. "My sweet lady," he said to the child, "do you prefer to read Richardson, Yorick, Klopstock, or Diderot? You probably prefer the former; ah! and Marmontelle, and Gessner and Wieland! and Shakespeare and La Fontaine! I tell you one cannot be a perfect German lady so long as one reads German; everybody, to be sure, understands German. Who will have anything to do with that? I tell you this Thuringian Minna von Barnhelm is a barbarian; else how could she say that, in Germany, one must speak German with a Frenchman? She certainly has a very bad accent. The Deutsch speak is a clumsy speak. [*Die deutsch Sprach ist eine plump Sprach.*] Mademoiselle parle français. Mais sans doute: telle que je le vois. La demande était bien impolie."

Ephraim quickly set the child down out of his lap, she flew to her mother; the ladies smiled at the odd children's friend; only Recha blinked uneasily with her eyes and chewed at a corner of her handkerchief. The conversation resumed its full tide, for all the sluices of city news were opened; Ephraim moved despairingly back and forth in his seat; at last he rose, and stepping to Recha, said:

"My young lady, I have some words to say to you in private; will you follow me to the window yonder?"

"Pray! —"

"What do you wish there?" asked Frau Mendelssohn.

"I speak with you alone, Recha," answered Ephraim, hurriedly, without looking round at the speaker. "You must, you must fulfill my request. I have a right to demand it of you."

"You want a criticism of your poem," answered Recha, trembling, and thrust her hand into her work-bag. "Here it is; my bitter tears which have fallen upon it may be an all-sufficient criticism for you. The hero is a glorious man, whom we must respect, but unhappily he is the victim of a delusion. I wish, my ladies, that Mr. Kuh would read you something of his beautiful poem."

"What is the subject of it?"

"A New Archimedes; but it is too hard a problem that *one* heart shall compensate for the whole world, and the hero must first ask himself whether he stands firmly enough on his own feet to ask for a point outside of the earth. The hero is a noble—"

“Fool!” Ephraim completed the sentence and snatched the letter from Recha’s hand, tore it in pieces and bit it with his teeth; then he gathered the pieces together and thrust them into his pocket, broke out into a peal of immoderate laughter which was evidently forced, but it seemed absolutely impossible for him to come to an end, and in his violent motions he almost upset the whole tea-table.

“It is enough to make one die of laughing,” he cried; “excuse me, ladies, but it is enough to kill one with laughing. It is the story of a foolish ventriloquist, who fell in love with the female voice, which he himself imitated; and the super-wise Miss Recha has let her tears be wrung from her by a shred of paper, by a hero out of the inkstand; it is enough to make one die with laughing.”

“An extraordinary man,” said one of the ladies, when Ephraim with a polite bow had taken his leave.

“I feared he had become crazy,” said another, “for that was a crazy laugh.”

Meanwhile Ephraim had left the house. With hurried step he made his way toward the Spree, to extinguish his lamp of life in its waves. A hundred lines of thought coiled themselves up within him; he whistled a lively tune; it seemed to him as if a heavy hand rested upon him and drove him on without any will of his own; and yet he often looked back again, as if a magic breath turned him away; he felt that his good genius followed him and called him to turn back; nay, he even believed he continually heard steps behind him. Had he noticed more

distinctly, he must have observed that a veiled figure followed him at a distance . . . . He struck into another path.

On the banks of the Spree wandered moaning a veiled form; it knelt down in prayer; the moon hid herself behind clouds; suddenly it raised itself up; it heard approaching steps, and with a cry of terror, sprang into the flood; the waves closed over it; here and there might have been heard a struggling and a splashing in the water, but soon all was still; the moon shone out clear, and a fisher came to spread his net.—

O, what a wretched waking! there is a dreary whirl of frightful grimaces before thy sight. Thou grin'st at the sunlight that steals to thy bed; thou wouldst gladly make the day blind; the wings of thy spirit are broken; thou hast neither the power nor the will to rise; thou wouldst fain close again the gates of the eye upon thy awakened consciousness; wouldst sleep; wouldst die; and dost thou ask: what is it that has crushed and shattered thee? It is lost love; whether by deception and betrayal, or by the power of circumstances, the robbery has been accomplished upon thee; into thy very dreams it sends its anguish and murders thy rest and thy forgetting.

Whoso has ever experienced a heavy sorrow, whoso by the power of fate or by any fault of his own has been cast down and chained down in the confused whirl of life—such a one knows how at the first opening of the eyes, in the hour of waking, the calamity suddenly breaks in afresh and over and over again; the world is dead—dead is his very life.

Thus did Ephraim awake the next morning. The servant-girl from Mendelssohn's house brought the Petrarch "from Ma'm'selle Recha with her best compliments." Once he would have envied every leaf and every letter on which his eye rested, and now he flung the book into a corner, for *she* had touched it. Trevirano entered.

"Thou, too, hast thy share of blame in the devilish tragedy," he cried.

"What art thou talking about? what is it then?"

"Well, thou knowest of course, that the mincing chamber-puss, Matilda, had been missing from home since last evening; and this morning a fisher has found her in his net which he spread out upon the Spree."

Ephraim could not answer; whatever Trevirano might say, he remained mute, till the latter at last went away vexed; now at length he could groan out loud; a flood of tears rolled off from his soul the heavy load of anguish, and at last he sank worn-out and exhausted to sleep. It was past noon when Ephraim went out. He would have redeemed the body of Matilda from the dissecting-table, but the law was rigid and could not be evaded. To be sure he received one comfort from the dissection; the surgeons assured him unanimously that Matilda had suffered from a heart complaint, and could have lived very few years longer; this could give him, however, but a faint satisfaction.

## 20.—DEMORALIZATION AND DEPARTURE.

WEEKS and months had passed. Matilda had found no grave which bore her name; she was scraped in with other lost ones and forgotten, only Ephraim at times still remembered her, when after a night of revelry he awoke in the morning with remorse of conscience.—Passion and will conspired, and he persuaded himself that he bade the world defiance and would let it know in his destruction what it had lost in him, and yet he defied no one except his own better self, which the world always sees with unconcern go to the bottom. And as the sense of every pain announces itself first in that part of the organism where a malady has seated itself, so it was in this case. “Were I a Christian,” Ephraim said to himself, “I would take military service, or in some other way offer myself for the country and public life and honor; now that the public way is closed against me as a Jew, what remains for me? Money-making? It has no attraction for me. Science? To be sure, into her sanctuary no arm of secular or priestly police can penetrate, but to bury one’s self

in science is also a suicide, only of a more respectable sort,—nothing therefore is left me but to—*merrily live and joyfully die!*”

Trevirano was a faithful boon companion, and inventive in devising new enjoyments, which he knew how to serve up with a certain *noblesse*, with an unimpeachable grace. He took Ephraim into the society of the Italian Singers, where the Galiari and Barbarine, the Ostroa and Salimbeni, ravished with song and gay jest, but Ephraim felt himself still more attracted by Döbbelin's theatrical company in which a dissolute life of pleasure was overspread with an enchanting veil of geniality. In cities where a dismemberment of society presents itself, one will very frequently find that Jewish youths, aspiring after more refined and free enjoyments, attach themselves to the play-actor's life; a common revolt against the dull commonplace of society, based on different reasons yet similar in its manifestations, links them together; those repulsive Jewish dandies and æsthetic enthusiasts, those coffee-house æstheticians, off with the tailor's and *frisieur's* culture, are a natural, though a sad product of this alliance.

Ephraim had another special reason for being pleased with this theatrical life, as at this time, when the actors, as strolling companies, had fully separated themselves from general society, they also went on their way freely in disregard of all its laws; wanton young officers, young officials who had not yet played out the student, old worn-out debauchees, in short all that felt itself constrained in the pressure of

society and excluded and outlawed from the circle of citizens, gathered here. Especially conspicuous was an elderly but extremely attractive Italian; they called him bluntly nothing but Chevalier; he had only recently arrived in Berlin and charmed all by the grace and ease of his deportment, as well as by the lively relation of his almost fabulous adventures.

In this society outside of society the bitterest satire was indulged against the life and doings of the so-called Philistines; they laughed and jeered at the virtues adorned with beauty-patches; and the whole chaotic whirl of demoralization; witticisms and puns followed clap on clap. In Ephraim too the epidemic influence soon appeared which manifests itself in bacchanalian wantonness. At first only for the sake of not appearing prudish and pedantic he joined in timidly, but soon the pleasure of such ways overmastered him, and when he had once given himself up to it he was borne on till he became a spur to all the others. He fell into the most ruinous of all moods, in which the distortions of corruption are contemplated with a certain complacency, and one dares not rest till he has scented out in all the phenomena of life the hidden drop of evil. His original and borrowed witticisms transplanted hither from Jewish regions excited surprise by their foreign flourishes, and Ephraim soon passed in this society for the richest wit.

Returning home from this jovial company, in the silence of solitude Ephraim almost always recognized the burned-out desolation of his spirit; of all the



laughter, all the flashes of witticism that followed each other so swiftly peal on peal, nothing was left behind that could sustain his inner man in its elastic gayety; for this is the immediate revenge of the spirit against its maltreatment, that such maltreatment is dogged by the spectres of remorse and emptiness.

A large portion of those smaller poems in which he sharply scourges the falseness and faithlessness of women, date, however, from this period; nevertheless, Ephraim could not suddenly break off his earlier social connections, nay, rather, he made a show of his altered view of life; he would fain pass for a misanthrope and life-destroyer.

As that gloomy Spanish king caused himself to be interred in broad consciousness that he might know the horror of the grave, the funeral pomp and the after-talk of men, so Ephraim went to the last limits of self-destruction. He felt a peculiar melancholy satisfaction when any one reminded him of his intellectual qualities, of his good heart, of all the zeal and exalted endowments of his nature—that was now all dead, and yet men saw what had died. But not even in this could he quite content himself, and sought to build up a peculiar system of Epicureanism, which raised an undutiful enjoyment in opposition to nature and human society to the rank of the highest end and aim.

And yet there was again a slight quiver of uneasiness within him when he perceived that his wild speeches were taken in earnest and not with the protest of the better knowledge of his real self.

Ephraim had in fact for a long time been accounted among his acquaintances as weak and wavering, for he always carried his wishes and aspirations on his lips, and only he who locks up his changing purposes and wishes in his own bosom and surprises by action, impresses men as strong and consistent. This complete transformation, however, alarmed all; only Veitel smiled quietly: "One must sooner or later sow his wild oats," said the practical man; "it is better he should do it now than put it off till he is married; that makes the best kind of husband; the two or three hundred dollars which it now costs, one can well let go; we have enough at any rate," and he complacently jingled the money in his breeches-pocket.

He was now better satisfied with Ephraim than ever, for the latter had, as if in mockery of himself and the world in which all good fortune should have its market-price, become an enthusiastic speculator, who now all at once transferred his poetic fantasy to business combinations. Veitel exulted with rapture over the sudden awakening of his nephew; he ascribed this enlightenment to his own influence and laughed greatly when Ephraim explained to him that he only strove after money because he despised it, because it was the means by which he could learn to despise men. Ephraim was put to his trumps when Veitel acknowledged that in this also he was quite right.

One day, however, Veitel came to his nephew's chamber and said: "Thou knowest what great ac-

count I make of thee; thou mayest become the greatest merchant in the world. Thou seest too that I have never put anything in thy way, thou art a free master, and canst do what thou wilt, but there are two things against which, as uncle, I must warn thee."

"And these are?"

"In the first place, I don't like thy brotherhood with Trevirano; we must not have any such friendships with a man who has no money. I am not angry; thou seest how I treat Emanuel and that I have a good heart. I know very well all men are not selfish, but still one gets himself into a dilemma of this kind. Such men usually need more than they have; if one gives them money, one gets nothing back again; if one gives them none, the friendship comes to an end and one loses after all his good name. Therefore thou wilt have no more to do with this Trevirano, who might drink up thy property and mine and that of seventeen others, houses and lands and all.—My second is this," here he pointed to the enormous case of books. "I have reckoned there is more than a thousand dollars' worth of stuff sunk there, which is worth barely thirty per cent.; that is a luxury for a prince, but not for a business man, who must make compliments to every one, if he is to make a silver groschen out of him."

"You have spent a greater sum upon the pictures in your country-house."

"That is quite another affair; in the first place, I bought them cheap at the auction sale of Gotzkow-

ski's things, and can at most lose two or three per cent. on them, which I can soon get back again. But I don't part with them. The pictures are my best friends and relations."

"Your friends and relations?"

"Yes, and never speak ill of me behind my back, and always remain what they are. Dost thou not comprehend my meaning then? My Uncle Jekuf was a horse-jockey, and my grandfather had a voice like a commandant, but it had no weight beyond the synagogue of Prenzlau. Who has got the acquaintance of generals and statesmen, and the most considerable dignitaries? My pictures, saints and scamps, men and beasts and trees. Well, now, don't my pictures bring in their revenues? And truly and honestly, I know not how it has come to pass; I now take pleasure in the pictures themselves and I understand something about them too, the greatest connoisseurs tell me so."

Ephraim was silent, and Veitel, after a pause, continued: "I buy books also; I have this very week subscribed for Karsch's poems. She is a poor lady. I have paid her for it fivefold, and my name is printed at the head among the grandees. Follow my example and sell thy books, now, while they are new and handsomely bound; by-and-by they'll not be worth anything. I have said all."

Ephraim gave an evasive answer, and when Veitel had gone, he opened his book-case and his eyes rested with delight on the gilded titles. There stood in rank and file his body-guard, as he often

playfully called his library; it was splendidly uniformed, blue, and with shields; never, perhaps, did a king cause his troops to display before him with greater complacency than Ephraim here reviewed his books. "No, never," he said, "nothing shall part us; for when all forsake me, you will offer me consolation and rest."

Ephraim visited Recha also several times after that fatal evening. That is the most oppressive feature of the constraint society exercises, that it is necessary to keep the form of a relation unchanged, when its original essence has long since evaporated.

How should Ephraim meet Recha?

"An old flame is like an old lottery-ticket," Abraham Diogenes used to say; "time was when one set great hopes upon it, and studied the figures as those of a lucky number; now it is no longer anything more than a scrap of paper."

His altered manner of life gave Ephraim, however, sufficient power of resistance to behave himself toward Recha in a cold and unembarrassed manner. Many a time a demon even sought to persuade him to hail the now friendly and now melancholy looks of Recha as signs of repentance and silently blooming love; but even were a return possible, this much he felt, that the untroubled bliss of a first and pure sensation was forever lost, by mutual rejection, no less than by his own willful change and hardness. After a few weeks Recha took leave of her Berlin acquaintances; she went back to Hamburg.

"If God himself should ask for her hand, she

would beg three days for consideration," Abraham Diogenes had said of her.

Now, when Ephraim had long been out of humor, he did not take refuge as formerly with his sister Violet, for he felt that her habit of indulging his assertion of his whims, as a man and one of the lords of creation, was calculated only to aggravate, by no means to conquer them; and beside, the evident and real sorrow of his sister caused him in that still and pure presence too sore a self-reproach. Again he took refuge by the sick-bed of old Emanuel, who always received him with the same kindness; he had remained almost immovable, while Ephraim had been tossed to and fro by light waves.

"It is a sad thing that thou dost not understand anything of music," the old man once said; "for what is innermost and deepest in the soul there is no other expression than a kiss or a tear, but when one can neither kiss nor weep, music alone gives us a presentiment of what it is in the innermost soul that sighs for deliverance. Whoso will accomplish anything in life, needs others to help him or subserve him; and in every act he who will create anything needs forms and experiences from the external world which he may freely shape; in music alone one needs nothing of the outer world; it gushes from the inner; music is a something on the other side of the Babylonian confusion of tongues; it is a language common to all nations; music is the inner Saviour of the world."

"Hence it is, probably," replied Ephraim, half

playfully, "we are told, the Messiah is to appear amid the sound of trumpets to redeem the world."

And all the time, Ephraim complained over and over before Emanuel how he pined for rest and could not find it, and it seemed at last as if the hour of consecration had come. Emanuel set forth to Ephraim what a saving vocation it was to have been born a Jew; a thousand times cast off, and yet always cared for again continually, to gain his own heart and that of mankind in purity; and with exalted energy he said: "After the great journey of life, I come up again before the dark veil, and wait for light; how gladly would I impart to thee of that which shall be to me over yonder, but of that which I have received here below, I may let a ray fall into thy soul, and enlighten and gladden forever thy inner being. Behold, through the wide earth, torn as it is into a thousand hostile camps, there passes an endless girdle of light, into which all good men enter. In the hand of the One God, which thou holdest, thou holdest and art a link of this infinite chain; thou knowest its beginning, but not its end; for in distant zones lives a soul, throb thousands of hearts, animated by the same wishes as thou; and though thou never seest these friendly features, nor feelest the beating of this bosom, so long as thine eye drinks the light of earth—wherever thou standest is holy ground, and thou canst exclaim with joy: 'Above me God and his angels, and beside me good fellow-men.' When thou journeyest alone through strange cities and villages, be not afraid; let

thy heart say to thee: Behind these walls, amidst this whirl, there live human beings who strive for goodness like thee; who love thee as thy brothers—and thou wilt be happy. The higher thou soarest in this universal love, in this universal recognition, the more thou feelest thyself single and whole, and again recognizest thyself as universal, as a splinter in the great world-edifice, as a mote that floats in the sunlight, so much the more purely and freely dost thou live and die in the nearness of God. Behold, to wish to change the life of the universe according to thy own wish and need, is to desire what is impossible and were not good. Look at a single city; for centuries the generations have built there; no one can any longer arrange the streets differently, after a logical plan; one may think it fortunate, if by a new bridge, by the clearing away of single houses, a thoroughfare is opened which lightens human intercourse, and the new improvements must incorporate the old, and what has apparently sprung up by mere caprice, as a preconcerted part of their new plan. So, too, is it with the whole world of history.

“Ah! the saddest experience of my life is this, that no man understands another, that no man can give aught to another which he can so wholly grasp and make his own, as it was given. Every one takes only that, and keeps only that, of which he has something already.\* Look at human souls;

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\* One is reminded of the two sayings; “Every man shall bear his own burden,” and “To him that hath, shall be given.”



one is gold ground, another gray, a third brown, and so on; if thou wilt paint the same picture on these different grounds, thou must in each case mix the colors differently, distribute differently the lights. That is justice, that is the highest. Young friend, thou canst not yet know, take my word for it, what it means to look back at the end of life's journey and survey the dangerous by-ways and bold ascents. How much that one took so hard might easily have been mastered, and how often mere heedlessness and levity helped one over dangers; but all has at last led thee to the goal, and it is well as it is. Fain would I set all the gain of my life as a polished jewel in the silver of speech, and, making thee my heir, leave it to thee as a protecting talisman and magic ring. I could die more cheerfully, if I knew that I had also brought as spoils from the conflict, consolation for another, for my life has been unhappily a confused zigzag, on which I almost always missed the mark."

Ephraim received quietly this last appeal, but when he was alone he said to himself: Just as Rabbi Chananel did in my childhood, so would Emanuel now transfer the outstanding obligations of his life-battle to me to collect them. Is this the boasted felicity of the masters of knowledge, that at the end of their days they must content themselves with the living-on of their thought in the hereafter of another man? I will not let myself be so cheated by life, to seek at the end of my existence consolation in

another. I will enjoy for myself—for myself will I live and die.\*

Once, after a night of revelry continued almost till morning, Ephraim sat drowsily at his desk, when Veitel stepped up to him in a friendly manner and took him aside into the inner apartment, where he was accustomed to entertain distinguished strangers.

“I must at last out with it,” he there began; “I have always waited for thee to begin, but it is with thee as with that sick man who lay dying, and whom his son exhorted: ‘Wait, father, till the doctor comes!’—I cannot wait. Now then, let me make a clean breast: Maier Baschwitz, of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, is here, and has asked for the hand of my Zerlina; he is a splendid match; Itzig and Süßmann here would each gladly give him three daughters for one; but I shall not breathe a syllable till thou hast told me whether or no thou wilt have her; I have not yet given one the refusal of my daughter, but with thee I make an exception; therefore consider the matter, or rather tell me at once, Yes or No, *franchement*.”

“I shall never marry, and if I did, I do not know whether Zerlina would be happy with me.”

“As to that last point, all that is mere tomfoolery. Why shouldst thou not be happy? Thou hast a pretty property; and so with God’s help has my Zerlina also; but I will not force nor persuade thee, why should I? Thy books are wiser than I, or a hundred other experienced men. But in thy case

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\* And was not this, in fact, the logical carrying-out of Emanuel’s own doctrine, expressed above?

the proverb applies doubly: Thou eatest pheasants and groanest all the while; thou hast what thou wilt and yet art always dissatisfied—my understanding is at a stand.”

“I cannot wed Zerlina,” replied Ephraim.

“Why not?”

“Because I do not love her.”

“Youngster, art thou in the theatre? From the players on the stage one hears such phrases, but not from ordinary people.”

“I choose to live for myself alone.”

“For thyself alone?” asked Veitel, shaking his head; “Trevirano is perhaps right; I tell thee, that man does not mean well by thee; thou hast no knowledge of men, nor wilt have, to thy dying day.”

“Marry off Zerlina, with my congratulations,” said Ephraim, angrily, and went about his business. He knew not to what his uncle alluded in the mention of Trevirano, but he would not insult his friend by asking a third person about him. As he demanded of a friend a direct survey of himself, such as no other could possess, so would he too pledge the same in return, and repel any outside remonstrance. The reproach of being deficient in the knowledge of men, he felt that he did not deserve, and in some measure justly; his whole poetry and practice, indeed, took the direction of a close examination of the human heart with all its venous ramifications; hence too he kept his own soul’s life moving amidst reflecting mirrors set up on all sides; hence, indeed, he watched in a self-tormenting manner for every im-

mediate emotion, and now came a cool worldly wisdom, and set itself up against him with its keen practiced eye-sight, and all those advantages which rest upon the logic of hard fact, but cannot prove themselves by inner deductions.

But is not the explorer into the depths of the human mind, in the presence of the individual phenomenon, the more liable to deception from the very fact that he seeks after fundamental traits and first principles for actions and characters, where, as a general rule, only disconnected liking manifests itself?

Ephraim, who carried himself with an air of passionate protest against that knowledge of men which prides itself on its experience, still inwardly despaired of ever being able to know a human being in his innermost nature, for he had reached that point where what presents itself as a simple element one still contemplates with the question whether after all a manifold combination may not prevail therein.

Of every fact and feeling he would fain explore the manifoldness of the causes, as every stem of a tree appearing in its unity nevertheless rests upon many-wise ramifying root-fibres and draws from them its nourishment.

Fate had thrown Ephraim into a position in life where all life's settled customs, all fixity of tradition, appeared to him fluid and in chaotic solution; two ways stood open to him, either in harmless levity to content himself with a limited existence, or to make his way through the perplexities of thought to that

point where the creative "Let there be" reveals itself in the original spirit, and the world shapes itself anew. To the one he could not descend, to the other he could not attain.

Often he thought of turning about and enjoying life as given him, just as thousands did all around him, but he had no longer the power.

He could not marry Zerlina; she indeed was the confidant of his love to Recha. How could he ever without blushing approach her as a lover, how exchange a loving word with her, when she knew his heart belonged to another; or should he possess a goddess without love? Sooner would he take upon himself inextinguishable sorrow and certain destruction.

A few days after that conversation with Veitel, Zerlina became the bride of Maier Baschwitz; Mendel Felluhzer, whom we well remember, had been here, also, the business manager and undertaker.

"Blow on blow," said Veitel to his nephew, whom he had sent for one morning early. "Emanuel has, to crown all, had a shock, and Trevirano ought to have one, wherever he is; he has retained a bill of exchange for three hundred dollars, which he had of me for collection, and has made tracks; is he owing thee money, too, the scoundrel?"

"Yes, indeed, over a thousand dollars."

"Get them exchanged; I have warned thee enough; I have heard from one of thy jolly companions that Trevirano had publicly said several times that his only reason for being on such inti-

mate terms with thee was that thou couldst pay the piper with thy money for his merry speers. But if thy purse has the consumption at such a rate, thou canst not carry out thy project, as, according to Trevirano's report, thou wilt set up a manufactory of thine own; it will not be any advantage to thee that thou wouldst betray the secrets of my gold and silver manufacture to a new associate."

"You are so great a connoisseur of men that what you imagine must be true," answered Ephraim, and went up to Emanuel.

A stillness of death reigned in the sparingly-lighted chamber; only a low moan was from time to time audible; the dark man in the gray military mantle sat by the bedside holding his friend's hand. Emanuel with all his might stretched up his head, his tongue was lamed, his hands refused their office. The friend seemed to read the wish of the sick man from the direction of his eyes; he took the violin from the wall and played a soft adagio. It was the long-drawn tones of a church melody, only more joyful and manly; Emanuel seemed to know the melody; he thanked his friend by repeated winkings of the eyelid. A halo of transparent glory hovered over the face of Emanuel; softer and softer, more and more tremulously sounded the tones of the violin, but soon they swept upward tempestuously and exultingly to the heavenly tent; the sick man breathed faster, when suddenly a window-shutter flew open. "Light! light!" cried Emanuel with his last struggle; he grasped at his eyes with both hands;

the tones still sounded, the sun shone in brightly, but upon the waves of the melody Emanuel had gone up from the light to its primal source.

"The happiest day of his life was that on which he died," said the dark man; he closed Emanuel's eyes and went away.

The Jewish inquisitors would have hustled away Emanuel, the freemason, into the criminals' corner, because he had come only once a year to the synagogue and had died without the presence of the "holy brotherhood;" the influence of Mendelssohn and his friends, however, nullified such a sentence upon the dead.

Only at the grave of Emanuel did it come back to Ephraim what he had lost in him. Here among the grave-mounds an icy shudder stole over him at the thought that this was the end of life. Pale and painful arose the remembrance of another vanished one, on whose grave no tears fell and no flowers bloomed. Matilda had sunk like Ephraim's past life, leaving in death no trace behind.

And a funeral wail, full of unfathomable sorrow, rose in trembling tones upon his soul. How crumbles life and sinks away in ourselves and in others for whom we lived; who can collect all his energy and carry it and cherish it to the end?

At last he stood erect in the thought that henceforth he would no more let fate be master. A span of time was yet given him.

His residence in Berlin grew daily more burdensome; all ties which had held him here had been cut

asunder and fluttered loosely in the wind; to this was added the fraud of Trevirano, and especially the unjust suspicion of his uncle, which he willingly, for the sake of having a stinging excuse, painted in more glaring colors by disclaiming all excuse for it on his own part; he would with all his might plunge into life, but where does life offer the visible handles, whereby one may grasp it and where one may in a fresh accession of energy apply all his strength as a lever? Nothing on all sides but quiet, regulated activity, studying, working. Only in the soldier's or the sea-farer's life can be found the full sense of existence; hourly to expose life means hourly to live a whole life; but how to fill up the dreary intervals? And always the result was that the whole occupation of the world lay more and more chaotically before his eyes.

Ephraim resolved to travel. Wandering from city to city, he thought to be able to subdue in himself the restless yearning which he looked upon as the source of all his unhappiness; then again he fancied he should rise again pure and new-created out of the odious chrysalis condition into which he had spun himself. A great poem, a redeeming song, must be slumbering in his soul, which could only struggle out in a state of freedom; how he rejoiced with thousands after him, who should let themselves be absorbed with him in the joy and sorrows of his living and poetizing.

Nothing had been left him but his books and his sister Violet. Her he again visited often; she



greatly needed his solace, for she was confined to the sick-bed of her ailing husband.

“O God!” she said once, when her brother spoke with rapture of his tour, “ah, if I could only travel with thee, and had wings, that I might fly, far, far away, I know not whither; ah, God forgive me, I am a miserable person, I had quite forgotten that I have a sick husband and duties to do.”

Violet was profoundly unhappy, for her husband was sick; she found a comfort in the careful nursing which she administered to him, and she was unremitting in her attentions, and full of inexhaustible patience, whereby, also, she would fain make a certain expiation, because her innermost thought and feeling had not wholly and solely belonged to her husband. Herz Helft, who recognized the calm elevation of his wife's nature, saw now and too late the rich, but hitherto overlooked, bliss of his life. A wronged spirit rose within him, and at the close of their wedded days the married couple learned, for the first time, to love each other.

Violet begged her brother to stay with her only this winter; they would love each other right heartily and make life sweet for each other; but Ephraim was afraid of his own fickleness, and that he might by-and-by no longer have the courage to undertake the tour. When, however, he bade farewell to Violet he could not refrain from tears; she flung her arms around his neck, and clasped her hands tightly together and absolutely would not leave him.

Not until he was in his room again could he re-

cover from the tender mood which had unmanned him. Nor did he succeed in doing this except through his uncle Veitel, who came to him once more and tried to persuade him to stay. At first Veitel made a show of unexpected tenderness and family attachment; but as this proved ineffectual, he said: "Thou wilt take a journey, thou fanciest; I do not understand what troubles thee, but I tell thee, he who cannot be happy in any place, will be so nowhere. Yes, laugh away, thou hast a hot head. It does thee no good to turn thy pillow over, thou gettest nothing thereby except the pain of having to raise thyself. Then stay where thou art, I'll hold thy head for thee."

Not even the consolation was left Ephraim of being able to separate from his uncle with abhorrence, and yet he adhered to his resolve.

Now it came to the packing up of the books. First he took the Bible and laid it with silent devotion in the great trunk; it should consecrate the wooden house in which he shut up his friends: a selection of Greeks, Romans, Italians, Germans, etc., was to be his escort. But the more and the longer he chose, so much the more unjust it appeared to him to leave behind this or that book; was there not here and there a passage which had many a time comforted, cheered and elevated him, and should not these be worth the freight, should they not be allowed to accompany him everywhere?—Thus by degrees two great trunks were filled with his library and his heart was lightened.

When in the familiar Berlin circle they talked of Ephraim's book-escort, Abraham Diogenes said: "He could not succeed in having a *ménage* of his own, and now he travels with a literary *ménagerie*."

There was a laugh, and with this pun Ephraim was dismissed from the thoughts of those in whom he imagined he had made himself a living home.

## 21—DAME ADVENTURE.

THE interaction by which events often call up mysterious apparitions, or these, in turn, produce and determine events, is hard to explain.

We are occupied with the time when bold adventurers wandered from court to court, in quest of news and enjoyments. The whole pleasure of life in the upper classes was in masquerades. Ephraim also took part therein.

Before the inn of a residence in middle Germany, a lean man alighted from a well-packed coach; as he threw off his fur-cloak, one could more closely inspect his attire: in the finely frizzled peruke glittered strung pearls; over the pale face hovered discontent or the *ennui* of rank; the stranger had hard work to hook on his cavalier's sword; one could not tell whether his fingers were stiff with cold, or whether he was unused to this costume; in fact, however, it was the latter, for this cavalier was no other than Ephraim. He was hard to recognize, and yet he had scarcely entered the travelers' room when an acquaintance full of wonder came forward to

meet him. It was the much-experienced Chevalier de Seingalt, with whom he had become acquainted in the company of the Italian singers in Berlin. Ephraim drew him aside to a window and confided to him that he thought of traveling, but that he did not care to be startled at every boundary post, which would remind him of the payment of the Jew-tax and all the repulsive things therewith associated; he would for once look upon the world in undisturbed freedom. For a not inconsiderable sum he had therefore procured from a young police officer, whom he had also become acquainted with in that gay theatrical company, this pass. He then showed the passport, in which he was particularly designated as Cesare, Marquis of Tornicola from Maccrate. The chevalier was highly delighted and promised to present Ephraim at court.

Ephraim must needs accept this offer and yet he could not rid himself without an inward repugnance. He had wished to see the world for himself in a free and unembarrassed way, and now he had not strength to withstand the decision and persuasive arts of the chevalier; he saw himself chained to a man who might perhaps be an adventurer; even the chevalier's mow inspired him with an inexplicable dread. The conversation, however, soon fell into a lighter flow, and Ephraim, who always lived inwardly and kept up a constant fight with the states of his soul, initiated the chevalier, almost without intending it, into his thoughts and feelings.

“What do you mean by this eternal talk about

your dead love?" the chevalier once said; "in the case of love particularly the saying holds: 'Le roi est mort, vive le roi!'"

Leaning against a marble column in the great hall of the residence stands a Knight of the Cross, his arms folded across his breast, staring into the masquerade, which, illuminated by a thousand lights, swept tumultuously around him. Ephraim began to regard his fate as a poetic complication, and heightened it yet more by an ironic coloring which created for him a certain inner triumph. What a scene of mad merriment it was! Here and there a group darted forward and crystallized in more and more complex and manifold forms; the Spanish and Turkish costumes richly studded with jewels flung back the thousand in a glittering play of colors. Harlequins leaped round merrily and slapped at them with their wooden swords; the voices sounded shrill and hollow from behind the masks. Ephraim gave himself up involuntarily to the fantastic imagination how it would be, if under these motley dresses nothing but spectres were disguised; but gradually this thought grew repulsive to him, for in the mere speaking aloud to others the conjuring up of the spectral loses its awfulness; in solitary thinking, without the distraction of mutual speech, it remains an uncomfortable demon, which creeps on again and again.

Ephraim shuddered violently when for the first time a mask addressed him; this feeling of being put in relation with some one who occupies an invisible

position, almost made him tremble; he forgot at the moment that he himself was masked. Several masks spoke to him in German; Ephraim answered in Italian that he did not understand their language; there was a general laugh; now he was asked about his latest love, in what heart he would next take up his residence; and other snares were set for him. Ephraim observed that the questioners, despite all the freedom the mask permitted, maintained a respectful bearing, but suddenly they put their heads together and then disappeared. He again resumed his fixed position; the whole intermezzo seemed to him extraordinary, when the chevalier came to him and told him he had for some time been taken for the Prince. The chevalier might well be the person to tell it, for it was he who confided to a female friend the secret that the Prince was already at the ball as Knight of the Cross; in ten minutes the secret had got about among half the assembly. By a crowd which suddenly took place Ephraim was separated from the chevalier; a Greek procession of gods came pressing on, music and dancing genii, draped in light veils, led the van, then the mighty Jove strode powerfully and energetically along; around his head flowed the ambrosial locks; Hebe and Ganymede, two alluring maiden forms, followed him, and then the whole divine train of Olympus; throughout, the natural flow and fullness of form came forth free and unobstructed through the light drapery.

What his boldest fancies had pictured to him

Ephraim saw here appear before him in fresh brilliancy. This is the full bliss of existence! his heart cried exultingly within him, and all else is only being buried alive.—And yet he could not resist the impulse, in the midst of the swell and din of music, and all the flash and glitter, to transport himself for a moment out into the other remote and narrowly-bounded world; he carried himself in fancy to the dark room with Rabbi Chananel, he was working in the counting-house, he was sitting with old Emanuel in his chamber, he was sitting by his sister at the sick-bed of her husband, he was philosophizing with Mendelssohn . . . . his whole life and that of all his acquaintances he would compress into one thought, to gain a culminating point for the present moment; but too vast a multitude and variety of objects came thronging around him; he must needs open his eyes at once to rid himself of his thoughts. There he saw again all the splendor and the motley tumult; but suddenly he trembled through his whole body; he crumpled his cloak in his hand and could not stir from the spot—for there he saw the form of his father stealing on toward him; there was the reddish frock-coat, the three-cornered hat with the white peaked cap under it, the black velvet breeches, the white stockings, the buckled shoes; the form seemed to seek some one, and stalked straight up to Ephraim: “Massel tov, Rabbi Ephraim!\*

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\* I congratulate you, Master Ephraim!



In strife, play, drink, is seen  
How much a friend's words mean."\*

Ephraim could not answer; his throat was as if gagged, and as suddenly as it had come the apparition had disappeared. The signal for unmasking was given; the chevalier approached Ephraim, took his arm under his and led him to the other end of the hall. In a box not far from that of the Prince sat Luna, a well-knit figure of luxuriant fullness of outline. The chevalier brought our friend up to her and introduced him to the Countess Aurora von O.

Ephraim took his seat near the countess; she no longer appeared to him so young as he had at first imagined her, but the gay and graceful play of her charms and the refined liveliness of her mind did not fail of their attraction.

The presumption of the cleverness of a man of the world which had been brought to meet Ephraim, in some measure communicated to him that quality, and he was pleased that the countess accepted what he with trembling lips had put into a word, as a witty gallantry; she pronounced it "very sweet and charming" that so clever a man of the world could so skillfully appropriate to himself the mask of a bashful and enthusiastic youth; this bit of tactics was new and entertaining to her; she readily brought up some reminiscences of the pastoral court-life of the past period, and so entered with ease into Ephraim's tone.

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\* A saying of the Rabbins.

The latter was quite enchanted with such a new conception of life, which assumes as an understood thing that all is mere joke and jest, and out of politeness gives itself the appearance for a while of believing in something.

He remembered that Matilda had once prophesied to him that Luna would choose him for her Eudymion. He grew pale at the recollection, but presently again he followed a new idea on the alluring track; how unjust, he thought to himself, are we in the lower walks of life to those in the higher; we repay prejudice with prejudice, and fancy that under their glittering dresses no hearts beat as purely and nobly as in us; the shining form misleads us, so that we nowhere see anything but the form; but is it not better to taste the ripe fruit of the tree of life out of a golden dish, than to pick it laboriously out of the dust? Wealth and power are the fairest, if not the highest goods of earth. After this pause of thought the countess asked Ephraim about his sojourn in Madrid or at the Berlin Court, of which the chevalier had informed her. Drops of sweat stood upon his forehead at being obliged to communicate on these subjects; he threw over his stay in Madrid a romantic veil and passed on to the Berlin Court, of which he knew more particulars. He inwardly cursed the chevalier for putting him into this embarrassment, and yet he could not be angry with him, for was not his whole present life one continued lie?

The most excruciating part of it all was, however,

that he saw more and more how entirely he had thrown himself into the hands of the chevalier, who could hold him up or let him fall at will by the thread of his favor; the apparition of his father still continued at times to flit before his memory, but a glance at the countess and her friendly smile dispelled all pain.

The ball was over. The chevalier waited on the steps, and they went to the inn. A troop of young court cavaliers and officers of the guard who likewise came from the ball were assembled here also. They drew together, they played; the chevalier kept the bank; he shuffled with dexterity and graceful humor, so that one could well perceive that he must have much practice in this line. Ephraim played with easy indifference, but when he had lost fifty ducats, he drew back; the chevalier offered him his purse, and almost forced it upon him. Ephraim was merchant enough to know the worth of money; he modestly declined the offer, and drew back into a corner. Ephraim did not observe for a long time, in his innocence, that a young officer was mocking him with polite raillery, till the chevalier came along; he gave the subject of the ridicule to understand what the matter was, and as the latter still refused to take the matter up, the chevalier himself in the name of his fellow-countryman, accepted a challenge.

The chevalier stayed by Ephraim in his chamber; the day was already dawning.

“In an hour,” said the chevalier, “you must fight. You have the choice of weapons; you choose pistols,

thereby you are equal to your adversary; you set your right foot forward, direct the point of the foot exactly in the line of your adversary, hold the pistol hard against your thigh, then raise it slowly and without trembling up to a level with your adversary's breast; do you see? in this way, believe me, I have often shot at a knife-blade, and cut the ball in halves. At the first call, you blaze away. You will be doing the good youth and his uncle, the old Baron von O., a pleasure by releasing him from his creditors."

"I cannot fight with him, for we have not an equal stake," replied Ephraim. "I offer nothing but a life which is a burden to me; before him lies a future rich in hope; his passion for fight is only the consequence of his fresh zest of life; I forgive him, I cannot fight him." The chevalier saw in all this only a cowardly subterfuge, and cried angrily:

"You must fight with him, I say you *must*; no way out of it would be left you, except to take instant flight; but this I say to you: you shall not pass this threshold alive, for I will strike you down first. My reputation is at stake, if you, to whom I have introduced her, if you take a cowardly flight; besides I have already risked too much by you."

Before the chevalier and Ephraim stepped into the carriage, the former caused the groom, Muley, to hand him a few drops of naphtha on sugar; he also made Ephraim take some. The morning was clear, the cold piercing, as they passed out through the gate; at the edge of a wood they stopped and

alighted; Muley followed with the weapons. Ephraim fancied he heard the Moor singing a Jewish synagogue melody; he could not help laughing at himself for seeing spectres even in broad day. He concluded the melodies of the Moors and of the Jews must resemble each other.

They found the adversary with his second already on the ground. The parties saluted each other with silent bows, the two seconds measured off the distance; the chevalier caused a cloak to be spread out on the snow, and laid upon it two pistols crosswise, and requested the adversary to choose one of them. Ephraim, meanwhile, stood lost in thought; suddenly his thoughts went back to the still room where he had sat with the Rabbi, and had known nothing of all the life outside. What would the Rabbi think if he should now see him here! With an ironical smile he looked up as the chevalier summoned him to hold himself in readiness; the adversary deeming this a smile of contempt, quickly threw off his cape and stood there in bare shirt; our friend had in like manner to take off his coat.—Each grasps a pistol, Muley steps up and pours on the priming, the seconds lead the adversaries to their places and then step aside; Ephraim stood firm and collected and pressed his teeth tightly together, that no one should observe his trembling, and at a signal from the seconds, he fired first and in an instant after, his adversary. Neither was hit; with astonishing rapidity Muley had again loaded, and again neither shot hit. A third time the combatants stood with pistol in

hand; Ephraim fired but missed again, his adversary's pistol missed fire; he cursed the blasted Moor "who had put no powder in his pan." Ephraim had now to wait till all was again in readiness, then he felt suddenly his adversary's ball; he put his hand to his head, a lock of his hair had been singed off.

The two adversaries now stepped up to each other and offered each other the hand of reconciliation, and the chevalier embraced Ephraim. "Now you are in all honor, a cavalier *comme il faut*," he whispered to him. Ephraim again fancied he heard Muley during the packing up murmur to himself: "I could not have believed the fighting-school at Breslau turned out such good scholars." The black grew more and more mysterious, and strange to say! to the silver earrings of Muley Ephraim fancied he could attach probable stories.

At the ordered breakfast Ephraim did not tarry long; he needed sleep; he had now suddenly become so genteel that he turned time topsy-turvy and changed day into night and night into day.

One recollection Ephraim retained from this last adventure: he had really and truly looked death in the face and felt in himself no trace of fear; true, he confessed to himself that it was hardly anything more than indifference to life which inspired him with his heroism; who can determine, however, how many boasted acts of heroism have been achieved under the same incitement? For all that he persisted in deriving from this a confidence that he could joyfully meet death in a noble cause.

The next day he drove to the Countess Aurora's. She was still in her bath; had, however, given orders that if the Marquis of Tornicola called, he might wait awhile in the reception-room. Voltaire's *Candide* lay on the table opened at a particularly attractive passage. Ephraim ventured to regard this as a *carte blanche*; he read and his breath trembled. Soon the marquis was ushered into an inner cabinet; the countess apologized for his detention, but she could not deny herself the pleasure of speaking again to her brave knight. She was extremely lovely.

Days of the most rapturous enjoyment our marquis now experienced; he was welcomed to what called itself exclusive society, for he had so chivalrously fought out the "affair of honor,"—as they called it. In company he always found the countess, but according to her prudent instructions, he ventured there to converse with her only sparingly.

A solemn boar-hunt was appointed by the Court; several hundred vassal peasants had to skip round in the biting cold in their linen blouses to drive in the wild game before the stand of their excellencies; our marquis stayed back on the pretext of illness; he had never sat on horseback and understood nothing of the noble field sport.

By degrees, however, this mode of life also began to be repulsive to him. Accustomed to a life of steady activity, he saw in this new mode of life nothing but constant preparation for feasts and enjoyments, and this making a business of pleasure could not keep

him awake. Even poetry forsook him; the materials which lay around him he could not master and work up; he had been hurled too suddenly into this great world out of his little one. A singular mixture of love for life and contempt for life fermented within him.

“What a wretched thing after all,” he once said to the chevalier, “is the life and labor of men; all the tinkling of the music, the halloo of the chase, the skipping of the dancers, and the risking of money and life, is nothing but a deafening of the cry of conscience, so that one dies every moment; one will not hear and see the death-worm, that ticks and pricks in the stillness. What is the amount of all? to free men? to give them liberty to die more joyfully?—One should either stick to the clod, or see, know, enjoy, the whole circumference of the earth, ere one has to part from it. And more than this: one should either live forever or not at all.”

“I have seen the cities and countries of many men,” replied the chevalier, “but I find you still a riddle; I believe, when you have the meat in your mouth, you reflect whether it is right and proper for man to shoot a partridge, and whether it would not be better if one could live without eating. I tell you, chew away, for wholesome wild flesh offers itself to you. I seldom or never think of death; when one has done eating, one wipes his mouth. But even if there be still a *soirée* by other light, nevertheless I would rather be with his majesty, by the *disfavor* of God, king of the lower world; there is the finest



society, there are the handsomest women, the jolliest priests, there it must be paradisaically amusing, whereas, with the saints and Magdalens in Paradise it must be infernally tedious."

The conversation was not continued, for our marquis soon perceived how the chevalier had, so to speak, no organ for this kind of discussion; he was wont to drink down the pearling foam from life's chalice without much thought or inspection, and therein our marquis would follow his example.

The rosy-fingered goddess Aurora offered him her hand in this dance. The grace of the countess could not but inflame such a man as our marquis to the highest degree. All the wealth of tender feelings which he had gathered in and achieved in his love for Matilda and Recha, all those fresh flowers of love, he again brought out; often he reproached himself for this abuse, but by degrees he saw a justification in the fact that the countess intimated an inward trouble about her present situation and gave him reason to suspect she would prefer a "plain, unvarnished" life of love to all this gilded misery. This was enough with our young marquis to hang a hundredfold plans of love upon; he had already begged the countess several times, instead of the title, "Herr Marquis," to call him only Cesare, or in fact, by no name at all; he could not yet explain how oppressive it was to him under the mask, and how icily it cut through his soul to have to receive her tender words under a lying address.

Ephraim was talking once with the countess about

titles and designations of rank, and remarked: "These titles are after all properly, only the nominal value, the mint-stamp,\* which is put upon the gold, its proper value it carries in itself; we must have the courage to melt down the precious metal again and allow it only its intrinsic value, throwing out all the alloyage of base metal, which the sovereigns of the traditionary ideas have mixed in with it."

The countess took this utterance as a singular and yet unmistakable act of homage; the marquis praised her inner meaning. Ephraim could not resist a demand which lies even in the unintended interpretation of a judgment, and he was already in danger of being charmed out of his proper life, but he forced himself to decision and led the way back by relating that he, though with great reluctance, had occupied himself for a time with the coining of money. The countess again refused for a while to see anything but an emblematic language in this, but asserted also at the same time that she believed in the art of alchemy, and only warned her friend against dangerous experiments.

Ephraim found himself caught continually in new masks, and with the extremest effort he now explicitly declared that he was resolved to rescue himself and his beloved, and that he would constrain himself to confess another religion. He clasped the tender hands, covered his eyes with them, and said in a deep tone, "For I am a Jew, I *was* one, if you command it."

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\* Burns.

“That is an unworthy jest,” replied the countess, withdrawing from him her hands.

“It is no jest.”

“And what then is your Hebrew name?” asked the countess, laughing.

“Ephraim Moses Kuh.”

“You should invent for yourself a more euphonious name.”

“I have not invented it.”

Notwithstanding all Ephraim’s assurances and protestations, the countess insisted that she did not believe him; she kept up a continual jesting, but in her looks there was an uncomfortable fire and her lips trembled. Suddenly she rang for the physician and begged the marquis to retire, but hardly had the latter gone, when she sent for the chevalier.

Ephraim sat in his chamber tormented with rage and remorse. As once in his love for Recha he had done with poetry, so had he now meant to stake even his innermost sanctuary, faith itself, without being sure of any more certain result; how could he henceforth seek rest and edification at the altars which, in thought, he had already so cravenly forsaken?

The servant of Countess Aurora entered and delivered a letter from the chevalier; Ephraim broke the seal and read:

“Mr. Marquis! You have concealed from me your rank, as I have just learned from the Countess Aurora; my blade would disdain to meet you in the combat of honor; you understand merchants’ language, then take yourself away from here *after sight*.”

If you are caught here this evening, you may find your way with your false passport to prison; the thing has got wind. Take your books with you and don't forget your Don Quixote. Greet your cousin Ahasuerus, if you meet him in his travels.

“CASANOVA DE SEINGALT.”

Almost as suddenly as he had been launched into this life, Ephraim was hurled out of it again.

22.—SENTIMENTAL JOURNEYS AND THE  
PROPHET.

THE rest of the winter Ephraim spent in still seclusion in a university town of North Germany; the scientific atmosphere in which one moved there was refreshing. Ephraim overtook a piece of his lost youth in associating himself with the careless ways of the students, and yet he often felt that he was inwardly too old, had already experienced too much, to be able wholly to renew the wild joy of youth. He translated here a great part of the epigrams of Martial, but hardly had spring sent her first messengers when the passion for traveling awoke again. He had cleansed his eyes in the clear Pierian stream of the classic poets, and now he could again contemplate the world freshly and freely; but he soon fell back into that sentimental haze which then hung over all Germany. We were on the eve of a crisis in the world's history; the blood stagnated with the fullness of heaviness, the spirits of men wandered feverishly, now in an adventurous passion for mysteries, now in a prurient laying bare of all that hith-

erto had been sacredly veiled, and through all was infused a melancholy, anxious foreboding, a self-tormenting spirit of inquiry; it was like the pause of suspense before the outbreak of a tempest.

“I have committed the fault of so many Jews, who eagerly press upward from the Jews’ street immediately into the palaces of the so-called higher classes,” said Ephraim to himself. “Up there there can be none but Court Jews, to whom in gracious jest one tosses the crumbs of toleration; how are we there to hope for an equality which is not allowed to the lower classes of their own nation? To the people which, sound and sensible to the core, dazzled though it may be, is not blinded, to them we must firmly ally ourselves; the baptism of tears shed over the common oppression of the ruling powers and of time-hallowed prejudice binds us in one, and there alone is a still unbroken and unspoiled force of nature.”

Ephraim had penetrated to the southern portion of his native Germany; he had again accustomed himself to the running of all his thoughts and feelings into the channel of poetry; he lived that exalted double life which together with its own experience nourishes within itself another still and secret one. He formed the plan of composing upon the model of Tasso a great epic poem: “The Destruction of Jerusalem.” Forms, great and mighty, rose before his soul; the death-struggle of a heroic nation raged in its fury before his eyes. How petty and insignificant were now all the cares and sorrows of

his life, which had sprung from the glances of a maiden and the smile of her red lips; far away toward the Orient, to the ruins of Salem would he make his pilgrimage; there, by the sarcophagus of a great nation, still standing on the earth, for which none had found rest, there would he sing a dirge that should make the angels in heaven weep with him, and men learn to understand and love each other; on the fallen columns of Zion would he breathe out his soul's deepest sorrow and die, or rise to a renovated life.

If he should succeed in framing in melodious words his pain and sorrow over the ruin of his people and its endless agonies, then should this anguish, and with it his own distressed bosom, be relieved; but this foretaste of a life and a poesy soaring upward to the highest reach of song, was all he achieved; he could no longer gather up his whole intellectual energy to a single act; he had too long accustomed himself to extort something from the little incidents of life; his pain was not one great, yawning, bleeding wound; he bled from the thousand needle-pricks of a petty destiny. How often one persuades himself in the failure of power to overtake a great purpose, to regard this as only a preliminary step to other performances, and where the deed falls short, to rejoice in a gain of knowledge.

Ephraim chose to think that in excogitating his plan he had gained deliverance from the sorrow of having been born and living a Jew, and it seemed to him more agreeable to turn his attention now to immediate life.

After the example set him by Montesquieu with his Persian, Voltaire with his English, and D'Argens with his Jewish Letters, he thought he would in like manner write Jewish Letters; he would give himself for the purpose a quite free and poetic stand-point: A Jew from the time of Christ, or in fact from the time of David, travels through the lands of Christian Germany and reports upon their manners and customs. That was a happy basis for the most many-sided irony.

The doubly guarded concealment from which Ephraim could now contemplate for himself the life of the world gave him a full sense of freedom, and he hoped to be able to play freely with all events; they did not rule him, they must serve him; no confusion, no limitation of sense could touch him; he would like an enchanter wield all the motley phenomena of life at his will. Traveling in a carriage was disagreeable; to hold a thought fast for hours, without having relieved himself of it by noting it down, produced dizziness. Ephraim left his books at a little residence city, and roamed on foot over mountains and valleys.

A beggar woman was on her way to town bare-foot; she carried her shoes in her hand, to save shoe-leather; she begged for a "Christian gift." Ephraim thrust his hand into his pocket and gave her, uncounted, a handful of money with the words: "That is a Jewish gift, for I am a Jew." How glad he was to have delivered a poor woman from the prejudice attached to an expression innocent in itself.



A Jew peddler came up the road, with his wallet on his back, parti-colored cloths hung on his arm, a round, yellow patch was sewed on to the left side of his coat, and he seemed, as he walked, to be making a prayer. Ephraim's heart beat audibly when he beheld his submissive salutation; he walked along with him and it did him good, though by a deception, to show the poor fellow the benevolence of a man of rank; he therefore asked the peddler in a friendly manner about his business. "A plague on the enlightened age," said the peddler, "the boor has become too shrewd and knowing, there is no dealing with him any longer." Ephraim tried to show that the new light was the Messiah of the Jews; then, too, would come the better times, when one would no longer need to wear a yellow patch on his heart. "That is the ribbon of my order," said the peddler, "it is dearer to me than a general's badge from the emperor; up in the other world yonder this order is of more account. Perhaps other people also have worn it and have had it cleaned off with aqua fortis." The peddler looked at Ephraim sharply, for he took him to be a baptized Jew; he asked him, however, whether he had nothing to trade for, and when this question was answered in the negative he soon parted from him.

Ephraim's musing mind entered into the life of every tree that stood by the roadside; he saw it germinate, grow and die; into every hovel he passed his mind entered and associated itself with the life of its inmates; but in his unremitting death-thought

he saluted all the beauty, all the mountains and valleys, as for the first and also for the last time: with the first perception he at the same time took leave of all this as a dying man.

“Laughing—weeping—without rest,  
Onward to the grave I haste,”

he once wrote in his diary after an enrapturing outlook from a hill-top.

This characteristic surfeit of life did not therefore allow him to taste the pleasures of this journey in their freshness and freedom. There he stood under the shade of a nut-tree on the shores of the green Rhine, saw the castles on the vine-hills, saw the towns and villages that see themselves so brilliantly imaged in the mirror of the stream, and yet in all the wondrous legends that come sounding out of the past, in all the joy of the vintage that pervades this fresh life, there was naught that could revive the weariness of his being.

As a sick man, carried out from his chamber into the gay and crowded streets, stares in confused astonishment into the throng and bustle and din of life, so did Ephraim feel his senses heavily oppressed and he could not roll off the burden. There he stood, high up in the fresh-living breath of the mountains, and he looked sadly down, for he thought of the misery which lies hid in the folds of the mountains, and in the midst of this world of majesty and freedom his inner eye beheld nothing but a wheezing and maltreated Jew.

Away with these doleful images! he said to him-

self a hundred times, but his heart always came back to them again, and he gave a friendly greeting as he passed through a town or village where the Jews stood in festal attire by the wayside, celebrating their Sabbath; he rejoiced that to them air and sunlight were still granted and that they had a heart to deck themselves festally in a life full of persecution and sorrow. Of the landlords he always inquired in many roundabout ways whether there were also Jews living here in town; if he was sharply observed by any one, he fancied himself detected; particularly did he fear this whenever a Jew looked him in the eye, for it is a characteristic trait that two Jews immediately recognize each other, often by their mere way of looking at each other. In that peering curiosity and importunity of many Jews, who soon after the first greeting begin to ask thee after house and home and all that is around and upon thee; in all this Ephraim saw, as often as it met him, only a genial family trait, which leads the suffering to recognize and fraternize each other and gives them the right to demand the familiar friendship of every one of their kith and kin. He felt himself inclined to give in to it; but there were two occurrences that led him back inevitably to the more general point of view.

Ephraim was wandering through the Jews' street of a populous city of Middle Germany, where there was nothing but a dull, mouldy vapor, a noisy running and racing, chaffering and jabbering and squabbling, in the narrow space which the two rows of

houses inclosed between their high gables; no ray of sunshine found free entrance; he looked up at the innumerable windows, behind which hundreds dragged along their life of sorrow; he looked round him in the ground stories which lost themselves in dark holes was the motliest mass of frippery heaped together in checkered confusion. There he saw a stately old man; snow-white locks crowned his pate; under the bristling eyebrows a black eye gleamed brightly forth. "In the gleam of that eye lies a ray from the eternally creating spirit of God," said Ephraim to himself; "proceeding from another stock, thou hadst haply been highly honored as poet, general or statesman." All at once he had reversed his whole career of life; the old man quickly perceived that he had become an object of scrutiny, and with a friendly nod called out to Ephraim, "Can I sell you anything, Sir Count?" "No," answered the latter, and quickly left the Jews' street.

In a little town he saw a tumult before the custom-house; as he drew nearer he learned that within a short time one of the faithful had farmed the Jews' tribute, and was now proceeding with unexampled tyranny in order to get a good profit from the business; while he was thus talking with the others, the revenue collector stepped up to the carriage and called out: "Thou too must pay me!" Ephraim drove hastily away.

This trading in one's own shame exasperated him most of all; he would absolve himself utterly from this disgusting business, and fell, himself, into the

fault which he had so often censured, of setting up individual cases of imprudence and baseness as the original type, and forgetting the thousand noble and good.

On a pedestrian tour he met a young peasant, who sat on the horse which was dragging the plow homeward; with a clear and powerful voice the youth sang out into the evening air, and his Tyrolese songs echoed back from the mountains. Ephraim joined him; the sight of this free and blooming youth was as exhilarating as the inspiration of fresh mountain air. The peasant asked our traveler whether he had come for the sake of to-morrow's church fair, and when this was answered negatively, he proudly remarked that often many distinguished people came and were well entertained by his cousin, the landlord of the Eagle. Ephraim promised himself to stay, and the peasant in riding by plucked a leaf from the tree, put it between his lips and blew with it the merriest country dances, by way of enjoying a foretaste of to-morrow's pleasures.

Here at last would Ephraim shake off from him all the dust of his books and of the ruins of Jerusalem.

In a fit of bucolic remembrance he wrote the poem:

“Hail, ye lindens, alders, ashes!  
Welcome to my weary heart!  
With a peace your shade refreshes,  
Which the town can ne'er impart.  
“To your huts, ye shepherds, take me,  
Free from vain and vexing noise!

Ye of unspoiled manners, make me  
 Sharer of your tranquil joys !

“ Here men envy not each other ;  
 No poor brother here complains  
 Of his proud and cruel brother ;  
 Here the golden age still reigns.

“ Tinsel-pomp and heartless pleasures  
 In our cities well are known ;  
 Genuine joys and lasting treasures  
 Nature yields with you alone.”

Not long after Ephraim had entered the guest-room, he heard a peasant, who was playing dice with another, cry: “ Seven—like a Jew ! I’d sooner the devil had a couple of his best witches strangled, than that I should have to lose the liquor ! ”

“ Thou art lost like the Jew’s soul, Christopher,” said a *bummer* coming along, to whom the winner handed his full glass.

Ephraim blushed over and over, as he heard these phrases; a teasing demon seemed to be carrying on a horrid game with him. Now, when the loser got up and flung his emptied glass on the table, the archer of the village cried out to him: “ Why off so soon, Christopher ? Carriest thou a Jew’s beard, for fear thy Annamarie might blow thee up, because thou hast taken a glass ? I believe thou wilt have to breathe on thy wife when thou goest home, like long George’s Peter, that she may smell what has gone down thy gullet.”

“ I believe the mayor has hung the cabbage-knife on thy neck, to cut off a fellow’s soul and honor with it, for thou hast not much else to cut, thou starve-

ling, thou art a churl; if thou hadst four kreutzers in thy bag, I would not give a groschen for thee." So answered the object of the bantering.

"Na, na, no brawling," cried the others, "show the master, Christopher, and stay here."

"No, I must go to the school-master, he shall trim down my Jew;\* a fellow can't let himself be seen with such a beard at the church to-morrow." Christopher went, and the others soon followed.

Ephraim sat for a long time, with his head supported upon his two hands, alone and meditative in the guest-room. No one else was there now but a little girl, who stood at the other end of the table and eyed the stranger curiously. Ephraim called the child to him, set her on his lap and kissed her.

"What is thy name?" he asked.

"Matilda."

He gently set the child down again; he covered his face, and something within him said: "Why be a Jew also, is it not miserable enough to be a man, a mongrel, bound and imprisoned in the midst of this worthless world?" Of the flask that stood before him he could not drink a drop.

A ringing of bells awoke him the next morning; he smiled at the thought of having been put out of humor by mere phrases, mere fleeting pulsations of the air, for in the life of humanity, as in the life of men, dominant notions are found to pass current for a time as proverbial modes of speech, but presently these are melted down again and stamped anew with

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\* Long beard, like a Jew's.

the reigning ideas of the present; the people love the old coin very much and are not so easily accustomed to new ones.

Ephraim went to church with the pious multitude; he would pray to God in silent devotion. There stood in the pulpit a small man in a black gown, who preached in a nasal tone "of those false Pharisees and those accursed Jews who crucified the Saviour." Almost the whole sermon was a motley mosaic of Bible verses. "Upon this conjuring up of an old prescriptive sin of the Jews," said Ephraim to himself, "the demon of hatred fastens, to which the oppression and degradation and consequent contempt of the race attaches itself; when will this end?" He recollected that old popular usage of which he had heard in his childhood, that an executioner's sword, with which a hundred heads have been cut off, must be laid to rest forever, and the question arose within him: When will this headsman's sword of the faith and of reciprocal damnation be laid down to its eternal rest? Has it not already murdered its thousands and its tens of thousands?

After the sermon a summons was read, that all male parishioners, from sixteen years of age to sixty, must repair on the following Tuesday to the castle of his gracious lordship, provided with pick and shovel, to do socage-service.

"When will this end?" said Ephraim, again to himself. "One day the prescriptive vassalages shall all cease together."

After noonday church there was target-shooting,



according to old custom, with the cross-bow. A Turk was set up as a mark; they aimed at the agraffe on his turban. After that a Jew was set up; a horse-laugh greeted the odd caricature with the long beard, which reached down to the middle of the breast, where a black spot was marked as the centre; from all sides came a hailstorm of derision and wit. Ephraim silently kept himself aloof.

The rich man and he who is secure in the respect of his fellows may look on smiling when one publicly makes himself merry over his poverty or his insignificance, and in familiar circles even over his person; but he who is struggling for recognition and is rebuffed by a thousand limitations, feels himself assailed and dispirited in his innermost soul by derision; hence the sensitiveness of so many Jews, which exacts in public and confidential relations a respect such as the children of fortune will but rarely pay.

Far easier had it been for Ephraim to separate himself from the so-called higher classes; in his ill humor he saw there only people who had been trimmed and spoiled by the scissors of fashion; here he saw the people in leading-strings and contented with the tinkling of a child's rattle. He thought of the man with the great soul and the mighty hand who cut asunder the leading-strings in the training of the child and the people, and loudly demanded that they should be left to act freely; grandmothers and tripping aunts might cry death and murder at this innovation, and insist that the child would smash its

head if it were suffered to run alone without a padded hat and a patriarchal *bonne*, but it availed nothing.

Ephraim surmounted his dull despair more and more. Now he divided European humanity no longer into Jews and Christians, but into slaves and masters; now the people appeared to him no more as a child, but as the victim of oppression, who for a moment fancies himself to be free, because there is one still lower whom he in turn oppresses and scorns; the peasant-bondmen oppressed the chamber-menials of the emperor, the Jews.

On the Alps yonder were Sinai and Golgotha; there wandered the prophet in a pilgrimage; to him the life and journeyings of Ephraim gained once more an end and aim; now he no longer fluttered about like a frightened bird lost in a maze.

With elated heart sat Ephraim in a skiff, to be ferried over to Peter's-isle, the asylum of Jean Jacques. It was a fresh autumnal morning, the mists gradually rolled away, and as if out of a cloud the lovely island, with red and yellow crown of its groups of trees rose before the view. Ephraim found Rousseau botanizing; the latter looked up shyly on perceiving the stranger.

"Are you the man to give an unprejudiced hearing to a Jew?" asked Ephraim, stepping boldly into his path.

"I was enjoying the peculiar formation of this flower," answered Rousseau, smiling; he contemplated a flower which he held in his hand, looked

down upon it, then looked up again and sharply eyed the new-comer. "Salem aleikom," he then concluded.

Ephraim smiled at this final greeting, at which Rousseau offered him his hand, for he had not expected to be received like the arch-patriarch Abraham.

"I come not out of the patriarchal huts," he began again; "my step-father-land drives me hither, which suffers me to be cast out and pine in exile; everywhere, so far as the tone of a church-bell is audible, I hear contempt, hatred and persecution with brazen tongues hurl contempt at me, the Jew. You must be gratified to feel that all who are cast down in soul, come to lay the consecrated offerings and images of their sorrow in the temple of your heart. To you I have come on a pilgrimage, I clasp your knees and thank God that he has enabled me to find a man."

"I have become such once more, since they have forced me to flee from the poisonous breath of cities," replied Rousseau. "The more gregarious a man is, the worse he is. Intolerance, the curse of humanity, weighs not, however, upon the Jews alone. I, too, am banished by the tyranny of human society, because I refuse to think and to feel as kings and priests prescribe; but I nevertheless hold fast to the guiding thought of my life. It is possible in the midst of the perversity and corruptness of the world—it must be possible to shape one's existence after one's own firm convictions, after the laws of reason."

“And a Jew?” asked Ephraim.

“A Jew?” Rousseau continued in a thoughtful and interrogative tone; “it creates a noble pride in the midst of this apothecary’s shop of the world, where they have forgotten that all medical virtues are grown in open nature and imported from there, to carry one’s own free law within him. Of old time you Jews set your Jehovah by the side of Chamos.\* Do the rabbins of Amsterdam still teach that even out of your church salvation is to be found?”

“The just of all nations have part in the eternal salvation, the church fathers teach,” replied Ephraim.

“Toleration to all those who exercise toleration, for an exclusive national religion cannot exist in a pure social compact.”

Ephraim grasped the hand of Jean Jacques and kissed it fervently; the latter looked at him with wonder and quickly drew back his hand, saying:

“That the miserable condition of men should weigh down those who are called to hold up their heads proudly and freely and show no one a slavish veneration!” And he had disappeared in the thicket.

Ephraim himself stood there as one lost, and he felt only the solitude of his heart; but out of the depth rose the thought how vain it is to seek a sanctuary in the outer world in another human being; that only he who has a temple in himself will find such in the world; only he who brings peace with him will find peace coming to meet him.

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\* Or Chemosh, the national deity of the Moabites.—I. Kings, i, 7; II. Kings, xxiii, 13.

Ephraim determined henceforth to seek only the fruits of his own inner deeds.

An old reminiscence arose again within him: he had come out from the ruts of customary life and could no longer turn into them; to Otaheite, to the Eldorado of simplicity, thither, where pure and unsophisticated human nature unfolds itself, something drew him with magic cords.

With new exaltation of soul he read again and yet again the alluring delineations of that boasted land, which at that time inflamed all the youth and set them to recognizing with Rousseau the ideal of humanity in the savage, the so-called man of nature, out of the pale of culture; his purpose grew more and more fixed within him; winter drew near; he resolved to spend it in the circle of his kindred, and then to take leave of them forever; with the spring he meant to steer towards a new spring-time of his life.

### 23.—THE VAGRANT.

THE bolts rattle; the iron door turns groaning on its hinges; we go in to see Ephraim in prison. There he sits sunk in solitary musing, rolling within himself, Sisyphus-like, the heavy burden of his fate up even to the seeming heights of peace and knowledge; but ever, before reaching its destination, the treacherous load rolls back again into the dark abyss.

The events of the last day still whirled incessantly in his brain; he could not comprehend his mad audacity in daring, on his journey homeward, to stay overnight once more in the residence-city, where he had forced his way into the gayety of court life. He saw there in the inn Trevirano keeping bank at a table; a great pile of gold lay before him; Ephraim stepped up and fixed his eye on Trevirano, who asked him in a strange and sharp tone what he wanted, and Ephraim replied he would tell him the next morning.

In the semicircular room, where the daylight was crossed by a twofold iron grating, here now he had been sitting for three days, and felt all the horror of one buried alive.

We seldom know how men, flowers, and birds hold, as it were, their hands, cups and wings stretched out round about us, and bear us up in joy and sorrow, but suddenly, when cut off from all that thou knewest not when it was thine, and now alone with thyself and thy consciousness, immured in a stony solitude, while light and sound announce to thee the life outside; then thou feelest that thou, snatched out of the stream of life, art still dripping with its waves, and soon, after the first shiver and shudder thou wilt attempt to penetrate into thy own innermost being and that of the world.

Ephraim lay on the wooden bed; he studied his hand, its pores and many branching lines, and reflected how he must keep this hand till it should serve as food for the worms. How strange it were that this sum of experiences, feelings and aspirations, should only be there whither this hand and this body were to be swept away. He turned his thoughts now in upon the moving force of all this, the soul. Again his thoughts whirled about confusedly within him; he helped himself by beginning to sing; he drowned the inner tumult. Suddenly he listened: a voice came up to him from the lower prison. He laid his ear to the ground; he heard a Jewish church melody; he immediately joined in; the person below interpolated the question into the melody, who it was overhead? Ephraim shuddered; he felt as he did then when at the masked ball he, for the first time, was addressed by invisible lips; and yet how different were his situations then and

now; however, he quickly answered in the same tune what seemed to him advisable, for he still doubted whether he should confess before the judge his Judaism, and therefore he feared that he might be detected by a spy. The two prisoners now conversed together by singing Jewish airs. The guard could discover nothing suspicious in that; the prisoners might sing, to be sure, to their hearts' content. Ephraim's fellow-captive had been arrested on the same ground with himself. The two fellow-prisoners had conversed together in their recitative hardly an hour when they had nothing more to say to each other. We do not know, in the state of freedom, what a mighty influence it has upon conversation that the parties can look each other in the face; a glance, a play of the features, the whole outward appearance with its immediate impressions, continually reanimate conversation; the two prisoners, who could not see each other and never had seen each other, must needs therefore soon come to a dead pause. Every morning they mutually inquired how each had slept, whether no sentence had yet been pronounced, and then each one gave himself up to his own thoughts. Ephraim missed men perhaps less than his books; to sit thus half in the dark, not to be able to transport himself into the life and thought of another, nor to unburden himself of his own thoughts either by conversation or writing, that is a torment which stamps itself into the fibres of the brain. A piece of news from his fellow-prisoner startled Ephraim. He learned that the overseer of



the prison was a baptized Jew; this prisoner under him might be the jailer himself; he no longer gave him any answer. The jailer was repulsive to him by his smirking show of friendship and by the Jewish phrases with which he greeted him. These Christians with a Judaizing jargon were odious to Ephraim's soul, for in this specious complaisance lies concealed for the most part only mockery and banter; besides, Ephraim was offended that they treated him as an ol' clo' Jew; he was proud and chary of his words.

From this time forth he began, however, to be more friendly toward the jailer; this knavish face with the woolly gray hair and the silver ear-rings, Ephraim fancied he had met once before.

"Have I not seen you once before?" Ephraim once asked him.

"Once? Ten times!" replied the jailer; "I knew the Kuh [cow] when she was yet a little, innocent calf; don't take it ill of me, it is only a fancy of mine."

Ephraim turned away indignantly, for nothing is more repulsive than a witticism on the family name which the wearer cannot put off all his life long; the jailer, however, continued:

"In Breslau, in Berlin and here we have seen each other before, but I will tell you my history from aleph [the beginning of the alphabet] down: My father,—where he lives now, I know not,—but formerly he lived at Wieliczka, in Poland; he had a large business, a great deal to do, to get ahead, from

morning till evening. In the morning he goes to market and yawns in the faces of the huckster-women, till they all were compelled to yawn at him; at evening, as soon as it was night, he runs round all through the Jews' street, and on the ground-floor shuts up shop for all the people; then, when he comes home, he has to fight it out with my mother. She and we children had to earn the bread. As a child of eight, I was school-knocker; you know very well what that is: three times every day one has to strike with the clapper on all the Jewish houses, to call them to the synagogue. In the cold winter days the hammer almost froze to my hand; many a time I actually did not know any longer that I had hands, they were so dead; and then, too, to have to stand so long in the synagogue on an empty stomach. I have been vexed with God for making me beat the reveille for his soldiers; once, when not a soul was left in the synagogue, I tipped the desks one over another, just to enrage the Lord God, and then ran out as fast as I could. When my father died, my mother packed up and came with me to Germany; on the way she died, for it vexed her to leave my father alone at rest where he is. I was the oldest and hired myself as boy at the horse-delivery in the first Silesian war, because I wore a moustache under my nozzle. A Swabian from Augsburg tacked on to me the nickname *Schnauzerle*.\* Afterward I often came with wife and children to Breslau; I am as well known in Breslau as in my breeches-pocket."

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\* Snozzly(?)

“Where, then, is your family now?” asked Ephraim.

“With grandfather.”

“With grandfather?”

“Well, yes, above or below, they haven’t so much as a finger-ache any longer. My Matilda alone I cannot yet forget, she was such a dear, sweet child; they told me that the silly thing took her own life, because she had in her a life too many, but I don’t believe it, I don’t believe it.” Schnauzerle grew suddenly pensive and chewed at his coat-sleeve. Ephraim was glad to find a tie that drew the old fellow back to a tender spot in life; had he known how nearly the sorrow of this man for his dead child touched himself, for Matilda was Schnauzerle’s daughter, he would not, for the sake of comforting the mourner, have diverted him to other subjects; but now he asked him again after the fortunes of his life, and where he had first met him.

Schnauzerle went on: “Do you remember how, on Passover-evening, they took your father to a free lodging? At that time I sat at table with him.—I had even as a child a begging spirit in me. I always kept company with rich children, for I calculated with myself: If I one day come to them as a beggar, I can say: Dost thou remember how, at such or such a place we played together and stole the onion from Gudula’s roof? And then they must certainly give me more than any one else. When, in begging, the staff has once grown warm in the hand, or when one has torn a pair of boots on the

tramp, the staff will burn in his hands and the sole on his feet, till he trudges the same road with them again. I have left no stone unturned. I lost my wife and children one day, I know not how. As I sit like a cat on horseback, I was put with English riders; but there nothing is left one but an old bridle and piebald clothes; when things were at the worst with me I played the bass-fiddle for four good groschen a day."

"The fiddle? Are you musical then too?"

"Yes, the fiddle; the saw was the bow, the wood the string, and the cross-block the fiddle-case; that was the miserablest of all, four good groschen for earnings and ten good groschen spent for drink; I was always a lover of a good swig; it keeps soul and body together; then I was for some time parson."

"Ah, you take me for a fool."

"As true as my name is Victor Nepomuk Baptist Schnauzerle, I was parson; what is a parson, then, except a double ventriloquist, or belly-speaker? He imitates the voice of another that he may get something into his own belly."

"Who is locked up below me?" asked Ephraim, for he thought now he had sure evidence that he had been deceived by the ventriloquism.

"That is a Ger;\* his name is Chulicki; he will have to drag the cart to-morrow, because he can't pay the fine; he is as restive and hard-mouthed as a silly nag. Ah, you must certainly know something about him?"

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\* A Jew, turned Christian.

"I don't recollect him."

"Well, then I will help you to a clew. Rabbi Chananel, you know, was a long time an inmate of your house; well, Chulicki was the very man on whom he worked a miracle; in one day he made him a couple of thousand years older."

"I don't understand you."

"I don't understand him either," said Schnauzerle, laughing. "Rabbi Chananel changed Chulicki from a Christian to a Jew; a nice job, too; Chulicki knows all our religious usages, but one thing he will not get through his thick skull—he can't duck, and that is the very first thing of all."

Ephraim was deeply affected at finding here his teacher's proselyte, and would have had Schnauzerle announce this fact to him forthwith, but Schnauzerle was once for all in a story-telling vein, and went on: "I was also for the first two years of the Seven Years' War in the cavalry, but I soon took myself off from that, for I saw that one does with the invalid soldiers as they do with the butcher's dog who brings the calf to the shambles for the gentry, and runs himself almost to death, so that his tongue hangs out, and doesn't get as much at last as gnawed bone."

"Had you then already changed your religion?"

"Seven times for good; that was for a while a good business; the Prussians, all their fingers itch to get hold of a Jew's soul, but they're poor pay; ten thalers and at most a couple of thalers extra that fall into the contribution-box; the best paymaster has

been my last; that was my Jesuit, through whom also I have my present bit of service."

"Have you no conscientious scruples about trifling so with religion?" asked Ephraim.

"If our Lord God had wanted me in his service here or there, he should have reflected: it takes money to buy truth; the other God has at least given me something for pocket-money. I paid my Jew's tax at once, became a Christian, and have made money out of it too. One must bore through the plank where it is thinnest. If there were a judicious word to be whispered in the Sultan's ear, I wouldn't make any objections to becoming a Turk or a Hei-duk."

"You have never reproached yourself, then, for abandoning Judaism?"

"To concern one's self for the Jewish religion," replied Schnauzerle, "is like bridling the nag's tail; the Jewish religion is a discharged campaign-horse; it is galled; one should treat it respectfully, but one cannot use it any more."

"And do you never think of a future life?"

"The present life is cash in hand; the other—na! it is an obligation resting on mere promise of mouth, or note of hand without security; may be it will be paid, may be not. I am now, it is true, in the third week of the fair—when one is in the sixties, it is, to be sure, a day after the fair—my best business is done; I have no longer a firm seat on horseback, my knees are no longer steady; I might now, indeed, hold on to religion, but religion is nothing but a

nose-piece for the common folk; the hard-mouthed jade would never let a rider sit on her any more, if one did not hold her rigorously by the snaffle; the priests, they make the best grooms."

"You said we had seen each other here, too, before now?"

"Yes, indeed, but I was masked. Do you remember the Moor Muley, with the chevalier? That was I. Do you remember the mask of your father at the carnival? That was I. I gave you warning enough, but there are people who, if you say to them a hundred times: There's a stone there! will not believe you till they themselves stumble over it. At that lottery where there was no prize, the pistol-duel, I was present also, and as Moor played the orphan. Wasn't I a handsome Moor? I have my clothes yet, all of them. Shall I fetch them?"

Ephraim nodded assent; his head was all in a whirl with Schnauzerle's long and crowded story; he had not for several days been accustomed to converse with any human being, and now he saw suddenly a checkered vagabond life shoot about before him in a jack-o-lantern zigzag, and at so many points cut across his life's pathway. Ephraim, who had always floating before him the sense of a mismatch between his character and his condition, loved also to seek the same in others, and shifted every one arbitrarily out of his given position into the one that seemed fitted for him. Thus he now transferred Schnauzerle into another station in life and saw him shine in the *salon* with literary renown as a kind

of Rabelais or Voltaire. When Schnauzerle came back in his Moorish costume, he found his prisoner far more pensive than before, for that is the peculiarity about the conversation of a wag, that it becomes dry wood so soon as a pause ensues and new tricks are not incessantly started up.

In a few hours Schnauzerle had showed up his nature and his fortunes; all further could be nothing more than repetition or variation. When twilight set in Schnauzerle withdrew.

Ephraim paced with short steps the narrow space of his prison; suddenly he stopped and counted the strokes of the clock in the neighboring steeple, it struck eight; from another tower it struck again; Ephraim again counted; the same with a third; this was a torment which he could not escape; ever since he had sat here in confinement, here where it could not be of the least consequence to him what hour it was, here he counted involuntarily every stroke of the hammer; by no action of the mind, but only by making a racket with table and chair, or crying out loud and singing, could he tear himself away from this numeration; perhaps he could not avoid this impression for the reason that in the perfect silence it was the only tone that reached him.

The burlesque tricks of Schnauzerle had the characteristic effect upon Ephraim of inclining him to melancholy. He placed the chair on the table, mounted upon it and peered out into the starry night. Right over him shone Jupiter with his bluish flame.—“O these stars,” he said to himself, almost



aloud, "they are worlds peopled like our earth, and even much larger than it; lo, there sweep millions of worlds, and our earth is only a drop in the sea, in which a heap of worms wriggle, called humanity; I mount from star to star, from world to world. Hold fast, my spirit, and tremble not before the immensity; lo, here thou standest and lookest down upon the dust-heap where they contend with each other in nations and religions, till death shakes them off like the leaves from a tree; lo, here and there they have set their houses together, how they race and chase, amuse themselves, hate and love, starve and gormandize; there, on the countless sand of the seashore, there under a tiny pebble lies a fly imprisoned, how she moans and wails! The pebble, that is my prison, and I am the fly; exult, my soul, on high above the worlds, thou art free—O eternity! Endless eternity, would men only recognize thee, they would share the earth lovingly; but now each will have all the room for himself; when will life begin, and peace and freedom? Death, thou art the only Saviour!"

Long sat Ephraim there feeling his way into the centre of the world's being; he held his hand to his forehead; his wits seemed to reel; sighing he shut the window and laid himself on his board.

The next day Schnauzerle came and took him to trial. Already during the ten days of his imprisonment Ephraim had been preparing himself for this. He meant to represent to the judge with defiance and sharpness how, not he alone, but most Chris-

tians had false passes, inasmuch as their baptismal certificates were made out in the name of Christ—and so on. But now when he came before the judge he suddenly felt an unconquerable trembling and quaking. In thought he had already in a hundred ways questioned the national validity of the state authorities, nay, the whole order of the world; he who defiantly arrayed himself against the state authorities stood here cast down and submissive, for he stood here, the first time in his life, before a judge, in open conflict with the power of the state, accused of forgery; besides Ephraim had from youth up been accustomed to regard every official with lowliness and reverence, and even at this advanced age he had not the courage to stand out boldly.

The judge had contrived a rat-tail string of counts, and worried Ephraim with it; there were assaults upon the rights of nobility, forgery, fraud, etc., and an inquisitorial inquiry as to the object and occasion of the notes in his memorandum-book. During the delivery of his observations it was as if an invading horde of soldiers dragged slumbering children from their beds. Ephraim saw with profound sympathy for himself his most individual and deeply concealed life dragged into the light and called to account; what he had felt in still and sacred hours, and what he had sharpened into an arrow in bold presumption and antagonism to the world—all that he was now summoned to justify and explain. He saw himself placed all alive under

the dissecting-knife of the anatomist. He demeaned himself with a perfect faint-heartedness; he confessed all, for he wished to end his confinement speedily and pay his penalty; he inwardly persuaded himself also that he could look down with a smile on 't petty machinery and motives beneath him. The judge seemed surprised at these voluntary confessions.

In one thing only Ephraim remained steadfast: he concealed the name of the person who had drawn up his false pass, and demanded with resolution that Trevirano, his betrayer, should be confronted with him. The judge asserted that he knew no man of that name. His books, too, for which Ephraim earnestly begged, were refused him.

A hundred times more dark and sweltry than ever did the gloomy solitude seem to Ephraim, when after his trial he was brought back again to prison. He ran round like a madman, but at last he was compelled to calm himself; he could no longer find free thought of his own; it was to him as if his whole soul's life were fastened to a chain, of which the last ends were riveted into the court records.

Schnauzerle came now very often; Ephraim refused to understand him when he remarked repeatedly that all men were blind and dumb, unless one applied gold to the eyes and tongue.

One morning Ephraim was taken again to the court-room; irons lay upon the table; the judge came in and announced to the criminal that he must pay a fine of several hundred dollars together with the

costs of examination and imprisonment, and drag the cart for a year; hereupon the judge handed the irons to Schnauzerle to have them put on to Ephraim. Ephraim stood there, with his eyes staring wide open, passing his hand across his forehead; it was there as if an adder suddenly darted his poisonous teeth into his brain, but as with the speed of lightning he began again suddenly to laugh aloud; he had placed himself with his consciousness high above himself, and now looked down transfigured upon the extraordinary complication of a thread of life, which lay over against him as a foreign spectacle; there stood a man who had cruised about wildly and crazily through the world, who many a night had wrestled with demons and conquered them, there he stood now, and was to have irons put upon his feet! Was not that an extraordinary fiction of the poetic mind? He conjured up in his thoughts still more extraordinary complications, he no longer knew whether he were physician or patient, poet or poem; he knew no longer who he was.

The judge took this singular start and this wild laughter of Ephraim's for an attack of craziness, of which Schnauzerle had already given him intelligence. Ephraim was remanded to his prison. At his request he there received permission to inform his relatives by letter of his fate, but Schnauzerle drew his attention again to the fact "that people only double up their fists until one chooses to put money in their hands, and then they open handsomely;" at last he came out with a free utterance, and Ephraim gave

him full power to use all his property for purposes of bribing, etc. He asked nothing but his books and so much of the rest of his money as would carry him back by post to Breslau.

Towards evening Schnauzerle came triumphantly to Ephraim in his prison with a pass for Breslau. He reckoned up all the money and assured him he had not kept a farthing for himself. "The criminal court was criminally lax," Schnauzerle said, "but if a regent will have corruptible officers, he has only to make tyrannical laws, then one's conscience gives him absolution when he peeps through his fingers." Ephraim answered not a syllable; the prison-door was open; he insisted upon staying here this one night. Not without sadness did he the next morning bid farewell to this place: twice he turned round when he was already on the steps, and contemplated the walls and the furniture upon which his eyes so long had rested. He thought of the innumerable successors who like him would moan there, and now for the first time he pressed out a tear from his eyelashes.

Ephraim's first act after his release was to release his fellow-prisoner, Chulicki. It was a singular relation, to stand eye to eye with the man with whom he had conversed invisibly and by singing. Chulicki was a nature that had run wild, and when with a mixture of pride and subserviency he thanked him for his release, Ephraim replied:

"It is better to have nothing at all, than only a wretched remnant."

In fact Ephraim had that pleasure in profuseness which takes possession of one who sees himself lost, and now in dejection throws away from him every remaining support, in order to stand wholly bare. Chulicki would fain have attached himself to him, but Ephraim laughingly declined.

In the company of his books Ephraim sat in the coach on his way to Breslau; at a spring, which flowed by the roadside, he alighted and stared a long time into the clear mirror; he had not for a long time seen the features of his face; he turned away several times and looked again into the liquid glass; it was to him as if he saw therein an old man with the face of a stranger.

## 24—RETURN HOME.

AFTER an interval of more than ten years Ephraim alighted once more at the inn well known to us, at Deutchlissa. Immediately on alighting he requested the host to advance to the postilion temporarily the necessary fare and drinking-money. The host measured the new-comer from head to foot with a wondering look and quickly put on again with a look of assurance the cap which he had held in his hand; he ran out to help bring the great trunks into the house; he himself lent a hand, and with a friendly grimace he hefted their weight. In the guest-room the stranger requested writing materials and a messenger to send to Breslau.

“Good weather for traveling,” said the host to his guest, on re-entering; “every fair day we get now is a gift outright; the proverb says: After Michaelmas our Lord God does not owe the Germans another pleasant day.”

“Nor does he properly the whole year round,” answered Ephraim.

“Has the gentleman ever been in this country before?” asked the host again.

“Yes, several years ago.”

“Isn’t it a fact, one would hardly know Silesia any longer? The roads as clean and smooth to travel as a table, for with the officials the word is: Look out! Things go on no longer as in the Austrian times, then it cost heaven and—money, and nothing was done. Thank God that we are Prussians! From the beginning we were unwilling to trust our old Fritz, because we imagined he would treat us Catholics like step-children, but: Think what you will and pay what you must, is his proverb; all are alike to him.”

“Yes, in paying taxes,” replied Ephraim, “and there it always happens that they who have the fewest rights must pay the most.”

“Between ourselves,” the host continued, “he has, properly, no religion at all. Since his father’s death he has been once to God’s table! but what does that concern us? Every one must carry his skin to market himself; one thing is certain, the land has much to thank him for. The potato salad you are eating there—those are good potatoes, ar’n’t they? just like meal! six years ago we knew nothing of them—there you have an example ready to hand, what we owe him. The stupid peasants cried murder when six years since at the king’s command they had to plant the potato; *there was nothing but poison in the clumps, and the object was to make them poor.*—Such is the people—one must force their blessings down their throats in spite of their screaming, as one does an infant’s pap. In the awful famine of last year, they



thanked God a thousand times that they had potatoes; how many thousand would otherwise have starved! Whoso undertakes to say anything against my king, has to do with me," concluded the host, pouring out a glass of potato schnapps, and drank it down at one gulp.

Ephraim handed the letter to the waiting messenger; the host hurried after the man, overtook him in the yard and read the address: "'To the brothers Kuh in Breslau.'—Hallo, there's a chance for one to borrow," he said, smirking to himself, went back to his guest, seated himself by him with proud condescension, and communicated that he never judged according to appearances, on the whole was not given to prejudice, this trait of his had pleased so much the great Fritz, who on his reviewing-rides had twice stopped at his house; to him Christian and Jew, Turk and Pagan, were alike, they were all human beings after all. The Jews too, by the way, were brave and were men, like others.

Ephraim asked for his chamber.

"Have you also heard," said the host, as he preceded his guest up-stairs, "that it is whispered, because there was so great a famine, the potentates also have a deep stomach, so they have made up a Polish salad; one pours on the oil, another the vinegar, a third puts in the pepper; now they stir all together, then it is portioned out to be eaten; jesting aside, the restless kingdom of Poland is to be torn to pieces, the Russian and the Austrian take each a piece of it, and we—we don't go away empty, we

eat Saxony as a buttered roll, and when once the king of Prussia is emperor—any further commands?”

“No,” answered Ephraim, and shut himself up in his chamber.—With his burning forehead pressed against the window-pane, he stared out into the street, he thought of the mournful manner of his return. Swiftly his mind darted through all the rows of houses, and looked out at the windows; he saw himself plodding along with downcast look, he knew all that they were whispering there, and heard all their wise talk; drawing back his head he quickly turned round and paced the chamber up and down; he stopped before his trunks, contemplated them for some seconds, opened one, took out a book and threw himself on the bed. Long and busily he read the well-thumbed leaves, till the book dropped from his hands and he fell asleep.

How long he had slept he knew not, when suddenly he heard a knocking at the door and his name called; he sprang up, opened, and lay in his brother Nathan's arms; but quickly, as if an alarming thought startled him, he tore himself away, sat still on the bed and stared at his brother with glazed eyes.

“What is thy name now?” he asked.

“I am thy brother, what matters it to thee, what name I bear in the church-register?”

“Thou art now too in the company that collects the Jews' tax, art thou comfortably situated there?”

It was but gently and with the most cautious

words that Nathan could bring his brother to a confidential disclosure of his inner and outer experiences. Illusions, wrongs and maltreatments of all kinds Ephraim recited with a cold indifference, with an orderliness from which one might see that he meant to vouch for it, that he had long since buried in the grave all inspired feelings for love and friendship, human happiness and human confidence, and now pursued his way cold and immovable by their sunken grave-stones.

“As a beggar I lift my brotherly hand to thee,” he concluded; “give me clothes and money enough to last me till I reach the so-called savages; there I shall need your coined money and your coined faith no more! or art thou already so far on in your Christianity, that thou hast no feeling for my unutterable sorrow? Hast thou also a mischievous joy and malice in thy heart towards the Jew, who is thy born brother?”

“Thou wilt always that others shall forget thou art a Jew, and thou thyself never forgettest it,” replied Nathan, sharply, and then went on more tenderly: “Look, I pray, into the glass; thou art sick, come with me to Breslau, there thou wilt get well.”

Almost without a will of his own, Ephraim let himself be induced to return to his native town.

“How would it do,” he said to Nathan when they were seated in the carriage, “how if we should let the horses take the reins, and harness ourselves to the coach?”

“In that case we should have to have another

kind of harness," replied Nathan, smiling and looking his brother sharply in the eye.

"Yes, another religion," replied the latter; he undertook to take a pinch of snuff, but opened the box upside down, and spilled the contents; he began to laugh aloud; Nathan again fastened a keen look upon his brother, and shook his head.

They had not driven far, when Ephraim suddenly jumped out of the carriage and ran back; Nathan cried out, but Ephraim would not hear, till suddenly he fell over a pile of stones; Nathan hastened to him, lifted him up; the blood ran from Ephraim's forehead, the sharp stones had torn the skin of his face. After a while Ephraim again sprang out of the carriage. Nathan did not turn back this time, but cracked the whip and drove on; Ephraim sat down in the ditch by the roadside, and looked after his brother with tears in his eyes; when he no longer saw the cloud of dust, he ran after him weeping and screaming, but Nathan did not hear. At this moment they came to a hill; Ephraim exerted his last remaining strength, screamed and ran; panting he came up with Nathan, who, without saying a word, reached out his hand to him and lifted him into the carriage.

"My wife is greatly rejoiced at thy arrival," said Nathan, at last; "she is an old acquaintance of thine, she says; dost thou remember Rosa Petzhold, the daughter of our writing-master? That is my wife."

Ephraim pressed his lips tightly together. "I will alight at our brother Maier's," he said, and in a perfectly calm and rational tone he asked, after a pause:

"Dost thou feel thyself now entirely *al pari* with a Christian?"

"Perfectly," replied Nathan Frederick.

"I could never bring myself to it," continued Ephraim; "even on the best footing of familiarity, I feel myself under a favor, bound by regard and gratitude. I should like once to have a tussle with a Christian. Indulge me with one thyself, thou art a Christian."

Again Nathan looked at his brother at these strange flights and sought in every way to calm him.

Before the gate stood a female form dressed in mourning; she wore a veil fastened on her head, and over the forehead almost down to the middle of the eyebrows was laid a heart-shaped peaked piece of black crape; she stretched out both hands to the new-comer. Nathan kept still. Violet mounted the steps; a scream of joy, and she lay weeping on her brother Ephraim's neck, then she stroked his forehead and chin and looked fondly into his restless eyes.

"How I came to be so bruised, thou wouldst ask?" began Ephraim; "I fell over a heap of stones on my way, but why dost thou wear mourning?"

Violet now related that within a half-year she had returned a widow to her home; she begged her brother in the most fervent terms to live with her; they would set up a peaceful life, would spend their days together in domestic tranquillity. She described to him how she had arranged his chamber. She painted in the most alluring colors how she would

care for him, nurse him, do anything for him. But Ephraim answered coldly:

“The wisest course would be for thee to marry again, Violet; I do not want to have people pointing at our house and saying, there live two bankrupt widows; no, no, besides I shall not stay here.”

As they drove in through the gate, Ephraim took his sister's hand and said:

“Dost thou still remember the history of Ruth in the Bible? When the noble mother returned from her wanderings to Bethlehem, the whole city was astonished, and said: Is that Amorosa? But she said: Call me no more Amorosa, call me Dolorosa, for the Lord has given me bitterness and sorrow. Would that I might only glean the ears, too, like Ruth, barefoot in the stubble. I stand here as a beggar; let me not starve, Job is my name.”

There was silence all round.

The first news Ephraim heard on the threshold of his native city, was the intelligence of the death of his oldest brother, Maier, who had been dead three years.

25—THE SORROWS OF WERTHER.

FOR several days Ephraim lay in bed and received no visits; in the Jewish congregation of Breslau the most fabulous reports succeeded each other concerning the fate and appearance of Ephraim. At the breaking up of the Brody synagogue they talked with an especial liveliness on the subject, and Heymann Lisse made all laugh by remarking that there were cows (Kuks) which one could not milk because they sucked their own milk if one did not tie them with a short halter to the crib.

This kind of mockery Ephraim anticipated, hence he refused to see any one; only when Philippina announced herself, he smiled again and begged she might be admitted.

“How dost thou like my face?” said Ephraim; “isn’t that a fashionable beauty-patch?”

“Thou saidst thou wast going to the savages, and hast been tattooing thyself beforehand *comme il faut*,” replied Philippina.

With this single answer Ephraim was suddenly transported back again into the old relation to his

gay cousin; the many years since they had last seen each other had to be sure entirely changed her outward appearance, but not in the least her peculiar character. She was of a well-to-do aspect, but still had the same *gracieuse* unrest, the same sprightly and saucy humor.

"Why dost thou look at me so?" she asked, "wilt thou take an exact pattern of me? Dost thou see, such I am." She whirled round on her left foot and made a courtesy.

"Thou look'st very respectful," observed Ephraim.

"Ah, heavens! don't say anything to me about that," replied Philippina; "I have been vexed enough that I have not more dignity, more *aplomb*, as Taübchen would say; people always treat me as if I were sixteen years old, and if I say anything serious, or undertake to come out pointedly, they laugh. I have, for a long time, taken great pains to tramp along with majestic composure, in this way, seest thou? and wave my hand ever so lightly, or to smile graciously, but it soon grows too close for me. I tear off all the ribbons, and now I feel well again; there is nothing more tedious than what is called dignity. I cannot fit it to myself and now I will not try any more.—I have a favor to ask of thee, dear cousin."

"Well?"

"When thou art out of humor, do not let the world have the pleasure of consoling thee. Then every one comes and will have his portion of wo-



begone face; send him off with a laugh. When thou hast any trouble, bring it to me. I am a good cupboard."

Ephraim took it for granted that his cousin gladly heightened her natural gayety in order to cheer him up. The town-history, that is, the history of the Jewish congregation, for the last ten years, offered rich material; into Philippina's narrative there entered, despite all her good nature, a certain element of satire; out of the circle of town-history they soon passed over again to the central point of family-histories.

"What shouldst thou say to this," asked Philippina, "that thy sister-in-law Taübchen has run away with a death's-head?\*" It was a handsome officer, a man 'like an Adonis.' Such kinds of 'morn-and eve-nts,'† indeed, belong to the *necessaire* of a dame of the *haute volée*. Taübchen had also learned to ride, and once asked her riding-master whether the horse was *religious*—meaning, of course, good and gentle. She also gave great parties, and the *Messieurs Christians* made fun of her, when they had eaten to their hearts' content of her viands; she never invited a Jew, for, 'I am *responsable* for their violations of *bon ton*,' she used often to say, and the 'Messieurs Christians,' too, must never discover by her company that she was a Jewess. Thy sister-in-law Rosa, she is so sweet, so amiable, so good and

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\* Name given to Ziethen's hussars.

† "Morgen-und abenteuer," a play on the title of the religious book, "Morgen und abend-opfer"

loving; I often enjoy Rosa, she is so still and happy and makes everybody happy with a look, with a smile, with nothing; Rosa is the best of florists; every plant thrives with her, and I, I love flowers too, but I forget to take care of them, and they starve under my hands; Rosa has a true flower-hand. There, make a poem on that some time."

Ephraim was silent, and after a while Philippina went on:

"On the other hand, with thy sister-in-law Taübchen there is nothing but pride and rouge. It is a pity that Taübchen is no longer here, for she used to make a good deal of fun for me; I was quite exclusively *en faveur* with her. I cannot compare her culture to anything else than an actress coming on the stage with only one cheek painted. She has sat half a day at a time all alone in the middle of the sofa *décolleté* and with the lap-dog in her arms, practicing how one shall assume a right lady-like attitude. But there is one thing I envy Rosa most of all."

"And that is?"

"Only think—she never has *ennui*, and yet is so clever. She is as contented as a tree in the garden; she can be still and yet happy for a week at a time when nothing at all happens, when she doesn't stir from one spot; and I, I die with restlessness if for a single day I have nothing happen to me and nothing to expect. But most of all did I pity thy brother. The good Chajem Achilles found it all fuss and flurry in the grand parties, where he had himself to

play great folks; when he came to see me he breathed freely again; now he has gone with Taübchen on a tour to Paris."

When Philippina at length departed, Ephraim's eyes followed her with a heavy look.

His first visit abroad Ephraim made to his brother Nathan, who lived in a garden before the Oder-gate. He found his brother alone; his sister-in-law had gone out.

Nathan now showed Ephraim with the satisfaction of quiet possession, his house, its convenient arrangements, the laying out of the garden, etc.

"Come here, Ludwig," Nathan called out to a boy of about six years old, who was riding his hobby-horse in the yard, "give the gentleman a hand, this is thy uncle Ephraim."

"And hast thou brought me anything, and may I ride with thee in thy carriage?" said the child.

The face of Ephraim darkened, the consciousness of his poverty fell heavily on his heart; he could not even make this boy a present; he kissed him on his forehead and mouth; it was the forehead and lips of his mother; the boy rode off. Nathan took his brother round through the garden; suddenly Ephraim stopped, passed his hand over his eyes and stamped on the ground.

"See, brother," said he, "thou standest here on thy own ground and soil, a piece of the great earth is thine, down to the lowest depth up to the height of heaven, it is thine; thou hast a firm foothold on the earth—and I, I can say with Christ: 'I have not

where to lay my head.' The leaf which I pluck from the tree, the flower I pluck from the meadow, are they mine? Only a hand's breadth of earth would I fain have for my own, out of doors, where spring and winter, sun and storm may rise on my earth too; I pray thee, Nathan, or Frederick, as thou art now called, pardon me, I cannot yet accustom myself to it; I pray thee, give me a little piece of garden; I will give thee one of my teeth for it, whichever thou wilt, *that* is still my own; don't laugh, I am no child, and yet does not the fact that children love to have little gardens for themselves, fenced round, contain a deep meaning? See brother, the ground-idea is the idea of ground and soil, of possession, is it not?"

"Thou comest to buy when the market is already run out," replied Nathan Frederick; "thou hast arrived somewhat too late at a view of the necessity and agreeableness of possession; to ownership of the soil thou couldst not, as thou well knowest, in thy present position, have attained; consider what is mine as thine own. Must I be thy liege lord?"

"Aha! I understand," interrupted Ephraim; "I cannot as a Jew hold any real estate. I had forgotten that that is a Christian sun which shines above us; yes, those are Christian birds that fly over our heads; this is all Christian grass and flowers."

The garden-gate was heard to swing open. "My wife," said Nathan; Ephraim started; at no more inappropriate time could he have met Rosa again than at this very moment, when the shrill discord of religious difference still rang in his ears.

Rosa offered her brother-in-law her hand and bade him a hearty welcome; Ephraim hardly dared to raise his eyes and contemplate Rosa's charmingly majestic form. By degrees, however, he lost more and more his shyness; he scrutinized her features; they were still the same that had once impressed themselves on his youthful dreams, and yet again they were quite different; the radiant friendliness of Rosa did not leave him long to his scrutinizing speculations. There was so much thoughtful tranquillity and clearness, so much wisdom in her whole bearing, that one could not help feeling himself immediately attracted and transported into a clear atmosphere; Rosa even respected a delicate jest, yet with a certain serene smile, by which she did not forfeit a dignified bearing; her speech was void of wit and yet full of pleasantry.

"I have still a relic of you," she said among other things to Ephraim; "the A B C which you set as a copy for me in the writing-lesson with my father of blessed memory; I had it a long time lying in my prayer-book, till once I lost it on the way to church; when I found it again I took better care of it; I will show it to you sometime. Those were delightful times, when we still were so young."

"If father had only not looked and knocked so hard at one's fingers," remarked Nathan Frederick with a smile.

"It is really extraordinary," said Ephraim to Rosa, when they were alone together, "that fate should have so singularly snatched us asunder and now led you to me again as my sister."

"I greet you with joy as a brother," replied Rosa, again offering him her hand.

Ephraim looked straight before him in silence.

"I hear you make such beautiful poems," began Rosa, in a light and lively manner; "may I beg one favor of you?"

"All, all, if you wish."

"No, not so; I am not so immodest as to ask that; only this one thing I beg of you: promise me, on your word as a man, never to make a poem on me, either in praise or in blame. If you do not promise me that, I could not speak a word freely, nor give myself out without embarrassment as is fitting between relations; I should always be thinking: now he has caught me again. Do you promise, then?"

"As you wish it, I promise willingly."

Rosa poured herself out in sympathetic conversation with him; she was as gay and free as Philippina, only more calm, one might say, more logical.

Alone and thoughtful Ephraim lived on by himself; he was compelled more than ever, and in the midst of his relations, to lead a self-secluded existence.

A cry of anguish was suddenly wrung from the lips of many German youths and maidens; the pistol-shot of young Jerusalem woke hundredfold echoes; here and there the knell of a pistol was heard in some hidden thicket; here and there a dagger plunged itself into some poor or impoverished heart, and a sorrowing soul groaned out its last.

With wet eye and quivering pulse, Ephraim read,

nay, devoured, the "Sorrows of Young Werther." Old as he already was, far advanced beyond the years of youth, yet every word, every breath had been stolen from his soul; that was a night of passion under which his soul quaked; that was an undreamed-of magic of speech which caused common words to be listened to, as if they suddenly sounded out melodiously from a beloved and venerated soul. Ephraim felt himself distressed, as if his most original and personal life-thoughts and experiences were wrested from him, and set, larger and deeper, before the eyes of the world, and then again distorted into foreign relations; he was angry with the poet who had robbed him of all this; he, only he himself, could and must tear off the bandage from his wounds before the world, and bleed to death, or rise again fresh, redeemed, crowned with laurel. But soon he rose to the purely human point of view; then the beatings of his heart were redoubled; he thanked the poetic spirit which in the far distance had felt sympathetically, nay, even prophetically, the faintest agitations of his soul; with a growing sense of suffocation he read on and on to the conclusion, and with a deep sigh closed the book—he had seen his double; he must needs die.

Almost the whole family were assembled in Nathan Frederick's garden; mention was made of the death of a young officer who had the night before shot himself through the forehead; the Sorrows of Young Werther lay open on his table.

"The man had already a scorched brain, and has now scorched it again," observed Nathan Frederick.

“The book is deeply affecting,” sighed Violet, “but men take for strength what is properly only weakness; it is far stronger to endure a life than to throw it away.”

“My sympathies are all with Lottie,” said Philippina. “Good Heavens! what a horrible thing it were, if one were accountable for all the people who choose to fall in love with one or had done so; one could no longer stir or turn round without fearing to tread on some lover’s toes. Now it will be the fashion to dress *à la Werther*: blue frock, yellow waistcoat, white pantaloons, colors that never properly tone together. Yellow and white necessarily require a light-brown frock, not a blue one.”

“Nothing is more insipid than aping others,” observed Nathan once more. “When one is going to take the *salto mortale*, he should at least do it originally, and even show his inventive spirit. Why dost thou bite thy lips and shake thy head, Ephraim? What dost thou say to the speculation, if one should now get up blue merino *à la Werther*? I think it would go off like wild-fire.”

Ephraim still made no reply. Rosa meanwhile came to him and asked in a confidential tone:

“Why so dull?”

“And so dumb?” added Philippina.

“Do you regard us as unworthy to hear your view?” continued Rosa.

“O, no!” answered Ephraim, smiling; he had just heard how such an “aping” was censured, he was himself ashamed of that, and would now fain destroy



every suspicion of imitation in the opinion of his relatives, therefore he now said:

“I see nothing in the whole book but the last stragglers bringing up the rear of the old overstrained minne-singer’s love-errantry: an idle and *borné* man seeks all his happiness and his life’s end in love, and because love alone cannot satisfy, he is unhappy, has all the time one foot in the air, and knows not where he shall set it down. This Werther is an impotent nature possessed by an overmastering passion; we see all his moods laid bare within him; we follow their currents, as according to a legend of a German emperor’s bride, they saw the red wine she drank run through her neck.—But now if Werther had married Lottie, he would have been still more unhappy, for then he would for the first time have rightly seen how much emptiness there still was in his life, and how many faculties slumbered in him which must all decay for want of use. Since we can in no direction freely unfold ourselves, nowhere feel ourselves borne on freely in the full force of our nature, either by the world as a whole or by the life of the state, we seek the whole salvation of our existence in a turtle-dove-idyll, and are and must be disgracefully deceived. In Greek antiquity, love, too, was not wanting, but it did not absorb all the life-juices of the youth: country, freedom, glory, the public conversations of the philosophers and the public discussion of state affairs, all this busied heart and head of the youth as of the man, and thus there was no such thing as coming to the state of madness,

where, for the sake of two brown or blue eyes, one will seek to turn the world upside-down, and will rummage and distort everything. This love-epidemic, with which most of the deeply sensitive souls of our time are affected, is nothing but a consequence of the narrow-minded and dislocated state of our private and public relations; since we can in no direction stretch out our hands freely, we twine them around the neck of a maiden, and will in our egotism find there all that which nothing but a life fully occupied on all sides can supply. There is a mighty fermentation everywhere; it always seems to me as if the whole world would jump out of its skin, such a universal discontent prevails; this amorous billing and cooing can effect nothing; the wedding-rings on the hands of men and women are nothing but rings of a great chain, by which the whole of humanity lies fettered."

"So all people say who clutch round in the air with empty fingers," observed Philippina.

"All I meant to say by that," Ephraim continued, "was, that this pusillanimous fuss and fury about single persons or about a single circle is answerable for the fact that the world is kept down by priests and military monarchs; then it is happy in its cage, if the great ones stick a bit of sugar in the wires. The time must come again when, free and unconstrained, in the symmetrical development of all his practical faculties, every one shall feel himself borne on in the harmony of a great whole. Love and domestic life are the root and summit of all the joy of

existence; in a state of freedom there will be far fewer unhappy lovers, for love will no more be the *va banque* of life, and if it is lost, then there are still paths enough of action and enjoyment open; even despairing ones there may still be, but what a heaven-wide difference there is between the suicide of a Cato and that of a Werther! Ah! that one could only die nobly!" Ephraim wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"For God's sake only say nothing of suicide," said Violet, striking out with both hands into the air, as if she would ward off the evil thing; "I cannot imagine anything more horrible for the survivors, than when a relative of theirs has laid violent hands upon himself; when one dies of sickness, that is sad enough, and yet one cannot get it into one's convictions that he now no longer exists; it was only an hour ago he still spoke, took medicine, and now dead! One hates himself for still living, one hates all life. How affecting is that cry of Lear over the dead body of Cordelia: Shall a dog, a horse, a mouse have life, and thou not even a breath? If mere death is so terrible, then self-murder, the sudden extinction of full life—it is to me always, when I think of such a thing, as if one bored into my brain with a red-hot iron."

"You have heated yourself very much," said Rosa, bringing a glass of *eau sucré* to Ephraim, "drink this; I thank you heartily for being so good as to impart to us your view. I can conceive that one cannot always or to everybody express such things. You are

so good that you will certainly one day be right happy."

Ephraim took with a smile the glass of sugar-water; Nathan walked up and down the garden; Philippina, for whom the conversation was too serious, soon diverted it to other topics.

"O inconstancy, inconstancy!" said Ephraim to himself when he was alone again; "under the mask with which I would have deceived others, I saw deeper into myself, and found the truth, for it is truth, that love is transitory and freedom eternal. But are the Philistines right when they assert that only they who in some way or other have become bankrupts of life are the loud champions of freedom? No, self-interest may well be a low motive, but it can serve as a lever to lift us to truth, and he whom life has flung up so high that he stands clear out of it and above it, may the more freely and serenely survey it and attempt to control the wheel-work. I am old and want nothing more for myself."

With a strange medley of feelings Ephraim inserted in his row of books the "Sorrows of Werther."

## 26.—THE OLD BACHELOR.

A QUIET life, in which all storms are spent, has its pleasures and its memorable incidents, not a few, still left; one knows exactly the state of the thermometer for the day; one becomes familiar with the signs of change in the weather; one is in readiness for the era of new vegetables which the next month will bring; one has to look after the recruits and see what new exercise they will begin to-day; one knows what progress was made to-day and yesterday in the building of the new house in Niemer-Row; how they are getting on with the cleaning of the public walks, and who dined at the commandant's yesterday—these are all good things to kill time, and then, too, the family news, and if one corrects a nephew's school exercise, or hears him say his Gellert's fable, and then, what a pity the day has only twenty-four hours!

Thus, too, did Ephraim live for years in the still monotony of an old bachelor; with greater content than ever he now labored several hours every day in his brother's counting-house, for he thereby earned his

subsistence; and his brothers and sisters tried all ways to make his life comfortable and cheerful. It was a melancholy confession which he once made to his brother, Nathan Frederick: "I now see for the first time that I was originally created to let my life be determined for me by others; to go on in a prescribed path—that is my calling. Ah, and a Jew must begin the world anew with himself. I awake at evening; I have dreamed away, worried away the best part of life; I am about to say, Good-morning, and lo! it is night."

In this state of tranquillity Ephraim became conscious of many evils and of the failure of his powers, and now, when life had no more to offer him, he had to expend the greatest care upon its preservation; but he made his own philosophy out of it, and expounded it to Philippina in these words:

"I begin again to spell Life, I dissect the words of existence into syllables and letters, I will have nothing more to do with days, years and large periods of time, I confine myself to the blossoms called minutes, they alone are ours. This thought is the tincture of iron which I give my mind, and that works a great deal better than this from the apothecary's."

The tincture of iron which his physician had ordered him he always carried with him, so as to be able to take it at the appointed hour, and once when he came to Philippina's she quickly took the bunch of keys from her apron, "for," said she, "I should be afraid Cousin Iron-eater would sometime devour all my keys."

“I fear nothing so much as madness,” Ephraim once said to her, “with broken joints to be dragged round in life as a loathsome pappy mess, paugh! that must be horrible. Why do they shoot mad dogs and not mad men? Every village and every city ought to have a house of invalids, where all old people, men and women, without distinction, rich and poor, should be sent; there every one could live and die according to his convenience and ability, and the young could freely enjoy life; no dry knot should be left standing in the midst of a budding and blooming world; life and the world belong to youth; why does not one die like the flower, when one has bloomed out? Often, when I am alone, millions of demonic thoughts whirl and whiz round me, and clutch at my brain; I grow dizzy, I reel, I must needs cry out—then at my voice they are frightened, and like mice dart off to their holes. O, how long and distressful is the night, when both body and soul in vain yearn for sleep; then the ghosts of past days, of plans that miscarried in the past, rise up, and all is so dead, so alive. I soar away over all that has departed, I want a future; purposes, hopes, wishes, come and wave their salutations, and all, all is lost. When I lie in bed at night, perfectly quiet, without stirring a muscle, my eyes closed, and I see nothing at all, then Fantasy sweeps restlessly, aimlessly, to and fro; often I feel myself borne far, far away; I think upon religion, God, death; then it is to me as if I suddenly came against an iron lid, or sank into a bottomless nothingness; I must fly, be

crushed like a hollow egg-shell; then I find no longer any way to help myself, I almost die with restlessness and torment. Hast thou ever had such experience, where a yelping pack of evil spirits is suddenly let loose upon a prey? On all sides they hack and tear it with their bloody teeth; when I would quietly pursue a thought, all of a sudden the dogs come and rend and strangle; then I must needs stretch open my eyes, only to see something which hounds me in another direction and lets me go; I see the pale light gleam through my windows, that relieves me; I count the panes, I grow more quiet again; I throw a chair over and set it up again, that always takes my mind off to other things; then I get up and look out of the window, then I say to myself: 'See, there dwells Lippman Maier, there dwells the dyer,' and the fact that I still know this is to me an assurance that I am yet in the ruts of common reason;—but, my dear child, I pray thee, throw me down-stairs instantly if I ever come to thee crazy; feel of my forehead, how it burns; in the bony pot my brain boils and bubbles; I fear, I fear, it will run over yet."

"Nothing is more repulsive than to see any one play with a loaded pistol; I pray thee, rise," replied Philippina; without losing her composure; "it is not mannerly of thee so to distress me; thou tormentest thyself as well as me." She laid her hand upon the forehead of her cousin, who by this touch seemed suddenly transformed. "I thought thou wert quite happy and cheerful," Philippina continued.



“Ah, I have indeed lost all!”

“That is nothing,” said Philippina, laughing; “if one takes off an arm of mine to-day, I still enjoy the other to-morrow; indeed, it would still have been my duty to be content with my lot if God had sent me into the world with only one arm. If I could only make all men so content and happy! Just listen once: thou wilt not believe me when I tell thee how sensible I have grown. Dost thou know why children when they fall down do not hurt themselves? They say because a good genius protects them. But the reason is simply this: Children never rely on their standing, and therefore do not defend themselves when they fall; they come plump down and get up again unharmed. And so must we, too, do, and can, if we will. A little bump does no harm.”

Without making any transition, Philippina took her lute and sang the then favorite song, “Thou hast done with sighing and with sorrow,” from the much read “Sigwart, a Story of the Cloister,” but hardly had she ended a strophe and made a serious face at it, when he burst into a laugh and exclaimed: “This is a stupid world where one is always walking in a church-yard by moonlight and shedding soft tears over death, which has come and is still to come. Thou, too, art in this case, though thou wilt not have it so. Pray help me finish the verse differently. Good-bye yesterday, all hail to-morrow! . . . help me. I tell thee a pinchbeck joke is worth more than all tear-drop brilliants set in rhyme.” And

forthwith she sang in a gay mood an old song of contentment. These tones, these words, trickled like heavenly dew on Ephraim's languishing spirits. With transfigured countenance he sat there and related how he seemed outwardly to be leading the usual life of an old bachelor, but that his inner self was always wakeful and full of youthful freshness. That it was this which often led him to the dizzying brink of madness, but many a time he plucked even there a little flower, a little epigram.

"Thou knowest, of course," added Ephraim, "that *epigram* is a Greek word, meaning originally *written upon*, and was applied to monumental inscriptions. Precisely in this point, that of attracting attention to a subject by an unexpected turn to satisfy curiosity, lies the chief charm. Understandest thou that?"

"If thou comest to me again with thy *ex-cathedrâ* tone, I shall run right away from thee," replied Philippina; "but as a proof that I understand thee, I give thee liberty to make as many epigrams on me as thou wilt, nay, I shall even thank thee for them, for I should be glad to see myself once in this glass. But I cannot after all exactly imagine to myself how one makes such a poem," she concluded, archly.

"Then I can bring you the best example from last Sunday," answered Ephraim. "I look out of my window in the morning, it is raining frightfully, the bell is just tolling for church; just then I observe my neighbor's little daughter up at the window there looking out at the heavens, and then twitching again

at her handsome summer dress; I thought of a conversation with my sister Violet, who many years ago had described so enthusiastically the joys of a Christian woman on her way to church, but all at once the demon of fun nudged me, and transporting myself into my neighbor's daughter's frame of mind, I composed:

## "THE PIOUS MAIDEN.

"If God would grant good weather, so  
That a poor girl to church might go!  
One lives worse off here than a heathen,—  
Me in my new dress here, how can the people see, then?"

Philippina seemed not much exhilarated by this poem, for she observed:

"So it often is with me, I love to transport myself into the people's ways of thinking and acting. When I walk along the street I always long to know what all the people are thinking of, who split wood, carry wares, take drives; there perhaps is one going a-courting, and beside him another going to get a divorce; here one going about doing good and there another with thoughts of murder; for the most part, especially on Sundays, it seems to me as if they all wanted to sneeze and could not; dost thou understand? there is such a prickling and tickling all over the face, and one is after all not quite comfortable. But what does the world concern me?" continued Philippina, whirling round, as if she would turn her thoughts round with her body. "The sorrowing Werther gets no hold of me, my Minna von Barnhelm says the cleverest word: What can the Creator

look on with more pleasure than a happy creature!—That is more agreeable to me than all prayer-books with silver clasps. I proposed to thy sister-in-law Rosa to have these words inscribed with golden letters upon her new ball-room.”

His intercourse with Philippina was always animating to Ephraim; into his serious thoughts as well as into the craziest and most romantic matter that he might bring forward, she always entered good-naturedly, but soon let both drop again; her gay view of life, as well as the manifold speeches of politeness that he addressed to her, gave him occasion for many little poems, and he was happy when he had transformed her name Philippina into the classic Phillis, which fitted better his kind of verse.

“Ah, I have actually nothing poetical in my whole environment,” said Philippina, on one occasion, “unless it be my cat. Men and poets particularly do a crying—I may say a *caterwauling*—wrong by these creatures; they call them false and thieving, that is their nature; a cat remains forever wild and can never be tamed.”

Ephraim went away smiling, and the next day he brought Philippina the following poem:

“TO PHILLIS, ON HER CAT.

“Thy pussy, Phillis, shall I sing?  
Thalia, touch and tune my string!  
Wise is this cat, her form is fair,  
And white as Phillis’s skin her hair;  
She plays, caresses, kisses, strokes,  
Sometimes demurely mischief cloaks.  
O be not wroth! is not this, too,  
The way the pretty maidens do?”

With Violet, his sister Rosa and Philippina, he spent alternately most of his leisure time; he gladly avoided intercourse with men, and found almost his only satisfaction here among the women who humored his excitability; the crown right of geniality, which in earlier youth he had once enjoyed, he sought again to appropriate to himself; he knew not that they allowed him so much, not in deference to his superiority, but in deference to his weakness. Next to the women he loved best the society of strangers; in such flying contact and mere meetings of pleasure no one had either the right or the opportunity to intrude upon his inner retreat, and attack there his favorite idiosyncrasies. Add to this that towards his relatives he was easily filled with mistrust and fear, he deliberately invited injuries, and was vexed with the physician who offered to heal them. The latter was alarmed when Ephraim reminded him once of an expression in the Talmud: "If we knew what demons are continually lurking around us in the air, we could never breathe freely and should go out of our senses."

Nathan turned pale when the physician communicated to him his fears regarding Ephraim. The latter seemed, however, merrier than ever; for like a fowler, he took a special pleasure in catching witticisms or other winged thoughts; with sadness, however, he observed the failure of his memory; in a twinkling, what he would retain had flown away and he could not overtake it again; this effort to hold fast every salient point made by others or him-

self murdered his very sleep. When he lay in bed, and as his eyes closed, a magic lid began to spread itself gradually over the eye of consciousness, suddenly a startling thought would spring up within him, he would fain hold it fast, without disturbing his rest; he would impress it strongly on his mind, so as never to forget it, but into the sweet forgetfulness of sleep this thought had been spell-bound like a rest-scaring spectre; he would wake up exhausted, seek the idea, and find nothing but a commonplace, a dry stalk, incapable of putting forth a blossom.

Another morning he woke, and it was to him as if a golden, luminous thought had rayed across through his dream-life; he tore all the memories which had been lulled into sweet slumber from their pillows; with clouded looks they blinked at him, but he thrust them from him; he sought that luminous thought, but it had vanished; feverish and dizzy he rose, and all day long was disturbed and irritated. As the loto-player sits up in the morning in her haggard bed, rubs her eyes, sends her thoughts to and fro, and groans and is almost distracted, she remembers perfectly that she dreamed her lucky numbers, but the ciphers! the ciphers! who shall find them? At last she finds this and that one, but she does not quite believe that these are the ones she dreamed; no, certainly not, and yet, yet, she puts them down—so, too, did Ephraim cajole himself with some thought or other that shot up through the feverish strain of his memory.

Ephraim often stood for hours before the looking-

glass and stared at his image. Once, when Philippina called him to account for this, he said: "Only in this way, by contemplating no strange object whatever, but only my own likeness, which coincides with my vision of it, only so can I most easily draw myself away from all worldly objects, and become absorbed in the most abstract and general existence; thou canst hardly imagine what a height of enjoyment it is, no longer to be this person, Ephraim, but only, in general, to be."

"Thou art right, I cannot imagine it, nor will I; I am content to be in my skin, and wait calmly till I shall one day as a spirit travel round through the universe; but I, too, am a friend of the looking-glass; I think it would be impossible for me to be a whole day long in a room in which there was no mirror; not from vanity, but I should feel the want of something; a room without a looking-glass is blind. The first act of furnishing a room is to hang up a looking-glass, thereby it becomes immediately habitable; one thinks: There were, or are, human faces which have peered at themselves therein. The Jewish mourning custom has always been most touching to me, of hanging in the house of mourning the looking-glasses face to the wall; dost thou know why no looking-glasses hang in churches and synagogues?"

Now at length Ephraim began to follow with friendly acquiescence the fitful leaps of Philippina's mind; she told him that every time she came home from a party, she almost involuntarily looked a long time into the glass without changing her dress;

“for,” said she, “one must after all know once more how one has appeared to the people; formerly, in my slender days I could always say to myself I was surely very stylish, but now I have already advanced to the time of sham-fighting.\* I always fancy the glass must have threads in it, because little wrinkles show themselves in my face; I cannot at all get it into my head that one must grow old. When we pass from summer into autumn and then into winter, one will not believe, it shall not be, that the bright, green days are gone by, until one wakes up some morning, and the hoar-frost is there and the leaves are yellow, and then one says: ah, such a fresh autumn has its beauty, too! And when it snows, the talk is: I am very fond of winter,—and that, too, is true. One must simply not fight against that which, once for all, is not to be changed; then all is right and good.”

Ephraim saw how unjust it would be to drag this innocent creature into the hurly-burly of his inner speculations; he therefore concealed his second intention in that self-absorption into general being, for it made even himself dizzy to have reached the height of such a design. By the contemplation of his external appearance he would gain a position outside of and above himself, and then, and only then, did he deem that he could be free, and should be able to lift himself above his temporary affliction, when he had really and truly laid hold of his second self as an outward object, so that he could look upon himself as a stranger; therefore it was that he con-

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\* Literally, “fighting before a looking-glass.”



templated for hours together these features, these eyes, this forehead, and placed himself over against his other self which contemplated all this. Once he got so far as even to laugh at this whole apparition and to gnash his teeth at it; suddenly he felt himself grasped as from behind with demonic power, and fell swooning on the floor.

Never could Ephraim look into the glass any more without a shudder.

In this life, full of feverish convulsions and mighty inner dismemberment, there was still, however, no want of lucid points, at which Ephraim was conscious of the harmonious consonance of all his powers of life, spiritual as well as bodily; and this was the clear and immediate joy of being, when, with his arms folded across his breast, he held nothing but himself, when he leaned on no other breast, on no event, no idea and no wish. Ephraim rejoiced over his joy, and at such moments exhorted himself in his inner being still to enjoy life; this joy over the consciousness of youthful sensibility was then the proper enjoyment itself also, and the exaltation, for seldom did he succeed in actualizing what he recognized and wished in the spirit.

“It is my fortune and my misfortune,” he once said to Philippina, “not to grow old. Generally age has its coming-in of twilight, as childhood has its twilight of departure; with me it is not so; I am, to my great discomfort, still evermore under youthful excitement. O, how sweet is the evening twilight of life, which permits us no longer to apprehend

things in definite outline, and thus enables us to go to sleep, to live with a child's indifference. But I will die young."

In such a mood he wrote once the poem:

"MY BIRTHDAY.

"Those bright goddesses, the Hours,  
 Bring this morn my fiftieth birthday.  
 And who knows if e'er the Parcæ  
 Let another greet my eyes.  
 Now then, let me live life swiftly,  
 Ere this light for me is quenched;  
 Ere old age has plowed deep furrows  
 In my brow, and snowy-white  
 Lilies o'er my crown has scattered.  
 Quickly let me scare away  
 Every grief that gnaws my heart-strings;  
 Anxious cares for coming time  
 To the winds a prey deliver,  
 And devote myself to joy.\*  
 Bring me, boy, fresh-blooming roses!" etc.

This Horatian bacchanal style with its out-worn forms could never exert on the poet the true liberating power of poesy; never had Ephraim crowned with roses his head, which a neatly braided queue adorned, and if he drank a goblet of wine his senses reeled; but this was the period in which the wine-loving Gleim, "sober, of drunkenness sang." In the essential features those expressions and exhortations of Ephraim's might be true, only as he could not set

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\* "Then top and main-top crowd the sail,  
 Fling care o'er-side,  
 And large before enjoyment's gale  
 Let's tak the tide."—*Burns*.

them with all the Olympian appurtenances to poetry, this latter remained forever separated from his life; he could not represent and poetically transfigure the immediate and original elements of his life; this whole classicizing style of artificial poetry was daily convicted by life of falsehood.

Often, therefore, did Ephraim sing his "Farewell to the Muses, or Swan-Song:"

"My locks are wasting,  
Hoar age creeps on;  
My years are hastening,  
Ten lustrums gone.

"The fates have bereft me,  
Lone is my breast;  
The Muses have left me,  
And wit and jest.

"Muses! ye brought me  
Sorrow and grief;  
Parting has wrought me  
Endless relief."

It has, however, been long since well known how these bills of divorce from the Poet to the Muses were meant. Unfaithfulness to such an expressed purpose is so sweet and alluring, and can so easily make itself as valid as fidelity itself, that one often and willingly returns with a penitent smile.

## 27.—HITHER AND THITHER.

THE complaisance and polite attention of Ephraim to strangers and those who came recommended to him had become, in the Breslau congregation, almost proverbial; the monotony of his commonplace life was suddenly refreshed as with a breath of wind by the arrival of a stranger; a stranger's way of looking at things gave what was familiar a new coloring; almost the only pleasure he now had left him consisted in seeing others happy. In the precisely-bounded circle of family life, his love had not found satisfaction; he now extended its limits as far as he could.

He had in this love for strangers another special interest; not that he would fain make a display of his knowledge of many cities and countries, but he always listened attentively in any direction from which he might catch the voice of the age in its most immediate expression; nothing was too small for him to count worthy his attention, and the people loved his company and conversation and praised his depth of mind, for never are men more

grateful than when one gives them opportunity to bring their views and experiences to the right man and market, and thereby enables them to enjoy the pleasure and triumph of playing the teacher.

Dull and confused as Ephraim's life was when he entangled himself in his sophistries and self-tormentings, even in the same degree was it right and clear when he went out of himself, attached himself to the people around him and to general interests, and yet on the other hand he felt the feebleness and poverty of it all.

"Dost thou know who is the poorest mortal?" he said once to Philippina. "He who cannot bear to be alone, who cannot do without others, who is unable to conquer in solitude a melancholy thinking, and must seek diversion and dissipation."

"No, thou art too good, thou need'st association, thou walkest much straighter and more surely when thou goest arm-in-arm with some one."

"Call it not goodness, it is weakness and misfortune," said Ephraim, deprecatingly, "to expect and require anything of the outward world that shall answer one's most individual yearning and longing; that is the greatest misfortune and weakness at once. I depend upon the barometer in the face of every human being. I know whence that comes."

A new-comer engaged Ephraim's whole attention. Full of good cheer and good things Maimon "darkened"—nay brightened—"his door" one evening, laid his knotty stick on the table and gave notice that he was going to live in Breslau now, as, in Ber-

lin, things had not gone according to his wishes; Ephraim must give him for the nonce a few groschen, that he might wind up "his clock-works" again, as he called his body, with some brandy and black bread.

"How stands it now with your philosophy?" asked Ephraim, and Maimon responded:

"Where my first box on the ear left it."

"I don't understand you."

"Nor I either, but, as I said, it sticks just there, at my first box on the ear. When, as a little youngster I first read the Chumesh [Bible] to my father, there I read: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;' I asked: Who created God? Then my father gave me a smart box on the ear, and that is up to now the only answer that I have got to my question; no philosophy has given me any other."

Maimon was one of the most peculiar apparitions that presented themselves in the first breaking forth of Judaism from its chrysalis state. Sprung from the closest cells of Polish orthodoxy, he kept himself in a state of restless roving among the sciences as among the cities; his ingenious mind found itself attracted by all systems of knowledge and held fast by none; like a tamed savage, he would suddenly put all pedagogic discipline to shame, and with Tal mudistic dialectics cleared at a bound all the limits of order in life and knowledge. With devoted diligence Ephraim provided for him, and soon, through his acquaintances, secured him the means for his

support and the prosecution of his studies. Ephraim had, himself, now reached that stage which he had erewhile so greatly despised and pitied; he regarded his own life as a failure, and found no longer any satisfaction in it, except in caring for others, whether it were individuals or societies.

Through Maimon Ephraim was also drawn to the tavern-life, to which he had hitherto remained almost a stranger. The German-Jews are distinguished from the Polish very much by their sobriety; Maimon followed his national bent in unrestrained geniality. Here, too, he loved best to talk of his highest interest, the enlightenment of his fellow-believers.

“The mathematics alone can plane down these crooked heads,” asserted Maimon; “hence I worked over the Latin mathematics of Wolf in the Rabbinic language; but the edition is too costly, and the few friends of the liberal cause have already given enough.”

Ephraim needed only a fresh breath to kindle the glow within him to a blaze; henceforth his poetizing and all his pursuits were devoted to the great work of enlightenment. He once spoke with Maimon to the point, that the limitations of Pietism were the highest sin against God and humanity, for “every withdrawal of a pleasure of life and of an enjoyment was the highest sin against the end of creation and of existence.”

“A Polish nobleman once came to Warsaw,” Maimon related, in his singularly desultory parabolic way; “the nobleman having nothing better to do,

sets himself to walking up and down the streets. He sees on all hands provisions exposed for sale, he is hungry, thrusts his hands into his pockets, but finds all bare and desolate. Now he begins to vent abuse upon the capital: *co to so mjasto niemam sacco pirogi Kupicz!* (What sort of a city is this, in the devil's name, where one has not even the wherewith to buy a roll!) just the way the pious Rabbins do."

"I don't understand how you apply that to the case in hand."

"The application lies close at hand," replied Maimon. "When people have no coin of original thought in their heads, they let fly abuse at Jerusalem and Babylon.—But I tell you, the whole history of Judaism and all that has come out of it, lies in a single legend of the Talmud. Only two men of the present day understand it, and I am one of them."

"And what does the legend say?"

"The Jews, once on a time, after the return from Babylon, caught the demon *Jezer-Hara* (sensual impulse) and put one of his eyes out, and I say that means since that they had no sense for beauty and pleasure, for art generally. But the Talmud goes on to relate: but they would fain have put out the demon's other eye also, and then no hen would any longer have laid a single egg. Will you be the third that has comprehended this legend?"

Ephraim nodded affirmatively, and recognized with much satisfaction how the end of his life was after all coming round again toward its point of de-



parture. He had worked his way out of his Jewish limitations, then had staked all upon a personal, ay, one might even say, egoistic happiness; when this had been denied him he had attempted to associate himself with the general movement of the world. He found himself in the midst of a circle of spirits full of youthful aspiration, who felt themselves blessed by every new piece of knowledge which they made their own, and exalted by every principle of reason which they diffused among their Jewish fellow-believers. The impulse given by Mendelssohn had created in the provincial towns a zeal for enlightenment and culture, which maintained itself in lively activity long after they had in the chief cities begun to fall away. The Hebrew magazine called "The Gatherer," which appeared frequently, had in Breslau its most active collaborators; among whom Joel Löwe and Bense, the author of a commentary to Rabbi Saadia Gaon's "Faith and Knowledge," stand especially prominent. A circle of young men had been formed full of noble aspirations, who tried their hand at Hebrew poems and treatises; and a new paper of Mendelssohn was like a new revelation, and was read and expounded in full meeting.

More and more did his past life seem to Ephraim like a dream. Where was the distressing aberration, where all the terrifying spectres? He had awaked and was once more at home.

That reflective point of view after which he had so often striven, where joy and sorrow melt indistinguishably into each other, he had now reached;

he recognized that the future redeems all the promissory notes of the past by fixing new limits; come what might, he felt confident he could master it, for he knew to-day how he should review to-day and smile at it a year hence.

Maimon recounted with much joviality incidents of his youthful days; how, according to the Polish custom, he was married as early as his eleventh year, and often got cudgelings from his mother-in-law; the most delicious anecdotes were slipped in by the way, and there was no end of laughter. One day, however, Maimon was surprised by the arrival of his wife and son. She had come to get a divorce from her run-away husband. This reminded Ephraim of his old teacher, Rabbi Chananel, and he heard now of his recent horrible death. Maimon had known the Rabbi intimately, and now communicated the following account of his falling away from himself and the world: Tossed to and fro between enlightened conviction and hypocritical sanctimoniousness, Rabbi Chananel lapsed now into one extreme and now into the other. With the thought of fleeing from manifest death and corruption he betook himself into the stir of fresh life; he would become a convert to the dominant church, since indeed it were all one whether he played here or there his Jesuitical game with forms which one could no longer honor with faith or conviction; his bosom heaved; there gleamed from his eye a transfiguring fire; yearningly he stretched out his arms to the millions of human beings to whom he would hence-

forth consecrate the might and force of his spirit; he felt himself borne on by the stream of the world, living and giving life, but soon he sank back again into his withered existence; he saw himself the captive of those who venerated him as a saint, and he became again a bitter zealot and persecutor of those who deviated a hair's breadth from the forms of the faith; he often fasted for weeks together and mourned and prayed for the forgiveness of his sins, and yet his orthodoxy was doubted by many in the congregation, for he almost always during prayer in the synagogue stood with closed lips, looking on dreamily, or hastily closed his eyes tight and threw his head this way and that as if he would scare away flies. The people said he was possessed with a demon, and so in fact he was. The thought which in a Voltairish wantonness he had once thrown out in the smoking-club at Berlin was alive, and in his very self. He knew no longer what was fantasy and what reality. At first with a strange smile, but then with wild rage, he refused all food and drink that was offered him, and when at last nourishment was forced upon him it was too late. His last cry was the tearful entreaty: "Let me live! Help me to live!"

Ephraim heard the account of Rabbi Chananel's end with profound sadness, and it became more and more singular to him that all old life one day awakes and sounds its last knell.

Maimon applied to the life and end of the Rabbi the significance of a Jewish legend which forbids

the creating of images in the fancy; for in the hour of death the phantoms of the imagination come as demons, hang upon the spirit which would fain mount upward, pluck at it and cry: "Thou gavest us a body; give us now a living soul." Whoso lives out of unity with himself, thinks out one thing and acts out another, to him the creatures of his imagination become demons, he falls their victim, they rob him of his vital existence.

Ephraim gazed shudderingly into an undreamed-of abyss.

Maimon had, according to the Jewish canonical law, as a vagabond, been compelled to a divorce; he determined, soon after it, to leave Breslau; on the fast-day of the Destruction of Jerusalem he celebrated his departure with Ephraim at the inn of "The Golden Wheel," and, as was his wont, he read from his favorite book, which he always carried about with him, Butler's "Hudibras," pithy passages, and threw in all sorts of enlivening expositions as he went along. This made a great noise through the whole community. The Rabbin Isaac Joseph Fränkel, however, a just and tolerant man, would not take any notice of it. The congregation was ruled, however, by the stout and ugly better-(?)half of the Ruler Hirsch Levi; zealotism and female ambition spurred her on to the highest activity, and she brought it about at last by all sorts of intrigues, that Ephraim should be summoned before a Jewish ecclesiastical court for violation of the fast-day.

Ephraim's friends advised him to pay no attention

to such a summons, for the time had gone by in which any one needed to fear the thunders of hierarchical excommunication; Frederick II, a foe to all "priestly government," had intimidated even the Jewish rabbins. But Ephraim rejoiced in this opportunity, for he would fain for once lay hold on this skeleton of orthodoxy and smash it with the whole weight of his mind. But here again things had almost gone with him as in the presence of the judge at his arrest, for Ephraim had an insuperable shrinking from standing forth boldly and independently in the sight of many, and if he attempted it, he seldom accomplished his purpose; in his monastic thinking and speculation he had already so many stages of the discussion beneath him, he stood already on such a position that he was always inclined to presuppose this in regard to others, and seldom possessed the skill to lead those standing below him up to his point.

With a blank stare he stood for a while before the judges and heard their questions; then trembling with rage, he cried: "Shut tight the doors and windows, that no breath of free nature may find its way in; spin away and whirl and twist spiritual bands with which ye may throttle the free soul; a lightning-flash from heaven will consume the bands and you. Go home and pray; set free your slaves, and be yourselves free."

"Did you on the fast-day of the Destruction of Jerusalem eat meat?" was the question propounded by the ecclesiastical court.

Ephraim could not help laughing. "What have I to do with the dead Jerusalem?" he replied; "day by day you are destroying it, for Jerusalem is everywhere, as it is written: 'In every place where I let my name be mentioned,\* will I come to thee and bless thee.'" (Ex., xx, 24.)

Ephraim had to leave the room.

"He is wanting here," said one of those who sat in judgment, tapping with his forefinger his own wise forehead; "if he were not crazy, how could he talk in that way?"

"Yes, he is crazy," said the second judge; "and I was afraid of him; we have no need to punish him; God has already punished him enough in taking away his understanding." The Rabbin availed himself of this happy mood; Ephraim was pronounced crazy, and acquitted; his whole previous life, however, was subjected to a severe censorship; the whole course of his life had been carefully watched, but it was brought in a distorted and disfigured state before his eyes.

With a sorrowing heart Ephraim sat at home and reflected how the fast-day for the Destruction of Jerusalem had now continued for eighteen centuries; he sought solace and illumination; and he who had called the enjoyment of the moment the only life, who would fain dissect the words of existence back into their original letters, contented himself at last with a word, in assigning to the rhythm of universal history millenia as counting syllables.

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\* In King James's version: "in which I record my name."

Ephraim, in crossing the Jews' place one day, saw two boys who had fallen out and were beating each other; he kept off the one who was in the wrong, when the father of the boy ran up, scolded at Ephraim and told him to keep quiet; he had been declared crazy by the Jewish ecclesiastical court, and that was the only reason why he had not been put under ban. Ephraim smiled and passed on; he thought the matter over, how he could end the rest of his days in peace, far from all Jewish concerns. As he came upon the ring, several Christian boys, their catechisms under their arms, who were just coming from the catechising, threw snow-balls at the Jew and laughed at his anger. If he had at that first occurrence involuntarily thought of Moses in Egypt, so would he now, like the prophet, gladly have fled, into the wilderness, that he might never more behold a human face; he took refuge in the house of his sister Violet.

It was toward the end of February, of the year 1781. As Ephraim entered his sister's door she came to meet him with a pale face and said:

"Ah, God! Thou art come to mourn with me, I thank thee."

"What has happened, then?"

"Alas! alas! only a bit of paper, and a drop of ink, that is the news of a death. Hast thou not read it, then, in the newspaper? He died on the 12th."

"Who is it, then?"

"Come, brother," answered Violet, and her eye beamed brightly, tears hung in the lashes; "come,

brother, let me kiss thee, for thou hast, indeed, his name. Dost thou remember how thou broughtest him for the first time to our house? I remember it yet as distinctly as if it were to-day; it was spring, a Monday afternoon, towards three o'clock, I sat at my work-table and was busy with a summer dress—the secretary—”

“So Lessing is dead?” asked Ephraim; Violet nodded affirmatively.

“I knew he was dead,” said she; “the very night he died I saw him; I was walking in Spandau street, now with a man, now alone; on and on I walked; all at once I was on a barren heath—night everywhere—*ignes fatui* darting round—when suddenly I saw his dead body; hoo! he passes his cold hand over my face.” Violet looked at her brother with a rigid stare.

“Alas! thou art out of thy senses,” he cried; “touch me not, thou infectest me, away! away!” He thrust his sister from him and ran away raving; it seemed to him all the time as if the spirit of madness were in chase at his heels, and would seize him as its prey, and not till he reached Philippina did he find rest.

Meanwhile Violet lay at home sobbing on her sofa; she drew her amulet from her bosom and kissed it; it was a letter of Lessing's, which she had managed to get possession of; to be sure it was directed to a stranger, yet it was, indeed, from his hand, that hand which now mouldered in the cold ground.



Here, in the far distance, mourning for the great dead, was a soul, which, in the succession of poetic creations, in the vicissitude of life's events and conflicts, he had certainly long since forgotten; but this is the power of the spirit and its reward, that its influence is immeasurable and unfathomable.

Violet, also, soon found again her consolation; Lessing was no more dead to her than formerly, when he still lived; the next day she saw him again in the circle of the poor children whom she taught to sew and knit, and whose spirit she labored to ennoble; her life flowed on again in its calm course.

Ephraim ventured, meanwhile, to undertake a change respecting himself; he forsook the Jews and betook himself to his brother, Nathan Frederick.

Now, at this late day in life, Ephraim made an experience with which he had never acquainted himself, or which he had always evaded: the happiness which may be found even in the business of a merchant.

“Since I learned what I could do, and by that means was in a condition to do it,” Nathan Frederick often declared, “I have been the happiest and most contented man in the world. The small business of our blessed father was as full of anxiety as it was laborious. I suffered long under it, and was tormented with all sorts of misgivings. I was like a bird that hops on the ground, and I cannot tell thee how happy I was when I discovered that I could fly, and that I can now do, and far and high; and I make it a rule in life, as in business: one must make

large discount from the idea of men which one forms to himself; one must yearly reckon upon some bankruptcies; then one gives himself no trouble about them. I know thou holdest the poetic flight to be the highest, but I tell thee, a business which flourishes can make one happy, too; and it is all the same; and so to see and feel how one grows—if thou hadst ever rightly discerned this in thyself, thou hadst never chosen to be a poet.”

Ephraim suppressed every other emotion and rejoiced to see his brother so filled and elated.

How sharply, toward the end of life, the contrasts stood out!

It was spring. Ephraim lived with his brother and his sister Rosa at the country-house; he was walking with Rosa and Philippina in the broad shady avenue; he was remarking how the first grass was now growing over Lessing's grave. “The great heart is no more to be found,” he concluded.

“I am sure thou hast a great heart too,” said Philippina, as she took her cousin's stick out of his hand, skipped nimbly round on the broad gravel walk, drew the outlines of a heart on the ground, and cried: “Dost thou see? That is a miniature picture of thy heart; with twenty times as many ladies as can stand within this figure thou hast already fallen in love, O, thou great heart!”

Ephraim was silent. As often as Rosa and Philippina were present at once, it was impossible for him to bring the conversation into an even flow, the cause of this he found in the dissimilarity of charac-

ter between the two ladies, who, nevertheless, were in such sisterly accord; he would not confess to himself that his inclination and attentions vibrated to and fro between the two.

A new incident breathed fresh energy again into Ephraim's life: now in his advanced years he received the poetic confirmation from Father Ramler. He had sent two great quarto volumes full of epigrams to the good professor, who read them with diligent care, made a selection from them, filed and polished it, and exhibited it in the "German Museum."

Not only Ephraim alone, but a great portion of the creative minds of the time, found their first satisfaction and ground of self-confidence in the recognition of the Berlin Horace. Inasmuch as, both in matter and form, they followed the rules of a poetical catechism drawn from the free creations of the Greek and Latin classics, hence the inner recognition was wanting, the repose of the inner consciousness, and one needed encouragement from without.

The inner self-reliance which Ephraim had now gained was answered by the outer appreciation and respect which were accorded to him in the larger circles of society; they pardoned in the poet what they had blamed in the merchant; they indulged his odd nature because they recognized its foundation, and he who gains fame is suddenly raised far above many trivialities of every-day life. Garvé, with many other *litterateurs* and officials who frequented Nathan's house, showed Ephraim a friendly attention.

The latter was now more friendly toward everybody, for he was proud of himself. Those people whom he had encountered to his joy or his sorrow, whose looks he had anxiously watched and for whose words he had anxiously listened, when he was made glad by every little recognition,—they were now his world no longer. What were these two or three persons? His name and his thoughts went now through the wide world by thousands and thousands. He once expressed his whole state of mind and the characteristic change of his way of thinking, when he said to Fülleborn and Garvé:

“Well, there is something of me in the world now of which I can be modest.”

Nathan was especially gratified that Ephraim seemed now to have come out from his inward moping, and he once deeply moved his brother's heart by saying:

“The reason why Judaism is so heavy a burden is that it keeps one in a constant antagonism to the world. Thou wilt always keep thy peculiar character, but this will not do. If a prince passes by, and three hundred men doff their hats, I am not going to be the fool to be the only one covered. I live with the world as it is, and not with that world which it possibly might be. To be angry with the world and growl at it—whom does one hurt by that? Himself, himself alone; the rest are not a bit the wiser for it that one wanders round all day long in disgust. From very selfishness I am on peaceable and friendly terms with every one, and so he must

be the same with me, and I have pleasure instead of torment."

Ephraim sighed heavily and nodded assent. Nathan went on triumphantly:

"Last Sunday our parson at the Elizabeth preached at large and at length on the text: 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.' I tell thee, they don't understand the New Testament rightly; a Jew is more readily at home there. What does the saying mean except simply: If anything comes in thy way in the world which annoys thee, if thou seest anything that vexes thee, ask thyself first whether the fault is not in thee; have the courage to attack thyself first; tear out thine own irritable eye; if thou canst not do that, well then, be content with the world! Is that the alphabet of common sense?"

With an ambiguous smile, Ephraim grasped his brother's hand.

He now moved freely and unconstrainedly in "Christian society," but neither in word nor in thought could he forget this last designation; he had lived too long outside of this circle; the roots of his thinking struck into another region; they were too firm and gnarly to be capable of transplanting into new soil; he never forgot that he was a Jew. Often did he blame himself for his narrowness, for not feeling himself at home here, but he could not overcome the consciousness that he was here partaking only the allowance-bread of society, that he was not permitted to help himself, but must always wait for what was handed him.

To him who is not accustomed to society, many a usage is strange and startling, which to others appears natural and unquestionable. Ephraim was once staring at a stately young officer, when Philippina came up to him and asked him what he was thinking of. He drew her aside and said to her in a subdued tone:

“See that young officer there; how pleasantly he smiles; perhaps he is just saying some polite thing, and rests his whole body the while on his sword. How is it possible that one should carry a deadly weapon with him into gay society? Is it then an ornament to man to be always ready and have his instrument at hand to kill his fellow-man? Ought he not to make people forget that, here at least? *Is cutting people's throats the way to honor?* Mendelssohn once said: ‘Ah, if these officers knew what is stirring in my brain, they would draw their swords and split my skull open. Pray, don't say a word about it.’”

Philippina sought to pacify him, but Ephraim could never pass by an officer without shrinking into himself; and if he spoke with an armed man, his glance was uneasy and always went back and fixed itself upon the weapon.

Not only as a Jew, far more as a man, Ephraim felt himself a stranger in society. Soon was he to learn that society also had not forgotten that he was a Jew. On one occasion a larger party than usual had just sat down to supper, when Ephraim found under his serviette a paper on which was written the stanza:

“Best and dearest Kuh!  
Tell us why, pray do!  
Thou dost with the Father stay;  
Wilt not greet the Son some day?”

Ephraim read the verse out loud; a painful silence followed; Ephraim's eyes rolled furiously; he asked for the poetaster; but presently smiled again and answered, “that a good son must never disparage his father's servants.” Whereupon he swallowed the paper on which the verse was written, expressed his thanks for the good supper, and departed.

For a long time after this he avoided all society; and as often as a stranger appeared in the circle of his relatives, he suddenly slipped out, and was no more to be seen; in silence and solitude he would worry away his days and learn to despise men. For this latter course, however, he had neither strength nor self-complacency enough; he was glad therefore to yield to the urgent entreaties of his sister-in-law and gradually gave himself up to the pleasures of society.

With silent pleasure he often contemplated the behavior of Rosa. In her nature, as in her whole environment, all must be ever orderly, nay, symmetrical; at table, even while she listened attentively or spoke herself as one interested, she was always able to restore glasses and decanters to a symmetrical position. At first Ephraim could not see anything in all that but a certain pedantry, an absence of real sympathy and a housekeeper's petty regard to trifles; but soon he began to recognize in it the

kindly manifestation of an inward symmetry, whose outward exactness had, as well upon the somewhat impetuous Nathan as upon himself, a most beneficial influence.

There was a great party one evening at Nathan's house; there was playing and dancing and singing; Ephraim stood leaning against a side-board, his arms folded on his breast; he kept his eyes shut for a long time, and then stared again out upon the gay throng.

"What are you thinking of again?" asked Rosa, approaching him, and contrary to her custom taking his hand familiarly.

"When I look upon the ways of men," said Ephraim, "how they smile upon each other, ogle each other, while, after all, there is nothing but falsehood, malice and fanaticism behind it all, I could willingly flee away into solitude, lest I should commit a murder. Then I close my eyes, and imagine suddenly that all the people around me were dead; that the fiery, rolling eyes were nerveless; these lips sealed; these glowing-red cheeks pale and cold; these supple limbs rendered powerless by inward decay; and after a while nothing were left but a bald skull with empty eye-sockets, a fleshless skeleton encoffined within four boards; instead of the music, nothing but the snapping tick of the gnawing death-worm; hoo! that is horrible! I open my eyes and see all the fresh, bounding life; and I could fold every human being to my heart, because he lives; I love him because he lives; ah! it is so beautiful to live! ah! it *might be* so beautiful!"



“You torment yourself too horribly with these night-thoughts,” answered Rosa with trembling voice; but Ephraim went on:

“I have yet one favor to ask of you, dear sister, will you promise me unconditionally to grant it?”

“If it is not against my conscience and out of my power.”

“It is neither. You promise me that if I should be crazy and have no longer the strength or the control of my will to destroy myself, that you will then give me poison? Now, your hand?”

“Ah! you are a tormenting-spirit and ought to have known long since that I have no mind for such jests,” said Rosa, and disappeared among the company.

Again Ephraim was at a larger party. The chief topic of conversation still continued to be the death of Frederick the Great, although his successor Frederick William II. had already for four weeks administered the government, certainly the most indubitable proof of the greatness of the late king.

“This year, 1786, has taken another great victim, I mean Moses Mendelssohn,” said Ephraim; and quoted in that connection the sentence set up over Maimonides and transferred to Mendelssohn: From Moses in Egypt to this Moses, none has arisen like Moses. All were silent and looked round them with astonishment; Ephraim might well feel how out of place this observation was in a circle which was ruled by wholly different sympathies; by the side of a hero of the world’s history he had set up another

significant indeed, but infinitely subordinate man. After a pause he therefore added: "One pillar of the age after another sinks into the grave, the old time dies and a new comes; what will it bring?"

No one answered; an officer drew a pamphlet out of his pocket; all clustered around him; the officer read Schubert's hymn; "The Death of Frederick," which may perhaps be called the greatest masterpiece of German hymnology.

Reverential silence reigned in the assembly when the reading of the poem came to an end; gradually the most enthusiastic praise of the incarcerated poet and of Frederick the Only poured forth from all lips. In the midst of this inspiration Ephraim stood smiling, and intimated his differing sentiments occasionally by a shake of the head.

"I suspect you are of a different opinion," said the officer, stepping up to Ephraim in company with a comrade.

"By all means."

Speedily had the company gathered around him. "Let us hear your view," they insisted on all sides.

"My view is, that this old Fritz the Only is chargeable with the misery of a whole great period. He was a good king? For all me; but then they will go on believing for a generation that they can be made happy by kings, the poetic eagle-parrots and philosophic greyhounds will 'fetch' the stars and wag their tails systematically: 'Hold your jaw!' 'Stupid stuff!' 'No reasoning!' Is not the Austrian uniform handsomer than the Prussian?"

Why will you shoot each other dead about that? I wish—I wish—I had a pair of leather breeches. Give me thy cap, cuckoo, stick thy calves into thy waistcoat pocket, the cat bites, miaow! cock-a-doodle-doo!”

“I’ve a good mind to throw that fellow out of the window,” said the officer to his comrade.

“Dost thou not notice anything, then? he is simply crazy,” said the other.

“He’s crazy,” was whispered and hissed from mouth to mouth through the whole company; Ephraim seemed to hear it; with glazed eyes he stared at vacancy; all gave way before him; he stopped before a large looking-glass, from which his whole form stared out at him.

“Yes, there thou art, my double!” he cried, foaming at the mouth as he clenched his fist, “churl! thou art crazy; die, thou mad dog; so! so!” he dashed his fists and feet against the glass, till the pieces came rattling down; all were horror-struck; he leaped round furiously, threw everything topsy-turvy, yelled and raved at the crazy Ephraim.

With great difficulty he was bound and carried home.

## 28.—HE IS MAD.

HE who scourged so keenly the frailties and follies of men, Swift, became toward the end of his days childish, and was exhibited by his domestics for money; he who named and classified the countless plants on the earth's surface, Linnæus, had, in his last days, forgotten his own name; he who mastered and bridled the reason with his mighty will, who unveiled and described its limits and laws, Kant, became, in his last days, dull and feeble:—we stand here before those awful depths of the human intellect, whose bottom no explorer's plummet has ever yet sounded.

In a dark, secluded chamber of the house of Nathan sat Ephraim in a strait-jacket, raging and raving against his murderer, till the foam stood on his lips; ever and again he gathered himself up afresh and struck out on all sides, cried and howled. At last he sank back exhausted with the words: "Good-night! Ephraim is dead, cock-a-doodle-doo!"

In characteristic ways did the three females now manifest themselves in their relation to Ephraim.

Violet was the first to visit him, and yet she stood the most in fear of him; "but," she said to herself, "one must not entertain fear or disgust at any malady. Who shall nurse him, if I keep aloof?" With trembling heart but with firm tread she went into her brother's dark cell; she sat down silently by the attendant; Ephraim lay on the bed, playing with his fingers and muttering to himself: "There, there, mouse-trap, thou hast caught Ephraim, but thou hast not got him; dost thou see, Ephraim, clever youth, in every village is a mouse-trap, with a tall tower, and a black cat inside; swallows on the window-sill; peep in; down, thou rabbinical goat's-beard, eat thy dry hay; ow! ow! let Ephraim go, you tear his heart out. Heretic! heretic! heretic! die as a dog dieth!"

With suppressed breath Violet approached her brother; he shrieked out, struck at her, cursed her; then he asked her: "Was the shearing good? is the wool already sorted? Ephraim would be glad to deal in wool, that is all clear mortling; come, Schnauzerle, thou blackamoor, must get thyself washed white by a priest; give Ephraim back his golden box; only one pinch, only one, faugh! that is mere mouse-dung. Ephraim has devoured Jerusalem; if he could only bring it up again out of his body." He sank back; it was as if his glassy look implored pity; Violet ventured with her transparently delicate hand to stroke the hair from his forehead; and Ephraim said softly; "Blow, blow, ah! that does me good; but don't burn thyself, thou good child!"

Now for the first time could Violet weep, as she heard her brother speak so tenderly; she held her hand on his hot forehead. "Dost thou not know me then, dear Ephraim?" she asked with trembling voice; Ephraim made no answer; he chewed, motionless, at his coat sleeve; but then suddenly he started up again and raved against the two officers, who would foully murder him; he struck with all his might at Violet and ground his teeth at her. The attendant, a sturdy wool-packer, drew Violet away, but she still stood before the door and listened; she wept again, for she seemed to hear her brother maltreated by the rough fellow; she went to Nathan and begged for a more gentle treatment; Nathan went to Ephraim.

"St! Hush!" cried the latter to him as he entered: "hearest thou how they work? they are digging the grave; they will murder Ephraim."

"The noise comes from the dyers who live opposite."

"Dyers? whoo! whoo! they require Ephraim's blood, to stain altar-cloths with it; ungag Ephraim! If father comes, he will give you a beating.

"There was one time a pious man  
Who babbled about 'All's Well!'

"Ephraim is frozen; when father comes he'll bring a little nothing in a little stocking, because thou hast not been good; who is biting Ephraim on the tongue? There you have dyer's blood."—He spat out blood; Nathan had him carried into another chamber.

Rosa, after some days, transgressed the strict prohibition of her husband; she stole softly after the

doctor into Ephraim's chamber, and glided up almost inaudibly to the patient. When Ephraim discovered the slender form in the white dress, he raised himself up as well as he could; his features suddenly assumed a fresh eagerness; his breath trembled; he folded his hands softly across his breast; his lips moved as if for prayer.

"How are you, dear Ephraim?" asked Rosa. Ephraim grasped her hand; a tear came into his wild, wandering eye; sobbing, he whispered: "Sweet Matilda, art thou here? Ah! they have bound poor Ephraim; thou art going to take him with thee, is it not so? Whoo! thou art wet!" Tears ran down his cheeks; then he closed his eyes and fell asleep; Rosa soon withdrew her hand.

"You are his guardian angel," said the physician, as he retired with her; "these tears which he shed give evidence that a great commotion of the soul has taken place in him; they may be the happy crisis; I hope at least from this time lucid intervals. You may visit him now and then, not often, and talk very little. You must also always be dressed in white when you visit him."

"It is singular," said Rosa, "that he calls me now by my second baptismal name, Matilda."

"In maladies of this kind all is singular or nothing," replied the doctor. Rosa pondered, however, over the "singular appellation."

The lucid intervals in Ephraim's mental life grew, in fact, more and more marked, and now at length Philippina ventured to visit her cousin "Iron-eater."

Unwonted anxiety and discomfort had tormented Philippina from the hour when she heard of her cousin's insanity; she absolutely refused to visit him, and said once: "I don't love to see spectres, and a crazy man is the ghost of himself." Her thoughts, however, she could not prevent from having the ghost of Ephraim appear in them, where it would not be conjured down. Often she would stop suddenly in the middle of her chamber and tie knots in her apron-string, as she looked down musingly; she had seen this horrible distraction of Ephraim's coming on; she asked herself a hundred times whether she might not have counteracted it; a dreadful meteor had fallen at her feet; she could no longer gaily skip over it; for hours together she lay on her sofa, hid her face in the cushions, and then looked round again with confused and unsteady glance at the familiar objects about her. She determined at last to be rid of the tormenting imaginations. Reality is certainly, even in this case, less horrible than the creations of fantasy, she said to herself consolingly, and formed a firm resolve. Without giving an audible hint of her struggle, she had fought out the whole battle within herself, and now with her old cheerfulness looked the new relation in the face; the world was suffered to know nothing of the horrible upheaving within her, and she herself had soon forgotten it.

"One must just take every man for what he is," she said to herself; "the only difference is that with others the lucid intervals last longer." She had her



lute taken into Ephraim's chamber, and soon followed herself. Ephraim lay on the bed; he had closed his eyes, was playing with the quilt and murmuring to himself broken sentences; "*Bon giurno*, Signor Trevirano—*va banque!*—Rabbi Chananel, to-morrow is church-festival—come, fair countess, we'll have one more dance—ha, ha, ha!—thou hast a bat on thy head, fy! fy!" He turned round and greeted Philippina. She could not stir from her seat for agitation and alarm; with trembling hand she made a pass over her lute; the patient gave a nod of satisfaction, and Philippina sang to him one of her favorite songs, to which he hummed a low accompaniment; Philippina drew nearer to him.

"Are the two lieutenants still standing at the door down below there, watching to kill Ephraim?" he asked, mysteriously; "they know what I think; they mean to split my head open."

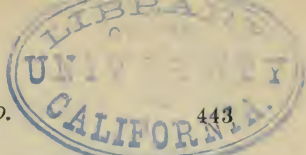
"An hour ago they stood there, but the commandant, I hear, has ordered them to go upon guard-duty," replied Philippina, boldly; she gave to all questions the desired answer, without contradicting.

Ephraim's condition improved but very slowly; for though a dam bursts suddenly and abruptly, it is only by little and little and with hard labor that it is built up again, and the overflowing flood led back into its wonted channel. Ephraim's kinsfolk, however, soon accustomed themselves to this situation; for no state of things is so sad and oppressive that one does not, when it has continued a considerable while, sometimes forget it. They went about their

usual occupations, nay, even their usual enjoyments; they even laughed, half sadly, at the fantastically jumbled phrases of the patient; only on Violet's face one noticed not even the faintest smile, even when her brother did and said the most absurd and ridiculous things.

There was once a family gathering at Nathan's. "Now for the first time one becomes really acquainted with Ephraim," remarked Nathan Frederick; "he hates all men, and speaks it out freely; children and fools tell the truth."

"That is not true," replied Philippina; "they merely tell *their* truth; if a fool or a child says to me: 'Thou art a frog,' am I therefore a frog? No; but he has spoken *his* truth; most other men say all the year round things which they have either learned from books or heard from others, and these are precisely the things on which they insist the most stiff-neckedly. My old music teacher plumed himself the most upon his skill in drawing and his mathematical accomplishments, precisely because he had made himself master of all that with great labor; whereas music was originally his own. With so-called crazy people the original inner being is turned immediately outward; they babble everything that is in their thoughts, without having first filtered it; I have often thought if, all of a sudden, all the thoughts, without distinction, which during the day pass through a man's head, if all of them suddenly were put into words, or were uttered without an act of the will, every one would run away from himself



shocked at hearing what crazy stuff was lodged in his brain. Our whole reason lies in the little bit of self-mastery."

No one followed the burlesque jumps of Philipina, and she went on with her discourse: "Now I have come to the point of showing why I am no longer afraid of the sight of a crazy person. The first time I was ever in a windmill I was seized with an inexpressible confusion and alarm; the whole building trembled; there were the wheels moving, beams turning round; the great millstone-maw was whirling about; there was such a groaning and clattering; all was so uncanny, so spectral, I thought I must needs fall in myself, till the miller explained to me how one thing worked into another. And so, too, I have found it in regard to the insanity of our cousin Ephraim; I have even sought to get behind the uncanny snarl, and our doctor, like the miller, has explained all to me, and now I am no more frightened and look on with perfect composure."

All were silent; Rosa bent over to her sister Violet and asked her softly, handing her a parcel of worsted, with what color she should shade the dark green in her embroidery; Nathan walked up and down the chamber, shaking his head. "For all the unhappiness of our Ephraim," he said at last, half in soliloquy, "Judaism alone is, after all, to blame; it is of itself a madness to remain in a fortress which the advancing army leaves unconcernedly behind it, because it must at last starve or surrender. As well the insight of the Bible prophets, as the world's

history, impels one to our faith; here alone is peace and blessedness."

Philippina had already opened her mouth to remark to Nathan how great is the force of habit he had gone over without faith, and now he had already advanced even to the stage of proselytism. She remembered, however, in good season how unedifying was this everlasting clutching at great questions; she only smiled and played with her locks. Nathan appeared to have observed this dissatisfaction of Philippina's; he now informed her that according to her advice he had gone to the Commandant; that he, an amiable man, had willingly fallen in with the proposal and might be expected at any moment. The Commandant came; he informed Ephraim that he had sent the two officers who had had design on his life under arrest to the fortification. Ephraim smiled and remarked with great composure that this fear of his persecutors was only a part of his disorder; that the most painful part of it was that no thought would any longer keep any foothold with him, and he wonderfully supplemented the explanation of Philippina by complaining that he could no longer think without uttering his thoughts in words, since otherwise the thoughts shot through each other in a perfect whirl, and how again he was frightened at the words which he heard from himself and yet could not silence.

Ephraim had scratches on his face, which he explained by saying that he had done it himself. In the dead of night he was almost suffocated, he said,

by the swarm of raving, murderous thoughts, and he had an intense longing for bodily pain, that it might deliver him from them. During the last night it had seemed to him as if his body were dead, insensible; then he had violently dug into his face with his nails and had found relief when he felt the trickling of blood and a bodily pain.

Now, at length, he was induced to obey the directions of the physician, and to take, accompanied by his watcher, a walk in the open air. In the street he greeted, right and left, all whom he met, whether he knew them or not, and gave them a friendly smile; the people would stop for a few seconds, and look after him with wonder, and then each one would go on his way again.

A quiet melancholy and shyness of men seemed to take possession of Ephraim. For hours together he would sit with his chin resting on his hand, muttering to himself unintelligible words; then he would rave and rage again at all present; people gradually became accustomed to this, and would then leave him alone. Here in his solitude, at such times, the inner cloud would often suddenly lift and the sky light up, and he would become conscious of his condition, and once, after a frightful out-break of frenzy he wrote the following "Thoughts occasioned by certain calamities:"

"Upon his back the world stout Atlas bore.  
I bear a world of grief, full sad and sore;  
Yet thee great Jove, for this I thank:  
Beneath my load I never sank."

His mind was able to handle again the old ready-made forms of the usual poetic style and metre; he had, through word and sign, detached his condition from himself and set it before him as an object of recognition, and here for the first time he found again the notion and the word, "I". With the recognition of himself came back to him also the changing forms of the outer world, and threw their light reflection upon the mirror of his consciousness, but he turned away from them. More and more, in the spirit of a recluse, did he bury himself in the secluded world of his past history; coldly and indifferently he held the life around him as not worth a glance; he was calm and quiet; death had but a scanty remnant of life to glean from him.

In this seclusion Ephraim also failed to observe that his sister Violet had not visited him for several weeks; Philippina, too, came seldom, and for the most part with a troubled countenance; she came from Violet's sick-bed. So long as Ephraim's insanity had lasted, Violet had lived in a feverish excitement; day and night she went through, in sympathy, with all the sufferings of her brother's soul. Through all this ran the consciousness of her own miscarried life. Often she rose at night from her bed, stretched out her hands to heaven and prayed for death; no one answered her voice; then she woke her maid, and chatted with her about one thing and another. Now, when all seemed to have come back into the old track, Violet lay prostrate with a severe sickness, a fiery fever consumed her wasted life; Philippina hardly ever left her sick-bed.

One noonday black rain clouds hung in heaven, when Ephraim unexpectedly desired an excursion into the open air; Nathan accompanied him. Unluckily they passed along before the Jewish burial-ground. "I will see the graves of our parents," said Ephraim, stopping; Nathan tried to hold him back, but Ephraim tore himself away, climbed up the wall, and jumped down; Nathan hurried after him. His hands clasped above his head, Ephraim flung himself face downward on the grave of his father; long he lay there, without stirring; Nathan looked on thoughtfully; at last he endeavored to rouse his brother, but the latter gently waved him off with his hand, and it was with difficulty that he could be drawn away from the grave. When he was again on his feet, he once more looked round; an open grave stood not far from that of his father. "Is that for me?" asked Ephraim; and he leaped down and laid himself on the damp ground. "Ho! ho! it is too short, dear brother; cut off my head, then I shall just go in." Nathan stood there in despair; he cried for help; just then the gate opened, and six men brought in a bier; the whole congregation followed; Ephraim had raised himself up. "Whom are ye bringing here to my parents?" he cried out from the mouth of the grave to the approaching train; all shrank back with terror; the men placed the bier on the ground.

"Thy sister Violet!" then cried all, as with one mouth.

Ephraim was lifted up out of the grave; he fell weeping on his brother's neck; then he threw him-

self down and tore the cover from the bier and kissed the dead lips of his sister, begged a thousand times her forgiveness, wept and cried and rolled on the ground.

Nathan stood aside petrified with horror; no one said a word to him; he might well have felt what it means in life as in death to be severed from one's kindred.

Violet was buried; Ephraim had thrown in the first clod of earth upon her coffin; he was led home by two men. A whole day and night he sat upon the floor; his lips never once opened either to take food or to speak a word.



## 29.—RELEASE.

THE death of Violet, and an inner exhaustion which scarcely ever left him again, gave to returning life in Ephraim a peculiar character. By the careful nursing of his health he had now to bring his life into the tranquil and natural condition, and this reminder became to him by degrees a pleasure.

In an arm-chair under the broad shade of the weeping-willows in Nathan's garden sat Ephraim all day long, silently brooding over his own thoughts. From his wild and wayward roving through the length and breadth of human life he had come back home to the steadfast continent, and a tree was his companion. From his survey of the spiritual products of all ages and countries, one single book at last still lingered in his hand, on which the child's eye had long ago rested, whose words his boyish lips had long ago uttered; it was—the Psalms of David.

He read them in the original language; and these words, these tones awoke an echo out of his long vanished youth, and renewed a refreshing spring-fragrance of life.

And as the tree above him inclined its twigs toward the earth again, in which its roots sprouted, so was it to him with his life and thought.

Many a time, too, he compared Moses Mendelssohn's translation of the Psalms with the original, and he transported himself alternately into the life of the royal singer and that of the philosopher, who in his painful afflictions made himself a way of deliverance by bringing over the words of David into the German mother-tongue.

Often they heard Ephraim in the night singing a Hebrew psalm; and even Nathan, who did not like to have anything remind his children of Judaism, was touched by the fervor of the tone and let his brother have his way.

The persistency with which Ephraim, from the beginning of spring onward, chose now to sit only in the garden under the willow, might also pass for a symptom of disease, but the peace which thereby came over him prevented all interference.

It was in August, when in the heavy sultriness of noonday a violent tempest suddenly broke out in the heavens; the first anxiety of all the inmates of the house was to get Ephraim under the shelter of the roof; but he repelled them with all his might and persisted in sitting quietly there under the willow. And when the storm had passed over, they found him in a soft slumber, and in his hand a leaf of paper, on which were the words: "Praise to God after a short, but violent thunder-storm:

“My soul, thy fleshly fetters breaking,  
To new and nobler life awaking,  
Up by a path no fowl hath known,  
On wings of faith and wonder soaring,  
Creation’s ladder climb, adoring,  
Up toward the great Creator’s throne!”

Peace with God had from this time forth entered into possession of Ephraim’s breast; he had found it again in the devout contemplation of nature; with the human beings around him, with their manners and customs, he also became more and more reconciled; the tenderness of his soul’s mood suffered now only soft tones to wake an echo within him; he found men to be, he felt himself to be, better and nobler. All met him with tender and affectionate regard. As the deaf man thinks he hears better again because every one, knowing his trouble, speaks to him more distinctly, so too it fared with Ephraim; people knew his shyness and his sadness; every one was glad to meet him with friendship and civility, and he could thereby come better and better to recognize the actual virtue of men. Reconciled and converted he went forward to meet his end, and out of the fullness of his soul he prayed to God:

“With love for each my bosom fill,  
Whose being came from Thee;  
Let him adore Thee as he will,  
If but Thy child he be.

“When my last hour of life draws near,  
And death’s stern call shall come,  
Then let the thought my spirit cheer:  
My father calls me home!”

In reliance upon God and the virtue of individuals he sought to forget those devices of the world which so often contradict that sentiment; he dared to hope, even though the hope might in his day never be fulfilled.

With manly fortitude he now, also, endured the sufferings which he was still destined to meet; a shock of paralysis came upon him, which lamed his whole right side and his organs of speech. There he lay now, and could with his left hand and by signs only, with difficulty intelligible, express his wishes. Tranquillity and silent resignation spoke in his countenance; often he laid his left hand on his breast, his eyes turned upward; he prayed for death. No more, as in former days, would he have defiantly challenged him; he awaited patiently his end. Out in the world the carriages rattled, the drum beat for the march of the soldiers, mechanics whistled lively airs as they went about their work, happy people sauntered under the green domes of the trees, the lark soared trilling into the sky—and here, in the solitary chamber was heard nothing but the regular tick of the clock, the vanishing of time and the footsteps of approaching death; here was no life, save the scanty breath on Ephraim's lips. But such is the might of the spirit, that he, bound to his earthly integument, yet can soar away far above it, and sweep unfettered through the universe; one could see by the changeful play of Ephraim's features, that he was now here, now there, in space and time.

When he recovered the use of his vocal organs he said to his sister-in-law, who nursed him with self-sacrificing solicitude: "I bear this sickness far more easily than the previous one, when the shock affected my spirit; it is not true that it is a blessing to lose one's consciousness; consciousness alone, and though it were that of pain, is life."

Rosa sat the chief part of the day by Ephraim's sick-bed; she sought in every way to entertain him; she told stories, she read to him, nay, contrary to her former habit, she even indulged in lively jests.

One day Ephraim had sunk to sleep; "art thou here, Matilda?" he cried, on waking; Rosa started with a shudder, she feared a relapse into his madness, as he had called her then by that name; Ephraim was silent for a while, his lips moved, he begged his sister-in-law to take pen and ink in hand, and dictated:

"When sore woes and pains oppressed me  
And heart-gnawing cares distressed me,  
Like an armed man, frightfully,  
Then came fell despair on me.  
Lo! a soft-eyed maid advances,  
And before her radiant glances  
That dark foe affrighted fled;  
Then, with grateful rapture fired,  
'Whence, who art thou?' I inquired;  
'PATIENCE is my name'—she said."

He requested the sheets to be brought to him, on which in a neat handwriting he had inscribed his poems; with a melancholy look he contemplated these few leaves; in them lay all the gain and

achievement of a whole life. Neither children nor grandchildren will one day revert to their ancestor and seek the spot where his remains were committed to the dust; without leaving a trace of his footsteps he had passed over the earth, only these lines might one day bear witness that here a soul had lived and suffered, wept and laughed, to sink at last into the arms of death.

With smiling mien he now almost day by day turned over the leaves of these manuscripts; often he paused; he conjured up before him the hour and the circumstances in which he composed such and such lines; as he had spell-bound this fleeting into poesy for sport and pleasure, and in such wise doubly enjoyed it, so now it rose before him in a third resurrection, as he confronted life itself as well as the poetry which mirrored it, as things far off and foreign to him; often, however, even the original occasion of such a poem floated before him only as the vision of a dream; out of reality and fancy he had created a third thing; this third thing alone remained now all that was true for him; the archetypes had vanished and melted away. Sorrowfully he once named his whole life, "nothing but a bound book;" the old propensity to have a firm and immediate foothold in life, as it shapes itself in domestic and civil society, seemed not yet to have wholly gone to sleep within him.

To no one but his sister-in-law did he confide his dearest jewel, his poems; he therefore often called Rosa, playfully, his "soul-keeper Chloe." Rosa's in-

defatigable care and watchfulness had in fact anything but a pastoral character, but the tenderest breath of love ennobled and glorified all her doings; not more tender and fervent appears the maiden when, with graceful modesty, she binds a fresh wreath of flowers around the floating locks of her loved one's forehead, than Rosa appeared here, when she put upon the head of her brother-in-law, who could not move his limbs, the prosaic night-cap. Ephraim was a passionate snuff-taker; his lameness disabled him from this enjoyment; but Rosa found a resort; with a half-sportive, half-sympathetic smile, she laid the grains of tobacco-dust on the delicate palm of her white hand, with her left she raised his head from the pillow, and with the right hand let him snuff it up. Ephraim stared at her, and expressed his thanks only by a soft inclination of the eyelashes; he might well have felt how this soul, so full of love and kindness, so unassuming and contented in all her doing, turned neither to the right hand nor to the left to see whether others would think it comely.

When Ephraim could speak again, Rosa soon discovered that he liked to converse about his poems; not from love of poetry, but only to give the sick man a pleasure, she read the poems of Ephraim; she could not, herself, enter into this way of thinking; nay, there was much that displeased and offended her in it. She, however, once remarked to Ephraim:

“I have wondered at not having yet found among your poems any one about the merchant's life.”

This simple observation struck Ephraim very deep-

ly, and half in vexation he wrote that very evening on the last page of his blank book:

“This little book’s my shop; the goods I with me carry  
Are epigrams; whoso has use for them, come buy.  
But, good folks, if there’s naught that takes your eye,  
Go to another shop, pray do not tarry.”

He had at last, in some measure, fought his way to a certain unity, he stood as merchant in poetry; he showed his brother Nathan the advertisement he had drawn up for himself; Nathan smiled approvingly and then gave him an account of what was going on in the world. The affairs of the country had not much to offer of more than transient interest; the controversies with Holland were lost in details and cabinet-mysteries. “Will Neckar keep his place in the French Cabinet? Will the nobility, the clergy and the third estate form a coalition?” Such were the oft-handled questions. Nathan loved to assume the air of an expert financier, and he plumed himself not a little upon the fact that he had been chosen to the office of auditor in the city treasury. Philippina, too, was fond of taking part in this conversation; she was an industrious newspaper-reader; Rosa alone took no interest in all this.

Here, in remote Silesia, in the sick-chamber of a man whose life was slowly ebbing away, here did the transactions of the French National Assembly find a clear and manifold echo, for it was the first time that things were discussed by the law-givers of Europe, which in books and social gatherings had long been put into words.



It was a hot summer noon. "The people of Paris have stormed the Bastille," cried Nathan, rushing in with excited face. "Listen!" He drew a letter from his pocket, and read a report of that memorable event, which may be regarded as the first rolling particle, which in process of time swelled into the mighty avalanche.

The eyes of the whole cultivated world were turned upon Versailles and Paris; the Declaration of Human Rights as the base of the new constitution, won, especially in Germany, countless votaries to the new order of things; for here, particularly, one could not fail to hail it as a victory when one saw philosophy and humanity exalted to be the law of the state; that was indeed already discussed in schools and books in manifold forms. Only when it came to innovations in individual and definite titles were discordant tones audible. Klopstock greeted the new day in a lofty ode; all were full of joyful expectation. As here in the sick-chamber of Ephraim, so was there in all places and in all families a sympathetic excitement of men's minds.

Often too did Ephraim murmur to himself in Hebrew the words of the Prophet Zachariah: (xiv. 7.) : "And at eventide it shall be light." Once more life seemed to flare up in him like an expiring lamp.

"Woe is me that I am dead," he once lamented; "here must I lie in a trance; I hear the steps of the beloved on the stairs, and cannot hasten to meet her; cannot stretch out to her my hand; I hear people talking, acting, fighting round about me; I hear and

feel all this and cannot rouse myself up to take my place among them: I would that I were dead! nay, only one day more would I live, wholly live, and die in battle! I thank Thee, oh God! Lord and Father! that thou hast preserved me in pain and sorrow, and spared me to behold this new day! I see the dawn of the morning; I hear millions of trumpets sounding; the earth trembles down to its deepest heart; spectres flee, chains break, the scaly armor falls from the breasts of men; there is no more prejudice nor injustice, and in silent embrace they feel, breast to breast, their hearts beating alike. Away with all the rubbish;" he cried, and threw his poems which lay on the table, down upon the floor; "only one more song would I sing, my swan-song, and then die. I conjure you, bury me not in a trance; thrust a knife into my bosom, here!"

Such excitement exercised the most pernicious influence upon Ephraim's condition; he would then lie there for hours together, and only his short breathing would give sign of life. They would fain have concealed from him the events of the day; but he always insisted stormily upon exact reports. Nathan was once complaining of the horrible murders which were committed by the liberated people, and that so many men, even innocent ones among them, must fall victims.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" cried Ephraim; "did not all the world shout and sing jubilee and extol the hero to heaven, because so many thousands of men had to die, that Silesia might be Prussian or Aus-

trian? May not men die now, too? Eagle or cock-erel; cock-a-doodle-doo!"—

Nathan shook his head compassionately; his brother had again gone mad; he wished for his death, which indeed drew nearer with every beat of the pulse. Spring came on; Ephraim grew weaker and weaker. "I feel it," he said one day to Rosa; "I shall never more see the spring flowers; they will grow out of my grave." Rosa covered her face in silence, and sought to console him, but he begged her to write; he would dictate his epitaph; he begged so fervently that Rosa wrote with tears in her eyes.

The next day Rosa sat again by the sick-bed of her brother-in-law; the sick man hardly breathed; a fresh nosegay of violets lay on his bed-quilt; Rosa had herself gathered them in the garden. Ephraim awoke; he looked round with astonishment; he saw the flowers on his bed; he seized them with trembling hand and pressed them to his lips; he lifted himself up in the bed with all his might, grasped Rosa's hand, pressed and kissed it passionately.

"I love thee, Matilda!" he groaned, and sank back on his pillow; Rosa cried for help. In the course of an hour Ephraim had sunk to the sleep of death.

Men bury their dead; Ephraim, too, was buried. Rosa had woven a laurel-wreath around his head; the Jewish grave-diggers tore it off, for the Jewish ceremonial tolerates no such adornments.

In the Jewish "Good-place" at Breslau is a grave

on which is inscribed in Hebrew letters the name of Ephraim Moses Kuh, and beneath it the epitaph composed by himself:

“Here lies the poet, Kuh,  
 Who, now by fate malicious,  
 And now by luck capricious,  
 Was teased; his war is through.”

\* \* \* \* \*

On the steep declivities and in the open passes of the mountains one meets with carved wooden pillars, on which are inscribed the names of those who were here crushed by wheels, overwhelmed by avalanches, or frozen in blinding snow-drifts. Some more compassionate than cunning hand paints the incident in glaring colors, and devout piety begs a prayer and the benediction of a remembrance from the passing traveler, who now treads the same road in bright sunshine and in the fresh breath of the mountain.

Not by a sudden and overwhelming shock has a man here sunk in death; often cast down, he had gathered himself up again, and toiled along to the end. In seclusion and solitude has he breathed away his existence, and here the carved image is set up in his memory.

THE END.







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