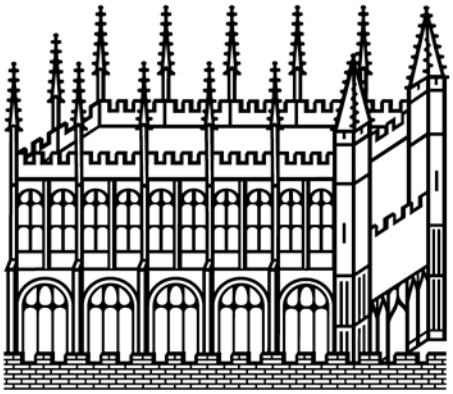

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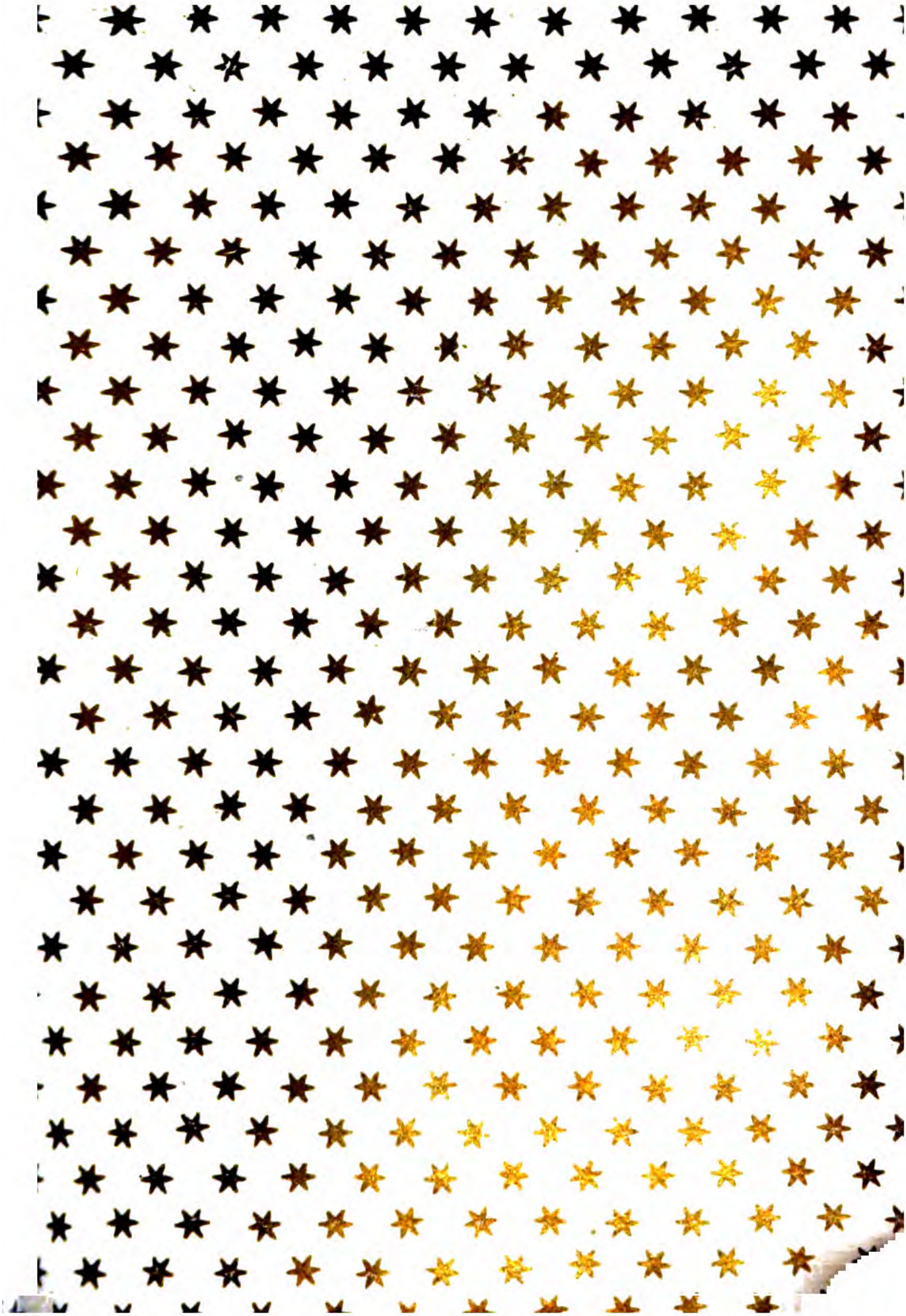

THE

NOVELS

OF

FREDERIKA BREMER.

VOL. IV.

THE NEIGHBOURS,

VOL. I.

LONDON:
H. G. CLARKE AND CO., 66, OLD BAILEY.

1844.

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THE

NEIGHBOURS.

BY

FREDERIKA BREMER,

AUTHORESS OF "STRIFE AND PEACE," "THE H—— FAMILY," "THE PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTERS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH,

BY

E. A. FREIDLÆNDER,

(LATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN,)

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VOL. I.

LONDON:
H. G. CLARKE AND CO., 66, OLD BAILEY.

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1844.

THE NEIGHBOURS.

I.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, June 1. 18 —

Here I am, dear Maria, in my own house, at my own home, at my own desk, with my own Bear. Perhaps you ask, "Who is the Bear?" Well, who else should it be but my husband? I call him "Bear," because the name suits him so exactly. I am sitting at the window. The sun is going down. Two swans are swimming on the lake tracking light furrows in its clear mirror. Three cows—*my* cows—stand quiet, fat, and ruminating on the green margin, of course, without thinking of any thing. What splendid creatures! Now comes the maid with her stool and milk pails. What delicious milk in the country! But what is not good in the country? Air and men, food and feelings, earth and heaven, all is fresh and animating. Now, I must lead you to my dwelling. No, I must begin further off,—at the hill from which, for the first time, I beheld the valley in which Rosenvik lies; the hill is situated a few miles within the district of Smaland. Do you see a dusty carriage upon that acclivity? In it sits the Bear and his wife; the latter peers out with

curiosity, for before her in all the beauty of a bright and tranquil evening, lies a most fair valley. Green forests spread their broad shades to the margin of the clear lake; corn fields surround the grey-tinted mountains, and white farm-steads glimmer here and there between the trees. Around the wooded heights columns of smoke ascend towards heaven; you might fancy it to be a volcano, but it is only peaceful Schwendeland. No matter, it is beautiful, and I am enraptured! I bend forward, thinking the while on Nature's happy family, on Paradise, on Adam and Eve, when suddenly the Bear embraces me with his great paws, and so hugs me that I almost give up the ghost, whilst he kisses me and hopes that I shall enjoy my new abode. I felt a little cross, but thought of the kind meaning of this caress, and could not be dissatisfied. In this valley, therefore, was my future home; here lived my family, here lay Rosenvik; here was I to live with my Bear. We drove down the hill, and the carriage rolled quickly forward on the level road. Björn* pointed out to me the dwellings which we perceived far and near. I heard as in a dream, but was suddenly roused from my reverie by my Bear saying, with a peculiar emphasis, "Here lives *ma chère mère*," and the carriage drove into a court-yard, and stopped before a large handsome house built of stone. "What, are we to stop here?" "Yes, my love." This was by no means an agreeable surprise. I would gladly have driven first to our own house, there in some degree to have prepared myself for the meeting with my husband's step-mother, of

* *Björn* is a Swedish Christian name, and also signifies *Bear*.

whom, from all that I had heard, and from the respect entertained for her by my Bear, I stood somewhat in awe. This visit appeared to me *mal a propos;* but my husband had his peculiar ideas, and I could read in his manner that it was by no means advisable to resist.

It was Sunday, and as the carriage stopped I heard the sound of a violin. "Aha!" said Björn, "so much the better," as he jumped clumsily from the carriage and lifted me out. Bonnet boxes and packages were never thought of. Björn took hold of my hand, conducted me up the steps to the handsome vestibule, and dragged me to the door, from whence the sound of music and dancing proceeded. "Indeed!" thought I. "Now, I suppose, I shall be obliged to dance in this costume." I wished to retire to a room where I might wipe of the dust from my face and bonnet, or where I could at least inspect myself in the glass. Impossible! Björn led me by the arm—assured me that I looked most lovely, and begged me I would reflect myself in his eyes. I was obliged to be so impolite as to tell him that they were sadly too small. He protested that they were so much the brighter, and opened the door to the ball-room. In a sort of merry desperation, I said to him, "Well, since you lead me to the ball, you shall dance with me yourself, you Bear!" "Gladly and for ever!" cried Björn, and saying this, we entered the room.

My terror soon subsided, when I beheld in a spacious apartment only a number of cleanly dressed men and maid servants, who jumped about merrily together. They were so occupied with dancing that they hardly observed us. Björn led me to the upper end of the

room, and there I saw upon an elevated seat a very tall and stout female of about fifty years of age, who was playing energetically on a violin, and beating time to it with her foot. On her head she wore a singular high cap of black velvet, which I shall call a casque, because at first sight the word came into my mind, and I do not know a better. She looked kind but eccentric. This was the lady of General Mansfelt, my husband's step-mother: she was *ma chère mère*. She soon cast her large dark eyes upon us, immediately left off playing, laid fiddle-bow aside, and rose up with proud demeanour, but cheerful, open countenance. Björn introduced me. I trembled a little, bowed profoundly, and kissed the hand of *ma chère mère*. She kissed me on the forehead, and surveyed me for a time so keenly, that my eyes fell beneath her gaze, after which, she again impressed a hearty kiss on my lips and forehead, and embraced me almost as roughly as my Bear. Now came his turn. He kissed the hand of *ma chère mère* most reverently; she offered to him her cheek, and they seemed on very friendly terms. "Welcome, my dear friend," said *ma chère mère*, with a loud masculine voice; "it was very polite of you to come to me before you drove to your own residence. I thank you for this attention, and should have given you a better reception had I been previously apprised of it; but, at all events, I know "Welcome," is the best fare. I hope my dears that you will stay to supper."

Björn begged to be excused; said that we wished to get home early; that I was tired, but that we did not wish to pass through Karlsfors without paying our respects to our *chère mère*. "Very well!" said

ma chère mère delighted, we will talk more of that presently; but I must first say a word to the young people here. "Hear me, good friends!" And *ma chère mère* tapped with the bow on the back of the fiddle, till a universal silence reigned in the room. "Children," she continued solemnly, "I have to tell you——Zounds! will you be still there? I have to tell you, that my dear son, Lars Anders Werner, has brought home Franciska Björn, whom ye see at his side, as his wedded wife. Marriages are made in heaven, my children; and we will pray to heaven to send a blessing on this married couple. We will all drink their health together this evening. Now, then, ye can go on dancing, children! Olof, come here; take the fiddle, and play as well as you can." Whilst a murmur of joy and congratulation ran through the assembly, *ma chère mère* took me by the hand, and led me and my Bear into another room, where she had ordered punch and glasses to be brought. Meanwhile she leaned both elbows upon the table, rested her chin on her clutched hands, and stared at me with a gloomy, rather than with a friendly look. My husband, who observed that this scrutinizing of his mother distressed me, began to converse about the crops and farming concerns. *Ma chère mère* sighed several times so profoundly that she almost groaned; appeared by a strong effort to command her feelings, and answered to the questions of her son. When the punch was brought in, she drank our health; whilst with serious look and tone she cried, "My son and daughter, your health!" She relaxed afterwards into a jesting tone—which became her well—and said, "Lars Anders, I don't

think you seem to have bought a pig in a poke. Your wife does not look amiss; and she has a pair of eyes that you might buy a fish for. She is little, very little, that's true; but 'little and good goes a great way.'"

I laughed, and so did *ma chère mère*. I began to reconcile myself to her strange manners. We chatted for a time very cheerfully, and I related several travelling adventures, which amused *ma chère mère* very much. Shortly after, we rose to take leave; and *ma chère mère* said, with a very gracious smile, "I will not detain you this evening, however much I like to have you with me. I can easily imagine that you are longing to be at home; to-morrow, if you like, remain there, but the day after, come and dine with me; you know very well that you will always be welcome. Now fill your glasses, and come and drink the health of the people. 'Sorrow one may keep to one's self, but joy should be in common.'"

With filled glasses we went into the dancing-room, and *ma chère mère* heralded the way. They awaited us with flowing goblets, and *ma chère mère* addressed the people as follows. "When one begins the voyage of matrimony with prudence and the fear of God, then applieth the adage, 'Well begun, is half done!' and on this, my friends, we will drink a toast to this married couple, whom you see before you; let us wish that both them and their descendants may live for ever in God's pasture land. Huzza!"

"Huzza! huzza!" resounded on all sides. Björn and I emptied our glasses, walked about and shook the people by the hands, until I was giddy in my head. When this was over, and we were ready for our journey,

ma chère mère, with a parcel or bundle in her hand, followed us on the stairs, and kindly said, "Take this piece of roast veal with you for your breakfast, children! Bye and bye you may fatten and eat your own calves. But don't forget, my daughter, to let me have my napkin back again. No, you shall not carry it, my child, you have enough to do with your bag and cloak; Lars Anders shall carry the roast meat." And, as if Lars Anders had been still a little boy, she gave him the small parcel, and shewed him how he ought to carry it. He, however, did as she desired him; and her last words were, "Don't forget to let me have my napkin back again!" I looked at my husband, somewhat astonished, but he only smiled, and lifted me into the carriage. I was right heartily glad to have my introduction to *ma chère mère* so *a l'impromptu*. I felt that, if this had been done in a more prepared and ceremonious style, her look and manner would have had a more depressing effect on me.

I was glad of the roast veal, for I knew not how the larders of Rosenvik might be furnished. Right glad was I likewise to get home, anticipating the sight of a waiting maid and a bed prepared, for we had this day travelled ten miles * and I was quite tired. I was dozing a little during the quarter of a mile from Karlsfors to Rosenvik, and it was so dark when we arrived at eleven o'clock in the evening, that I could not clearly discern the appearance of my little Eden. The house appeared somewhat ancient and small in comparison with that we had just left. But that was nothing; my

* A Swedish mile is equal to six English.

Bear was so thoroughly kind and so thoroughly sleepy. All at once I woke up, all seemed to me like a fairy tale. I stepped into a beautiful and brightly illuminated apartment, in the centre of which I saw a covered tea-table glittering with silver and china, and near it stood the neatest maid in the pretty festive garb peculiar to the peasant girls in this part of the country. I gave a scream of delight, I was no longer sleepy. A quarter of an hour after I was installed as the hostess at the tea table, admired the furniture, the tea pot, the cup, the spoons, on which I read the initials of my own name and Björn's, and served tea to my Bear who appeared to be heartily delighted.

"And the evening and the morning were the first day."

When I opened my eyes the next morning, I saw that my Adam was already quite awake, and directed his look with a sort of devotional expression to the window, where a sun's ray had penetrated through an opening in the blue striped blind. A cat mewed.

"My beloved husband!" I solemnly began, "I thank you for the charming music which you have appointed to welcome me. I presume that you have also ordered a band of whitely arrayed young country girls who are to strew fir twigs under my feet. I shall soon be ready to receive them."

"I have ordered something better than this old fashioned show," said Björn cheerfully, in concert with a great artist I have arranged a panorama which is to show you the prospect of—Stoney Arabia. You have only to draw up the blind."

You may imagine that I was quickly at the window, and with a secret anxiety drew up the blind. Ah, Maria! there lay before me in the morning splendour a lake clear as a mirror, green meadows and forests were situated round about, and in the centre of the lake was a little island with a tall oak tree, and the sun shone on all this so brightly, all was still, beautiful as a paradise! I was so affected with the view, that, at first, I could not utter a word. I only clasped my hands, and tears filled my eyes.

"May you be happy here!" whispered Björn, and pressed me to his heart.

"I am happy, too happy," said I affected and thankful.

"Do you see that island, the little Swan Island? I will often row you there during the summer. We will take our supper across with us and eat it there."

"Why not our breakfast?" I exclaimed in ecstasy, "Why not take our coffee there to day in this beautiful morning? I will immediately."

"No," said Björn, smiling at my enthusiasm, "I must away to the town and see after my patients."

"Ah! what a pity that the people can't keep themselves in health," I exclaimed, vexed.

"And what should I do then?" said Björn with curious alarm.

"Go with me to the Swan Island!"

"I shall come back to dinner at three o'clock, and this evening we might—that abominable rent just at the top there! I couldn't have believed that the blinds were so tattered—"

"The rent shall remain as long as I am here!" I

cried warmly.—"Never shall I forget that through it I beheld for the first time the sun in Rosenvik. But tell me what old fortress is that which we see across the lake, there, where the forest is so black?"

"That is Ramm—a large estate."

"And who lives there?"

"At present no one. Fifteen years it belonged to *ma chère mère*, but it did not agree with her, so she removed to Karlsfors, and sold Ramm. The estate was bought by farmers who cultivated the land, but left the fine house and park to ruin. It is now said, a stranger, who wishes to hunt in this neighbourhood, has rented it for the summer season. This park itself will afford him ample room for sport, since it is above a mile in circumference, and the game has long been undisturbed. We will walk there some day. But now, my dear wife, I must have my breakfast, and then bid you farewell for a few hours."

After having taken coffee, and my husband had departed, I began to settle myself in my little world. I will describe the house and other buildings hereafter. The master of the house must be my first theme, for you do not know him yet, Maria! I have your letter before me, your dear letter which I received a few days after my marriage. I thank you, sweet, beloved Maria, for all those tender expressions and your sage advice. They are stored up in my heart where they will never be forgotten; and now for your questions, which I will endeavour to answer in their order.—First of Björn! you shall have his picture—of middle stature, somewhat stout and broad, but not in the extreme, fine light wig made by nature's hand, a full face *couleur de rose*, fair

eye lashes, and small grey eyes which under strong bushy eyebrows, have a certain penetrating look; nose well formed, rather thick, mouth large, with good teeth, which, alas! have turned brown with smoking; large hands but well shaped; and large feet, his gait is like a Bear. But from all this you will form no correct conception of Björn's appearance, unless in his countenance you can trace good nature, candour, kindliness, something inspiring cheerful confidence. This expression speaks when the mouth is silent, which it usually is. The forehead is serene, and the position of his head such as might suit an astronomer; the voice, deep bass, and not amiss in singing. Here you have Björn's exterior; the inner man, dearest Maria, ah, that I have yet myself to study.

Two months since a bride, a wife only since a fortnight, I have not yet formed my complete judgment of a man who is for the most part silent, and whom I have not known above half-a-year; but I hope and believe every thing good of him.

You ask whether I feel love, real love for him, and half in earnest and half in jest you give strange tests to try this question; whether I feel an intolerable blank when he is absent, whether I, like Madam L., grow pale and anxious when he joins a company where I am, whether he has a fault, a bad habit, which would be disagreeable to me in another person, but which I like in him? No, Maria! All this I neither feel nor perceive — you see — I liked him, I found him agreeable or else I should not have married him— but love—hm! In the first place, he is much older than I. He approaches to fifty, and I want three years

yet of thirty. In the second place, he has been a bachelor a long time; he has contracted good and bad habits, and the latter of these I do not pretend to admire. I am determined, however, that they shall not disturb my domestic happiness. To some of them I shall get accustomed, from others I shall wean him. For instance: first, he has a bad habit of spitting indiscriminately on fine carpets and bare floors; from that he must; but he shall find spittoons in every room. Secondly he smokes a great deal of tobacco; to that I shall accustom myself, for I know how dear and necessary a pipe is to one whose companion it has long been in his course through life. But our contract shall run thus,—I shall be glad to see the lighted pipe, though *seldom* in the drawing-room, and *never* in the bed-room. Björn is at liberty to puff away in his own apartment and in the sitting room. Thirdly, Björn has the singular habit when silent of making the most fearful grimaces, sometimes at his own thoughts, sometimes at the words of others; herein we shall make a compromise; sometimes I shall tell him, Björn, don't make such horrible faces; but in general I shall let him quietly go on grimacing, for it would be painful to him and probably impossible to avoid a habit so long contracted; besides it forms a sort of very expressive language, and looks more droll than disagreeable. Fourthly, he has a little turn for carpentering, and likes to enjoy it in the evening by glewing and dirtying chairs, tables, floors, &c.; to this I shall accustom myself with all my heart, and will only take care to have it carefully swept every morning. I consider it good for a husband to have some manual

occupation, and when mine has fatigued himself during the day with his medical duties, this will be an agreeable diversion; whilst he works I shall read to him some entertaining fiction. Fifthly, he has accustomed himself in a certain degree to use coarse expressions; but what I have determined to accustom him to, is this—to feel himself secure of finding comfort and enjoyment in his own home. For you know, Maria, I was poor, was obliged to earn my own bread by my own exertions—teaching music is no easy labour, was no longer young and prepossessing—had no beauty nor talents beyond my little music; and he one of a respected family in a superior social position; he who, on account of his skill, his character, and his knowledge, is so universally esteemed—he chose me before others of more wealth, more beauty, and more merit. He treated me during my severe illness with unfailing kindness, and when my mother wished to remunerate his medical services with our last remaining money, he refused it, and asked for—my hand. Then he was so generous towards my family, bestowed presents on my brothers, and brought prosperity into our once almost destitute dwelling. Should I not be grateful? Ought I not to love him, to study to make him happy to the utmost of my power? O yes! that will I, with his good and his bad habits, in jest and in earnest, in weal and in woe will I strive to make him happy, and a voice within tells me that I shall succeed.

Tuesday Morning, June 3d.

Alas, poor creatures, what are our best resolutions when we have so little power over ourselves? The day before yesterday I was sitting picturing to myself how happy I

hoped to make my husband; yesterday—for my own punishment I will tell you all. I return to the evening of the day before yesterday when I was so contented with myself. Björn was attending a patient in the neighbourhood and I was writing; he came home, I left off writing; we talked over various trifles, we made several little domestic arrangements, and, in joke and earnest, the contract in reference to smoking was drawn up and signed. So far everything went on well, and so ended that day.

The next day, that is yesterday, we were to have dined with *ma chère mère.* I had a little head-ache, and which ever way I put my cap on and arranged my curls, they did not sit well, and I looked, so it seemed to me at least, old and faded; I believe my husband thought so too, although he looked at me without saying a word. This made me a little low-spirited, for I feared *ma chère mère* would not be pleased with me, and I knew very well, how greatly Björn wished that I should be liked by her.

The weather was rainy and windy; I had a great desire to remain at home, but when I made a slight allusion to it, Bjorn began to make such frightful faces that I immediately desisted from the attempt, especially as I was besides more out of spirits than ill. We got into the cabriolet and drove, sheltered by an umbrella, through a pouring rain.

Ma chère mère received us graciously, but did not appear to be in a good humour There were some strangers at dinner, several elderly gentlemen and ladies, whom I did not know, and who were not pleasing. The dinner was excellent, but I had no appetite.

In the afternoon, immediately after coffee, Björn went with the gentlemen into the billiard-room below. I remained with *ma chère mère*, the old ladies, who chiefly conversed with each other, and a certain counsellor Hök, a very old friend of *ma chère mère*, who sat next to her, and took snuff.

Ma chère mère was silent, and looked serious. I spoke a word now and then, but grew gradually duller, for my head ached much, the rain beat against the windows, and I was, to speak the truth, out of humour with Björn, who, as it appeared to me, might have paid more attention to his little wife during the long afternoon, and not have devoted himself entirely to his old disagreeable bachelor habits of billiard-playing, smoking and drinking. In this unamiable frame of mind the afternoon passed over. About tea time, *ma chère mère* begged me to play a little music. I sat down to the piano, preluded, and began to sing the pretty song "Youth;" but the headache, the heat and discontent, had quite put me out of tune. At first I sang trembling, then incorrect, and at last stuck fast in the piece, which I had sung I dare say a hundred times.

A death-like silence prevailed in the room, and I was on the point of weeping, but I did not wish to appear so childish at my age. I struck a few concluding chords, and left the piano, with an apology and a few excuses about my headache. Now *ma chère mère* grew exceedingly kind to me, seated me next to her on the sofa, ordered a large cup of strong tea to be given to me, as one would treat a sick child. I was now in fact quite vexed, for this, as well as the politeness of

the excellent counsellor Frank, displeased me. I believed it was the conclusion of the miserable part which I had played during the whole of the day, and thought that *ma chère mère* would judge that Lars Anders had made a bad choice, as he had brought home a person for his wife who was both old and childish, silly and ailing. I was truly unhappy. At length Björn came, and we returned home.

The weather had grown fine, and the tea had done my head good, but the discontent had now taken possession of me. I was vexed with myself, with Björn, with the whole world, and my husband sat still the whole of the way, quite unconcerned about my headache. After he had asked, "How do you do?" and I had answered, "A little better!" we did not exchange another word.

After we had returned home, I had to attend to something in the kitchen, and when I again entered the drawing-room, Björn had planted himself on the sofa, and was puffing away the tobacco smoke in great clouds before him, whilst reading in the journals. He had not chosen exactly the most suitable hour for his breach of contract. I remonstrated in a cheerful tone it is true, but I was nevertheless really angry. I had a sort of wicked desire to repay him for my unpleasant day. He said, good-humouredly, "I beg pardon!" but nevertheless remained sitting with his pipe. This I would not willingly permit. I thought the old bachelor had sufficient free play this afternoon. He (my Bear) begged that I would let him have his pipe in peace in the drawing-room but this once; but I would hear of no concession, and threatened that if he did not lay

aside his pipe immediately, I would sit in the vestibule all the evening. Björn had at first begged in jest to be allowed to remain quietly, but soon became more serious; he begged me ardently, pressingly, "for the love of him!" I saw that he wished to try me, saw that he really wished most sincerly that I should indulge him this time, and I—obstinate creature—did it not; I remained, though always in a jesting tone, firm to my resolution, and at length took up my work to go, when my Bear put away his pipe. Had he only been angry, had he not put away his pipe, but proudly marched, like a Newab,* out of the door, clapping it violently after him, and not come back again the whole evening, then, indeed, there might have been some alternative for me, some consolation, a something "paid and receipted," and I might have let the whole disagreeable affair rest there. But he did nothing of all this, only laid his pipe aside and sat still; I, however, immediately received gnawings of conscience. He did not even make grimaces, but, with a sort of grave and quiet countenance, which went to my heart, read his newspaper. I begged him to read to me; he did so, but there was something in his voice which I could not bear to hear. In a kind of stifled exasperation against myself I grew still more tyrannical towards him. I tore away from him his newspaper. It was intended, you understand, as a joke, and I said that I wished to read myself. He looked at me, and gave it up. I now began to read, in a strong

* This is the more correct way of writing the word usually written "Nabob."

and cheerful tone, about a debate in the English House of Commons. Long, however, I could not endure it. I burst out into tears, clung to my husband, caught him round the neck, and begged him to forgive my bad temper, and my unbecoming conduct towards him. Without making any reply he only held me quietly, tenderly and forgivingly pressed against him. I saw one or two tears slowly rolling down his cheeks. Never had I loved him so, as at that time. It was then I felt real affection for him. I wished to enter into a little explanation with him, but Björn stopped my mouth. I now begged him, if he loved me, to fill his pipe afresh, and to finish smoking it by my side. He would not; but I begged so long, and so pressing, begged it as a token of his forgiveness of me, that he at length consented to my wish. I held my nose as much as possible in the smoke; it was now a propitiatory incense to me. Once I was ready to cough with choking, but changed it into a sigh, and said: "My dear Bear, your wife would not have been so cross, if you had not neglected her the whole afternoon; she lost her patience because you were not present." Björn took his pipe out of his mouth, looked at me pleasantly, but yet half reproachfully, and said: "I had not forgotten you, Fanny, but was at a most painful death-bed in the neighbouring farm house; this detained me, and prevented me from being with you." I held my hands before my face, and was ashamed to my very soul. I, who had indulged such an unjust and pettish feeling towards him, and had sought to revenge myself in my folly—I, how worthless! I, who wished to make my Björn so happy—what sweet refreshment

had I now prepared for the fatigued body and distressed spirits of my husband! The thought of my mad conduct torments me to this very hour; and the only thing that comforts me is, that Björn and I love each other still more ardently since this scene, than before. Dearest, good Björn! rather than that I should cause you one unpleasant hour, you may smoke every day in the drawing room, in the bed room, yes for my part, you may smoke in bed, if you like. Heaven, however, grant that you may not be with this last desire!

"I now return again to your letter, and to the question propounded in it: "Whether I shall be as glad and equally as candid in writing to you as a married woman, as I was when yet a girl?" Yes, Maria, you may rely on that, and I cannot do otherwise. It is seven years since I made your acquaintance, and since that period you have been to me as my conscience, as my better "self." You were the pure mirror in which I saw myself justly reflected. You were ever sincere, although indulgent; and though two years ago you went far away from me beyond the sea, you continued the same to me. O that it might be so always, Maria, or else I should fear to lose myself. Under your eyes, and with your assistance, I first formed my character. Under your eyes and by your counsels, will I teach myself to become a good wife. It is so gratifying; it renders my life richer to be able to live, as it were, in your society and under your guidance, though lands and seas do separate us. Björn, moreover, does not belong to that class of men; who are jealous of the female friends of their wives, he is not of the opinion that one should give up a

friend, because one has obtained a husband or wife. Björn would not contract the circle of affection; he is too kind, too sensible. I believe that he would readily subscribe to the following words of a beloved teacher, who instructed me in the principles of Christianity; "It is with the heart as it is with heaven: the more angels, the more room." Ah! see—here is my Björn. Read what I have written, and subscribe—

BJÖRN."

Friday, June 6.

"Thank God! matters go on well with me and *ma chère mère*. How unlike is one day to another. Tuesday so depressed, yesterday so cheerful. I proposed yesterday to my Bear to pay a visit to *ma chère mère*. He was very much satisfied with this. I told him on the way, how silly I had lately conducted myself, and how anxiously desirous I was to efface the impression which I must have made there. Björn laughed, mused, looked pleasantly—and we arrived. In the house all was in the bustle of preparation. The people were actively employed, and *ma chère mère* was, as it were, the spring and wheel in the movement. She was just in the act of ordering the rooms for her two real step-sons—for Björn is only half so—and their young wives, who were expected shortly, and were to live in the house; the one couple for a few weeks, and the other as their permanent residence. *Ma chère mère* received us very cordially, and provided Björn with Virginia tobacco and newspapers, and appointed me her assistant for the afternoon. I was glad and willing; and I succeeded very well in doing every thing to the satisfaction of *ma chère mère*. The furniture was removed to

different places—the curtains put up: every thing went on rapidly and well under the superintendence of *ma chère mère*, and by my assistance. We performed a great deal of work, and were very merry under it. I said several *bon mots*, which pleased *ma chère mère*. She patted me on the cheek, pinched my ears, laughed and answered cheerfully. On the whole I was very much pleased with her. There is something extremely peculiar and very vivacious in her character and her demeanour. Without doubt she possesses natural talents, and a great deal of common sense. Her domestics she treated as slaves, and at the same time as children with strictness and mildness. Nevertheless they all appeared to be greatly devoted to her, and obeyed on the slightest intimation of her pleasure. Once *ma chère mère* and I were very near falling out a little. This arose on account of the toilet table for the young wife, which I maintained to be somewhat unfurnished. *Ma chère mère* was vexed about it, began to be angry about the abominable luxury of the present time; about the presumption of our young women; and declared that the toilet table should remain just as she had placed it—with the same covers and glasses: they were good enough, &c. Having been silent to all this, all was soon right again; and I am not quite sure whether the toilet table covers were not changed after all, for *ma chère mère* went soon after to her linen-closets. These arrangements in the room were soon succeeded by various commoner domestic duties, in which *ma chère mère* invited me to assist; "for," said she, "it is well for you, my child, to see how things are conducted in a well regulated house; you may, probably, find it of

use to learn every thing in housekeeping. Roasted sparrows don't fly into our mouths; we must take care that the larder is not empty, if we wish to see something on the table," and so forth. I accompanied *ma chère mère* into the store-room, where, with a large piece of red chalk in her hand, she made many (to me) cabalistic strokes and marks upon certain small casks of herrings and barrels of Stromings*. She explained every thing, however, and allowed me to peep into every corner of the subterranean well-stocked vault. We then proceeded to the garret; here I assisted in looking over some bread-chests, venting anathemas against rats and mice, and weighing various flour sacks; at length I was obliged to let myself be weighed. *Ma chère mère* laughed at me right heartily, when it was found that I did not weigh full *five pounds;* and, assured me, that a woman weighing under five pounds, would have been burnt in the time of Charles XI. I took all this quite philosophically, but burst forth into a stream of admiration at the domestic management and order of *ma chère mère.* This admiration was quite sincere. In truth, a house so perfectly arranged, from the smallest thing to the greatest, where every thing has its fixed place and regular number, is worthy to be viewed and admired no less than the housewife, who is the living promemoria of all this, and manages her affairs as skillfully as a general does his forces.

After the preparations and housewifery were concluded we sat down to rest on a sofa, and *ma chère mère* spoke as follows:—"Dear Franciska, now and then only does my house require such an inspection, it keeps the people in respect, and the things in order. If we

* Stromings are a particular kind of small herrings.

wind up the clocks in proper time they go of themselves, and we have no occasion to go about tic-tac like a pendulum; think of this, my dear Franciska! Some wives boast and pretend to be so busy with the bunch of keys, and are perpetually about the kitchen and the store-room. It's all stuff and nonsense, trumpery and awkwardness. It is better for a wife to superintend her house with her head than with her heels; in this way the husband likes it better, and should he not do so, then he is a blockhead, and the housewife may then rattle the keys about his ears as she likes.

"Some wives are always at their servants' heels. That won't do; servants must have both liberty and rest. We ought not to muzzle the ox, that treadeth the corn. Let the people be accountable for what they do. It is good for them as well as the mistress. Engage their feeling and their sense of duty, and give them their due abundantly. The labourer is worthy of his hire; three or four times in the year, however, at indefinite periods come upon them like the day of judgment and prove their works, storm like a thundercloud, and interpose your authority here and there judiciously, that will purify the house for many weeks. If there were no storms we should have no rest from showers."

These were *ma chère mère's* house-keeping doctrines. She then turned the conversation to Björn:—"Yes," said she "my dear Franciska, you may justly say that you have a clever husband, but he is likewise in his way very stubborn, and never fear but that you will have some trouble with him, as I have had. Well, well, we shall see how you will manage. You are little,

but I see you know how to conduct yourself, and this I can tell you, that however you may conduct yourself, you will never have anything but an honest man in your husband, and therefore I'll give you this one advice—never dissemble in the slightest degree to extricate yourself even from the greatest difficulty. One insincerity leads always to a greater, for it banishes confidence from the house."

I expressed my ideas on the subject warmly to *ma chère mère*, and we walked mutually satisfied into the common sitting-room, where Björn was sitting and yawning over his newspapers. Miss Tutten, (who was called Adjutant Tutten by *ma chère mère*,) was setting the table in order. *Ma chère mère* requested me to sing (she had therefore quite forgotten my last unfortunate attempt) and I sang. I felt myself that it went well. *Ma chère mère* laughed heartily at some little merry songs, and I saw Björn's eyes stealing towards us from his newspaper quite delighted. After tea, with Tutten. we formed *ma chère mère's* game at Boston, which was one of the most lively which I had ever played at. *Ma chère mère* and Björn were extremely good friends, and were making themselves merry at my expense when I committed any errors in the game; but this pleased me better than if I had played most skillfully, and we laughed and screamed like children. When after supper we were taking leave, *ma chère mère* tapped me smartly on the back, kissed me, and thanked me for an agreeable day. When Björn and I came down the stairs, the weather was so fine that we determined to walk part of the way, and the open calash was ordered to follow us. The

walk was exhilirating, and after various little pranks which I had played with my husband, I succeeded in pushing him into a ditch. I am still obliged to laugh when I think of it. He was so like a real Bear as he lay there stretched all fours *(entre nous* I am not sure, whether he did not suffer himself to be thrown over.) "Good natured Bear!"

"But I will not for ever talk to you of the Bear and his wife, you shall hear something about the estate and the family. To understand the latter rightly is somewhat difficult. Try, dear Maria, to understand what I shall endeavour to explain to you.

"General Mansfelt was in his first marriage united to a widow, who brought two step-sons with her; the oldest was my Björn; the second, Adolph Werner, died several years since. By this wife the General had two lovely sons, the still living Jean-Jacques and Peter Mansfelt; these were yet in their childhood when their mother died. A twelvemonth after the General married the rich and proud Miss Barbara B., our now living *chère mère.* Björn, who was then thirty years of age,was not particularly satisfied with receiving a step-mother twenty years of age. The latter however behaved herself in an exemplary manner, and became an excellent, though strict mother to the four step-sons, whose love and high esteem she soon gained in spite of a certain restriction and parsimony towards them; she was compelled to act thus by the extravagance of the General, who brought his affairs into the greatest disorder, and only by means of a settlement was *ma chère mère* able to secure her own property; from this fortune she provided for the education of her sons, and spared no ex-

pense upon them. The sons were held in high respect in their paternal house. They there learned a certain propriety of manners and some French refinements. Every morning they were obliged to go at a certain hour to their parents, to kiss their hands, and say, " *bon jour mon chère père; bon jour ma chère mère*, and every evening they were in like manner obliged to kiss hands, accompanied by the words, *bon soir, mon chère père, bon soir ma chère mère* (hence the appellation *ma chère mère*, which became a standing one in the lips of the sons. This kissing of the hand is still in practice, whenever the sons and the mother meet each other, but the French salutation is done away with. As for the rest the otherwise rigid mother granted her sons much time and liberty for playing and exercise in the open air, etc. Her object was to strengthen the bodies and minds of her sons, who, on the whole, enjoyed a happy childhood. General Mansfelt was a fine looking man and a brave soldier, but dissolute, violent, and thoughtless; he cared little for his children and wasted his fortune. *Ma chère mère's* union with him, was by no means a happy one, and when he died, he left nothing to his sons. *Ma chère mère* now performed a noble action without parade. Making no difference between her husband's sons and step-sons, she entered into an agreement to settle upon each of them, after he had become of age, a considerable annuity, whilst she herself undertook the management of her large but heavily encumbered estates. Björn, who had at that time already made his way and by ability and diligence attained an honorable situation, refused, though respectfully, the proffered gift, for he was unwilling to accept assistance of any one, least of all

of *ma chère mère*, whose despotic character did not well agree with his independent spirit. This conduct, as well as some certain explanations, which Björn and *ma chère mère* had had together on various occasions, contributed to place him on an independent and at the same time amiable footing with her, whilst the other sons are obliged to submit passively to her will. Björn and she are not very intimate, but have the greatest respect for each other. She has nevertheless declared that she should never wish to see him as a doctor in her house, she sends all physic and physicians to the deuce—never will have any thing to do with them, and quotes the proverb, "No man gets to be a good Physician till he has filled the church yard."

Having given you the history of *ma chère mère*, I will now draw her picture. Behold a very tall woman, with a fine figure, whose frame still retains the vigour and elasticity of youth, very straight, somewhat stiff, almost with the air and demeanour of a general; her countenance might be handsome if the features were less strongly marked and the complexion were not so faded; the chin also is too large and prominent; around the mouth which is provided with a set of large white teeth, a good-natured friendly smile often plays, but occasionally when displeased, the under lip is projected over the upper and forms a feature of rigid determination, which, in a female, is far from pleasing, but *ma chère mère* is quite an original. Her hair is quite grey, and at times displays itself from under her head-covering, which as I have now ascertained, has been christened "Slurka" by *ma chère mère*. No curls, the cap sits solitary upon the austere, high, and sometimes be-

clouded brow. In her whole attire, no trinket, no ornaments, but much neatness and consistency. *Ma chère mère* does not wear stays, (by the way of parenthesis, I should like to know, whether tight lacing may not account for the dullness of some ladies in society?) the mind can hardly be free when the body is in fetters. Her dress consists mostly of a brown or grey quilted silk gown. A white kerchief covers the still fair neck in the morning, and is exchanged for a white standing collar at noon. Her hands are large, well shaped, white, but rough, and are not always used, as is said, for the most peaceful employments. *Ma chère mère* has a rough voice, speaks loud and distinctly, often makes use of singular words, and is always ready with a number of sayings; she walks with great strides, often wears boots, and throws her arms about; nevertheless, when she likes, she can be very polite and genteel. *Ma chère mère* is accused of covetousness, of meddling in other people's affairs, and of a want of regard to propriety. There are many anecdotes about her; notwithstanding the people in the whole district hold her in much respect and her words are valid as the mandates of a king. In this all agree, that she is clever, friendly, and sincere. This, I think, is no mean praise. She reminds me of Götz, of Berlichingen. But sometimes I fancy that gentler feelings dwell in this austere exterior, and then indeed I feel I love her. Hitherto she has managed all her estates alone, (and moreover has regulated her affairs excellently) but now she wishes Jean-Jacques to assist her. The latter has studied farming on the continent, has lately married, and will settle with his young wife in Karlsfors. Björn shook his head at this partner-

ship: "*Ma chère mère et Jean-Jacques.*"

It is impossible to speak of *ma chère mère*, without mentioning her maid-servant Elsa. They have lived together these forty years and appear as if they could not exist without each other. Elsa is both the slave and the tyrant of *ma chère mère*. She is so avaricious, that she will scarcely allow her mistress to wear her own clothes, and grumbles at every clean pocket handkerchief which she is obliged to give out. On the other hand there is not her equal, in love of order, cleanliness, and fidelity, and therefore *ma chère mère* has a certain respect for her, and in many a contention Elsa gains her point; notwithstanding she labours day and night, if required, for *ma chère mère*. *Ma chère mère* is her destiny, *ma chère mère's* room her world, *ma chère mère's* word her law, *ma chère mère's* person her second self. Without her lady, Elsa is nothing. She once had permission to visit her relations and to stay away for eight days; but before two had elapsed, Elsa returned to her mistress, as she could not bear being away from her. It is said, that on the evening of that very day, she received a box on the ears from *ma chère mère*, on account of some trifling neglect whilst dressing her. Elsa took it quietly and was silent and never went away again after this attempt. Elsa is scraggy and stiff, and her person is quite angular. They say, that she knows more about *ma chère mère* than any mortal being. But Elsa is dumb as a mummy. She deserves to be embalmed.

Shadow of a shade Tutten appears! Elsa is a Rembrandist shade, Tutten an undefined shadow, without marked character of her own, and incapable of reflect-

ing distinctly the outline of another's. Elsa's strong fidelity is her beauty. Tutten always speaks: "Madam says this—Madam believes that—Madam wishes so and so—;" but secretly traduces her behind her back, and obeys her without attachment. At one time humble even to self-humiliation, she is ready to presume audaciously at another, if *ma chère mère's* hand did not keep her in proper restraint, and compel her to develop the faculties which she possesses, and make herself useful in domestic affairs. At a glass of her excellent beer I am almost ready to cry, "long live Tutten!" But how will she one day live in a world I wonder, where there is no more baking or brewing going on? where no beer-glass foams, and no cake rising in the oven, how will she be able to collect her thoughts there?—but enough of Tutten and Metempsychosis; I will not wander so far from my home.

You must now have a slight sketch of my beloved home, my little Rosenvik. Rosenvik is a farm below Karlsfors, and lies better than half a mile from W., where Björn is the first and best liked Physician. He has rented the little farm from *ma chère mère*, as he, like myself, is particularly fond of the country. We cultivate Rosenvik thus more for pleasure than interest, however I for my part speculate on the garden, of which, although it is almost a wilderness at present, much may be made. The garden, a small birch wood, a meadow, on which three cows and a horse are grazing belong to Rosenvik. Why this farm should be called Rosenvik, I cannot conceive; it is true it lies near an inlet of the Helgalake, but there is not a single Provence rose-bush to be met with here, whereas it abounds

in hyssop and elder bushes. These ought to be preserved, but the others not neglected, and I hope that Rosenvik will yet fragrantly answer to its name; however the beautiful shall not supersede the useful. I shall plant plenty of gooseberry bushes, peas and beans. On the whole I feel more glad to have come to a place where there is something to improve, than to one where every thing is done already. My character and disposition require a good deal of employment, and I know how much one values that for which one labours. The house is small, but admirably arranged. We have four rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor, Björn has furnished them comfortably. The sitting room especially, with its furniture of blue chintz and white muslin curtains, is a most charming apartment; in the upper story are two comfortable guest chambers. The kitchen and store rooms were badly furnished, but I am thankful to say we are improving them. Björn has made an arrangement with regard to money, which has given me pleasure, yet at the same time a certain degree of uneasiness. He puts all his money into a drawer, for which he has had two keys made: the one he keeps, the other I have, and I am authorized to take money out of the drawer, when and as much as I please, without giving my husband an account of it. This proof of his perfect confidence in my prudence delights me, and is at the same time a much stronger fetter than my husband's greatest avarice could have been. I fear to take too much, not to manage well enough in the housekeeping or by any little superfluous expenditure to gratify my feelings or fancies, for I myself put not a shilling into the drawer. All in it belongs to my husband, and is the

reward of his exertions. It seems to me, that I should be more free, and that it would be better if he were to let me have a fixed sum, monthly, for the expenses of the house. I proposed this to him one day, when, with a tear in my eye, I communicated to him my scruples, but he would by no means listen to this proposal. "Are we not one?" said he, "and I have seen that you are a thorough accountant." With regard to my difficulties, he assured me that they would vanish if we only got to know each other better, and that I should then find that there is no *mine* and *thine* between us. I am almost inclined to believe in the prophecy of my husband, but intend, for the sake of my own conscience, as well as for regularity, to keep a strict account of all my expenditure.

I am much pleased with the little girl whom Björn has hired and who shall be my own waiting maid. She is a young peasant-girl, with a countenance so cheerful, innocent, and even pretty, that it does one good to look at her. She is quiet and industrious, quick in understanding, and kind-hearted, and it will afford me pleasure to educate her. Should God give me children, Sissa shall be their nurse; I will train her up to be a real *bonne* for my children, so that I might be easy on their account, even when they are not in my arms. The remembrance of my own childhood reminds me how important first impressions are. Purity, kindness, intelligence, shall guard the cradle of my child; there they shall begin their impression on his soul; the affections of infancy do not easily grow cold towards the friends of one's youth.

I talk of educating my maiden; but believe me,

Maria, I shall not forget to improve myself. Why does the flame upon the altar of matrimony die away so very rapidly? Because it is not fed. We should mature and cultivate ourselves in the course of our daily life, and then life itself will be a continual development of love and happiness.

My first care at present will be that of arranging my house, so that quiet comfort may dwell in it. I will try to be a wise law-giver in my little but not unimportant world. And what law do you think before all others I intend to make and rigorously to maintain? A law respecting the treatment of animals, to comprehend the following:

"All the animals on the estate shall be attended to with the utmost care, and be treated gently and indulgently; they shall live happy.

"The slaughtering shall be effected with the least possible torture to the animal.

"No animal shall be allowed to be tormented in the kitchen, no one shall dare to scald a fish alive or leave it to struggle in the pan; no bird be hung up half dead upon a nail. One cut with the knife is to give instant death to them and liberate them from torture."

These and many other precepts shall be comprehended in my law. How much useless cruelty is there not daily exercised because we do not reflect on what we are doing? And how irrational, how shameful is not cruelty towards animals? Is it not enough for them, to be doomed in the present order of the world, to serve us during their life and to nourish us after their death? Are we to make their hard life still harder? We are in many cases compelled to

curb and punish animals, but we need not be their cruel enemies. How infinitely milder might their sufferings be, if they were humanely treated; if we felt compassion for their weakness in old age, for their pains in sickness and in death!

In the days of antiquity there were laws in existence which rendered gentleness towards animals a sacred duty, the violation of which was severely punished. And we, Maria, who profess a religion of love, shall we deal worse with animals than the heathens?

Saith not he, who established the kingdom of love on earth, that 'not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the notice of your Heavenly Father.'—Mark you well, Maria, he does not say, that the sparrow should not fall to the ground, he only says, that it is seen by the eye of the Father.—Yes, observed are also all those needless sufferings, which the excesses, the thoughtlessness or the cruelty of men inflict on animals; their cries of suffering are heard. Will not an avenging echo in the other world add one more pang to the torments of hell and disturb men's very peace in heaven.

O, Maria! Let us, wives and mothers of families, not deserve this punishment. Let us, when appearing before the tribunal of the Father of all, be guiltless of the ingratitude of having mal-treated the creatures of His making! Let us render ourselves worthy to see ennobled races of animals about us in a better world, and there to live with them in that amicable relation, which we have already began on earth.

Here comes Björn, who gives me notice to prepare for paying some visits to our neighbours (of which

we have a great number) and tells me that there are some who have a great wish to see me, very kind and intelligent people, from what he says! Be prepared, therefore, of soon forming some new acquaintances! I shall also soon be able to introduce to you my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law. I am glad they are coming, and that I shall be acquainted with my husband's most beloved brother, Peter Mansfelt, who is said to be a most amiable character as well as a distinguished lawyer. I could almost be disposed to write a novel on the subject. Novels generally terminate in a *marriage*; does not the real romance of human life begin with it? Generally speaking every one's life is in fact a romance, a little episode in that great history "the book of life," which is written by the original author of the "world." Take it, therefore, as a novel which I am writing to you, Maria! Let it find a place in your heart, my good, sweet, affectionate reader; merry or sad—may it only not be rejected by you! Farewell—think of your romancing and loving

FRANCISKA.

II.

SECOND LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, June 9th.

Yesterday morning the weather was fresh and clear. I took my seat beside Björn in the one-horse carriage, when he was riding into town, as usual, at eight o'clock in the morning. He left me at Karlsfors, and promised he would call for me on his way home,—providing he did not forget. "Forget?" Abominable Bear! With this passport he drove on. I walked along the grand and beautiful avenue leading to the principal building. In the court stood a tall, strange figure; she wore a wide grey cloak, a green cap, and struck about her, with something which looked like a magic stick, whilst with a loud voice she called, "Drive up!—Do you hear?—drive up with the Heaven-chariot!* I looked up involuntarily towards heaven, and the thought of the chariot of the prophet Elijah entered my mind, but was as soon expelled again; when, in the beckoning female in the grey mantle, I recognized *ma chère mère.* On coming nearer I heard her violently abusing the groom, because the oats had all been used, and she accompanied her moral sermons with powerful lashes of

* The word translated *heaven* here, signifies in the original likewise, *canopy* or a *roof* of a covered carriage, (especially of a coach and *chariot*;) also a *carriage.*

the whip, although only in the air. On perceiving me her countenance suddenly changed; she took hold of my hand quickly; shook it, and said pleasantly, "Look now! Good day to you, my dear Franciska, you are just coming at a lucky time.* I have put on my *Januarius* to-day (pointing to the cloak), for it appeared to me to be cold. My grey horses will soon be here with my heaven-chariot." At this instant a singular equipage, drawn by four horses with a canopy resting on four supports, drove up the court yard. This was the heavenly-chariot. *Ma chère mère* ordered me to get in: climbed herself in after me, and took the reins in her hand. Behind stood a footman. *Ma chère mère* cracked monstrously loud with the whip, and we drove off. At first I was afraid, for it went at full speed, and the heavenly-chariot went any how rather than heavenly. At one time the horses were refractory. *Ma chère mère* stood up in the carriage and administered the whip until they returned to their allegiance again. With a contented, "the deuce take me, if I won't give it you," she sat down again. Seeing me quite pale she laughed, but drove much slower, chatted at the same time very merrily, and made me answer various questions about my house-keeping affairs at Rosenvik. Having convinced myself of the charioteering abilities of *ma chère mère*, I became more calm and comfortable, and resigned myself to the pleasure which I always in-

* *Hon Kommer i grefvens tid*, in the Swedish original.—This is literally translated: You come in the Count's time. It is a Suecism. and refers to the time when the Hansiatic League attacked Denmark, in order to liberate their captive King Christian.

voluntarily feel in her presence. We inspected a number of fields, fresh lands, drains, &c. *Ma chère mère* talked to several persons; found fault with some, and praised others. The relation between the mistress and dependents appeared to me most friendly, and that they understood each other very well.

On our journey we had very near overturned Counsellor Hök, who drove up to us in a *Desobligeant*, and whose coachman was so startled at the sight of our heavenly-chariot, that he confounded the right side with the left, and chose at last that on which we were driving. "Where the deuce are you driving to, Counsellor?" cried *ma chère mère* with a thundering voice, whilst her powerful hands held in the horses, and by a dexterous turn avoided a collision. Soon the heavenly-chariot and *Desobligeant* stopped quite familiarly along side of each other, and *ma chère mère*, who was again in good humour, said laughing and joking to Counsellor Hök, who peeped out amazed from behind his green curtains: "Dear Counsellor, you so infect your coachman with your poetic phantasies, that he forgets the rules of the road." "Counsellor Hök and poetic phantasies," thought I, "that will never rhyme together." "When a heavenly-chariot comes," said Counsellor Hök, more poetically than I should have expected of him, "who can think of earthly laws?" Thus *ma chère mère* and Counsellor Hök joked together awhile, after which, the heavenly-chariot and the *Desobligeant* proceeded each h's own way.

Coming home *ma chère mère* was in the best humour, and we fell into a warm conversation respecting husbands, wives, and matrimony. *Ma chère mère's* doctrine

for wives was in reality no encouragement to coquettes, and was comprehended in the following words. Act in such a manner that your husband and all men will respect you; so you shall enjoy peace in your house and honour in your life—(esteem and respect are in *ma chère mère's* estimation the highest possessions of life); certainly her rules of conduct for young women in their behaviour towards men are, generally speaking, a little too strict. They reminded me of a song, which I had often heard in my youth, of a lady Regina, and of which, the words still sound in my ears:

> In case a young gentleman offers his arm,
> Refuse it, and say, without any delay,
> No thank you, good Sir, I can walk by myself;
> And if a young gentleman asks you to dance,
> Deny him and say in a positive way,
> No, I thank you, most kindly, I'll dance by myself.

I repeated the song to *ma chère mère.* She laughed but said gravely, "the song is really not so silly, my dear. I won't exactly go so far, but this I mean to say, that a promenade and a waltz with any other gentleman except the husband, may be but doubtful as to its propriety. A young wife—mark well my words—cannot be too circumspect, not to compromise herself. You must be circumspect, dear Franciska, you must be circumspect. I grant that our times are more moral than when I was young, when Gustavus III—most blessed be his memory—introduced French fashions and French manners into this country; and I believe, that there are at present far fewer Atheists and libertines in the world; however, as I have before said, you must be circumspect, Franciska. The tempter

can come to you, as he has to many other women; not because you are handsome, for that you are not by any means; and, besides, you are very little; but your April-face has nevertheless its own little charms; and then, you know, you are a very charming singer, —as I have said before, you have your little attractions. And should a young coxcomb some day try to figure himself into your good graces, listen to my advice. Keep him at a distance by reserved behaviour; and if this be not sufficient to command his respect, and he should proceed to be impertinent, you must look at him with an air of great surprise, and say: "Sir, you are strangely mistaken in the person you address." If this is not a sufficient hint for him, should he repeat his rudeness, then go straightway to your husband and tell him: "My friend so-and-so has been rude to me, and so-and-so I have acted. Now, do what you think proper." And depend upon it, dear Franciska, the corydon will soon find out what o'clock it is, and move off with shame and disgrace. No shame, however, can reflect upon you in this matter, but rather honour; and you will feel that a good conscience makes a cheerful face,—that a good conscience is the softest pillow."

Ma chère mère's good advice delighted me beyond expression. Unfortunately she had invited two poor old maids, who are partly supported by her bounty, to dinner. They came when *ma chère mère* and I were just about entering into a most lively discussion. One of them had two rows of lace as a trimming to her dress. On perceiving this, *ma chère mère's* countenance immediately darkened; and scarcely had the unfortunate old maid paid her compliments and seated herself,

when *ma chère mère* began to talk quite angrily on the subject of the trimmings. "One trimming," said she, "was more than necessary, but two are unpardonable!" It was a terrible reprimand for the poor old damsel. In vain she endeavoured to excuse herself, by saying that the upper trimming was put on in order to hide a patch. "I must tell you, my good friend," cried *ma chère mère*, "that if we are not above receiving charity, neither should we be above showing our patches. Yes, yes, this much I must tell you, poverty is no disgrace; every one is not born with a silver spoon in his mouth; but the love of dress in poverty is 'the devil in the boat.' Come, come, don't cry about it; reprimands are no millstones, and we don't grind to the bones. Rip off your laces, and I'll take care that you shall have a gown without a hole." The old maid looked quite comforted. *Ma chère mère*, resumed her kind manner; and when I—on hearing our carriage drive up to the door—rose to take leave of her, she said, very pleasantly, "So you are going, dear Franciska. I can see very well that it would not suit to invite you and your husband to dinner. Well, well, go; God be with you; but come again, soon; for you see, my child, I liked you from the first time I saw you, and you cannot come too often! Now go. I can't bear people to be long taking leave. Adieu! adieu!"

I made haste to be off, and ran away laughing. And now, I shall also bid you, farewell! Adieu! adieu! for I must welcome my Björn, who has just come home. I shall now be able to have him for a few days by myself.

The 11th.

Here I sit again, pen in hand, feeling a sort of de-

sire to write, without, however, having anything particular worth relating. All is in order in my household. In the kitchen, little patties are baking. The weather is sultry, the leaves look withered, and the birds gasp for breath. The hens lie in the sand before the window; the cock stands solitary upon one foot, and looks about him with the air of a sleepy Sultan in his Harem. Björn sits in his own room, and writes letters; the door to his own room is open. I hear him gaping; it is infectious. Ah! ah! I must pick a little quarrel with him, to rouse us both. I just want a sheet of paper, to bake some cakes upon. Bjorn is a monstrous niggard with his paper, and, therefore, he must let me have some now. We have managed it; a perfect quarrel, and we are both quite wide awake after it. You, Maria, must share it too, that you may see what a terrible life it is between man and wife.

I went to my Bear, and said, quite meekly, "My Angel-Bear, you must be so kind as to give me a sheet of your writing paper, to bake some sweet-cakes upon it."

Björn (quite startled).—"A sheet of my writing-paper?"

I.—"Yes, my sweet friend, of your very best writing-paper."

Björn.—"Best writing-paper? Are you crazed?"

I.—"Not in the least; but I believe that you are a little mad."

Björn.—"Greedy monkey! Don't rummage my papers about so! You shall not get any of my paper."

I.—"Covetous creature! I will and must have the paper!"

Björn.—" 'I must!' Did any body ever hear! Now, then, let us see how you'll carry your point;" and at the same time the rough Bear held both my little hands fast between his great paws.

I.—" You odious Bear! you are worse than those that run on all-fours. Instantly let go my hands! Let go, I say, or I'll bite!" And not letting go, I bit; yes, Maria! I really bit into his hand; he, however, laughed deridingly, and said,

" Yes, yes, my dear little woman, so goes it with those without power. Now take the paper, pray take it!"

I.—" Oh! let me, let me loose!"

Björn.—" Bite nicely!"

I.—" Sweet Bear!"

Björn.—" Confess that you are conquered!"

I.—" Yes!"

Björn.—" Beg my pardon!"

I.—" Oh! Pardon!"

Björn.—" Promise to be better!"

I.—" Oh, yes! yes, I'll be better!"

Björn.—" Well, then, I'll forgive you! Now let me have no sour faces, my little woman! but embrace me, and give me a kiss!"

I gave him—a little box on the ear, stole a sheet of paper, and flew away loudly exulting, Björn grumbling after me as far as the kitchen; but then I turned round well armed with two delicious patties towards him, which were aimed against his mouth and there they vanished. Björn was quite silent after this, the sheet of paper was forgotten, and reconciliation complete. There is no better way Maria, to stop the mouths

of these lords of the creation than to fill them with good things.

In the afternoon we intend to begin our visits to the Neighbours. I shall dress myself well, (I have a little straw hat with Syringas in it, which is most lovely) and take notice with what satisfaction Björn will introduce me: "My wife, my wife," he always says "my wife," in a most peculiar tone of satisfaction. But now "my wife" must leave off talking; she must attend to her husband's dinner."

Evening.

Another little quarrel! It is dangerous to rouse the sleeping lion. The scene occurs at dessert.

"Dear child, what bonnet do you intend to put on to-day?"

"My little straw hat, with the Syringa's."

"That one? O, no, don't! wear your white Crape bonnet, which is so pretty."

"That one? my only dress bonnet! What can you be thinking of, darling? To sit with that bonnet exposed to the dust in the open carriage—and who knows we may have rain."

"Well then, at least, there'll be no dust!"

"How clever you are!—But that wont mend my bonnet!"

"My sweet Fanny, it would please me very much, if you would put on that bonnet."

"Then I will, dear Björn, even if it should be dusty and rain at the same time."

And now I am going to put on the white bonnet. What would Mrs. Folker say, if she were to see me riding in it on the turnpike road in an open carriage?

The little gardener-lad plays on this occasion the part of footman, dressed in a grey jacket with a green velvet collar.

Friday, the 12th.

"You look more than lovely in this bonnet!" cried Björn, when he saw his wife yesterday dressed for a visit. "*Ma chère mère* must needs see you in it. We must look in at Karlsfors, before we drive any further. It is really most lovely!"

"Indeed, do you think so? Well, as you like, my sweet friend! If we only don't arrive too late at the other places."

"Whether we do or not, *ma chère mère* must see my little wife to-day."

Now see the "little wife" in her little bonnet jogging in her little carriage, casting uneasy, almost entreating looks upward to the sky, which looks down rather dark and threatening upon the little bonnet. However we reached Karlsfors, without receiving a single drop of rain. In the drawing-room we met with visitors. *Ma chère mère* came gladly and cheerfully to meet us, kissed me, looked at me, patted me on the cheek, and said, I looked like a winter's new moon. To Björn she said: "You have a little wife, Lars Anders, but it may be said of her, little but good." Björn appeared highly delighted. (I am rather vexed that *ma chère mère* should find me so dreadfully little; sometimes it seems as if she thought me insignificant, but that I really am notwithstanding.) Fresh visitors came, and I sat me down surveying the company. My attention was soon attracted to a young lady (I am sure less than I) whose whole air displayed an extraordinary vivacity. She

had a sallowish complexion, sparkling brown eyes, a somewhat large and aquiline nose, and a chin a little projecting; she was not handsome, but she had something piquant, and her fashionable but somewhat over dressy attire suited excellently well to her little lively figure. Björn and her cordially extended the hand to each other; and her lively sharp eyes soon rested on me. Björn made a move as if he wished to introduce us to each other; at this moment however *ma chère mère* took hold of me, turned me quite round, led me to the piano, and I was now compelled to play and sing to the company. Having finished my song, the lively little lady came and seated herself at my side. She looked at me penetratingly, but kindly and almost familiarly, and asked how long I had been in this place, and if I did not find the people here "horribly *en arriere* in comparison with the Stockholmers." I cheerfully replied to her, when she said, looking at me for a long time, and inquisitively, "You are very much like your mother—an excellent woman your mother—I have often seen her ere this; and I feel to know you very well too, Mrs. Werner, although I have never seen you before."

I looked at her inquiringly, and had the words, "with whom have I the pleasure," etc. on my tongue, but she anticipated me, and asked me whether I had yet seen many of my neighbours?

I told her that I was now on my way to make some visits.

"Well," she replied, "then you will become acquainted with many curious personages, some of a water-gruel, others of a horse-radish nature. It would be a pity for you not to get a little fore-taste of what

you will meet with hereafter. When you come to v. P—'s., the new nobility, at Holma, speak of accomplishments and the arts; mention *en passant* your genteel acquaintances, at least if you wish to be in favor with the v. P—'s. Has it ever yet occurred to you, after being with certain persons for a few hours, to feel as if you were soaked, or, if I may so express myself, drenched?"

"O yes!" said I, laughing.

"Well, then you know the sensations with which you will return from the v. P—'s. At Major Stalmark's family, in Adam's-rest, don't let your conversation be on art, that is, if you wish to be in favor with them;—nature, liberty, simplicity, is the motto there. My good friend, the Major's wife, will speak of nothing else but of servants and house-keeping. With the Major nothing goes down but thorough good sense and strong energy. I shall be anxious to hear whether you are very much edified by it. There are disputations which do not strengthen the wits; but take care that the young Adamites do not play you some unparadise-like tricks; the old ones, I suppose, keep in the stable."

"I advise you, as a friend, not to pass by the old maiden Hellevi Hausgiebel, who lives in her Bird's-nest, near the town, for she would not take it well; with her angular figure and her sharp tongue, she just reminds one of a wood-pecker, and at the same time of a gingerbread-cake,—but perhaps you know her already."

"No, but I have heard that she is ill-natured and ridiculous."

"Ill-natured? ridiculous?" repeated my neighbour, hesitating; "hm!—Heaven knows if that is not saying too much. Ill-natured? She expresses her opinion of people tolerably free, but she does it openly and not too severely. Ridiculous? Well, perhaps that may be true. She has her failings just as much and probably more than many others. But my comparison you will at all events find striking."

"I should like to know," said I, amused with her ideas, which from her lips sounded less malicious than they appear on paper; "I should very much like to know what you have to say about my husband and me, and what you would compare us to?"

"Who can ever look at the good Doctor Werner, without thinking of a plum-pudding? And you, dear Madam, are the hot sweet-sauce to it, without which the former would not have half its flavour; but what I have yet to add about your future acquaintances is, that you will not know what is most exemplary among us, until you have seen the old Dahls, nor can you have a clear conception of perfect amiability until you have made the acquaintance of their grand-daughter Serena, the flower of the Dale;* the name doubly applies to her.

"Serena?" I repeated, "that's a singular name?"

"It won't appear so to you when you see her. She seems to have been christened in heaven. But I must be going; and if, after our conversation, you say that I am either mad or spiteful, I tell you, I care nothing

* In the Swedish it is here the pun with *Dahlens blomma*, the flower of the Dahlish Family and *dalens blomma*, the flower of the Dale.

about it. I shall like you any way, and hope to see you soon again."

With this she squeezed my hand very heartily, rose, and quickly took leave of us all. On her going out, I noticed that she was a little awry, to conceal which she seemed to give herself no trouble whatever.

"Who is she? who is she?" I asked when she had left the room.

"What, Franciska?" said *ma chère mère;* "don't you know Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel? Well, then I have been very foolish not to introduce you to one another."

I stood as if thunderstruck. "Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel?" I at length exclaimed, "why she is said to be old!"

"Those are her own stories," said *ma chère mère.* "She has her whims, and takes as much pains to make herself out old as others do to appear young. She pretends to be forty years old, but is, I am sure, not yet five and thirty. Her fine Bird's-nest I don't particularly admire, for I am no connoisseur in snails, worms, and sponges, which she collects there; but she herself is a clever estimable person whom I like very well."

"But what will she think of me?" thought I to myself, whilst ashamed of my own stupidity, I returned with Björn to the cabriolet. My hat had made no great show, and I had been guilty of a sad inadvertence. The commencement of our journey was not encouraging.

Pshaw! thought I to myself, by way of comfort,—Miss Hausgiebel is a sensible person; I am not, upon

the whole, so stupid; we can manage to make it all straight again. La Bruyere says, "Le sot ne se retire jamais du ridicule, c'est son charactere, l' on y entre quelquefois avec de l' esprit, mais l' on en sort;" and merrily the carriage rolled along to Adam's-rest, the residence of Major Stalmark. Not far from the estate we met a young girl, of about fourteen years of age, riding on an Œlandish poney, without a saddle; her hair was reddish, and, as well as the whole of her dress, in great disorder. "Good day, Miss Malla," Björn called to the young Amazon, "Are your father and mother at home?" "Yes, to be sure!" she cried in reply. "I am riding Putta to the pasture," She rode on, we drove further. "Heaven keep me!" cried I, "is that intended to be a young lady?" "Yes!" answered my husband, laconically. We arrived at the house. A tremendous noise resounded there. Three young gentlemen, in hunting costume, were loitering about, with not less than a score of dogs. At the sight of my Bear and his little wife the barking company turned upon our innocent equipage, but, fortunately for my heroism and that of my beloved, they were called off by the young gentlemen, and the lively but unharmonious choir moved further off. This spot of land ought properly to be called Adam's-*un*rest, thought I to myself. Whilst I was walking through the hall, something came between my feet which nearly overthrew me. I perceived it was a piece of wood; I looked round and discovered in one corner of the hall two cunning little grinning figures, who were preparing to bombard a-fresh the peaceable guests. I threatened them with the piece of wood, and had an indescribable

desire to make the wild young things more intimately acquainted with it. Björn, however, who was already in the ante-chamber, called me, and I was obliged to fly rapidly, for something—heaven knows what—came rattling at my heels. I was cross, but was nevertheless obliged to laugh. Björn was angry when he heard what had happened to me, again opened the door to the entry, clenched his fist at the Adamites, and promised them a ducking if they would not let people alone.

After we had collected ourselves, my Bear had ceased growling, and I laughing, we entered the room and found in a comfortable drawing-room two persons of the appearance usually indicating a certain degree of rank and fortune. It was the major and his wife. The major—an elderly, still handsome-looking man—had a good tempered and well-bred manner.

The Lady was very stout, still young, but not pretty; in her look there was a particularly open and straightforward expression. Björn introduced "my wife!" and "my wife" was received as cordially as my Bear himself. The gentlemen walked up and down talking together. The ladies were left on the sofa to make nearer acquaintance with each other. She looked at me, and I at her. Her face seemed familiar to me, her voice still more so; this latter especially—which had a Finlandish accent—made such an extraordinary impression upon me, I could not take off my eyes from her; I saw a little scar upon her neck and memory suddenly recalled an Episode of my former life; I retraced by-gone scenes, which you must contemplate with me, in order to understand that which now follows.

First, accompany me to my exploits in the Gymnastic Hall; go back with me as far as a time when I was yet young, when my pulse beat quicker than it does at present (although Björn maintains, that it might run more quickly, yet without being the worse) to a time when I was heartily tired to see always the same sun, the same faces; when I longed with impatience for adventures; when a conflagration or a tumult were real refreshments to me; when the Battle of Prague and the Battle of Fleury were my most favourite pieces of music; when I wept that I was not a man, that I might enjoy a Campaign; when, in a sort of craving for excess, I drank five cups of watery Tea at ChamberlainArbelt's, whereupon his wife, in a frenzy of generosity, would insist on making me take the sixth.

I was then sixteen, and, fortunate for my restless character, my right shoulder began to project at that time. Gymnastics were then in fashion, as remedies against all manner of defects, and my parents determined to let me try Gymnastics. Arrayed in trimmed Pantaloons, a *Bonjour*-coat of green cloth and a little morning cap with pink ribbon, I made my appearance one day in an assemblage of from thirty to forty figures, dressed almost the same as myself, who were merrily swarming about a large saloon, over ropes, ladders, and poles. It was a strange and novel scene. I kept myself in the back ground the first day, and learned from my governess the "bending of the back," and the "exercise of the arms and legs." The second day I began to be intimate with some of the girls, the third I vied with them on ropes and ladders, and ere the close of the second week, I was the leader of the second

class, and began to encourage them to all manner of tricks.

At that time I was studying Greek history: their heroes and their heroic deeds filled my imagination, even in the Gymnastic school. I proposed to my band to assume masculine and antique names, and in this place to answer to no other than such as Agamemnon, Epaminondas, &c. For myself I chose the name of Orestes and called my best friend in the class, Pylades. There was a tall thin girl, with a Finlandish accent, whom I greatly disliked, chiefly on account of the disrespect for me and my ideas, which she manifested without reserve; she quizzed this change of names, and in derision called me and my friend, (who were both little) Orre and Pylle. I was extremely vexed at this, for it lowered the enthusiastic spirit with which I wished to inspire the whole troop. My tall enemy did not wish, as she said, to be called any thing else than Brita Kaijsa; I, notwithstanding, continually called her Darius; from this arose fresh causes for quarrels. Although in love with the Greek history, I was no less taken with the Swedish. Charles XII was my Idol, and I often entertained my friends in my class with narrations of his deeds till my own soul was on fire with the most glowing enthusiasm. Like a shower of cold water, Darius one day came into the midst of us, and opposed me with the assertion that Czar Peter I. was a much greater man than Charles XII. I accepted the challenge with blind zeal and suppressed rage. My opponent brought forward a number of facts with coolness and skill, in support of her opinion; and when I, confuting all her positions, thought to exalt my victorious

hero to the clouds, she was perpetually throwing Bender and Pultawa in my way. O Pultawa! Pultawa! many tears have fallen o'er thy bloody battle-field, but none more bitter than those which I shed in secret, when I, like Charles himself, suffered a defeat there.

A third spark fell on my smothered imagination, and the flame burst forth. A young, pretty, but lame girl, in whom our masculine costume could not hide the feminine and timid disposition shared my love of heroism, and I declared myself her knight. One day, when I was reciting some verses from Racine, the abominable Darius came forward and said scornfully: "I am your rival!" I cast an annihilating look on my rival, and said contemptuously: "BritaKaijsa, stick to your needle!" This vexed Brita Kaijsa, and she blushed, whilst my party burst into a roar of laughter. A short time after, I was sitting upon the ladder, and was looking from my elevation at the swarming little crowd beneath me, when suddenly I felt one foot laid hold of by a strong hand; I saw my tall enemy, who had reached up her arm and was holding me fast, whilst she deridingly said: "Holloa, up there! help thyself now as Orestes, or stay on the step and cluck like an "Orre" (Heath-cock)." What Orestes would have done in my situation, I know not, but my wrath, my cries, and my gestures resembled a bird caught in the snare, rather than a captive hero; an indescribable laughter was set up all around me, and threw me into a perfect rage. With a loud voice I called Pylades to my aid, but Pylades looked like a poltroon, and only made some faint remonstrances to my enemy. "I challenge you, I demand satisfaction," cried I to Darius, who only laughed

and said! "Bravo, Orre, bravo! Look, that's just the way in which Czar Peter held fast great Charles XII, at Bender." I was on the point of committing some desperate act, when one of the teachers came, quickly put an end to this scene, and liberated me. But my spirit foamed in bitterness, I went to Pylades and said: "You have behaved disgracefully, Pylades, this instant come with me, I will challenge this great bragger who has insulted me—you shall be my second." Pylades looked as timid as a hare, but did not venture to refuse.

I went to Darius, who with provoking indifference was leaning against a wall and humming to herself. With frowning brow I approached her, and asked: "What did you mean by your conduct to me just now?" Brita Kaijsa stared at me indignantly, and answered carelessly: "What did I mean? why, exactly what I said, to be sure." "Well then, I have a word to speak to you," said I enraged,—"You have insulted me shamefully, and I request that you ask my pardon in the presence of the whole class, and acknowledge that Charles XII was a greater man than Czar Peter, or else you shall fight with me, if you have any honour in your breast and are not a coward." Brita Kaijsa blushed, but said with detestable coolness: "Ask pardon, indeed? I should never dream of such a thing. Fight? O yes, I have no objection! but where and with what? With pins, think you, or—" "With the sword, if you are not afraid—and on this very spot. We can meet here half an hour before the rest; arms I shall bring with me, Pylades is my second, and you shall appoint your own!" This I said with an air of

great haughtiness. "I shall not trouble myself to get one," answered Brita Kaijsa, with intolerable insolence —"I don't fear being a match for you both."

"You must have a second!" I cried, stamping with my little foot, "it is the rule."

"Very well. Gronvall, come here a moment."

"Elizabeth Gronvall was also a tall girl, stupid and helpless, with pouting lips; she called me, by way of derision, "Nestor." Having been made acquainted with the affair, she consented with an air of great importance to second my opponent.

"To-morrow morning at nine o'clock!" I said, going away.

"At nine o'clock!" repeated Brita Kaijsa, with a scornful laugh.

On my way home, I endeavoured to inspire Pylades with courage, and to bind her to secrecy, and being strongly attached to me she promised—after many fruitless expostulations, and with tears in her eyes—to observe silence and be faithful to me unto death.

My blood was in violent commotion; at night, however, I had gone to bed, and when all was still around me, I cannot deny that a kind of surprise and horror seized me at the thought of the deed I was about to commit. But to recant, to forsake Charles XII, to bear the self-incurred disgrace unrevenged, to merit the scorn of my enemy and expose myself to further persecutions,—no! rather die! Then again I thought on the words of the commandment, and on my parents, how they would weep if I perished. My antagonist stood before me, fierce and powerful as Czar Peter, and I—ah, I felt indeed I was no Charles XII. At the

thoughts of the tears of my parents, at my own tears falling, and weeping, I fell asleep. On my awaking I found it was already broad day-light, and the clock struck half-past eight. I had almost overslept the time of the duel; but whilst rubbing sleep from my eyes, I felt as if a voice sounded loudly in my ears as through a trumpet, "Nine o'clock!"—I jumped up. The rendezvous stood clear before my memory. In five minutes I was dressed. I took the two small swords, which I had taken the evening before from my brother's room. who was then from home, with me. But suddenly the thought struck me that I ought to have written a letter to my parents, to be ready in case I should fall a victim in the combat. On a strip of paper therefore I wrote in pencil: "My dear parents! on the receipt of these few lines!—" Despair! the clock struck a quarter to nine; I should have been too late, if I had delayed going another instant. I hastily threw the letter just begun into my desk, threw myself like Cæsar into the arms of fortune, and repaired bearing the swords under my mantle, to the Gymnasium.

You may easily imagine that I knew nothing of the art of fencing; but that mattered little to me. To dash blindfold into the adventure appeared to me both simple and easy. Besides, I confess that I reflected as little as possible on the way to the meeting-place. When I had entered the spacious saloon, I found my enemy already there with her second, but Pylades was nowhere to be seen. I was secretly enraged with her. Darius and I saluted each other proudly and distantly. I gave her the first choice of the swords. She took one and flourished it about quite dexterously, as if she had

been accustomed to the use of it. I saw myself (in imagination) already stabbed to the heart. At this moment Pylades arrived quite pale and terrified. I cast an angry glance at her, and locked the door.

"For heaven's sake," cried Pylades, "don't murder one another, it is downright madness!"

"Silent!" I called out with anger, and said hurriedly to Darius: "Do you still continue in your obstinacy, not to acknowledge yourself wrong, nor to ask my pardon?"

"I continue so!" said Darius, whilst with unparallelled coolness she proved the temper of her sword by bending it against the ground: "Czar Peter was a great man!"

"Down with him! long life to Charles XII!" I cried, bursting out into a furious rage. I placed myself in an attitude of defence, Darius did the same.

"Stop, stop!" cried Pylades in an agony. "Stop, it is my place to give the signal first!"

"Then be sharp about it!"

"Stop, stop!—I am thinking of something—stop!"

"I'll not wait!" cried I, "my Russian friend, I count one, two, three, and then we begin. One—two—three!—Our swords clashed one against the other, and in the next moment I was disarmed, and thrown on the ground. Darius stood over me, and I believed my last hour had arrived. How astonished was I however, when my enemy threw her sword away from her, took me by the hand and lifted me up, whilst she cheerfully cried: "Well, now you have satisfaction; let us be good friends again; you are a brave little body!"

Pylades sank upon her knees ready to faint. Nes-

tor sat upon the ladder and cried bitterly, I felt utterly bewildered, while I stared at my former enemy, who was bleeding profusely from a wound in the neck.

"You are bleeding!" I called out at length, "I have killed you!"

"Nonsense! a little scratch, which will soon be well again. Besides, I must tell you notwithstanding, that I like the Russians just as little as you do, and that I only feigned all this in order——" She grew pale, faltered, and was obliged to sit down.

"What have I done, O wretched me?" I exclaimed, overwhelmed, I threw myself on the ground by the side of the bleeding one.—"Forgive, oh forgive me!"

At this moment a tremendous noise was heard at the door; Pylades crawled to it, opened it, and in rushed the fencing master and three teachers. My senses now forsook me.

It was not until three weeks afterwards that I ascertained that Pylades had betrayed me, had written that very morning to one of the teachers, and intreated her to prevent my foolish purpose. But the note had been delayed, and consequently the affrighted teachers had arrived too late to prevent the duel.

Brita Kaijsa, for after this I re-christened no one any more, was in a short time perfectly cured of her wound, but I was laid up dangerously ill for upwards of three months. This illness however had a good and salutary effect; it cooled my violent temperament. After being restored to health, I learned that Brita Kaijsa had departed with her friends to Finland, which was their place of residence; that she had visited me several times during my illness, and expressed her sincere re-

gret at having provoked me, and at being obliged to leave Sweden before I had recovered and we could be perfectly reconciled. Nor was I less sorry to have been unable to say a farewell word of friendship to her; but my severe illness (during which I was almost incessantly raving) had greatly weakened old impressions, fresh ones succeeded: death, distress, the necessity of exertion for a maintenance, and many painful circumstances which nevertheless had a salutary influence on my character; in these I forgot the past; enough now of this! —we will return to the present.

Twelve years had rolled on. I had quite lost sight of my former friend, had forgotten my early valour, had learned to appreciate Czar Peter, and to wish well to all men—even to Russians. I had become Björn's well-disposed wife, and was now accompanying him in the Cabriolet on some visits, with as much propriety and modesty as any Mistress Prudentia. Well, Maria! the Major's wife, on whose sofa I now was sitting, the corpulent lady with the earnest open countenance, who seemed strange and yet so familiar to me—who else should it be, but my former thin enemy from the Gymnasium, Darius,—Czar Peter,—in a word Brita Kaijsa. Her voice and the scar on her neck were sufficient for me perfectly to recognise her. I cannot tell you how strange I felt under this discovery. I was confounded, affected, but my uppermost feeling was that of intense amusement, which I longed to vent in exclamations and laughter. The spirit of drollery once more overcame me. I took up a knitting-needle which was lying on the table, placed myself in a martial attitude before my hostess, and cried: "Long live Charles XII! Let us

fight. One, two, three——"

The Major's lady looked at me for a moment, as if she thought I were not in my right senses, and the next minute she cried: "Czar Peter was a great man!" took up likewise a knitting-needle, and placed herself in an opposing position to me. We then at once dropped our weapons and fell laughing immoderately into each others arms.

"Now imagine (if you can) Björn and the Major's astonishment at this scene, and you may easily conceive the questions, exclamations, explanations, astonishments, and the laughter.

Brita Kaijsa and I surveyed each other again.

"Good gracious, how aged you are since that time!" she exclaimed.

And you have not grown more civil! thought I to myself; but said, "you, on the contrary, have grown younger in appearance." And so it was, the full comely woman was handsomer by far than the dark skinny girl.

When our astonishment, retrospections, and laughing were ended, we fell on the chapter of amusements and youthful pranks in general. The gentlemen were quite vivacious over the reminiscences of their naughty tricks and adventures. Brita Kaijsa declared that she had never spent any period of her existence so pleasantly as that of her youth. All three unanimously agreed in regarding their young days as the golden age of life.

"Yes, yes!" said Björn at length, with a sigh, "it was a happy time, never to return."

"My love!" said I, somewhat teased by this rapturous preference of youth, "do not fancy, I beg, that

it has been so overabundantly excellent. Does not the age of childhood appear to men of maturity as a landscape in perspective. It seems so beautiful, only because it is so far distant. I am firmly convinced, that, as a boy, you have had many tedious hours with lectures, scoldings, punishment and restraints, and many distresses from which you are now free!" Björn laughed. "I, for my part, never feel disposed to praise the days of childhood. With me, that time was full of longing to be grown up. Ah, how delightful to be grown up, to escape scoldings for tearing my clothes. Ah, if I were but grown up and could drink coffee every day. Ah, how charming to be grown up and go to balls dressed in gauze and flowers like Mamma! Ah, were I grown up, and might read novels! Ah, ah, were I only grown up! I am firmly convinced, that all children, each in his way, have such longings. And suppose, indeed, that children are at times very happy—to what, I should like to know, does this happiness amount? A transient, partial happiness, of which they are but partly conscious, and for this very reason are able to enjoy it but in part. And when at length we attain the object of our childish longing, when we are grown up, drink Coffee, read Novels, and go to Balls, ah! then cravings for some future good become a part of our existence, and anxiety prevents the peaceful enjoyment of the present; so doubtful, you see, is the much extolled happiness of children and youth!"

"Upon my word, Madam Werner is not so far wrong," said the Major gravely, "and every age no doubt has its grievances. That was a capital remark about the

Landscape in perspective. Yes, Yes! there is some truth in that."

But my Bear looked at me half astonished, half distressed and said; "It seems then that yours was not a happy childhood, Franciska."

"Indeed it was not!" replied I, "I was too restless, too unreasonable ever to be satisfied, and without good sense and repose there can be no real happiness."

"Well said, well spoken;" said the Major.

The Tea was brought in, and at the same time the young gentlemen entered; three hearty, lively, but somewhat boorish young men. They were Brita Kaijsa's step-sons. The young gentlemen talked of hunting, horses and dogs; after which the conversation turned on the new inhabitant of Ramm. "They say he is an American," and, added one of the sons, "they say that he is very rich and has had adventures enough to be the hero of a Novel."

"Aye, to be sure" said our hostess, shrugging her shoulders. "I believe that he is precisely like other people, but you are always exaggerating, Robert."

Robert blushed as if he had committed a breach of propriety. The young Adamites at this moment swarmed in like so many locusts, and rushed to the tea-table, where they tried to seize upon anything in the shape of eatables. The Major's wife endeavoured to establish quiet, by preaching patience to them; but the young Imps took little heed of her exhortations, and would not rest until their demands were satisfied. I wished Björn had seen this, but he was in another room with the Gentlemen. "One ought not to pinch children," said Madam Stalmark, let them have liberty,

and they will be natural and not affected and pedantic as so many are. Have you seen v. P.'s girls? good gracious! how silly they seem to me, when they sit there in their white gloves, and screw their lips together, fancying themselves so elegant and genteel!"

The doors were now thrown open, and a figure entered, to whom the reproach of appearing affected could not well apply. Her hair and dress seemed to have been arranged by the wind. Madam Stalmark cried, "Come hither, Mally!" and introduced her step-daughter. Mally made an awkward boorish sort of courtesy, and rushed precisely like the brotherhood to the Tea-table, where they all soon began to quarrel; and I heard the pretty expressions, "Fie, are you not ashamed? will you let my biscuit alone? You urchin! You disgusting creature! You ill-bred thing!" And then followed loud screaming, "Mamma! Mamma!" But Mamma was quite unconcerned about it. The gentlemen came in, and while the Adamites were eating and abusing each other, we gladly seized the opportunity of getting out of the house with safety to life and limb, and took a hasty leave. Brita Kaijsa and I very cordially shook hands together, and congratulated each other mutually as to our neighbourship. Within myself, however, I formed a secret resolution not to expose myself soon again to the danger of being killed by wood-logs, and entertained with compliments on my aged appearance. The Major escorted me to the carriage. He was very polite, and appeared to be very much pleased with me. On the whole I had been amused with the visit, although I left the house with two little thorns in my side. Would you like to know what these were? In the,

first place I was vexed a little at Björn's expression that he had been so extraordinarily happy in his youth, while he at the same time sighed, as if the present was a heavy time to him. In the second place, I feared that I had spoken too much and too warmly in a place where it was my first visit. I feared Björn might be dissatisfied with me, and be inclined to rejoin "not well! not well!" to the Major's approving exclamation. Gladly would I have discovered his real opinion, but my good man sat quite dumb by my side, looking only at his reins. Well it matters not, I must ascertain it, thought I, and began to consider on the way in which I should introduce the question, but as I did not open my lips, he spoke suddenly, as follows; "I am sorry, Fanny, that you were not happy in your Youth."

"But still more sorry am I," cried I, almost ready to weep, "that you were so excedingly happy in yours; so happy, indeed, that you can never enjoy equal happiness, but must find everything in comparison, burdensome. You were happier with your cricket, than with your wife."

Björn stared at me with a look of surprise, which put me at once at ease. "You little silly thing" said he, "you surely don't believe that. You cannot possibly think me so mad. Yes, those times were certainly good, but these are still better."

"God be thanked!" said I softly but gratefully.

"And yet," continued Björn, "few children have been happier than I. When I remember how the whole world smiled around me, what I felt when I laid on the grass and looked up to the sky, and heard the rustling of the forest; when I think how I roved in

later years through the forests in Ramm, and every thing about me was joy and life; then Franciska, I wish that you had experienced similar sensations, that you had had a like happy childhood and youth."

"But life, Björn, like the years, has sometimes its second summer, and I feel that mine has began."

Björn seized my hand and pressed it. We sat silent, but happy, and the carriage rolled gaily along on the level road. We drove home.

"What a gloomy district," said I, sometime after. "It is not like our valley. Where are we? There is nothing here but hills and woods."

"We are not far from Ramm," said Björn. "I have purposely taken the road through this part of the country, that you might get a view of the spot where I passed my childhood. Besides, the house of itself is worth seeing, the park likewise. I am glad that some one is coming to live here. It is an unpleasant thing to see places deserted where men might live and enjoy life."

"Who can rightly enjoy life here, Björn? Every thing is so black and gloomy here; this long avenue is as dark as a vault; and there at the end of it is the house. It looks like an ancient haunted castle!"

"And yet it has been the scene of much joy, of much happiness; but certainly of a great deal of sorrow, too."

"Has any sad event happened here?"

"Yes—a misfortune."

"How has it healed again?"

"Like the scar," said I, "which grows on closed wounds."

"True," said Björn; "true, heaven be praised! I

have not been here for many years past, and scarcely know myself in it again. And the house,—how black it has grown."

"I assure you this place is haunted! I saw a little grey man peeping out of the window."

"Perhaps the new tenant has already arrived."

"If he is not more lively than the place, than—"

The cabriolet stopped, and we stepped out. With a sort of sensation of profound respect and dread, I looked up to the noble yet gloomy house, which with its three stories, a black tower, and two large wings built uniformly with the facade, resembled an owl lurking for its prey. Oaks of large size grew thickly round about it, and a number of the younger children of the wood, service trees, poplars and willows crowded round the walls up to the windows, like the common people when they wish to see a royal banquet. Towards the left I saw between the trees the glimmering of a silver stream. It was the Helga lake, the same water near which our little Rosenvik lies so pleasantly. In the great court grew a number of weeds; a stone basin was in the centre, where a disabled Neptune surrounded by water green with vegetation, indicated the former existence of a fountain. Every thing looked dilapidated and miserable. But in the house there was a movement, though not of ghosts, as we soon ascertained. The large gate was open, and from a workman who was just coming out, we learned that they were busy in putting every thing in proper order for the new tenant, whose arrival was expected shortly. We entered the house, and I was surprised at the spaciousness of the rooms, and the prospect from the other side of the

building; and was ready to exclaim, like the young lady, "Ah! how heavenly it is here! Trees here and woers there." But I was satisfied to behold the open view over a large pasture, encircled in the distance by wood-grown heights. From the left wing appears the Helga lake extending even to the foot of the wall, which, at this part of the building, rests on a low cliff surrounded by elder bushes. The waves wash gently against the rocks, making a pleasing murmur. In one of the most elegant rooms on this side, I was surprised by the sight of a large, splendid organ, which appeared to have been lately put up.

"Mr. Romilly is very partial to music," said the chief inspector of the workmen, who accompanied us very courteously through the apartments.

"What countryman is he?" inquired Björn.

"A Portuguese," was the reply. "He has been of the party of Don Miguel; has since become the heir of a paternal uncle in the West Indies; and wishes, it is said, to spend his large fortune in our country, which is at present the only peaceful and secure retreat in the world."

"If fortune favours," thought I to myself, "we shall get Don Miguel himself for our neighbour in Ramm."

I could not forbear to try the organ, which had a rich, though almost too powerful tone; but it enchanted me, and I should have been sitting there yet, if Björn had not reminded me that evening was drawing nigh.

"Well, the only pleasant things to me about this house," said I, "are this organ and the prospect towards Rosenvik. I should not like to live here, for all the world contains. But some autumnal evening in

moonshine I should like, if you, Björn, were with me, to stroll about the house and see whether there are not here, as in the ancient castles I have read about, some moveable panels, ghostly shadows, blood-stained stairs, balls of twine which roll along after one's heels and at last unravel and disclose a bloody dagger, and—here I suddenly stopped, for Björn sighed, and I saw on his otherwise so good-natured placid countenance, so painful an expression; I became alarmed, trembled all over, and involuntarily turned round to see if any of those apparitions were making their appearance. But, heaven be thanked, I saw nothing, and with secret alacrity I left the house with Björn. Just when we had reached the steps outside, several score of jackdaws flew with a loud cry from the tower over our heads into the wood.

"And here it was once so beautiful and so gay!—" sighed Björn. "It was a home for youth, sport, and life." He sighed again.

"But why has it become so changed?" I asked,—"Why did *ma chère mère* leave a residence, which was by far more splendid than Karlsfors, and was as you say, formerly so gay, and had guests more lively than these Jack-daws?"

"Because—because—a great misfortune befel her here. Do not speak to her of Ramm, Franciska; do not tell her that we have been here. Some other time I will tell you the reason of this my request. Look at that park! All this beautiful forest of nearly a mile in circumference, is, or more corrcctly *was*, a park! The walks are now most likely overgrown. We will stroll about here occasionally."

"It is gloomy indeed, here!" said I. At this

moment a ray of the setting sun broke through and cast a golden lustre on the gray-tinted house, and the dark tops of the forest. I do not know how the name of *Serena* just then came into my mind, as it were a literal interpretation of this sun-beam, but this ray was soon lost in darkness.

"Yes! so it is!" said Björn, as it were to himself, as he stood contemplating with a melancholy smile the suddenly illumined and now re-obscured house. I observed a tear in his eye.

"Silently we seated ourselves in the Cabriolet, and silently we rolled along towards our home. I breathed easier as we came into more open country. As it seemed to me that we had been silent long enough, thinking of that old nest of Jack-daws and misfortunes, I spoke at last and asked: "Björn, where is Serena?"

A smile now played on Björn's countenance, like sunshine in the forest, and he said: "Yes she is a most lovely creature!"

"I have no doubt of that, but where can one get a sight of her?"

"She resides in the town, and is the handsomest and best girl in the whole place."

"But, Björn, you have never mentioned a word about her to me!"

"I like best to let men and things speak for themselves. You shall soon see her. We will pay old Dahls a visit some of these days."

I wished to pursue my enquiries, but a large drop of rain fell on my nose; then came a second, and a third, succeeded by a perfect torrent. We looked for our umbrella it had been left behind and now pocket hand-

kerchiefs and shawls were in requisition to shelter my bonnet. Alas, in vain! My full-dress gauze bonnet, my holiday bonnet, thoroughly spoiled and done for on the way home. The shape, color, brightness, gauze flowers and every thing was wet through and disfigured. But the only sour look called forth by this mishap proceed from—Björn.

Thus ended the first Visiting Day.

THE SECOND VISITING DAY.

What does the bird of passage do? He wanders out into the world and seeks riotously about for a place where he may erect a house,—where he may build and live, for he finds no repose; and who I wonder would find it, until he has made a home, a little world of his own, wherein he may dwell according to his own pleasure in freedom and tranquillity? And when he has at length found the shore and the tree where he likes to settle, he collects leaves, wool, and straw, and prepares a nest for himself; then he goes to rest, sits in his retreat contemplating the world from thence, and sings. Thus he remains till his next passage.

After this introduction, I shall transport you at once to the Bird-cage, to Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel. My heart was not exactly "light as a feather" when I walked up the steps. Those words "malicious" and "ridiculous" laid heavy on my conscience, but from the landing Miss Hausgiebel came flying to meet me, and embraced me smilingly. I returned the greeting most heartily, and thought to myself: Miss Hausgiebel is a person of sense, and the more I saw of the Bird-cage

the more strongly I felt convinced of it.

This diminutive house was a perfect little museum. Excellent eugravings from original paintings of the great masters adorned the walls; fine busts in bronze and plaster were tastefully grouped in one room; in another was the gratification of a library; in another were collections of shells, minerals, and various rare objects of nature disposed under glass-covers. All was fresh and well arranged; wherever the eye was directed it was met by objects which inspired thought and feeling; and the little lively Hausgiebel, who lead us about, skipping all the while, and explaining to us everything most clearly, was not the least interesting speciman in the colleetion.

I was quite glad and revived. "Dear, how delightful it all is!" I exclaimed. "How can any one ever be dull here?"

"My dear Madam Werner," answered Miss Hellevi smartly, "you could not give me greater pleasure than you have now done, for it is just my most anxious wish to keep at a distance that worst of enemies *ennui*, together with its train of vapours and gapings. All my collection in Bird-cage, made during a period of ten years, have been intended solely to preserve my friends and myself in particular, from finding our time to hang heavily; it is my daily employment and delight to bring new straw into my nest, and thus tastefully to improve it. Look at this engraving after Dominichino's St. John, and that head of Venus, in plaster. I received them yesterday, and am quite delighted with them to-day. I am not rich enough to possess myself of the original master-pieces,

but copies of them I may obtain, and bring the ideas of great artists into my nest, at little cost."

"But these master-pieces surely are originals!" said I, whilst entering the little cabinet of natural history.

"Yes," answered Miss Hausgiebel, "and therefore I esteem them as the greatest treasures I possess. The supreme artist, our adorable Creator, deals with this, as in everything *en grand seigneur;* he scatters his inimitable master-pieces over sea and land, in deserts and ocean-deeps. The earth is full of them,—men need only go about and gather them."

This remark came somewhat unexpected. "Oh, Miss Hausgiebel!" said I, "you are right, the world is rich, and how much richer might life be, were we all to be collectors, and, like you, endeavoured to bring home treasures daily,—each one in his way,—a straw as you term it. But we walk about, for the most part like blind men, and see nothing."

"Yes, that's the misfortune! Could the doctors operate on this kind of cataract—"

"That alone would avail nothing," said Björn; "it would still require some other kind of operation."

"Good heavens! What do you mean by that, Doctor Werner?"

"That in many cases the mind suffers incapacity and dullness, which—"

"I hate every thing bordering on dullness!" cried Miss Hausgiebel, starting up like a scared bird; "the very sound of the word sinks like lead into my heart. I have strenuously endeavoured to avoid it, and, from fear of it, I have taken my flight up to the Bird-cage; but even here, alas! I have had to experience that

there is a law in the world, called the law of gravity, according to which, the body must still cleave to the earth. But I have striven to unshackle my spirit, and, therefore, I gather around me objects, which help it to fly like birds about the world, and sip the dew of all the flowers of Paradise. Were I a Corinna or a Madam de Stael, I should probably give up all this, and content myself with my own inspiration. I should sit myself down alone in my Bird-cage, with the lyre in my hand, and, like a nightingale, delight my friends with my own melody; but I am only Hellevi Hausgiebel, scantily endowed in body and mind, and being nevertheless desirous that people should be amused at my house, I have called to aid these fair products of nature and of art. And if, with all this, my guests should tire, I then maintain, that it is their own fault."

Thus spoke the vivacious Miss H., whilst she led us into the garden, where we found hot-houses filled with blooming vines, and peach-trees, and a number of rare and beautiful plants, which Miss Hellevi rears, and calls her children. Bird-cage consists wholly and solely of the house and the large garden, richly stocked with trees and flowers. In a small, most lovely pavillion we partook of a choice collation. In the midst of this, several visitors from town arrived, among whom was Counsellor Hök, who received an especially hearty reception from Miss Hausgiebel. The conversation became general, and soon turned to the future neighbour at Ramm. The most varying reports were repeated and conjectures started about him. They hinted, at the surmise, that he was a spy; but what he intended to spy out no one could say. To an infinite

number of amusing suspicions, Miss Hausgiebel said: "I'll tell you what good people, I'll lay a wager, that our much-talked of neighbour is,—simply a decent man, who is tired of his native country, and wishes to while away his time in Sweden, by shooting hares and stags. I have been sitting here for the last ten years, in Birdcage, and have seen neither spies nor renegades, nor heroes of romance. I believe these kind of people are continually decreasing in the world. On the other hand, I have seen many people who are tired of themselves, and who seek only to dissipate the tedium of existence. Heaven grant that this class might likewise soon be at an end. At the same time, I have no objection to our new neighbour being of the first class; indeed it is just what I wish; it would enliven the whole neighbourhood, and give rise probably to an interesting romance."

On this chapter the conversation dwelt at some length, and was very animated. Miss Hausgiebel is one of those singularly rare persons who really enliven conversation, and elicit bright remarks from others. I was very much astonished to see Björn so witty. He and Miss Hausgiebel criticised and bantered each other cleverly, like two old friends. When we wished to go away, Miss Hellevi accompanied us to the garden-door. I felt anxious to make some little apology for the expressions which I had so incautiously used at our first meeting.

I believe she read my wishes in my eyes, for she shook me by the hand, and said very kindly: "My dearest Madam Werner, you will often come again to the Bird-cage, I trust. I mind nothing about people

saying that the old maid Hellevi Hausgiebel is ridiculous and malicious. I have heard the report myself. My hair will not turn grayer on that account than it is already, but I should like to appear in a more amiable light to you, therefore I venture to entreat your frequent return; and Doctor Werner will accompany his lady I hope; I feel better if I only see him. But, mark me well, I shall not press you. I hate all pressing in society; and should you, dearest Madam Werner, say at any time to your husband: 'Ah, dearest, I suppose we must pay the old Miss Hellevi a visit; its true she is extremely wearying, but she has asked us so often,' I beg you, for heaven's sake, then, not to come. And if, moreover, you should never visit Hellevi Hausgiebel any more, she will, notwithstanding, say the Werners are delightful people, and it would be a happiness to her to see them often.

'But," said I, "the Werners are less liberal, they *insist* upon seeing you at Rosenvik, and would reproach you if you did not come very soon."

"Is it possible? Well, then I'll come the first minute I can." And the little lively person kissed her hand and flew away. Miss Hausgiebel has a remarkable likeness to a bird; all her movements are quick, but too rapid to be graceful.

While the Cabriolet trotted along with us in the cool fine summer's evening, I endeavoured to satisfy myself clearly of the impression which the Bird-cage and its possessor had made upon me. I had been agreeably entertained; I liked Miss Hausgiebel; first, because she had pardoned my stupidity so cordially; and secondly, on account of her Bird-cage; and her philosophical

way of life: but I was not quite satisfied; one objection after another kept rising up in my mind against the Bird-cage, then followed in succession endless counter-arguments in its favour; so in order at last to extricate myself from this indecision, I determined to bring Björn into the discussion.

"The Bird Cage," I began, "is exceedingly neat and clean, but—"

"Well, but?"

"But I feel the absence of a something in this little museum, when I look at it as a home. I mean that altogether there is something dry, something egotistical in the general appearance of the place."

"How so?" inquired Björn, and grew attentive.

"How shall I say?—it seems to me as if the heart must get dried up by this love of shells and stones. Whom does Miss Hausgiebel render happy by all the care and devotion of her life? Whom does she benefit by it?"

"Dear Franciska!" said Björn, "we should take care not to judge too severely, nor to consider the word useful in too narrow a signification. It is true Miss Hausgiebel lives a pleasant life to herself, but she imparts pleasures also to her friends. Without Miss Hellevi and her Bird-cage this part of the country would be wanting in one of its pleasantest attractions; Miss Hausgiebel's Wednesdays' *Soirees* are agreeable and interesting, we will pay her a visit some day."

"Yes, Björn; it is well that she entertains people agreeably, very well that some one is kind enough to undertake the task, but still it appears to me, that the Bird-cage would have been doubly agreeable, if it had

something—what shall I say?—something of human affectionate interest about it."

"There is no lack of that, even, although it is concealed."

"What do you mean?"

"Miss Hausgiebel has a younger sister who has made a bad match, and has thereby been very unfortunate. When she became a widow, and lost her property, Miss Hausgiebel took her and her daughter to her, and became their benefactor and kind friend. This lady who is an estimable mother, grew misanthropic under her misfortunes. Were you ever to visit the upper story of the house, you would see a life of retirement, which presents a no less interesting picture of life, than Miss Hellevi and her Museum;—then the two sisters are most affectionately attached."

"If there are eggs of this sort in the Bird-cage, I am perfectly satisfied with it. You see now, dear Björn, without loving human hearts, I can picture to myself no happy dwelling, even were it filled with works of art and precious stones. Long life, therefore to Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel and her Bird Cage!'

THE THIRD VISITING DAY.

"A poor day in a rich house! The house would be splendid, but it is only fine. The master wishes to be a *grand seigneur*, but lords it only with his chandeliers and french tapestry. The lady of the house wishes to be thought of the highest fashion, and to shine in con-

versation; from all which proceed a strange jumble of inconsistencies. The daughters pretend to be educated, talented, *naive*, and speak a kind of jargon, displaying utter vacuity of mind. The son wants to be a man of consequence, and is a fair, diminutive young gentleman, with thin carefully curled hair. The whole family are full of unsuccessful pretensions.

"A great inheritance, a patent of nobility (N.B. Herr v. P. says that he has taken up his German title in the Swedish); and a journey to Paris have raised this family—in their own ideas—to the high point of distinction. Two years ago they settled in Britenberg, stayed there during the summer, fitted up a splendid house, and wished to be like eagles among the small birds of the place; but they were obliged, to their astonishment, to perceive that *ma chère mère* looked down uponthem.

"Madam Von P. was a very polite lady, but a certain air of condescending civility towards myself, deprived her courtesy of its value. Several young gentlemen were on a visit, and talked and laughed much with the Misses Emilie and Adele, who in the most elegant toilette and french gloves, sat and bowed their heads, as if they moved on springs. Madam v.P. inquired of me after Madam Mansfeldt, investigated my degree of relationship with her, and as the result of the examination discovered, that I was not in the most distant manner related to *ma chère mère*. I had never thought of this before, and it almost pained me to perceive it. The conversation then turned on Stockholm, and society there, and behold! all Madam v. P.'s acquaintances and intimate friends were Counts and

Countesses. I heard a great deal of the Count L'sh's family, she had lately been in Britenberg, the v. P.'s had been invited to spend part of the summer at Count L.'s in H—nas, the v. P's had made up a party last summer to go with Count L's to Uddevalla. And they had lived together at Gustavsberg. The Countess L. was a remarkably charming person, whom Madam v. P. loved like her own sister. The young Countesses L. were most lovely polished girls, *toute a fait comme il faut.*

"Do you know the Countess L's family, Madam Werner?"

"No!" Madam Werner was obliged to confess that she had not the honor.

"The L's are visited by the best society in Stockholm: I was there introduced by Baron N's family; probably they are known to you?"

"No."

"Indeed? They are quite *Bon Ton;* but if I am not mistaken, I have met you in company one evening at Count B's."

"Impossible, for I have never been there."

"But I fancied so just now; pardon me—may I take the liberty to ask your family name, Madam Werner?"

"Buren.—"

"Buren,—Buren.—An ancient family of title, I believe?"

"I don't know: I believe—(I blushed; I knew that my family was not noble; but a wretched petty weakness had come over me).

"Ah! yes," continued Madam v. P. consolingly, "it is most assuredly a noble name, but in disturbed times every thing is easily confounded. Our family, for ex-

ample, which is noble and of ancient German descent, (there having even been princes and landgraves of this name) our family I say, had as it were, forgotten their rank, and lived quite in obscurity in Sweden, till Count L. said to my husband: "It won't do any longer my best friend, you with your large fortune and your services ought to have a seat and voice in the House of Peers." And Count L. said a great deal more of the reasons which would enable us to assert our claim to nobility. The matter is in itself trifling, especially in the present time. Those who advance with their time, easily perceive that manners form at present the true Aristocracy, and that acquirements are as good as a Patent of Nobility. We live in an enlightened age, dearest Madam Werner; and my friend, the Countess L., always said, 'Education always gives the real rank.' Well, it is true, one ought indeed always to rejoice, and thank Heaven that one is not called Backström, or Wallquist, Löfgren, Sjögren, and so forth. To have a fine name, and have a good property, is always a lucky fate. If we have a high situation assigned to us by Providence, we may more easily select our acquaintances, and obtain access to certain circles. Amalie L.'s sister once said.—Do you know the Countess W?"

"N—yes—a little."

"Well, is she not a dear creature? Amalie says herself, *ma sœur vaut mieux que moi.* I am glad that you know such a distinguished lady. Ah, do mention to me a few more of your acquaintances in Stockholm; perhaps it may so happen that you know mine also."

I confess my weakness, Maria, I searched in my head for Counts and Countesses. I believe I was in-

fected with Madame v. P's love of fine people. At last I mentioned the Baroness R.

Madam v. P. assumed an air of contempt. "Dont know her," said she, most likely *retiree du monde.* At Count L.'s and at our house one always finds the best society. The *corps diplomatique* are quite at home at L.'s and at our house."

Suddenly I got sight of Björn, who stared at me with a most disapproving grimace; this, as well as my unsuccessful attempt with the Baroness R. drove all assumption of high acquaintance out of my head, and in order to conquer my weakness and at once set myself clear, I named the family of His Excellency O. as one of my acquaintainces in Stockholm.

Madam v. P. paused a little. "Oh, indeed!" she said slowly. "Well, I have also been there,—once or twice."

"Oh, I was there two, even three times a week" said I smiling.

"Indeed—a most distinguished house. Perhaps the Countess O. is one of your intimate friends, my dearest Madame Werner.

"No I saw her very seldom. I gave her daughters lessons in Music.

"Oh—indeed!—for friendship's sake, no doubt."

"No, for remuneration. I was poor and got my livelihood by it."

Madam v. P. blushed and appeared quite emoarrassed. But Björn smiled, and cheered by that, I proceeded: My brother-in-law Bergwall, and my friend Madam Wallquist, procured me through the medium of Miss R., the governess in the house of Madam O.

the situation of teacher of music to the daughters of thisexcellent family."

"Oh, indeed—indeed"—said Madam v. P. evidently surprised, and cried, turning the conversation; "dear children! won't you play and sing a little ot something to us? something of one of those pieces which you have sung with the young Countesses L."

The yong ladies did not stir, till several of the young gentlemen supported Madam v. P's. request, and then sung French and Italian pieces, which they entirely spoiled by their affected and tasteless manner. Meanwhile Madam v. P. spoke of Coloritt, of Weber, Rossini and Meyerbeer. "Weber," said she, is bizarre; Rossini poor in melody, but Meyerbeer excels both. He is in truth *le prince de la musique.* You must not think, Madam Werner, that I do not highly esteem the exercise of an art of whatever kind it may be. In my opinion, it is art alone that makes us live a more exalted life, and therefore I have given my daughters the same education which I myself received; they know four languages, have various talents, and we have lately taken a journey to Paris, in order to perfect their acquirements. Have you been in Paris, Madam Werner?'

"No.'

Then I would advise you to go there as soon as possible! *On vit a Paris mais on vègète ailleurs.* Adele, my darling, do sing that short piece once more, which Count B. has sent you. Do you know Count B., Madam Werner?"

"No."

"He is coming to us in the summer—a most dis-

tinguished young man."

"Do you know Mr. Dahl's family?" I now asked in turn, vexed at being always the questioned party.

"No—a little—we move in such different circles. Very nice people, I believe. I have met with them once by chance in company. A Merchant—dear, what do they call them?—Dall—Dalhens, they are not much in the higher society of this place.

"Because they are too old, I should suppose. I have heard a great deal about their grand-child Miss Löfwen. She is said to be very amiable."

"The girl is very nice looking, but a poor little ailing creature, she wo'nt live long. The whole family are weakly."

"Poor ailing little creature?" I repeated in astonishment to myself, "what in the name of—"

But I had not much time to wonder, for one of the Gentlemen mentioned the new neighbour of Ramm (soon I shall be sick of hearing of the new neighbours) and Madam v. P. who apparently in a sort of fear lest the conversation should flag, took up the subject and treated it as follows:

"Ah, he is said to be an interesting man, a real *Hèros du roman.* He is called *Romanus* or *Romulus*, and is an Italian of a princely race. He assassinated his first wife and eloped with a handsome English lady to America. Then he fought a duel with her brother, whom he killed, upon which his beloved died of grief. At present he is wandering all over the world to drown his sorrow, and to do good. His beneficence is said to be as great as his fortune."

I sat with my mouth wide open.

"Such adventures"—continued Madam v. P. speaking very affectedly—are so extremely suited to our eccentric and passionate times, that one cannot judge them according to the laws of a rigid morality. Deeply sensitive, passionate, if I may be allowed the expression. Byronish natures demand a standard of their own. One ought to take the climate into consideration and not expect from the man who lives under the warm sun of the South what is required of the inhabitants of the Northern clime."

I felt surprised at Madame v. P's. speech, and chiefly at her expression—"our eccentric and passionate age;" but I soon perceived that Madam v. P's. knowledge of the world was altogether derived from novels. Observe, Maria, I only reprehend her novel reading, as exclusive of more improving studies. In their due place let novels, novel-readers, and novel-writers flourish, especially as I happen to be one.

Mais revenons a nos moutons! The young ladies sang, quavered, and appeared to have forgotten that there is such a word as "leave off." I went up to them, and was wicked enough to ask if they could also sing a Swedish song? to which they replied "no."—Then they talked of Paris, of Malibran, of fashions, and—I cannot praise their remarks.

Affectation, superficial acquirements, arrogance, how greatly do I detest you all! and, therefore, I will now flee from this owlet's nest.

Madam v. P. took leave of me with many civilities, coldly expressed, and did not beg me to repeat my visit. I suspect that my music-teaching, and my acquaintances with names ending with—valle and quist,

satisfied her that I did not belong to her circle.

Well—she may be right. On our way home we met waggons loaded with furniture for the new neighbour. If this man, after all that has been said about him, is only a respectable common-place man, then I shall be very angry.

June 14th.

Yesterday evening we were at home, and very glad of it we were. Björn was working away like a thorough carpenter, and I was reading to him what I had written on the subject of our visits. He was amused and laughed, but censured me for having written too severely about several persons. He was not at all satisfied with my judgment of the v. P.—'s family.

"You call them a succession of unsuccessful claims," said he; "and as yet you have only seen them once. My sweet Franciska, it is very difficult to judge correctly of character even after long acquaintance, and therefore impossible, to form a just opinion in one single visit; besides, men display themselves so differently under different circumstances. I have seen many affected and ridiculous in company, whom I have admired on their sick-bed. Many, on some occasions tedious and assuming, whom I have afterwards found agreeable and modest. Many people indulge for a time in singularities, which they afterwards for ever lay aside. Many conceal their better qualities, and perform the noblest actions, whilst the world laughs at the fool's cap which they choose to wear. Just so it may possibly be with this family.'

"Granted, granted, dear Björn; and I'll promise you if I get a sight of this fair side of theirs, I'll paint

it in my most glowing colours."

"Would it not be better in the meantime to keep their faults more in the shade? By such rash judgments as these it is that we injure our neighbours, for those who listen to them do not stop to consider that one fault does not condemn the whole man."

"What are your wishes, Björn? You make me quite melancholy. Shall I throw the whole scribble into the fire?"

"No, let it alone now. The same reflections that we have just been making, will most probably occur to your reader."

"To make this more sure, Björn, as well as to relieve my conscience, I shall note down this little conversation for her."

And this I have, herewith, done, dear Maria. Ah! I fear I shall always remain a thoughtless creature, judging from first impressions. Forgive me, and still remain kind to your—

FRANCISKA.

III.

THIRD LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

June 16th.

"I am returning again from a better world. I have been in a heavenly land! Would you like to know what I saw there? Well, a patriarch and his wife, the very sight of the venerable old couple rejoices the heart. Serenity smoothes their aged brows. Cheerfulness and wisdom sit upon their lips, and in their gaze one may read love and peace. Around them was a company of angels; blooming young maidens and younger children—one of these who fully responded to my idea of a seraph, particularly claimed my attention, not because all seemed attached to her, nor for her beauty, for she was not handsome; but because she looked so innocent and affectionate, and because she seemed to live entirely for others. Now she was occupied with the patriarchs, and mutual love beamed in their looks. Now she snatched up the angel-children in her arms, kissed and caressed them. Now she spoke with the fair young girls with animation and affection. She was a celestial creature, whose sole happiness seemed to consist in loving. She beckoned the attendants, and nectar and delicious fruits were handed round, and she herself took care that the children should obtain as much as their little hands could hold.

From her fair, moderately arched brow, shone a ray of purity which touched my heart, and filled me with the idea of a heavenly vision. The glance of her fine blue eye was bright and kind, and it had that bashful, quiet, ingenious expression which pleases us so much in children. I have never seen a look which expressed so much of goodness. Now and then a glance beamed from that benign eye, which seemed to tell that her whole existence was made up of bliss. Her hair was light brown, incomparably radiant and beautiful; her complexion white and transparent. I have never seen a form which displayed more the nobility of the soul, nor a being who reminded one more of music. I learned that this lovely girl is called Serena, and that those children were assembled to celebrate her birth-day. They all attached themselves to Serena. All wanted her, all wished to hear her, and to be heard by her.

"Ah, Serena," said the little angel-girls, "sing us the Little Flower-Girl's song—that beautiful, sweet song!"

"Ah, Serena," entreated the children-angels, "play to us, that we may dance."

"I will do everything for you that you wish," replied the sweet Serena. "What shall I do first? I think I must obey the children and play a dance, and then we will ask the stranger-lady for that pretty song, for I am sure she will sing it better than I."

And Serena sat down to play, the young ones danced, and the old ones smiled, for it was delightful to see them.

After the dance the fruit-baskets were handed round again, and Serena requested me in the name of all, to sing the "Little Flower Girl." I went to the piano

forte. The whole little party with oranges in their hands crowded round me; their rosy cheeks and cheerful countenances animated my voice; and when I had finished, I heard from all sides: "Ah! once more, once more."

And I sang once and twice more; the little angels were never satisfied in listening to "the Little Flower Girl." The patriarchs thanked me for the song as heartily as the angels, and thanked the author.

Serena introduced games. You should have seen the joy and mirth they produced. I sat near the patriarchs. During the game one of the heavenly little angels, who, however, possessed a good share of terrestrial avidity, stole into the room in which I sat, and took of the refreshments which her sister had put by. Serena, who at this moment was pouring out negus to the patriarchs, followed the child with her eye. She then went softly up to her, lead her to one side, took her upon her lap, and said with a serious, yet kindly look:

"Why have you taken your sister's apple, little Eva? Was that right? Was that a good action?"

Little Eva terrified and ready to cry, stammered out: "Why, she had two, and I had none."

"Because you had eaten yours; but in no case had you any right to take of your sister's fruit."

"I thought that no one saw it!" answered the weeping little one.

"If nobody here saw you, yet God saw you, and he does not love children who do what is wrong. Go now and put the apple down again, my little Eva!"

Little Eva went and laid the apple down; (would to

heaven, that the first Eve had done the same,) the tears ran down her face, whilst she said to Serena: "Will you never more be kind to me again?"

"Will you promise me, never to take any thing again that does not belong to you, without permission?" said Serena with a gracious, serious look.

"Yes, indeed!" sobbed the child, "I will never do so again."

"Then I will love you again, and you shall again be my dear little Eva!" said Serena; she took the child again upon her lap, and let it cry out on her breast.

This little scene which I had witnessed furtively, whilst conversing with the old people, gave me a lesson, which I never shall forget.

At Dahls also, mention was made of the expected guest at Ramm, but not with silly conjectures; something good and noble, which he is reported to have done, was spoken of: "The man is certainly not Don Miguel," and there was joy in heaven over the remark.

There was a little sparrow in this little heaven; such a sparrow I have never seen. It was tame and social. The little angels were particularly delighted with it. There was a laugh, a cry of delight, when the sparrow flew about their little heads; and the name of "Gullgul, Gullgul!" (golden or as yellow as gold) was repeated in exulting choruses.

Thus playing, dancing, singing, and laughing continued the whole of the evening. Once the angelic-host came and formed, under the direction of Serena, a circle round the patriarchs. Bear and his little wife also found themselves surrounded by the fair and

happy circle; then they again, with song, divided to form fresh groupes.

Agreeable and lovely as it was in this heaven, we were nevertheless obliged to think of returning to our little earthly home, and, after we had supped with the angels, we went away in the cabriolet. But the venerable patriarchs and the fair Serena first entreated us so cordially and earnestly to come again and spend a whole day with them, that we were obliged to give them our promise to do so. I confess, that nothing could be more agreeable to my wishes. I could speak of nothing on our way home, but of Serena, and fell asleep with her pure image in my soul.

Perhaps I shall, some day, see this house in a more prosaical light, and then you shall receive a less poetic picture. Life has its every-day, as well as its festive-garb. For the present, I only know that I have enjoyed a heavenly vision.

June 18th.

It may be good abroad, but it is better at home. I have thought of this a hundred times during a few happy days spent tranquilly at home. I am taming my Bear and my little animals; my work prospers. Six hens, three ducks, and two turkey-cocks are now my intimate acquaintances. To-day I have stroked and fed my cows. Splendid creatures! The largest and finest one I have christened *Andumbla* in memory of the fair Northern Mythos, of which I had been reading in the symbolic doctrines of Eddas.

My Björn is a singular being; whilst I wean him from his little faults, he wins—heaven knows how—an

increasing power over me. This much is certain, that he is excellent and sensible. Yesterday evening he came, with his pipe in his mouth, into the drawing-room, but stood at the door and made a sly inquiring grimace, whilst he was watching me. I ran up to him, took him with his pipe in my arms, and pulled him into the room. I was so happy that his pipe did not hate the drawing-room. But too great familiarity—

June 19th.

Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel—exuberant spirits—supper at Svanö;—this was our afternoon yesterday.

Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel is a lively clever creature, but almost too lively for me. She reminds me of preserved ginger; if taken occasionally it is refreshing; one calls it delicious! but it does not do every day. Bjorn, come here, darling! — What do you say to this simile?

"That it is wicked, and that you are ginger yourself, you monkey!"

"Ginger? That's what you are, you Bear!"

June 20th.

The sisters-in-law are arrived. Yesterday morning, just when Björn and I had been squabbling, a note came from *ma chère mère*, inviting Björn and me to supper; first, because she wished to see us; secondly, because she wanted us to be with her to receive the relations, who were expected at Karlsfors that evening. She added: "If the little woman would come somewhat earlier, I should be glad of it, and will therefore send my bay-horses with the Norrköpings-carriage to Rosenvik. This time I'll take it upon my conscience to separate man and wife, but if they can both come together

I shall be so much the happier."

I was very curious about the brothers and sisters-in-law. Björn was quite happy at the thought of seeing his beloved brother, Peter, again. On account of several patients however, he could not go to Karlsfors before the evening. I therefore went alone in the Norrköpings-carriage, which went much better than the Heaven-chariot.

I found Counsellor Hök at *ma chère mère's*. He comes regularly once a week and dines at *ma chère mère's*, and brings journals and law papers from the town, where he lives; for *ma chère mère* is very fond of law, and is engaged in many law suits. They have a good deal to say about her affairs, into which he enters more heartily than if they were his own. The conversation begins at coffee time, (for during dinner *ma chère mère* is a most attentive hostess to all her guests,) and lasts till six o'clock in the afternoon. Then *ma chère mère* says: "Now, counsellor, we will take a walk." After this, both rise and begin to walk up and down the large saloon, side by side. This period is regarded as a truce to business. The promenaders do not exchange a single word, but *ma chère mère* walks with her hands behind her back, and repeats continually, in low whisper to herself, "Trallala, trallala, trallala, trallala, trallala, trall!" This promenade, which is called "Trall," lasts about half an hour; after which *ma chère mère* says: "Now, counsellor, we will sit down!" And now they sit down, and resume their conversation, but not again on the subject of business, but about old times and persons then living; they relate anecdotes and drink tea. Thus have they for upwards of twenty

years been promenading, trallaling and chatting together. At times the counsellor is remarkably absent. He places himself, for example, within a door or against a door, and stands there, lost in thought, without moving from the spot for hours; sometimes at table, when he is pouring out wine or water, he does not notice whether the glass is full, but keeps pouring away, till it runs on the table-cloth. *Ma chère mère* is not particularly well satisfied with this, as you may easily believe, but she never says a reproachful word about it to Counsellor Hök, only jokes with him about his "poetic distraction." However, she is generally very quick in anticipating his wishes, when she sees his long hand reaching over to a decanter or bottle.

But I am letting my pen run like a wild-duck from one thing to another. I stopped at the evening of my relative's arrival. *Ma chère mère* had herself and house in holiday array. The helmet sat pompously and proudly upon her serious forehead, and with the air and step of a general, she marched at the side of Counsellor Hök through the large appartment. They were occupied with the "trall." All the doors were open, domestics in livery were bustling about the stairs. Every thing wore a highly festive appearance.

"Welcome, my dear Franciska!" said *ma chère mère*, with a proud demeanor, reaching me her hand. "You will now make the acquaintance of your new relations; we shall soon see what sort of young women they are; occupy yourself in the mean time as you like, my love, whilst I finish my trall."

I availed myself of the opportunity this permission she gave me to inspect the rooms prepared for the sisters-

in-law. I found the coarse toilet-covers exchanged for much finer ones. I was delighted with *ma chère mère* for that. The rooms were in all respects completely furnished; everything was neat, substantial and comfortable; but I missed the little poetic embellishments, all those graceful superfluities, without which life and time are but bare and tasteless. *Ma chère mère* (thought I,) will leave them to the young occupants, she will let them embellish their own little world according to their own fancy. But though I acknowledged that this way might probably be the best, I had nevertheless an irresistable inclination to anticipate the tastes of the sisters-in-law. I went into the garden, gathered a quantity of flowers, which grew their in abundance, wove some garlands, and hung them on the toilet mirror. I arranged also flowers in the glasses, and was delighted with the pleasing effect. At this moment I heard a sharp voice say behind me: "So, so, little one it pleases you to invade my garden, and to spoil my flowers! What do you think I shall say to that?" I turned round and beheld with terror *ma chère mère's* severe countenance, the expression however quickly changed; and laughing and patting me on the cheek she added: "Come, come, only don't look so serious, I only mean that you are poetical, and that if you like to poetize and fill your sister-in-law's rooms with all sorts of trumpery it is your business and not mine. Your work, I must needs say notwithstanding, looks very pretty, I see you are not without taste, my dear. Will you have a cup of tea now? then come with me; for my commanding officer (so *ma chère mère* terms her stomach), does not feel disposed to wait for the

young gentry. Hök is planted in the saloon, in one of his reveries, but we will rouse him."

I accompanied *ma chère mère*, and when I entered the saloon, I heard Björn's steps in the adjoining room. I had only just time to whisper to *ma chère mère*; "if he should ask after me, say that you have not seen me!" and I stole quickly behind an open door. *Ma chère mère* nodded assent to my little joke, and my husband entered. Almost at the same moment that he saluted and kissed *ma chère mère's* hand, he asked: "Where is my wife?"—"I don't know anything about that,"—said *ma chère mère* very gravely,—"I have not seen her at all." "Good heavens! where is she then?" said Björn with a mien of such alarm and concern that I could not bear to see it, and when, after having looked round on all sides, he turned to leave the room, I rushed up to him and caught him in my arms. Ah, how sweet it is, to feel one's-self beloved! Ha, ha, ha, ha! and *ma chère mère* laughed loudly out at our embracing.

Björn was quite in good humour, he had found his little wife again, and expected soon to embrace his beloved brother. *Ma chère mère* took her seat at the bottom of the large saloon, in her great arm-chair of red damask; made me sit by her, and afterwards seated Björn, Counsellor Hök, and Tutten in a semi-circle around her.

I saw that *ma chère mère* wished to have an imposing scene, and to make an impression on the young ladies.

In order to get up to her they were obliged to traverse the whole length of the saloon. I do assure you, that my whole heart beat with sympathy for them, and

I inwardly praised Björn's kind consideration in having presented me, unprepared as I was, to *ma chère mère* by which he saved my character the cruel ordeal of an imposing introduction, which is my greatest dread and abhorrence.

Ma chère mère's strong nerves prevent her being able to form any conception of such feelings; whilst we sat at our posts, she related with animation the history of her first presentation at Court, how she had a long time previously practised herself in courtesying to five chairs, and how these courtesies were afterwards performed before the crowned heads. *Ma chère mère* described the whole of this scene and the principal personages in it, in so lively and distinct a manner, that I forgot where I was, and why I was sitting there. But now the rolling of a carriage was heard, *ma chère mère* was silent, I felt anxious and rose up, Björn did the same. *Ma chère mère* laid her weighty hand in the way of interdiction on my arm, and said to us, "Sit still! the old woman wishes to be the first to welcome them to her house, the old woman will await them here." She looked quite solemn, and I sat myself down again with a throbbing heart. Björn hesitated, but as soon as a bustle and voices were heard below, he said,— "That is Jean Jacques!" and seated himself likewise. Now steps were heard, and a servant announced with a loud voice: "Baron Jean Jacques and the lady Baroness!"

We heard the rustling of a silk dress, and in came, accompanied by a gentleman, a lady about my own age but taller than I. She looked quite *comme il faut*, walked quickly, and with a certain modest self-possession, up

the room as far as *ma chère mère*, who raised herself majestically, walked a few steps towards the newly-arrived, and looked extremely imposing. The sister-in-law courtsied very profoundly, and kissed *ma chère mère's* hand, as I had done. *Ma chère mère* kissed her in return, but only on the forehead, and embraced and welcomed her as the young wife. She then saluted Jean Jacques in the same manner as she had formerly saluted Björn; after which the new relatives were introduced to us. I took my seat next to my sister-in-law. At first we were a little agitated, but soon composed ourselves, became quite intimate, and began an agreeable conversation. Jane Maria pleased me much, very much. She is not handsome, but has a look of superiority, and a very fine figure. Her manners and address indicate much benignity and good sense. Her dress was likewise very suitable and becoming; a brown silk pelisse, over it a large gold chain with a watch, a simple but fashionable cap with pale blue ribbons, which suited very well with her light hair and complexion. I like a woman who understands how to dress, it is a mark of good sense and taste.

"But where is Peter?" Björn had now cried at least seven times successively, ere yet the first salutations were over. At length Jean Jacques answered: "Peter will not arrive yet, if he comes at all this evening; Ebba took a fancy to lie down to sleep at C., where we dined, and she would by no means have herself distured. My wife and I were at last obliged to leave her behind, that *ma chère mère* might not be disappointed in her expectation of seeing us this evening. Ebba, it seems to me, might have slept in the carriage very well, for

she does not care for scenery, and sits always with her veil down." *Ma chère mère* wrinkled her brows a little, but Björn frowned outright. I looked at Jane Maria, who smiled emphatically. Almost at the same instant we heard the roll and stopping of a carriage. "There he is!" cried Björn, who started off like a bomb-shell, and rushed out to meet his beloved brother, before *ma chère mère* could detain him. She shook her head, and looked angry, but I was pleased with my Bear for loving his brother so dearly.

Now behold my sister-in-law, No. 2.

A little, slender figure moves in conceitedly, but gracefully. Her eyes are half closed, her little straw bonnet hangs over her arm; the little cap with pink ribbons sits on one ear, and lets a few curls of dark-brown hair droop out on the other, as it were, accidentally. Her husband follows her with his eyes,whilst at the door he is again embraced by Björn. *Ma chère mère* rises as before, majestically, and advances three paces to meet the little sylph; but to the astonishment of us all, the latter, without looking up, passes her, and throws herself carelessly into the arm-chair, which *ma chère mère* had just left, exclaiming, "Oh dear, I am so tired, so tired, so warm, almost ready to die!" Her little silk pelisse flew back, and exposed a fine white french cambric dress, from beneath which peeped out a pair of the most lovely little feet and ancles.

You should have seen *ma chère mère*. She stood as if thunder-struck; but Peter hastened forward, took Ebba's hand, and endeavoured to raise her from the chair, whilst he whispered, "Ebba, for heaven's sake! think what you are doing for my sake! Ebba, it is

ma chère mère !

"Heavens!" cried Ebba, waking as it were out of a dream, and looked up with a pair of fine dark eyes to *ma chère mère*, just as one looks up to a church-steeple. *ma chère mère*, on her part, approached her with a mien which seemed to say, "What sort of a strange little creature are you?"

When *ma chère mère* came quite close to Ebba, the latter suddenly tore her hand out of Peter's, skipped upon the chair, flung both her arms round *ma chère mère's* neck, and kissed her with the sweetness and freedom of a child. This appeared to make a peculiar impression on *ma chère mère*. With both her great hands she clasped Ebba's slender waist, lifted her up high, took her upon her arm as a child, and walked with her under the chandelier, now shining in the rays of the declining sun, and inspected the little seraph head under the splendour of the bright sunshine. Ebba laughed, we were all obliged to laugh, and now *ma chère mère's* rough Ha, ha, ha! was heard sounding above all the rest. She patted and pinched the pretty, naughty child on the cheek, till the latter compressed her fine dark eyebrows, and impatiently cried, "Let me go!" But *ma chère mère*, who probably wished to punish her a little, carried her about, still joking with her as with a child; and only when the tears came into her eyes, shook her good-naturedly, kissed her forehead, and sat her down on the floor, *ma chère mère* afterwards greeted Peter with the following words: "My dear son, punish your wife, or she will punish you."

Ebba saluted me most ungraciously, did not once even look at Björn, but threw herself on a sofa, and

stared about the room, and at us, with an air of indifference. *Ma chère mère* suffered all this to pass off; but I saw a look which said plainly, in my opinion, "We'll bring you to your senses, you little pert thing!"

Ebba is however, from head to foot, the most beautifully formed little creature that I ever beheld. She is more like a fairy than a human being; but her face is disfigured by a kind of supercilious and pert look, which especially plays about the lightly inflated nostril, and the small pouting mouth. She is certainly very young yet, but appears to me to be a child, whose training must have been most difficult. Björn seemed to participate in this opinion, and he looked at her and at Peter with an air of the deepest concern. The latter is apparently enamoured, beyond measure, with his whimsical little wife, who does not seem to care much for him. Nor can I be in the least surprised that he is not able to win the love of such a young and childish being. He is plain, has a very large nose, and his sandy hair stands out towards all the points of the compass. He is taciturn and reserved; but his eyes are fine, and have a speaking look, full of soul and feeling. He sat the whole evening as it were, retired within himself, now and then he squeezed Björn's hand, and often cast a glance at his little wife, who had fallen asleep on the sofa. The evening would have appeared rather long but for the company of Jean Jacques. He has lately been on the Continent, and described to us many very interesting novelties; he told us of mechanical inventions, of railways, the tunnel under the Thames, etc.

Jean Jacques is handsome, he speaks rapidly, and appears to be full of life and information. *Ma chère mère*

was very much entertained by his communications, and we all listened to them with great interest; I felt sorry to be interrupted by the announcement of supper. We looked round for Ebba, she was lying on the sofa in a sweet sleep, and was indescribably lovely as she lay there, like a rose-bud between green leaves. I expressed this as we stood around her. Peter thanked me with a bright look. He stooped down, kissed Ebba's cheek in order to wake her, and said, "Ebba, my darling, wake up!"

"Why can't you let me alone? you are unbearable!" was Ebba's sweet reply, and she would have fallen asleep again, if *ma chère mère* had not raised her powerful voice, "Listen! my dear little woman, if you don't come directly to table, we'll go away, and you shall have nothing to eat. Don't fancy that we mean to put ourselves out of the way for you!"

The little one opened her brown eyes with an air of the most extreme astonishment raised herself, and *ma chère mère* took her, without further ceremony, by the hand, and led her to the dining-room. Ebba suffered herself to be guided, but with an indescribable expression of bad humour in her countenace. *Ma chère mère* meanwhile was singularly kind to her, seated her next to her at table, and paid her a thousand little pleasant attentions; there is a something in *ma chère mère's* pleasing demeanour so irresistibly cheering and encouraging, that even Ebba began to feel it, and her good humour unfolded, as the rose before the sun-beams. The pettish look vanished, and was replaced by a cheerful smile; she became at once infinitely beautiful, and her sylph-like head appeared to me bewitching. She

ate and laughed and talked to *ma chère mère*, who took much notice of her. Peter looked quite happy; Jean Jacques spoke to Tutten, who appeared no less happy with roast beef and French *Omelette soufflèe.* Björn sat mute next to Peter, making grimaces. I kept up a continued conversation with Jane Maria, whose obliging manners, and agreeable conversation, delighted me more and more. At the close of the repast *ma chère mère* ordered a bowl of smoking punch to be brought in, filled all our glasses and beckoned with her hand to the servants to withdraw. We were all suddenly dumb, expecting something unusual, and *ma chère mère* after having cleared her throat by various hems, raised her full sounding voice, and spoke with force and gravity:

"My sons and daughters, I address you, because I find you assembled for the first time in my house and at my table; I address you, my children, because I wish to see you often here as three united and happy couples. In an ancient work on military regulations, in the possession of my deceased husband, General Mansfelt, it was said, that the moment the battle began, the only command to be given to the troops should be; "Do your best." This rule may also apply to married people. Books on education, paternal and maternal admonitions, lessons of teachers, only go as far as the Hymeneal Altar; there they stop, and say once for all to the newly married: "Do your best."—For it is not an easy task to lay down fixed precepts here. Every marriage has its own mystery of trial, varying from all others, and it is not well for the uninitiated to intrude into it. But to a few

counsels, my children, from an old woman, who has seen a tolerable portion of the world, and acted a good part in the freemasons' lodge of matrimony, I think you may listen. And, if you take these counsels in your marriage, *ad notam* you will find yourself happy in it. If you wish to be happy, my children, guard against cross looks, and capricious tempers. By this, Satan finds his way into the house. A little cloud may soon darken both sun and moon.—Yes, guard my daughters, against that, which may be called dark weather in the house; and you, my sons, guard against being the November storm, which calls it forth. Remember, what the adage says: "peace nourishes, discord consumes." I have already observed some things, my children, with which I am not pleased; yes, I have seen them; but I hope, they may disappear and you may improve, and therefore I shall speak of them no more. Do not deceive each other, whether in great or minor matters; one single little deception has often destroyed the peace of marriage. "From small beginnings often proceed great consequences." Do not fold your hands together and sit down idly. "Idleness is the devil's pillow!" Wander not much from home. "He who is oft from home, will soon not be missed at home." "Our own hearth is much treasure worth."—

"Many a marriage, my friends, has risen like the morning dawn, and consumed away like smoke. Why, my friends? Solely, because the married pair have neglected to be as anxious to please after marriage, as they were before. Strive at all times to please each other, my children, but yet strive to please God; do not lavish all your affections to-day, consider that

marriage also has a to-morrow, and a day after to-morrow; reserve, therefore, some fuel for the winter. Consider, my daughters, how much the word *hustru* (housewife) means; the wife is the husband's domestic faith; to her he ought to be able to confide his "house and home;" to her he ought to be able to trust the keys of his heart, and the lock of his treasures. His honour and his dwelling are in her care; his prosperity rests in her hands. Think of this. And you, my sons, be ye true men, and good fathers of families; so act that your wives may be able to esteem and love you. And what more shall I say to you, my children? Read diligently the word of God; it will carry you through storm and sunshine into the haven of rest. But as for the rest—do your best! I have done my duty. God help and bless you all my children, all together."

Ma chère mère spread out her arms over us in an attitude of benediction, made a solemn motion of salutation with her head, and then emptied her glass. Ebba was so rude as to gape quite audibly. She did not touch her glass, but reclined against the back of her chair and closed her eyes. Jane Maria emptied her glass with a respectful air. It had cost me some trouble at the commencement of the speech, to refrain from laughing at the ugly grimaces which Björn made all the while. But gradually the force of *ma chère mère's* exhortation made me serious; Björn, likewise grew composed; and when the speech was finished, our eyes met, and with full hearts we drank to each other's and *ma chère mère's* health.

After this ceremony *ma chère merè* struck with a knife against her glass. The servants entered, and with her

most commanding look, *ma chère mère* stood up, took Counsellor Hök's arm, and made us all pass before her, in pairs, whilst she inspected us. When I passed her, she tapped me on the shoulder and said: "You are certainly the shortest!" (This, however, is not true, for I have measured myself with Ebba, and am half a head taller than she; but *ma chère mère* wishes to teaze me.) Ebba was the only one who would not conform to her orders, but would walk alone; and in order to slip away from her husband she skipped about like a bird amongst us. *Ma chère mère* with Counsellor Hök closed the train.

We entertained ourselves for some time after supper, after which *ma chère mère* conducted the young pairs to their chambers. Björn and I, who were determined not to be excluded, followed. Ebba's good humour still continued, but expended itself in ridicule of the old fashioned furniture. *Ma chère mère* delivered a short moral lecture to her on the subject, which Ebba listened to attentively; and, after its conclusion, she kissed the mother's hand, and courtsied, and thanked her with mock submission. She is a graceful, but a thoroughly spoiled child, and appears to be ill-suited for a wife to the quiet and serious Peter. Jane Maria, on the other hand, seemed to be perfectly contented with every thing, noticed my flowers with pleasure, and formed by her good sense and polished manners, a perfect contrast to the wilful Ebba. *Ma chère mère* was in good humour, and joked with us all—not in too refined a style, it is true, but nevertheless she was really witty. There is something extremely peculiar and fascinating in her character. I observed likewise, this evening, how her

straightforward, upright manner of dealing, inspires all around her with security and comfort: she makes each feel at once his place. One may easily accommodate one's self to her, and be comfortable with it.

Ma chère mère invited Björn and me to dine with the family to-morrow. I was glad at this, for I was anxious to know my relations more intimately. It strikes me, that I shall gain a friend in Jane Maria, and my heart needs female friends. Since you, Maria, have been removed so far from me, I have felt a great blank in my heart, for writing after all, does not satisfy; and if I should even gain Jane Maria's affection, I shall not love you any less sincerely on that account.

But to return to the past evening, to Björn, and Rosenvik. Arrived there again, I communicated to Björn all my observations respecting the brothers and sisters-in-law. He, however, was absorbed in one sole reflection, and replied to all that I said, only with a sigh, and the words, "Poor Peter!" Rather out of patience with that everlasting "Poor Peter!" I said at length, "Very well. Peter ought to do as a certain Bear does,—he must tame his wife by good sense and kindness, and then subject himself to her tyranny."

Björn gave me a look of delighted love, said many kind things, but concluded again, with, "Poor Peter!" He had a kind of horror of Ebba; calls her a witch, and will not even concede that she is handsome. Jane Maria he likes as much as I do.

And now I will go and dress for dinner. I send you a thousand kisses and my letter.

FRANCISKA."

IV.

FOURTH LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, June 21st.

Yesterday's dinner passed off very well. *Ma chère mère* was cheerful and pleasant; Ebba tolerably polite and fair as the day. Jane Maria was elegantly and beautifully dressed; still I could have wished a little more simplicity, and the *Sevignèe* away from the forehead. I am no friend to ornaments which conceal the forehead. Jean Jacques helped to pass our time agreeably by his interesting narration. Counsellor Hök poured half a decanter of water over the table, and must have been very much roused by this occurrence. By and by Jean Jacques described to him, most eagerly, a winged steam carriage, with which one could ride in the air. Counsellor Hök listened to him with excited attention. Encouraged by this, Jean Jacques continued his description with greater warmth and fuller details, when the Counsellor suddenly interrupted, and exclaimed with great concern, "I beg pardon,—forgive me, Baron;—which decanter do you mean?" *Ma chère mère* laughed, and Jean Jacques looked quite confounded.

Jean Jacques talks a great deal. I found this a little tiring, especially immediately after dinner; at last I only heard a kind of incessant buzzing, out of which

the words: "Railway, Manchester, Tunnel, Steam-carriages, Penny Magazine," struck on my ear. The more Jean Jacques went on with his descriptions, the more sleepy I became; and at last he gave up the unworthy listener. Soon afterwards a remarkable occurrence roused me from my sleepiness. *Ma chère mère* sat on the sofa, and laid out her old patience cards to shew "*la blocade de Copenhague ;*" next to her sat Counsellor Hök taking snuff. Jane Maria gave good advice to Ebba, which certainly was very needful, but apparently not likely to be useful. A young page walked through the room with some coffee cups. "Dear, bless me!—how much he is like Bruno!" cried Jean Jacques. In the same instant *ma chère mère's* invalid-table received a push, so that it fell over with "*la blocade de Copenhague ;*" but now all eyes were fixed on *ma chère mère.* She first turned pale, then yellow, her nose grew pointed, her lips became blue, and her breathing sounded like a difficult, strong whizzing; she raised herself like a foaming billow, stretched out her clenched hand in threatening gesture against Jean Jacques; her eyes stared, and the cap appeared to erect itself on her head. Jean Jacques also grew pale, and moved to one side. *Ma chère mère* was really terrible to look upon, and almost breathless from fright, I expected a tremendous explosion; suddenly, however, she seemed to grow stiff in the threatening attitude. Immovable, dumb, and stiff, as if petrified by some terrible magic, as if a horrible ghost had been raised before her, she thus stood for some time, and the gasping breath alone gave indication of some inward paroxysm of fright or anger, I know not which. Whilst standing thus, my terror

changed into distress, and I was on the point of running up to her, when Björn held me back with all the force imaginable, and sat there quite still, with his arm round my waist watching her attentively; no other person went near her, and after awhile the dreadful seizure gradually subsided. Her clenched hand sunk down, the hue of life returned to her countenance, and replaced the blue tint of her lips; her eyes grew milder. She drew breath several times deeply, but lighter and lighter as it were sighing; and without uttering a single word, or looking at any body, she slowly left the room, and violently shut the door after her. Notwithstanding this, I wished to follow her, but Björn prevented me; and seeing me so uneasy and violently agitated, he took me aside, and gave me an explanation about this singular and melancholy scene, in the following words:

"*Ma chère mère* has had a son, who was called Bruno, and who—" "Is dead?" I interrupted him, inquiring: —"Yes!"—"And therefore, his name, the remembrance of him, operates *thus* upon her?" asked I, astonished.—"Not on that account only; he has brought much of sorrow upon her, and every thing that reminds her of him, especially the mention of his name, agitates her violently; but no notice must be taken of such emotions; she does not like it; and they always subside quicker, when left altogether to herself!"—"But what has happened to her son?"—"That is a long history, Fanny; I will relate it to you another time." —"Another time is a bore; I detest that 'another time;' I cannot wait any longer than this evening, Björn!"—"Very well then, this evening At present we dare not whisper together any longer."

—We returned to the rest.

Counsellor Hök sat on the sofa by the patience-table, and I saw that he tried to lay out *la blocade* at the same point to which it had proceeded at the time of the upset, in order that *ma chère mère*, on her return to the room, might not have evidence to remind her of the scene which had taken place. When he had succeeded in getting the cards in order, he took some snuff and sneezed nine times successively, at which Ebba laughed violently. His concern for *ma chère mère* affected me. Such sympathy is amiable: it is thus that friends should be mindful of one another. Have I sketched you the picture of Counsellor Hök? I fancy not. Here then is a slight outline:—He may be about sixty years of age; is meager and tall; has large feet and hands, a long neck, and a long face; in the marks and furrows of which you find nothing but ugliness, till you come to a Hawk-nose,* and hit upon a pair of eyes, which, shaded by deep-arched eyebrows, have a placid, kind, and pleasant look; they make an impression similar to cheerful lights, which one sees on a cool autumnal evening, glimmering from the windows of an Inn. He appears to have a peg in every joint; I have never seen a back so long and stiff; and I never see him without wondering how any body can accuse him of poetic phantasies; however, *ma chère mère* seems to have established this notion in her head. As for the rest, I can pass no judgment upon him. He seldom speaks to any one, except to *ma chère mère*. His voice and his general

* In Swedish, the pun is on Hoknasa, Hök's-nose, Hawk-nose.

character are gentle, but, although he is silent and retiring, still one does not feel induced to forget his presence. He is assuredly a good man; but such a terrible snuff-taker, that great heaps of snuff lie about where he has been sitting. Well, there is nothing so very bad in that.

Whilst Counsellor Hök laid the cards in order, and Jane Maria, Jean Jacques, and I, were talking about music, Ebba had opportunity to show off her sweet disposition. After having drawn the knitting-needles out of my stocking, upset the Counsellor's snuff-box, and perpetrated all manner of mischief, she glided softly behind Peter and Björn, who, with their heads close together, were discussing some important affair, and sewed their coat-tails together. The excellent brothers suspected nothing, nor did I; when, observing the fine weather, I proposed to take a walk. It was agreed to; both brothers rose up, and—ritch! ratch! it went, whilst the coat-tails rent violently asunder. Björn made a desperate leap and the most horrible grimaces. I could scarcely contain myself from laughing aloud; and Ebba, in a paroxysm of childish joy, was rolling on the sofa. Peter was at a loss to know how to take the matter; Björn was at first a little angry at Ebba, and at me I fancy, but afterwards he denounced us both merrily and good-naturedly. Jane Maria shook her head, but could not likewise refrain from laughing; when she looked, however, on her own beautiful embroidery, and found that Ebba had been busy over that also, and made some wrong stitches in it, she coloured, cast a severe look at her, and said something in a sharp tone about "unpardonable im-

pertinence." And certainly it is vexing to see such beautiful work so spoiled. I could more easily reconcile myself to my drawn-out knitting-needles. Counsellor Hök sat quite still, and endeavoured to gather up his snuff. In order to end this scene, I again proposed to take a walk. All, except Ebba, were willing. She declared, lying carelessly on the sofa, that she would never put her foot out of doors so long as she remained in the country; that she detested the country, and the dust on the roads; that the green hurts her eyes, etc. In vain we endeavoured to persuade her; in vain Jane Maria remonstrated with her about her childish folly. She obstinately adhered to her determination, and Peter—remained with her. Now I was constrained, like Björn, to sigh from my heart, "Poor Peter!" Counsellor Hök likewise quietly kept his seat, no doubt to await the return of his friend. Under the pretext of fetching a shawl, I stole secretly to *ma chère mère's* bed-room door, and watched there with anxious sympathy for her. I heard that she was seized with violent perspirations, and long spasmodic yawnings; and, feeling more easy respecting her, I joined the company in a walk.

The weather was fine. Jean Jacques spoke with Björn about the new arrangements which he proposed making on the estate, and censured *ma chère mère's* old-fashioned management, at which Björn made monstrous grimaces, while puffing colums of smoke from his pipe. I fell into conversation with Jane Maria respecting Bulwer's and Miss Martineau's excellent novels, and had great pleasure in listening to her. I found that Jane Maria was well-read, and knew several

languages, and we agreed together to read Dante's "Divina Commedia." That will be delightful! During our raptures about this, we walked along a beautiful forest-road, towards a mill, whose waters we heard rushing through the wood. Suddenly I got sight of something, which made me stop and lay hold of Björn's arm, to draw his attention. We all stood still and looked silently to the left, where the sun shone upon an open green spot. Among the oak trees, we perceived a man of a powerful athletic form, in the dark riding-dress worn by nobles. He walked slowly on, his arms crossed, and his head sunk as if lost in profound meditation. By his side, or rather behind him, went a splendid black horse, with a bridle richly ornamented with little white shells. The reins hung loosely, and he first bent his noble head down to the grass, then raised it caressingly over his master's shoulders, who appeared to be accustomed to it, and gave his faithful companion full liberty. We could only see a small part of the profile of the man, for he walked with his head turned away from us, but this gave us the idea of a dark and gloomy visage. Thus man and horse proceeded together, in this friendly way, farther into the wood, and at length were concealed from our sight; but our conjectures followed them, and we soon concluded that we had now seen the much-talked of and most mysterious neighbour of Ramm. But let him be called Romulus or Romanus, or answer to the romance of the v. P—'s. or not, still this much is certain, that his entrance on the scene, as well as his looks, wore a most romantic air. I confess that I am very curious to see somewhat more of him; I am firmly convinced,

that, if I could only once get to see him *en face*, I should at once be able to decide, whether he is a spy, or a mere ordinary man who finds his time hang heavy on his hands; whether he is a Don Miguel or a Howard; for what I heard in the heavenly land, was of the latter character.

After a walk of about an hour, we arrived at home again. In the drawing-room sat *ma chère mère* at her card-table, and Counsellor Hök next to her. All appeared as if nothing strange had occurred, except that *ma chère mère's* face was pale and unusually earnest. She saluted us very kindly, but spoke to nobody. Tutten handed us some tea. Jane Maria seated herself at the piano-forte, and played a difficult piece from memory, which appeared to me more difficult than pretty; but how she played! she is perfectly master of the instrument. Pity it is that she has no voice, or else we might have sung together; but she shall accompany me. I am truly happy to have such a sister-in-law. What a difference between Jane Maria and Ebba! The latter was however very amiable this evening, and only insisted that all should dance. As no one was willing, she began to dance by herself in the adjoining room, and sang to it very prettily. Peter devoured her with his eyes. I am not surprised at that. She is a little fairy, when she is merry, and in good humour. Partly to oblige her, and partly to gratify a wish I secretly felt for dancing, I soon bore her company. We seduced Jean Jacques, and at length even Peter, and we all danced for a time, to our great enjoyment and to Ebba's indescribable delight. But when the gentlemen were tired and left us, and Ebba

seated near me on the sofa, began to give me a gossiping history of all the balls which she had attended during the last winter at Stockholm, how she had been dressed, and how often she had been asked to dance by this person and that person; I was overcome by a disposition to yawn, which would soon have sent me to sleep, had not the sound of loud voices in the saloon afforded me an excuse to escape Ebba's chatter. *Ma chère mère* was playing with Jane Maria, Counsellor Hök and Björn, at Boston, and was very angry with Jane Maria, who I suppose plays better than I, and had, in consequence, made *ma chère mère, bete.* "How could you think of not following, when you were eldest hand, with four trumps and the king of spades?" "I should not think of following when I see that I cannot make my play," replied Jane Maria, offended. "No! and, therefore, I am to be made *bete*," cried *ma chère mère*, enraged; "and I was renounce in clubs and you in diamonds." They were not at all pleased with each other. This scene was interrupted by the steward, who came in and complained of two grooms, who refused to obey his orders in the stable. *Ma chère mère* made him explain distinctly the nature of the charges, and when it appeared from the evidence that the grooms were guilty of nothing short of rebellion, her countenance darkened, and she started up impetuously. Jean Jacques rose likewise, but *ma chère mère* motioned him down again, and said, passing him, "Sit still!" and to the steward, "Stop here!" She walked out, and soon after returned, clad with her "*Januarius*" and helmet; she then marched off, with long strides, accompanied by the steward, towards the stables. Ten minutes after,

she returned from her busines, to all appearance, quite refreshed. "How did you get on?" inquired Björn. 'How should I, but well?" replied *ma chère mère*, cheerfully. "I gave them words, and no songs; that's the way to let them know what they are about; and I'l see, if they dare refuse to obey instantly. The deuce take it, if I don't find them some hands and feet. For the rest I was safe enough with the people; Tannenström was too easy for them; I let him know that too, you may depend upon it. But so it is, 'All would like the axe to work, but no one will lay hold of the shaft.' 'All wish to be masters, but nobody will carry the sack.' "

Supper was announced, and *ma chère mère* was, as she usually is, at her table, a courteous and cheerful hostess. All traces of the scene of this afternoon had vanished.

Late in the evening, when Björn and I were at home again in our quiet little dwelling, I asked for, and obtained, an explanation of the events which had disturbed *ma chère mère's* happiness; and here you have, nearly in Björn's own words, the strange and melancholy history:

Ma chère mère had an only son, by General Mansfelt, who was called after his father, Bruno. His birth was almost at the cost of his mother's life, and this child, so dearly bought, was dearer to her than life. More than once his mother was seen kneeling by the cradle of her son, almost worshipping him. Many a night, when slight indisposition made him restless, she sat near his bed, and watched quietly. She nursed the child herself; would suffer no one else to wait upon it, hardly even to touch it; her bosom was his cradle, her

knee his chair, her arms his world. With untiring love she cherished that wayward boy, impetuous from his earliest infancy, and he on his part, clung to her with vehement tenderness, and only appeared to be happy when reposing on her bosom. It was lovely to see them together; it was the lioness and her young one, who, with a mixture of wild strength and deepest tenderness at the same time, fight with and caress each other. Notwithstanding this, the relation between mother and son, was, from the cradle, strange, and sometimes hostile. One day she laid the babe, then nine months old, to her breast; the boy, who was either hungry or angry, bit it violently with his young teeth. Made impatient by pain, the mother gave him a slap; the child immediately let go the breast, and never took it again. He was obliged to be weaned, for his mother could not bear the thought that a strange nurse should nourish him. At another time, when about eight years old, his mother had occasion to inflict some well-deserved chastisement upon him, and he turned upon her like a young lion, and—struck at her.

But amidst such wild scenes there were also endless occasions which testified their unbounded love. She interposed between him and every danger; he kissed the traces of her footsteps. When, after a short separation, they beheld each other again, they met with outpourings of most vehement affection. The very next moment, might perhaps, find them embroiled in a quarrel. This state of things grew with the growth of years. Both had a violent and determined will: they appeared to be able to exist neither without nor with one another.

A more beautiful boy could not be seen; but however much his mother idolized him in her heart, yet her sense of justice and propriety was so strict, that she never favoured him even in the smallest matters beyond his step-brothers. Never was he spared from corrections; never received more than an equal share of rewards and enjoyments. The only preference he enjoyed was the caresses of his mother.

We were all kept under strict rule, and as regards money supplied much too penuriously. I was always inclined to parsimony, in spite of which I have often been obliged to have recourse to innocent industry in order to procure postage-money and means for petty expenditures, which *ma chère mère* looked upon as superfluous; I, therefore, secretly became a carpenter. Bruno was naturally a spendthrift, and inclined to dissipation. In order to satisfy his taste for dainties and pleasures, he already early took refuge to a less innocent employment. He pilfered, what he could not get given, at first from his brothers, and then from the servants. No one ventured to correct him for it, or report the case to his mother. Endowed with the strength of a Hercules, the active and strong lad soon attained a great ascendancy over his brothers, and was feared by them as by all the household. He was beloved by none but me: I cannot say, what it was that attached me to him. I admired his great, natural talents; his wild but ingenious tricks often extorted a smile from me, even whilst I was obliged to censure them; and what chiefly influenced me was, that he really was fond of me. (Björn paused a moment, deeply affected, and then proceeded.) I must do him the justice to say, that he never was

stubborn, when spoken to with reason and gentleness; and more than once he desisted from acts of violence on my entreaties, or wept bitterly during my serious remonstrances, whilst he perceived his first sad step in the unhappy path of vice; but about that time I was seldom at home. Being much older than Bruno, I had finished my academic career when he began his, and I almost was constantly from home, in the practice of my profession as physician.

There was a child, a little girl, who possessed remarkable power over Bruno from his thirteenth to his sixteenth year. It was the same Serena Löfren, with whom you were lately so charmed. She was at that time a quiet, fair, but ailing child.

Ma chère mère, who ever had a great regard for Madam Dahl, prevailed upon her for three years to spend each summer, a couple of months at Ramm, in the hope of recruiting the health of the little Serena by drinking waters of the springs, and breathing the fresh country air. The wild Bruno attached himself to the little angel-like child; and it was wonderful to see the constraint and privations he would submit to for her sake; how he neglected every thing in order to carry her about the woods of Ramm, to chat with her, or to sit still and look at her when she slept. On holydays he used to take Serena on his arm, with a basket of eatables in his hand, and wander from home at an early hour, and seldom were they seen again before the evening. By this kind of life Serena's health was strengthened, and Bruno grew more gentle. One request from Serena's child-like voice, one tear of her's was more effective to restrain Bruno than the command

of either his mother or his preceptor.

Had attention been paid to this peculiarity in Bruno, of resisting severity and yielding to kindness; had he been treated accordingly, he would have turned out, I am convinced, an excellent and distinguished man, and one who would have been a credit to his family; but his preceptor, a man of harsh and unbending character, appeared as well as her, to have determined to tame his wild passion by force alone.

Ma chère mère meanwhile did not suspect the dangerous road on which Bruno had started; and I do not remember to have feared any one thing in all my life so much as that she might discover it; she, who was so proud, so sensitive in matters touching her honour, so rigid in her principles, and in her whole moral life. Bruno's blooming beauty, his great abilities, his agility in corporeal exercises, his boldness, and even his audacity, were subjects of pride to his mother, and her eyes glittered with joy at the sight of him, or the mere mention of his name. To hear anything to his dishonour would have been her death-blow. Bruno also possessed both pride and ambition; the opinion of his mother had an indescribable weight with him, but his violent passions, and the inability to restrain them, constantly tempted him to the commission of crime.

A period, however, now arrived in which the power of his evil disposition appeared about to cease. I spent a couple of summer months at Ramm. Bruno had during the spring attended the Sacrament. I found him unusually quiet and thoughtful. The relation between him and his mother was more peaceful and loving than ever. I hoped that Bruno had for ever turned from

the error of his way; and he himself told me that it was so; that he had still secret and far more than prudent expenditures I notwithstanding soon perceived. I had been for some time in a condition to assist Bruno with money, and hoped thereby to prevent him from procuring it in an unlawful manner; he had applied to me more than once, and I had let him have what I could. One day, however, he requested so large a sum, that I refused him with some surprise and vexation, nor could I refrain from reproaching him with his extravagance. Bruno was silent, but gnashed his teeth and left me. It was the last day of our being together at home at that period; in the next we were both to depart, he to the academy, I to S. In the forenoon Bruno rode to town in order to take leave of the old Dahl's and his little bride, as he called Serena. He was not expected to return before evening.

Immediately after dinner the steward with the utmost consternation, reported that a considerable sum of money which he had had in the morning safe in his office, was gone; and that he was compelled to suspect that the thief must belong to the household, as only one, well acquainted with the house, could know where he usually kept his money.

This was, as far as *ma chère mère* knew, the first time that a case of this kind ever occurred in her house. She took up the subject violently, and immediately entered into a strict investigation of all the house. Accompanied by the steward and two of her oldest and most faithful servants, she went herself through the house, rummaged every corner, and searched the domestics with most diligent scrutiny

the oldest servants were alike compelled to undergo the examination. There being nowhere anything found, which might give the smallest cause of suspicion, *ma chère mère* arrived at the suspicion that the informer himself might be the thief, and accordingly every thing belonging to the young steward, even the clothes which he wore, were examined with still greater minuteness than the rest. This young man was Bruno's personal enemy; and, whether from a real suspicion of Bruno, or from a desire to vent the indignation which *ma chère mère* excited in him, he said, with bitter emphasis: "My lady might find what she is seeking nearer to herself."—"What do you mean?" inquired the latter, with a look of terror.—"Yes!" continued the irritated man, "you may find that with your own flesh and blood, my lady, which you suspect to be with innocent people!"—"Man, thou liest!" cried *ma chère mère*, pale with wrath, whilst seizing his arm and shaking it violently. Still more provoked, and almost furious, the latter said: "I am willing to be a liar, if one of your sons, my lady, is not a thief!"

"Follow me!" said *ma chère mère*; and, with flaming looks and pale cheeks, she went, accompanied by the steward and the two servants, to our rooms. I had been out; had only lately come home, and been informed of what had taken place, when *ma chère mère* and her attendants came in to me. I cannot describe the feeling which at that moment seized me. A foreboding of the real truth ran through me; I grew pale, and involuntarily sat myself down on Bruno's travelling-trunk which stood in the room packed up next to

mine. *Ma chère mère* looked at me with a piercing glance, paused, and turned still paler than before. She then said, with a firm voice, to me and my brothers, who had also entered:

"My sons! for the honour of the house, you must submit to the same examination which all the rest of the household have undergone. I suppose I need not tell you, that it is done only from form, and that I am convinced of your innocence." Hereupon she cast a look towards me, (the meaning of which was, at that time, inexplicable to me,) passsed by my trunk, and examined the effects of my brothers. She then came back into the room and opened my packed-up trunk, which was turned over to the bottom. There was nothing found that did not belong to me; my carpenter's tools laid lowermost. Every thing being examined, she gave me a look, full of maternal tenderness and joy. Ah! she had suspected the circumspect man, rather than the wild youth; for now she raised her head, and in her powerful expressive face was clearly to be read: Heaven be thanked! now I am easy.

"The only things left to be examined are the young Baron's," said one of the old servants, respectfully, "but his trunk is locked, and besides it is unnecessary—"

"That may be!" cried *ma chère mère*, "but it must share the lot of the rest. The trunk must be broken open!"

"But the young Baron is not at home," said the servant, timidly; "we cannot!"

"His mother commands it!" cried *ma chère mère*, violently.

It was done. With her own hands, his mother took out the books and apparel, which had been thrown in, in great confusion. Suddenly her hand drew back, as if burnt by a red-hot-iron; it had fallen on a bundle of notes; it was—the missing money. She took up the notes, turned them over in her hand, looked at them, as it she could not believe her own eyes, and turned paler and paler; a scream of inexpressible terror and grief at length struggled forth from her breast. "My own blood!" cried she; "my own flesh and blood!" And, without a sigh, she sunk lifeless to the ground. We carried her off, and our exertions at length re-animated her. Her awakening was frightful; but she shed no tear, expressed no word of anger or of complaint,—she appeared strong and determined.

She immediately dispatched a messenger to the provost Rhen, the spiritual shepherd of the flock. He was a man of iron; rigid, energetic, ready to contend for the law with voice and hand, and moreover *ma chère mère's* sincere and confidential friend. She imparted all to him, and they arranged between them what was to be done. I surmised what was at work, and in vain I endeavoured to employ the influence I sometimes had over *ma chère mère*, to induce her to a less severe, or at least, less violent procedure. My remonstrances remained fruitless. *Ma chère mère* only replied to me: "Sin grows on unpunished offence. Bitter sins must be bitterly expiated."

In the evening, about the time when Bruno was expected to be back, my three brothers and I, the old servants and the Steward, were summoned into *ma chère mère's* room. It was only dimly lighted, and in the

gloomy shadow, sat, in a large arm-chair, Bruno's mother, with the clergyman near her; on her countenance the grief which she bore in her heart was plainly legible. But over grief, shame and anger, predominated a resolution more determined than I had ever before seen in the countenance of any one. Here also was the small but fearful tribunal before which Bruno was to enter. Here we awaited him for the space of a terrible hour. No one spoke. By the weak glimmering of the light, I saw the cold perspiration falling down in drops from the forehead of the unhappy mother.

It was an evening towards the close of September; it blew violently, and the rain beat against the windows, which shook and rattled. For a short space the storm was hushed, and at this moment the trampling of a horse's foot was heard in the court-yard. I saw *ma chère mère* tremble. I had never seen her do this before; there was a strange sound heard, it was not the storm that rattled against the windows, but the chattering of teeth. My brothers wept, the old servants stood dumb with downcast looks; and the countenance of the steward betrayed a sort of repentance; the iron headed clergyman himself appeared to gasp for breath. At this moment the door opened quickly, and in came Bruno. Methinks I see him yet, as he then stood. He was heated by the ride and the storm, full of health and spirits; never had I seen him more strikingly handsome. He made towards his mother, ready as was his wont, after a day's absence, to throw himself into her arms. Thus he entered, but suddenly paused, started, and cast an affrighted look on his mother. She covered her face with her hands. Bruno grew pale,

gazed first at us, and then at his mother. Then her furious look met his, and his sank before hers; his head bowed, he turned paler and paler, he stood there, as—a criminal! Now his mother rose, and with a melancholy severe voice accused him of theft, pointed to his open trunk, to the sum of money found there, to the witnesses, and called upon him to confess.

With an air of inconceivably audacious defiance, Bruno confessed himself guilty.

"Kneel down and receive your punishment!" said the severe Judge.

But Bruno stood immovable. A power-destroying consciousness appeared to have taken possession of him after the moment of his bold confession. He was pale as death, his head sank down upon his breast, his eyes were cast to the ground. The Provost Rhen walked up to him.

"Young man!" said he, with a subdued voice, to Bruno, "you have grievously sinned against God's holy law, and against your mother; confess your crime, and submit to the punishment which we decree."

Bruno still stood confounded and dumb. The minister took his silence for submission, and began with a powerful, solemn voice, to put to him the usual questions of penance imposed by the church. Bruno still stood immovable, without either seeing or hearing. Now, however, the priest asked in a tone of severity:

"Dost thou acknowledge that by thy crime thou hast not only grievously sinned against God, but hast likewise given great offence to His Church?"

Bruno awoke from his stupor. He raised his head in defiance, darted a look of flame, but answered no-

thing. Again the question was repeated, again all remained silent. M*a chère mère* rose: "Down on thy knees, thou sinner!" cried she, with a menacing voice.

Bruno looked at her, sullen and threatening, and she returned his gaze.

"I shall not!" said Bruno, at length, daringly, "what has this priest to do with me? I did not want him. If the question here is of confession of sins, others beside myself, might be included in it. Provoke me not, otherwise——"

"Silence!" cried *ma chère mère*, "and answer only the questions that are put to you. Confessest thou thy self alone guilty of the theft in question?" Bruno was silent, and stared at his mother sullenly.

"Answer!" cried she, vehemently,—"answer! does any other person share thy guilt?"

Bruno cast a long look at his mother, then said he with a firm voice:

"No! I alone am guilty!"

"Then bend thy knees, thou wretch! Thy mother, whom thou hast loaded with shame, commands thee to bear the disgrace which thou hast merited: fall down!"

Bruno stamped fiercely with his foot, clenched his hand, with a look of wrath and fury.

"Throw him down, pull him down, all of you, hear!" cried *ma chère mère*, in fearful agitation. Priest, if you are a man, bend the disobedient, degenerate boy; let him humble himself before the law of God."

I wished to interpose, but already the Provost had laid his powerful hand on Bruno's shoulders; at the same instant it was dashed away so fiercely by the culprit, that he was whirled completely round.

"Do you lay hands on the minister of God?" cried

Provost Rhen, in the fury of anger; and forgetting himself, seized Bruno in his arms; the latter, however, possessed the elasticity and strength of a lion, and after a short struggle, the priest laid levelled to the ground.

"Seize him, stop him!" cried *ma chère mère*, beside herself with anger.

The steward and my brother, who laid hold of him, were soon prostrated beside the Provost. Bruno sprang back a few steps, caught up a stick, which stood in a corner, swung it whizzing over his head, and threatened with frantic gestures every one who should dare to approach him.

Mother and son looked at each other's defying flaming eyes. Thus they stood, for a considerable time; again the question was repeated, and then followed dreadful words on both sides. Silence ensued; the cursing lips grew benumbed, the defying looks became fallen, both mother and son fell into a profound swoon; they were carried to their rooms.

Björn was silent. "Oh! dreadful, dreadful!" cried I, whilst I laid my head shuddering against his shoulder.

Björn was pale, and paused for a time, lost in thought. He then proceeded.

Both came to themselves again, but did not see each other again that evening. I wished to speak to Bruno, but he pretended to be asleep, and at length I repaired to my room. In the night, when all was silent and dark, a wild, lengthened and piercing scream was suddenly heard in Bruno's chamber. I jumped up and hastened thither. Bruno's mother was there alone, with dishevelled hair and wild appearance! Bruno was gone. The open window appeared to shew that he had escaped by it,

although a leap from such a height seemed almost incredible. Notwithstanding, such was the case. Bruno had this night deserted the maternal roof: and never returned to it again. We never heard more of him. In vain were all searches and inquiries. Bruno was gone, as if vanished from the number of the living. Seventeen years have elapsed since that unhappy period, and we have not discovered the slightest traces of his existence. We have, therefore, accounted his death as certain.

On his flight, Bruno took nothing with him, save his clothes which he wore and a few papers. Upon his table lay a strip of paper, on which the following words were addressed to me, in apparent haste:

"Severity I have treated with defiance, violence with violence, and this has made me appear more culpable than I really am. But, in your eyes, brother Lars, who hast never been harsh or unreasonable towards me,—to you, who, as I believe, have loved me,—to you I would not appear worse than I really am. Listen to me, therefore, for it is the last time. This last theft (and I have vowed that it should be the last) was not a robbery. The day after to-morrow the money would have been replaced. Speak to Mr. C., in W., if you wish to be convinced of it. The money was not for me, but for the unfort——but what avails whom it was for. My mother would lend me nothing; I took of that which must have become mine some day. It was discovered, and she——on her falls the guilt of what has passed, and what will come. Farewell for ever.

BRUNO."

Ma chère mère tore the paper out of my hand and read the contents. "He has, therefore, stolen often!" cried she violently. "Then have I truly given birth to a thief!" and saying this she tore the note into a thousand pieces. From this time forth, she never spoke for the space of three years. She locked herself up in her rooms; ordered them to be darkened; tolerated neither light nor sight of men; she ate and drank little; scarcely slept at all: spoke to no one, and no one was permitted to be about her excepting Elsa. If any of us dared to attempt to see her she fell into a violent rage, and beckoned to the intruder to be gone; or with her hands before her face, sat immovable and silent, deaf to all entreaties.

Counsellor Hök and Provost Rhen meanwhile undertook the management of her affairs, which in the hands of these honourable men were in good keeping. A clever inspector, well acquainted with the place, managed the estates under the supervision of these men. As, however, *ma chère mère's* hypochondriacal state lasted for such a length of time, and threatened to be permanent, I determined, in agreement with those friends, to call her family together, and, in common with them, to lay down plans for the future conduct of her affairs. This family convocation was held in October, 18—, three years after the flight of Bruno.

One day, when we were all assembled in the large Hall, and engaged in earnest consultation, the doors suddenly opened, and *ma chère mère* entered, dignified and calm, and commanding greater respect than ever. She addressed the assembly in her peculiar solemn and powerful manner, saying, that she was acquainted with

its object, approved of it in regard to her long illness, but declared the Congress to "be dissolved" because of her present capability of personally superintending her property and her family as formerly.

With an earnestness which affected all, she thanked her friends for their assistance, and their patience with one whom the Lord had so heavily chastised. She then welcomed all her relatives, and entreated them to stay for some time yet, and enjoy themselves at Ramm, as formerly.

The impression which this scene made on the assembly is difficult to describe. Astonishment, esteem, and compassion, were the feelings of most, but I felt real joy, for I loved *ma chère mère* sincerely.

In order to satisfy her wish the relatives remained a few days yet at Ramm, from which however all gaiety had departed. *Ma chère mère*, although vigorous, and managing as formerly, appeared only as it were the shadow of what she had once been. Her complexion was changed, her hair was turned quite gray, her fair countenance, once so fresh with life, bore the traces of the most depressing sufferings; her formerly cheerful temper was now dull and gloomy. She wore continually dark gray dresses, and avoided all adornment. She had frequent attacks of deep melancholy, and would sit mute for hours, covering her face with her hands.

The first act in which *ma chère mère* employed her regained government, was to remove from Ramm to Karlsfors. Soon after she sold her former possessions. She appeared to regard Bruno as dead, never mentioned his name, and could endure nothing which might call him to her remembrance. The old servants were dis-

missed with a pension, she arranged her whole house anew. Elsa only remained. Years rolled on, and gradually the gloomy dejection in *ma chère mère's* character diminished, and for several years past she has regained much of her former animation, but one must be very careful to avoid any allusion which might touch the wound in her heart,—it will perhaps never be thoroughly healed here upon earth.

Bruno's flight excited much remark in the neighbourhood, but *ma chère mère* was so respected and beloved by the people in the house, that the disgraceful cause of his flight remained unknown to all beyond her household. Several vague reports soon fell to the ground of themselves, and the neighbours contented themselves at the conjecture, that disagreement between the character of the mother and son had been the sole cause of this sudden separation. And, in reality, such was no doubt the case. Under other early treatment, Bruno's lot would probably have been a different one, but as it was—unfortunate Bruno! I shall for ever mourn over and lament him, said Björn, in conclusion, with a tear in his eye and a deep sigh. I was sorrowful and heavy after this narrative, but I confess that it gave *ma chère mère* increased interest in my eyes. I perceived now, through her inmost soul, a wounded and bleeding mother's heart, and her misfortune was greater than her fault. I felt myself drawn towards her with ties of sympathy and affection.

June 22nd.

I will now dispatch this packet of letters, but must first tell you that I am now, for the present, a widow;

Björn has taken a journey for a few days with Peter, to settle some money matters in G. the former has saved a pretty little fortune during his twenty years' practice, which by the advice of Peter, he now wishes to put out on interest with the great commercial house of E. Meanwhile I rule in undivided sovereignty over Rosenvik, the cabriolet, and Pollo. Björn has requested me to make frequent use of the latter, and to call at Karlsfors; and Peter begged me very earnestly to look after his little Ebba. I will attend to their wishes, although I should rather prefer remaining at home at present, in my dear little snuggery, and see my peas blossom.

At the end of next week we shall have a visit paid us at Rosenvik, which alarms me a little, namely, the young Baron Stellan S., the son of Björn's youthful friend and companion, the late S. Björn had been guardian to the son, and loves him on his father's as well as on his own account. The young Stellan S. is Chamberlain, rich, handsome, and most talented. All this is certainly not terrifying, but some things which I have heard respecting his elegance, dress, and style, really inspires me with fear not to be able to receive, suitably, so fine a gentleman in my humble and limited establishment. I do not see how he could be satisfied here, and I am naturally anxious that a friend of Björn's should find himself comfortable in our house.

But perhaps all will go well—yet, what will become of my Novel? I have no mysteries, no entanglements —hence also, no unravelling. I merely make new acquaintances. How shall I be bewildered with them all? How am I to keep all these threads together,

without entangling them into a maze? At this time two new personages appear, both suited for heroes of romance,—the brilliant Stellan S. and the mysterious Romilly. My breath actually fails me! How will my Novel fare?—but however it may fare, I still remain,

Your

FRANCISKA.

V.

FROM A STRANGER LADY TO THE READER.

I hope, respected reader, that this letter will find you in sound health and good humour. In consequence of which I further hope, that you will excuse, if between the "Letters of a young wife" now and then one or two from "a Gentleman" should venture to creep in; as also, that you will not take it amiss if an unmarried lady should occasionally take up her pen to hold converse with you. All this is done to save you trouble, and, in truth, I do not know how you, dear reader, or the young wife could, without it, see your way clearly with the Neighbours.

I remain, respected reader,

With the greatest esteem,

Yours,

A STRANGER.

VI.

BRUNO MANSFELT TO ANTONIO DE R.

Ramm, St. John's, eve. 18—

Here I am again, here, where I was born, where as a child and as a youth I played and loved. Between that time and the present, lies an ocean, an ocean full —but enough, I am here again. The oak-trees are still as green, the summit of the mountains as towering, and the clouds still rest on them as formerly. Feelings, thoughts, actions, are but clouds too; they are driven—they flee—space absorbs them—annihilates them. Annihilates? no! something still remains. This I feel.

I have ascended the summit of the mountain, I have stood there, where once I stood as a boy, where I stood with high-heaving breast, and saw the billows of the lake lashed into foam by the winds, saw the blue-tinted mountains ascending high on the opposite shore, and I anticipated, sought, longed for something far beyond them. I stood near the same fir-tree; it was now sprung up high although its roots cleave to the mountain A stone-heap lay near it, I knew it well. The boy had erected a pyramid on the summit of the mountain and planted upon it his banner of liberty. The pyramid was now fallen, and the man stood there and thought of the ardour of the boy and smiled, a bitter smile!

I have wandered about in the forest, in the field, on the sea-shore, I have sought up many a well known spot, awakened many a recollection; the stormy appeared to me calm, the criminal guiltless. You can guess the reason. I have heard my whole spring of life over again, I have enjoyed and wept—*that* was bliss!

It is now evening and every thing around me is quiet, I likewise enjoy a moment of tranquillity. The foliage of the ash-tree waves in the evening breeze, and taps gently against the window as formerly; as formerly the falcon soars above the meadow. The mist lies white and thin upon the green plain and the slumbering flocks. I hear the monotonous song of the hedge sparrow, I know of none sweeter. Lulled by this song, I fell asleep when a child every summer evening, my face turned towards the evening-sky, red at that time as now, and beheld the clouds lighting up with more golden radiance as the sun declined lower and lower—like the actions of a noble life when it sinks into the deep. Oh!

And when my eyes closed, when the thoughts of life began to interweave themselves in dreams, then always approached—every evening some one approached my bed, and fostering hands replaced the covering which I had thrown carelessly off; a warm caressing breath passed over my cheek. I well knew, who was near me, it was—my mother. Oh how beats my pulse and trembles every nerve of life at this adored and dreaded name. My mother! she was a fine and noble woman. I was proud of being called her son. Sometimes I suddenly threw off the covering, in which she had care-

fully wrapped me, with one spring I was at her breast and embraced and kissed her so, as I had never yet kissed any beloved one. And she likewise closed me in her arms, that—*that* was love! At times, I remained quite still and feigned to sleep, then I saw her sink down on her knees at the side of my bed. She prayed—prayed for me! How has her prayer been heard?

I have caused the apartments here to be improved and newly furnished. I did not wish that they should retain too much of their former appearance; I feared that the ghost of childhood in the white garments of innocence might haunt and terrify me. The sleeping-chamber of my mother only have I left as it was. I have not been in it. I could not. It is locked at present.

Shall you recognize me in this, think you? Will you not accuse me of weakness? Hear me. I rejoice in being capable yet of natural feeling; rejoice that rest, quiet as the grave, has not yet chilled my heart; no feeling—not the very flames of hell, however, shall while I live unman and depress me, neither joy nor sorrow.

I know only too well, alas! that I shall never be happy, never find peace, never forget. No matter. I will endure; I alone will bear what I alone have committed. Life may draw many an utterance from my breast,—never that of complaint. I bid defiance to pain and the world; besides, one can always make an end when one is tired of this ugly farce called "life!"

Sometimes I have thought: "perhaps it may be

better with me; perhaps bright days may illumine the shadows of the past; perhaps the storm will abate and be hushed, and these plaintive accusing voices die! ....Occupation, time, perhaps domestic happiness.... You laugh Antonio! I laugh too, for I dream like a child. Well, it may be so; but in my waking state I seek, at all events, a something—perhaps again only a dream.

Have you heard of a man who was seeking for his own shadow? (He had lost it, and he did not feel happy afterwards in the world.) I am this very man; I am seeking my own lost shadow! I seek for esteem for respectability in the very place where I first transgressed against the laws of society. I wish to win the civic crown, and atone for past offences by acts of beneficence. Can that be done? Before the world—yes; but before the judge in my breast?——

One thing I wish for, and not attaining this, every thing else is—nothing. If this be denied me I shall once more leave the land of my childhood, and again go into the wide, wild world, and remain—cursed. Why was Cain's Forehead marked by Heaven to bear the stamp of eternal misery? *He was cursed by his mother.* I know what Cain felt. I, also, am cursed by my mother, and a vagabond upon earth. And now I desire I long that she would lay her hand upon this forehead on which her curse rests heavily; that she would remove it hence, and in its place lay her blessing. Oh, then, and not till then, will the heat of this brow be cooled. Shall I be permitted to lean my head against that breast which furnished me with my first nourishment? Shall I read forgiveness in those rigid looks? Shall I again be permitted affectionately to kiss those

lips which once cursed me? Oh, I thirst, I burn, I pant after this bliss!"——

Do you know a high, holy, sweet, much feared name, a name which is first won in a struggle between life and death? a name which God himself has pronounced in human love, in human sufferings? This name will I recall into the soul of her who has rejected me—mother! oh, mother!

Mother!—my mother! Will you once more acknowledge your guilty son? Can you pardon him? I dare not venture to believe it—hardly to hope it. Yet she ought; much of the blame was her's. Violence against violence, asperity against asperity, nothing but evil could ensue. But now if she will be gentle, if she will but pardon, I will crave forgiveness at her feet.

You know my love of music; here I indulge it. I have caused an organ to be set up in one of the rooms: its tone is excellent; at it I sit every evening at the setting in of twilight and play till late. The more profound the silence, the darker the evening grows, the higher the organ's deep swell rises; this quiets me; it raises and quickens my spirit. In a flood of harmony I drown the wild remembrances which revive in the lap of night. Music is a glorious thing; it is an intoxication, a rapture, a world, in which to live, struggle, repose, a sea of painful ecstasy, incomprehensible, boundless as eternity.

At such moments a vision sometimes comes over me. I am then as if out of this storm-viewed world, over this raging sea of sound rises and moves a something. What shall I call it?—a hope, an ideal of beauty, a heavenly spirit, a benign conciliatory genius, which

from the tone-floods draws the most lovely, the most etherial melody, and weaves it into a form of perfect purity. The deeper the fugue swells the higher this image rises in its splendour, like the brightness of a star in a dark night. The storm then abates, my soul grows calm, all discords, all torments vanish, and the heavenly figure alone hovers dazzling in radiance over the becalmed sea. But the vision fades; it is not for me to keep it. It mounts up on the wings of sounds, and with the harmony is lost. Nor can I always call up this divine apparition. Sometimes, also, it is visible to me only in family outline; but I have an indescribable desire to seek it. A reality equalling this vision in beauty, life has never yet presented me. Seldom do I lay me down to rest before the first rays of the sun dance upon the Helga-lake; then my soul is weary from the struggle and the rapture of the night, then for a few hours I can rest.

Will my mother's ear ever listen to the voice of my heart, to the *Miserere* of my soul addressed to her? But before she hears my voice I will send messengers who shall speak to her of the stranger in sweet melodies She will hear him praised and highly spoken of, and then she will shudder the less to recognize in him her son again.

But if she will not, then shall you, Antonio, soon see again by *Rouge et Noir*.

YOUR FRIEND.

VII

FIFTH LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, June 25th. Evening.

A stormy day; a real unlucky day, notwithstanding it passed over happily. Yesterday I was invited to dinner and to a Midsummer-day dance at Karlsfors, but was seized with one of my head-aches, and could not go. I let my maids (excepting Sissa, who would not by any means leave me) go to the dance, and spent the lovely Midsummer-day lying on my sofa. It was not pleasant, but it did me good to think of the many who were joyful on this day. This morning I was full of spirits and health. I was inclined for a walk; took my little work basket in my hand, and went to Karlsfors. The weather was a little dull, but calm and mild. The country was in full summer-splendour. The scythe had not yet passed over the flowery grass; butterflies were flying over it on glittering wings, and the birds were singing. I also sang as I walked along on the fair earth, and felt happy in being one of those little creatures, who from a light and thankful breast can

raise a voice in praise to their Creator. To perform such a walk alone without any company, is one of the greatest luxuries I know of. I always feel light and free from care by it, as does the bird, and for the sake of the air, the flowers, green trees and blue waves, I forget all the toils of earth. The life of nature becomes mine.

Arrived at Karlsfors, I found *ma chère mère* hard at work at her turning lathe. She seemed to be delighted to see me—embraced me heartily; scolded me on account of my stupid "head-ache;" a lively, playful conversation soon arose between us, whilst she continued to work and I to admire her skill in the art. It gives me real pleasure to see that *ma chère mère* and I become more and more attached to each other. There is a something in us both which harmonizes together. I like her well, and always feel myself light and free in her presence. She is a prudent, obliging, although severe woman, and one of those rare beings who at all times know exactly their own wishes. Such people have a most salutary influence on me. My nature feels as it were quieted and settled by her's. Twice or thrice *ma chère mère* addressed me during our conversation with the familiar term "thou," which, coming from her, had something particularly sincere and fascinating. In a general way *ma chère mère* says to all females, "you;" and Jane Maria is always called, "my daughter-in-law." That little "thou" gave a particular pleasure to me; nor was I less delighted with the present which *ma chère mère* made me of a beautifully carved box executed before my eyes.

Can two persons of this place be talking together,

think you, without mentioning the new neighbour at Ramm? Impossible! Even *ma chère mère* was talking about him to-day. The man is said to have made an initiatory offering upon his entering into residence here, in the form of a large present for the erection of a school, the want of which has been felt for a considerable time. The worthy Mr. Dahl, who for his great age is yet extremely active, is said to have undertaken the management of it in conjunction with the Pastor D. in W. *Ma chère mère* spoke as if she, also, wished to assist, being desirous of contributing oak-timber for the building as well as good counsel for the management. Several remarks which *ma chère mère* made in reference to the school respecting education and enlightenment, delighted me on account of the sound and clear ideas contained in them. Thus we proceeded together in sunshine, but at noon clouds began to gather.

Jane Maria was as usual infinitely amiable and complaisant towards me, but towards Ebba she assumed a tone of superiority and pedantry, which was no less unbecoming to her than disagreeable to Ebba. As regards the latter, she was in a bad humour, which her greatest worshipper could not have called any thing but a very bad one. Careless in dress and demeanour, she leaned back in the chair with a discontented air; would touch no article of food; then again she would have some; screwed her mouth whilst eating, threw away her knife and fork, made a noise, quarrelled right and left, and behaved unbecomingly in the highest degree. *Ma chère mère* said nothing, but I saw by some of her looks, that a storm was approaching. One

time she answered *ma chère mère* very unpolitely, and a "come, come, dear child!" served as a warning to the little overbearing creature. I was fearful, as I generally am, of all domestic storms, and did what I could to prevent the impending one; but Jane Maria behaved strangely. It seemed as if she rather wished to render Ebba's faults noticed, than to conceal them. Ebba began to hum to herself.—"It is not customary to sing at table!" said Jane Maria, much louder than was necessary. *Ma chère mère* appeared to be disposed to lean to my side, and to hush away the storm. She addressed herself to Ebba in a very pleasant and jesting tone, the latter was silent, and looked at her with an impertinent air.—"Ebba, it is exceedingly unbecoming for you to look at *ma chère mère* in such a manner!" said Jane Maria, reprovingly.

'A cat may surely look at a king!" said *ma chère mère*, still in good humour, but at the same time she remarked, rather seriously, that she expected to have a rational woman and not a child at her table, etc. Ebba began again to hum a ballad.

"Don't sing, Ebba!"—said Jane Maria—"but listen to what *ma chère mère* says."

"I don't know why I should," replied Ebba with unexampled pertness.—"Because it is your duty!" thundered *ma chère mère*, suddenly, whilst knocking with her fist on the table till the glasses and bottles shook together; "and if you don't know it, the deuce take me, if I don't make you know it!

She rose up; her nose became pointed and pale. This storm would nevertheless have passed over, if Ebba's impertinence had not exceeded all bounds. I

have noticed, that Jane Maria likes to precede me and Ebba on all occasions. She is punctilious to go into the room first, to be called to table first, etc. Once I heard her say to the servants, "Don't forget always to announce me before the Baroness Ebba." I am quite contented with this, for Jane Maria is superior to Ebba and myself; but Ebba embraces every opportunity to resist Jane Maria's assumed precedence. A cup of milk, which unfortunately was served up between the two sisters-in-law, now gave rise to a quarrel. Jane Maria wished to appropriate it to herself, with an air of superiority, when Ebba dragged it to herself with such violence, that the milk was spilled on Jane Maria's muslin-dress. All was up now. Jane Maria burst out into a cry of alarm; *ma chère mère* moved back her chair, went up, without speaking a word, to Ebba, took her by the hand, and conducted her out of the dining-room. I blushed with shame at this scene, and wished myself far away.

We all rose up; Jane Maria went to change her dress, and we afterwards met in the drawing-room. After a while *ma chère mère* entered, holding Ebba by the hand, who, with blushing cheeks, with difficulty suppressed her sobs. *Ma chère mère* led Ebba to Jane Maria and dictated the words with which to ask pardon, which Ebba articulated after her; after which, both sisters-in-law embraced each other, but without the least cordiality. Ebba then ran into another room, threw herself upon a couch, and there cried herself to sleep.

After the coffee, *ma chère mère* proposed to Jane Maria to accompany her in a piece of music. Jane

Maria glanced towards me with a contemptuous mien (for she had no respect for *ma chère mère's* musical talents) but she complied, and played a sonata of Mozart, which *ma chère mère* laid before her and accompanied on the violin, with tolerable skill, but no taste; Mozart's music, however, always enraptures me. Jane Maria would play nothing except Herz and Czerny; they have too much flourish and ornament for me. Jane Maria's superior execution, and *ma chère mère's* enthusiasm for her "Mozart," as she calls him, caused the sonata to go off well enough, and *ma chère mère* herself pronounced "Bravo!"

After Jane Maria, it was my turn to exert myself; but partly from being quite unacquainted with the *grande sonate par Steibelt avec accompagnement du Violon,*" partly from being a mere bungler on the piano-forte, compared with Jane Maria, I acquitted myself but badly. In vain did *ma chère mère* beat time with her foot, in vain did she make such scrapes on her violin, as almost to burst the drum of my ear, we still continually got out of time. We re-commenced, we repeated, she grew impatient, I confused, and we finished with a perfect cat-music. *Ma chère mère* laid aside her violin, calling me a "little goose."

"It's quite another thing," she added, "when Jane Maria and I play together. That's something like harmony."

The harmony between *ma chère mère* and Jane Maria was nevertheless soon disturbed; they fell into a dispute about some domestic matter; *ma chère mère* used at her large brewings, a barrel and a half of malt to two barrels of small-beer and half-a-barrel of Ale.

Jane Maria thought, that, according to her method, a third less of malt would brew the same quantity of small-beer and Ale. *Ma chère mère* said, that that was thoroughly impossible; one must either take more malt to such a quantity of brewing, or the beer would be weaker. Jane Maria adhered to her opinion, and they disputed for a time, till Jane Maria threw out a slight hint, that *ma chère mère* did not understand the real art of brewing.

"Does the egg pretend to be wiser than the hen?" said *ma chère mère*, bitterly; "what the deuce do I care for your new art of brewing and wonderful inventions; there may be much art in it, but so much the less liquor; those who have tried know something; and I have seen a few more years, and some little more of brewing, than you, daughter Jane Maria. Age gives experience; remember that, Jane Maria." Jane Maria worked away at her embroidering frame, looking very red, and silent, but preserved a mien of superior sagacity. All this was not very agreeable. Meanwhile Ebba had awoke. She came in, and looked like a bird after a shower of rain. In order to cheer her, I proposed an amusing game. *Ma chère mère* joined in with me cheerfully, and we all took our seats at a round table. But at the very commencement of the game, Jane Maria and Ebba fell into a quarrel, and that in right earnest, about some rule of the game. Ebba appealed to me, and I put her right with a little jest respecting Jane Maria's opinion. Jane Maria was offended, and said something cutting to me. Heaven knows, how it happened, that in a moment my thermometer rose several degrees. I felt hot about my

ears, I answered somewhat sharply, and we scolded each other for a moment very soundly, till I saw *ma chère mère's* eyes attentively directed on me. I then was ashamed, blushed, and tried to make amends for my rashness by some kind expression to Jane Maria. But never was a game less spirited. Jane Maria sat, as if at church, and returned a chilling demeanour to *ma chère mère's* more and less refined attempts to rally her. I was quite glad when it was announced to me that the cabriolet had driven up to the door.

On taking leave of Jane Maria, she drew back from the kiss which I wished cordially to give her, and only just touched my hand with the tips of her fingers. I saw that she was angry with me yet; I felt sorry about it. *Ma chère mère* followed me to the ante-chamber, and said: "My dear Franciska, we have all been exceedingly vexatious to-day!"

"Ah, yes," answered I, so heartily concerned, that *ma chère mère* began to laugh, embraced me, and said looking at me: "Yes, you too have not been much better than the rest, child!"

"Nor have you, mother," said I, roguishly; but somewhat alarmed at my presumption, I added: "Forgive me!" and kissed her hand.

She gave me a light pat on the cheek, and said, good-naturedly: "Well, you must come again to-morrow, and we will try if we can't agree better. Will you come, my child? I will send my Norrköping carriage to fetch you, and it shall take you back as well. A little exercise will do the horses good.

This little ante-chamber scene lightened my heart considerably. I feel that *ma chère mère* gains on my

affection more and more. But, Jane Maria? How goes it with our friendship and with *la divina commedia?* But I will not judge by the occurrences of to-day. There are evil days in which the mind is out of tune, just as the milk turns sour in the dairy, when there is a storm in the atmosphere. I myself indeed was, as *ma chère mère* said, not a jot better than the rest.

To-morrow, I hope all will be right again between me and Jane Maria.

June 26th. Evening.

No, all was not right again between Jane Maria and me. Astonishing! how can one sulk so long about a trifle, a little excitement, which moreover was mutual. *Ma chère mère* received me yesterday more kindly still than usual, but Jane Maria was short and distant; she did not speak to me, and scarcely answered me when I spoke to her. This made my heart shrink. I was sorry for Ebba likewise. She was pale, dejected, although not out of temper, and looked as if she did not know what to make of herself and her position. She seemed to me to want a friend, and I was determined to act the part of one to her to the utmost of my power. I perceived likewise, that she did not relish Jane Maria's moral preaching, and that the latter and Jean Jacques's constant exhortations "to be rational, and take a walk," confirmed her little obstinate brain in her determined resolution not to put her foot out of the door, and to be reasonable as little as possible.

I watched to be alone with Ebba for a moment, and then said: "Have you a mind to take some fresh warm milk at my cow-house very early to-morrow morning?

I have a cow, called Andumbla, which gives most delicious milk, and is so tame moreover, that she will take bread out of your hand, if you will feed her. Would you like to come?"

"Oh yes!" answered Ebba, opening widely her beautiful eyes which suddenly brightened.

"Well, then, I'll come and call for you to morrow morning. But can you be up so early as six o'clock?"

"At five, at four, if you think it necessary," said Ebba warmly.

"But you are not capable of walking so far. It is above a mile from here to Rosenvik. No, it will be too far."

"No no, I am certain it will not. Indeed I can walk a mile and much further. I am strong. I can dance a whole night through!"

Well, then, I'll come and call for you to-morrow morning at six o'clock, and you shall stay with me the whole of the day. We will bake our own pancakes for our dinner and in the evening I will take you home again in the cabriolet. Pollo is so gentle that I am convinced you can manage him yourself.

"Oh, how delightful that will be!" exclaimed Ebba enraptured.

"But we must have permission first from *ma chère mère*, Ebba."

"That of course; I will run immediately to ask her." And away ran Ebba. The antipathy against the country, the resolution not to go out, all was forgotten at the prospect of taking milk at the cow-house, and driving Pollo.

I rejoiced at my little victory, as well as at the pros-

pect of having Ebba to myself for a day. A something told me that both a good heart and good sense will be found in her, when only called forth in a rational and seasonable manner.

When, soon after this, I entered *ma chère mère's* apartment, I found her with Ebba, who sat on her knee, chatting away with childlike joyous freedom, whilst she turned *ma chère mère's* cap into all sorts of forms and shapes. *Ma chère mère* laughed, and let her do as she liked. There was a perfect understanding between them.

Ma chère mère looked at me pleasantly, and exclaimed, "Well, dear Franciska, I understand you wish to run away with Ebba to-morrow, that she may drink new milk with the calves in your cow-house, I expect that you will carry her off in a balloon, for she cannot bear dusty roads and green grass."

"How charming, how exquisite that will be!" cried Ebba, clapping her hands, and skipping out of the room.

"There is no guile in her," said *ma chère mère*, "but she is a spoiled child, and must be corrected; had this been done earlier, it would not be necessary now. If you should have children, think of the words of the son of Sirach, 'Hast thou childern, correct them.'"

I said that one may govern children solely by reason, and train them for good and reflecting men.

"All roads may lead to Rome," said *ma chère mère*, "but the rod-road is shorter than the reason-road. Of course it is necessary that one should use the former with discretion. But to reason with children is to talk one's self hoarse, and get little by it. Teach the wolf

the *Paternoster*, he will still cry "Lamb!" My brother in-law Reinfelt's children were to have been brought up on this reasoning system, and with such perfection! But they turned out intolerable! The over-bearing lads were a pest to every one in the house. One day there were some strangers at my brother-in-law's house, and the children ran about and roared like little devils. One of the strangers spoke about something, "black as a crow," and one of Reinhold's boys shouted out, "The crow is white!"—"No, my son," said the mother,—"the crow is black." "No!" cried the boy, passionately, "the crow is white! the crow is white!" "The crows are black!" said the mother. "Crows are white." cried the urchin. What was to be done now? Was there a crow immediately at hand in order to convince his reason? No, and thus the boy had the last word. If I had only got him under my hands, he should have soon learned—and very properly too—that the crows are not white. No, no! Franciska; Reason is a good thing, but does no good with children. 'He who will not obey father and mother, must obey the drum.'"

I was obliged to laugh heartily at this sally, as well as at *ma chère mère's* warmth, but the thought of the unsuccessful application of her doctrine, in reference to her own son, inspired me with a feeling of sadness, and in deep thought, I said:

"It may be the case that different children require different treatment."

"Perhaps!—" said *ma chère mère*, and a black cloud lowered over her forehead, but she chased it away quickly, and cheerfully continued: "However, I am quite agreeable, Franciska, that you should take the

pretty little mad-cap under your inspection. At her age 'a word spoken in season, how good is it!' 'What is hid in the snow will come forth in the thaw.'"

The little mad-cap was exceedingly good-tempered and most engaging throughout the whole day; but Jane Maria was the more peevish, at least towards me and Ebba. It seemed as if she believed that we had formed a confederacy against her. I had a great desire to convince her that this was not the case, and that there is nothing that I wished for more than that of being friends with her again; but I perceived a trait in her character which quite chilled my feeling for her, for it betrayed a great want of kindness and of real good manners.

It was towards evening; the topic of conversation was Bellini. Ebba was enchanted by his compositions, Jane Maria said he was monotonous, and there was no life in his melodies. "Oh!" cried Ebba,—"I will sing you a piece of his, which is heavenly, and which I learned last winter with Mr. B.; you must hear it!" She ran to the piano and really sang, very gracefully, a little enchanting piece of this most melodious master. I listened to her with great pleasure, but just when Ebba was about performing with care a most expressive Movendo, Jane Maria pushed back her chair with a great noise, and walked out of the room, opening the door widely, and clapping it too after her. Ebba blushed, I did the same, for Jane Maria's conduct evidently intended to depreciate Ebba, was wounding. I could tell, by a look of *ma chère mère*, that she thought as I did, and when Ebba concluded her song, with tears in her eyes, *ma chère mère* thanked and praised her, doubt-

less more than she would have done, had Jane Maria not conducted herself so ungraciously.

Jane Maria is extolled as a woman of distinguished manners. "Alas!" (thought I, at this scene), "how superficial is the signification of this fine, comprehensive term!" And I felt no longer any inclination to trouble myself about a reconciliation with Jane Maria; I left it to come when it would.

But oh, what brought me such joy and rapture think you, just now? Why, a letter from you, dear Maria, so sweet, so full of that, which makes me happy. Although already late, I cannot lie down before unburdening myself of those words and feelings towards you which your letter has called forth.

The 27th July,—Evening.

This morning at five o'clock, I set out on the way to Karlsfors, in order to fetch Ebba. The weather was as beautiful as I could wish. At six o'clock I arrived, and found Ebba already dressed and waiting for me, full of eagerness and impatience. Excepting the servants, there was no one yet up but Ebba. We set out on our way. At the commencement, Ebba talked, skipped, laughed, sang, and enjoyed her life as the birds in the air; but when we came half way to Rosenvik, into a large, beautiful wood, she suddenly grew silent. And in reality, the scene around us was well calculated to inspire, at the same time, both pleasant and serious thought. A perfect stillness prevailed, large dew-drops hung on the leaves of the trees, and the sun with its golden rays broke through the forest, and gave varied degrees of shade to the abounding foliage; the atmosphere was indescribably pure and mild. Ebba walked

at a gradually decreasing pace, and I silently at her side. Feelings of solemnity stole over me, and now and then I cast a look on Ebba. A sort of soft paleness rested on her fair, young countenance, a kind of embarrassment was legible in it; great tears stood in her eyes, which seemed, as it were, to open on an unknown world. A bird then began to warble—wonderful, enrapturing tones—one might have believed they were inspired by a thinking soul.

"Oh, what is that?" enquired Ebba, pausing, and astonished.

"That is a nightingale!" replied I, myself also intoxicated by the lovely and rarely heard melody.

Ebba hearkened and gazed for a considerable time, with anxious searching look. It seemed as if the ear of her soul, had, for the first time, opened to the lofty song of life.

"Good Heavens!" she whispered, "how solemn and fair this is!"

In an under voice, I recited the following words of Tegner:—

> "Oh when so much of nature's loveliness,
> Is felt through every bounding vein, how fair
> Must be the eternal source of pure delight."

Ebba fell weeping round my neck, and I pressed her to my breast, with the tenderness of a sister.

"Oh, Franciska!" said she, "I don't know how it is, I am happy, and yet obliged to weep. Every thing around me is so beautiful, so grand, so wonderful:—Tell me, what may this be likened to?"

"To Life!" replied I.

"To Life?" repeated Ebba, astonished, "but life has many changes, many varying scenes."

"Yes, but that which we now see, is like the truth of life, its inmost reality, grave but yet glad."

Ebba put her hand to her forehead, "I do not rightly understand you," said she, "but I believe my heart forebodes,—thoughts flash through me, but I cannot realize them."

"In the course of time," dear Ebba, "you will understand them better."

"And when I shall understand this reality of life, of which you speak, shall I then be able to be gay and laugh, as I now do?"

"Oh yes, Ebba! Then only will you be able to be rightly glad and happy. Then you will have no ill-humours, nor continued weariness, as you often have at present."

"I should like to become acquainted with this reality of life," said Ebba, with earnestness, "but who is to teach me it? Jane Maria is not able. You are able, but I shall soon travel far away from hence."

"Do you know any thing else to which this wood-scene may be likened?"

"Yes."

"To what then?"

"To your husband!"

Ebba looked at me, and her eyes brightened. "I believe you are right!" said she.

"Yes, his mind also is serious, but clear; and if you wish to become acquainted with the reality of life, and its beauty, then—live for him, Ebba; O, Ebba! be as a nightingale in the domestic world! Be to him as

the sun-beams between these trees! Attach yourself with heart and soul to him! Be guided by him! Make him happy, and you shall, you will become happy and understand what in life is the most lovely! You will acquire self-esteem, honour before God and men!"

Ebba was pale, kissed my hand, and wept. But, oh, how lovely were those tears upon her youthful cheeks! They proclaimed the dawning of womanhood in a being hitherto but as a child.

I left Ebba to her thoughts, and silently we continued our journey to Rosenvik. Not until our arrival at the dairy, did Ebba arouse from her silent musing; and the frothing milk which we poured into glasses from the milk-pails, appeared to us to be a real draught of joy. It never entered Ebba's mind to believe that Andumbla's could be but common milk, and I made no attempt to convince her of it.

My intercourse with Ebba during the remainder of the day, confirmed me in my opinion of her. She has many fine qualities, which, if cordially cherished and developed, would render her an excellent and amiable person; it is true, she has many childish ways about her, but how much should I excuse in her at seventeen, when I at seven and twenty————.

For a moment Ebba sank into profound and apparently melancholy reflection. I enquired affectionately the cause of her depression.

"Ah!" sighed Ebba, deeply, "if he were only not called Peter!" I was obliged to laugh out aloud at this. But Ebba continued (dejected) "Jane Maria is of the same opinion, that Peter is such a frightful name; whilst she says Jean Jacques sounds so well. How dis-

agreeable that he should just be called Peter!"

I tried to comfort Ebba, and brought before her all the great men who had borne this name. The Apostle Peter made no great impression on her, nor Czar Peter either. Master Peter, from the national song, rendered the name a little more poetical, and she was almost reconciled to it, when I represented that Pedro and Peter were one and the same name, and that a lately deceased Emperor, closely related to our royal family, had borne the same. She determined to call her husband, Pedro; I proposed several abbreviations to her, and at last we laughed most heartily over the subject, and Ebba became equally reconciled to the name of Peter, as I was with the far less poetical Lars Anders.

We finished the day with sending up soap-bubbles in the open, calm air, with as much eagerness and pleasure as if we were little children. I then drove Ebba home in the cabriolet, and now and then abdicated to her the reins, to her great delight.

I was very anxious to see, whether Jane Maria still continued to be unfriendly; it seemed incredible, but at my first salutation I saw that it was so. I was quite grieved about it, and my hope of living in friendship with her almost vanished, for I never can become sincerely attached to any one who is not kind and reasonable; and such a disposition, (so appropriately designated by the ugly name of churlish), changes life into a dark autumn day. Compared to this *ma chère mère's* bursts of impatience are a thousand times better; she expresses herself harshly, but, once said, there is an end of it, and she is again kind, and cherishes no resentment towards those who have offended her. Not-

withstanding I am glad of not being obliged to *crouch* before her sceptre, and the more I compare Björn with others, the more does he resemble an angel of peace.

Ma chère mère was this evening very much occupied with the new neighbour at Ramm. Partly because she had heard a number of good reports about him, partly because he himself had now paid her great attention. She had, some time ago, for instance, expressed in company, that she should like some venison; and also a few deer, to keep in her park at Karlsfors, to let them breed. [*Ma chère mère*, before her misfortune, was very fond of hunting, and had killed with her own hand more than one swift deer.] The new neighbour at Ramm had now sent her the delicious venison of a young fat roebuck, which he had shot, as well as a couple of living animals of this kind, which had been caught in snares. The present was accompanied by an extremely polite French letter on the part of the neighbour. The note was to the effect, that having accidently ascertained the wish of the lady formerly the possessor of Ramm, he esteemed himself happy to have it in his power to gratify her, especially as he expected ere long to be settled on the estate, and would then cherish no higher wish, than that of entering into a friendly connection with so revered a neighbour. He trusted that the objects sent might meet with a favourable reception, as pledges of his respect. The letter was signed "Antonia de Romilly."

Ma chère mère was exceedingly delighted at the French letter, at the deer, and, above all, at the politeness of the new neighbour.

"See, that is something like *savoir vivre!*" cried

the, snapping her fingers. "Yes, these southern people have no equals in it. We must see the man. I will invite him to my first grand dinner, if even he pays no previous visit. Politeness of this kind is better than seven visits. At present, however, I must certainly answer his letter immediately; and, moreover, in French. Franciska shall look over my letter afterwards. Heaven be thanked, I have acquired the French language grammatically, and spoken and written it as well as any body, but latterly it has become a little rusty, and will probably be somewhat imperfect, by reason of want of practise. I am very glad of the opportunity of practising my French again with the polite Monsieur de Romilly. It will be very agreeable to become more closely acquainted with him.

I say with *ma chère mère*, it will be very agreeable to form a more intimate acquaintance with this man; for a man of whom every body speaks, and nobody sees, who distributes benefits and polite favours, and whom yet nobody knows, is undeniably a wonderful and interesting person.

Ma chère mère was a long time at work with her French epistle. On reading it over, I had the utmost trouble imaginable to keep myself from laughing; so precise and old-fashioned was it; it was, however, so like the composer, and in its antiquated style expressed her ideas so distinctly, that I considered it both impossible and unnecessary to attempt any alteration. I therefore left those expressions, "*Monsieur et très honore voisin*," "*politesse magnanime*," "*present gentil et courtois*," and many other somewhat singular words, standing as they were. I said the letter was

very good; and *ma chère mère*, who had all the while been watching me with some little uneasiness, was very well satisfied with herself, with the letter, and also with me.

The 30th July.

Ah! I breathe again. It is fair weather again between Jane Maria and me; and the south wind which chased away the misty vapours, was called—Flattery! The day before yesterday Björn returned, satisfied with himself, with his brother, his journey, his business, and, above all, with his little wife, who on her part again was not dissatisfied with him. Yesterday evening there was a Sunday dance at Karlsfors. *Ma chère mère* had asked us to be present on the occasion, because she wished to drink the health of the new married couples, and to make an address to her people; which, on account of Björn's and Peter's absence on St. John's day, was left unperformed. *Ma chère mère* played to the dancing, on the violin, almost the whole of the evening. Ebba danced with heart and soul; I did the same. Jane Maria, who had been making visits with her husband did not return till late, and only remained a spectator of the dance. I poured forth a stream of encomiums respecting her toilet, which really was very tasteful; and at length the dark cloud dispersed which hung between us, and Jane Maria became, to my inexpressible joy, as friendly as before, but with the *divina comedia* of our friendship there is an end. I am sorry for that. I should like to find one friend among my many neighbours and acquaintances. Ebba is too childish, Miss Hausgiebel too much like a bird, *ma chère mère* is—*ma chère mère*. For long

periods it will be but poor pleasure to have many neighbours and no friends about one.

After the dance *ma chère mère* ordered bowls of punch to be brought in, and the healths of the newly-married ones were drunk; she delivered also a discourse, interlarded with proverbs, but which did not seem to me to be on the whole the most successful.

Björn will take my letter with him to town, therefore I conclude at present in haste. I do not believe that any one writes such long letters as I do. But it is accounted for, by your being my Maria, and I your—

FRANCISKA.

VIII.

SIXTH LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, July 3, 18—.

As a bee flies from flower to flower, so do I drive about from neighbour to neighbour and gather honey in my cells. To-day we have had an abundant harvest. No wonder, for I was at the flower of the Dale, with the kind and amiable Serena.

Björn reminded me this morning of our promise to the old Dahls to go and spend a day with them. He proposed to me to bear him company on his morning's ride to town; he would then set me down at Dahl's, and be there again towards noon, after he had finished his round of professional visits. I disliked this project at first, and I remonstrated with him against being handed in so early in the morning, like a pill-box, or any other medicine. Nor did it appear to me the most befitting way in the world to take by surprise, people with whom I was but newly acquainted, and settle myself down in their house for a whole day, they all the while perhaps wishing their uninvited guest at Nova Scotia. He was, however, exceedingly persuasive in his laconic way, and overcame all my objections; secretly allured besides by the remembrance of Serena,

and the impression which the heavenly land had made upon me, I dressed myself plainly but nicely, according to Björn's taste, and away rolled the cabriolet with him and his little wife.

I was duly and rightly set down at the door. Björn had taken it into his obstinate head not to go in with me, but to let me speak for myself. In vain I represented to him that I was not even so fortunate as a medicine-bottle, which, at least, bears a strip of paper, explaining "how to be taken," and told him my fears that they would be at a loss in the house to know what to do with me. Björn told me only to greet them in a civil tone, and assured me that this, in conjunction with my face, would have all the desired effect. Chiding we separated.

As I walked up the stairs quite alone, I looked upon myself as having no more right there than one who comes with the intention of borrowing money; but scarcely had I entered the door, than I was ready to fancy myself cream to the coffee, or a long wished for present, so was I hailed and welcomed and embraced, and I felt in my grateful soul that all this was to be placed to Björn's account.

I just came in right time for the coffee, eat and drank, and chatted, and felt myself in a very short time like a child of the house.

And now you shall have in prose a description of that family, which I have already described to you in poetry; it is as a working-day to a holyday, but the Kingdom of Heaven is still at hand (I do not speak now solely from personal experience,) but according to the descriptions which I have received from Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel and *ma chère mère*.

THE DOMESTIC LIFE.

For upwards of half a century have the aged pair inhabited these same rooms. Here they were married, and here will they celebrate next winter their golden nuptials.* The rooms are unaltered, the furniture the same as fifty years ago, and yet every thing is clean, comfortable and pleasant, as if it were a dwelling only of a year's date; but it is more simple than our modern abodes. I do not know what spirit of peace and comfort possesses me in this house. Ah! in it fifty years have passed away as one happy day; here a virtuous couple have lived, loved, and wrought. Many a pure joy has flourished here, and the intruding cares have not been bitter. The love and fear of God has brightened the darkest clouds; from hence has issued many a noble deed, many a beneficent work. Here happy children have grown up; they drew strength from the example of their parents, and went forth into the world and established themselves like them, in goodness and happiness. Still, to this present moment, they often return to the parental roof full of love and joy, to bless and be blessed. Ah, Maria! I feel that I fall again into the poetic strain. But what would you wish? There are pictures of every-day life, which, let them be turned whichever way they may, always appear in poetic loveliness. I will endeavour notwithstanding to bind my-

* Alluding to the celebration of a marriage jubilee, on the 50th anniversary of the wedding day, it is a custom in some places to marry the aged couple over again.

self more to earth. Well then!—the children: three sons and four daughters come once almost every year, with every soul belonging to them, to visit their parents and to diffuse new life into their early home. That home is still unchanged to them, still is it full of love, as dear as ever. It has only become more quiet, more peaceful, for evening is there, and the shadows of the grave begin to fall around the venerable old people,—and now a glance at these.

THE VENERABLE OLD MAN.

The mark of a long life full of integrity, industry and benevolence is stamped upon his open forehead, and to be seen in his frank and kind demeanour. His frame is yet strong, and his gait firm; the crown of his head is bald, but beneath, a circle of silvery-white locks surround his dignified head. No man in the city beholds this head without bowing his in friendly and reverential salutation. All in the vicinity as well as in the city love him as their benefactor, and honour him as their patriarch. He has acquired his fortune by his own exertions; sacrificed much for the general weal, and in spite of many adversities and losses his courage is unabated. In thought and in word he is still vigorous, even cheerful; but since the last few years his sight has become weak. Sometimes he has attacks of the gout, which affect his equanimity. Ah, prose of life!

But around the couch when he lies cramped with pain, an angel hovers. His feet are wrapt up and moved by white soft hands; the sick chamber, as well as the countenance of the old man, are brightened by Serena.

We are coming into the house where Serena rules, not out of poetry.

THE VENERABLE OLD WOMAN.

An aged face, a bent back; you see an old woman. But shew her something beautiful; speak of something amiable, her countenance brightens, her smile beams with that eternal youth, which dwells for ever in the feeling soul. Involuntarily you are then obliged to exclaim: "What a handsome old woman!" Where you to sit next to her, and gaze at her gentle, honest eyes, you would feel as if you were ready to open your whole soul, and listen to her words with faith as firm as they were gospel. She has lived through much and experienced much; and still she says, that she should like to live to learn. Ah! truly, we ought to learn from her. Her tone and demeanour betray true culture and refinement, and great knowledge of mankind. She alone has educated her daughters; she still lives in thought and deed for her children and children's children; still bears the cares of her house and family upon her shoulders, though she reposes some at present on Serena; since the death of her youngest daughter she has become somewhat melancholy, to which in words she gives no expression, but it is perceptible in her frequent sighs. Like her husband, she is universally respected and beloved; and all agree in saying, that a more perfect union than that between this couple cannot be conceived.

Do you wish to see in one short trait a miniature picture of the whole?

Every evening the old man himself roasts two apples; when they are done he gives one to his Old Beauty, as he calls his wife. Thus, they have shared every thing with each other for fifty years past.

The kind old woman in a good-natured grandmotherly tone, which did my heart good, at once called me "Franciska," and addressed me with the cordial "thou." *Ma chère mère* I like very well, but I could love this excellent old woman.

And now to the third person—the very life, the real charm of this family.

SERENA.

Her mother was called "Benjamina;" and, like the Benjamin in the Bible, was the youngest and most beloved child of her parents. When scarcely eighteen years old, she formed a matrimonial alliance with a young man, who possessed and merited all her affections. It was a union fair as a spring day, but much too quickly dissolved. The daughter, who after the lapse of two years, was the offspring of this union, received the name of Serena. With her it terminated on earth. The mother blessed her daughter and died; the father followed her after a few months. They were not to be long separated from each other. The cradle of the little orphan girl was conveyed to the house of her grand-parents. Serena was their comfort, and soon, also, their greatest joy; and not to them only, but likewise to all their friends and acquaintances did Serena become endeared. The happy life of her parents and their premature death, had flung the veil of mourn-

ing over the orphan child, which claims a sympathizing tear from every benevolent eye. Her childhood was delicate; a pain in her hip, which for a long time kept her, as it were, a prisoner, and from the sports of childhood, gave a paleness to her cheeks, and prematurely brought that smile of patient sadness upon her lips, which even now sometimes rests with a most mysterious charm upon them. All this in connexion with her passive resignation, with the perfect amiability of her whole character, gained for her the interest and the hearts of all men.

During one period it appeared as if the languishing angel would spread her wings and follow her parents on their passage to heaven, but this was not the case. Tender and faithful nursing held her back upon the earth. Like a rose blossoming in the sunshine upon graves, like a young vine-branch entwining its soft twigs round firm old stems; thus grew up Serena, cheered by loving looks, tenderly cherished and guided by those who had been the support of her parents. She was restored to health, she smiled, played—her soul developed itself, and by degrees she ripened into a lovely harmonious being.

She learned every thing with difficulty, but retained what she learned in a most faithful memory. Ever a little timid in commencing any work, she never desisted from it until it was completed and executed well. Her instructors were at first impatient, but always became satisfied at last. Serena was not richly endowed, but she finished her work so well, and then,—she was so pleasant, so sincere, so loving!

Thus she grew up, unfolded her powers, and became

the Flower of the Dale. The earnestness of her soul, the clearness of her understanding, rendered her gay, gay in angelic happiness, pure, animating to all, imparting happiness!

"Look at Serena," said every mother in the vicinity to their daughters, and the daughters looked and strove to imitate what they were constrained to love.

But the prose in this sketch! the touch of earth in this angelic picture! ah! this too must be told. Serena is lame. This word alarms me. I am ready to exclaim "No!" to what I have said: if you think you see in Serena a limping awkward figure, I call out with all my might, "No, no, no! it is not so." Behold a graceful, perfectly formed shape, whose slight inclination forward in walking, by no means disfigures her. It is a gentle, wave-like motion, which resembles the pleasing exception from a rule more than a real defect. Is it the remembrance of her sufferings or the tone of her character, which so entirely hides this natural defect? Enough, it inspires no other feeling in those who behold her, than an involuntary wish to be permitted to support her.

Serena's appearance in other respects you may learn from my former sketch. That innocence upon her forehead, that bright child-like gaze with those stars in the azure sky enraptured me as at first, and I found her almost still more beautiful in her simple every-day attire, than in her festive robes.

I dare not forget "Goldhead," who often fluttered twittering around his fair mistress. On my inquiry how the little creature had become so tame, Madam Dahl replied: "During that severe winter two years

ago, Serena one day found that little bird lying on the floor. She took it up, and nursed it, and fed it. The sparrow revived and attached itself to Serena, as if it knew how to be grateful. But it is true also that Serena is tender and kind to it, as to every thing, which she takes under her protection. Goldhead flies at his pleasure into his cage to eat, but is otherwise fastened up only at night.

And now for myself. for I must not forget myself, Madam Dahl requested me to sing. (It is after all a pleasant thing to possess a little talent.) I obeyed, was successful, and received the most lively thanks. The old Dahl cried with cheerful voice: now Serena must sing a little too!

"Oh, Grandfather!" said she blushing;—"how would it sound after what we have just heard?"

"Dear child!"—answered the venerable old man smiling,—"do not let Madam W—, believe you to be vain."

"No!" rejoined Serena gaily,—"and therefore she shall hear my poor little voice."

She seated herself instantly at the instrument and sang a pretty, simple, little song, by Lindblad. Her voice was not poor, but rather weak, and apparently unexercised, but notwithstanding, she sang with so much soul and expression, that I felt heartily delighted.

"Yes!" said the old man, who was evidently rejoiced in his inmost soul, "I like that sort of thing far better than all our Catalini's, Mara, and Dulcamara, and whatever else their names may be, who are more instruments than singers. This I comprehend at least with my heart and understanding. If Serena

had only had opportunity to learn them, then—" The venerable old man made a most expressive mien.

"Are there no singing-masters in the town?" I inquired.

"None, except old E——, who sings wretchedly ill. Many of our friends here wished to have taken Serena to Stockholm, to cultivate her talents there, but nothing could induce her to leave us. She knows very well, that we feel lost without her. But the reason why her voice fails her, and she gets hoarse, is because she reads so much Latin."

Saying this, the venerable old man held out his hand affectionately to Serena, who embraced him with filial tenderness. Both laughed—"If you are not tired of singing," continued the old man—"come my good child, and read a little Latin to me out of the book. You know which I mean, from Victor—I always forget the man's name. Will you my child?"

"With all my heart," replied Serena, and they walked out together.

"Does Miss Löfven know Latin?" I asked Madam Dahl somewhat astonished.

The good old woman answered smiling, "Ah, that is an absurdity! Since my old man's eyes have become so weak, Serena often reads to him. His favourite readings are travels, and novels; these latter keep him as he says, young in spirit."

When passages occur in these works, which Serena thinks improper for reading aloud, she skips them, or when that is impracticable, she says: "Here comes some Latin." My husband, who sometimes sleeps whilst she is reading, let these excuses about the Latin

pass for sometime, although he remarked it as strange that they should occur so often. "That is a singular style of writing," said he at last, "which our modern authors have adopted, it is a cursed pedantry," &c.—he was downright vexed about it. One day, however, there was so much of Latin occurring during the lecture, that my old man highly astonished, began to inquire how the matter really was. After the conclusion of the lecture, and Serena's withdrawal, he took up his double glasses and commenced to study the pretended Latin himself; he soon discovered the nature of it, and the Latin afterwards became a standing joke between him and Serena, whom he gradually persuaded to be less particular about the Latin quotations with him.

We spoke for some time yet about Serena, and the good old Lady listened with pleasure to what I had to say about her favourite. She then sighed and said: "she certainly is at present far less handsome than she was; for a twelvemonth past, I fancied she was in a decline, and she still coughs occasionally. I am afraid, that the retired life which she leads here with us, is injurious to her. Doctor Werner has recommended her country air and exercise."

"Many of our acquaintances have been so kind as to invite Serena to their country seats, but she will not leave us, and we do not know indeed how we could live without her. My old man in particular, cannot bear to hear a word about her leaving us, and we have therefore thought of hiring a small country house near the town, where Serena might be with us, and at the same time receive benefit to her health. In the mean time she shall take exercise on horseback as often as

possible, and my old man and I will accompany her in a carriage. We intend to commence this plan next week, provided Serena can get a good and safe little pony."

I took up this point and inquired eagerly, if it were not practicable for Serena to take a trip to Rosenvik, and spend the day now and then at my house? I would take good care of her, we would be out in the fresh air, we would drink fresh milk, we would sing together, said I, and heaven knows what more I said, for a flood of eloquence came over me.

The dear old woman thanked me, appeared half happy, half perplexed, knew not whether it was practicable, sighed at length, and said: "We must see what my old man says, we will speak to him."

"I shall speak to my Björn," thought I, "and if I get him over, who will be able to withstand us?" I was full of spirits for the accomplishment of this project.

Björn came. At the very hall door I seized him unawares.—"My dear Björn, if you have any regard for me, you must be on my side and speak with me and for me, that Serena may come to Rosenvik, and stop there during the day. You see she is to ride out for the sake of exercise, according to your own prescription, dearest! now prescribe likewise that she is to ride only to our house; say, that it is indispensably requisite to her health. I will attend to her, I will sing with her—say so to the old man—talk with them and bring it about. I am sure it is your wish too, my dear little Bear, is it not?"

"Bless us! what a flow of eloquence. Where is one

to get breath? Well, I see clearly you are pretty well at home here already, you monkey!"

"All my own merit, and no one else's, you Bear!"

Björn was welcomed and hailed by the family, as a very dear and esteemed friend. He always looks on such occasions something like a Bashaw, and receives all such civilities and kindness as a tribute due to him —and I suppose it is all quite correct.

Having devoted myself to-day to prosaic observations, I directed my attention at dinner very minutely to the domestic management and arrangements, by the neglect of which, all the poesy of life here in the north, at least, evaporates like bubbles in a glass of champagne. But I only discovered here, that I should be able to learn much from Serena in the cooking department itself, as well as in the serving, &c. &c.

For several years she has superintended the management of her grandmother's house, and appears to perform her part excellently. The charming girl was an attentive and graceful hostess to all at table, whilst sitting near her half-blind grandfather, she paid perpetual attention to his wants with the kindest solicitude.

After dinner, I soon adverted to my project with Serena. Björn entered into the theme with much force and reason, and we succeeded happily. The old Dahls hesitated at first about it, but when I spoke of our desire to practice in singing together, he gladly consented, shook me by the hand, and said, "that will be most desirable." When Serena had the hearty consent of her grand-parents, she also expressed her joy at the plan, embraced me, and said, a tear starting

in her eye, that I was too kind to take such interest in her and her music.

I was delighted beyond measure, and feeling light-hearted, every thing else appeared charming. The afternoon passed over in agreeable conversation. Mr. Dahl talked with animation of Mr. de Romilly's bounty and of all the advantages which a school-establishment of this kind and of such an extent, as could now be accomplished, would yield to this part of the country. The old, but yet energetic man, was already, as its director, in full activity for it. Though already in his seventieth year, he is as warmly interested in projects for the welfare of mankind as any enthusiast of twenty years. To behold such a sight inspires a wish for long life.

Serena's conversation is very agreeable. One cannot exactly say that her expressions contain any thing very striking; but there is a sort of soul-euphony in them, which I should like to call feminine. I wish she were a sister of mine. Ah! that I could have her for my friend. This wish is most vivid in my imagination. She is certainly very young yet, compared to me, and takes probably a very different view of life from what I do; but she attracts me with irresistable force into her gentle angel-world.

On our return home, Björn and I scarcely spoke of any thing else than of her. Björn was more communicative on this subject than he is wont to be.—"She is a most estimable young woman," said he, among other things. "It would touch the heart of every one to see her sacrificing herself in mind and body for her grand-parents, and so forgettin herself in anxious love

for them. As their family physician, I have had excellent opportunity to observe this. Four very good offers of marriage, I know, she has rejected, and more are talked of, all under the pretext that she could not love her suitor. But the principal reason is most assuredly, her unwillingness to leave the old people. They show it too plainly, that they cannot part with her. Two years ago, a young, very amiable, Englishman, who was deeply in love with her, sued for her hand. He received a refusal, like all the others, although Serena, as is supposed, was not altogether unfavourably inclined towards him. He made no secrecy of his desperation, threw himself into the vortex of dissipation, in which he miserably ended his life the following year. This was ascribed to the desperate state of his circumstances, but certainly his disappointment in love was the chief cause of his lamentable end. Be this, however, as it may, this much is certain, that this event has made a deep impression on Serena, and that her character since that period is less cheerful; her cheeks have become more pale; but her peace and amiability are still the same."

"May she find roses and joy at Rosenvik!" I exclaimed.

July 5th.

I have seen him, I have seen him, the man of the wood, the spy, Don Miguel; the kindness, the benovolence, the secret—in a word, the neighbour of Ramm, Mr. de Romilly! I have seen him, and were I to live for fifty years, and never see him again, still I should never forget him. Is he then so handsome? I don't

know. Or so ugly? I don't know. Is he so agreeable? I don't know. Or so disagreeable? I don't know. What is he like? I don't know. Is he a novel hero? I don't know. What is he? I don't know. Such were Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel's interrogations to me to-day, and such my responses. Listen now, dear Maria.

Yesterday, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from our brothers and sisters-in-law. I had already let them satisfy their curiosity on all points; we began to be cheerful, and at home, and I projected a plan for our supper at Svanö, when suddenly the door opened, and was immediately darkened by a tall, strong, and dark figure. At the first sight of him, I recognised the man of the wood, and felt quite oppressed—I cannot conceive why?—and within me there was a voice crying: "Samuel, Samuel!" Björn went up to the new comer, with his usual frankness and cordiality, and bade him welcome. The stranger announced his name in a tone of voice which sounded harsh to my ears. Björn introduced him to me, and we all sat down. A less inquisitive man cannot be found in the world, than Björn, and strangers may for ever remain a secret to him. Not so Jean Jacques; he immediately interrogates people, although in a social way, which is not offensive to any one, who is not very particular. Before many minutes had elapsed, he had asked Mr. de Romilly how long he had been in Sweden, how long he intended to stay, how he liked it, &c. I must confess, that the stranger did not encourage his inquisitiveness, and I have never heard any one give such brief, indefinite dry answers. Notwithstanding I was

as it were infected by Jean Jacques, and as I, like the rest, understood French, I asked whether the Swedish language did not seem harsh to his ears? and, to my great astonishment, he replied with a foreign accent, although with an altered, and melodious voice: "On the contrary, it sounds very harmonious to me, especially when spoken by ladies."

"You speak Swedish?" said I, surprised.

"Several years ago," he replied, in the same soft tone, "I spent one winter in Sweden, and then learned your pretty language."

The conversation was afterwards carried on in Swedish, but Mr. de Romilly took but little part in it, although Jean Jacques did his utmost to draw him out since he touched on subjects which must have been familiar to the stranger; he spoke to him especially about Portugal, its commerce, and colonies. The conversation then turned to the various races of mankind; asubject on which Jean Jaques displayed with much interesting information, but I thought him unjust towards what he called the Ethiopian race, which he reduced to the level of the brute creation, whilst he declared the Negro to be quite incapable of a higher cultivation. Peter contested this assertion in part. The slave-trade became the topic of discourse. To my astonishment, Jean Jacques spoke in favour of it, and maintained, that only as a slave to the civilized Europeons, could the Negro become of any value, or enjoy any continued happiness. Peter opposed this opinion throughout and indeed with profound reasoning. Jean Jacques quoted Tarleton and Gascoigne in support of his assertion; Peter answered them triumphantly with

Wilberforce and Canning. During the whole of this debate the stranger uttered not a word, but followed the conversation with the greatest interest. Sometimes a kind of sneering, and bitter smile, moved on his lips; sometimes his dark eye lightened with a peculiar fire. I could not turn away my eyes from him, but his thoughts I could not fathom. I fancied as if he listened to Jean Jacques with approbation, especially to a long and warm speech, in which he endeavoured to show the low and degraded state of the negros, especially in an intellectual point of view; proving that nature herself placed them within an insurmountable barrier. "Do with the negro whatever you please," concluded Jean Jacques; "give him education, and enlightenment, still his intellect will always be the slave to the intellect of the white man; develope all his faculties,—he will still remain a machine in the hands of the European. He is, by nature, designed to be the servant of the latter."

I could see by Björn's grimaces, that he was not very much pleased with this speech, and at the conclusion of it he said, with emphasis: "I do not know whether the negro is capable of developing high intellectual power; nor do I know, whether such development is the most important object of human civilization; but I do know that he is a man, and as such, my brother."

"Brother!" cried Romilly, with a tone which made me start, so singular, awful, and almost threatening was the sound of it.

"Yes, brother," cried Björn, growing warmer, "and he who traffics with his liberty and life is a monster, and worse than a murderer."

"A murderer!" repeated the stranger, with a convulsive movement in his eye-brows, and in a voice so gloomy, that the looks of all were involuntarily directed to him. The expression of his face changed again, and he said, calmly, but seriously, to Björn: "*Monsieur, je pense entièrement comme vous:*"—After this, he was silent, looked quietly down before him, and did not seem to pay any further attention to the conversation, which Jean Jacques transferred, with his usual facility, to other subjects.

After a time I renewed my proposals respecting Svanö, and moved, that the company should repair thither immediately, whilst I would follow a little while after, with a cold collation, which I wished to prepare in the interim. Mr. de Romilly, I should conclude, had no great taste for such pastoral repasts. He begged us to excuse him, and took leave. As we were moving to go to Svanö, we saw him mounting his fine black horse, and, saluting politely, he vanished between the green trees. I felt easier when he was gone, notwithstanding I involuntarily gazed after him, with the wish to obtain another glimpse of this gloomy but striking form. We rode to Svanö, and spent an agreeable evening there. The green grass equalizes all claims and every pretension to precedence. Jane Maria and Ebba took milk out of the same glass. But I can talk of nothing now but of the stranger, I could think of nothing else the whole of the evening, (Jane Maria lectured me on account of my absence of mind,) I cannot get this picture out of my mind. I have now seen the much talked of neighbour *en face*, and yet I do not know what to say about him. At first one felt an im-

pression of the union of great simplicity with great power; but this power is felt to be oppressive. He reminds one of a beautiful thunder-cloud. He is very tall, of a strong physical structure, rather stout than thin. His face is energetic and manly; his complexion very dark. Several scars, as from sabre-cuts, are by no means disfiguring. On the mouth a pleasing expression is sometimes seen, but his habit of contracting his great black eyebrows, till they meet in an almost perpendicular line above his nose, spoils his whole countenance, and gives it an unnatural look, almost amounting to ugliness. When his brows separate again, the face so brightens up, that one is obliged to pronounce it "handsome." Under the brows are a pair of eyes, which I cannot well understand; they seem to vary from black to flame color. At one time they do not look up for a whole minute, although the mouth may be speaking; at another they are fixed with such a piercing and penetrating look, that one is involuntarily obliged to cast down one's own; then again they flare up like blazing flames in a dark night; thus they looked when he exclaimed the words: "Brother and murderer!" This singular and sudden change is to be found also in his voice, and I cannot help inquiring, if it may not extend much deeper. There is a mark about him which seems to me to indicate some fatality, for I have seen the same peculiarity in several men of strong passions, it is a vein in his temple, which is in form exactly like a thunderbolt, especially when it swells up suddenly. In other respects, I was pleased with his character: it is quite natural, without a trace of affectation or assumption of any kind; at the same time there

is nothing frank, nothing to inspire confidence about him; he appears to me to resemble a gigantic power, but whether good or bad, whether destructive or beneficent, I cannot say. But whenever these wonderful eyes should be fixed in love on any one, when this voice should speak loving words, they would then be dangerous indeed. I have never seen any one who was so much a living mystery. My desire, mixed with fear to fathom it, is extreme.

But, I thank Heaven that my Björn is no dark mystery, that his soul is as bright and open as noon-day. This indeed constitutes the happiness of married life, and fills home with peace.

July 6t

To-morrow comes Baron Stellan, I cannot say that I am glad of it. Björn is somewhat busy in making preparations for his reception. There is scarcely anything that is good enough for him; he is to be cherished as if he were a little petted Countess. Such a spoilt fine little gentleman will be but a difficult guest to please, especially at rustic Rosenvik.—"Yes, yes, Björn, he shall have your morocco slippers, and the real China washing ewer? Yes, yes, dearest! your gold-boy shall get all this!"—I wish the Chamberlain was at Constantinople. But Björn is so full of glee. He is so friendly, therefore I will now likewise appear philanthropic.

July 10th.

Baron Stellan is here. Well, we get on very well with him. He is polite, amiable, seems contented with every thing, and it is no difficult matter to live agree-

ably with him. He walks with Björn, and talks of politics and physic. To me he reads, or chats easily with me, whilst I sit and work. One soon becomes as intimate with him, as if one had known him for many years past. Country-life certainly contributes much, especially if whole days are passed in each others company. Björn has requested me to stay at home on account of cousin Stellan, and to manage every thing so that he should feel comfortable and satisfied in our house. Björn really loves his former pupil most heartily. Here you have his portrait with a few rough strokes of the pen. I should almost be inclined to call him the opposite of Mr. de Romily; the latter I compared to a sort of grand and wild scene in nature, but cousin Stellan I should compare to a fine, perfectly well ordered English park. His finished education has polished cousin Stellan, and given him every advantage, his handsome charming figure moves with ease and gracefulness. This freedom in his demeanour enhances the gifts which nature has bestowed. His mouth, around which plays a sly, almost sarcastic smile, exhibits, when open, the most beautiful set of teeth, which look whiter still in contrast with the black mustache. His eyes are not large, but have a noble expression, and his hair curls gracefully over his white forehead. His dress is extremely precise, and displays much taste. What more shall I say? Cousin Stellan, posssesses many talents, he draws, sings divinely, is very agreeable in conversation, and besides all this, is (in the country at least,) unassuming in manner and conduct, for which he is highly to be commended, especially when one considers his position

and his prospects in life. His toilet occupies him a little too much, but there is no harm in that; it is a matter of course when men are young, rich, and handsome.

July 12th.

He is, however, a singular being, this worthy cousin, and I cannot yet understand exactly what to make of him. In the first place, I see that he is no sincere Christian. Yesterday evening he talked a good deal of the Mahomedan religion, and commended the Koran as the wisest of books. He confessed quite openly that he should like dearly to have been born a Turk or Persian, and spend his days in oriental luxuries, have a harem, &c. I was quite vexed at this remark, opposed the Koran, (without even knowing much about its contents), and gave him very clearly to understand my contempt for all such Turkish ideas. Cousin Stellan was not in the least moved by this, but plainly expressed his views respecting the highest happiness of man. This was not all together very edifying to listen to. I was a little angry, and was vexed besides, at my own warmth and Stellan's coolness, and particularly at Björn, who never spoke a word, but made the most horrible faces whilst carving a chess-queen. The conversation was interrupted by the supper, and not resumed after it. Before Björn went to bed, I made him give me a full account respecting the morals of this Gold-boy. I must say, that I am not altogether satisfied with Björn's morals, at least, on this occasion. He defended Stellan too much, and declared that in spite of his Turkish ideas, he was a man worthy of the highest respect, and would never be guilty of a bad action.

"His only fault," said Björn, "is a little indiscretion with regard to ladies, but this is such a common failing with young people, that we ought not to be too severe with him about it."

"Very well, Björn," said I, "I shall treasure this up, and should he during your absence try by a "little indiscretion" to gain my heart, I shall remember that this is only a usual thing with young people, and I will not be very severe with him."

Björn looked so astonished and confounded at this, that I was obliged to laugh, throw my arms round him and undeceive him. Björn at last quite agreed with me, that it would be very desirable for Stellan to adopt sounder principles, to become steady, and to make a good match. His mother, and all his family, are very anxious that he should marry, but cousin Stellan does not manifest the least inclination for it. Björn intreated me very much to talk to his cousin about the happiness of matrimony. I shall certainly not neglect this; and I mean to teach him a little of the catechism too. He is no Sultan, and certainly shall learn to hear the truth.

July 13th. Evening.

Dear Maria, I certainly have many qualifications for a good priest. Faith, earnestness, zeal, but—alas! not those of convincing my auditors. Do you wish to hear now, my dear Maria, the sermon which I delivered, and the effect which it produced? Björn was, as usual, attending his patients in the town in the morning. I was sitting at the window sewing. My heart was light. I sang to my work in rivalry with the little birds in the elder bushes. Stellan then entered, took his seat at my side, and began to pull several very

pretty monthly roses to pieces, which were standing in a glass upon the table. I wished to improve the opportunity, and felt myself moved in spirit to deliver a sermon. As an introduction to the discourse, I began, probably not very wisely, with reproaching him for his destruction of flowers, which, if left in their beauty, would have afforded far more pleasure. He replied, whilst continuing his work of destruction: "They would at any rate soon die. It is this very perishableness, transcient loveliness, which pleases me. I know no flowers so unattainable as everlastings." You see to what point this opening obviously led, and I drew quickly towards it, leading the discourse to the chapter of matrimony. I attacked Stellan's favourite ideas, and upheld the lasting, pure joys of life, in opposition to the transcient pleasures of a fluttering butterfly-existence. I pictured in glowing colours from my heart the fair invading bliss springing from a happy marriage.

Cousin Stellan's replies were at first only evasive; soon he added a little jest, and then compliments; as for example: "If all ladies were like Franciska, I should soon become a convert to matrimony! If all marriages were like this, &c."

I pretended not to hear it, and in my zeal for persuading him to marry, I proposed one pretty amiable girl after another; but Stellan had something to object to all of them; the one had too large hands, the other bad teeth, the third dressed badly, the fourth had a thick complexion, the fifth had a shrill voice, &c.

At length I became vexed at all these difficulties, and asked him if he thought himself to be so superla-

tively perfect. "No, far from it!" replied he, in his little pleasant quavering accent. However, I could perceive that he was self-satisfied, and, as I could not dispute that he was more than commonly handsome and pleasing, I turned my discourse to the inner man, reproached him with judging superficially, said that external advantages were but dust, and extolled the beauty of the soul, especially in two young ladies, whose hands and teeth he had found fault with. I connected with the above remarks the prettiest encomiums of domestic life, which I praised and lauded as warmly as the late Miss Rönnquist.* I was becoming quite affected at the beauty of my own descriptions, when Stellan cooled me by a pretended yawn, while, in an under tone, he hummed the song "Old Noah.† I now became almost angry, and told him that he was a heathen, an Orang-outang; that he was not worthy to possess the hand of a noble-minded girl, that he did not deserve to enjoy the highest and purest happiness of earth.

Suddenly he grew quite serious, and said: "Is then such happiness as that you describe, Franciska, really to be found? Or is it, like the Phœnix, only a pretty fiction on earth? You, who seem to be so sure, so at home in the matter, mention to me, among the families you know, one pair really happy, really united, really blessing the bonds which enchain them, not only for a moment, but in all changes, all periods of life.

* See "The President's Daughters." (Clarke & Co., London.)

† "Old Noah," or "Gaffer Noah," is a popular song in Sweden, composed by Bellman.

Mention me one such family, Franciska!" Stellan looked at me steadfastly and seriously, and I began to reflect. Is it not the most provoking thing in the world, that the very words, the things, which we are seeking, escape us, and retreat further the more we seek? Such was my case when seeking for a pattern couple. I believed I knew a number of such, and now I could not find a single one. I sought and sought, ran from one house of my acquaintance to another; I became excited and warm, for I could nowhere find the object of my search. With mischievous pleasure Stellan sat looking expectantly at me. To rescue myself and domestic happiness, I now pretended to remonstrate against Stellan's immoderate demands, and began as follows. "Perfect happiness is no where to be found on earth——" Stellan interrupted me, and said:

"You are right, Franciska; and least of all do we find it in domestic life. Man, that butterfly of a day, can find a certain degree of enjoyment on earth, providing he lives upon it, like a butterfly flits over the fairest boughs, extracting the juice from the sweetest flowers, and settles no where; so soon as it settles on the earth is it a prey to worms and maggots. All that is troublesome and insipid in life, its dull tedious prose overtakes us where we settle. Psyche's wings drop, the butterfly turns into a caterpillar. Believe me, Franciska, I have seen more of domestic life than you, and far too much for me to be able to praise it myself, to wish to play the part of a *père de famille.* Domestic love is an instrument which sooner or later necessarily gets out of tune; this belongs to the nature

of the chords, and their relation to one another. I will prove this to you in particular families which I know. I might commence with my own; for I also have had parents, and brothers and sisters; I also have been a witness of many a matrimonial contention, have myself quarrelled and chidden with my own flesh and blood; but that is now past, for we are now separated, and thereby we are become good friends. There are the A.'s, everything went on, I believe, very smooth with them until their children sprung up; the latter had received a careless education; they turned out badly, their parents sit sorrowing in poverty, reduced to it by them.

"The B.'s, adopted another course, they were severe and despotic. There they sit forsaken. Their children are gone from their parental home, and shun it more than a prison.

"The C.'s made it their most important care to educate their children well. They let them learn every thing; had masters for them in every branch, spared no expense, and were for a time delighted and proud at the progress they made. The children became accomplished and talented, and despised their parents, who, in comparison with them, were uneducated. In silent grief the old people walk like shadows by the side of their showy children.

With the D.'s, things look better. They have no children, and are rich; they give brilliant entertainments, as they have done for thirty years. But if you were to contemplate them more closely, if you knew —the emptyness, the frigidity of their life shew the dishes on their table are the only points to them of interest or natural attraction.

"At the E.'s, every thing appeared for a time very gay. They were lively, friendly, and hospitable. Their daughters were called the three graces; there were feasts and courtiers. Time passed on. The graces grew old in their paternal home, they faded away together. The world forgot them. They remained together single, and spend their wretched lives in self-consuming and vexation. In the evening they sit at a round table, light candles, and expect visitors—but none come.

"Of the F.'s I shall say nothing. The husband has *one* will, the wife another; there is a perpetual storm. The children are accustomed to say: 'When there is no storm from the north, there is a storm from the south!' But there is always, at least, a cold north wind."

"It is no matter, so long as one knows how to make up matters again!" said dear Mrs. G., when she had filled up a gap, which her violent husband had shot in the wall. "This family had continued to exist amidst such patchings up, and have worked themselves out of all comfort and order. It still exists, and holds together only by mending and concealing. The family is in a state of perpetual asthma, it neither lives nor dies."

"My mother wished that I should choose a wife among the H. family. I went there one evening. Every thing looked very charming. The daughters were handsomely and becomingly dressed; all was perfume and elegance. I went there again one morning. A pair of—not clean—stockings laid upon a chair in the ante-room. An abominable smell of nasty

weaver's glue met me. I went into another room. The young ladies flew up from the looms: domestic habits are excellent things, but weaving deranges the toilet excessively, and to the smell of nasty glue I have always had the greatest aversion. Nasty glue and domestic happiness do not harmonize together, according to my feelings."

"But that is childish!" cried I, "with an excessive sensitiveness; "you are not at all fit to live in this world."

"Well, I grant," rejoined he, "that this sounds somewhat paltry; but I confess that I am so constituted; the nasty glue of domestic duty frightens me from becoming a father of a family.

"My friend J. has been married four years, and I had not seen him during this period. A short time ago I took a journey to that part of the country where he resides, and accepted his invitation to pay him a visit in his sylvan habitation. In the first room two bare-footed servant girls were scouring; in the second I very nearly tumbled down, or stumbled over a line, wherewith a spinning-wheel had been fastened to the foot of the stove; out of the third I heard children's voices screaming. I waited a few minutes till their cries had abated, but grew sick and tired of it, and hastily ran, half dead, with a leap over the scouring-buckets, out of this poetic domicile."

"But you chose a very improper time for your visit, let me tell you!" said I, provoked. "Are people not to have any cleaning in their houses? Must little children not cry sometimes? Must one not have patience with little children?"

"Very true, Franciska! But I have not this sweet patience, and do not find these family joys so enviable; and just for this very reason am I not a fit subject for matrimony. But I have more weighty objections than these against domestic life. There is a something in man which for ever repels them from each other. The more individuals are brought into close and constant contact with each other, the more these stumbling-blocks are felt, the more do these sharp spikes and edges wound. External circumstances increase the difficulty; one person offends another so easily; people are mutually in each other's way; and the consideration which one has, and ought to have, is just so much dead weight on freedom and comfort. If all are to live for one-another, no one can properly be said to live happily for himself. I do not deny that great happiness may be found in matrimony and domestic life, but such instances are rare exceptions, they are echoes which still reverberate from a lost paradise, and *a propos* of this—— What do you say to the apple, in the history of Adam and Eve? It is our inheritance, and most of the families upon earth have to bite into an apple, from which proceeds discord and sorrow. Do you wish to know, Franciska, where the greatest want, the greatest disgust, the greatest envy, the greatest bitterness, and the deepest mutual hatred have their home? Do you wish to know when the most tearful eyes, the palest cheeks, the most joyless, spiritless hearts are to be found? I will show you all this near at hand, in the domestic circle, in a word—in family life!"

I cannot say how I felt during these descriptions of Stellan. I was obliged in many parts to acknowledge

the truth of his pictures, and although I found his views partial, although I was obliged to laugh at some of his touches, as, for example, the "nasty glue," I was nevertheless deeply wounded at heart. I shuddered at the thought of the mental destitution, of the profound misery which was to be found in married life. But I loved the idea of domestic happiness, I believed in it, it had grown together with all that is best in me, and now it seemed to me desecrated by Stellan; I felt anger, anguish, and pain, and a thousand mingled feelings made me burst into tears, whilst I almost screamed: "But I am happy, Björn is happy, we are happy!"

"Yes, at present, during the honeymoon, for two or three years, perhaps," said the cruel Stellan; "but let years, let children, and cares come—say, for example, you have ten daughters, what will you do with them all? No money, no marriage; one girl lame, one sickly—"

"Ten daughters!" I received a shook. I saw them all around me, grown up, tall, demanding of me to give them fortunes, as I had given them existence. I saw a crippled, a diseased——I sank together under this burden which overwhelmed me, and whilst I wept, without being able to give utterance to a word, Stellan rose, threw away my roses and walked out,—that abominable man! I almost wished never to see him again.

"Ten daughters!" For a length of time I could do nothing else than think of these words, and cry over them; but, by degrees, I tried to console myself, and began to consider the subject seriously, and as a Christian. It gradually assumed a different aspect. I

was no longer alarmed at my ten daughters, but quite satisfied to have them. I wished to devote myself wholly to them; I wished to make of them, useful beings, fearing God, and diligent in their vocation; they should be happy and good; they should love each other, and be of good courage in the world. The longer I contemplated my family picture, the more pleasant it grew. I began, as a matter of course, to love my ten daughters; and, most of all, the lame and sickly ones. I conjured up no more phantoms, but felt in my strengthened heart, that it might really be so; that, with the help of God, and Björn, I should make my ten girls happy; and the thought beamed into my mind, how richly I should come forward at the last Judgment day, and say: "Father, here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me!" Such were my thoughts, such my feelings, and I was composed and happy. I walked out into the birch-grove, to cool my red eyes and flushed cheeks; I then had something to attend to in the kitchen and store-room, and with my various duties, I had almost forgotten my ten daughters; but, on Björn's coming home, they all rushed together heavily upon my heart. I became quite weak again. When Björn wanted to kiss me, I fell on his neck, and said, half laughing, half crying: "Won't you love me and be satisfied with me, Björn; and shall we not be happy, if we should even have ten daughters,—and will you not love them every one, even if they be—lame and sickly—?" I could not finish my speech properly—dearest Björn—he made a horrible face, and looked as if he had his ten girls already about his neck. But, seeing me so excited, he became really

concerned, gave me a glass of water, and begged me to "speak Swedish." (I dare say he thought that the ten daughters belonged to the Hebrew.) I explained the matter to him in Swedish, and then he laughed, good-temperedly, and assured me, that he should always be happy, and would ever love both me and all the children with which I may present him. At this moment Stellan appeared. He seemed ashamed and sorry on seeing me so excited, but, in the joy of my heart, I held out my hand to him, and cried, "We shall be happy, my Björn and I, we shall be happy even with ten daughters, and even if they were all sick and lame! We will love each other and our children!"

Stellan became, in reality, affected; he blushed, kissed my hand, and begged pardon for his thoughtless jest. Björn was as kind as an angel towards me, and would not sit down to table until I was composed. I made haste to become so, but nevertheless could not swallow a single morsel. I believe my ten girls were sticking in my throat. It appeared to me moreover, as if Björn looked at me in a sort of perplexity. Ten girls! That certainly was too much.

But I will think no more of this. Whilst Björn and Stellan are taking a walk, and evening colours the fair landscape with shades of Sepia and Bister Umber, I shall once more cast a glance on cousin Stellan's sketches of family life. Are they really correct? In many isolated cases—alas, yes! but, in general—no, oh no! and were there even more of shade than light in our earthly homes.—All-wise artist! thou who hast painted the great picture of life in tints so glorious, thou wilt teach us to lay our colours in purer harmony

upon our little canvass. But thou hast already taught us this, Great Master; and all depends upon ourselves. If we work with energy and truth, then will our family picture likewise be lovely, and worthy of its place in the gallery of the blessed.

"There is," said Stellan, "in men, a something, which for ever repels them from each other." I grant this; there is envy, jealousy, unreasonableness, disgust,—a thousand greater and lesser stumbling-blocks which give rise to bitter feelings. I grant that they are most keenly felt when the circle is drawn most closely—in domestic life. But what? is there not also a power—mild, but still mighty—whose efficacy consists in conciliating, uniting, and changing the evil into good? Who is not hereby reminded of the apostolic doctrine, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind;" and who has not blessed it a thousand times during the course of his life?

I will apply this to some of those family-scenes which Stellan has painted. I leave the external circumstances as they are; and conduct into the interior, the angel-sisters—truth and love. Behold how the picture changes. See, for example, the family with talented children, and the less educated parents. *True* education, *true* enlightenment has elevated the characters of the children. It does not enter into their mind to despise their kind excellent parents, because they are scientifically better educated. They know that real human worth consists in moral goodness; in uprightness. They attend to the comforts of the old people with all reverence and thankfulness, adorning their house, and enlivening their days by their talents.

And then the three graces! In truth, a most mournful picture! I am obliged to yawn when I think of it; but it is not the ties of domestic life, but vanity, love of dress, and empty minds, which have made them the silly puppets that they are.

If Stellan banishes happiness from families, I should very much like to know whither he could transport it. I shall ask him, whom he considers the happiest, and what picture he conceives most to be desired? I should not wonder were he to answer—that of a bachelor! But he must be an egotist indeed, who renounces all the ties of nature. I envy no one such a happiness; but I shall ask Stellan, whether he himself is happy.

July 13th.

I have asked Stellan. He wished at first to evade the answer; he joked and was witty, though not cheerful; and on my asking him, with increasing earnestness, and intreating him to tell the truth, he became serious too, and said: "I am not happy. Life appears poor to me, and I often feel in my heart an almost intolerable void."

"Ah, thank heaven!" I exclaimed, touched, and overjoyed. He looked at me with astonishment. "You are therefore"—continued I—"no unworthy egotist, for that you must necessarily be, if you could be happy with your sentiments. You have so pictured married life to me, that one could weep over it; but I could paint you a bachelor's life, which you would find so wretched, so insipid, that you would not think it worth a pinch of snuff. But that is needless in your case, Stellan. You are good, and able to reflect; you will

be a discerner of the true value of life; you will give up your exaggerated desires, and your excessive sensibility; you will become happy by noble employments; by an amiable wife; by home, and domestic life."

He smiled, half melancholy, shook his head, and said something about "nasty glue."

"But, cousin Stellan," said I, "there are domestic employments also in my house; here is spinning, and nasty glue, and weaving, and scouring. Do you find it so very uncomfortable here?"

"If all wives were like you," said Stellan. He took my hand, said something about the "fine white hand," kissed it several times, blushed, and earnestly looked at me. I also blushed; I felt very strange; I withdrew my hand from him, began to speak of the weather, and then went away into the kitchen. Indeed a most foolish scene! It shall not happen again. No, it shall not, as sure as my Björn is alive, and I am his Fanny. Only think, if *ma chère mère's* lecture should really suit my case; if I should really have occasion to say: "Sir! you are mistaken! etc." But "straightway to my husband," I shall not go, to tell him: "My dear, such and such has been said to me, etc." A wife, who loves her husband and her duty, ought to be able to take care of herself. There is no occasion to call in the police. But—after all, I am doing it perhaps at this very moment, since I am shocked at such a trifling matter.

Meanwhile I have a sort of satisfaction in knowing, that Stellan is not happy with his way of thinking. Had I reflected on the matter, I should not even have

had occasion to ask him. Stellan is, with all his many good properties, after all, an *ennuye*. He opens a book, reads something, yawns, throws it aside; then takes a newspaper, and does the same with it. He begins a paper, and leaves it unfinished. He has no desire for any thing; no interest in any thing. He likes to be out in the open air; loves nature, and flowers; but is very easily put out of his way by the most trivial causes. Now it is too cold; now too warm; sometimes it storms, and stormy weather he abominates. Strange! This man, in matters of every-day occurrence is so conceited and particular, is nevertheless, (as I have heard from Björn) most bold and daring in the moment of danger. He has a good understanding, and considerable acquirements, and might perhaps become a distinguished character, if he would only apply himself to study in good earnest. But very probably, among his books, he finds also a strong smell of nasty paste. And herein he is right in more than one respect.

July 14th.

No, I have not acted so very wrong, to arm myself, to be upon my guard. One ought to keep a strict watch in trifles; for the proberb, "A little spark kindles a great fire," is true enough. How many a young woman has, merited or unmerited, suffered a stain upon her reputation, because she was not circumspect in trifles.

We had spent the afternoon of yesterday at Svanö. Cousin Stellan was agreeable, and in good spirits. On our return, in the evening, he challenged Björn and me to a game of *les graces*. I cheerfully

accepted the proposal, and soon the rings, wreathed with pink ribbons, flew about among the green trees, and we caught them again quickly and merrily upon our sticks. Björn made several throws, but soon grew tired and warm, and said, that the deuce might take this wearisome pleasure, and marched into the house. I confess my fault, Maria! As a prudent wife, and faithful to her duties, I ought to have followed my husband; but the game amused me much, and I had no desire to leave off. Heated, eagerly, and almost rompingly, we (Stellan and I) continued to throw our rings. We thus gradually removed further from the house; it began to grow dark, so that we could no longer clearly discern the flight of the rings, and Stellan's ring remained hanging on a birch-tree behind me. I ran up to it, and began to spring to catch it, when suddenly I felt myself embraced by Stellan, whilst his lips, resting on my curls, whispered, "Fanny, sweet Fanny!" —The heat of a thousand strange sensations flushed through me, but in an instant I disengaged myself, and said, singular enough, in *ma chère mère's* very words: Baron S., you are mistaken; there—on the tree, hangs your ring." This I said with such earnestness, that I was understood at once. "Ah!" said Stellan, somewhat confounded, as it appeared to me—fetching down the ring. "It is getting cool," said I; "it will be best to go in!" —And without any more delay I ran quickly into the house. Stellan followed me slowly, humming an air from Fra Diavolo.

It was not until half an hour later that he came in. I sat near to my Björn, and was telling him how dear he was to me—a communication which he listened to

with his placid Bashaw-look, when Stellan entered. He held a pretty provence-rose in his hand, and gave it to me, with these words: "I have stripped it of all thorns!"

"Many thanks," I said, and took the rose and placed it—in my bosom?—no, Maria, that you will not believe, nor should you, for I stuck it into a button-hole on Björn's coat. Stellan hummed again his air, and shortly afterwards we separated somewhat coolly.

"Oh no, my Björn, your confidence shall never be misplaced, nor will I ever abuse it, no, not in the smallest trifle. My ten daughters shall at least inherit from their mother an unblemished reputation and a good name!"

But what shall be now my course? I do not wish any longer to keep Cousin Stellan company during the whole day, nor can I run away from the house, since Björn has so expressly requested me to stay at home. Still less do I wish straightway to go up to him and say: "My friend, so and so is the case, etc.;" for that would only disturb his peace, and estrange his regard from his young friend, while the latter has no bad intentions, but is only thoughtless. I know what I shall do. This forenoon I have domestic occupations, in the afternoon we will drive over to Karlsfors, and introduce Cousin Stellan to *ma chère mère*. To-morrow Serena comes to me, and then I shall move heaven and earth to keep Serena a week or a fortnight at Rosenvik. I shall make Björn tyrannize over the whole house of Dahls. Serena will derive benefit from it, and I likewise. That will be delightful.

July 15th.

It is tiresome that Cousin Stellan should choose to manifest his ill-humour just in the same way as Jane Maria. There is certainly a difference in the manner, for Stellan does not sulk exactly; but he acts with such indifference and coolness, which is far from agreeable: and seems anxious to persuade me that I am the very person for whom he cares least of all in the world. I endeavour to convince him that I do not notice it at all. But I am always sorry not to be in perfect cordiality with all around me. Notwithstanding I am at present reserved towards Stellan; otherwise he might fancy I wish to attract his attention towards me again.

We spent yesterday afternoon at Karlsfors.

Stellan was reeeived by *ma chère mère* in a singular manner.

"I knew your father, Baron,"—said she—"he was an honorable man, but a *Rouè*. I have heard that his son treads in his father's steps, and although one ought to respect the tree, whose shade one has enjoyed, yet I must tell you, that you might follow a better example. Well, well! your father became an altered character in his latter years, and I hope that his son will do the same, and become steady by means of a prudent marriage. This would be wise couduct on your part, Mr. Baron, for the saying is:—'Wed early, and you'll never repent.' 'One cake in quiet, is worth two in riot.'"

Stellan looked quite astonished, and a little offended at this unexpected salutation. *Ma chère mère* seemed to be not altogether in the most placid mood, and on further observation we found the whole house up in arms. Jean Jacques had opposed *ma chère mère* upon

the subject of some new arrangements which he wished to make on the estate, and on the abolition of some abuses of long standing. The contest between the old and new regime had broken out at Karlsfors; but *ma chère mère* held the reins of government firm in her hands; and Jean Jacques, who was compelled to give in, found his situation at Karlsfors far from agreeable. All this he complained of to my husband. Jane Maria was engaged in an open war with Ebba, and told me with bitter feelings the injuries she had sustained, which consisted in a number of trifles, all of such a nature, that I was more inclined to laugh than to cry; for it is truly ridiculous and pitiable that people, who might live free from all cares, should embitter each other's lives by unnecessary vexations of their own creating. I endeavoured to draw Jane Maria's attention to this in a delicate manner, but with no success. Jane Maria was angry that any one should view affairs so greatly derogatory to her dignity, in the light of trifles, and hinted to me that she herself was best able to judge of what was important or not in things of this kind.

I had firmly resolved never to let it come to a quarrel again between Jane Maria and me, and I now moreover felt so great a longing for harmony, that I replied to Jane Maria's pompous words, nothing more than:—"Certainly, dearest Jane Maria; but your education, your good sense, raise you, in my opinion, high above Ebba, and you might have forbearance with her childish ignorance, without fearing her abuse of your kindness on that account."

"You don't know Ebba," said Jane Maria, some-

what pacified; "she is full of selfishness presumption, and pride; she would dance upon my head if I were not to set myself on a high horse against her."

There was a time when I believed that all men had a ruling principle of reason and common sense; when I believed that all were disposed for improvement; that they only wanted to hear the truth to own it, and owning it, amend their faults; and that they would consequently be rejoiced to hear it. I then declared the truth to many, never omitted to give good counsel, and gladly interposed as peace-maker between contending parties, but I rarely found that I had thereby rendered any service to others—and still less to myself. And, candidly speaking, kind offices of this nature which my friends have occasionally volunteered, have only served to convince me that zealous interference is not always welcome. At a more advanced period I have become very cautious in telling people the truth; I am very sparing with good counsel, and have a real dread of being involved in a quarrel, whilst acting the part of mediator, or in other words—to stick fast between. When, however, I happen unavoidably to have such a troublesome office imposed on me, I shut up my heart within me with a sigh, and endeavour to do the best I can, and call to my aid the experience which I have gained in former unsuccessful attempts. I did not therefore now say to Jane Maria:—

"My dearest Jane Maria! you yourself are proud and presumptuous, your own faults are the very cause of Ebba's. Had you been more prudent she would not have been so overbearing." I expressed none of these thoughts of my heart, but only sighed and said: "Poor

child! she has no doubt received a defective education. Those who have had the privilege of a better, ought to excuse her; an imperfect education is a misfortune indeed."

"Yes, a misfortune indeed!" repeated Jane Maria, apparently more softened towards Ebba, "But with *ma chère mère* too was Jane Maria by no means satisfied. *Ma chère mère* yesterday ordered her Heaven-chariot, and said to Jane Maria and Ebba, "One of you can ride with me." When the carriage had driven up, and *ma chère mère* was already seated in it, Jane Maria and Ebba both came, intending to go. There was only room for one of them by the side of *ma chère mère;* both were anxious for the drive. Whilst on the steps a violent squabble arose between the two sisters-in-law, *ma chère mère* whipped the horses, and drove off alone in the Heaven-chariot, to the great astonishment and mortification of the contending parties.

By and by, when I was walking in the park at the side of Ebba, (for she had become a lover of the country since our morning promenade,) I listened to all her complaints against Jane Maria. Jane Maria had assumed such intolerable airs of superiority, Jane Maria had called her "a silly thing, Jane Maria wished to be at the head of every thing, Jane Maria always wanted to be first in entering the door, always to be called first to table. Jane Maria wished to have every thing better and more splendid than Ebba, generally called Ebba's dresses and ornaments dowdy, always found fault with what Ebba did and what Ebba had, whilst on the other hand she extolled every thing belonging to herself, and called it select, distinguished, and excellent.

The poor little creature was sadly hurt by all this, I also was pained, but in a different way. We now stood by the side of a murmuring brook, whose banks were richly adorned with verdure and flowers. It was so very beautiful, fresh and calm, about us. My heart grew warmed, and I felt that I could speak differently to Ebba than I could to Jane Maria. I turned to her and embraced her, and said: "My dear Ebba, do you wish to be happy?"

"Yes, certainly!" replied Ebba, looking at me with astonishment.

"Ah, dear Ebba," I proceeded, cordially, "then do not yield to such trifles, and do not suffer yourself to be discomposed by them. Do you see how fair, how lovely every thing is about us? You have enjoyed nothing of it, have scarcely noticed it, because Jane Maria assumes 'airs of superiority' and possesses richer things than you! Dear Ebba! is it not lamentable that we mar our satisfaction in the many good and lovely things in life by such trifles?" To repeat all that I said in my warmth on this subject, would be tedious; enough I found a willing listener in Ebba, and pictured to her so vividly, the folly of such contentions, and the torment of the bitterness produced by them, that she both laughed and cried at once. She was most engaging and docile, and promised 'for my sake,' quietly to resign to Jane Maria in future, all the rights of precedence, which she so much insisted on.

Meanwhile Björn had on his part interfered between *ma chère mère* and Jean Jacques. By his influence, he had prevailed upon Jean Jacques to promise to trouble *ma chère mère* less urgently in future with his plans of

reformation, whilst he had induced the latter to take those changes proposed by Jean Jacques, into mature consideration. What did Cousin Stellan do, in the interim? He was busy with those who were not involved in the quarrel, played the gallant with all the ladies, one after another, except with me, and succeeded in making himself liked very well by all, even by *ma chère mère*, who said to me, "On my word, Baron Stellan is a very nice man, he takes good care of his plate, he is a steady young man!"

I was delighted with Ebba this evening, for she kept her promise perfectly; and instead of contesting Jane Maria's favorite privileges, she gave way to them several times. Jane Maria seemed at first to suspect some stratagem in this conduct; but when she saw Ebba's friendly earnestness, she quite changed her manner, and descended considerably from her "high horse."

What foolish creatures we are! How do we torment each other and ourselves, and yet how might we often so easily change the picture from strife to peace, from vexation to happiness.

When Björn and I arrived at home, we communicated to each other "our heroic acts," and how we each had interposed a word in season. Our hearts were filled with joy that in this signification of the word no one would ever have occasion to interfere between us.

This very instant I received the intelligence of Aunt Ulla's death. Dear Maria! I could only say "It is well" especially as I heard how peacefully she departed. Aunt Sophy, who conveyed to me the report, added:—"Anne Maria may now occupy the room, which is

much more convenient and pleasant than that which she had hitherto been obliged to content herself." There are people, (harmless, guileless creatures), whose departure is good, in as much as they make room for others. This thought makes me sad. Oh, if ever I am a burden on my fellow creatures, if any one ever should wish to occupy my place, then I will away, away! Here I sit now, however, and weep at this idea, and at the thought of my ten daughters.

FRANCISKA.

IX.

SEVENTH LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, July 16th.

Yesterday, Serena and I commenced our vocal exercises. At ten o'clock in the forenoon, a pretty little brown horse ambled before my door, bearing a light graceful burden. A heavy Calash, antique like the owner, containing the patriarch, followed the Amazon. I was glad to see the venerable pair at my house, and happy to be able to receive and retain Serena, who enlivened by the ride and the loveliness of the morning, appeared to breathe already more freely.

I had kept a little breakfast in readiness; and my eggs, my fresh butter, my boiling chocolate, received no little commendation. After the old people had breakfasted and inspected Rosenvik, they prepared again for their journey, and I kept Serena for the whole day. I begged and insisted on her not being sent for before nine o'clock in the evening, and this was promised to me. The kind grandparents tenderly embraced their darling, who accompanied them to the carriage with a thousand kind caresses.

We then had a singing lesson. Serena has a weak but a pure, alto voice; to exercise the voice, and read

music, will be the object of our lessons, for her expression and articulation are really excellent. Her own mind, her own taste has taught her these better than a teacher could have done. It was pain to me, to call Serena *Miss*. She is one of those beings, whom I have at once an involuntary inclination to address by the endearing *thou*. I begged her therefore to permit me to say *thou* to her, and recommended her to call me Aunt, (certainly the most tiresome appellation I know) if my superior age seemed to demand some little respect. Serena hesitated, laughing, to honour me on account of my age, and requested me that if there was no other impediment in the way than that of age, to allow her to say *thou* to me likewise. Gladly I consented, and found to my surprise, that there were only four years difference between Serena and myself. She is twenty-three years old, although the delicacy of her complexion and figure does not show it.

Having settled this affair—do not laugh! this *thouing* is in Sweden indeed an important crisis in an acquaintanceship, a great step forwards, sometimes however backwards,—we took up our work, walked out, and seated ourselves upon a bench in the shade of some Syringa-bushes and lime-trees. Serena, whose delicate fingers were exceedingly clever in many little handiworks, had plucked several blossoms, and practised copying their seed vessels and all the minute parts of the flower, with the utmost exactness. Cousin Stellan was already early out hunting with the brothers Stalmark. I was glad to be able to be alone with Serena, and anxious to hear her talk of Bruno, and I soon led the conversation to advert to him. On hearing his

name she sighed, and to my question: "Whether she believed that Bruno had a bad heart? " she replied smartly, "No! certainly not! His heart was assuredly good, yes, even tender, or else how could he have been so infinitely kind towards me; I, who was only a weak, sickly child, and could only have been a burden to everybody? Is not that Ramm, the opposite side of the lake? I remember yet so well, how Bruno carried me about among yon woods, and drew me about in my little carriage. My first feelings of the beauty of life and of nature take their date from that period. I recollect how delighted I was with the murmuring of the forest, how enraptured with the flowers which he plucked for me. When he sang, I sang with him, and when he leaped from one precipice to the other bearing me on his arm, I felt no fear but only a slight tremor, produced more by pleasure than by dread. Never at any time was he impatient or unkind towards me, and never shall I forget how in a rage he once wished to strike one of his brothers, but desisted the moment I called him, and began to cry. Why was he so tenderly disposed towards me, if his heart at bottom had not been good and loving. Once, moreover, he saved my life at the risk of his own; it was in the park at Ramm; some starlings had built their nest upon a high oak there, and in my childish ignorance, I wished to have their eggs. Bruno sat me down upon the grass, and climbed up the tree, but on my cry for help, he immediately precipitated himself down from one of the tree branches, and with a shriek of terror seized a snake which had entwined itself round my neck. I saw him strangle the monster, and crush its head. He then took

me up in his arms, and I remember that he wept, and that it was I who endeavoured to compose him with childlike caresses. Ah! they did not sufficiently estimate the depth of his affections, otherwise he would not have inflicted that grief upon his mother, nor have forsaken his home and father land."

"Do you still recollect how he looked?" inquired I.

"Not very distinctly! I feel as if I still see through a mist a pretty blooming boy, with large fine eyes; but when I try to get a fuller view of the picture, it fades away."

"And do you know what prompted him to flee from home?"

"I was told, a disagreement with his mother, and harsh treatment on her part; they are said to have resembled each other much in character, and both have opposed harshness with harshness, violence with violence. Bruno is reported to have died abroad. I have deeply bewailed his fate. Poor Bruno! He was so kind towards me."

Serena sighed again, and her placid countenance wore a look of sadness: a sorrowful feeling crept over me likewise. I turned the conversation to other persons. I spoke of Serena's grand-parents, and she was cheered and animated by the enconiums which I passed on them. In general, it appears to me, as if gratitude was the feeling which predominates in her, to an unusual degree. It seems as if, of all recollections, she only preserves those which led her to love; even when she speaks of a book, it is done with an expression of gratitude for the good which it may have afforded her. And then her words, her whole character, how simple,

how charming! I loved her, she did me good. I wished that I also could creep into a leaf of the book of her recollections.

At dinner we had Björn, good humour, good appetites, and—without boasting—good fare. In the afternoon came Cousin Stellan, in the usual condition after a hunting party, viz: hungry as a hunter, and having had no sport. When we had spent an hour or so after Coffee, in agreeable conversation, we determined on a trip to Svanö, and taking our supper there. Serena and I cut bread and butter, filled several bottles with *Kaltschale*,* laid them and a piece of cold roast meat into a basket, and thus our little cheerful company marched off towards the strand, where a little green boat received us. Stellan rowed. A gentle breeze wafted around us and ruffled the waves. Serena and I sang "*la biondina in gondoletta.*" Thus we arrived, and seated ourselves beneath the great oak, upon the fresh bank of white and red clover; I sat between Björn and the provision-store, Stellan next to Serena; and when I saw her sitting on the green grass so fair and happy, seeking with him the white five-leaved clover and binding grass, the hasty, (perhaps sinful) thought of a possible connection between the two, rose up in my mind.

Björn, with his pipe, was lying upon the fresh fragrant mead, slowly puffing clouds of smoke into the azure sky, and listening to his wife, who told him heaven knows how much nonsense, about the Grand Mogul, etc., when suddenly the air trembled, and a sound

* A cold beverage, or soup, made of beer or wine, with grated bread, sugar, lemon, etc.; or fruit, such as strawberries, currants, etc.

as of melodious distant thunder, struck upon my ears. This solemn, rich, and low sound made a singular impression. We were silent and watching. Every thing was still for a moment, but again a breeze passed by, and on its wings again, trembling, melancholy, but inexpressibly harmonious tones penetrated into my very heart.

"It is the organ of Ramm," cried I; "the wind conveys the sound to us. Oh, if we could but hear it nearer! Silence! silence! Here it comes again!"

We listened. The melodious booming sound came again, and again, with every breeze which floated over from Ramm; but we could catch nothing connectedly, the trembling sounds rose and died; they were like the sound of a troubled spirit, and when I listened to them I felt, what many a thinker of antiquity must have experienced, when he mused over the broken inexplicable melodies of existence, and believed that the winds of fate played wantonly among the chords of life's Æolian-harp.

And a longing seized me, a torment, which those only can conceive, who share a like passion with me for music and harmony. "I must hear this nearer!" exclaimed I with determination. "Serena, we two will row along to Ramm, and fathom the mystery of this music. I shall go mad with listening to these unconnected sounds." "Lie still, dear Björn, and smoke your pipe in peace." "I entreat you let us go." "Stop you here, cousin Stellan. We wish to be alone, Serena and I; we shall soon return." The gentlemen both looked far from pleased; Björn growled, but remained quietly in his position; Stellan accompanied us grum-

blingto the boat, Serena and I set off with earnest glee. I rowed the light boat without difficulty. The trip was enrapturing to me, for the farther we went, the more distinctly we heard the music. To me it seemed as if the boat glided along of itself: the wonderful sounds attracted us forward as if by an invisible power. The evening grew more serene; the rays of the sun quivered through the wood in richer and richer lines of gold, higher and higher swelled the storm of melody, my heart beat violently, and tears started in a kind of rapture into my eyes. Serena was more calm, her white hand played with the waves, and her bright lovely eyes wore a look of child-like innocence, and of the purest enjoyment. Thus, we both sat in silence, abandoning ourselves to the wish of hearing the enchanting music more distinctly, we imperceptibly came nearer and nearer to Ramm. Shall I confess it? Dame Curiosity so asserted her power over me in the boat, that Serena raised her warning voice in vain; the boat crept up nearer and nearer to the gloomy walls of Ramm,and at length came too like a smuggler's boat, within the shade of an elder bush, close under an open window. Here we heard in sounds which did not appear to originate from the hand of man, the popular song, "*Neckens Polska,*" in rich variation, which in beauty and power exceeded all I had ever heard or imagined. They were evidently the production of a mighty inspiration. Enraptured, enchanted, I bowed my head into my hands and dreamed that the King of the Sea himself made bold by twilight, and the loveliness of nature poured out his wonderful life before us, that life of mysteries passed in the crystal-palace

at the bottom of the sea. Suddenly, however, the sounds ceased, and I awakened from my dream to the consciousness of the present reality. Involuntarily I seized the oar, and with a few soft strokes I rowed the boat away from the shore, but Serena and I both looked involuntarily upwards to the open window, and immediately withdrew our eyes, for the sombre-looking Romily stood there in his own gloomy person, and his looks rested upon us. We blushed, both seized our oars and hastened back, in much shorter time than we had spent in going, although our oars now beat time to no accompaniment; for the music altogether had ceased. We had been away for an interval of nearly two hours. Cousin Stellan appeared quite sleepy. Björn was not in the best humour, and no wonder; but he was soon kind again, when I earnestly entreated his forgiveness. I sometimes feel a sort of wicked pleasure in contriving to sin against Björn's goodness, and then to coax a pardon from him.

We enjoyed our supper in peace and merriment; but Serena, who thought of her grand-parents, and expected to be fetched, turned her looks often to Rosenvik. Their carriage arrived there almost at the same instant that we landed at the bridge, and Serena took leave of us after I had arranged with her that the next singing day should be on the Friday. Cousin Stellan escorted her with the greatest politeness to the carriage, and shewed her many kind attentions. It is remarkable, how well acts of this sort become a young man; "come to see us soon again!" cried I, after Serena, and her sweet blue eyes smiling forth from her little straw bonnet, cast back a look of cordial acquiescence, and

waving her hand she vanished between the green trees.

"That is a charming girl," said Stellan, who stood a little while yet in the portico, "pity only that she limps a little."

I smiled and said, "In your eyes, cousin Stellan, every thing indeed limps in the world."

"But I confess," continued he, "that I have scarcely ever seen a defect less disfiguring in any woman."

"I am quite of your opinion, cousin, and it is, perhaps, moreover possible, that the eye, under certain circumstances, may perceive nothing but beauty in such a defect."

He smiled and made a motion with his head, as if struck by it. I was on the point of going into the house, when Stellan stopped me, and said in a serious tone.

"Cousin Franciska, you have not been so friendly towards me for the last few days, as heretofore. Have I offended you?"

"Yes," replied I candidly, "for I was obliged to believe that you cared nothing for my respect, and this has grieved me."

"Forgive me," said he pleasantly, but with earnestness. I would not like to live without your respect, Franciska, give me your hand in token of your credance in my statement, and your friendly disposition towards me."

"Here!" said I, and cordially gave him my hand. I prevented him, however, from kissing it, and satisfied with having changed Stellan's gallantry into respect, I rejoined my Björn.

To-morrow there will be a large party at *ma chère mère's*. All the neighbours will assemble at Karlsfors. Mr. de Romilly is also invited, although he has paid no visit there yet. I am very anxious to see this problematical person again. His sounds have captivated me; he who can produce such magic melodies, must possess deep and powerful feelings.

July 18th.

I was deceived in my anticipations of being able to pursue my closer observations on the gloomy neighbour of Ramm. He came nevertheless to Karlsfors almost the entire company were already assembled, and his entrance created a sort of sensation. An unpleasant feeling thrilled through me, when I beheld the tall figure in black, and noticed the almost threatening expression of his frowning eyebrows on his entrance. *Ma chère mère*, who was in full dress, and really looked very well, walked up to him majestically, and delivered a pretty stately French address to him, which the stranger, however, appeared to understand as little as if she had spoken Laplandish. He stood immovable, with down-cast eyes, and spoke after she had finished, a few words in a low tone of voice, which I did not hear, made a profound bow, and withdrew quickly. I believe that *ma chère mère* was not very much edified by the foreign politeness, which she had formerly so greatly extolled, and, as if infected by de Romilly, she also frowned, whilst resuming her seat. A moment afterwards a strange movement arose in one corner of the room. The gentlemen crowded together, and when the group opened, Romilly was seen pale as death' and almost unconscious, supported by two others, at-

tempting to leave the room. Björn followed them, and *ma chère mère* offered everything the house could afford for the service of the sick man. After a while she went to him, taking me with her.

Mr. de Romily sat on one end of the sofa—he appeared to have recovered himself, but covered his face with his pocket-handkerchief. He replied with a low dull voice to *ma chère mère's* friendly enquiries, complained of a violent head-ache, and said that he found it necessary to go home, as his head-ache rendered him perfectly unfit for society. *Ma chère mère* said all that a polite hostess is accustomed to say on such occasions; the stranger merely bowed his head in mute thanks, and we left him after *ma chère mère* had entrusted him into Björns care; soon after we heard him drive off.

Now a few words on the pleasures of the day. I begin with skipping over the dinner, which like all grand dinners, was somewhat dull. *Ma chère mère* was not in good humour, and this had its effect upon us all. Therefore I pass to the evening.

Mrs. v. P. had saluted me on her arrival with a short gracious nodding of her head, but did not trouble herself any further about me; whilst she paid particular attention to Jane Maria. The latter played her difficult piece by Herz, viz.:—the "*cheval de bataille*," and warlike it is, that, one must confess, as well as that her execution of it is excellent. After she had finished, Miss v. P., ran up to her and exclaimed, "Charming! charming!" — our modern composers alone are capable of writing things of this kind. What effect, what colouring. Weber is odd, Rossini is often poor in melody, but Meyerbeer excells both. He is, so to speak, "*le prince de la musique!*"

"The piece I have just played is by Herz,"—answered Jane Maria, somewhat drily.

"Yes, he is excellent, excellent!" repeated Mrs. v. P. "My dear Baroness, it is art alone which elevates man above the brute creation. Education alone is the true aristocracy, it levels all inequalities of rank and property. We live indeed, in an age of enlightenment."

The two Misses Julia and Adela, had run up to Serena, whilst crying with affected vivacity and soft mimicing voices, "Oh, how delighted we are to see you dear little Serena! how are you, dear Serena? Do you suffer much pain yet in your hip, poor little Serena?"

Serena replied, smiling somewhat roguishly, "I thank you, dear friends, it is just fifteen years since I had any pain in it."

"Indeed! I positively thought that you still continued to suffer from it, you look so pale, but that's partly the fault of your dress. What kind of material is this? What? Levantine, I do declare! well, you are old fashioned indeed, Serena, very *arrieree*."

"I do not come from Paris," said Serena with that pleasing good nature. which made the hearts of others as free from bitterness as her own. She looked at the dresses of the young ladies, praised them, made some inquiries respecting Paris, and listened with visible pleasure to the replies. I fancied that the two sisters grew more pleasant whilst they were with Serena.

Cousin Stellan ran about, first holding a lively conversation with the Misses v. P's., of which, however, he soon seemed to grow tired; then steered his course

to the brothers Stalmark, who had been sitting together with some other gentlemen in one corner of the room, where they talked of horses and dogs; then from these to several corpulent landed proprietors; marching again from these, he was intercosted by Mrs. v. P, and was obliged, for his sins, to hear her deliver a discourse on the arts and sciences. At length he tore away from her, and remained with Serena, in whose agreeable company he appeared to feel: "Here I like to be." Meanwhile I received a lesson from my friend Brita Kaijsa, on her servant's domestic management; grew sleepy over it, and sought up the patriarchs, with whom I commenced the introduction to my great scheme "of Serena's fortnight's stay at Rosenvik." The accomplishment of it did not appear impossible. Success to eloquence! Miss Hellevi Hausgiebel had been prevented by a prior invitation, from being present at the banquet at Karlsfors. This, *ma chère mère's* ill-humour, and the great heat without and within, were the cause of the want of any particular spirit pervading the company. After Serena had set out with her grand-parents, which they did rather early, the dulness gradually increased, and I was glad when I found myself once more in the coach with my Björn, on the way to our agreeable Rosenvik.

July 19th.

Oh, that stupid, obstinate, cruel, infamous, detestable,—you shall hear who? Cousin Stellan had ridden yesterday afternoon into the town to pay the Dahls a visit. Björn, and I, were glad to be alone; he had taken his tools, I had placed my little work-table near the sofa, and opened the third part of the "Watch Tower in Koatven," which I was reading to Björn. It

seems to me to be a most horrible book, and I cannot better describe the impression it made upon me than in Björn's term 'choking.' The only good lesson, which in my opinion, may be derived from it,—(I have run it over to the end), is: to feel what moral incongruity the life of many men and manythings would exhibit here upon earth, were we not to look beyond the grave as the solution of the problem, for the continuation of the history. I, for my part, would gladly throw the book into the fire, but Björn is determined that we should read it to the end. I believe that horrible things like these are still a little amusement to him. But now again to the sofa, to the table, to the book. Just when I was on the point of commencing to read, my eye happened to glance at the window. The foliage of the Syringa's rustled in the wind, the swans flapped their white wings, the clouds moved slowly towards the West; every thing seemed to me to beckon, and to whisper, "Come out, come out!" And an inconceivable desire impelled me to go out into the open air amidst the verdure. I took hold of Björn's ear, and whispered to him my wish. He grumbled a little, stretched himself, but got up after awhile, and took his hat. Kind Björn! I soon had my bonnet and shawl in my hand, and took my Björn under my arm. Just when we were about stepping out of the front door, he looked about him with a sort of long face, as if he had forgotten something; and I, who need very well understand all his looks, quickly took his pipe, filled it myself, struck a light and lighted it, to Björn's great pleasure. Björn had a mind to look about him in the park at Ramm. We procured a rower, and had a com-

fortable and cool passage across the calm lake. Björn puffed the smoke out of his pipe in great volumes, I sang little barcaroles, thus we travelled over almost a mile, and landed at Ramm's shady banks. We got ashore at a tolerable distance from the house, and arm in arm we walked into the fine gloomy park. I felt myself happy, happy in walking clasped to Björn's arm in the lonely forest, to feel the fresh, pleasant breezes playing about my face, to know Björn to be so kind, and to see the sky so bright above us. He likewise was happy to walk with his wife amidst the recollections of his childhood; he looked about, drew breath deeply, and said, whilst pressing my arm to him, quite softly:

"How splendid!"

And do you know, Maria, if Björn says *one* word, it conveys more than a hundred from the lips of others. Thus, we continued to proceed further into the wood The lofty, thickly foliaged trees, the shadows, the stillness, the recollections, which seemed to dwell under these shades, and the picture of the gloomy hermit at Ramm, which involuntarily stepped forward as the genius of the place, all contributed to solemnize our minds. But in walking further we heard at first a confused sound, and then more and more distinct stamping, as of wild horses, which a man in vain strives to get the mastery of. I am no friend of unmanageable horses; but Björn seemed to take a delight in it, for he ran with me, to the spot where the noise was heard. We came to an open place, and remained, as it were, rivetted to the spot by the sight of the wild, but beautiful spectacle. The same man, and the same horse,

whom we had seen walking at the side of each other in such Idylian peace, we now saw again, but in the wildest conflict. The man sat upon the horse, and was determined to make it leap over a wide ditch. The beautiful animal started back. It dashed to the right, then to the left, it plunged, it reared, and it would not take the leap. The foam ran down from its black glittering body, but, like an immovable despotic will, the man sat firm, chastising, encouraging, compelling. The splendid animal displayed all the magnificence of its nature in this wild contest; its eyes sparkled, its widely expanded nostrils appeared to stream forth fire, whilst striking the ground with its hoofs, and endeavouring with a hundred powerful springs to escape the leap which it was unwilling to perform. With unparalleled skill the rider sat firm, and bent to the motions of the horse whilst he curbed him; and again and again was the obstinate animal led back to the same spot, and the same contest followed. Thus, they contended positively for the space of an hour, when the horse appeared to grow tired, become more quiet, but made no attempt to succumb to the will of its master; the blood streamed down from its flank, lacerated by the spurs. The man dismounted leaving the reins loose; the horse stood still, and looked at its master. The latter took something out of his breast pocket, and placed it against the forehead of the animal, saying in a stifled voice: "This is the third time that we have fought together. Farewell!" It lightened before the horse's head, a shot gave a report, and the horse fell down at the feet of his master. We saw the dying head stretching itself out towards the latter, as it were, to caress him, heard a

deep groan, t en all was still and silent. Björn pressed my arm to himself with such violence as I had never before seen in him, struck his forehead with his clenched fist, whilst drawing himself back, he exclaimed:

"It is Bruno! Gracious Heaven! Yes, it is he!"

"It is Satan, the Satan himself!" I called out, incensed. "Oh, Björn, let us go away, far away from this frightful man—I never wish to see him again."

"It is Bruno!" repeated Björn, whilst leading me into the wood. "Where had I my eyes that I did not sooner——but now he was himself; wild, unmanageable at every resistance, and that expression upon the forehead and the mouth. Bruno living?—Bruno here?"

"I wish he were far enough from here!" cried I vehemently. "He is a monster, not a man; he will murder us all should we not do according to his mad will!" I was violently excited, and was obliged to sit down. Björn, also, was pale, and repeated with mingled feelings of anxiety, joy, and pain, "Bruno returned! What, what will his mother do?"

"Ah! she will not own him. I wish he was in Botany Bay; that is the place for him."

"You will not wish that, Franciska," said Björn; "Bruno is not bad, he has his wild moments, but when he is himself, he has, also, his good ones. Gentleness and affection have an infinite control over him, even his very coming here, his stay in this place, give evidence of his good feeling."

Seldom had Björn spoken with so much warmth.

"And what, now, is to be the end of all this?" inquired I, quite dejected.

"He must become reconciled to his mother, he must remain with us"

"That bandit?—that murderer?"

"We shall see: let us wait."

"Let us begone from hence, dearest, otherwise he will shoot our brains out because we are standing in his way. Oh, let us ride back to our quiet little Rosenvik," and so we did. To me it seemed as if I was tossed on the stormy sea, so agitated and uneasy was I. When we got home we talked (i. e., I talked) about what had happened, what could and what ought to be done. Björn walked up and down the room with his hands across his back, whilst he perpetually groaned out, "hm, hm!" At length I agreed with him, that we had nothing else to do but keep our discovery secret, and wait the event. Björn never closed an eye throughout this night, nor I either, but towards morning I fell into a slumber, and I dreamed that Bruno thrust a dagger into his mother's breast; I heard her penetrating cry: "My blood, my own flesh and blood!" and saw her sink into a dark abyss. When I awoke, I was so strongly affected that I wept, and again I was obliged to give vent to my indignation, by exclaiming from the bottom of my heart, "Oh, that irrational, obstinate, cruel, detestable man!"

July 20th.

No, I cannot detest him notwithstanding. Bruno has a heart, although he was cruel towards his horse. He came yesterday evening to us, and when he entered, my heart heaved against him like a wild horse, and I could not exchange a friendly word with him. The visit commenced with an almost general silence; but I

could see Björn's brotherly-love swell within him, as if it could not contain itself much longer. Cousin Stellan had commenced, a short time previous, to read to us a part of Spindler's "Jew," which he praised as a master-piece of the terrific style. Bruno's arrival interrupted the reading, and immediately after, Stellan laid the book aside. Bruno perceived this, and begged that if we were occupied with reading, he might be allowed to be an auditor.

Cousin Stellan briefly repeated the subject treated of in that part of the book, related how the Jew Zodick, walking already in criminal paths, was, by a cruel act of violence, baptized into a religion which he abominates, by some Christian knights, and then barbarously mocked and insulted by them; how in this situation the most dreadful desperation possesses his soul, he feels that he is an outcast in heaven and on earth; every paradise closed to him. "Must I, then," he exclaimed, "be cursed? Cursed Christians! You have robbed me of my soul! I curse you! I swear against you the most terrible revenge!" Here Stellan had left off, and from here he proceeded: "This thought inspired the unhappy Zodick, rent by anguish and despair, with a fire, descending not from heaven, but sent from hell. He raised himself from the ground, looked wildly up to the chasing clouds, which in vain whirled down thick snow-flakes to cool the glowing image of Moloch. "The covenant is rent," cried he with a yelling voice; he, the only living being in the still ice-rain, "Samuel, Lord of the wilderness! prince of death! thou husband of the hideous hag! Lilus, the mother of goblins and of sin! to thee I dedicate myself. Protect me from

the wrath of our God, defend me against the fury of Edom, teach me to wield the sword against that law which is mine no longer; grant me to take vengeance on Israel as on Esau, till thou one day shall claim my spirit, and bear it hence in the storms of thy wrath."

The narrative goes on to relate how Zodick hardens himself in the feelings of hell. He becomes more composed, perceives that it must be permitted to the destroyer of the life to come, to exist below, living doubly in his own bliss, and in the sufferings of others. He teaches all men to be free as the birds; and intoxicated with wild joy by the frightful images arising within his soul, he thanks fate for the event which gave him strength to quench his thirst for revenge, and to be the enemy of the whole human race.

"This is horrible!" cried I, when Stellan had finished, "but is it also true? Is it not one of those images which modern romances so often conjure up, but which have no counterpart in reality? Crimes and criminals I can conceive, but not the hardened misanthropist, not a devil in human nature."

"And for as much as it is natural throughout," said Bruno, emphatically, "the sinner himself becomes a devil when hope has left him."

"But, why should it abandon him," said Björn, with that confidence which so well becomes the pure in heart. "Who is there who should not hope?"

"Can you," asked Bruno in a tone of reproach, "roll away the burden of remorse and anguish from the human breast, so that it should open to hope? Can you hinder the passion from destroying and desolating—Hope? Take then out of this world punishments,

which are ten fold better than even sin deserves; let words be again unspoken, which, once uttered, burn in the soul for ever."

The brothers Stalmark, who were crossing the yard in hunting dresses, followed by a pack of hounds, here beckoned Stellan away. He was, (or wished to be), hungry for the chase, and left us. He therefore heard nothing of the bitter reply, which in my anger against Bruno on account of the horse and other things, I thus made to him.

"Banish pride, rage, and resentment from the human soul, and you will see that punishment corrects, and misfortune and suffering purify the soul, and lead to humility and hope."

"Punishment!" interrupted Bruno with a melancholy vehemence. "Believe me there are sins which no punishment can correct; there are natures which severity hardens more and more. They plunge continually deeper into their hearts the point of the sword which is set against them. Would you rescue such a criminal from sinking into eternal perdition? Would you change the heart within his breast? then extend to him your hand in love, pardon him, though he may not deserve it; but cast him not out, abandon him not. A heart may for a long time be irresolute between good and evil, long it may continue in a state fit for repentance; but the time comes when it may turn to stone for ever. When the only bosom after which it longs remains closed to it, then the Eden of life is closed to him for ever; when a dreadful unatoned-for remembrance perpetually recurs, returns unceasingly, day and night, every hour, every minute falls upon a soul like a shower of ice, then

—terrible! terrible! terrible!"

Bruno hid his forehad in his hands, and appeared to have forgotten us and all around him. The thunderbolt upon his temples was sharp and full. After awhile he looked up with a loving gaze, and proceeded: "And under such cirtumstances can man become virtuous, good, and hope.—(He laughed bitterly.)—Ah! ye good, ye happy ones, go out into the world, visit the prisons, the galleys, cast a scrutinizing eye into those hearts which more than the bodies are chained, and then speak yet of improvement. There are furies in life, in the heart: the sayings of antiquity about them are no fiction. "Go out to those possessed by furies and preach hope, if you have courage to do so."

"Yes, by Heaven!" cried Björn, stamping, as it were, angrily upon the ground, although the tears stood in his eye, "Yes, I will preach hope in dungeons, on the earth, and on the sea! I will cry into the ears of the dying malefactor; I will proclaim it beyond death, beyond the grave—into endless eternity will I proclaim it, hope ye! hope ye!"

"He promises boldly, but he is right," thought I, affected and pleased with my Björn.

"Would you also," said Bruno, slowly, and his cheeeks grew pale, whilst he leaned his head on his hand, "speak of hope to him who has received and merited the curse of his father and his mother?"—His voice grew faint at these last words.

"Yes, in the name of all heaven!" cried Björn, vehemently, and proceeded with a tone and a manner which for a moment quite amazed me: to what purpose these doubts and lamentations, and this despairing

wretchedness in a man and a christian? Why have you come hither to disturb our peace with it?"

The blood rose into Bruno's face, whilst he cast an inquiring look at Björn.

Björn looked quite incensed and furious, whilst he cried, "I must confess that I find it very strange, that you as a stranger, come into my peaceful house and disturb our tranquillity by remarks on dungeons, galleys, furies, and by detestable arguments which we have no inclination to hear."

Bruno rose astonisded, wounded and proud, and fixed his strange, penetrating, piercing looks at Björn; he then cast them down, and with a voice, betraying smothered pain and anger, he said, "I have disturbed your rest? I will do so no more. Farewell!" he bowed to me, and walked towards the door. Björn followed him, whilst he cried still louder; "Yes, I find it wonderful, singular, inexplicable, and almost unpardonable, that you as a stranger should come here, talk of wretchedness, helpless misery and despair, and this in—" here Björn suddenly laid his hand on Bruno's arm, when the latter paused at the door, with a countenance as if all the lightenings of the world would flame out of his soul,—"in the house of a brother, which is also your house, before a friend who would do all that he could for Bruno! yes, it is unpardonable!" Björn held him in his arms, pressed him to his honest breast. The storm subsided into the harmony of love. Bruno was transported. Pale, and burning by turns, he betrayed a thousand contending feelings. He abandoned himself at last to a flood of overwhelming tenderness, he pressed his brother with ardour to his breast,

kissed him again and again, whilst he said with a faultering voice: "Brother! brother! . . . . . *Lars Anders* . . . . . can you still remember me? will you still acknowledge and love me as formerly?"

"Be still!"—sobbed Björn, with a voice choked with tears—"be still! Come, here is my wife. We two are one; embrace her."

I confess that the ghost of the horse had quite vanished from my thoughts, I sat weeping at the sight of the embraces of the brothers, and on Bruno's approaching me, I offered my cheek to him. He kissed also my hand, and embraced Björn again. His warm loving heart beamed forth from his eyes, and animated his whole person. I felt affection for him at this moment. We had scarcely begun to be somewhat composed, when we unexpectedly heard cousin Stellan come back. "Secrecy!" said Bruno softly and emphatically. We feigned to be as indifferent and calm as possible. Bruno remained mute for a time after Stellan's arrival, at length he said: "One of my people at Ramm is dangerously ill. May I request you to pay him a visit, Doctor Werner; I should have liked it best this evening, yet—but if not, perhaps to-morrow?"

"Best this evening!" replied Björn, "and the sooner the better, before it gets too late."

They immediately proposed to go, and Björn begged me in a low tone, whilst taking leave of me, not to be uneasy if he should stop somewhat late at night.

I remained alone with cousin Stellan, who must have found me the most tiresome companion in the world, for my thoughts were far distant from him, and although he spoke much of Serena, I remained mute and absent.

Björn did not come home before midnight, and informed me as follows:—From Bruno's papers, and his own words, it is manifest, that he has served for a considerable period in the Portuguese war. On the re-establishment of peace, he took his leave, travelled to the West Indies, entered into partnership with a planter, and made his fortune in trade. He became rich, led for many years a very busy and active life, partly in the plantations, partly in travel. But his longing after his native country, the wish to become reconciled with his mother, seized him with increasing vehemence, and rose at length to such a pitch, that life became worthless to him. He resolved to liberate himself from the curse which persecuted him like the furies. He travelled under his assumed name to Sweden, and came to Ramm. Here he made inquiries as to his mother's state of mind. He ascertained her condition after his flight, how she had since banished every recollection of his name—and his soul was filled with dark despair. It appeared to pain Bruno to speak on this subject, and he interrupted himself with these words:—"No matter, I must venture a trial, when, I cannot say, let us not talk of it till by and bye."—If he succeeds in his hopes, then he intends bringing over his great fortune to Sweden, to purchase Ramm, and to settle there. Should he fail, then he goes back to the West Indies, and will be dead to his family and his father-land.

Such is the state of things. How will it succeed! Björn has said to his brother "hope," and at the same time the knowledge of his mother's character made him very unhappy respecting the issue. Notwithstand-

ing this, Björn is delighted beyond measure at Bruno's return, and at having found his heart still as warm as formerly. "But did you not say anything to him respecting the horse?" inquired I. "I did so, of course," replied Björn, "for I told him when and by what signs I had recognized him." Bruno blushed, and said: "It was an unfortunate moment; I had determined to consider the issue of my fate in the leap over the ditch as prophetic: and I longed to put the future to the test. When my horse's resistance was not to be conquered, I grew enraged, but I repent of what I have done."—"Then he is at least a man," I exclaimed, "though he be not a rational one."

"Ah, my good Maria! what is all this to end in? A wild, imprudent son, an inflexible mother, who has also a soul of fire, and between them both such recollections. How is this to succeed! what result may we dare to anticipate! Björn, who speaks so much of hope, means but little in his looks. God help us all!"

X.

EIGHTH LETTER,

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, July 28.

I have been so busy, so animated and happy for several days past, that I had forgotten care and anxiety, the threatening future, and—forgive me, dear Maria—almost my pen too. I have lived and revelled too much in the present. Serena has been with me, and remains so still. My plans have succeeded; I tyranised over Björn, he tyranised over the patriarchs, and I obtained Serena, with the permission to be allowed to keep her a whole week, and perhaps still longer, with me.

How happy I felt on the evening when she came. It seemed to me as if I had received a dear younger sister into the house, to whom I was to be as a mother. How pleased I was to set before her my eggs, my butter, my fresh-baked rye-bread, and in the evening to draw the pure white drapery over her bed, which is put up in the drawing-room. In the morning we had made it a point of always rising early; have drank milk from Audumbla, then walked into the birch-wood, where

Björn had caused winding walks to be made, so that it is now like a little park. I have imbibed air and fragrant odours in her company, and seen her daily grow stronger and more beautiful. We have been reading, working, singing and chatting, and every thing acquires in Serena's company a new and increased charm.

On Wednesday, there was a coffee and tea-party, at the Bird-cage. A spirited *fete!* Lively and cheerful, like the hostess, and with whom body and mind were alike agreeably regaled. It is a fine thing to have a museum.

On the Friday following, there was an elegant display at Doctor Werner's. Rosenvik cannot vie with the Bird-cage; it has, nevertheless, as *ma chère mère* pleasantly expressed herself about its hostess, (excuse my egotism!) its *little* charms. Being the first time of my receiving a large party, I was a little fearful whether every thing would go off well, especially on Björn's account, as it was my earnest wish he should be satisfied with " my wife." Fortunately every thing passed off admirably; the only misfortune was, that I had already prepared Björn a few days previous to expect that at the banquet he should be graced with a kind of sweet-cake, which should quite melt in the mouth. Unfortunately my sugar-cakes had melted already in the oven, so that the mouth did not get the least taste of them. But as for the rest, every thing was charming; and my friends very well satisfied. Jane Maria played her difficult piece by Herz; I sang several things; and then there was dancing to the piano. All were merry.

After our visitors had left us, Björn and I walked up and down the saloon, and congratulated ourselves that every thing had gone off so well, and that our guests had found our house so pleasant.

" And how they all liked the lemonade! " cried I.

" And the sweet-cakes too! " cried Björn, with a horrible grimace, " which *so* melted in the mouth, that one could not even taste them! " Unfortunate sweet-cakes!

The most happy and agreeable days, however, are those we have spent alone at Rosenvik; we have then always taken our supper at Svano." Cousin Stellan is *aux petits soins* for Serena. Come, come, cousin Stellan!

We have spent a few evenings at Karlsfors, (Since her misfortune, *ma chère mère* accepts no invitations.) *Ma chère mère* is very kind and pleasant towards me; she almost calls me " Thou," and " Child." And when we are in very happy mood, I call her " Mother," which seems to please her very much. Notwithstanding there is no confidence existing between us; she does not invite me to it; and, besides, I am afraid of the " Idol of Berlichingen " in her.

Ebba departed with her husband on Saturday. I was sorry for it; I had become attached to her latterly. There is so much naturally good in her, and by a wise treatment of her on Peter's part it will develope itself more and more. Her tears on our parting evinced to me that she was not indifferent towards me We promised to correspond with each other.

The 2nd August.

I have permission to retain Serena a fortnight

longer! The kind old Dahls arrived here yesterday. It was a pleasure to witness how Serena flew into their arms, and how she was embraced by them with heart-felt affection. They were happy to see Serena's blooming cheeks, and to hear her improvement in singing. (I boasted of her, as much as the best aunt could do.) And they themselves persuaded the sweet girl to comply with Björn's advice, and my earnest intreaties. It appeared to be difficult to leave the old people; at length she consented to the general request, and I am the gainer of fourteen more happy days.

Between Jane Maria and me all is harmony again. It always interests me to converse with her; and her musical talent is really rare. I fancy also, that since Ebba's departure she is more amiable than previously. There never was a proper understanding between them. It is with some men as with certain witnesses. Each by itself may be very well, but when they come together, they confront each other, and appear to mutual disadvantage. Jane Maria grows more and more respectful towards *ma chère mère*; who, on her part, relaxes in her stiffness towards her, but still—especially in domestic affairs—keeps herself somewhat reserved. Jane Maria has real merit, as a wife; and she and Jean Jacques are very well satisfied with each other.

Hitherto I have only given you sun-shine, but now comes a cloud, and the cloud is—Bruno. Bruno has often been here in the evening. I do not know how it happens, but I grow nervous, whenever he enters; I fancy as if some wicked power had its dwelling within him, and that he would bring some sorrow with him.

The warm sun-beam which broke forth so beautifully in his character, when he found himself recognized and embraced by Björn has vanished with that moment. His thunder-cloud nature has regained its predominance, and Bruno is gloomy and reserved. This singular man has, nevertheless, a secret influence over us all. I fear Serena feels it deeper than I could wish, although I cannot assert it with certainty. Bruno, on the other hand, appears to be evidently thoroughly interested in her. He looks at her, listens to and watches for every word proceeding from her lips, as one listens to a music, of which one does not like to lose a single sound. Serena is kind and gentle towards him, and so, by-the-bye, is she also towards Stellan; but to whom is she not so? I think, however, I have perceived her betraying a sort of embarrassment towards Bruno, which she does not manifest towards Stellan, and that is no good omen. Perhaps this is a natural consequence of the dissimilar nature and character of these men; even I myself am not quite at ease when associating with Bruno. I should not like to see either of them the husband of Serena, but Stellan rather than Bruno.

The 5th August.

Aha, cousin Stellan! Is this the state of affairs? Only think, dearest Maria, our former marriage-despiser has actually been sitting here for a whole hour, talking of nothing else but of the happiness of a suitable union, of the comforts and joys which may be found in domestic life; followed by sighs and melancholy looks and confessions, that he also would regard

it as the greatest happiness to settle down to domestic life, with a really amiable and well-informed wife. But I opposed him with some of his former objections. "But, cousin Stellan, the nasty paste? But, cousin Stellan, the scouring-buckets? Your wife will be obliged to have some scouring in the house? But, cousin Stellan, the screaming of children? All little children—even those of the best-bred parents—do cry. And, then, the apple, which is found in all families, &c." Stellan was now prepared with replies on all these points, the principal of which was, that in the case of a really prudent and amiable wife all earthly discomforts might be looked upon as fleeting clouds, which only appear for a moment and vanish in a bright atmosphere. I was perfectly of the same opinion, and at length expressed myself to that effect. "Yes," said Stellan, "one only perceives this clearly; only when we find at last a person, who, by her lovely, harmonious character, spreads lustre and rapture all around her. It is then alone that a man feels that the mind can influence the external world, that his circumstances are under his controul."

"Yes, so it is, cousin Stellan; and I confess, that I have long since anticipated this revolution in your views."

"How so?" inquired Stellan, blnshing.

"Confess, that one of our neighbours has especially contributed to exhibit the picture of domestic life and matrimony to you in a more attractive light."

"Hm—well, yes, perhaps! I cannot dispute it."

"I have long since noticed it; I am not surprised at this, cousin Stellan. You could not contemplate Miss

Hellevi Hausgiebel and her Bird-cage, with feelings of indifference."

"What? Whom? How?" he started up, quite scared, and looked at me with dire consternation. I was obliged to laugh. Stellan grew angry, and said: "You are jesting, Franciska, and that is not kind from you."

"Forgive me, Stellan," said I; "but do confess that the Bird-cage possesses none of those annoyances, which appear so great in your eyes; there never can be any smell of 'nasty glue' there, and scouring certainly only occurs once a year there; besides this, Miss Hellevi is a person, with whom life never can become irksome and tedious."

"Heaven keep me! Her unceasing vivacity gives me the cholera; eight days at the Bird-cage—and I should be a corpse, from mortification; she might then embalm me, and think herself lucky, in getting me, in the shape of a mummy, for her museum. No thank you, cousin Franciska! you may look about in some other quarter."

"I have done so too, cousin, but then some great *But* has come in the way; she is charming indeed—but she is—lame!"

"The celebrated, fair La Vallier was lame too!"

"Ah, that's true, and alters the case very materially with people at Court," said I aside.

"But she seems, however, to have a greater fault, which I abominate in a female!"

"Heaven forbid! and what is it?"

"She appears to me to be phlegmatic,—there is a calmness in her demeanour which borders on indifference,—this is a great defect in a female!"

"You astonish me, Stellan; I have never observed any coolness in Serena!"

"Still I believe that she possesses it. How glad should I be to find myself mistaken, for she is indeed most fascinating; but icy natures are a chilling sort of thing after all." Cousin Stellan repeated this in a natural and tolerably indifferent tone, whilst he rose and walked out.

Ah, Cousin! you are very cunning—but you can't deceive me! I see very well how matters stand. Stellan wants me to pump out Serena's heart, and then to tell him whether it beats warm or cool for him. In the first case, he will come forward with confidence; in the second, retreat behind "the great fault in a female;" and then he endangers neither his equanimity nor his dignity. But—is love really at the bottom of such cautious conduct? At all events, it is amusing to see, how the nasty glue can at once turn sweet; I shall indeed endeavour, on the first opportunity I have, to find out, whether Serena is warmly or coolly disposed towards my nice cousin. Whether I shall tell him anything of the result of my investigation, that is another matter.

August 6th.

Now I know how the land lies, and you shall know it too, my dear Maria! Oh Serena! Serena!

I was yesterday afternoon alone with her. I thought of Stellan, and asked her, without any circumlocution, what she thought of our young visitor.

To my astonishment, I discovered that she had thought very little of him. She considered that he was handsome, agreeable, and very talented, but she

expressed her approbation with most chilling indifference. Then I began to abuse him a little. Love, thought I, has strange lurking-places, and often, when it cannot be got out with sugar, one may get it out with salt. But in vain did I season my remarks with salt respecting Stellan's conceit, thoughtlessness, etc. I could not discover the slightest point of an arrow, from Love's quiver, in Serena's replies. Serena made apologies for his conduct, as christian charity is wont to do, even whilst she owned his faults.

"You are very indulgent towards him, Serena!" said I; "would you be willing to take him under your training? viz., as his wife?"

"Ah! no, no!" said Serena, laughing.

"Why, 'Ah! no, no!'? You own yourself that he has many good qualities, and you are warm in excusing his faults."

"Yes! but—still I could not fancy him for a husband."

"And why not, Serena?"

"What shall I say? I believe that he is very agreeable and amiable, but I do not believe that he could sincerely love any one or any thing but himself."

"I should suppose, Serena, you would much rather take my Björn?"

"Take him! he who is so kind towards every body, so sympathising, so active for the good of others?—O yes!"

"'Tis well for me that I have made him secure to myself. But tell me, dear Serena—forgive me if I press my inquiries too eagerly—is there no one else in the way of cousin Stellan—for I really believe, that other-

wise, you must be a little more inclined to favour him, —perhaps your heart is already given away?—I have heard that your hand was sued for, a few years ago!"

Deep blushes had, on the first utterance of my question, covered Serena's cheeks, but, at the conclusion of my speech, she turned pale, and replied, after short reflection:

"No, I did not love him; but had I been perfectly at liberty to act for myself, I should probably have become his wife?"

"And why so, if you did not love him?"

"Because I believe, that he loved me sincerely, and that I could have made him happy; it certainly is a delightful thing to make a man happy upon earth!"

"But you have had many suitors; has not one of them pleased your parents; or have you not had the same consideration for these as for the last mentioned?"

"There was no need for that!" said Serena, smiling.

"How so?—they certainly loved you?"

"Oh, there are various kinds of love!"

"Very true! Let us see! First, we will take lukewarm love; it speaks in this way: 'See a pretty, intelligent girl, she will make a nice sort of wife, and not a very expensive one either; that's the kind of wife that would suit me!'—What kind of love shall we discuss next?"

"Suppose we talk of falling in love."

"Just so: The love which has a bandage before its eyes, and can fall into raptures about a foot, or a shoe. And this love may be as violent as a spring-storm, or tender, like an Anemone, and disappears like æther;

nevertheless, fortune favouring, it may, like luke-warm love, spring up into a more heart-felt sentiment, and become closely allied to a love, for which, I have the highest respect. I mean warm friedship."

"Oh, that is lovely !" said Serena; "It develops itself to perfection only in marriage; and I have noticed in my own family how it speaks—more in actions than in words."

"Tell me how it speaks, dear Serena; for I should also like to introduce this language into my domestic life."

If a man had been standing in the presence of Serena, he must have thrown himself at her feet, so fascinating, so amiable was she, whilst she said:

"Thy prosperity is also mine; let adversity do its worst, it cannot make me unhappy, if I can only keep thee. When I have failed, and when I have acted right, I can see it in thine eyes. This is my punishment, this is my reward. Whither should I go with my sorrows, and to whom with my joys, except to thee? To whom should'st thou turn, except to me? Do we not share everything together? What matter if thou errest, if thou sometimes art unjust? I clasp thee ardently to my heart, and we love each other all the more. Near thee, I find at all times support, home, and bliss. In all the wide world there is no man, who so understands me, who so adapts himself to me, as thou !"

I dried up a tear, and spoke: "But what can love—even the highest love—say more, Serena ?"

"The highest love?" repeated Serena, and a soft paleness dispelled the purple from her cheeks. "What

it would say, I know not, but I can guess what it would feel. It is a quicker pulsation in the veins of friendship; it is the higher life—" Serena paused, her eyes filled with tears, and her inspired look finished the thoughts, which her tongue was unable to utter.

And a being like this is to be indifferent, thought I. "And you, Serena," I continued, after a short time, "you, who understand the highest happiness of married life, shall you never enjoy it? shall you remain unmarried?"

"Yes, I believe so!" replied Serena, "but I shall love my grand-parents as dearly, and you, and all who deserve affection, and I shall be happy!"

"My dear Serena! you may do so, as long as your heart remains free."

Her delicate warm hand trembled as I held it in mine. It was as if a heart-throb had run through Serena's veins, and when I looked at her, her cheeks were flushed, and her breathing was quick. Just when I was on the point of asking her whence this sudden agitation proceeded, I was painfully enlightened; I heard the trampling of a horse's feet, and Bruno immediately after dismounted at the gate. Serena must have recognized the sound of his horse's feet, while yet at a distance.

"Is that it?" thought I, and a slow fearful shuddering ran, like an evil omen, through my body and soul. I pressed Serena's hand firmer, I felt myself constrained to embrace her, to press her more ardently to me, but I was prevented by Bruno's hasty entrance. He always comes like a storm; however he now shook my hand so heartily, and cast such a sweet look at Serena,

that the uncomfortable impression which his sudden appearance made upon me, vanished in some measure.

Serena now sat intently at work at her embroidery frame, and Bruno's eyes rested on her fingers, and the flowers of their production. "It is a fine day!" said I to Bruno,—"Yes!" replied he, with a melodious voice, "but now only do I feel it!" we were silent for awhile, and I was glad when our trio was changed into a quartet by Björn, and soon after into a quintet by Stellan.

But this did not appear to please Bruno, he rose, and after having paced up and down the room several times, seated himself at the other end of the room at the piano, and softly, as if with hardly suppressed feelings, poured forth his tide of melody in all its wondrous expression. Serena appeared to dream; she paid no attention to the conversation, nor was she roused until we began to speak of the approaching golden nuptials of her grand-parents.

"It must after all be a touching moment," said I, warmly, "to look back from such a day upon an extended series of years, and to see in their long course nothing but pure recollections and good works."

Bruno moved, the sounds died away, he bowed himself over the chair back, and I saw that he was listening.

Stellan sighed, and said: "Such a happiness is the lot of but few mortals!"

And why, Cousin Stellan?" I began.

"Because so few live for it! because so few wish to know and to govern themselves!"

"And who knows himself? Who can govern himself?" inquired Bruno, rising.

"Hm! I hope very many!" replied I, somewhat confounded at this harsh interruption.

"Yes! people fancy so," proceeded Bruno, with gloomy vehemency, "they imagine they know their own power, and solely because they have not been tried, because they have never looked really into the depth of their souls. Circumstances smoothen their course, life passes like a sunny day, and the tranquil spirit, unobscured by any shadows, unshaken by any storm, believes itself to be bright and strong. The Blind! The Fortunate! They know but little of life; but what man who has experienced the temptations, the torments, and joys of the world; what man, who, has felt his soul shaken by passion, ventures to say, that he knows himself, that he can be and do whatever he chooses. And who is always the same? Look into history, do not vices and miserable actions stain the life of the greatest men? Cannot the malefactor perform noble actions? May we not, in one, moment possess a paradise of love in our hearts, whilst in another, all may be cold and desolate within? To know one's self, is it not to feel that man's heart is a wrestling-place for all contradictions, for all possibilities, a tennis-ball between heaven and earth, with which devils and angels play? Man can do every thing but be consistent; he is capable of performing the greatest, the noblest actions, but only for a moment; the next drags him downwards. To know one's self, is, to know one's weakness." Like an impetuous torrent, which suddenly dashes over its banks, and breaks through all impediment, thus rushed out Bruno's speech, and I confess that I felt myself as it were, carried away by it.

In my own, so often changeable and erring heart, a hundred testimonies arose for Bruno's sad doctrine. I felt my courage sink, but Serena had not lost her self-possession. She fixed her bright look on Bruno's countenance, as he stood opposite to her, and when he was silent, she said with heartfelt consoling mildness:—"Surely we do find contradictions and inconsistencies in all men, but may we not presume that these decrease according to the degree that we try to overcome them?"

"So it ought to be," said Bruno, slowly, and refreshed his sight with a glance on her heavenly countenance.

"And do we not see innumerable examples of the actual success of such endeavours? Do we not know that fallen creatures have raised themselves again, that the heavy-tried have gone forth victorious from the conflict? Does not every man carry about in his breast a divine image, which in secret is able to reflect light into his soul, and which strives continually to bear him upward?"

"Yes, so it is, I believe," said Bruno, softly but sadly, whilst he seated himself next to Serena.

"Then let us have hope for all men," continued Serena, ardently and agitated. "For certain natures, the way may indeed be more difficult, and He who is good and merciful, and eternally the same, will one day also cause His voice to be heard, and raise them up to light and harmony."

"Amen! Amen! may it be so!" said Bruno, whilst laying his forehead in his hand. "May peace descend upon all unhappy souls!"

"And, above all, good-will," thought I to myself, but I did not wish to raise my voice, after Serena's angelic voice, even in utterance of a blessed thought. We sat for some considerable time plunged in silence, each deeply occupied with his own thoughts. At length they separated themselves into Mozart's Don Juan, as proposed by Stellan, and Bruno, as our leader, inspired each of us with a portion of his genius. He really enchanted me this evening, and I believe that all were equally enraptured, with me; we scarcely took time to eat a morsel, but continued, without interruption, till eleven o'clock. Divine art! Glorious Mozart! Through him we had all become such good friends, that on Bruno's departure we accompanied him a good part of the way. The air was mild, and the starry firmament shone brightly in the dark midnight of August. Involuntarily we looked upward with silent admiration, and Stellan, who since the last few days appeared to feel every thing more deeply, said: "Beneath such a sky, man must have had the first forebodings of immortality!"— "Or rather, perhaps, his mortality, his independence of external powers," replied Bruno, "for what does the crowd of stars tell him, the eternal wanderers upon eternal paths, which are silent as the Trappists in their heavenly course; strangers to our feelings, our torments, our joys, they revolve in eternal succession, and appear to answer to our questions only, Poor dust and ashes! measure thyself with eternity and be silent!— Immortal life? No! These lofty ideas are not derived from the feelingless firmament; the starry heaven rather oppresses than elevates us. But the world of sound!—Can we plunge into this, and not antici-

pate the grandeur of eternity, its harmony, its infinity, not conceive it (at least for a few moments)? Oh!" and Bruno's voice here assumed its profound melodious tone, "Oh! if there are high aspirations in this our life, are they not expressed by music? Hear the fugue! Hark! how sphere sings to sphere, how thought answers to thought, how manifold is every thing, and yet how one idea sustains these endless parts in power and beauty. The fugue is the Creator's "let there be!" Thus innumerable worlds repeated the first command. Listen to a Symphony of Beethoven, if you would have life explained. Hearken to the sounds, how they live, suffer, love, embrace each other, and at the same time form all the inexpressible melodies of existence. Hear lastly, how the dissonances melt into harmonies, how storms, anguish, joy, hatred, and love run along like the streams of earth, and rush into the ocean, in which every thing dissolves, every thing melts into one full accord of harmony, and ends in peace!"

I was strongly affected and carried away by Bruno's expressions, although not fully satisfied with his meaning. We now walked slowly towards the avenue; Cousin Stellan conversed with me, and I believe that I suddenly received two pairs of eyes and ears, for I listened and replied to him, whilst I directed my attention to what passed between Bruno and Serena, who walked a few steps before us. Bruno plucked a flower, offered it to Serena, and said, with a suppressed voice, of infinite tenderness, yes, even of tenderness: "Flowers and wishes generally go together. Will you accept these from me? May you always be as peaceful as at present. May your bitterest torments be always like

this night, be brightly illuminated by lights in heaven. May you ever be as happy as you are innocent and good. But—" (and here he suppressed his voice still more) "when you yourself are borne in the arms of angels, still pray for those who enjoy not peace, who are not so pure as you, pray for all, and—pray for me!" These last words I more anticipated than heard. Bruno at this moment bowed his head on Serena's hand, and Cousin Stellan, apparently now like me, received two pairs of eyes and ears. Serena had turned her face towards Bruno, but I could not hear whether she made any reply to him. Bruno's horse was brought, he took hasty leave of us, and soon vanished out of our sight.

Bruno! such a singular mind one cannot fully understand, nor can one calmly enjoy peace with him. And these very contradictions in him, this sudden change, these alternate snow and thaw, storm and calm, this night and this flashing day, this plenitude of life and warmth, all invest him with an uneasy overwhelming interest. He repels and attracts, but meets the latter, because he is so perfectly natural. However I am extremely uneasy that Serena should have attached herself to him. What can the lily do upon the boisterous waves? Can Bruno make a wife happy? Does he deserve such a wife? Only think, if he should be one of those malefactors, whose cause he espouses. What is he? What does he seek? Such are my inquiries to myself, such my inquiries to Björn. The latter always believes the best, and loves Bruno sincerely. Nevertheless he does not fully console me, I have fearful forebodings; with a heart full of these, I bid you farewell for the present, my sweet Maria!

XI.

NINTH LETTER.

FRANCISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.

Rosenvik, August 14.

Again eight days have passed, since I have written last to you, dear Maria. Absorbed by the romance, which is now performed around me, I forget that I ought to have written to you. But the necessity I feel of living in your presence, Maria, leads me again to the pen, and to my narative. Cousin Stellan has taken his departure. He must have gradually become more and more convinced, that Serena had "the fault which he found most unpardonable in a female." He was often seized when Bruno came to Rosenvik, with violent gaping-fits, received business-letters from Stockholm, which required his presence there, and—departed accompanied by my wishes for his welfare. Notwithstanding, I was sorry that his conversion was arrested just at its very commencement.

Serena and Bruno, however, have occupied me so much, that I have had few thoughts for any one else, but for them. Bruno had made our house his

home. Björn enjoys this, and in spite of my uneasiness in the presence of that eccentric man, I can still not be indifferent. Serena is, as it were, under a misterious magic influence, and—what do you think? I have not yet ventured to inquire into it. She seems so happy, so gay, so calm, that I am afraid to say a word which might disturb her, or awaken her half-slumbering feelings into perfect consciousness. In addition to this, she goes on blooming to fairer life; her voice has develloped the most splendid sounds, but Bruno is quite a different sort of teacher to me; never has her face, her general demeanour possessed a more fascinating vivacity. And Bruno? He is reserved, but it is apparent in him, that he is altogether in love with her. He follows her, wherever she goes, he seats himself next to her, sometimes he casts one of those looks on her, which do not dart in vain from the human eye! Oh, that look from him! I do not like it. Sometimes I tremble before it,—it is said, that the serpent when it has selected the lark for its prey, raises itself, and fixes its eyes upon it. The lark looks into the serpents eye, and a strange and terrible charm seizes it. With its trembling wings it flies singing in a circle, never has its song been so enrapturing, never have its wings shaken in higher joy of life, and thus it sings, and encircles the serpent gradually nearer and nearer, till it rushes into her jaws, and remains silent, for ever.—Oh, Serena! Serena! Indeed all this must not be. I must warn Serena, she must know what we know of this dangerous man. I must speak to Björn.

Later.

Notice here our conversation: "But my dear Björn that will never do. I can assure you, that something

very serious might be the consequence of it!"

"Well, and then? what can we desire more? I wish it may become so perfectly serious, as to terminate in a wedding. I really believe that the match is desirable."

"But is he worthy of such a wife? How do we know whether he is not after all something far worse than is told? I do not trust him. I believe sometimes that he is capable of doing the worst actions. Only think if he should be a murderer!"

"My dear little Franciska," said Björn, almost angrily, "why do you suffer yourself to be led away by your fancies? Why do you judge so without foundation, of any fellow creature? This is unjust of you Franciska!"

"Forgive me, my angel! but are you not too forbearing? No cause! we know at any rate, that he has stolen!"

"And have you never stolen any thing when a child?"

I paused, reflected, blushed, and was silent. A number of biscuits, and sweet cakes, pieces of ribbon, a particular sort of little mother-of-pearl box, rose up like spirits from my innocent years of childhood, and testified against me. In conclusion, I said: "Yes, Björn, I have stolen, and readily confess my sins, but at the age of fifteen years I stole no more!"

"Consider the circumstances under which Bruno grew up. Almost all children pilfer a little, but a good education and wise treatment by and by suppresses the dangerous and yet so natural desire, to appropriate the coveted object. Bruno was not treated judiciously,

and must be judged accordingly. At all event his last lines to me testifies that he had acknowledged his error, and was desirous to repair it. And certainly the fearful lessons, which the last scene with his mother gave him, has withdrawn him for ever from pursuing such a course."

I sighed and said, " At any rate we have seen, how soon he dispatches those who do not choose to conform to his will. He who is so unreasonable towards horses may be equally so towards men!"

" There is immence differense yet, Franciska! At all events I will not defend Bruno's errors. Yes, he is wild and sometimes unreasonable, but he is still as in the days of his youth, vascillating, restless, but not wicked. On the contrary, his heart is warm, and I am convinced that he will become at last a good man. Just such an angel as Serena, can acquire power over him, make him good and reasonable, whilst at the same she will make him happy."

" My dear Björn! I admire your reasoning, but still I am not satisfied. Ought we not to acquaint Serena with the character of the man to whom she leans so blind? Ought she not likewise be informed of what we know of his youth and his adventures?"

" Why? for what purpose? If she loves him, this will not estrange her from him. But as a wife, it might be painful to her, to know, that Bruno once merited the contempt of his nearest relatives. At least no other persons except Bruno himself ought to inform her of it. Eye to eye, heart to heart, much may be said, and much forgiven."

" Ah, would that we only knew something better of

the latter part of his life!"

"I have listened to all he had to tell me, have seen his papers. All is authentic and in proper order. They all speak highly of him. Besides—if Bruno should ever have done wrong—do we not see clearly in him, earnest strivings after that which is good? The Lord would not reject him—and you, Franciska, wish to do it?"

"Ah, no, no, Björn! But Serena. . . ."

"Think of Bruno's warm heart, of his great talents, yes, of his mind, and then—of his great fortune! Why should Serena not be happy with him?"

"Ah, Björn! That which makes a wife happy, that which gives lustre to a family is not the husband's talents, his property, not even the ardour of his soul—these can also set the peace of home on fire—no, the happiness of the wife consists in the husband being upright, kind, intelligent, reasonable and good—in short, in being like you, Björn!"

We quarrelled no longer.—

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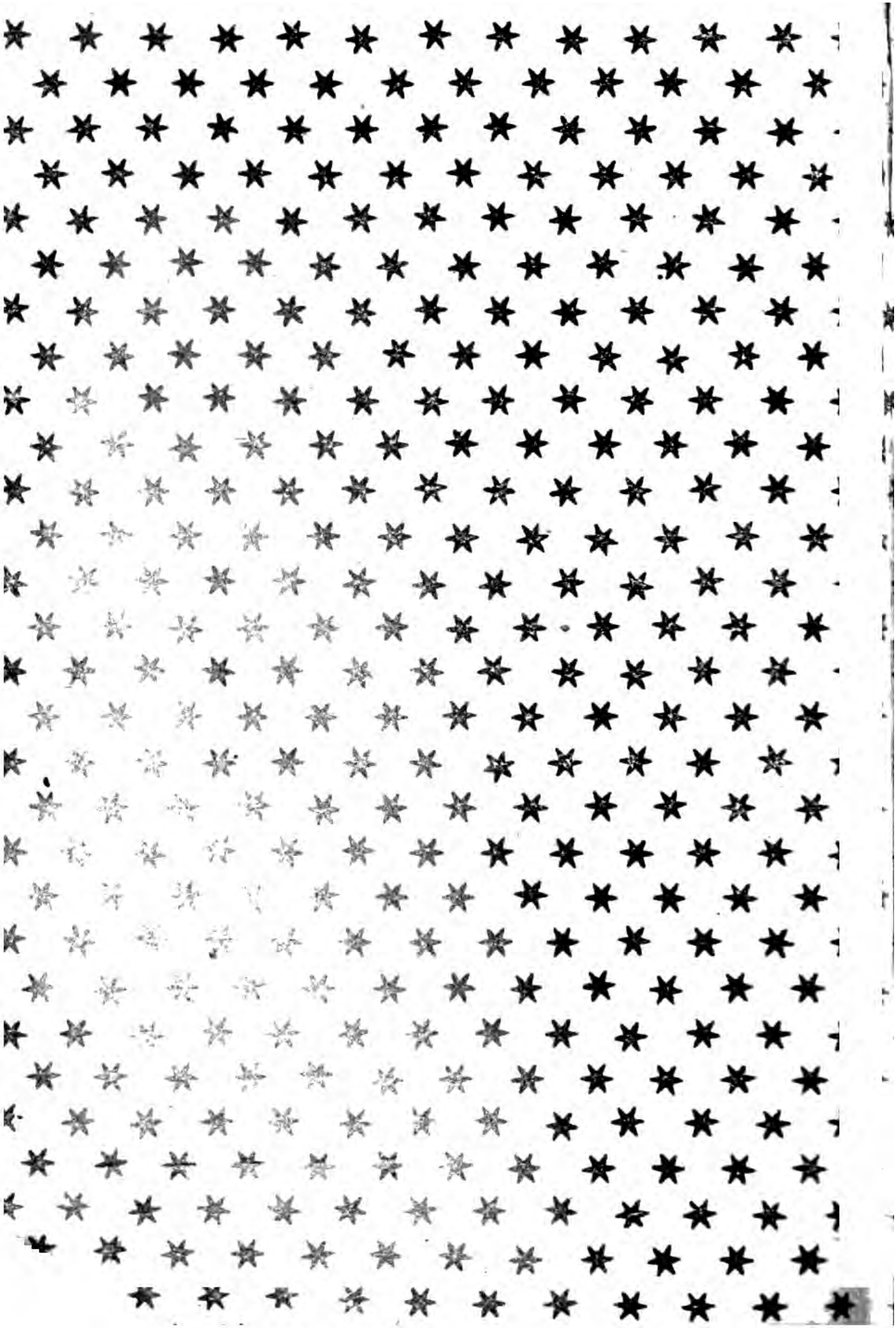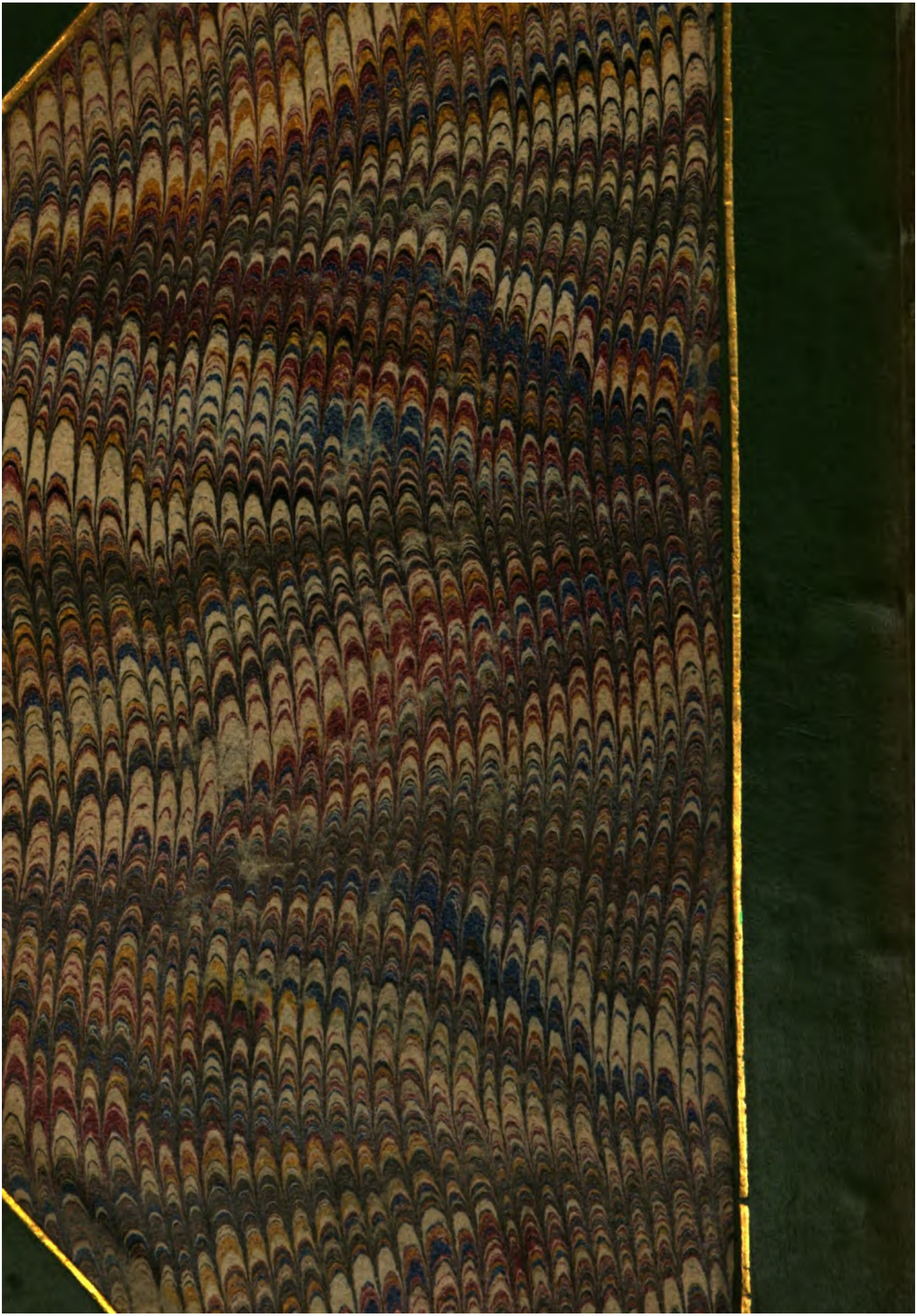
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