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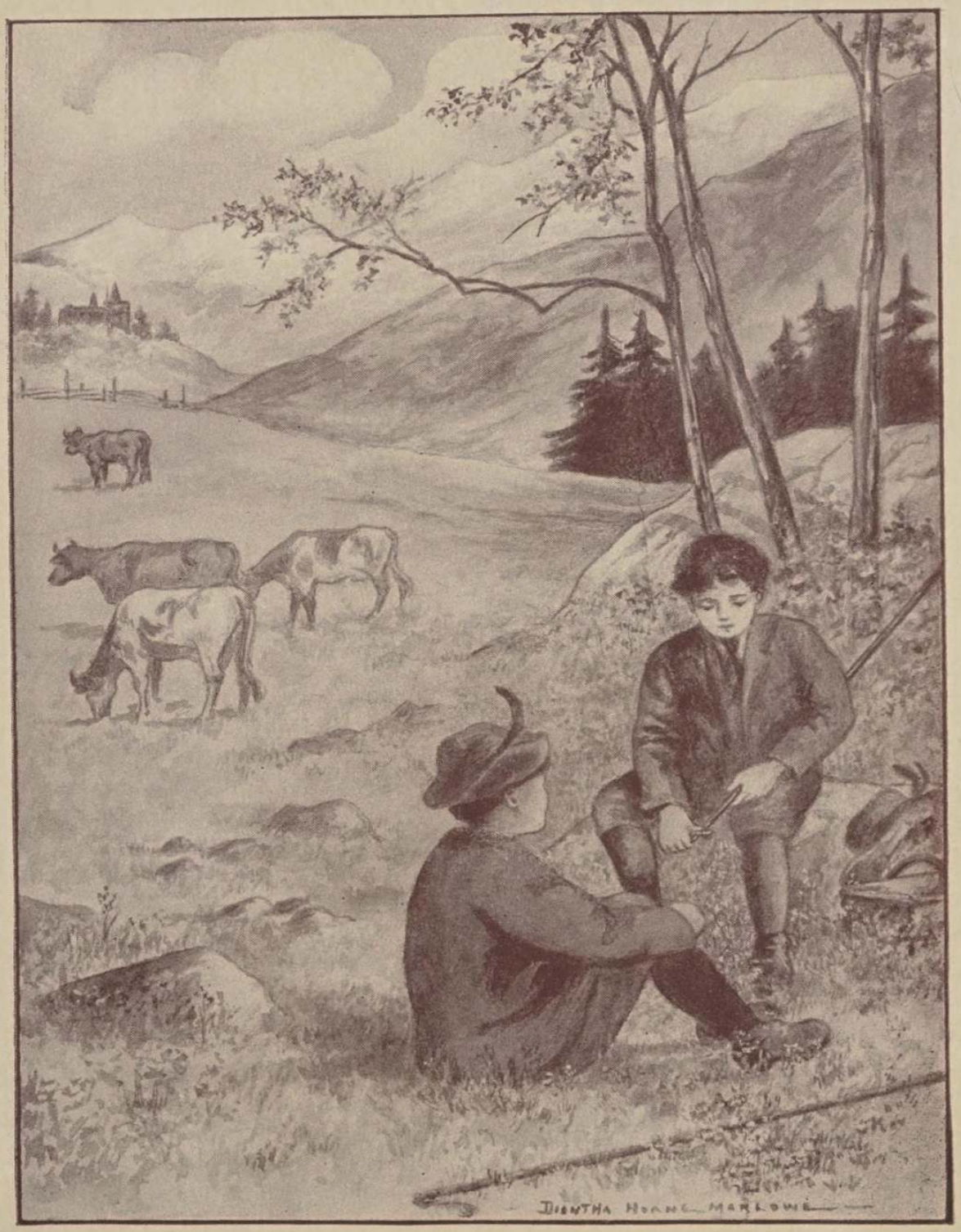
Our Little Austrian Cousin

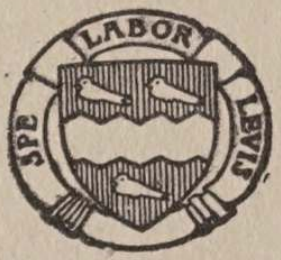


"FERDINAND AND LEOPOLD . . . WOULD HELP WITH THE CATTLE." (*See page* 100.)

OUR LITTLE AUSTRIAN COUSIN

By
Florence E. Mendel
Author of "Our Little Polish Cousin," etc.

Illustrated by
Diantha Horne Marlowe



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TO

His Imperial Majesty, Francis-Joseph

THE SYMPATHETIC FRIEND OF HIS PEOPLE

PREFACE

IN this volume I have endeavored to give my young readers a clearer and a more intimate knowledge than is usually possessed of the vast territory known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is a collection of provinces united under one ruler, and which is, strange to say, the only country of importance in the world that has not a distinctive language of its own, since the various races — German, Slav, Magyar and others — each speak their own tongue.

The northeastern provinces, Galicia and Bukowina, have not been considered in this book, owing to the fact that they are included in OUR LITTLE POLISH COUSIN; and, for a similar reason, Hungary and Bohemia have been omitted, as each is the subject of an earlier volume in THE LITTLE COUSIN SERIES. The

book consequently is chiefly devoted to Austria proper and Tyrol, but the other provinces, including Dalmatia and Bosnia, are not neglected.

The publication of **Our Little Austrian Cousin** is most timely, since the Balkan War, now drawing to a close, has occupied the attention of the world. The Balkan States lie just to the south of the Austrian Empire, and Austria has taken a leading part in defining the terms of peace which the Great Powers of Europe insist shall be granted by the Balkan allies to the defeated Turks.

Our Little Austrian Cousin can well be read in connection with Our Little Bulgarian Cousin and Our Little Servian Cousin, describing two of the principal Balkan States, which volumes have just been added to The Little Cousin Series.

Among others, I am especially indebted to Fr. H. E. Palmer, for much information concerning country customs in Upper Austria.

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Our Little Austrian Cousin

CHAPTER I

A VISIT TO OLD VIENNA

"HURRAH!" shouted Ferdinand, as he burst into the living-room, just as his mother was having afternoon coffee.

"And what makes my son so joyful?" asked Frau Müller, as she looked up at the rosy cheeks of her young son.

"Hurrah, mother! Don't you know? This is the end of school."

"So it is," replied the mother. "But I had other things in my head."

"And, do you know," the child continued, as he drew up to the table where the hot coffee

emitted refreshing odors, "you haven't told me yet where we are to go."

"No, Ferdinand, we've wanted to surprise you. But help yourself to the cakes," and the mother placed a heaping dish of fancy kuchen before the lad.

Ferdinand did not require a second invitation; like all normal boys, he was always hungry; but I doubt very much if he knew what real American-boy-hunger was, because the Austrian eats more frequently than we, having at least five meals a day, three of which are composed of coffee and delicious cakes, so that one seldom has time to become ravenous.

"But, mother," persisted the child, his mouth half filled with kuchen, "I *wish* I knew. Tell me when we start; will you tell me that?"

"Yes," answered his mother, smiling. "Today is Wednesday; Saturday morning we shall leave."

"Oh, I just can't wait! I *wish* I knew.

"Perhaps father will tell you when he comes," suggested the mother. "Do you think you could possibly wait that long?"

"I don't believe I can," answered the lad, frankly; "but I suppose I shall have to."

That evening, when Herr Müller returned from his shop, Ferdinand plied him with questions in an effort to win from him, if possible, the long-withheld secret.

"Well, son, there's no use trying to keep you in the dark any longer. Where do you guess we are going?"

"To see Cousin Leopold in Tyrol."

"Well, that's a very good guess, and not all wrong, either; but guess again."

"Oh, I can't. It must be splendid, if it's better than visiting Cousin Leopold."

"Well, it *is* better," continued Herr Müller; "for not only are we going to pass a few days with your Tyrolese relations, but we are going to a farm."

The boy's face fell visibly.

"To a farm!" he exclaimed. "Why, Uncle Hofer has a splendid farm in Tyrol; that won't be very new to me, then."

"It won't!" ejaculated his father, a trifle amused. "You wait and see, my boy. This is not to be a tiny farm of a few acres, creeping up the mountain on one side and jumping off into a ravine on the other. We sha'n't have to tie *this* farm to boulders to keep it from slipping away from us." And Herr Müller chuckled.

"Then it isn't in the mountains?"

"No, it isn't in the mountains; that is, not in any mountains that are like the Tyrolese mountains. But there will be acres and acres of this farm, and you will be miles away from any one. You will see corn growing, too; you've never seen that in Tyrol, my son."

"No," answered the child. After a few mo-

ments' silence, he added: "Will there be any young folks, father?"

"Don't let that trouble you, Ferdinand; where there's an Austrian farm there are many children."

"Hurrah for the farm, then!" shouted Ferdinand, much to the astonishment and amusement of his parents, who were unused to such impulsive outbursts. But Ferdinand Müller was a typical boy, even though he had been reared in the heart of the city of Vienna, where the apartment houses stand shoulder to shoulder, and back to back, with no room for play-yards or gardens, even; the outside windows serving the latter duty, while the school building on week-days, and the public parks on holidays, serve the former. Austrian children are never allowed to play on the street; but, as if to make up to their children for the loss of play-space, the Austrian parents take them, upon every available occasion, to the splendid

parks where are provided all sorts of amusements and refreshments at a modest sum.

"Father," asked the lad, after a few moments' silence, during which he had sat thinking quietly, "when shall we start?"

"Saturday morning, my son. I believe your mother has everything in readiness, *nicht war, meine liebe Frau?*" he asked, as he glanced over his paper at his wife.

"Oh, mother, *do* say you are ready," pleaded the child, who, for all his twelve years, and his finely developed body, was yet a boy, and impulsive.

"Yes, I'm all ready," she replied.

And, for the rest of the evening, silence descended upon the boy, his small brain being filled with visions of the coming pleasure.

When Herr Müller returned to his home the following evening, he found a letter, postmarked "Linz," awaiting him.

"Hello," he said, half aloud, "here's word

from our friend Herr Runkel. Wonder if there's anything happened to upset our plans?"

"Oh, father, please don't say it," pleaded the boy; "I shall be so disappointed."

"Well, cheer up," replied his father, "there's better news than you thought for. We shall leave on Saturday morning as planned; but to-morrow Herr Runkel's sister from the convent will come to us. He asks us to take charge of her, as the Sisters find it very inconvenient this year to send an escort with her; and, as we are coming up in a day or two, perhaps we would not mind the extra trouble."

"Oh, father, won't it be fine! How old is she?"

"I believe about your age."

Friday morning Frau Müller and Ferdinand jumped into a fiaker and drove to the railroad station to meet Teresa Runkel. She was a fine-looking child, with round, rosy cheeks; quite tall, with the fair complexion, sunny hair, and

soft, Austrian blue eyes that makes the women of that land famed for their beauty. She was overjoyed at this unexpected pleasure of spending a day or two in the city of Vienna, which she had never seen, although she had passed through several times on her way to and from the convent. She enjoyed the brisk drive to the tall apartment house in the Schwanengasse, and she fairly bubbled with chatter.

"After luncheon, my dear," observed Frau Müller, "we shall have Herr Müller take you about our city; for Vienna is vastly different from Linz."

Herr Müller joined the party at luncheon at eleven o'clock, which was really the breakfast hour, because Austrian families take only coffee and cakes or rolls in the early morning, eating their hearty breakfast toward the middle of the day, after which they rest for an hour or two, before beginning their afternoon duties.

At two o'clock the three were ready for the

walk, for Frau Müller was not to accompany them. Joseph, the portier, an important personage in Viennese life, nodded "A-b-e-n-d" to them, as they passed out the front door of the building, over which he presided as a sort of turnkey. No one may pass in or out without encountering the wary eye of Joseph, who must answer to the police for the inmates of the building, as also for the visitors. And this is a curious custom, not only in Vienna, but other European cities, that immediately upon one's arrival at an hotel, or even a private home, the police are notified, unawares to the visitor, of his movements and his object in being in the city, which reduces chances of crime to a minimum; burglary being almost unknown, picking pockets on the open streets taking its place in most part.

"Of course you know, children," said Herr Müller, as they passed along the broad Kärtnerstrasse, where are the finest shops of Vienna,

" you've been taught in school the history of our city, so I need not tell you that."

" Oh, but please do, father," said Ferdinand. " Teresa may not know it as well as I do," — he hesitated, for he noticed the hurt look in the girl's eyes, and added — " although she may know a lot more about other things."

" Well," began the father, " away back in the times before Christ, a body of rough men came from the northern part of France and the surrounding countries. They were called Celts. They were constantly roving; and so it chanced they came to this very spot where we now are, and founded a village which they called Vindobona. But about fourteen years after Christ, the Romans worked their way northward; they saw the village of the Celts and captured it. They built a great wall about it, placed a moat outside of these fortifications and settled down to retain their conquest. They built a forum, which was a public square where all the business

of the city was transacted; and, on one side, they placed their camp or praetorium. To-day, we call the Roman forum the Hohermarkt, just here where we stand now," continued Herr Müller, "and here, where the Greek banker Sina has built this fine palace, stood the Roman praetorium; while here, you see the street is named for Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor who was born in Spain and died in this city so many hundreds of years ago."

"I've heard that ever so many times, father," said Ferdinand, "but I never realized it before; somehow it seems as if I could almost see the Celts driven out and the great wall and moat of the Romans."

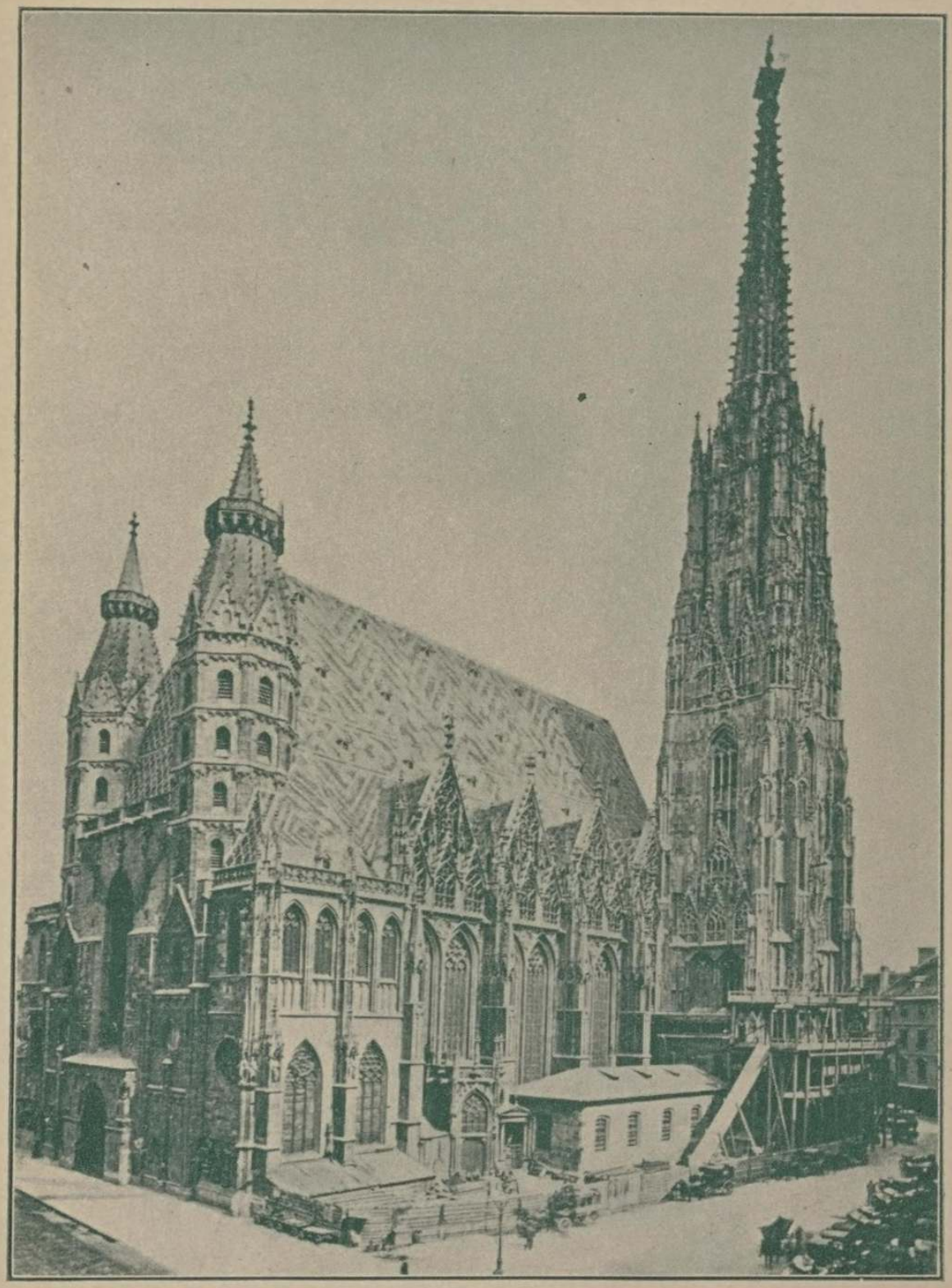
Meanwhile they had walked on, down the Bauermarkt and reached the St. Stephanienplatz, with St. Stephan's Church in the middle.

"There," said Herr Müller, pointing to the beautiful edifice, "is the oldest monument we

have in Vienna, begun in 1144. Duke Heinrich Jasomirgott founded it."

"Oh, he was our first duke," spoke up Teresa, who also wished to prove that she knew *her* Austrian history as well as her friend.

"Yes, Teresa," answered Herr Müller. "But it's a long jump from the Romans to Duke Heinrich. Several hundred years after the expulsion of the Celts from Vindobona, Charlemagne, the undaunted conqueror of the age, absorbed it into the German Empire; he distinguished it from the rest of the German Empire by giving it the name of the Eastmark or border of the empire (Oesterreich), hence Austria. He placed a lord or margrave over it; and when Conrad III of Germany became emperor, he appointed Heinrich Jasomirgott ruler over the Eastmark, giving him, at the same time, the adjoining territory of Bavaria. But he had no right to dispose of these Bava-



ST. STEPHAN'S CHURCH.

rian lands as he chose, just because he was angry with the Bavarians; and when his son, Frederick Redbeard (Barbarossa) came to the throne, he gave it back to the Bavarians. But Frederick Redbeard was a politic ruler; he did not wish to offend any of his subjects; in order to make up to Henry Jasomirgott for the loss of Bavaria, he raised him to the rank of duke, and thus Oesterreich or the Eastmark became a duchy. This was about 1100; then, being such an important personage, Duke Heinrich determined to make his home in Vienna. He built himself a strong castle, surrounded it with a high stone wall and a moat, as was the custom at that time, and included within it the confines of the city, so that he and his people might not be molested by neighboring princes.

"Here," continued Herr Müller, as they passed to the end of the Platz, "is the Graben. To-day it is our most fashionable shopping district; but in the time of Duke Heinrich it was

a moat filled with water; and here, where these rows of modern houses stand, were the ancient walls which protected the city."

"Isn't it great!" cried Teresa, who, girl though she was, could appreciate the ancient struggles of her ancestors for liberty and defence.

"Oh, father, there is Der Stock im Eisen!" said Ferdinand. "Tell Teresa about that, please; she doesn't know."

"Der Stock im Eisen?" repeated Teresa. "What is it?"

"That old tree with the iron hoop around it, at the corner of the Graben," replied her companion.

"We will reserve that tale for the evening," answered Herr Müller; "it is getting toward coffee hour, and we want to visit many places yet."

As he spoke, they walked slowly along the Graben, which means Moat in German, and,

at the end of several minutes, they reached a large open square called Platz am Hof.

"Here is what remains of the palace of the House of Babenberg, which Duke Heinrich built," said Herr Müller; "and here before it you see the Tiefe-graben, or deep moat, which amply protected the stronghold from attack. And there," he continued, moving as he spoke toward the building, "stands the Schottenhof."

"The Schottenhof?" exclaimed Teresa, astonished. "Why is it called a Scottish palace in Austria?"

"Because it was originally built and occupied by some monks from Scotland in the year 1158, whom Duke Heinrich had asked to come and instruct the citizens, not only in religion, but in the educational arts, there being no schools in those days; all the teaching was done by the Holy Fathers. But later on, the Scottish monks were dispossessed by a German order of monks; yet the Hof still bears the name of its founders.

And even to-day the Church owns all this most valuable property, right in the very heart of our city, which was given to them so many years ago."

"That's the first time I thought about the Hof being Scottish," admitted Ferdinand, between whom and Teresa there was much rivalry and jealousy as to the amount of knowledge possessed by each; but the lad was generous enough to admit his ignorance, because he did not wish to assume too superior airs before his guest.

"Here runs the tiny lane, the Schotten-gasse, which separates the Schottenhof from the smaller Molkerhof just across the land; and here are the ancient bastions which protected them; to-day, you notice, these same names are retained; the bastions are no longer required, but history preserves their memory in preserving their names, the Schotten-bastei and the Molker-bastei, now streets of the city of Vienna

instead of bastions. But we have had quite enough of history," continued Herr Müller, "I am quite certain our little convent friend is tired."

"Oh, no indeed," spoke up Teresa. "At the convent we take long walks every day; and in the country at Linz, we do much walking, too; it does not tire me at all."

"But walking about city streets is quite different from country lanes, my girl," observed Herr Müller.

"Yes, but we do not have the interesting places to visit, nor the tales to hear, in the lanes," wisely answered the child.

"Well, then, if you are quite certain you are not too tired, we will walk home. We will go by the way of the Ring, here behind the Schottenhof; and we will walk over the old walls, which were erected in later years as the original city of Duke Heinrich grew. Of course, we have no use for these fortifications in these days,

so we have changed them into a magnificent boulevard."

No one, not knowing the original use of the Ring, would ever have suspected the mission it had fulfilled; so broad and handsome was the avenue encircling what is called the Inner-Stadt (Inner City), planted with magnificent trees, and bubbling over with life, color and gayety.

Teresa would like to have stopped at every fine building and park, but Herr Müller promised to ask her brother to allow her a few days with them in Vienna before returning to the convent in the fall, that she might see all there was not time now to show her. For the present must suffice a cursory glance at the Burghof or imperial residence, the royal theatre, the Hofgarten and the Volksgarten, gay with the scarlet skirts and gold cloth caps of hundreds of nurse-maids watching over their youthful cares.

"Wouldn't it be splendid to be an emperor,"

remarked Teresa to her companion, "and live in such a fine palace?"

"Oh, that isn't much of a palace," remarked Ferdinand, somewhat contemptuously, "that's just like a prison to me; you ought to see Schönbrunn, the summer home of the Emperor."

"Oh, I've been to Schönbrunn," returned the girl with disdain in her voice. "The Sisters took us all there once; they showed us the room where the Duke of Reichstadt died, and where his father, Napoleon, lived when he took Vienna."

"Well, I'll bet you haven't seen the celebration on Maundy Thursday, when the Emperor sends his twenty-four gorgeous gala coaches with their magnificent horses and mounted escorts in uniform to bring the four and twenty poor men and women to his palace, that he might humble himself to wash their feet?"

"No, I haven't seen that," admitted Teresa. "Tell me about it. Have *you* seen it?"

"I've heard father tell about it a number of times," continued the lad. "The Emperor sends his wonderful holiday coaches with the escorts in gorgeous uniforms; they bring the poor men and women to the palace and set a splendid banquet before them; then they go to the royal chapel and hear Mass, at which the Emperor and the royal family, and the entire Court are present; after that, the poor folks are led to the banquet hall and here they are served from silver platters which the Emperor and his royal family present to them. After that, the Emperor kneels before them and wipes their feet with a wet cloth."

"He does that himself?" asked Teresa, who had listened spellbound, that her beloved emperor should conduct such a ceremony.

"Indeed he does! And, furthermore," added the boy, with ineffable pride, "he is the only monarch, so father tells me, who preserves

the ancient custom. But that isn't all; the Emperor sends these astonished poor people home again in the gorgeous coaches; he gives them each a purse in which is about fifteen dollars; he sends a great basket filled with the remains of the banquet which they have left untouched, together with a bottle of wine and a fine bouquet of flowers; — and, what do you think, Teresa?"

"I'm sure I couldn't guess," admitted the child.

"He gives them the silver platters from which he served them."

"What a splendid emperor!" cried Teresa. Then she added, "I've seen the Emperor."

"Oh, that's nothing," most ungallantly replied the boy. "Franz-Joseph walks about our streets like Haroun-al-Raschid used to in the Arabian Nights. *Any* one can see the Emperor; he allows even the poorest to come and see him in his palace every week; and he talks to them

just as if he was a plain, ordinary man and not an emperor at all."

"Well, I've had him speak to me," answered Teresa. "At the convent he praised my work."

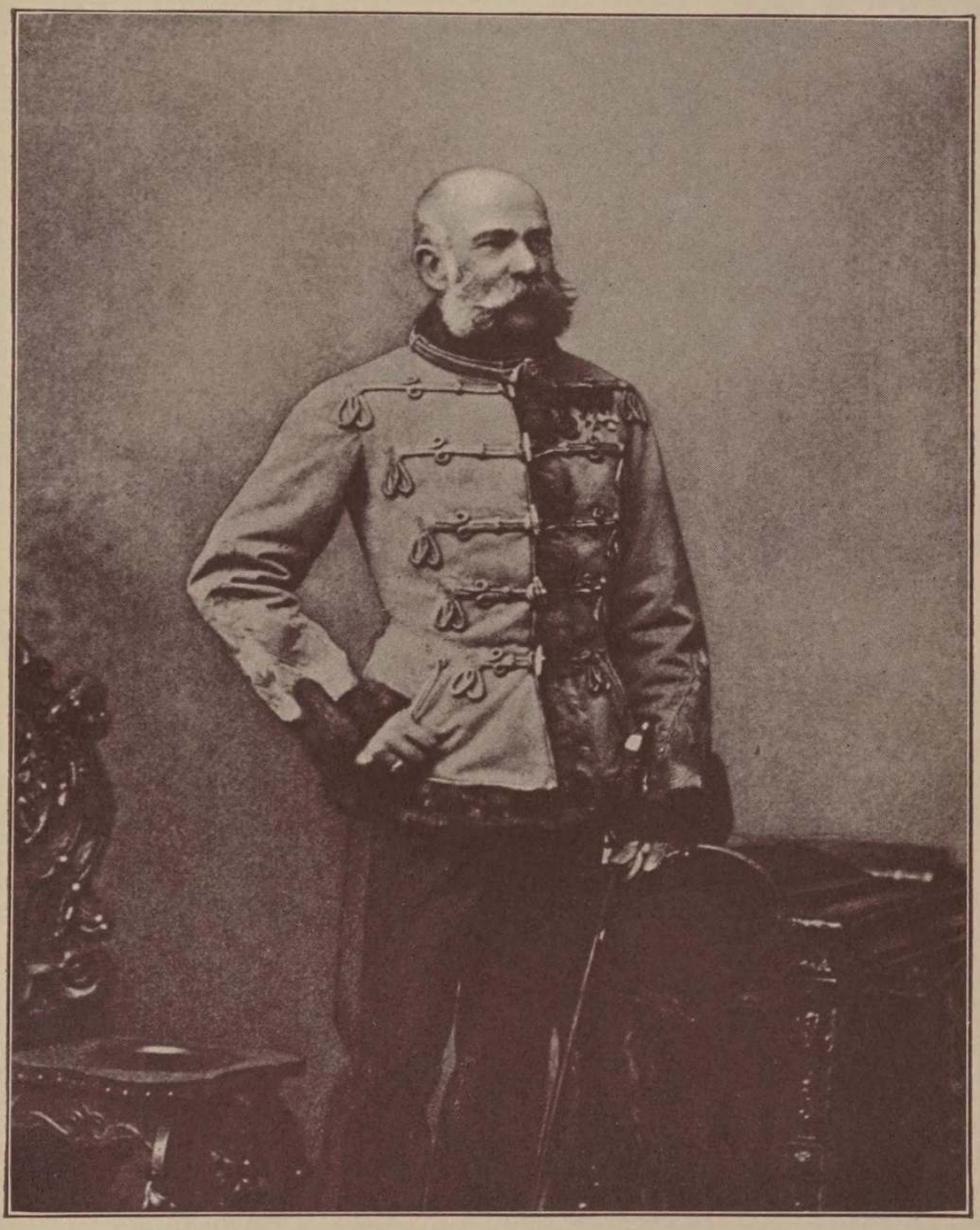
There was a dead silence. Herr Müller walked along, not a muscle in his face betraying the fact that he had overheard this juvenile conversation, for fear of interrupting a most entertaining dialogue.

"Has he ever spoken *directly* to you?" demanded the girl, seeing that Ferdinand did not reply.

"No."

Again a dead silence.

"The Emperor needs our love and sympathy," said Herr Müller, after waiting in vain for the children to renew their talk; "his beloved empress Elizabeth has been taken from him by an assassin's hand; his favorite brother Maximilian went to his doom in the City of Mexico, the victim of the ambition of a Napo-



EMPEROR FRANZ - JOSEPH.

leon; even his heir, the crown-prince is dead; and when our beloved king shall be no more, the very name of Habsburg will have passed away."

"He is a very kind man," replied Teresa. "He comes often to the convent; and he makes us feel that he is not an emperor but one of us."

Herr Müller touched his hat in respect. "Long live our beloved emperor, our most sympathetic friend," he said.

By this time they had gained the entrance of their home; Joseph opened the public door to admit them to the corridor, and they ascended to the third floor to the apartment of Herr Müller.

CHAPTER II

DER STOCK IM EISEN

THAT evening, after a hearty dinner, the children called for the story of Der Stock im Eisen. And so Herr Müller began:

"Many hundreds of years ago, in the old square known as the Horsemarket, lived Vienna's most skilful master-locksmith, Herr Erhanrd Marbacher. Next door to him, stood a baker-shop owned by the Widow Mux. The widow and Herr Marbacher were good neighbors, and were fond of chatting together outside the doors of their homes, as the evening came on; Herr Marbacher smoking his long, quaintly-painted pipe, and the Widow Mux relating the sprightly anecdotes of the day.

"But, one evening, Herr Marbacher found

the widow in great distress; as she usually wore a merry smile upon her jolly face this change in temperament greatly affected the spirits of the locksmith, and he demanded the cause of her unhappiness. With tears in her eyes, the widow confided to her neighbor the dreadful fact that her younger son, Martin, a worthless, idle fellow, had refused to do any work about the shop, and had even used harsh words.

"'Sometimes it happens,' suggested the master-locksmith, 'that a lad does not take to his forced employment; it may be that Martin is not cut out for a baker; let me have a hand with him; perhaps he will make a first-rate locksmith.'

"'A locksmith!' exclaimed the widow in astonishment. 'How can he become a locksmith, with its attendant hard work, when he will not even run errands for the baker-shop! No, Herr Marbacher, you are very kind to suggest it, and try to help me out of my trouble,

but Martin would never consent to become a locksmith's apprentice. He is downright lazy.'

"'Well, you might let me have a trial with him,' said the locksmith; 'I am loved by all my workmen, yet they fear me, too; they do good work under my direction, and I am proud of my apprentices. Martin, I am certain, would also obey me.'

"'Well, have your way, good neighbor,' replied the widow, 'I can only hope for the best.'

"Evidently Herr Marbacher knew human nature better than the widow, for Martin was delighted with the prospect of becoming an apprentice-locksmith, with the hope of earning the degree of master-locksmith, like Herr Marbacher, and he worked hard and long to please his master. His mother was overjoyed at the change in the lad, and Herr Marbacher himself was very well pleased.

"Now, it chanced that some little time after Martin's apprenticeship, Herr Marbacher

handed him a tin pail and directed him to a certain spot on the edge of the forest, without the city walls, where he should gather clay with which to mould a certain form, for which he had had an order. As the commission was a particular one, and somewhat out of the ordinary, it required a peculiar sort of clay which was only to be found in this particular spot.

"With light heart, and whistling a merry tune, Martin, swinging his tin pail, set out upon his errand. The day was perfect; Spring was just beginning; the trees were clothed in their fresh greenness, light clouds flitted across a marvelously blue sky, the birds twittered noisily in the treetops and Martin caught the Spring fever; he fairly bounded over the green fields, and reached the forest in a wonderfully short time.

"Having filled his pail, he started homewards. But, instead of keeping to the path by which he had come, he crossed through the

meadows, his heart as light as ever. Suddenly he espied through the trees figures of men or boys; then voices came to his ears; he stopped and listened. Boy-like, he was unable to resist the temptation — the lure of the Spring — so he changed his course and made toward the bowlers, his old-time cronies, who were engaged in their old-time sport. Slower moved his feet, — his conscience prompted him in vain — he forgot the admonition of his master not to loiter on the way, for fear the city gates would be shut at the ringing of the curfew; he forgot all about the time of day, and that it was now well on toward evening. The fever of the Spring had gotten into his veins; Martin paused, set down his bucket of clay, and, picking up a bowl, joined in the sport of his comrades.

"Suddenly the curfew bell reached his ears; he recalled his errand, the warning of his master, and his heart stopped still in fright. He dropped the bowl in his hands, grasped his

"'CHEER UP, MY LAD,' SAID THE STRANGER."

bucket of clay, and ran with beating heart toward the city gate, but he was too late; the gate was closed and the gate-keeper either would not or could not hear his call.

"Fear now seized Martin, in very truth. The woods about the city were infested with robbers and dangerous men; there was no way in which to protect himself; yet he had nothing about him which any one would care to have, and that thought gave him some comfort. As he was planning how he might get within the walls, a tall man dressed in scarlet feathered cap and a long black velvet cloak upon his shoulders, stood before him.

"'Cheer up, my lad,' said the stranger. 'What is the use of crying?'

"'But I am locked out for the night,' replied Martin.

"'That is nothing to fret about,' answered the tall man. 'Here is some gold. Take it, it will open the gate for you.'

"'Oh, thank you,' said Martin, overjoyed. Then he hesitated. 'But I shall never be able to repay you,' he added. 'I have never seen so much gold.'

"'Oh, do not fret yourself about repaying me,' answered the stranger. 'I have plenty of gold, and do not need the little I have given you. Still, if you are really anxious to repay me, you might give me your soul when you have finished with it.'

"'My soul?' cried the boy aghast. 'I can't give it to you. One cannot sell his soul?'

"'Oh, yes,' replied the malicious stranger, smiling grimly, 'many people do sell their souls; but you need not give it me until you are dead.'

"'Much good would it do you then,' replied Martin; 'I cannot see what you would want with it after I am dead?'

"'That is the bargain,' retorted the tall man.

And he made as if to move away and leave Martin to his fate.

"'Oh, very well,' said Martin, fearing to throw away this chance for deliverance. 'I will take your gold, and you may have my soul when I have finished with it; the bargain is made.'

"'And I shall be lenient with you,' continued the stranger. 'I will give you a chance to redeem your soul.'

"'You will?' exclaimed Martin in delight. 'And how?'

"'Only this, if you forget to attend divine service even once, during all the rest of your days, then shall I claim my bargain. Now, am I not fair?'

"Martin was very glad to be released, even with this proviso, and laughed as he moved away, for Martin had been brought up religiously by a pious mother, and he knew he should not forget his Sabbath duty.

"As the stranger had said, the gold gained entrance for Martin Mux through the closed city gate, and he straightway made his way to his room and to bed before his master should discover his absence.

"Some days later, as the apprentices were hard at work in the shop under the scrutinizing eye of Herr Marbacher, a tall man in a black velvet cloak and a red plumed cap, stood in the doorway. Martin recognized his erstwhile friend and feared he knew not what. But the stranger had come to order an iron hoop with padlock so intricate that it could not be unlocked.

"Herr Marbacher hesitated; the order was certainly unusual, and even he, the master-locksmith of Vienna, was uncertain whether he could accomplish such a commission. But, seeing Marbacher's hesitation, the stranger cast his glance about the shop full of young apprentices,

and fixing his regard upon Martin, he said, in a loud voice:

"'Among all these workmen, is there not one who can make the lock?'

"Whether impelled by fear, or feeling that having assisted him once, the devil would assist him yet a second time, Martin spoke out,

"'I will do it.'

"All eyes turned toward the young apprentice.

"'You?' cried Marbacher, and he laughed very loud and very long, so excellent did he consider the joke. 'You? You are my very youngest apprentice.'

"'Let him try,' suggested the stranger warily, fearing the master would deny Martin the privilege. 'Who knows what he may be able to accomplish?'

"And so it was agreed.

"Martin worked all that day until the evening shadows compelled him to quit his work.

He racked his brain; he thought and thought; yet no lock could he imagine which could not be unlocked. He carried his paper and pencil to his room with him, thinking that in the stillness of the night he might think of some design. But, although he worked conscientiously, no ideas came to him, and he fell asleep. With visions of locks and bolts and bars in his head, it was no wonder that Martin dreamed of robbers' castles and dungeons and locks and bolts. He dreamed about a mighty robber in a fortress-castle; he was a prisoner there, he, Martin; but what his crime he did not know. He rushed toward the door to make his escape; it was locked; he tried to undo it, but in vain; then he looked about him, and the room seemed filled with padlocks, some small, some large, some handsomely wrought, some very simple; but among them he found one that looked like a huge spider. It interested him so much that he took out his pencil and mechanically repro-

duced it; then he felt himself sinking, sinking, down, down. With a start he awoke, he had tossed himself out of bed and lay sprawling upon the floor of his room. Rather piqued, Martin picked himself up and jumped into bed. But there upon his pillow lay a drawing. He examined it by the feeble rays of the candle, which was still burning; it was the design of the spider lock he had seen in the robber's castle in his dream.

" Impatient for the morning, Martin was at his bench early working upon the design of the lock; and when the end of the sixth day arrived, the time appointed by the stranger for the delivery of the work, Martin had the lock completed. Evidently it proved entirely satisfactory to the stranger, for he paid Marbacher the money agreed upon, and left the shop.

" At the corner of the square he stopped before the larch-tree, bound the iron hoop about

the tree, locked it, put the key in his pocket and disappeared.

"Time passed. Martin, for some inexplicable reason, had left Vienna and gone to the city of Nuremburg where he continued in his profession. But, one day, he heard that the Burgomaster of Vienna had offered the title of master-locksmith to the one who would make a key which would unlock the iron hoop about the larch-tree. It was a small task for Martin to make a duplicate of the key he had once made, and with it in his pocket he travelled to Vienna and presented it to the Burgomaster.

"It was a great holiday when the hoop was to be unbound. Dressed in robes of state, glistening all over with gold thread and medals, the Burgomaster and the City Fathers gathered in the Horsemarket, where stood the Stock im Eisen; the lock was unfastened and Martin was created a master-locksmith, much to the

joy of his mother and to the overwhelming pride of his former master, Herr Marbacher.

"But, although Martin Mux had now acquired fortune and fame, he was far from being happy. His bargain with the devil haunted him; day and night it was with him, for he feared Sunday morning might come and he would forget to attend Mass. And then he would be irretrievably lost. What would he not give to be able to recall his bargain. He enjoyed no peace of mind; at his bench he thought ever of the dreaded day when he must pay; he could no longer work; he must not think; he joined his old-time idle companions; hour after hour was spent in gambling; night after night he frittered his wealth away; the more he lost the more desperate he became; poor Martin Mux was paying dearly for his game of bowls and his disobedience to his master.

"One Saturday evening Martin joined his

comrades quite early, but luck had deserted him; he lost and lost. One by one the other habitués of the place had gone until there was no one left but Martin and his few friends at the table with him. He paid no heed to time; all he thought of was to regain some of his lost money. Suddenly, as had happened some years before, out on the bowling green, Martin heard the deep tones of a bell. But this was not the curfew; it was the church bell calling to Mass.

"Martin looked up from his cards and saw the sun shining brightly through the curtained windows. His heart stood still with fright, for his bargain flashed through his mind; he threw down the cards and fled into the street, like a mad man.

"On and on he ran. He brushed past a tall man, but heeding him not, Martin rushed on.

"'Hurry, my friend,' called out the stranger, whom he had jostled. 'Hurry, the church bell has rung; the bargain is paid.'

"A malicious laugh rang in Martin's ear. He turned and saw the evil-eyed stranger, him of the black velvet cloak and red-plumed cap.

"Mad with fear, Martin bounded up the church steps. He entered the house of worship; but the stranger had said truly it was too late; the bargain was due for the service was ending. Martin Mux turned to leave the church, but at the threshold he fell dead; the stranger had claimed his soul.

"Since that time it has been the custom for every locksmith apprentice, whether he comes into Vienna to seek his fortunes, or whether he goes out from Vienna to other parts, to drive a nail into the stump of the larch-tree and offer up a prayer for the peace of Martin Mux's soul. That is why the old tree is so studded with nails."

"What a dreadful bargain for Martin to make!" said Teresa fearfully. "How could he have given his soul away?"

"He chose the easier way out of a small difficulty, and he paid dearly for it," replied Herr Müller. "It is not always the easiest way which is the wisest, after all."

CHAPTER III

THE FARM IN UPPER AUSTRIA

THE following morning the Müller family and Teresa Runkel boarded the boat in the Canal which should take them up current to Linz. It was most exciting for Ferdinand, who had never been on the Danube before, but to Teresa it was quite usual, for she always made the journey to and from her home by way of the river.

There was a great deal of excitement upon the quay — the fish boats had come in with their supply for the day, and fishermen were shouting themselves hoarse in their endeavors to overshout their competitors.

The children seated themselves in the bow of the boat that they might miss nothing of the scenery which is so delightful near Vienna, with

its green banks, its thick forests and its distant mountains.

"Do you know what that grim castle is, over there on the left?" asked Herr Müller.

"Oh, yes," replied Teresa quickly. "That is the Castle of Griefenstein."

"Then you know its history?" asked Herr Müller.

"Yes, indeed," answered the child. "Sometimes the Sister who takes me home tells me, and sometimes father; but doesn't Ferdinand know it?"

"No," answered the boy. "I haven't been on the river before." As if it required some explanation for his seeming ignorance.

"Then tell it to him, please," said Teresa, "for it is a splendid tale."

"Long ages ago, this castle belonged to a lord who was, like all noblemen of that time, very fond of adventure. Whenever the least opportunity offered to follow his king, he would

take up his sword and his shield and his coat-of-mail, and hie him off to the wars.

"Now, the lord of the castle had a young and beautiful wife whose wonderful golden locks were a never-ending delight to him. Having a great deal of time upon her hands, and neighbors being few and far between, the lady of the castle passed her time in arranging her magnificent hair in all sorts of fashions, some very simple, while others were most intricate and effective.

"It chanced that one day, after an absence of several months, the lord of the castle returned. Hastening to his wife's boudoir, he found her before her mirror dressing her hair in most bewitching fashion.

"After greeting her, he remarked about her elaborate head-dress, and laughingly the young wife asked her husband how he liked it.

"'It is much too handsome,' he replied, 'for a young woman whose husband is away to the

wars. It is not well for a woman to be so handsome.'

"And without further word, he seized the sword which hung at his side, removed it from its scabbard, and with one stroke cut off the beautiful golden locks of his young wife. But no sooner had he done so than he was angry with himself, for his display of temper. He rushed from the room to cool his anger, when, whom did he run into, in the corridor, but the castle chaplain. The poor young lord was so ashamed of himself for his ungovernable temper, that, with even less reason than before, he seized the frightened and astonished chaplain by the two shoulders, dragged him down the castle steps and threw him into the dungeon.

"'Now,' said he, after bolting the door securely, 'pray, my good man, that the day may be hastened when the balustrade of my castle steps may become so worn by the hands of

visitors that it may hold the hair of my wife, which I have cut off in my folly.'

"There is nothing so unreasonable as a man in anger; I presume had the cook of the castle chanced to come in the way of milord's anger, he, too, would have been thrown into the dungeon, and all would have starved, just to appease the temper of the impossible lord. Fortunately, the cook, or the hostler or any of the knights or attendants of the castle did not appear, and thus was averted a great calamity.

"When the lord had had time to calm down a bit, he realized how unjust had been his actions. It was impossible to restore his wife's hair, but at least he might release the chaplain. A castle without a priest is indeed a sorry place; in his haste to descend the steps to the dungeon the lord caught his foot; perhaps his own sword, which had been the means of his folly, tripped him; in any event, he fell down the entire flight and was picked up quite dead."

"It served him quite right," interrupted Ferdinand.

"Oh, but that wasn't the end of the lord, by any means," continued Herr Müller, smiling. "He is doomed to wander about his castle until the balustrade has been worn so deep that it will hold two heads of hair like those he cut from his wife. The penitent lord has roamed about the castle for many a year crying out to all who pass, 'Grief den Stein! Grief den Stein!' (Grasp the stone). Long ago he realized how foolish had been his actions, but although he has heartily repented, yet may he never know the rest of his grave until the balustrade has been worn hollow."

"And does he yet wander there?" asked Ferdinand.

"So they say; but one cannot see him except at night. There are many who claim to have heard him calling out, 'Grief den Stein,' but although I have been up and down the river

many times, sometimes in the daytime and sometimes at night, I, myself, have never heard the ghostly voice."

"I've always felt sorrier for the poor lady without her beautiful golden hair," observed Teresa, after a moment's silence, "and I always felt glad to think the lord had to be punished for his wickedness; but, somehow, hearing you tell the story, Herr Müller, I wish his punishment might not last much longer. For he was truly sorry, wasn't he?"

Herr Müller looked quizzically at his wife, and they both turned their heads from the earnest faces of the children.

"Do you find the old legends of the Danube interesting, Teresa?" asked Herr Müller, as the boat sped along, and the children maintained silence.

"Oh, I love all sorts of tales," the child replied. "Father tells us some occasionally, but I am home so little of the time now I do not

hear as many as I used to. In the summer-days we are always so busy at the farm we do not have the time for story-telling as we do in the winter-days."

"Austria is full of tales about lords and ladies, ghosts and towers, but the Danube legends are not as well known as those of the Rhine. Have you ever heard that story concerning the Knight of Rauheneck near Baaden?"

"No, Herr Müller," replied Teresa.

"Well, it isn't much of a tale when you compare it with the Habsburg legends and the Griefenstein, and Stock im Eisen, but then it is worth telling."

"Begin," commanded the young son, in playful mood.

"Well, near Baaden there stands a formidable fortress called Rauheneck where lived a knight in former years. As he was about to go to war, and might return after many years

and perhaps never, he decided to hide the treasures of the castle and place a spell upon them so that none might touch them but those for whom they were intended. So, in secrecy, he mounted to the summit of the great tower of the castle and on the battlement he planted a cherry stone, saying, as he did so:

"'From this stone shall spring forth a tree; a mighty cherry-tree; from the trunk of the tree shall be fashioned a cradle; and in that cradle shall be rocked a young baby, who, in later years, shall become a priest. To this priest shall my treasure belong. But even he may not be able to find the treasure until another cherry-tree shall have grown upon the tower, from a stone dropped by a bird of passage. When all these conditions have been complied with, then shall the priest find the treasure at the foot of my tree, and not until then.'

"Then the careful knight, fearing for the

safety of his treasure, even after such precautions, called upon a ghost to come and watch over the castle tower, that peradventure, daring robbers who might presume to thrust aside the spells which bound the treasure, would fear to cope with a ghost."

"And did the priest ever come?" queried Teresa.

"Not yet, child; the cherry-tree at the top of the tower is but yet a sapling; there are long years yet to wait."

"But we don't believe in ghosts, father," interrupted Ferdinand. "Why could not some one go and dig at the root of the tree and see if the treasure were really there?"

"One could if he chose, no doubt," answered Herr Müller, "but no one has."

"Would you, Ferdinand?" asked Teresa.

"Oh, I might, if I were a grown man and had a lot of soldiers with me."

"Do you know another legend, Herr Müller?" asked Teresa, shortly.

"Well, there is the legend of Endersdorf in Moravia.

"A shepherd once lived in the neighborhood, and although he had always been exceedingly poor, often almost to the verge of starvation, yet, one morning, his neighbors found that he had suddenly become exceedingly rich. Every one made conjectures concerning the source of his wealth, but none of them became the confidante of the shepherd, so that none were ever the wiser. The erstwhile poor shepherd left his humble cot and built himself a magnificent estate and palace upon the spot; he surrounded himself with retainers and sportsmen and gave himself up quite naturally to a life of ease and indolence. Most of his time was spent in following the hounds; but with all his newly-acquired wealth, and notwithstanding the memory of days when a few pence meant a fortune to

him, the shepherd lost all sense of pity, and none about the country-side were quite so penurious and selfish as he. To such poor wayfarers as accosted him, in mercy's name, to befriend them, he turned a deaf ear, until his name was the synonym for all that was miserable and hard-hearted.

"Now, it happened, that one day a poor beggar came to the gate of the rich shepherd, asking for alms. The shepherd was about to leave the gate in company with a noisy crowd of hunters and followers, on his way to the chase. Taking no pity on the poor man's condition, he suddenly conceived the idea of making the beggar his prey.

"'Here is sport for us, good men,' he cried. 'Let us drive the beggar before us with our whips, and see him scamper lively.'

"Whereupon, following the action of their host, the entire company raised their whips, set spurs to their horses, and drove the trem-

bling, frightened, outraged man from before them.

"'Now has your hour come,' cried out the old man, as he turned and defied his assailants. 'May all the curses of Heaven fall upon your heads, ye hard-hearted lot of roysterers!'

"At the word, the sky, which had before been cloudless, grew suddenly black; the lightning flashed; the thunder rolled; the very ground under their feet, shook, cracked and opened, swallowing the shepherd, his followers, their horses, dogs, and every vestige of the estate vanished. In its place arose a lake whose dark waters tossed and moaned in strange fashion.

"On stormy days, even to this present day, when the waters of the lake are lashing themselves in fury, the shepherd of the hard heart can be seen passing across the waves, his whip raised to strike some unseen object, a black hunting dog behind him. How long his pun-

ishment may last, no one knows, but he can always be seen just as he was when the earthquake swallowed him up."

"Isn't it strange," observed Teresa, "but every one of the tales end in the punishment of the wicked knight."

"Of course," remarked Ferdinand. "They wouldn't be tales at all if the wrong-doer was allowed to go free. Would they, father?"

"Indeed not; but now it's time for breakfast. Would you like to eat on deck? It is so perfect a day, it is a pity to go indoors."

This suggestion appealed wonderfully to the children, and Herr Müller left them to order the meal served upon the deck.

As night fell, the boat docked at Linz. Herr Runkel was waiting on the quay with a heavy wagon and a team of horses to drive them to the farm. It was a beautiful drive in the bright moonlight, and the lights of Linz twinkled be-

low them, while the Danube sparkled in the distance, just like a fairy world.

It was very late when they reached the farmhouse; Frau Runkel greeted them cordially, and immediately after helping them off with their wraps, poured out steaming hot coffee to warm them up, the night air having been a trifle chilly.

Ferdinand went directly to his room after coffee was served. It was on the opposite side of the house, on the ground floor; the farmhouse was but one story high, with a lofty attic above. In one corner of the large bedroom stood a canopied bed of dark wood, elaborately painted in bright colors, on head and foot board, with designs of flowers and birds. There were two small, stiff-backed wooden chairs, a night-table, upon which stood a brass candlestick, and an enormous wardrobe or chest for his clothes. All the furnishings of the room, even to the rug by the bed, were the handiwork of the oc-

cupants of the farm-house, for no true Austrian peasant would condescend to purchase these household necessities from a shop. Between two voluminous feather beds Ferdinand slept soundly, nor did he stir until he heard voices in the garden. Hastily dressing, he made his way into the living-room, where breakfast had already been partaken of by the others.

"I'm so sorry to be late," he apologized, shamefacedly. "Why didn't you call me, mother?" he asked, as he turned to the one who must naturally share the responsibility of her children's shortcomings.

"We thought to let you have your rest," answered Frau Müller. "Your day will be very full. You evidently enjoyed your downy bed."

"Oh, it was great; let *us* get one, mother."

"I used to sleep under one when I was a girl," replied Frau Müller, "but no one in the

city uses them any more; the woolly blankets have quite superceded them."

"You may take yours home with you, if you like," said Frau Runkel, "we have geese enough to make more."

"Now," said Herr Runkel, "if you are all ready, we'll go over and pay our respects to father and mother."

"Then your parents do not live with you?" asked Herr Müller, a little astonished.

"No, that is not the custom among us. You see, when I got married, father made over the farm and all its appurtenances to me, being the eldest son; then he built himself another home, just over in the field, there," and Herr Runkel pointed to a tiny, cosy cottage some few hundred paces away.

"What a splendid thing to be the eldest son," remarked Herr Müller.

"Perhaps it is," replied his host, "but it entails a great responsibility, as well. You see,

after the ceremony of deeding the farm away to me, *I* am called upon to settle an allowance upon my parents during their lifetime."

"That's but right," assented Herr Müller, "seeing that they have given you everything they possess, and which they have acquired with such toil and privation."

"Yes, but father received the farm from his father, in just the same manner; although he has enlarged it, so that it is bigger and better. But, in addition to father and mother," continued the farmer, "I have all my brothers and sisters to look after. There is Teresa at the convent in Vienna; there is Frederick at the Gymnasium in Linz; and there is Max an apprentice in Zara; these must all be cared for; and, I can tell you, Müller, it's a responsible position, that of being the eldest son."

"But you weren't called upon, Franz," replied his friend, "to provide so bountifully for each."

"No, but what would you have?" he replied. "I have tried to be a dutiful son; and," he added, his eyes twinkling as he glanced at his wife, "I've been sort of lenient towards father and the children, because father let me off so lightly when he boxed my ears for the last time."

"Boxed your ears?" exclaimed Herr Müller, in astonishment. "What *had* you done to deserve such disgrace?"

"Well, that was part of the ceremony. When the farm was made over to me, it's the custom, before signing the deed, for the owner to make the rounds of his estate with his family; when he comes to each of the four corner-posts, he boxes the ears of the new owner. Now, father might have boxed mine roundly, had he chosen, for I was somewhat of a rollicker in my youth," and the genial farmer chuckled softly, "but father was sparing of my feelings. Don't you believe he deserved a recompense?"

"He certainly did," answered his friend, and they all laughed heartily over the matter.

Meanwhile they had gained the entrance to the dower-house, as the home of the aged couple was called. As Herr Müller had not seen the parents of his friend since childhood there were many years of acquaintanceship to bridge over; and Ferdinand, fascinated, listened to the conversation, for this old couple were most interesting persons to talk with.

After returning from church the family gathered on the wide verandah under the eaves, the women with their knitting, which is not considered improper even on Sundays among Austrian women.

This verandah in the peasant home in Upper Austria is a most important part of the house. It is protected from the elements by the enormous overhanging eaves above, running the entire side of the house; heavy timbers support it, green with growing vines which climb

from the porch boxes filled with gayly blossoming flowers. It is a tiny garden brought to one's sitting-room; the birds twitter in the sunlight, as they fly in and out of their nests under the eaves; and here the neighbors gossip and drink coffee and munch delicious cakes. In fact, it is the sole sitting-room of the family during warm days, for no peasant woman would think of shutting herself in a room to do her work. One can always work to better advantage in the sunlight and open air.

The children rambled about the farm and outbuildings. The farm-house was very long and deep and low, with a long, slanting roof. The front door was of heavy timbers upon which was a design of St. Martin outlined in nails, the work of the farmer, while small crosses at either side of the door were considered sufficient protection from the evil spirits who might wish to attack the family within.

The interior of the farm-house was very simple; a large vestibule called the Laube or bower served as a means of communication between the different parts of the house; the sleeping-rooms were ranged on one side, while the dining and living-room occupied the other, with the kitchen just beyond.

The Gesindestube, or living-room, was very plain, with its bare floors and darkened walls; a tile stove in one corner, benches about the walls and chests, some plain, some elaborately decorated and carved, occupied whatever space was left. Here were kept the household linens and the wardrobes for the family, as no Austrian peasant home is built with closets as we have in America.

That evening, Herr Runkel said to Ferdinand:

"To-morrow, my boy, we work. Would you like to help?"

"Oh, it would be jolly," replied the lad.

After a moment's hesitation, he added: "What kind of work? Hoeing potatoes or weeding the garden?"

These two tasks were the only ones the lad was familiar with upon his uncle's farm in Tyrol.

The farmer laughed. "No, we won't do that," he said. "We'll leave that to the servants; but we'll make shoes."

"Make shoes!" exclaimed the child, incredulously. "Really make them yourself? I've never made shoes," he added, doubting whether he might be allowed now to assist.

"Why not?" answered Herr Runkel. "You know we are very old-fashioned here; and, as we have so far to go to the shops, why we don't go; we let the workmen come to us. This is an off-time of the season; so we have the tailors and the shoemakers and all sorts of folk come and help us with such things as we can't do ourselves, for, you know, we make

everything we use on the farm, and everything we wear."

"Oh, how fine," said Ferdinand.

"Yes, and we have jolly times, too," continued the farmer, "for when work is over we play. Isn't that right?"

Ferdinand went to bed that night with visions of tailors and shoemakers and harnessmakers and whatnot, in his head, until he fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV

THE PEASANTS' DANCE

FERDINAND needed no call to arouse him in the morning. He was awake and up long before any of his family, but he did not catch Herr Runkel nor his buxom wife, napping.

"Come along, Ferdinand, and help me get the leather ready for the men," said the farmer, and he led the way across the garden to a great timber building, two stories in height. He opened the door, and they entered a very large room, with a decided smoky smell about it.

"What is this?" asked Ferdinand.

"This is our Feld-kasten (field-box) where we keep all our supplies. Here are the seeds for planting when the time comes; here are the hams and bacons and dried meat for use during the winter; here is the lard for the

year;" and Herr Runkel took off the lids of the great casks and showed the white lard to the child, astonished beyond expression, at this collection of supplies.

"And what's in the loft?" asked the boy, seeing the substantial ladder leading thereto.

"Oh, that's for the women-folks," he replied. "We keep all sorts of things there. Let's go up."

And they ascended.

The loft was a room full of shelves; in most delightful order were ranged bundles of white cotton cloth, bundles of flax for spinning, bundles of woolen goods for making up into apparel, some dyed and some in the natural wool; there were rows and rows of yarn for embroidering the garments of the peasants, and upon the floor in one corner was a great heap of leather, with all sorts of machinery, and harness, and Ferdinand never *could* learn what there was not here, so overwhelmed was he.

"Here we are," said Herr Runkel, as he tugged at the pile of leather. "We must get this out, for the shoemakers start after breakfast. Give us a lift, child," and he half dragged, half lifted the leather to the trap-door and let it slide down the ladder.

For days afterwards Ferdinand was in a fever of excitement. First he would help cut out the leather for the heavy farm shoes, working the best he could with his inexperience; the main thing being to keep busy, and he certainly accomplished it. Then he helped the tailors, for every one who could be spared about the farm joined in the tasks of the journeymen, that they might finish their work and move on to another farm, before the busy season should begin for the farmers.

It is customary in addition to the low wages of about twelve cents a day for servants to receive their clothing, as part payment, so that upon a large farm, of the extent of Herr

Runkel's, there were many to be provided for. Frau Müller assisted Frau Runkel in the kitchen, where Teresa, too, was kept busy; even Ferdinand not disdaining to make himself useful in that department.

At length the journeymen were finished, and Herr Müller spoke about leaving in a few days for Tyrol.

"We shall have a merrymaking, then, before you go," said his host. "But I presume parties are not a novelty to you; are they, Ferdinand? City folks, especially Viennese, are very gay."

"Oh, we never have parties in Vienna," replied the lad. "That is, private parties; they cost too much. But we have our masked balls and ice festivals. Of course I can't go to those; they are only for grown folks."

Herr Müller took up the thread of conversation at this point. "Vienna, with all its glitter, is but a poor city, after all," he said. "Living

is very costly; the rich and the aristocracy have impoverished themselves by their extravagant ways of living. They dwell in fine homes, wear gorgeous uniforms and gowns, but cannot pay for these extravagances. They have shooting-lodges in the mountains, country villas for the summer, besides their town homes, but they have the fear constantly over their heads that these will be taken from them, to redeem the mortgages upon them."

"I am more than ever thankful," replied the farmer, "that I have my farm and my family, and owe no man."

"You are certainly right," answered his friend. "It is to such men as you that Austria must look in the future."

"But about the party, Herr Runkel," interrupted Ferdinand, who feared that his host might forget his suggestion.

"Oh, yes. Well, we'll have that Saturday night; so run along and help the women-folks

get ready for it, for you never saw such feasts as we do have at our parties, child."

Ferdinand, being just a boy, rushed off to the kitchen to provide for the "spread" that was to come, and he and Teresa chattered like two magpies over the splendid prospect.

Although Ferdinand Müller did not quite believe that Saturday afternoon would ever come, it eventually did come; and a perfect day, too. Teresa was dressed in her most shining silver buckles and her whitest of homespun stockings, while Frau Runkel outshone every one in the room with her gayly embroidered apron over her dark skirt, and her overwhelming display of hand-made silver ornaments in her ears, upon her arms, about her neck, and on her fingers. And her headdress was a marvel to behold, glistening with gold thread and shining with tiny beads of various colors.

The table was set in the Gesindestube; there were roast ducks, and geese and chickens, roast

meats and stewed meats, and Wienerschnitzel (veal cutlet), without which no Austrian home is complete. There were sausage and cheese and black bread and noodles; there were cakes with white frosting and pink frosting, and some were decorated with tiny colored seeds like caraway-seeds. Never had Ferdinand beheld such a sight before; but truly the Austrian peasant knows how to enjoy life.

The reception over, the host and hostess led the way to the dining-table, the men placing themselves on the bench on one side while the women sat opposite them on the other. With bowed heads, the host said the grace; then began the gayety. There was no constraint; each helped himself and his neighbor bountifully. Meanwhile, the two young children, at the foot of the board, were not neglected, but kept up a lively conversation of their own, utterly oblivious of their elders.

"Wait until the dessert comes," said Teresa.

"Did you ever see one of these nettle-cakes?"

"Nettle-cakes?" repeated the lad. "What is that?'

"Oh, you will see," replied the young lady, looking wise. "But be careful, I warn you, not to prick your fingers. Perhaps, though," she added, "mother may not allow us to join in, for this is a special feast-day, in honor of you and your parents."

Ferdinand was not kept long in suspense. The viands having been disposed of to the satisfaction of every one, the maid brought in the "pièce de resistance." It towered high above her head, and had she not been brought up in the open air of the country she certainly never would have had the strength to manage such a burden. Upon a huge wooden dish was piled high fresh fruits from the orchard, cakes with delicious frosting, nuts and bright flowers. It was a medley of color, set off by great streamers

"IT TOWERED HIGH ABOVE HER HEAD."

of gay ribbons and bows; quite like a bridal cake, but vastly more interesting.

Tongues wagged fast, you may be sure; all wished to get a chance at the gorgeous centre-piece, nevertheless, they all waited for their host's approval, and, waiting his opportunity, when many were not on the alert, he raised his hand, and then such a scramble you never saw in all your days. The men rose out of their seats and grabbed for one particular sweet-meat, which might appeal to the palate of his fair partner; but for all their precautions, knowing the hidden secrets of the dessert, many emerged from the battle with scratched hands or bleeding fingers, for these delicious cakes and luscious fruits covered prickly nettles, a trap for the unskilful.

But what mattered these trifles to the happy-hearted peasant folk. They chatted and laughed and dived for fruit and decked the hair of their favorites with gay flowers, or cracked

nuts with their knife handles and fed them to their lady loves. With the coffee, the feast ended.

Carrying the benches to the sides of the room, where they ordinarily reposed, the table was cleared as if by magic. Now the dance was on. Zithers and violins appeared, and the darkened rafters of the Gesindestube rang with the clatter of many feet.

By ten o'clock all was quiet at the farm-house; the guests had complimented their host and hostess upon the success of the evening, and the elaborateness of the table; they bade farewell to the Müller family, and saying good night to all, made their way over the fields, singing with hearty voices, their tuneful folk-songs; and thus Ferdinand heard the last of them ere he fell asleep.

CHAPTER V

SOME TYROLESE LEGENDS

THE following morning Herr and Frau Müller and Ferdinand bade their kind host and hostess good-by and they set out for Linz, where they would take the train to Innsbruck, the capital of Upper Tyrol. Ferdinand was very loth to leave the farm, he had had such a splendid time there, and felt that he had not seen half of the farm-life; but Herr Runkel promised that he should come again the following summer and spend the entire vacation with them, to which his parents consented, so the child was content. However, he was to visit his cousin Leopold, and that was always a treat, for Tyrol is so charming and so different from other spots in Austria, it would be a dif-

ficult child, indeed, to please, who would not be content with a trip to Tyrol.

Herr Hofer and his son Leopold met them at the station in Innsbruck, with a heavy wagon and two strong horses; the Hofers lived in Volders in the Unter-Innthal or valley of the Lower Inn River, some distance in the mountains; all the country to the north of the Inn being designated as the Upper and that to the south, as the Lower valley.

"Have you had your luncheon?" asked Herr Hofer, as soon as the greetings were over.

"Oh, yes, we lunched on board the train," replied Herr Müller.

"Then, let's get off," said Herr Hofer, "for we have a long drive before us." He pulled his horses' reins and the beasts started off at a good pace.

Leaving the station, they turned down the Margareth-platz with its fountain of dragons and griffins, where young women were filling

their pitchers, for Innsbruck is very primitive in many of its customs. Down the broad and splendid Maria-Theresa Strasse the carriage turned, and stopped before a most gorgeous palace, whose roof shone in the bright sunshine like molten metal.

"Oh, uncle, who can live in such a beautiful house?" asked Ferdinand.

"That is the Goldne Dachl, or the House with the Golden Roof," replied his uncle. "It was built ever so many years ago by our beloved Count Frederick of Tyrol. You've heard of him?" he queried.

"Oh, yes," replied the lad. "But I don't know about this house of his."

"Well, Count Frederick was a most generous man; he would lend to all his friends who were not always very prompt in repaying him, and sometimes forget they owed him anything at all. At length, his enemies began to call him the Count of the Empty Pockets. This was

very unjust, for poor Friedl (that's what we call him, who love him, you know) had had a very hard time of it, indeed. His own brother had driven him from his throne and usurped it himself, and made it a crime for any one to even shelter poor Friedl, who wandered about from place to place like the veriest vagabond. But, at length, he discovered that he had many friends who longed to show their devotion to him; he made a stand for his rights and secured his throne. But still, the nickname did not leave him. So, just to prove to his people that he was unjustly called the Count of the Empty Pockets, he ordered this wonderful roof of gold to be put on his palace. They say it cost him $70,000, which certainly was a great sum for a man with empty pockets."

Turning the horses' heads in the opposite direction, Herr Hofer conducted them through the Triumphal Arch and gained the country road.

"I thought to show the boys the Abbey of Wilten," explained Herr Hofer, as they trotted along, "and perhaps stop at Schloss Amras, as we may not have an opportunity soon again."

"Oh, uncle," cried Ferdinand, "I love to see old ruins and castles. We have a lot of fine ones about Vienna, but they are all alike."

"Well, these will be quite different, I can assure you," replied his uncle.

The two boys occupied the rear seat with Frau Müller, while the fathers sat upon the front. And verily the little tongues wagged as only boys' tongues can do. In the midst of their spirited conversation, the carriage stopped before a splendid old church.

"Oh, father," exclaimed Ferdinand, "what queer looking men!"

Herr Müller looked about, but saw no one.

"Where?" he asked.

"Why, there, by the sides of the church door."

Both men laughed.

"They *are* queer looking, aren't they?" said Uncle Hofer. "But you would think it a lot queerer did you know how they came to be here."

"Oh, tell us," the boy exclaimed.

"Well, once upon a time, way back in the Middle Ages, there were two giants who lived in different parts of the earth. Each of them was twelve feet or more tall; one was called Haymo and the other Tirsus. Now, in those times, giants did not remain quietly in their strongholds; they set out on adventures; so it chanced that, in the course of their travels, these two mighty giants encountered each other, right on this spot where this abbey stands. But of course, there was no abbey here then; the ancient Roman town of Veldidena was hereabouts.

"Now, when the two giants met, they stopped, looked one at the other and measured his strength. Well, it naturally fell about that they decided to prove their strength; in the struggle, sad to tell, Haymo killed Tirsus. Poor giant Haymo. Big as he was, he wept, for he had not meant to harm his giant comrade. At length, to ease his mind, he determined to build an abbey on the spot, as that seemed to be the solace for all evils, in those days. And then Haymo would become a monk, and for eighteen whole years he would weep and weep as penance for the deed.

"But poor Haymo had more than he bargained for. He did not know that the Devil had claimed this same spot; no sooner did Haymo bring the stones for the foundation of his church than the Devil came and pulled them down. But Haymo persisted, for he really must keep his vow; and evidently he conquered the Devil himself, for the abbey stands, as you

see, and these are the two statues of the giants guarding the portal of the church, so that the Devil may not come, I suppose."

"Poor Haymo," said Ferdinand. "What a hardship to weep for eighteen years, *nicht wahr,* Leopold?"

"*Yawohl,*" came the stolid reply, while the two men chuckled softly.

It is a peculiarity of Tyrol that, not until one attains middle age at least, does he begin to appreciate humor the least bit. Children are always too serious to admit of "fun" in their prosaic lives, so that, were it not for the elderly people, humor might eventually die out altogether in Tyrol, so serious a nation are they.

"Shall we go inside, father?" asked Leopold.

"We have not time; night will overtake us, and we must go on to Schloss Amras yet. There really is little to see, however."

And while the lads strained their necks and eyes to catch a glimpse of the beautiful paint-

STATUE OF ANDREAS HOFER, NEAR INNSBRUCK.

ings upon the outside walls of the abbey, the wonderful gilding and stucco, the horses disappeared around a bend in the road, and it was lost to sight.

Now they commenced to climb, for the road is always up and up in Tyrol. Below them lay the wonderful view of Innsbruck, with the Inn running gayly along; there, too, was the fair abbey with its two giants carved in stone, watching ever at the portal.

"Have you boys any idea where we are?" asked Herr Hofer.

Both shook their heads negatively.

"All this country hereabouts is alive with interest attaching to Andreas Hofer, our patriot," replied he. "Here, at this very Gasthaus (inn) was where he made his last effort against the enemy. We shall learn more of it as we go along," he continued, "but there is not much use to stop here now. We go a few steps further to the Schloss."

Truly it was a delightful old place, this castle of Amras, one of the few feudal castles left. There was an old courtyard paved with great stones, there were battlements and towers and relics of Roman invasions. The guide led them through the castle, room after room, filled with most interesting articles of every description pertaining to ancient times and wars, all of which intensely absorbed the boys' attention.

"Oh, what an immense bowl!" cried Ferdinand. "And of glass. What is it for?"

"That is the welcome bowl," replied the attendant. "We call it, nowadays, the loving cup. In every castle there were many like this; there was a gold one for ladies, a silver one for princes and a glass one for knights, which latter was the largest of all. When guests came to the castle, the welcome bowl was brought out, filled to the brim and handed to the guest, who was supposed to drink it off at a draught, if he was at all of a hazardous or knightly disposi-

tion. To his undoing, it sometimes happened he did not survive the ordeal; but that mattered not at all to him; he had displayed his bravery and that was worth life itself. After the bowl was drained, a great book was brought out, in which the guest was requested to write his name, no doubt as a test as to his real station, for no one but the highest and noblest were able to write or read in those times, and it often chanced even they were unable to do so."

"Why, that is what they do in hotels!" said Ferdinand.

"Yes," replied the guide, "and probably that is where the custom originated, for the manager of a hotel but preserves the ancient custom of registering the names of his guests."

All too soon the visit came to an end; the party made its way to the near-by inn to spend the night.

CHAPTER VI

MORE LEGENDS

THE inn-keeper, Herr Schmidt, was a big, raw-boned man with a red face and a jolly air. He was a genuine Wirthe or inn-keeper of the old-time; and after supper, as they all sat in the great sitz-saal together, he told them wonderful tales of the country round about, which so abounded in legends and folk-lore. As the position of Wirthe descends from father to son, for generations back, as long as there remains any sons to occupy that honored position, naturally, too, the legends are passed from one to the other, so that no one is quite so well able to recite these as our hearty friend Herr Schmidt.

"If it were not so late," remarked Herr Hofer, while the men sat and smoked their

long, curious pipes, "I should continue on to Volders, for it looks as if to-morrow might be stormy."

"Oh, you need have no fear as to that," replied the host. "I noticed Frau Hütte did not have her night-cap on."

Ferdinand looked at his little cousin with his face so puckered up with glee and merriment, that Leopold laughed outright.

"Do tell Ferdinand about Frau Hütte, father!" said the child.

"No, I think Herr Wirthe better able to do that. Bitte," and he saluted the inn-keeper in deference.

"And have you never heard of Frau Hütte, my boy?" asked the host.

"No, sir," replied the boy. "You know I live in Vienna."

"Well, everybody knows her," replied the inn-keeper; "but then, you are a little young yet, so I will tell you."

"Very long ago, in the time of giants and fairies, — But then you don't believe in fairies, do you?" and the fellow's eyes sparkled keenly.

"Oh, yes, I do," exclaimed the boy hastily, for fear if he denied the existence of such beings, he should miss a good story.

"Well, then, there was a queen over the giants who was called Frau Hütte."

"Oh," interrupted the lad, "then she isn't a real person?"

"Oh, yes, she was; but that was long ago," continued the story teller. "Well, Frau Hütte had a young son who was very much like any other little child; he wanted whatever he wanted, and he wanted it badly. One day, this giant child took a notion he should like to have a hobby horse. Without saying a word to any one, he ran off to the edge of the forest and chopped himself a fine large tree. But evidently the child did not know much about fell-

ing trees, for this one fell over and knocked him into the mud. With loud cries, he ran home to his mother. Instead of punishing him, she bade the nurse wipe off the mud with a piece of white bread. No one but the very richest could afford the luxury of white bread, black bread being considered quite good enough for ordinary consumption, so no wonder the mountain began to shake and the lightning to flash, just as soon as the maid started to obey her mistress' command.

"Frau Hütte was so frightened at this unexpected storm that she picked up her son in her arms and made for the mountain peak some distance from her palace. No sooner had she left the palace than it disappeared from view, even to the garden, and nothing was ever seen of it again. But even in her retreat the wasteful queen was not secure. When she had seated herself upon the rock, she became a stone image, holding her child in her arms. And

there she sits to this day. When the clouds hover about her head then we know there will be a storm, but when Frau Hütte does not wear her night-cap," and the Wirthe's eyes sparkled, " then we are certain of clear weather."

" Ever since then, the Tyrolese have made Frau Hütte the theme of a proverb ' Spart eure Brosamen fur die Armen, damit es euch nicht ergehe wie der Frau Hütte,' which really means ' Spare your crumbs for the poor, so that you do not fare like Frau Hütte,' a lesson to the extravagant."

There were endless more stories, all of which delighted the boys immensely, but we could not begin to relate them all, for Tyrol is so overladen with the spirit of the past, and with the charm of legend, that the very air itself breathes of fairies and giants, and days of yore, so that in invading its territory one feels he is no longer in this work-a-day world, but in some enchanted spot.

Early the next morning, up with the sun, all were ready for the drive home. As Herr Wirthe had predicted, the day was fair; as they drove away from the Inn, they caught a glimpse of Frau Hütte in the distance beyond Innsbruck, and, sure enough, there she sat on her mountain peak, with her great son safely sheltered in her arms.

"Shall we go to the salt mines, father?" asked Leopold, as they made their way along the mountain road.

"No, we cannot take the time; mother will be waiting for us and the women folks are impatient to visit, I know."

"They have wonderful salt mines at Salzburg," said Ferdinand. "Perhaps we may go there some time to visit them."

"Perhaps," replied his father. "But, while we are on the subject, did it ever occur to you that Salzburg means the 'town or castle of salt?' — for, in the old times, all towns were

within castle-walls, to protect them from depredations of the enemy."

"Isn't it curious?" meditated Ferdinand.

The Inn River crossed, they continued to climb. Herr Hofer stopped to rest the horses; he glanced about him at the panorama below, and chuckled mirthfully.

"What's the matter, uncle?" asked Ferdinand.

"Oh, nothing much; but every time I see the towns of Hall and Thaur, just over there," and he pointed with the handle of his whip, "I think of the Bauernkrieg."

"But there isn't anything very funny about a war, is there, uncle?" asked the serious little fellow.

"Well," rambled on his uncle, "there was about *this* one. You see, in early times, when Tyrol was not quite so peaceful as it is to-day, these two cities were most jealous of each other, and were always at feud. A watchman

meet the enemy with a flag of truce and demand the reason for this unexpected attack. The inhabitants of Hall, in fear and trembling, awaited Herr Zott's return.

"The truce-bearer left the city gates and proceeded into the plain, which separated their village from the enemy's. On and on he went; but not one soul did he meet. The great army of men, each carrying a lantern, had disappeared as if by magic. Finally he reached the walls of Thaur, where all was as quiet as it should be at that time of the night.

"He turned his horse's head homeward. The night was very still, and over the plain flashed the lights of thousands of fireflies, reveling in the warm summer breeze. It was not until he had reached the very gates of his own town that Herr Zott realized what had caused all the excitement. The watchman had mistaken the fireflies for lanterns; and naturally, as some one must carry the lanterns, who

stood on the tower, day and night, to prevent any surprise from his neighbor. One night, in midsummer, — and a very hot night it was, too, — the people of Hall were roused from their slumbers, if they had been able to sleep at all in such heat, by the voice of the watchman calling them to arms.

"'What is the trouble, watchman?' cried one and all, as they appeared at their windows.

"'Oh,' exclaimed the frightened fellow, 'hasten, friends, hasten! The whole town of Thaur is at our gates; and not only are they advancing toward us, but each man boldly carries a lantern.'

"Such audacity was never heard of before. In utmost consternation the people gathered in the village square and held a consultation. It was finally arranged that Herr Zott, the steward of the salt mine, and therefore a most important personage in the village, should

more probable than their enemy, the people of Thaur?

"The townsfolks betook themselves to their beds again, laughing heartily over the mistake; and even to this day we laugh over the incident which has become a by-word in Tyrol; Bauernkrieg, or the peasant's war."

"But I don't see how peasant's war can mean anything now," said Ferdinand.

"Well, when one becomes excited over nothing," returned his uncle, "they exclaim 'Bauernkrieg.' Some day you will hear it, and then you will recollect the origin of it."

Not long after this tale, the carriage stopped in front of a most charming home on the mountainside. The first story was stuccoed, while across the entire front and two sides of the second and third stories ran a wide wooden balcony. Boxes of red and white geraniums decked the top of the fancy balustrade, while vines trailed themselves far over, giving the

house a most "homey" appearance. The lower story receded far behind the overhanging second story, which formed a convenient space for sheltering the cattle. There is little available space in Tyrol for outbuildings, the mountains rising so precipitously that there is but little level. But, as stone floors separate the house from the stable, odors do not penetrate as much as one would imagine.

At the front of the house stood a woman of middle age, her hair carefully drawn back under an immense head-dress, so tall it seemed as if she would be unable to enter the doorway. She wore a black skirt, so very full it had the appearance of being a hoop-skirt; but this effect was produced by her ten extremely full petticoats. The reputation of a Tyrolese woman depends, in a great degree, to the number of petticoats she wears; sometimes young girls, who value modesty highly, wear as many as fifteen or more.

Over the black skirt, which showed to advantage the white stockings and low shoes with their shining buckles of silver, was a most elaborately embroidered black apron, the work of many hours of tedious labor for the housewife. About her waist was twined a bright yellow sash which brightened up the dark bodice, with its short sleeves tied fantastically with bright yellow ribbons.

The woman nodded to the travelers; Herr Hofer pulled up his horses and descended from the carriage.

"Well, *meine liebe frau,* here we are," said he, as he greeted his wife.

Such hugging as followed! Ferdinand was clasped time and again against the ample bosom of Frau Hofer, and even Herr Müller came in for a goodly share, while as for the greeting that Frau Müller received, no words may convey its warmth.

The party made its way up the narrow stair-

way with carved balustrade, which led from the ground floor to the second story, upon the outside of the house. This is the most convenient manner of building staircases in Tyrol, because it does not track mud and dirt through the corridors, and saves much interior space.

The guest-room was certainly restful looking. Its dark polished floor of pine had been newly polished until it fairly radiated; the big bed of wood, painted a vivid color of green, also had received scrupulous polishing; two small home-made rugs, one at the bedside, the other at the washstand, had been scrubbed and beaten until it seemed as if there would be nothing left of them. At the side of the canopied bed stood a tiny foot-stool: the Tyrolese beds being extremely high make the use of a stool necessary. No doubt the object of this is to avoid draughts, as none of the floors are carpeted, many being of cement. Immaculate white curtains hung at the casement windows,

those dear little windows, unlike anything we have in America, which open into the room and give such a cosy character to the home. A basin of Holy Water was hung in its accustomed place, and the image of the Virgin hung over the table; for, you must know, the Tyrolese are devout Roman Catholics, as, in fact, are nearly all the natives of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

CHAPTER VII

A NIGHT WITH THE SENNER

MERRY days followed; there were excursions almost every day. Ferdinand and Leopold would spend part of the time picking flowers on the mountain-sides, or would help with the cattle and in the garden, so that their elders might be able to devote more time to recreation with their guests.

One morning the two men and boys set out with rücksacks on their shoulders, and long alpenstocks in their hands, to climb the mountain and visit an "alp" in the pasture lands, for in the summertime the cows of the neighboring villagers are driven to pasture in charge of a few attendants, sometimes men, called senner, sometimes women, called sennerin, where they remain during the entire season.

"Have you never seen the senner*ei*, Ferdinand?" asked his cousin.

"Oh, yes. Don't you remember the last time I was here," replied Ferdinand, "we saw them drive the cattle away?"

"But I said the senner*ei* (dairy)," repeated the child.

"No, but I should love to see the cheeses made; the alps look so picturesque."

"Well, they aren't quite so nice when you reach them," admitted his cousin; "however, we are not going specially to see the dairy but the dance which the sennern have on Saturday night. Oh, it's great."

"Do they have one every Saturday night?"

"Very near, as long as the season lasts; it's wonderful, Ferdinand. I've seen some of the fellows do the most astonishing tricks."

Of course, such conversation stimulated the

city lad's desire to a great pitch; and it was with the keenest joy he tramped over the rocky mountains, which was difficult for him. But he said nothing; he kept before his mind the delights of the dance he should witness, and plodded on.

At length they reached the first "alp," or chalet, as the huts which serve for sleeping-room and dairy for the sennern are called. These chalets are built at different heights up the mountain; when the cattle have eaten all the green grass available at one level they are driven to the next higher pasture and so on until, towards the beginning of November, they return to the village for the winter.

Picturesque as the "alp" may look from the distance, it is scarce one of grandeur upon closer view. It consists of a low wooden hut, usually of one room, and a sort of adjoining alcove. In the main room is a bunk built

against the wall; nothing but straw serves for the mattress; there are no coverlets except the blanket the senner always carries with him, and in which he wraps himself. In another part of this uninviting room is a hollowed space where the fire is built, over which hangs a great crane and an iron pot for use in making the cheeses so famous throughout Tyrol.

The alcove serves as a store-room for the cheeses, and for the dairy, while off to one end is sometimes a room for such cattle as are ill or young cattle who must be protected from the chill night air of the mountain.

As evening advanced from all directions came merry voices, ringing the clear notes of yodels from over the mountainsides. Each sennerin knows the peculiar yodel of her swain; and you may be sure her heart beats light when she hears, miles and miles away, the beautiful, clear notes of his call. This is the only method the mountaineers have of communicating with

each other. The peculiar notes carry across ravines and hillsides as distinctly as if one were close at hand.

"Oh, father," said Ferdinand, as he touched him upon the elbow, "what queer-looking men these are! I have not seen such costumes about here. Do they belong to Tyrol?"

"Yes, but these men are from the south, from Meran. When a man is married he must distinguish himself by placing a green cord about his hat, so that he may not allow folks to think him single; we other Austrians wear the wedding-ring, the same as the women; but in the different provinces, customs vary."

Ferdinand watched the different costumes of the men, as they poured in from all directions. There were some in brown jackets trimmed with red, and wide brown suspenders; all Tyrolese men wear these wide suspenders, sometimes of one color, sometimes of another, but usually green, of which color they are passionately

fond, no doubt because their country is so wonderfully green. Most of the men wore knee trousers of leather, while some were of homespun, but that was an extravagance. The stockings, usually grey and home-knitted, reached from the ankle to just below the knee leaving the latter bare. Without exception, all wore the Tyrolese cap of rough green cloth, at the back of which was the black-cock's tail, while one or two isolated fellows were fortunate enough to deck their hats with the Gamsbart or Beard of the Chamois, as it is called; but this is not the correct name for it, as it is not the beard of the chamois but the long tuft which grows upon his back in the winter.

On the green of the mountainside, in a spot selected for its advantage of being as near level as possible, the dance took place. The senner and sennerin went through manœuvers that did them credit; they swung each other in giddy fashion until one almost believed they would

spin themselves down the mountainside, and thus dance to their deaths; but after whirling at great speed for many minutes, they would suddenly pull up with a jerk and seem none the worse for the whirling.

It was no unusual sight for Ferdinand to see the Tyrolese dances; but here on the pasture lands, on their native heath, he saw them perform many which were most unfamiliar to him. He always smiled when he saw the women place their arms about their partners' necks and waltz in that fashion; and then, when the couples separated, the women to dance round and round, holding out their full skirts to their greatest width, while the men indulged in all sorts of fantastic gymnastics, was truly bewildering.

At length the evening drew to a close; the company dispersed as quickly as it had assembled, and all was quiet upon the mountainside. One might have imagined himself back

to the days of Old Rip Van Winkle, so mysterious did the entire proceeding seem.

In the morning, the party descended the mountain. The air was very clear, although the day was cloudy, the sun steadfastly refusing to appear; but this made walking agreeable for which all were thankful.

"Did you ever hear so many bells in your life?" observed the city cousin.

"Oh, those are the cow-bells," replied Leopold. "Each herd has its own peculiar tone, so that the cattle won't get mixed up, where there are so many together. And then the senner can tell right away to which owner they belong."

"But there is such a constant tinkling, and so many different tones, I don't see how one can ever tell which is his own," replied the lad.

"That is because you are not used to it," answered his uncle. "After you have been on the mountain awhile, you, too, would be able to

distinguish your own bell as well as the senner in charge."

And to the tinkling of the bells, the party descended until they were well out of reach of the bewitching sounds.

CHAPTER VIII

THROUGH THE TYROLESE MOUNTAINS

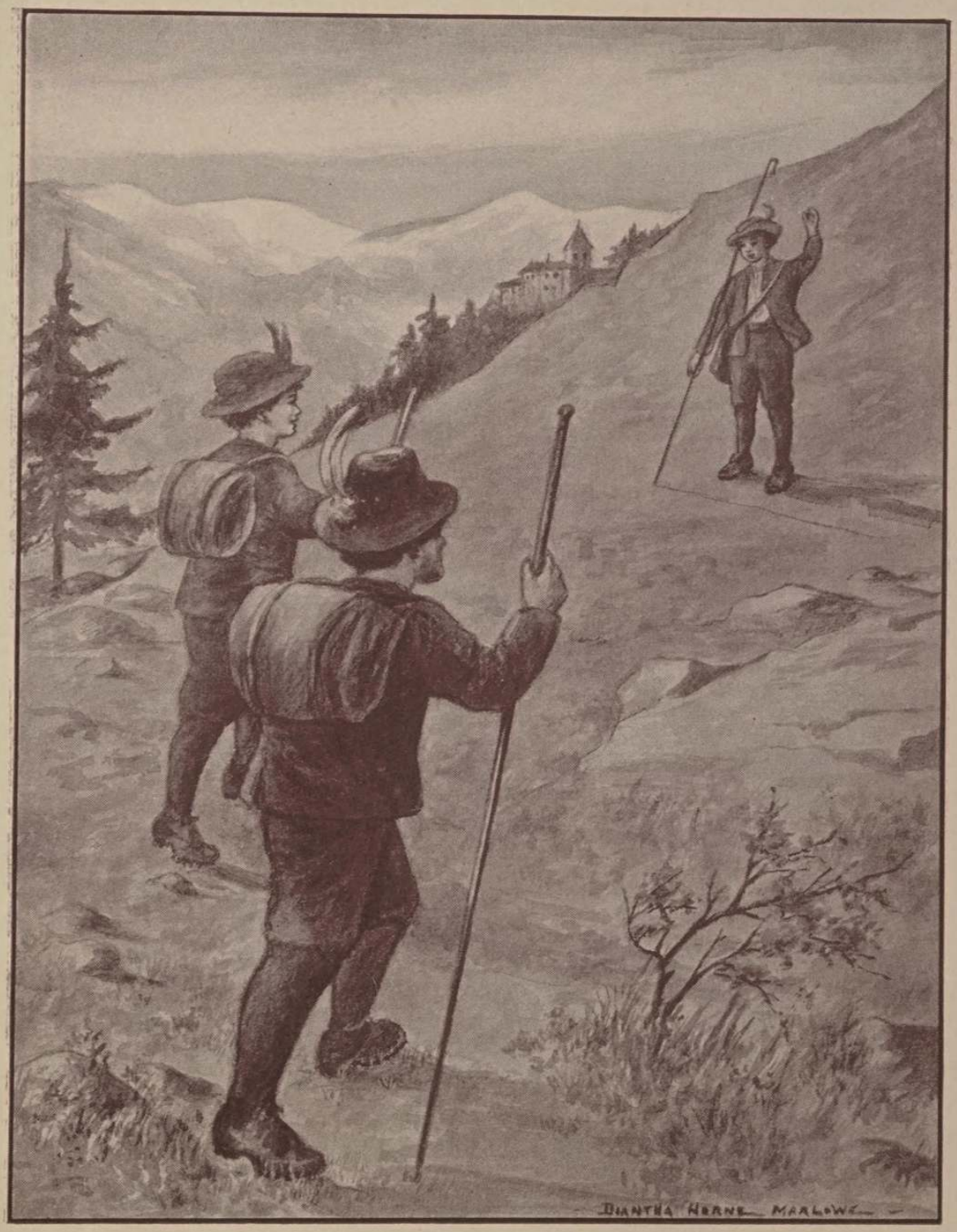
WHEN the pedestrians reached home in the early afternoon, a letter was awaiting Herr Müller. It was from Herr Runkel, stating he was obliged to make a visit to Dalmatia to see his younger brother Max on business, and if Herr Müller would care to make the trip with him, he would meet him at Villach in Carinthia the following Tuesday. Of course, there was new excitement now for the boys; the one wished to go with his father, while the other was urgent in his demands that the cousin remain with him. Finally it was arranged that both boys should accompany Herr Müller, while Frau Müller should remain with her relatives and join her husband and son at Gratz in Styria, on their return.

Leopold had never made a journey from home before, except the one time he had been to Innsbruck, quite recently, to meet his Müller relations; so you may be certain there was one little heart which beat faster than normal.

"We shall leave to-morrow, then," decided Herr Müller, "if you think you can be ready in that time," he added, addressing the Tyrolese youngster. "Because we shall want to visit some of the mountain towns; and if you boys want to see anything of Tyrol we had better walk than take the train."

"Oh, I could be ready to-night," ventured the child, delighted beyond measure. But his uncle assured him the morning would be ample time, and the two lads skipped away to talk over the plans.

As the sun was just beginning to peep above the mountaintop, the party of three set off, with many admonitions from Frau Hofer to her child, and many also from Frau Müller that



"TRAMP THUS, IN VAGABOND FASHION, OVER THE MOUNTAINS!"

Ferdinand should not allow his cousin to be too adventuresome. But to this Leopold smiled.

"I am used to the mountains, auntie," he said. "Ferdinand will tire long before I do, you'll see."

How glorious it was to tramp thus, in vagabond fashion, over the mountains! They stopped wherever night overtook them, passed through Brixen, the wine center of much importance in Tyrol, and on through narrow defiles through which there seemed no exit. A bracing walk of six miles from Brixen brought them to Klausen, or The Pass, so completely hidden among mountains there was but room for one long, narrow street.

"Well, I had no idea Klausen was quite so narrow," Herr Müller remarked. "I can well believe the tale of the barber, now."

"What barber, uncle?" asked Leopold.

"The barber of Klausen. You've never heard it? Well, there once lived a barber in

this town who was old and full of rheumatism; he had a client whom he must shave every morning; but the poor barber found it very difficult to descend three flights of steps from his dwelling and ascend three more on the opposite side of the street, in order to shave his customer. He could not afford to lose this fee, yet it was exceedingly painful for him to attempt the climb.

"One morning he opened his window and called to his neighbor. Upon hearing the barber's voice, the man in the opposite house opened his window and asked what was wanted.

"'Allow me,' said the ingenious barber. 'I am unable to descend the stairs this morning; my rheumatism is getting the better of me. But, in order that you may not lose your shave, if you will lean a little way out of your window, I shall be able to accomplish the duty quite as well as though you were sitting in your chair in your room.'

"For a moment the man hesitated; but, as the village was small, and there was but one barber, it was either a question of going unshaved, or of following the fellow's advice. Accordingly, he consented; he stretched his neck far out of the window, the barber placed the towel beneath his chin, and, with all the dexterity in his power, he proceeded to shave his client; and thenceforth the barber performed this operation in a similar manner, quite to the satisfaction of them both."

They passed on through the village of Waidbruck, the very center of romanticism; for here, right at the mouth of the Grodener-thal, rises the fascinating Castle of Trostburg, the home of the Counts of Wolkenstein; and here was born Count Oswald, the last of all the long line of Minnesingers or troubadours, who found employment and enjoyment in wandering from castle to castle, their harps or zithers under their arms, singing love-songs or reciting war-

stories that stirred the young blood to action.

They climbed to the magnificent Castle of Hauerstein, so hidden among the mountain-peaks and dense woods that one might imagine it to be the palace of the Sleeping Beauty; and then they diverged a few miles up the ravine in order to visit Santa Claus' shops, for such might be called the village of St. Ulrich with its countless numbers of toy shops. In every cottage men, women and young children busy themselves from morning until night, from one year's end to the other, in making toys; carved animals for Noah's Arks, dolls and wagons, to supply the world's demand of the children. Here, too, the very language is different from any other spoken roundabout; for the inhabitants, primitive in language as in everything else, still cling to the tongue of the Romans, which is to-day known as the Ladin or Romansch tongue.

They passed the night at Botzen, and, as the sun sunk behind the lofty mountains just beyond, a gorgeous glow overspread their entire summit.

"Isn't it beautiful!" remarked the two lads almost at the same moment.

"And it looks just like a rose-garden, too," added Leopold.

"It is a rose-garden, child," answered Herr Müller. "It is called the Rosengarten or Gardl (Little Garden)."

"But is it possible, father," asked Ferdinand, "that roses will bloom on such lofty heights?"

"Well, this is the legend about it. Once upon a time, there lived an ugly dwarf who was king over all the underground sprites and elves in the mountains of Tyrol. He was in the habit of going forth from his palace, wrapped in a magic cloak which rendered him invisible. Now, it chanced that during one of these expe-

ditions, Laurin went into the country of Styria, which lies right over there to the east. We shall pass that way on our return to Vienna. He saw a most beautiful maiden who was playing in a meadow with her attendants. Suddenly she disappeared from before the very eyes of her companions; they shouted, but no answer came back to them; in great dismay they fled back to the castle to report the news to the princess' brother Dietlieb.

" Dietlieb had heard of Laurin and his propensity for carrying off fair maidens; Dietlieb was a brave knight and had traveled far, so, as soon as he heard the news, he suspicioned at once that Laurin had done the deed. Immediately he set out for the city of Bern, where the king held his court, to demand that the dwarf be punished for his insolence. But the king was powerless against Laurin's magic; however, he warned Dietlieb not to attempt to approach too near the dwarf's domains, for it

was guarded by four magnificent pillars of shining gold, and a fence of silken thread stretched between.

"'Remember,' said the king, 'should you happen to break so much as one strand of Laurin's fence, he will demand the forfeit of a foot and a hand.'

"In hot rage Dietlieb left the king's palace; what mattered to him Laurin's magic powers, if only he could recover his dear sister, the Princess Kunhild?

"With a few faithful companions he set out over the mountains until he reached the Rose-garden before the dwarf's underground abode, the very sight of which so enraged the worthy knight that he tore away the silken threads and destroyed the four gorgeous pillars.

"Within his subterranean palace, Laurin heard the destruction without; he mounted his war-horse, and putting on his magic belt, which endowed him with supernatural strength, he

appeared at the door of the cave covered with sparkling jewels from head to foot.

"'Who has dared to enter my domains?' he shouted. 'And to destroy my garden? Let him who has done the deed stand forth that I may exact the punishment!'

"'Be not so hasty, Sir Laurin,' replied one of the knights, 'we will gladly repay you three, four-fold, if you wish, what you demand. The season is early and your roses will bloom again.'

"'I care not for your gold,' replied the indignant king; 'I have gold and to spare. I demand satisfaction, and satisfaction I shall have.'

"So saying, he spurred on his horse. There was a hotly contested battle; in the end, he was overpowered by Dietlieb, who had torn from him his magic belt, and thus robbed him of his strength.

"'Come,' said Laurin, 'let us not harbor ill feelings against one another. Come into my

palace, Sir Knights, and drink to the health of the fair Kunhild.'

"He led them through the door of the cave, down several long corridors at the end of each of which was a stout door, one of bronze, another of steel and a third of gold, and entered the banquet hall, where the table was gorgeously decorated with gold and silver and most rare flowers.

"As the dinner drew to a close — at which Kunhild had presided, dazzling with jewels — the knights fell into a sound doze; when they awoke each was locked securely in a separate cell with no means of communicating one with the other. But, when all was still, Kunhild entered her brother's dungeon and released him by the aid of her magic arts, which she had learned while captive.

"'Take this ring,' she said, 'gather up your weapons and flee for your life.'

"'But will you go with me?' he said.

"'I will come later,' she replied. 'But make your escape now before Laurin discovers us.'

"Dietlieb did not require a second bidding. The magic of Laurin had penetrated through the stone walls of the cell, however, and he followed the knight to the outer earth and there they fought a terrible battle. When Laurin found himself yielding to the superior strength of the knight, he blew a shrill blast upon his golden horn, and five enormous giants appeared. Meanwhile Kunhild had not been idle; she had released the companions of her brother, who now rushed to the scene of the fray, and in spite of his magic arts, and his reinforcement of the five giants, Laurin was made prisoner and carried off into Styria. The garden was left uncared for, and little by little it died; but on just such evenings as this, one can see the gorgeous roses, which will bloom only as the sun descends."

"Do you think, father," said Ferdinand,

THE ROSENGARTEN.

" that there is really an underground palace in those mountains?"

" Well, that's what they say; many have tried to find the entrance, but the key has been lost; some day, one may be fortunate enough to find it, and then great riches will be his. It is my private opinion that within those mountains lie metals unknown to exist, and when one has opened the door to them, he will discover great riches in them."

" I should like to gather just *one* rose, uncle," said Leopold. " I think mother would like to have one, for she has never seen the Rosengarten."

" You cannot do that, my boy, because they are not real roses; the rocks of the mountain are composed of magnesia and chalk, which take on these beautiful colors when the rays of the setting sun fall upon them; and it is only the sharp, jagged points of those rocks which simulate roses, that you see."

Another night would see them out of Tyrol, much to the regret of Ferdinand, for he had never imagined such an interesting land to exist.

"How did Tyrol come to belong to our country, father?" asked Ferdinand.

"Well, in the olden times," answered Herr Müller, "Tyrol was governed by counts who ruled like kings; but in 1363 a princess was the ruler; she was a woman with a very hasty temper and was nicknamed Pocket-mouthed Meg. Some say she received this nickname because her mouth was so extraordinarily large; but others tell a tale of her Bavarian cousin, who lived in the adjoining territory, who struck her on the mouth during a quarrel. It certainly was not a very gentlemanly thing for the Bavarian cousin to do, but children were not brought up so carefully as they are to-day, and you must not think too harshly of this little Bavarian, which sounds quite like barbarian. But Queen Margaret could never forgive nor forget that

blow; in after years, when her own son was dead, and her kingdom must be left to some one, she preferred to give it to her Habsburg cousins, who were Austrians, so that ever since, with the exception of a few years in which several nations struggled for possession of it, it has belonged to the Austrian Empire.

"You know Emperor Maximilian I, who was one of our greatest rulers, loved Tyrol best of all his provinces," continued Herr Müller.

"I don't blame him," replied Ferdinand, "I think he was quite right."

CHAPTER IX

THE HABICHT-BURG RAVENS

FROM Botzen, the train took them through the Puster-thal, which is on the north boundary of Italy, and on to Villach in Carinthia, where they were to meet Herr Runkel. There were great demonstrations when he saw the two young lads.

"Have you never been to Dalmatia?" he asked them.

Both shook their heads negatively.

"What a splendid thing, then, that business called me to Zara," he replied, "for Dalmatia is one of the provinces of our empire which is different from any of the others. You see, in the first place, it is on the Adriatic Sea, and could one have vision that would carry that far, he might glance over into the opposite country

of Italy. But, as if to make up for that lack of supernatural power, Italy has brought her customs and manners into Dalmatia, so we shall really be seeing two countries at one time."

Through Carinthia the party made its way, over the Kara-Wanken Mountains into Istria and spent the night at Trieste. As neither of the boys had seen the sea before, it was a never-ending source of wonder and delight to them to wander about the wharves, to see the ships of many nations lying in the harbor, flying their flags of many colors, and to see the curious sights of a sea-town. There was nothing to remind them of Austria with its German customs, even the name of the city (Tergeste) being Roman, which was conquered by that nation, and colonized about B. C. 41. There are no longer strassen (streets), but vias, and piazzas (squares) take the place of platze. As in most Italian cities, there were narrow, winding streets, some of which were nothing

more than mere flights of steps lined on each side, in place of a balustrade, with houses.

In the morning it had been arranged to make a hasty trip to Miramar, the charming residence of the Archduke Maximilian, the favorite brother of the emperor.

"Here it is," said Herr Müller, "that the ominous ravens warned the archduke of the fatality which should overtake him in accepting the throne of Mexico at the instance of Napoleon III of France. And the raven's warning came true, for the unfortunate young prince never returned."

"Tell us about the ravens, father," said Ferdinand, as they stood upon the terrace before the villa, overlooking the wonderful Adriatic.

"Well, you know the house of Habsburg occupies the Austrian throne to-day," began Herr Müller.

"*Yawohl,*" replied the two simultaneously.

"Well, many hundreds of years ago, the

founder of the Habsburg dynasty, Count Rudolph, was born in a very ancient and formidable castle in the northern part of Switzerland, somewhere near Zurich. The castle was known throughout the country by the peculiar name of the Hawk's Castle or Habicht-burg, from a story concerning one of the first counts who lived there.

"This was Count Gontran, of Altenbourg. He was a brave and gallant knight and loved to spend his time among the mountains hunting, when he was not away to the war. As he was so fearless in this sport, pursuing his enemy to the remotest spots of their lairs, he gained the sobriquet of the 'Hawk Count' or Der Habicht Graf.

"One day he had climbed to the top of a most peculiarly shaped rock, which much resembled a fortress. In his eagerness to reach the summit he had lost sight of his companions; but in his joy at the marvelous panorama

spread beneath him, he quite forgot all about them, and gave himself up only to the spell of the wildness surrounding him.

"Suddenly the air grew thick with moving objects; the sun was hidden from sight, and then the count realized that numberless vultures, whose habitation he had invaded, had gathered about the rock in swarms, waiting for their time to come when they might claim him their victim. But Der Habicht Graf was no craven; he made no attempt to fight; well he knew they would not attack him until he had passed that stage when he would be able to defend himself.

"All at once, while he thus stood defying his antagonists, a shrill cawing was heard on all sides; in a few moments the air was filled with innumerable ravens who seemed to have appeared from out the very heavens, so silently and unexpectedly had they come. There was a sharp battle between the two swarms, the

smaller birds being able to drive off the larger on account of their greater numbers. And then, when all vestige of both feathered tribes had disappeared, Count Gontran was able to find his way down the almost inaccessible rock, where he joined his companions at its base, who had given him up for lost, as their shouts had failed to reach him, and no answering call came back to them.

"From that day Der Habicht Graf chose the raven for his pennon; he became their protector, feeding them in winter, until, as time went on, they became verily a pest.

"Der Habicht Graf died, and others came into possession of Der Habicht-burg. There was little sentiment in these descendants concerning the ravens, and when Count Rudolph succeeded to the estate in 1240, he had them all driven away or killed. Ever since that time, the birds have taken a peculiar delight in foretelling disaster to the house of Habsburg (as

Habicht-burg has been corrupted into). And right here, in this garden," continued Herr Müller, "was where the ravens came and flew about the heads of the Archduke Maximilian and his young wife Carlota before they left on that fatal journey."

"What happened then, father?"

"Surely you must know. The Mexicans refused to accept a foreign ruler; he was sentenced to be shot, and although Carlota made the trip to France three times to beg Napoleon III to save her husband, the emperor was deaf to all her appeals."

"That was because Napoleon was not born a king, father," remarked Ferdinand. "Had he been *truly* royal, he would have saved Maximilian."

Herr Müller made no further comment, but shook his head slowly in an affirmative nod.

From Trieste the boat was taken to Pola, one of the oldest cities in the country, quite at the

extreme tip of Istria. Although the Romans built a city here in 178 B. C., yet many of the ancient landmarks remain, among which, outside the ancient city walls, stands the splendid Amphitheatre where gladiators fought and wild beasts contended with human beings for supremacy.

As Herr Runkel was obliged to make Zara on a specified day, they were not permitted to linger in the Istrian peninsula, with its almost continuous olive-groves and vineyards, famous throughout the world; but boarding a small steamer they slowly made their way to the sea-coast town of Zara in Dalmatia, stretching like a lizard along the Adriatic.

No longer was there sign of modernism or progress; every object, every peasant spoke of the past, of long-flown glory, and of poverty. One could almost imagine himself back in those days, six hundred or more years before Christ, when the Argonauts inhabited the spot, and

who, in turn, ceded to the Celts and they to the inevitable Romans. Then Charlemagne coveted Dalmatia; later the influential Venetians wrested it from the Germans; and in 1798 it was finally ceded to Austria, to whom it has ever since belonged, except for a short period when it belonged to France.

The peasants were gorgeous in their gay costumes; there were men in light-colored trousers, very tight fitting, laced with fancy cords of gold or silver thread, and most elaborately embroidered about the pockets in front; there were short jackets of bright cloth designed in intricate fashion in tinseled thread, with tassels about the edges; there were women with blue skirts, very short, over which was an apron so heavily embroidered that it seemed more like an Oriental rug than a bit of cloth, while the bodice was one mass of embroidery. Every conceivable spot was embroidered; about the neck, the shoulders, down the front and at the wrists.

There was color, color, color; fringes and tassels and gold thread, as if these poor gewgaws could make up to the peasant for all the poverty he suffered and the monotony of his life. But how charming they did look in their apparel; if their lives were not the sunniest, they surely tried to embody the very sunlight into their clothing, and that helps a lot, for they were never so happy as when decked in their gayest, wearing the hand-made filigree silver ornaments about their necks, in their ears and upon their fingers, even about their waists, which no persuasion nor hunger can prevail upon them to part with.

Herr Runkel's younger brother Max was an apprentice in Zara; his term was about to expire and some arrangement must be made for the future. It was this which had brought Herr Runkel to Zara. While he was busy with his brother's affairs, the rest of the party wandered about the ancient city; they visited the market-

place, alive and riotous with brilliant coloring; they inspected the wharves, and commented upon St. Mark's Lion, which reposed over the entrance-gate from the harbor, in the city wall, a relic of Venetian invasion, as if that stone lion was yet watching for the return of his people. They even crossed over to the islands, which lie like so many bits of broken mainland, to watch the fishing which is so remunerative, the sardine fishery being one of the greatest sources of revenue of the country.

His business terminated satisfactorily, Herr Runkel suggested they might return by way of the provinces of Bosnia, Croatia and Styria, because these held such wonders in sightseeing for the children.

CHAPTER X

THROUGH DALMATIA AND THE BORDER-LANDS

EARLY the following morning they made their start, packs on backs, over the low, waste lands of Dalmatia. The sun was burning hot; nothing but extensive plains of desert met the eye; far in the distance were low mountains, which glistened in the scorching sun with a startling whiteness, most dazzling to the eyes. There was a sameness about the landscape which wearied the boys.

"I certainly should not like to live here," remarked Leopold; "it is not so nice as Tyrol; there is too much barrenness, and too much dazzling whiteness."

"Nevertheless," replied his uncle, "this is a fine country; the wine and olive oil are famous

the world over, to say nothing of the fruit and flowers. If you did but stop to think about it, most of the fruit and flowers we have in Vienna out of season come from this region."

"But how can anything grow in a desert?"

"We shall soon see," replied his uncle. "Dalmatia looks baked, but it is extremely productive."

After some time, the soil began to grow more and more irregular. Great stones lay upon the surface, and immense fissures opened up at irregular distances.

"Now, my boy, can you call this a desert?" asked Herr Müller. "Here are the gardens of Dalmatia."

"The gardens?" exclaimed both children.

"Yes."

"But I see nothing but great ravines," said Leopold.

"They are not ravines, child, but great cracks opened up in the swampy soil which has burst

asunder from the terrific heat of the sun. But that is what saves the country from starvation; on the bottom of these fissures are deposits of fertile soil washed into them by the rains, and here the peasant plants his crops. Here you see one too narrow to plant anything in, but over there," and he pointed to the immediate right, "is one which stretches a mile or more."

"How interesting!" exclaimed Ferdinand. "But what a queer place to plant crops."

At the farm-house, a low, uninviting hut with thatch roof, they stopped to fill their flasks. The farmer led them to the rear of the house where was a huge tank of stagnant water.

"But we cannot drink that," said Herr Runkel, astonished.

"It is all there is," remarked the peasant. "In Dalmatia we drink rain water. It is all we have. There are no streams in Dalmatia except in the mountains, and often those are underground."

"Underground?" cried Ferdinand. "How do you get the water then?"

"Oh, the water runs along in the limestone until it meets with some obstruction, or when it deems it time to appear upon the surface, then it will flow on in a fine stream for some distance, when perhaps it will disappear again for awhile."

"I never heard of such a thing," said Leopold, to whom water was so very plentiful in Tyrol.

"It is a wise precaution of Nature," answered the peasant. "In these hot lands, were it not for this provision, the streams would soon dry up."

"But why don't you convey this water from the mountains to your home?" asked Herr Müller.

"That costs too much; we have no money to spend on luxuries; we have the rain and we gather the water as it falls."

Walking on, having thanked the peasant for his courtesy, they came in sight of a convent.

"Now we shall have some fresh water, I am bound," said Herr Müller. "Convents are always well supplied with refreshments of all kinds."

A friar in brown costume opened the door to them and ushered them into a cool courtyard, paved with brick, in which were small openings at regular intervals. At the well in the centre of the court the flasks were filled with delicious, clear, cool water.

"It surprises me," said Herr Runkel, "that you have such delicious water here, while just below, a mile or two, the peasant told us there was no water available for miles around, except rain water."

"He is quite right, too," returned the affable friar. "If it were not for the rain we should all perish; but the peasant does not take the

pains to collect the rain in just the same manner as we do."

He then explained to them the method of obtaining the drinking water. The earth under the brick pavement was dug out to the depth of several feet; the sides and bottom were lined with some hard substance, sometimes clay, sometimes cement, to form a foundation to the cistern. In the middle of the pit was built a well of brick; fine, clean sand was then put in to the level of the court; the brick pavement was then laid, through the openings of which the rain passed into the bed of sand, and, as it seeped through the brick well eventually the sand filtered the water from all impurities and imparted to it a taste, without which it would have been "flat."

A brief rest, and some slight refreshment, upon which the friar insisted, and the travelers plodded on; they passed peasants pushing crude wooden ploughs such as have been in

use since long-forgotten ages, but which seem specially adapted to the rocky, stubborn soil of Dalmatia. And being so close to the border of Bosnia they encountered Bosnian peasants, fine tall men much like Turks in their costumes, for Turkey lies just next door on the south. The Bosnian Mohammedan women veil their faces like the Turkish women, and wear white garments with an apron of many colors, not outdoing, however, the men with their gold embroidered vests their scarlet jackets and the fez upon their heads. A curious contrariety of nature is, that although the Bosnians and Herzegovians dislike the Turk, nevertheless they cling to the Turkish costume with pertinacity. So deep was their hatred of the Turk that these two provinces combined and placed themselves under the Austrian rule.

As night approached, the travelers made their way towards a very large, low house surrounded with outbuildings, and all enclosed by

a strong palisade of timbers built for defense.

"We shall pass the night at the Community House," said Herr Runkel.

"A Community House?" repeated Leopold.

"Yes. You see, in the olden times, the borders of this country, and the neighboring ones, Servia, Bosnia, Croatia and Roumania, were constantly being overrun by the Turks, who have always been the dread of nations, their cruelty being proverbial. The inhabitants of these border-countries were forced to protect themselves, as in unity was their strength. Consequently, they built a Community or General House in which the villagers might live together for mutual protection, and mutual benefit as well."

"But they don't have wars to fear any more, do they?" asked Ferdinand.

"No. Nevertheless custom of long-standing cannot be lightly laid aside. Our empress

Maria-Theresa, seeing the advantage these communities afforded as a means of defense, had a long line of them built, seven thousand miles long, from the Carpathian Mountains on the east of Transylvania to the sea-coast in Croatia to protect the border from the Turks, but now these fortifications have been abandoned. However, isolated Communities remain, being a part of the customs of Servia, and you will find them vastly different from anything you have yet seen."

It was quite late in the afternoon; the sun had not yet sunk, because the days were at their longest; however, it was certainly dinner-time, if not past, and the party were hungry.

Knocking at the door of the largest and most important-looking building, which was of timber, and one story only, it was opened by a young man in Servian costume who ushered them into the room. It was an enormous room, to say the least; in the centre extended a

wooden table set for the evening meal, and about which were already seated the inhabitants of the Community.

The eldest man, who had the honor to be, at the time, the Stareshina or Hausvater, arose from his seat and greeted the strangers.

"And may we have the honor of receiving you as our guests?" he askcd, simply.

Herr Runkel thanked him, and explained that they were on a tour of the provinces with the lads, and should be most grateful for a night's shelter. Room was made for them at the table, and right heartily were they received by the Zadruga, or Community family. The two boys were lost in admiration of all they saw; and although they were plied with cheeses and meats and bread, and even fruits of all kinds, yet their hunger seemed to have left them in their wonderment. At one end of the great room was a brick stove or sort of fire-place, the largest either of the lads had ever

seen. To carry off the smoke from the blazing logs, was built a huge canopy, round and very large at the bottom, tapering to a small circumference at the top, and allowing the smoke to escape through the open roof at that point. Over the fire, but high enough to prevent them being burned, were cross-beams from which hung huge pieces of beef, bacons, hams and all sorts of meat smoking for future use, while the cooking was done in huge pots of iron suspended by chains from the beams.

The women were dressed in white linen bodices with long, flowing sleeves; their skirts were a combination of two wide aprons, one at the front and one at the back, over which was another smaller apron elaborately embroidered in brilliant colors. About their waists were scarlet sashes, with a second somewhat higher up of the same brilliant hue; red leather high boots, filigree silver ornaments or beads about their necks, and on their heads a filmy veil with

fancy border fastened to the hair with a silver pin, and hanging far down over their shoulders like a mist. In this most picturesque costume they certainly resembled our scarlet flamingo or bird-of-paradise more than anything else one could think of.

The men, too, were splendid in their gay costumes; loose trousers like the Turks, with top-boots of black leather; scarlet vests embellished with silver thread and silver buttons, and white coats, very long, reaching almost to the boots.

The meal finished, the Stareshina (the presiding elder of the Zadruga) and his wife, the Domatchina (which means homekeeper), arose and thus gave the signal for the others to arise. Those women whose allotted work it was to attend to the clearing of the table, betook themselves to the task. The Domatchina arranges all the work to be done by each during the week, and turn about is taken, so that there may

be no cause for dissatisfaction, while the Stareshina attends to the matters of the farm. Thus harmony always prevails; prosperity reigns wherever these Communities are established, and happiness is paramount.

Although there seemed no apparent necessity for a fire, fresh logs were added. The men brought out their pipes, drew up the benches toward the hearth and began conversation. Some brought their musical instruments; the women sat with their spinning or sewing, while the little girls even, were occupied with elaborate embroideries for their trousseaux later in life, which are always begun in childhood.

There was great unity and happiness in the circle. Amid laughter, song and anecdotes the evening passed; as the hour advanced the Stareshina conducted evening prayers. Good-night was said by all, and each family betook himself to his own vayat (hut) outside the main building or Koutcha, which alone was reserved

for the use of the Stareshina and the unmarried members of his family. As soon as one of his family should marry, he would have a separate vayat built for him about the Koutcha.

The travelers were conducted to the guest-house, reserved solely for that purpose, and long into the night the children lay and talked over the strange customs they had seen, and plied their elders with endless questions as to the meaning of it all.

"Let them be children, Fred," said Herr Runkel. "We brought them on this trip to learn," and he explained to them those things they wished so much to know. That the Slavs never allow their hearth-fire to die out, no matter how hot the season, for as surely as they do, all sorts of evils would befall them; that is one of the unswerving superstitions of the nation. The fire of their hearth is as a sacred flame to them, which must be tended and cared for with unremitting zeal, which harks back to the days

of paganism when the fire was looked upon as the most sacred thing in their religion, and was kept ever burning in their temples and public places; finally it became the custom for each family to have his own hearth or fire, but the superstition that should it die out it would bring all sorts of maledictions upon the household, has remained. No doubt the difficulty of obtaining the fire by means of friction (matches of course, being unknown) accounted for the careful preservation of the flame. However it be, the Slavs still retain the ancient custom.

He explained to them how the House father and the House mother of this great family are elected by vote, serving a given number of years; sometimes one, sometimes more, as custom establishes; but usually the eldest man in the Community holds that post of honor, while his wife is the House mother. He told the lads how the farm is worked by each member of the Zadruga under the supervision and in-

struction of the Stareshina, each receiving his share, according to his labor, at the end of the season, the finances being in charge of the House father. He told them how many of the young men, longing for higher education at the universities or in the arts, such as painting, etc., were sent by the Zadruga to the city which afforded the best advantages for them, the expenses being borne by the Community funds, should there not be sufficient to the young men's credit to pay for it, entirely; this extra sum being repaid when the students should be in position to do so.

The children were fascinated with the Community, where every one seemed so happy and well cared for; and they begged to be allowed to remain many days, but Herr Müller reminded them that Frau Müller would be awaiting them at Gratz.

"But we shall come again, *nicht wahr, mein Vater?*" asked Ferdinand.

"Yes, we shall come again, and soon maybe," he replied.

"And I, too?" queried Leopold.

"*Naturlich.*"

Off in the morning, the party journeyed through the southeastern portion of Carniola, so rich in mountains and minerals. There were unusual sights to be seen here, too; huge caverns were fashioned in the rocks, and grottoes of curious formations. They saw the peasant women making lace, a product for which the province is particularly famed.

At Marburg, Herr Runkel and Leopold Hofer bade farewell to their companions, and boarded the train for Innsbruck where Herr Hofer would meet his young son; while Herr Müller and Ferdinand continued on up into Styria to the city of Gratz, where Frau Müller awaited them.

Styria, or Steiermark, is a splendid province

of the Austria-Hungarian empire, famous even in the time of the Romans, for its production of ore, and holding to-day an important place in the commercial world for its minerals. Gratz, the capital, is a charming city with an excellent university, and lies on the River Mur. It has been said of it that it is "La Ville des Grâces sur la rivière de l'Amour" (the favored city on the river of Love) being a play upon words, amour (love) being interpreted Mur.

Of course there was an excursion to the Castle-hill, where formerly stood the ancient castle; and Herr Müller pointed out to the children the spot where Charles II ordered twenty thousand books of the Protestant faith to be burned in public.

A few days' visit and they were once more on their way for Vienna, and home. Ferdinand's tongue had never ceased to chatter, there were so many interesting details to report to the mother; and when Vienna was reached it did

seem as if the child never could settle down to life in the City, after his splendid rambles about the open country, wandering where he willed.

"Father," he remarked, after some days at home, "we did not go to Moravia. We visited all the provinces except that."

"Yes, it is true," replied his father, "but, you know, we lingered longer than we intended, and Teresa is due to arrive shortly. We shall have to reserve Moravia for another vacation-time. I think you will not find the customs there very different, however, from those of Bohemia.[1] But I should like to have you see Olmutz, the ancient capital of Moravia, where our emperor Franz-Joseph was proclaimed king."

[1] Our Little Bohemian Cousin.

CHAPTER XI

VIENNA

WITH the arrival of Teresa Runkel busy days followed; visits to the Prater, which Emperor Joseph II had dedicated to the public for a playground and recreation park; to the Capuchin Church, where lie the remains of the imperial families from the time of Matthias I in 1619, and where the ill-starred Duke of Reichstadt (L'Aiglon), the only son of Napoleon of France, lies buried among his kinsfolks, as well as his imperial mother, Marie Louise. And, best of all, there was the excursion to the Castle of Laxenburg just outside Vienna, one of the imperial chateaux, standing in the midst of a miniature island, which is reached by a tiny ferry boat, quite as though it

were some ancient feudal castle with its moat, minus the drawbridge and portcullis.

Here they were frightened nearly out of their senses while inspecting the dungeons, at hearing an automaton chained to the wall shake its cumbersome fetters as if he were some prisoner living out his days in the hopelessness of the dungeon. But Herr Müller quieted the alarms of the young girl by explaining the pleasantry of the custodian, who gives his visitors thrills, which is what they really come for, as he says.

"I wish you could be here for the ice-carnival, Teresa," said Ferdinand, after one busy day's sight-seeing. "It's wonderful, with the lake all lit up by electric lights and lanterns, and tiny booths dotted here and there, and skaters in their furs and gay gowns. Can't you manage to come at Christmas time?"

"I should love to," she replied. "I'll write and ask brother Franz if I may."

"And maybe mother will let us go to one of the masked balls," the lad said, half hesitatingly, for he knew this would, indeed, be a privilege.

"Scarcely yet, Ferdinand; children do not attend balls; but there are countless other festivities for children, which would delight Teresa much more than a masked ball at which she could but look on. It is far better to be a participant, isn't it, my dear?"

"Oh, much," answered the child, politely. Nevertheless, she did wish she might see the ball.

A few days later Ferdinand and his mother drove the Austrian girl to the railroad station, where she was met by the Sister who would conduct her and others to the Convent.

At the conductor's call "Einsteigen!" the doors of the train were fastened, and Ferdinand waved farewell to his little friend, through

whose childish head flashed visions of a merry Yule-tide to come, passed in the home of her friends, with dances and parties, and skating and endless merriment.

THE END

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