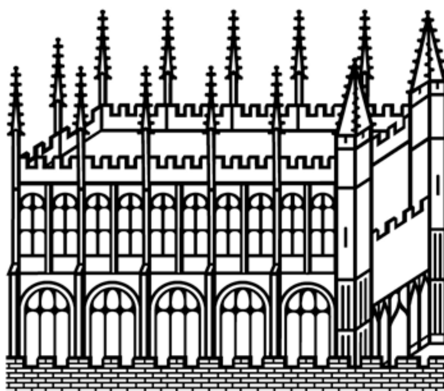

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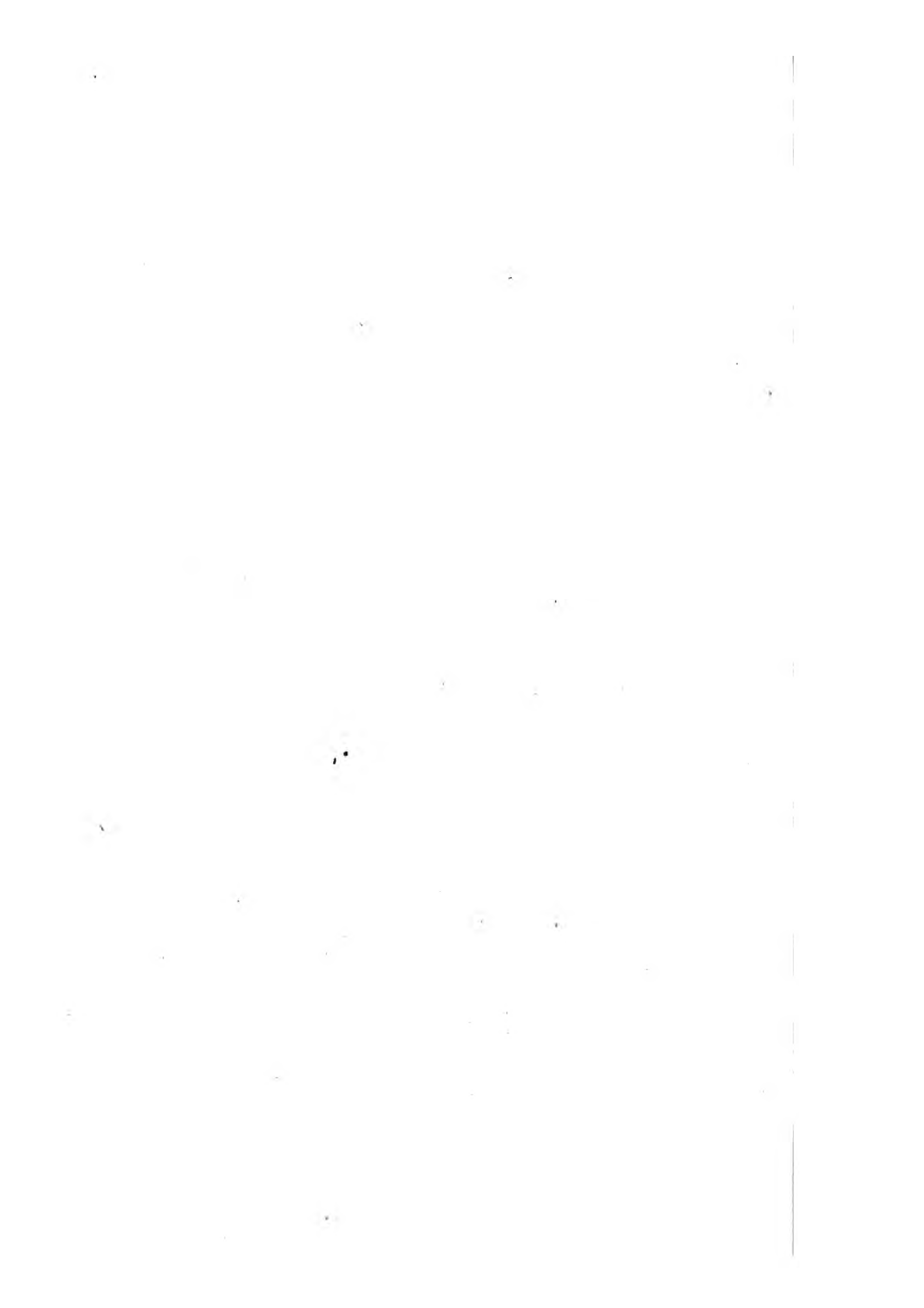

THE

OLD MONASTERY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CLARA."

FROM THE ORIGINAL,

BY LADY WALLACE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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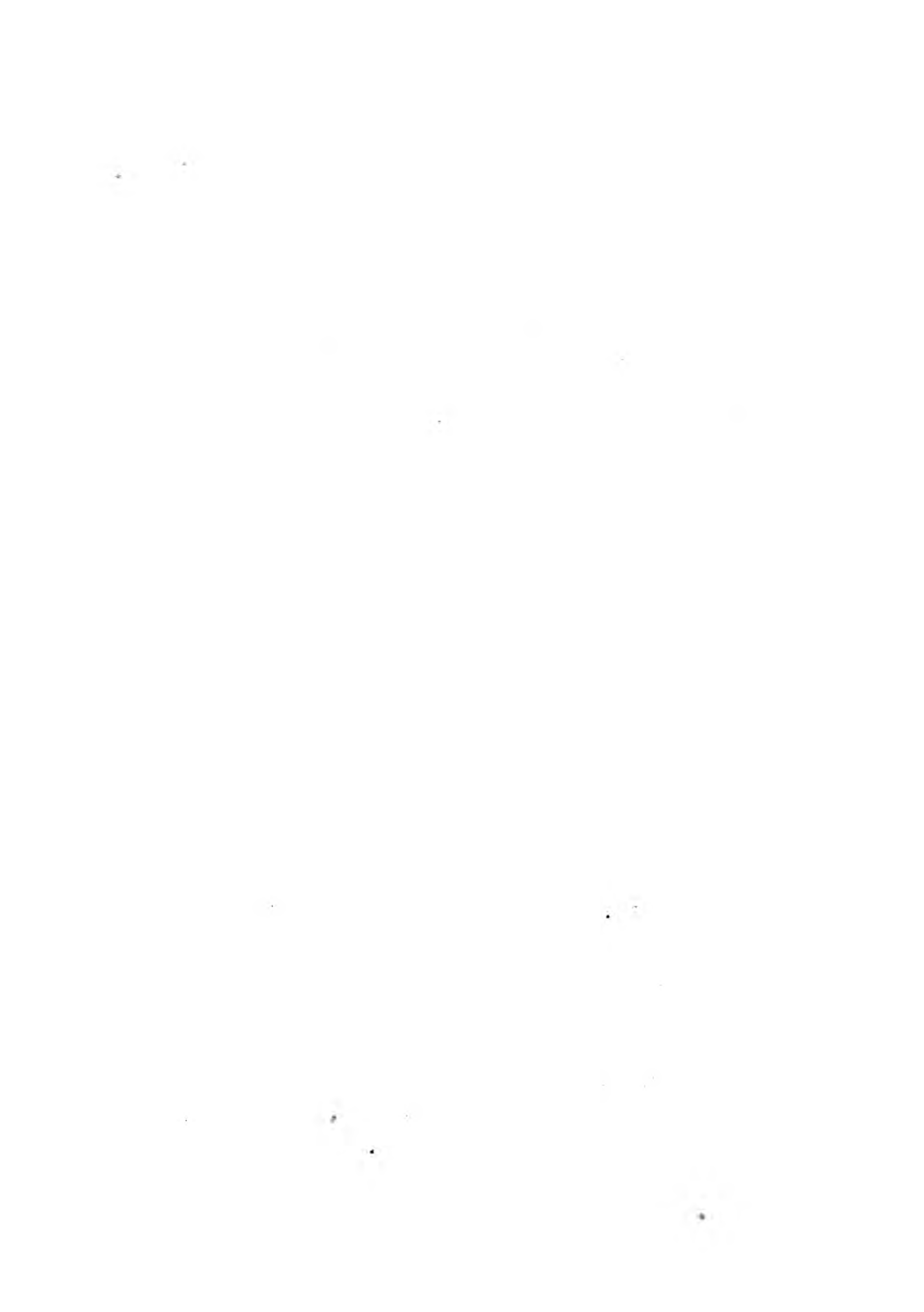

THE OLD MONASTERY.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD MONASTERY.

How often does the sight of grass-grown walks and ruined buildings, once gay and splendid, now deserted and crumbling to decay, recal those who in former days wandered through them in all the pomp of dress and pride of life. On every side, even in the smallest city, there is much that contrasts with modern days. In the spot we are about to describe, there is no ancient castle artistically adorned by our forefathers with gigantic ornamental gates and statues, and sculpture of every kind, we only see a solitary

fountain with jets, in the shape of fabulous monsters, pouring forth water, and surmounted by the form of an ancient knight, looking down with apparent contempt on the new generation, who in return, frequently look up at him with a sneer, as a strange piece of antiquity. The old houses round the fountain are unchanged, strange, grotesque monsters are clinging from their gables, who never could have existed in so hideous a shape as the sculptor has thought fit to invest them with. The church clock utters the same tones as in ancient days, only grown somewhat hoarse from age. The doors open as formerly, and the inhabitants go out and in; but the old knight on the fountain sees with every century a change in the exterior of the inhabitants, and how vast has been that change since the days when he might have descended from his pedestal, and mingled with the crowd below without exciting any surprise from his garb.

No time is more calculated to rouse such memories than the silent hour of midnight,

when the streets are deserted and the houses closed. No sound is then heard save the trickling of the waters from the fountain, which flowed in the same form, and gave forth the same tones in ancient days as they do now.

If you lean against the portals of one of these antique stately mansions, and place your ear against the huge doors, heavily studded with iron, it almost seems, if you listen attentively, that within its halls, former joyous days are renewed, chasing away the cold and sombre realities of our unpoetical times.

Once more horns gaily sound, the music of the dance, and the noise of the revel are heard, the gateway is filled with servants and retainers bearing torches to light their masters homewards. The portals of the large gateway are thrown back noiselessly, and a gay train of guests glide down the massive staircase, leaving these hospitable halls. Flaming torches and wax-lights are reflected on glittering gold embroidery, on velvets and satins, and floating plumes.

The lord and lady of the mansion stand on the landing place, and waive their adieu to their departing guests. A page is beside them holding back a small Bologna spaniel, who is barking and struggling to escape from him. At last the halls are deserted, the figures of the stately aristocratic hosts become more dim and indistinct, and vanish at last in the faint reflection of the fading torches. The spectral company go forth into the darkness with silent steps, and though the knights seem to be eagerly conversing with their fair companions, no sound of voices or mirth is heard, they float along in vapour and mist, till they gradually melt away before the gazing eye which strives in vain to follow their course.

Every spot on earth, every house that we inhabit, has its peculiar history, or its manifold memories, sad or sunny, if we choose to investigate them. But there is one spot, in particular, to which we wish to call our reader's attention, as our simple story begins there. It can boast of no mighty deeds, no marvels have occurred there; on the contrary, the

changes it has undergone and its history have been the fate of many a similar spot; but this one, however, has never yet, we believe, been described.

Like all German towns in days of yore, the city we speak of had been guarded in the middle-ages by strong walls and ramparts, spacious moats and drawbridges. These powerful defences encircled the city like an iron girdle, and long prevented any traffic or intercourse beyond their narrow limits; but when the times became more peaceable and the city lost its importance as a fortified town, then stirring busy life gradually overflowed its boundaries. New houses were built outside the ramparts, which looked mockingly in over the ancient gates, gradually the walls began to crumble away, then even the fortified towers fell into decay, and whatever was spared by the ruthless attacks of infirmity and old age, was pulled down by the reckless hands of man. The moats were filled up with stones and rubbish, whence sprang weeds, and grass, and flowers; these decayed in their turn, and the

soil gave forth a fresh crop of vegetation; and so it went on during many long years till the deep moats were slowly filled up, and lofty trees grew in the rich soil, and pleasant walks were formed under the shade of their branches.

One only of these moats resisted every attempt to demolish it. Long after the others had all disappeared, and some of the gateways, covered with ivy, were alone spared merely as picturesque objects in the very centre of the modern city, the moat to which we allude had remained in all its original depth and breadth. This was not caused by the city taking another direction, for on the contrary, two new rows of houses now bordered the ancient fosse.

One reason for its unseemly existence was its being considered in some degree sacred by the people, for during the various sieges which the city had undergone, the assault and defence had been chiefly carried on at this spot, and many a burgher and his sons left stretched on the field of glory, slept here the sleep that knows no waking. It was probably

from a wish to honour and consecrate this locality that the inhabitants built a monastery from the stones of the ancient walls, and pious Capucin monks cultivated their garden and planted their cabbages in peace—and, when numbers of spears, swords, helmets, and cross-bows were discovered on digging up the soil, they erected a cross in the centre of their garden, by which they both honoured the dead, and protected themselves from the depredations of the living.

Thus, for many long years the cloister garden flourished in the very centre of the city, surrounded by high walls, which the monks raised to protect them from the curiosity of the public. They planted trees and flowers, and performed works of charity and piety, and lived there in peace and happiness; but as nothing lasts for ever in this world of change, so it happened that the day came, at length, when the cloister was no longer a cloister—the monks departed, and the little postern door which led to the moat was walled up.

After a time, the magistrates resolved to let the spacious monastery as lodgings for a number of poor families, and to clear and over-arch the moat, as a kind of viaduct to connect two new streets. This passage, though gloomy and dismal enough, was not without its benefit to the poorer classes who lived in the monastery and its vicinity.

Market women set up their stalls within its shelter, and other itinerant merchants, selling books and pictures and ballads, and in heavy snow or rain children pursued their merry games under the arch, delighting in the loud echoes of their joyous childish voices. The entrance to the monastery was at one side of this passage, through a small deserted looking court. The old walls of the cloister, blackened by age, rose high into the air, and modern square windows were contrasted with the ancient gothic ones still remaining. Long festoons of ivy were pendent from the roof, and though the court below did not enjoy much sunshine, at all events it was not deficient in moisture, for the strangely sculp-

tured spouts attached to the walls all terminated here, and on wet days torrents of water rushed from them.

Each separate window was differently decorated. From one fluttered clothes hung out to dry on thin ropes, on another were ledges with flower pots—geraniums, mignionette, and marigolds, struggling into a feeble existence. In the court below, stood a variety of tubs to catch the rain water.

These ancient buildings, and the covered passage, were called "the Old Moat."

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD MOAT.

If the vaulted passage of the moat was dreary even in sunshine and bright day-light, it was infinitely more wretched on such an evening as that on which our simple tale begins.

It was a cold gloomy afternoon in November, thick fogs had veiled the earth all day, struggling with the winter sun when he tried to peep forth, first slowly rising and enveloping the city in their damp vapours, and then sinking heavily down on the ground, rendering the atmosphere so dense, that three paces off, it was impossible to distinguish whether a man or a horse was approach-

ing; the air was cold and raw, and the pavement so wet and slippery, that it was difficult not to fall. Towards evening, the fog descended in the shape of heavy rain, which mingled with snow was wildly driven by the wind into the face of the passengers.

There was considerable excitement in the streets, for the old fashioned lamps were about to be abolished, and the city, in future, to be lighted with gas. The pavement was lifted on all sides to receive the pipes, and dim flickering lanterns were placed at the edge of these gaps, to warn the unwary passenger of the yawning chasms at his feet. The entrance to the vaulted moat was obstructed by one of these, and the wind blew about the solitary lantern hanging from the centre of the passage, which creaked as it swung—no creature was to be seen but an occasional stray cat rushing home, springing wildly along scared by the blast, and anxious to reach its comfortable corner beside the stove.

Who could have thought that on such a night, in spite of the storm, a group of human

beings were patiently waiting, seated on the stone benches in the passage. They were six or eight women, of the lower orders, cowering close to each other in gloomy silence, only interrupted by an occasional heavy sigh or a remark that all the waters of heaven seemed resolved to deluge the earth this night. The women were poorly clad, their heads and arms covered by their shawls, and all shivering from cold and damp. One burning lantern was at their feet, lighting up their emaciated melancholy faces, and shewing also that each held in her hand a small lantern yet unlit, and had a tin can beside her.

These were the lamplighters of the city, whose duty it was to light the street lamps, and to supply them with oil. Every evening they assembled here, at twilight, to have their cans filled; and they usually passed their time in grumbling at their hard lot, declaring that to be a lamplighter, was almost to die of starvation; but they had lately changed their opinion, and the doleful sighs uttered this evening, were not in consequence of hard

work, but because the new gas-light would soon abolish their office altogether.

A fresh violent gust of wind, which entirely extinguished the hanging lantern in the passage, unloosed the tongues of these poor creatures.

" Do go, Winklere," said one, " and light the lantern again. It is pitch dark, and some one may tumble into the hole—not that I care! I should rather like to see these gas-light gentlemen obliged to pay heavy damages for some broken bones."

" I will light it again immediately," said Winklere, a little bent old woman, rising and coughing as she slowly moved along the passage.

" Mind what I tell you," said another voice, " Winklere knows well what she is about—she is sure to slip into some office with her civil ways, if only to sit as a weather-cock on a steeple."

" Say what you will," said old Winklere, quietly reseating herself, " but you know that I am as poor as any of you, though

my good son is a coachman in the royal stables."

"And I say," said the other crossly, "that you have helped to destroy our business. Did not you prevail on Constable Steinmann to let you take charge of the lighting of the district that good-for-nothing Marie had, and as you could manage both her business and your own, has he not ever since declared we were an idle lazy pack?"

"Yes! yes! he said so often enough:" called out another, "for the last six months Marie is confined to bed, as a punishment for her sins, and Steinmann says he will send one half of us adrift."

"Steinmann is a cruel hard-hearted fellow, and will one day receive his reward," said Winklere, as loudly as her gentle voice could be raised.

But as in the fable, speak of the wolf and he appears, so at this moment a tall figure was seen approaching, followed by a boy carrying a lantern behind him, and a large can of oil. The women became suddenly

silent, and agreed not to speak a word to their enemy Steinmann—for he it was. The features of the man were, indeed, ugly enough to startle any one. He had only one eye which glared with malice, and his face was scarred with small-pox.

He quickly perceived that the old lamplighters had determined not to speak to him; and it therefore caused him peculiar pleasure to be able, by one sentence, to set all their tongues in motion.

While they were pouring the oil into their little cans, and lighting their lanterns, the constable drew forth his snuff-box, and coolly taking a pinch, he said how deeply he regretted that the new arrangements to light the city with gas, would, in future, deprive him of such agreeable interviews as the present.

"From to-morrow," said he, "one half only of your number need come here; those, therefore, in the third, sixth, and eighth districts, are to consider themselves finally dismissed."

As Steinmann had foreseen, this announcement caused a perfect torrent of reproaches and complaints to burst forth. Their weeping and lamentations might have moved a heart of stone, but the more bitterly they sobbed and deplored their hard fate, the more Steinmann was delighted.

" You ought rather to be thankful," said he, in a provoking tone, " that your wretched work is at an end. I have heard you say a hundred times over, that it was only fit for a dog. Come, no more bother—be off with you every one, or—"

The one eye of the constable began to sparkle with rage, but the poor women, wet through and shivering, and losing their only hope of a livelihood just as winter was setting in, were too desperate to pay any attention to his commands, and they began to weep afresh, their cries and sobs almost overpowering the howling of the wind. Those who were passing along, stood still at first, astonished by the uproar, but on seeing Steinmann they quickly went on.

At this moment, a tall stout woman, followed by two servants carrying baskets of linen on their heads, appeared in the passage, and looked in surprise at the weeping women.

In the next chapter the reader shall learn who this was.

CHAPTER III.

FRAU WELSCHER.

The woman who had checked her hasty steps, and now looked earnestly at the group of lamplighters, was the worthy widow of one of the king's coachmen, who had died early in life, leaving her with three young children. The wages of a coachman were not great, and being obliged to wait for hours at balls and concerts, on the box in the most bitter cold nights, a considerable part of Welscher's gains had been expended at taverns to keep out the cold, he said; and one night the poor man received so severe a chill, that he never rallied again, and in a few weeks was no more.

His widow carried on a very good business which she had inherited from her mother, that of laundress to many of the most distinguished families in the town.

Frau Welscher had acquired a certain degree of polish, superior to what people in her class of life usually possess, by being so frequently brought into association with her customers and their upper servants, and by her upright and respectable mode of life, she had obtained even more influence in the neighbourhood than the chief of the police himself. She resided in the old monastery, and in the many disputes constantly occurring among her neighbours, her decision was always considered final.

The esteem in which she was held, was proved by the effect her appearance now produced both on the women and on Steinmann. They ceased lamenting, and related to her in what an unfeeling manner the constable had announced their dismissal.

The laundress was obliged to exert all her authority to succeed in silencing the lamp-

lighters, who were all gabbling at once like a flock of geese; at last, they were silent, and raised their lanterns to see if they could draw any hope from Frau Welscher's expression of countenance; but she shook her head, and said:

"Nothing can be done; the magistrates engaged you to light the oil lamps, and as there are no longer any to light, they have a perfect right to dismiss you."

Deep sighs followed this decision, and the poor creatures now felt as entirely hopeless, as if the first lawyer in the land had passed judgment on their case.

"All you can now do," continued Frau Welscher, "is to appeal to the kindness of the magistrates to give you some other employment; unfortunately you have little hope of being seconded in your request by your overseer here, but Providence is always kind, and if I can assist any of you by my advice, you all know where to find me; as for you," said she, turning to Steinmann, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself to make the dis-

missal of these poor women more bitter by your taunts and jeers, for many of them have no other means of subsistence, either for their children or themselves."

"Ashamed!" cried Steinmann in a rage. "A fine story truly—ashamed, indeed! Perhaps, because you say so?"

"Yes! and the whole town says the same," said Frau Welscher, while both her servants echoed her words, saying,

"Yes! yes! the whole town! you ugly, disagreeable fellow!"

Steinmann was furious, but he had the sense to remember that he was in a part of the town where he was already detested, and that one word from the laundress would bring a crowd of neighbours to her assistance, so he thought it best, with many muttered imprecations, to proceed home with his lantern.

The lamplighters also took leave of Frau Welscher, and went sorrowfully on their way. Their lanterns faintly glimmered as they went through the gloomy passage, their cans clat-

tered, and their iron-heeled shoes were heard grating on the pavement. Some of them were coughing violently, and on emerging into the open air, they were again soon thoroughly soaked by the pouring rain, and uttering a melancholy good night to each other, they separated in different directions.

Long after the little red sparks of light were dispersed through the streets, the ropes of the lamps rattled as they were let down, and many a pale anxious face was to be seen, endeavouring to light the damp wick in its glass cover. There were bright lights visible through the windows of the houses, and many merry little faces were pressed against the window-panes watching the old lamplighter, and wondering why she was so long lighting the lamp, and why she looked so sorrowful this evening, their father saying,

" Well it is lucky that this old fashion is nearly over, and we shall all rejoice at the new brilliant gas."

In the meantime, Frau Welscher proceeded to her house, conversing with old Winklere,

who limped along by her side, having a lamp to light at the monastery.

"How is your invalid?" said the laundress. "You can come to-morrow to get some good soup for her. How is poor Marie?"

"Alas!" said Winklere, bursting into tears, "may Heaven have mercy on her soul! The poor girl died this forenoon—from a broken heart, I believe; for though she was in a decline, she might have lasted a few months longer, if her mind had been at ease; but I dared not tell Steinmann of her death, or he would have taken away this last day's pay, as I did her duty."

"Poor creature!" said Frau Welscher feelingly. "And where is her child?"

"I was obliged to leave the little girl with her mother."

"Alone with the corpse?" asked the laundress, with horror.

"I was obliged to do so," said the old woman, "she clung to the bed, and nothing would induce her to leave her mother. If I had taken her away by force, her cries

would have alarmed the whole neighbourhood."

"But what do you intend to do with her to-night? Where is the child to remain?" asked Frau Welscher.

"I will take her home with me to my little garret, and see to-morrow if I can find some charitable souls to take pity on the poor little creature."

"You know nothing of the father, I conclude?" asked the other; "how could he first ruin, and then desert the poor girl so shamefully?"

"God help you!" said Winklere, "what do such fine gentlemen care about a poor girl's life or death? hear of him, indeed! No chance of that! he is gone away far enough, never to return."

"I always liked poor Marie," said Frau Welscher, sorrowfully; "she was a good creature, and a clever workwoman, and till this unhappy affair, she always bore the best of characters."

"She was, indeed, much to be pitied,"

said Winklere, while tears streamed over her furrowed face; "what care she took of her child; she always nursed her so tenderly, and dressed her so neatly. She toiled day and night for her child's sake, and when, at last, she was so ill that she could no longer go out, or even sit up, she used to work in bed; and when the doctor for the poor ordered her nourishing food and milk, though death was in her face, her whole anxiety was that her little girl should eat the food and drink the milk. Ah! Frau Welscher," continued old Winklere, drying her eyes, "there is a deal of misery in this world!"

The laundress, who had also tears in her eyes, appeared to reflect seriously. She told her two maids to go home, and to say that she would return in the course of half-an-hour; and after a moment's thought, she said to her companion: "Come along; let us go together to see the poor child. I will take her home with me to-night, and to-morrow we will see what can be done for her."

The lamplighter, who was highly delighted with this proposal, declared that the blessing of God would rest on so good a work; and then the two women proceeded along the moat to the end of another street, where they stopped before a poor looking house.

Winklere pointed to a window on the lowest story, which was so dark and so close to the ground, that it was evident the room to which it belonged, must be several feet under ground. The first story, like that of many old houses, projected over the lower one. There were several *étages*, and lights burning in all—even in the garret window, whence issued the sharp tones of a violin disturbing the silence — but below all was dark.

There was a lamp opposite the house, which Winklere let down and lighted, saying, "I was always so glad to light this lamp, for with all our economy, we never could afford a candle for the poor girl who lies within, and I knew what pleasure she felt in her little dark room, when she heard me

coming at last; and even if she had dropped asleep, the letting down of the rope would always waken her, and she used to declare that the rays of light quite warmed her room. They fell exactly on the bed, and if you like to look through the window, you will see the poor dead creature lying there. Ah! the child has heard me, and is making me a signal."

The laundress, who had a horror of looking through the window, heard three little taps given inside. Winklere dived quickly into her pocket, took out a key, and opened the door, which was close to that of the room. Formerly it had been a grocer's shop, but the damp had destroyed all the stores.

The women entered with beating hearts, and a little girl about five years old ran up to Winklere, and hiding her face in the folds of her gown, said sobbing: "Oh! don't leave me alone again, for my mother will neither smile nor speak; and I am sure I have not vexed her."

"Be quiet, my dear child," said Winklere, "I'll take care of you."

She then approached the bed of death in silence. The child crept close to her, and seizing her mother's cold hand, she placed it on her head, that she might stroke her long curls as she used to do.

The room was poor beyond all description, with only a few sticks of furniture, the child having always slept at its mother's feet. The face of the corpse was that of a girl of twenty, emaciated, and like wax; but death had not yet disturbed the features, where there still lingered traces of great beauty. The light of the lamp shone through the grated window, and when blown about by the wind, it cast its flickering rays on the face of the corpse, it caused the features to appear to move.

After both women had knelt down and prayed, with clasped hands, they rose, and Winklere drew the sheet over the face of the dead, she then took a gown from a chair where it was lying, and pinned it across the window. She said she shuddered at the idea of the light falling all night on the face of poor Marie, for

she could not help feeling as if it must wake her as it used to do, and that she would be terrified at being alone, adding, in a low voice, "besides, I live near this, and when I pass by to-night I could not help looking in myself."

They wrapped up the child as well as they could, and all three left the room, Frau Welscher holding the little girl's hand.

"Come early to-morrow to see the child, Winklere;" said the laundress, who then proceeded home with her little charge. The lamplighter took up her lantern, and after ascertaining that the old gown effectually excluded all light from the window, she left the house and hurried to light the other lamps. She had lost a good deal of time, and was very much alarmed lest she should meet Steinmann; but this evil spirit had long since gone home, and no one seemed to remark that the lamps were so late in being lighted. The snow and rain continued; no creature was to be seen in the streets, and no sound was heard but the occasional rattling of carriage wheels.

CHAPTER IV.

A BUSY HOUSEHOLD.

THE old monastery in which Frau Welscher lived, looked gloomy enough as she and the child ascended the broad staircase which was of stone, and the most solid part of the whole house, it was so strong and substantial that the most heavy substances could be transported without any injury to the massive steps. There was an impression that the old cloister was not very safe at night, and that the deceased monks pursued their spectral wanderings along the stairs and passages. The porter, a monk also, tradition said had been a repulsive fellow, and appeared every

night on earth as a punishment to see that the door which he had always kept so churlishly closed, was now invariably left wide open. The brother porter, whose figure chiselled out of wood, stood at the foot of the stairs with a heavy bunch of keys, was a very harmless spectre, and had never been known to injure any one. Many inmates of the house declared that a cousin, an uncle or an aunt, had seen the Capuchin in his nightly wanderings through the house; one even maintained that he had heard him cough; and a shoemaker on the third story, who had returned from a jovial evening in a tavern late at night, said—he had not exactly seen the Capuchin monk, but he was prepared to take his oath that on that night the statue no longer stood in his usual place, he had groped with his hands in every direction in search of him, but in vain, and yet next morning there he was as usual.

Frau Welscher lived on the third story, and she did so not from poverty, but on account of the spacious rooms which the nature of her business rendered indispensable, and the

advantage of a vaulted fire-proof kitchen, which was most convenient for her large washings. As often as the door of this kitchen was opened by the maids going in and out, the strong reflection of the bright fires in the stoves lighted up the stairs and the gloomy walls.

The washing of Frau Welscher had, this day, reached that state when it required the skilful hand of the ironer. This branch of the business was carried on in a spacious room to the right, and every moment its door opened to admit the maids bringing hot smoothing irons from the kitchen. The fires were stirred by a huge poker; occasionally one of the irons fell on the floor, making an immense clatter, and then the girls rushed with red laughing faces to pick it up.

Nothing could look more comfortable than the ironing-room, which was also Frau Welscher's bed-room; her large old-fashioned bed being placed near the stove. Two wide Gothic windows commanded a view of many of the roofs and chimneys in the

new part of the town. The room was neat and comfortably furnished, but all was of the last century, and in the dark hue of the old oak chairs and tables there was a degree of harmony which testified how long they had dwelt together, and that they had grown old in each other's company, and so it was in truth. Frau Welscher's mother had inhabited this very room, and for many years before her death, carried on the same business by which her daughter now made so good a livelihood. In the corner was a sofa, its well stuffed arms hospitably extended, and from its size capable of containing a whole family. On it were seated the youthful Welscher family, consisting of two girls and a boy; the former seven and eight years old, the male sprout about six, and all three, fine healthy children.

The girls were looking at a book of pictures, and reading in that monotonous buzzing voice peculiar to children, which at a little distance sounds like the dim tones of a melancholy street organ. The boy stood behind his sisters, both his feet pushing them by turns, holding

in one hand a roasted apple, and in the other a thick slice of bread and butter, between which articles of luxury he seemed to divide his attention most impartially.

The picture book of the little girls described the natural history of domestic animals, and as often as the sisters succeeded in spelling out the names of this useful tribe, the young gentleman tried with full cheeks and a nasal tone, to imitate the voice and the peculiar movements of the animal in question. First he crowed like a cock and clapped his hands, while the crumbs of bread and bits of apple flew right and left, then he bleated like a lamb, then barked like a dog and snapped at his sisters, who took no notice of him beyond throwing him down from the sofa, on which he quickly climbed up again, howling.

In the middle of the room was a long table, at which three women were busy ironing; they had a perfect mountain of linen heaped up before them, and when they were stooping busily over their work, you could see nothing

but the incessant motion of their hands. Two girls brought in the hot irons and carried away the cold ones—then there was a moment's rest, when the women brought the irons close to their cheeks to feel if they were a proper heat, and again set to work—at such moments that damp atmosphere, peculiar to wet linen, pervaded the room; the irons clattered, clouds of steam arose from the wet clothes, the sisters read on, the brother romped and stamped, and some apples roasting on the stove hissed, and gave forth their pungent fragrance; but when the little boy made too great an uproar, and when the wet linen smoked too much, the trembling voice of an old woman was heard from a corner enjoining silence and carefulness.

This person seemed, in the absence of Frau Welscher, to superintend the household. She was seated at a small table near the window, and her snow-white hair which she wore turned back under an old fashioned starched muslin cap, denoted her great age. Old Kiliane was eighty-four years of age, and the

first ironer and clear starcher in the whole town, and as such she was universally esteemed. Her dress consisted of a striped cotton gown, very short in the waist, a plaited and starched white net handkerchief over her shoulders, and a muslin apron frilled all round; before her lay a heap of fine cambric collars, and laces, and embroidered handkerchiefs to which she was about to give the finishing touches with an Italian iron. To her left was seated a sempstress, ready to repair skilfully any rents or deficiencies. Kiliane wore a pair of spectacles, and in spite of the heat of the room, she had placed her feet on a *chaufferette*.

Beside her, at a large table, was seated a person whom we wish more particularly to describe. We need only look at the needle which this young man of two-and-twenty holds in his hand, and the way in which he is seated cross-legged, to see that he is a tailor, and, alas! we must add, only a patching and darning tailor; indeed, we could not conceal this fact if we would, for he is at this very moment

engaged in repairing a most indispensable part of young Master Welscher's garments.

There is nothing remarkable in the appearance of this youth; he has an expressive face, very white hands, and thick curly hair which he evidently arranges with considerable care.

For a time all continued busy with their work, and no one spoke. At last, the Black Forest clock near the stove struck seven distinctly in its clear tones, which seemed to cause considerable excitement in Master Welscher, for he declared, still chewing as hard as he could, that it had struck seven, and that he had a right to his supper. Kiliane who no longer trusted to her hearing, looked at the clock through her spectacles, and said,

"Indeed it is seven o'clock. Where can Frau Welscher be?"

"She so seldom stays out beyond that hour," said the tailor, "that there must be some particular reason for it."

"She has probably been detained at the

great hotel, an English family have arrived there with three grown up daughters, and there is no end to the quantity of linen they give out to be washed."

"Strange people, these English," said the tailor, "never satisfied, always grumbling, yet they have lots of money. I have often thought if I had money, what kind of life I would lead; but there is no chance of my ever inheriting anything, if the whole world were to die; so my only hope and comfort is the lottery."

"I hope you don't gamble in the lottery," said Kiliane, reproachfully.

"Indeed, I do not, for I have no money; but I have always an idea that some one will make me a present of a lottery ticket, and that my number will win the great prize."

The old woman shrugged her shoulders, and hinted that he might wait some time before that came to pass.

"I think so too," said the poor tailor, "and yet this fancy is among my happiest dreams. I imagine the collector coming into the room,

and saying, 'My excellent young friend, Herr Dubel, I have the pleasure to tell you that you have won the chief prize in the lottery.' Ah! what a blessed moment that would be!"

Kiliane smiled and said, "I should like to know, supposing the man did really bring a bag of double Louis-d'or with him that day, what would you do with the money? Buy a fine house, and new clothes, I suppose?"

He shook his head.

"No! then you would hire a beautiful apartment, engage a first rate cook, and purchase a smart carriage."

Herr Dubel again shook his head.

"No, again?" said Kiliane, amazed, "why surely you would not continue to be a tailor?"

Dubel stuck his needle on his knee, run his fingers through his thick curls, and gazed up at the ceiling, as if lost in a delightful reverie; after a few minutes, during which old Kiliane let her iron rest also, watching Dubel's face, he said,

"Ah! Kiliane, in that case I would fulfil what has been the desire of my heart ever since I was a child. My favourite idea which is never out of my thoughts; but I know you will laugh at me. I would become the manager of a fine theatre."

"The manager of a theatre!" echoed Kiliane, letting her hands fall into her lap.

"Yes," continued Dubel eagerly. "The manager of a theatre, one of the directors and supporters of that noble art; and I would not exchange the manager's staff for the sceptre of an emperor. Should I not then, indeed, be more rich and powerful than any crowned head? would not every quarter of the globe, and every situation of life be at my command? I wish to go to Asia; one sound of the bell, and the palm forests, and bamboo huts of Asia stand before me; out of every thicket swarm forth lovely Bayadères, and sing my praises, their lord and sovereign. The air is too burning, too oppressive—I wish to cool my fevered breast at the ice of the North Pole, to inhale the breezes from frozen snow,

some hundreds of miles beyond where even Franklin or Ross have penetrated. The scene changes, and huge masses of ice rise before me, an ever-frozen sea spreads its glassy expanse all round, the mighty icebergs crash, the sea-birds scream, the utter solitude soothes the heart; but when weary, at length of the monotony of this scene, back to the south! Italian skies, Italian zephyrs, an inn at Terracina, the fair Zerlina at the lattice!"

Kiliane shook her head at this strange harangue, and said,

"Pray excuse me, Herr Dubel, but these strange notions all come from the quantity of foolish romances you are so fond of reading."

The tailor had leant his large shears against his side, somewhat in the same fashion in which field-marshals in portraits support their truncheons, and utterly disregarding Kiliane's speech, he went on with a triumphant air, saying,

"All these joys would be mine, my subjects would eagerly watch a word from my lips, or a glance from my eye. Ah! how

truly happy should I be: I could go behind the scenes, and converse familiarly with all the haughty actresses, I might reprove the saucy singers, and laugh and jest with the pretty little dancers, and not only should I be tolerated by them, but I would be the centre of every thing; all the servants of the theatre would make me low bows, and the first tragedian would treat me with respect. But alas! alas! that will never be, and all my life long I shall remain a poor, miserable tailor!"

He jumped up suddenly, and begun vehemently cutting out a piece of cloth, his face more melancholy than ever. Kiliane pursued her ironing, apparently intent on an obstinate fold in a chemisette which refused to be smoothed, but, after a considerable battle, she conquered it at last. The irons clattered, the linen hissed, the clock ticked; there were the same sounds of whispering and talking as before, with this difference, that Master Welscher had fallen sound asleep, a fact proved by his loud and regular snoring.

Kiliane renewed the conversation by saying to Dubel:

"If you take such an interest in the theatre, why do you not become one of the tailors of that establishment?"

"I once thought of it," said he, "and I even made some efforts to obtain such a situation, but I gave it up, because I saw that it was a very poor unpoetical business. What is a theatre tailor? He sits doubled up, sewing the whole day, making all the fine costumes which are to look so bright and grand at night on the stage, out of common coarse materials; for the fine embroidery is after all only trumpery spangles which he sews on; the velvet is cotton, the Roman togas are white glazed calico, and the monarch's diamond stars are paste. At last the hour arrives when the actor enters his dressing-room; the poor tailor is then at the mercy of the gentleman's humour, which often corresponds with the character he is to act. If the tragedian is to represent a despotic monarch, then the tailor is his slave, and the tyrant is on very

little ceremony in assuring him, if he has made a waist too short, or forgotten any of his majesty's equipments, that he has a great mind to send him to the gallies for life, or to order him to be beheaded. If he has to prepare the costume of the villain of the play, the artful, unmitigated criminal, he is then obliged, for the smallest fault, to submit to the most insulting speeches, and to be told that he ought to be made to swallow poison on the spot. No sooner has he got rid of the monarch and the villain, than the worthy chaplain seizes on him; at first, he addresses him with a dignity and a benevolence suitable to his character; but if he discovers any slight deficiency in his cassock, his wrathful indignation bursts forth as violently as in the closing murder scene in the piece. No sooner is he gone, than a sentinel comes to be dressed, so that when the signal is given for the piece to commence, the poor tailor sinks exhausted into a chair, no one caring about him or remembering that perhaps he, too, might like to see the play. The lover must have his

cloak brought to him during the first act, and the tailor is stationed with it in the back scene behind a rock, to listen for the cue. The hero now exclaims: 'To arms! to arms! brave comrades; down with the tyrant!' and rushing out knocks over the tailor, saying grimly, as he snatches his cloak, 'What an awkward fellow you are!' then he rushes back to the stage crying, 'Off, off, to the desert!'"

"I declare he relates it all as if he had seen it!" said old Kiliane.

"And so I have!" said Dubel, "one of my friends is employed in the wardrobe of the theatre, and he has often taken me behind the scenes."

"Don't be angry with me," said old Kiliane, kindly, "but you have many queer whims in your head; get rid of them all I advise you, and work steadily at your business. You might enter the house of the first tailor in the city, for you are both clever and industrious."

Herr Dubel replied:

"I like my liberty too well, and then I have such a dislike to all that is unrefined. I have the tastes of a rich man, without, alas! having his money; and as to eating out of the same dish with six apprentices, and sleeping in the same wretched garret—I really could not."

At this moment the door opened, and Frau Welscher entered with the little girl, who looked round timidly, and the inmates of the room were not a little surprised at sight of the child. The work was at an end, and the silence in the room was only broken by the ticking of the clock, and the continued snoring of Master Welscher; but the latter soon ceased, for the shrill cry of the little girl, "Mamma! mamma!" awoke the young gentleman, and uttering a loud howl, he rushed to his sisters, who were staring at the little stranger.

Frau Welscher placed the child near the stove, and crossed the room to Kiliane, casting, as she passed, a searching glance at the finished piles of linen on the table. She

nodded with a pleased look, and then asked Kiliane to go with her into the next room, on which the old woman rose, took off her spectacles, and followed her with a puzzled face.

"Listen," said the laundress, "poor Marie is dead; she lies in the little room near Winklere's, and has left nothing on this earth, but the child I brought home with me just now. What shall I do with the little creature? Keep her for this night only, and to-morrow send her to the poor-house?"

Kiliane leant her head on her hand, her usual attitude when reflecting, and said impatiently:

"Welscher, I really can give you no advice on such a point. You have three children of your own, and though you earn a good deal, you must not lightly take charge of other people's children, especially such people's children."

"Marie was formerly such a good industrious girl."

"Yes! until she was misled, and this poor

child born," said Kiliane; " but tell me what your intentions are, and then I will give you my opinion, but don't be too much influenced by your kind heart. You can't help every one in this world. You do very well, if you provide for your own children creditably."

The laundress walked hastily up and down, Kiliane watching her with a smile. The good old clear-starcher had the best heart in the world, and we do not at all doubt that if Frau Welscher had decided to part with the child, Kiliane herself would have taken charge of her.

Frau Welscher stopped short, and said,

" Well, Kiliane! I feel I must keep the child, even if in opposition to your advice. Where there is enough for three, there is enough for four."

Kiliane clasped her hands, and answered with tears in her eyes:

" God knows you are right, and more than right; but it was a case to be decided by yourself alone."

In the meantime, the child whose fate was

being decided, was an object of curiosity to every one in the room. The maids, who were still ironing, looked more at the little girl than at their work; and Herr Dubel, on pretence of examining the clock, had risen from his chair and approached her. But the children were the most excited, and stood staring, half angrily, at the little creature, as dogs do at a stranger of their own species.

The child stood on the very same spot where the laundress had placed her, and looked in surprise at the busy scene. She was about five years old, tall and slender, with large dark eyes and pretty features; but pale and delicate looking, and her long black curls now hung in disorder about her sad little face.

Kiliane returned to her work. Frau Welscher spoke kindly to her children, and to those who were ironing; but at this moment the clock struck eight. The maids cleared away the large table, on which they spread a clean coarse table cloth, and brought tin plates, and knives and forks. A tureen of

smoking soup, a dish of potatoes in their skins, a suet dumpling, and their supper was ready.

They all sat down to table; the little stranger beside Frau Welscher, whose youngest girl refused to eat any supper from spite, because she had lost her place of honour next her mother; indeed, it was only Frau Welscher's stern looks that prevented her laying violent hands on the intruder. None of the other children seemed very kindly disposed towards their mamma's protegée, and Master Welscher who, to the great amusement of the maids, was making all sorts of wry faces at the child, suddenly threw a heap of potato skins, which he had been for some time clutching in his hand, at her, for which exploit he was rewarded by a sound box on the ear, administered by the hard and bony hand of Kiliane.

The soup and potatoes were finished, and Master Welscher was scraping up the last remains of the suet dumpling. The table was cleared, and Kiliane and her assistants prepared to go home. The former tying on a

black hood and a cloth cloak, after lighting her lantern. The latter collected all the linen on a side table, put the irons in a heap together, and threw a sheet over the linen already finished.

Herr Dubel put on his coat, took up his hat, and settled his accounts with Frau Welscher; a mere form, as the tailor repaired the clothes of the family once a week, and, in return, his clothes were washed free of all charge, and though not many in number, they were always in good order, and Kiliane would sooner have overlooked any carelessness in getting up the linen of a noble family, than allow a badly ironed waistcoat, or unstarched collars to be sent to Herr Dubel; for the young man was most attentive to her, reading the newspapers to her in the twilight, accompanying her home at night, and as considerate towards her, as if she had been his grandmother whom he expected would leave him all her property. All wished each other a kindly good night, and no doubt the whole family slept as soundly as possible.

CHAPTER V.

A CITIZEN'S BALL.

THE affair of lighting the city with gas had caused no small discussion among the community; nay, the very question of what was to be done with the old lamps had been a fruitful source of strife. To cast aside entirely so many lamps which had cost so much money, was easily said by the younger members of the council; but the older ones repeatedly brought forward, in opposition to the gas, the fate of the old lamps. A question, which like many other momentous ones in this world, has never yet been solved.

Be that as it may, the pipes were laid, the

gas lamps erected, and one fine night the inhabitants of one part of the town were in a state of intense excitement. The gas was to be lighted for the first time. A crowd of boys ran after the man who was to light it, wondering at the small spark which he carried at the end of a long pole, and breaking out into shouts of delight as they saw the brilliant white flame burst forth; but this delight did not last long, for as the apparatus was not yet perfect, the light soon abated, burned red, then shot up into the air again, behaving in the strangest manner, to the infinite amusement of the boys. The long, wide street, at first so brilliantly illuminated, looked now as if interspersed with will-o'-the-wisp lights, burning now large, and now small, sometimes blue, sometimes red.

At a little distance among the circle of spectators, the ugly face of Steinmann was to be seen. He was especially rejoiced at this new arrangement from seeing old Winklere's sad face, who, with some of her colleagues were standing in the crowd, their arms wrap-

ped in their aprons, and gazing sorrowfully at the new lights. Sometimes, when the flame seemed to sink, and to be half inclined to go out altogether, a dubious ray of hope would appear on the old women's haggard faces. At such moments, Steinmann looked savage, and drove away the little boys with his cane.

At length, the crowd dispersed, and at the end of the street, Steinmann ascended the steps of a handsome house, and asked if Stadt Rath Schwämmle was at home.

"He is at home," said the pretty servant maid, "and is at this moment shaving before dressing for a ball."

"Ask him to be so good as to see me," said Steinmann, and in a minute the civic dignity himself appeared in the passage, a napkin tied under his chin, and a razor in his hand. "Well, Steinmann, what news?" said the Stadt Rath.

"Capital!" answered he, respectfully pulling off his cap; "the gas lamps are all lighted, and burning so brightly, that it does one's heart good to see them."

"Famous, indeed!" said the Stadt Rath. "Thank you for coming to tell me; but I have not even a moment to spare, good evening;" and he hastily returned to complete his toilet. He was a little, thin, restless, irritable man, quick both in speech and movement. He was a patriot, and carried through the measure of lighting with gas, in spite of an opposition party, whose favourite scheme was to build a new slaughter-house; but he had never rested in his canvassing, first talking over all his neighbours, then applying to the magistracy, and finally sending a petition to the king himself.

The Stadt Räthin was of a rich, respectable family, and one of those fat, good-looking, comfortable dames who pass quietly through life. She had no children, was tolerably fond of her husband, whom, however, she dearly liked to teaze and contradict, and she had no love for anything else but a good dinner, and strong coffee, accompanied by a gossip with her female friends. Quiet and indolent in her ways, a strong contrast to her little excitable

husband. The pair now sat in full dress, prepared for the ball, awaiting the arrival of the carriage. The lady was unusually smart, and was squeezed into a black satin gown, of which the hooks behind were so tight, that it seemed as if any unwary movement of the stout lady must inevitably rend asunder the whole fabric—a formidable catastrophe! She had a pretty cap with pink roses, and her handsome face had expanded into a very dignified expression on this solemn occasion.

The Stadt Rath was dressed in black, and had a ponderous starched neckcloth, and a white bow of ribbons on his shoulder, the badge of his office as steward of the ball; the carriage arrived, and the worthy couple were conveyed to the festive scene.

On their arrival, they were received with cheers by the crowd outside, and when they entered the ball-room, the music executed a grand flourish in honour of the Stadt Rath. The splendid candelabras, and the bright gas-burners looked like fairy land to the delighted guests, and every one crowded round the

Stadt Rath, complimenting him—he was at the pinnacle of his glory. At length, the orchestra commencing a gay polka, a perfect whirlwind of dancers rushed along, compelling the older members of the society quickly to disperse, and giving the worthy Stadt Rath an opportunity to retire from the overpowering congratulations of his friends, into the comparative tranquillity of an adjoining tea room, his wife leaning on his arm.

They walked past the tables already filled with guests, receiving the most friendly greetings from all sides. They were now in the room, where according to her rank, the Stadt Räthin usually took her place; but on this occasion, she was promoted to the unexpected honour of being offered a place at a table, to which only the very highest class of burghers were admitted. Some of these dignified ladies did, indeed, look down on their plates in considerable confusion at seeing the daughter of a butcher placed beside them, but Stadt Rath Schwämmle being the hero of the day, some unusual mark of distinction was

allowable, more especially as Captain Müller, the president of this select circle, drew in a chair for the Stadt Rath, and assured him that the gas was truly delightful.

"Beautiful! brilliant! lovely!" echoed the ladies in concert; and a tall, thin, severe looking lady who was seated opposite the tea urn, dressed in stern brown satin, said to the Stadt's Räthin, while offering her some tea, "indeed, this bright light sets off to advantage a pretty toilet."

"A wonderful invention," said the captain. "How people, twenty years ago, would have laughed at the idea of lighting a ball-room with air; for, ladies, gas is only burning air, forced through tubes by the gasometer."

"I believe it does not answer very well for dancing," said an elderly spinster in starched white muslin; "it is so dreadfully heating, beware of its effects at a ball." She wished to give the impression that it was from no lack of partners that she was not dancing, but from dread of the heat.

Near the angular dignified lady making

tea, was seated a young man about twenty, her son; a fact which a strong family likeness rendered very evident. He appeared unusually shy, and had drawn back his chair so far that he was scarcely visible between his mamma's starched sleeves, and a very fat old lady next to her. When any one asked him to take a cup of tea, he stretched out his hand nervously, the cup and spoon clattering as he took it, while he cast a frightened look all round, to see if any one in this select society observed how awkward he was. This was the first time he had ever been at a ball, and he had not now selected this place of recreation from his own free will. His mamma, who had fixed on his twentieth birthday as the proper period for his entrance into society, was not to be dissuaded from her resolution, and assured her son that it was the only means of overcoming his nervous dread of the female sex.

This youth had received every advantage of education and dress, and yet, there he sat thoroughly miserable in his black coat and white gloves, shrinking every time he heard

the rustling of a dress behind him ; for he had as yet, very indistinct ideas of the customs of a ball-room ; he had floating visions of being carried off to dance by any lady who wanted a partner, and who would not, in that case, hesitate to pounce upon him as her victim. He had positively refused to dance the first polka, and listened with a beating heart to the music in the ball-room, wishing the dance could last for ever, for his inexorable mamma had commanded him to dance the next waltz, and thus to commence practical life in earnest.

We must admit that Edward was by no means so shy among his own companions, or at bachelor parties ; there he was, indeed, quite at home ; nor was he at all alarmed at females of a less distinguished position. What he dreaded was polite and refined conversation, and he much preferred the company of ladies in cotton and merino to those in silk and crape.

At last the polka came to an end, and crowds of dancers poured into the tea rooms. The young ladies sheltering themselves under the wings of their chaperones, there to wait till the reommencement of the music should

induce some adventurous cavaliers again to abstract them from their careful mothers. Some young girls had approached the table where Edward was seated, and one in particular, a merry black-eyed little thing, sat down near him to his horror, especially as his mamma made him signs to ask her to dance, so in desperation he started up and asked the Captain to take a turn with him in the ball-room. His mother graciously allowed him to go, reminding him on no account, whatever, to forget his faithful promise to dance the next waltz, and Edward, though with a beating heart, assured her he certainly would fulfil his engagement.

Numerous groups of young people were walking about the ball-room, flirting and fanning themselves, and many of the elderly gentlemen were criticizing the young beauties and admiring the gas. The Captain and Edward were also examining the groups of belles; but as soon as the former approached one for the purpose of presenting Edward, and securing a partner for him, the latter dragged

him back, and made all sorts of excuses; at length, however, the chief of the orchestra gave the signal, the young ladies became excited, the gentlemen made a fell swoop, like birds of prey on various groups. There was a ringing in Edward's ears, and a feeling of desperation in his heart. His mother's command, the music which had begun, the injunctions of the captain to get hold of some one without delay, all made him feel as if he were about to be launched on a sea of ice, where nothing conld save him from a desperate fall.

"Engage a partner," cried the Captain, "time is passing, the waltz has begun. See! there are three young ladies without partners. Plunge into the midst of them, and ask that pretty little fair girl to dance, and if she is engaged invite one of the others."

The worthy Captain could not have much experience of balls, for he seemed to have very little idea of the manner in which young ladies proceed, who, when a waltz begins, have as yet no partners. They look round shyly, but still as if wishing to dance, or they walk about

arm in arm smiling, as much as to say, "these gentlemen want partners, and have no idea that we are disengaged," or one of them stumbles against a young man, and when he apologizes, she says,

"You are mistaken, sir, I am not yet engaged."

The three young ladies whom Edward was now approaching, were, however, by no means of this class, and the one with fair curls, who, if the ball had lasted four and twenty hours, would always have had a partner, received Edward's stammering proposal to dance with infinite disdain, and making a slight courtesy, she says she regrets that she is engaged for the whole evening; the other two, on whom Edward's dismayed looks are anxiously turned, also make little saucy courtesies, and assure him that they regret they are also engaged for the whole evening; and the shy youth, in his confusion, thinks that he sees all the ladies in the ball-room courtesying to him, and regretting that they are engaged; the very tables and chairs,

and the gas lights seem to be courtesying; and Edward, distracted, finds his way back to his mother, he knows not how, and throws himself on a chair by her side breathless.

The eyes of the mamma sparkle with anger, in vain does the Captain relate Edward's defeat, in vain do her friends entreat her to spare the youth for this one dance; the indignant mother rises in all her stateliness, annihilating her son still further by her angry glances, and then changing her frowns into polite smiles, she requests the elderly young lady in starched muslin, to do her son the honour of dancing with him.

Edward, seized by the maternal arm, and vigorously pushed towards the young lady, stammers out something about too late, which she, however, chooses to interpret into an urgent wish to dance with her, so she rises quickly, seizes the young man's arm, and the Captain accompanies them to the ball-room.

Edward gasps for air, like a fish on dry ground, his knees tremble, and he squeezes the lady's hand tight, a pressure which she gently

returns. As they enter, people wonder at their being so late. They seem, too, to have reversed the usual order of things; for the lady with a lofty air looks victoriously around, a splendid full blown sun-flower, while the gentleman creeps along by her side like a drooping faded lily.

Schwämmle is standing near, and whispers to Edward.

"Your turn comes next."

The unhappy martyr scarcely knows where he is; he might be seated on the top of a weather-cock, so far as all sense of identity is concerned, everything seems to swim before his eyes; he makes a convulsive effort to escape, but his partner holds him fast with a determined hand.

"Now," said Schwämmle giving the pair a shove; they rush along, various pushes and kicks from the next couples restore Edward to a momentary consciousness, and each time that he passes before the orchestra, the crash of the horns and trumpets revives him, otherwise he goes along with his eyes shut, and

feels as if he were sinking slowly into deep waters, where sea nymphs in white draperies float before him; at last, he has reached the ground, he opens his eyes, breathing hard, and finds that he is still in the ball-room, his partner beside him, assuring him it had gone off very well; so say, also, the Captain and Schwämmle. Edward, who finds with astonishment that he has not been knocked down, or himself upset any one, or torn half-a-dozen dresses, and that he is quite unhurt, is wonderfully strengthened and comforted. A sort of dim idea rises in his mind, that dancing is not so very disagreeable, and next time, when his turn comes, and old Schwämmle again calls out, "Now, if you please," he feels only a slight degree of nervousness, and after one or two turns, he actually opens his eyes of his own accord.

The dance was now over, and the lady led her partner back in triumph to the tea room. His mother who had been in some alarm as to the issue of the affair, rejoiced to hear that all had gone off so well.

"Now," said his partner, "a Française and a polka, and Mr. Edward will require no more tuition."

"With so charming a teacher," said the mamma, "who would not learn quickly? My son entreats you to do him the honour to dance the two next dances with him."

Edward muttered some unintelligible words, which, however, the young lady seemed perfectly to understand, for she instantly declared that she would dance both Française and polka with him. Edward and the Captain now agreed to take a turn in the ball-room, when the former walked about much more at his ease, and even passed close to the young lady with fair curls, casting a disdainful glance at her, and afterwards, both gentlemen went to an adjoining room to take some refreshment. Edward was much more in his element here, and drank several glasses of hot punch, and the Captain, who declared that the deluge of weak tea had sadly disagreed with him, took much more punch than he ought to have done; and in a quarter of an hour, during

which time, the mazurka had been danced, both gentlemen were in such a pleasing state of excitement, that they resolved to celebrate Edward's débût at a ball by a bottle of champagne.

When, after dancing violently, gentlemen drink punch and champagne, it is not improbable that the consequences may be to incline them to all sorts of frolics. The Française began, but the Captain in vain, feebly reminded Edward that he must not allow his old stick of a partner to wait for him, and thus enrage his mamma. The youth was much more disposed to make a voyage of discovery in the vicinity of the ball-room, the Captain agreed to go with him, and in the next room they saw a strange sight.

It was the cloak room; bonnets, cloaks, and hoods were hanging round the walls, each with a number pinned to it; the atmosphere of this room was far from agreeable, the fumes of punch and wine from the adjoining one, and the damp smell of the cloaks and great coats wet with snow and rain made a strange

mixture of odours. In the middle, however, of this room, a small select party were assembled, who seemed particularly merry and well amused.

There were three ladies and two gentlemen, one of the latter had a napkin under his arm, and, when not dancing, his office was to wait on the company at the ball. The other gentleman, respected reader, was no other than our old acquaintance Herr Dubel, who was always engaged at these balls to devote his needle to the possible wants of mankind; that is, to sew on buttons, or to repair the skirt of a coat, which in the ardour of dancing might have been torn. One of the ladies was a sempstress, whose skill was devoted entirely to the fair sex, as was that of Herr Dubel to the Lords of the Creation; the second was a young person learning the art of cookery at an hotel; the third was a milliner, who was sitting on a chair, in the corner, looking on.

Edward and the Captain entered this private circle at the moment when the two

couples had placed themselves opposite each other, profiting by the distant sounds of the music, to dance a quadrille for their own recreation. The ladies, at the sight of the two strangers, wished modestly to retire; but the gallant Edward quickly extricated the sempstress from the folds of a shawl in which she had taken refuge, and after some shy resistance from her, they commenced the quadrille, and when the Captain took a lady's cloak from the wall, and danced with it as if it had been a lady herself, all ceremony seemed at an end, and the whole party were as merry as possible.

How easy and comfortable Edward felt in this circle. He thought the sempstress charming, and the waiter so amusing; Herr Dubel, too, made such wonderful entrechats and pirouettes, he and the waiter outvying each other, our young friend was quite transformed, he stuck his hat on one side, plunged his hands into his pockets, and danced with a degree of ease and audacity which was astonishing.

Unluckily the music in the ball-room

stopped, but Edward, who had now began thoroughly to enjoy himself, persuaded the select party to accept of some punch, and to dance the next polka en petit comité.

In the meantime, his total disappearance had caused no little consternation in the tea room. His partner was quite frantic, for, as she had relied on Edward, she had actually refused a partner, a circumstance which rarely occurred to her. The mother, who naturally imagined that her son's delay was caused entirely by timidity and shyness, nevertheless considered a sharp reproof necessary, and each time when, at the end of a dance she heard a step, she drew herself up in full majesty, but no Edward appeared, the polka began, he never came, and, at last, alarmed lest any accident should have befallen her son, the mamma seizing the forsaken fair one's arm, entered the ball-room with a lofty air, but with great anxiety in her heart.

She first looked into every corner, for she fully expected to discover Edward crushed up behind a door, too happy to keep out of

sight. The ball-room was no longer in the same fresh and brilliant condition in which we saw it a few hours before; clouds of dust filled the room, and the lights seemed to burn dimly; Stadt Rath Schwämmle gazed intently at the candelabras in which the gas either flamed up very high, or sunk down suddenly. Some of the gas was still bright and clear; but most of the burners were dusky and dark red; but no Edward was to be seen. Dancing began again, and the unhappy mother sought her son in vain; but Destiny, whose inexorable hand is constantly, though invisibly, stretched over the head of man, often seizing the threads of the web of life, and often unexpectedly withdrawing the veil from dark deeds, here ordained that the mamma's attention should be attracted by a group of gentlemen who were standing at the door of the ball-room talking eagerly. Fate further ordained that Stadt Rath Schwämmle should solemnly advance to Edward's mother with a very red and angry face, adjuring her, in pathetic tones, in the name of the society,

to interpose her authority to check her son in some enormity he was about to perpetrate.

Dismayed, but stedfast, the Spartan mother advanced, and saw with horror, the shame, the disgrace to her honourable name, and to all the society of which her son had been guilty.

Young Edward was standing laughing at the door, and about to enter the ball-room, while on one arm hung the resisting sempstress, and on the other, the equally unwilling milliner. The remonstrances of the respectable Schwämmle, Edward had treated with profound contempt.

His forsaken partner, at this appalling sight, had some thoughts of instantly fainting away, but as she saw no chair, and no arms open to receive her swooning form, she resolved to postpone this intention for the present. But it was at this momentous crisis that the ball-room became darker and darker; the unhappy mamma thought it was emotion which made everything become dim before her eyes; but the gentlemen standing round also

perceived a kind of twilight creeping on, and Schwämmle saw, with horror, the flames in the gas lamps rise inordinately high towards the ceiling, and then as suddenly subside into small blue specks.

"How awful!" screamed some ladies, "but no wonder that signs and portents should occur, when milliners and sempstresses appear in society!"

The gas gave one final flicker, hissed in the pipes; a cry of alarm resounded, the whole house was shrouded in darkness, and thus ended the ball.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROYAL STABLES.

THE royal stables, whither we now intend to convey our reader, though extensive, did not look handsome beside the imposing palace. The façade was long, but the building was only one story high, the windows small, and the walls covered with yellow paint. There was a placard on the door, stating that no one was admitted except on business, but in spite of this announcement, we will now enter the stables, where we perceive that the horses have a most agreeable and comfortable place of abode; and in winter days, when snow and rain were fast falling, many a one might have

envied the horses the pleasing warmth of the atmosphere of the royal stables.

The stalls were extremely handsome, and separated by lofty partitions. In each of these compartments, there was a marble manger, a rack of cast iron, and above each stall the name of its occupant was painted in large letters. Many of these names transported one to the heathen world, a truly mythological assemblage. Here were Jupiter and Juno; Mars and Venus; Castor and Pollux; Ulysses, Ajax, Achilles, &c.

This locality was most comfortable about four o'clock, when the horses had dined; when their dessert of hay was finished, and when they were enjoying a quiet siesta. There was usually entire silence at this time, which was to-day only interrupted by an air, whistled at one end of the stable by a groom, "When the swallows hasten home," which resounded in melancholy tones, lulling the sleepy horses into gentle dreams of southern skies, for all in this stable were of Arab race. The minstrel, however, was nowhere visible. Probably,

after his work was over, he had lain down on a heap of straw, where he amused himself by whistling.

The only human being visible here was a young man in the royal livery, sitting on a corn-bin, and marking time with his spurs to the melody. He was tall, and good-looking; his hat and driving whip lay beside him, and a pair of powerful grey horses, ready harnessed and turned round in their stalls, indicated that the carriage was shortly going out. These animals seemed by no means to approve of the prospect of leaving their warm stalls, for they shook their heads impatiently, bit their bridles, and by snorting, shewed their indignation at the injustice which had disturbed their siesta. They stamped angrily with their hoofs, and kicked against the partition, till the coachman was obliged to call out to them to be quiet. "Wo, ho! old Pluto," said he; "you will have to go out into the snow quite soon enough, no end to visits to day, six or seven, at least. First to the chamberlain's lady, (counting on his fingers), then to the

milliner's to fetch a new gown, to the library for the last new novel, and finally to a ball at night, which will be a precious long affair. Tibullus! (to the other horse) can't you stand still, a minute? you will have going enough I can tell you, when once you start."

At this moment, the stable door was slowly opened, and a poorly dressed, but tidy little old woman entered, looking anxiously on every side, but when she saw Tibullus and Pluto harnessed, she went up to their stalls, and clapped them before looking round at the corn-bin on which the young coachman was sitting. "I scarcely expected to find you still in the stable, Joseph," said she. To which he answered, "an hour ago I should not have expected it either. Pray, what does my old mother mean by paddling about in the snow?"

"What is the use," said she, "of my staying in the house all day, burning wood? There were two people I had to see, so I thought I would, in passing, look what you were about, and go through the stables which are

always warm and comfortable, and now I have the good luck to find you."

This old woman, dear reader, has been presented to you before, but we do not expect you to recognise her, as you saw her at night, and in snow and rain, so allow us to mention that we have Frau Winklere before us, and her only son Joseph, one of the Court coachmen.

"Where do you come from, mother?" asked he. "Have you been at Frau Welscher's, and how is poor Marie's child? Is she to remain there?"

"Yes, indeed," answered his mother; "both good old Kiliane and she have promised to adopt the poor little orphan."

"May God bless them for their kindness!" said Joseph, drawing out his watch to see if it was time to go. "Frau Welscher," continued he, "inherits goodness from her husband. That was a man who could be called a coachman, indeed. He could turn four horses round a plate, and cut the figure of eight with his whip in the air. I learned driving from him, when I was a lad, and many

a good fatherly box of the ear I got from him. Now I must be off to drive the old spectre carriage."

"What do you say," said his mother, shuddering; "a spectre carriage?"

"Oh! it is the name we give to the equipage of the ladies-in-waiting; we call it so, because, let the weather be what it may, rain or snow, sunshine or storm sufficient to scare even dogs and cats to seek shelter, on rolls this spectre carriage. These Court ladies never tire of driving, morning, noon, and night; they are always at it."

The old woman shook her head doubtfully, and said, "but Joseph, no real spectres ever drive in the carriage, do they?"

"Not as yet," said he, laughing; "but wait till some of these Court dames die, and we shall see what will happen."

He then led out his greys, his mother following at a considerable distance, from a wholesome dread of the horses' heels. There was only one door of the coach-house open, on account of the bad weather, through which

projected the pole of that piece of antiquity, the spectre carriage; the wind blowing about its faded yellow tassels, and making the springs creak.

The coachman put to his horses, and shook hands with his mother, saying, "By the bye, don't forget to tell Frau Welscher that our coachmen are going to make a small subscription for poor Marie's child, and that we mean to bring it some evening to the Old Monastery, and spend a jolly night. Adieu, mother!" With these words he mounted the box, and drove away quickly. Frau Winklere looked after her good, kind son, till the carriage had turned the corner.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONFIDENTIAL CONVERSATION.

At first, Joseph kept muttering to himself as he drove away from the warm stables, shivering even under his cloak—exposed to the snow of a bitter day in November. He uttered short but impressive soliloquies about ladies who were too idle and too restless to stay at home, but must drive about the wet streets, and visit all the shops, and call on people they had seen a hundred times; and the carriage he was driving being nearly the only one out in this bad weather, did not tend to increase his good humour. He drove through one of the gates of the palace and

drew up. A footman threw open a glass door, and assisted Baroness von C— into the carriage. So far as one could judge from such a passing glimpse, this lady-in-waiting was tall and haughty-looking. She threw herself negligently back on the cushions, and saying a few words, she gave a paper to the footman, who shut the door, and whispering to the coachman, he jumped up behind, and the horses set off at a sharp trot.

They went to one of the principal hotels where the lady left a card, then they proceeded to a printshop, where the baroness went in.

"We shall have a fine long day of it," said Jean, the footman, to the coachman, stamping his feet to warm himself. "I have such a list of visits in my pocket. I advise you, friend Joseph, to get over the ground pretty quick, or we shan't have half an hour's rest before the ball to-night."

"Where next?" said the coachman.

"To the Court jeweller's—I have been there four times already to day, and now my lady is going herself. He may be prepared for a

good blowing up, or I am much mistaken! What a humour she has been in all day. When she came out of the duchess's room this morning, her eyes were red from crying; various notes were then written, and François and I have been running about all day. Bad weather! stormy, very stormy!"

"Do you mean here, out of doors?" said Joseph, shivering.

"Well! both out of doors, and in doors," said Jean, laughing; "rain, hail, and storm. I know her maid has had a sad time of it this morning, for when she brought me a note to take to Baron Carl, my former master, she said, "There, the baron is the cause of all this uproar. I do wish he would leave the town, and then there might be some peace;" but, added she, glancing viciously at me, "all men are good for nothing, and not worth vexing about." I took the note to the baron's, whose chasseur gave it to him, and through the open door I heard him say to Lucas, laughing, "I most assuredly intend to go to the ball to-night—the carriage at eight o'clock."

At this moment, the door of the shop opened, and a shopman gave Jean a portfolio, when the coachman whispered hurriedly to Jean, "If my lady observes that I go round, say the nearest way to the jeweller's is too slippery."

"Ah!" said Jean, laughing; "some one is watching at her window, to whom we wish to shew ourselves, old fellow. I understand!"

The lady now came out of the shop and got into the carriage—Pluto and Tibullus got a sharp cut from the whip, and trotted off at a great pace, scattering the snow in all directions.

On they went, through the streets and round the corners, the sudden jerks making the carriage lean to one side, so that the lady was obliged to hold tight by the straps, and the footman had no little difficulty in keeping his balance, but knowing Joseph's skill, he was by no means alarmed, and could not help laughing when the horses subsided into a gentle trot on approaching a small house in an obscure street—then the window of this house was gently opened, and the face of a

pretty young girl looked out, nodding kindly to the coachman, who again set off full speed through a street with booths on each side, so narrow, that the calico, and hats and caps which were hanging up, as well as the hams, and cheeses, and sausages almost touched the windows of the carriage, which, at last, entered the square and drew up with a jerk at the jeweller's.

The coachman heard the lady enquire why they had come through such horrid streets, and Jean coolly answering, that on account of laying the gas-pipes, the usual thoroughfare was closed for carriages. After the jeweller had received a severe reprimand, for not doing what was impossible, and Jean had lighted the lamps, the lady once more got into the carriage, which drove to the house of one of her friends, who was announced as at home by Jean, and after seeing his mistress admitted, he jumped upon the box beside the coachman, saying, "This is a visit that will last some time, when those two get gossiping together, it won't be over for an hour, at least."

"I should like to know," said Joseph, sulkily, "what they two can possibly find to talk about so long. People like us, go to see a friend, and we say, good day—how are you? —fine weather; and there is an end of it. How terribly cold it is now!"

"Cold enough!" said Jean, plunging his hands into the depths of his pockets. "A pleasant prospect to wait with the carriage to-night till the ball is over, and both you and I shall have to go twice."

"How twice?" said Joseph; "I have only to drive the baroness, and the young maid-of-honour, and they always go together."

"Not this evening, I can tell you, my lady intends to go alone, so if Mademoiselle Pauline goes at all, it won't be with the baroness. Ah! Mademoiselle Pauline is a charming creature, so kind and considerate, but the baroness can't bear her now."

"Why not?" said Joseph; "there must be a cause."

"Oh!" said Jean, laughing, "it's all about Baron Carl—we have long observed that he

was in love with Mademoiselle Pauline, we servants are pretty quick in seeing things."

"What a handsome couple they would make," said Joseph; "I hope I shall have the honour of driving them to church in a state carriage, seated on a richly embroidered hammercloth, and dressed in a new livery and cocked hat, driving those two splendid stepping English bays, of the baron's, who has, I must say, excellent taste both in carriages and horses. I'll tell you what, Jean, the people would look more at the coachman and horses, than at the happy couple inside."

"We are a long way from that day, I fear," said Jean, "not to be sure, if the baroness chose, but—"

"But what?" said Joseph; "what has she got to do with it?"

"Why," said Jean, "did you never observe how often the baron came and talked to the baroness at the door of the carriage, while he scarcely asked Mademoiselle Pauline how she was? and at the palace, just the same. You know how she was adopted by the duchess,

being an orphan; and she is accustomed implicitly to obey her commands, and those of the baroness, with whom she resides. She is now eighteen, and yet they still consider her a child. That any one should make love to her, has never occurred to either of these elderly ladies. In the palace, the baron would sit for hours relating amusing anecdotes to the baroness, while he only said a few words to Mademoiselle Pauline, but I understand my former master's ways, and I knew that these few words were very significant. He used to bring the most rare and costly flowers to the elder lady, and only sometimes a simple blossom to the younger one, but I understand it all. The baroness, however—"

"Actually thought," said the coachman, "that the baron—"

"Was in love with herself," continued Jean, laughing. "To-day, however, the truth has come to light, and you may imagine that the baroness has not failed to represent Baron Carl to the duchess as a monster of perfidy —he has, therefore, received a hint to absent himself from the court ball to-night, in the

very note I took to him—but I heard him, as I told you, order his carriage—he cares not a pin for the baroness's anger."

"In that case," said Joseph, "I shall only have to go once, for I suppose Mademoiselle Pauline will have to stay at home."

"Not at all," said the other; "Princess Augusta, who gives the ball, would immediately ask where she was, as she is very fond of her, and then the whole affair would come to light—but here is my lady, I think."

And so it was; and as they were driving home, the baroness suddenly pulled the check-string, and despatched Jean to a brougham at a shop-door, desiring him to ask her friend Countess Clara, who was just getting into it to come to her for a moment. The young lady hastened to the carriage, and got in. Jean closed the door, but stood sufficiently near to overhear the conversation. After some mutual greetings, the countess soon saw that some secret grief was preying on her friend, who looked out of spirits and complained of a violent headache; but she quickly discovered the real cause, for, at last, the baroness, with

many sighs and tears, related her sad tale, adding, that Baron Carl was, in consequence of his treachery to her, in disgrace at Court.

After discussing this affair for a time, the Countess Clara took leave of her friend, affectionately sympathising with her wrongs, and assuring her that she would not fail to tell all her friends that the duchess was so displeased with Baron Carl, for a certain affair that had come to her knowledge, that all the society ought to shun him.

She then entered her own carriage and drove off, saying to herself, "This foolish young man really does deserve to suffer for a time, the idea of making love to the baroness, who is five-and-thirty, when there are so many pretty young women in the society."

Jean had desired the coachman to drive home, and as he had not lost a syllable of the conversation, he resolved to pay his former master a visit that very evening. As soon as he left the carriage, he put his purpose into execution, and went whistling on his way in the dark.

CHAPTER IX.

BARON CARL.

It may not be disagreeable to our reader to leave, for a moment, the cold, wet streets, and to enter along with us a very elegant, well-arranged house in the suburbs. It is massive, but yet built with much taste, and surrounded by lofty trees, which at this dead season of the year, encircle the building with their bleak, leafless boughs, like a trellice-work. Through the windows, bright lights stream into the gloomy night. We go along a gravel path—we open the house-door softly, and after crossing a lighted passage, we ascend a back stair, at the top of which a door stands

half open—we enter boldly, and we view the servants of the baron, who, as their master's dinner is over, sit here enjoying repose, and demolishing the remains of a Strasburg pâté, which, being rather an indigestible substance, they endeavour to render more wholesome by draughts of claret and champagne. There are four persons in the room, all more or less earnestly occupied. Two of these are footmen in sky-blue liveries. A singular looking person forms the third of the party, and is sitting with his back to the stove. This person is the baron's chasseur—a gigantic man—his dress is handsome and picturesque; we never saw so black a beard, nor so fierce a pair of moustaches. He has a book in his hand, and when he does lift his eyes, he seems to look with contempt at the two gormandizing footmen. The fourth person, is our former acquaintance, Jean—who is freely partaking of the champagne.

"Won't you have some, Lucas?" said one of the footmen to the chasseur, extracting a large truffle from the pâté.

"Let him alone," said the other; "he is too fine a gentleman to eat with us."

Lucas smiled quietly, and left the room.

"If I were my master," said the first footman, chewing as fast as possible, "I would not keep such a sulky fellow as that."

On which the other replied, "Tell him he should send Lucas away, and make you chasseur instead."

These remarks were made in very suppressed tones, as the house was small. We shall now pass into the dining-room, where was placed a small table for six persons, bright with silver and crystal. In the centre of the table was a silver épergne, representing a vine, and among its chiselled fillagree leaves, were real fruits, and a bouquet of fragrant flowers in the middle. There were two superb candelabras filled with wax lights, the rays of which glittered brightly on the glass, and various ornaments of the table—but the room was deserted. Let us lift the velvet portière which conceals the door of the adjoining salon, and being invisible, we can do so with impu-

nity ; and we find six gentlemen in a charming little salon, stretched in comfortable arm-chairs, enjoying a cigar.

The jäger, at this moment brought in coffee—some blazing logs of wood are burning cheerfully in the large fire-place, lighting up the beautifully sculptured white chimney-piece. The conversation of the party is by no means very animated, and you only hear the clattering of coffee cups as they are placed on a marble table, and the deep tones of a bronze Louis Quatorze clock, which at this moment, strikes seven o'clock.

"I must go," said one of the party, "Who comes my way? I have only a droschky, for it is far too bad weather to take out one's own horses."

All said they had done the same, except one, who observed, laughing,

"As I was quite sure that each of you would order a carriage, I did not do so, so one of you may have the honour of conveying me home."

"Let us go, then," said the others. "Good

night, Carl. I suppose we shall meet at the ball?"

"I may probably look in for a half an hour," answered the baron, turning the logs to make them blaze up—"Adieu!"

Four of his guests then quitted the room, the chasseur in the ante-room lighting them down stairs, and in a few minutes the rolling of their carriage wheels was heard on the pavement. The baron and one guest only remained, the latter drew his arm-chair closer to the fire, and lazily stretched out his feet. Carl stood opposite him, leaning on the chimney-piece, and gave the head of a Chinese mandarin a push, so that he began to nod violently, then looking at the clock, the baron said, "we have plenty of time yet, and I think it very kind of you, Alphonse, to stay with me."

"Ascribe it chiefly to curiosity, my dear fellow," said Count Alphonse, "your hints during dinner have made me very anxious to hear all particulars—so everything is discovered, and you are an unmasked traitor!"

"I am so in truth," said the baron smiling,

while the mandarin seemed quite to agree with him, nodding violently.

"How did it all happen?" asked the other, "and what is to be done now?"

"I went to the palace yesterday," said Karl, "at the same time as usual. I was admitted, and shown into the drawing-room by Jean, who said that the baroness would receive me in a few minutes. The good lady kept me waiting some time. I sat down—I rose again; I looked through the windows into the court. I examined, for the hundredth time, all the pictures. At last, I saw an open door, on the opposite side, of course, to the sacred apartments of the excellent baroness. I passed through three more rooms, and arrived, at last, at a door standing ajar. I pushed it softly, and imagine my astonishment, my joy, when I found myself in the boudoir of my adored Pauline, and saw her seated at a table drawing. You know how many hundred times I have been in the palace, and all my vain attempts to effect a visit to her. For a moment, I stood actually

transfixed with delight, but was on the point of retiring, from dread of the baroness, when it suddenly occurred to me that such an opportunity of speaking to Pauline alone might never again be mine; she, also, having perceived me suddenly, had started up with a cry of surprise. As my intentions, with regard to her, had been long settled in my own mind, I did not require the use of many words to make them equally clear to her. That she entertained a certain degree of preference for me I had long thought, but I wished to receive the delightful assurance from her own lips. I soon prevailed on her to confess that our feelings were mutual, and she authorized me to apply to the duchess for her sanction to our union. Thus far all had gone well; but now I seized her hand and covered it with kisses; only her hand, I assure you, for there is something so pure and imposing about her, that in approaching her, I always feel as if she were a saint; but just at this moment, I heard the rustling of a silk dress. I turned quickly

round, and saw the baroness at the door, looking as if just about to faint, but I suppose she did not consider this advisable, for with forced composure she made me a sign to follow her, gliding on before me like a spectre, her hand uplifted, and without deigning to bestow a glance on me till she reached her own apartments, when she made me an imperious sign instantly to depart.

"Did you attempt no explanation?" asked Alphonse.

"No, indeed," replied Carl, "her looks were terrific, and I must own, that I am not entirely free from all blame with regard to her."

"You certainly paid her great attention; and the whole Court remarked it."

"How could I act otherwise?" said the baron; "I had no other chance of occasionally seeing Pauline; but my punishment has quickly followed my misdeeds, for to-day I had a letter from the baroness, written, she said, by command of the duchess, saying that I was in complete disgrace with the

highest personages in the realm, and, consequently, hinting, from herself, that my presence at Court could be dispensed with—of course, she has depicted me in the darkest colours: an evil vampyre, a detestable Don Juan—but I mean to go to the ball to-night; on no account would I gratify my enemies by not appearing there, besides, I shall endeavour to find an opportunity to whisper some cheering words to my Pauline, to assure her that she may rely on my love and constancy, and I will explain to Princess Augusta the true version of the affair; but adieu for the present, for it is getting late, and we have yet to dress." The friends then separated.

The baron rung the bell, and asked if Jean was still waiting, desiring him to be shown in, who, after a respectful bow, proceeded to relate circumstantially the conversation he had this day overheard between the Baroness von C—— and her young friend, Countess Clara. When he had finished, the baron thanked him, and presented him with a couple of ducats to enable him, he said,

to take a droschky, and not be too late in returning to the palace. Jean left the room, and then Lucas entered. The baron said to him: "It is of importance to me, before the ball, to see Baroness von C——'s coachman, I mean the one who will take her to the ball to-night. Are you acquainted with him?"

"It is probably Joseph," said the chasseur, "I saw him driving the lady this afternoon, and Jean behind the carriage."

"Then take my brougham," said the baron, "find out the coachman, and bring him here instantly."

"But, baron, allow me to remark," said Lucas, "that this is the very hour when the royal coachmen are particularly busy. I am certain Joseph dare not leave his post just now."

"You are probably right," answered the baron, "but take my carriage, drive to the royal stables, and tell the coachman that I will come there and speak to him privately, after he returns from the palace. Is this Joseph an honest, trustworthy person?"

"Oh, yes, my Lord," said Lucas, "besides, he can have no possible interest in betraying yoür confidence."

"Very well," said his master, "I shall leave this at a quarter past eight o'clock." And then he said, as if to himself, "I shall thus arrive rather late at the ball; the evil reports of me will have had ample time to be widely circulated, so I shall be well stared at; it would not be fair to deprive the society of so agreeable a recreation."

CHAPTER X.

A NIGHT DRIVE.

It was nearly eight o'clock when Joseph again turned round his favourite greys, Pluto and Tibullus, in their stalls, and began once more to harness them. The stables had now a very different aspect from that of the afternoon. Many lanterns were hanging from the roof, lighting up the stables quite as brightly as even in the day time, for the small, old-fashioned windows allowed very little of the light of the sun, at any time, to enter these precincts. The horses had supped, and fresh straw had been shook down in their beds, on which they were

stamping with an air of great comfort and enjoyment. Here and there an animal occasionally turned his head and stared at the lanterns, the light of which was reflected in his bright eyes. Some tumbled about on their thick straw couches, and looked at their less fortunate companions already harnessed as if pleased that they, too, were not forced to go out in the snow and rain.

There was busy work going on to-night in every part of the stables, and a number of coachmen walking about, harnessing or unharnessing their horses. Here a horse was sharply admonished to keep quiet; there another loudly neighed; then some coachman drew on his coat, and combed his hair smooth at a pocket glass. Indeed, this evening there were more horses' heads than tails visible in the stables, for, at least, one third of the animals were turned in their stalls and harnessed.

A great many carriages are required for a state ball, as the whole Court have the privilege of using the royal equipages, aides-

de-camp and chamberlains included, even when they have plenty of horses in their own stables.

Joseph, who was standing at Tibullus' head, tightening a leather strap, and drawing the grey's long hair smoothly over the frontlet, said to himself: "I should just like to know what Baron Carl can possibly want with me to-night? If Lucas were a man addicted to jesting, I should think he was hoaxing me, but in my life I never saw him laugh; he has always such a serious face, that I am sure a joke would never enter his head. Well, I shall see what the baron wants with me, presently."

In the meantime, there was plenty of laughing and jesting in the usually quiet building. A jolly, stout man was walking up and down the passage, with his hands behind him, dressed in a blue livery coat, buttoned up to the chin. The dress was of the same cut and colour as the others, but the collar was edged with broad gold lace. The legs, too, of this individual, instead of being en-

cased in yellow leathers, like the other coachmen, were attired in blue trousers, and boots without spurs. Wherever the stout portly figure approached, the loud voices were lowered to a whisper, and the hearty laugh to a suppressed giggle. Most of them touched their glazed hats respectfully as he passed, and the helpers stood bolt upright in the stalls.

This man was a very important personage in the realm. He was the king's body coachman—Herr Mundels; he alone had the sacred privilege of driving His Majesty's carriage, and he entertained no doubt whatever in his own mind, that his office was a far more important one than many, nominally higher in the state. For example, though on some particular occasions the High Chamberlain was entitled to precede His Majesty with his staff, still he could not, like the coachman, remain seated in the royal presence with his hat on. What a grand and solemn air he had, looking down from his richly embroidered hammer-cloth! how much he was

gratified when all those who saw his portly form, seated with the reins in his hands, touched their hats reverentially as he drove along. How dignified he looked when he slowly ascended his box! Yes, Herr Mundels, who, in domestic life, was the most social and kind of men, assumed a stern, serious face, when, with his three-cornered hat demurely pressed down on his head, and his whip flourished in his right hand, he was seated on the royal coach-box. With what deferential courtesy the court footmen requested him to be so good as to drive here or there. As he walked about in the stables, he looked like an ancient knight, about to mount his war-steed, and to overthrow all before him, so solemn and firm were his steps, his head so lofty, and his whole appearance so full of complacency and self-satisfaction. His page, in the form of a small tiger-boy, paced after him, step by step, bearing his helmet and lance—that is, his gold-laced hat, and his long driving whip, with an ivory handle.

The head coachman was now informed that his horses were in the carriage, on which he slowly proceeded to the door, attended by the other coachmen, leading their horses. Joseph also followed, with Tibullus and Pluto. On this occasion, the doors of several coach-houses were open, and the poles of carriages everywhere visible, but these usually gloomy buildings were now so lighted up by numerous carriage lamps, that they looked as if illuminated in honour of some festive occasion.

After Herr Mundels had received his helmet and lance from his page, and mounted his box, he drove off slowly and solemnly. Joseph did the same with the spectre carriage, followed by the rest, who dispersed in different directions, leaving the coach-houses in their original gloom and darkness. The stable doors were closed, and we are sure the watchman was extremely glad to be able to stay here on so wet a night, and throwing himself full length on a heap of straw, he resumed his morning song of "The Swallows."

Jean was right, for the baroness went

alone in the carriage to the ball, and kept it waiting for some time, so that when Joseph was driving to the palace, he met his colleagues all returning. After having gone there a second time with Mademoiselle Pauline, he returned to the coach-house and stables, where he found the other horses were already unharnessed. He was quite alone, for Jean had left him to go home.

He had scarcely begun to unloose the horses, when he heard the sound of a light brougham, and saw its lamps, as it stopped at the corner of the street. A gentleman, wrapped in a cloak, jumped out and came towards the coach-house, and a voice said: "Is it you, Joseph?" on which the coachman came forward, and made a respectful bow.

"I am glad you have kept your word," said Baron Carl, for he it was, and drawing Joseph into the coach-house, he added, "I believe that I may rely on you."

"Whatever I promise, Herr Baron, I will certainly perform," said the coachman. "And

I think it an honour to have a request made to me by such a gentleman."

"You seem an intelligent fellow," said the baron, "and will understand me."

"As for intelligence," answered Joseph, "I shall understand fast enough if it concerns my business, and if it is nothing contrary to the stable regulations."

"I wish you to do me a service," said the baron; "it is nothing either wrong or contrary to your duty, and it is in the way of your business. You are to fetch Baroness C—— to-night from the ball?"

"Certainly—at twelve o'clock precisely, and Mademoiselle Pauline rather later, as the carriage is to go twice."

"Exactly so," said the baron; "and when you are returning with Mademoiselle Pauline, might it not easily happen that, as you are passing under the Triumphal Arch, one of your horses should have a stone in his foot? and then, you know what must be done—"

"Oh, yes!" said the coachman, laughing. "I can guess!"

"So when you see, under the archway, that he has a stone in his foot then—"

"I must draw up, and knock the stone out. I understand."

"Quite right," said the baron; "taking it out will not be a very easy business, but if those inside the carriage become impatient, they can hurry you; otherwise, take your time."

"I won't fail," said Joseph. "Is that all?"

"Yes, at present," said the baron, thrusting something into Joseph's hand, which, on finding they were gold pieces, he, at first, declined taking, seizing hold of the baron's cloak to detain him, saying:

"Excuse me, Herr Baron, but I have something to say. I wish to know if Mademoiselle Pauline will be displeased at my drawing up under the arch in the middle of the night. I can't do it, unless you assure me she won't be vexed, and that it will do her no harm."

"Don't be afraid, my good fellow," said the baron; "trust to my caution."

"I should like to know, too," said the coachman, with a sly smile, "whether the baroness will be pleased if she hears of it?"

"On the contrary," said the baron, laughing, "she would be furious."

"Well, we'll risk that," said Joseph; "old Tibullus shall have a large stone in his hoof to-night all the same—"

The brougham was in a minute heard driving off, and Joseph, by the light of the carriage lamps, saw that the baron had generously given him five ducats.

"These," said he, as he put two of the shining gold coins in his pockets, "these are for the old mother; these," shoving a couple more into his waistcoat, "towards the subscription for poor Marie's child; and this last ducat shall furnish a capital bowl of punch in the old saddle-room upstairs to-night; so that is settled. Come, old boys!"

So, throwing the reins over his shoulder, he took up his whip, and his horses followed him into the stable. They were quickly un-

harnessed, and then Joseph went out to buy materials for the punch.

How wet the streets were, and how the wind knocked about the old street-lamps, and made them rattle, and how dim and red they burned! No gas here yet!

The coachman could not help laughing, when he saw a man walking along, vainly striving to shelter himself under an umbrella, once green, but now yellow from age. First he held it to the right, and then to the left, then he carried it aloft, when it suddenly sunk down flapping over his head, which gave him the air of a walking fungus; then he bobbed to one side, on feeling the water from a spout pour through the umbrella, full of holes, on his neck; and, at last, he was lifted off his feet, umbrella and all, by a violent gust of wind, and looked, with the umbrella now turned inside-out, like an insane tortoise.

The unlucky bearer of this unlucky umbrella, which, in its reversed state, stretched out its sharp points, like so many arms, to

the sky, at that moment took refuge in a grocer's shop after this trying visitation. How the coachman laughed, when he saw the face of the unhappy man, and his shabby clothes streaming with water; but Joseph did not laugh from ill-nature or malice, but only because he recognized an old acquaintance in the dripping wayfarer, and because he observed that, in spite of the storm, the man was buttoned up to the chin in a thin blue frock coat, that he had a pair of wet yellow kid-gloves clinging to his hands, and that his collars were in a sad limp state.

The man seemed very much annoyed: he looked with a face of distress at his broken umbrella, and his drenched clothes, and the coachman in vain tried to comfort him.

"Don't be affronted, Dubel," said Joseph, still laughing, "but upon my word you look so queer, and so tumbled to pieces, so like an old wet tabby cat, that no one could see you without being diverted. What on earth brings you out in the rain, and in a sky-blue

coat, too? Are you going to the palace, old fellow?"

The tailor could not help laughing, too, at this question; but his lively imagination instantly pictured to him that a cavalier who really had intended to go to the ball to night might have found himself in a similar plight; but his face quickly overclouded again, and he sighed heavily.

"What is the matter with you to night, Dubel?" continued the coachman, "I do believe you were on your way to some assignation—have I guessed right?"

Herr Dubel raised his eyes, and his sorrowful look shewed that the inexorable rain had, indeed, destroyed his fondest hopes for this evening.

"Ah!" said Dubel, "what must she think of me? It was no assignation, but an invitation to a most respectable house, where the lady would have presented me to other friends."

So saying he made a vain attempt by a

frantic tug to make his wet shirt collars stand up.

"Well!" said Joseph, "you can't possibly go to the respectable house to night in your drenched condition, so I'll tell you what to do—come back with me to the saddle room. I am going to buy materials here for a famous bowl of punch, and you can come with me and take your share. In the highly respectable house, you certainly would have got nothing but weak tea, and you can go there some other evening—so come along with me, I will give you a warm cloak of mine to put on, and then you can take off your own coat, and dry it at the stove."

The tailor stuck out one foot, asked what o'clock it was, and seemed to deliberate profoundly. To judge by his important air, he must be reasoning thus with himself:

"It is now half past eight o'clock, by the time I reach home it will be nine. I gave my fellow of a valet permission to go out, my coachman, the knave, will probably be at a

tavern; before I change my dress, and the under-coachman can prepare the carriage, it will be half-past nine. No, no! I must give it up, for in any event I should arrive too late."

After this supposed soliloquy, the tailor appeared to have made up his mind to descend from his lofty pedestal, and elevated social position, to accept a share of a bowl of punch in the saddle-room.

Some bottles of rum, some lemons and sugar were soon bought, and the two friends set off towards the royal stables. Dubel made no further attempts to coax his refractory collars, or to steer his umbrella against wind and rain, consequently by the time he arrived, he was wet to the skin. He soon, however, exchanged his threadbare dripping coat for a warm cloak of Joseph's, and sat down quite cheered and comforted by the stove.

CHAPTER XI.

A COURT BALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

In the meantime, Baron Carl had arrived at the ball, and instead of feeling nervous at the threatening clouds in his social horizon, he gaily ascended the staircase which was adorned with the most dazzling flowers, and plants from every zone. He had arrived rather late, and as any delay at a Court ball is a serious offence, many in his place would have entered the royal apartments with a beating heart, even if not loaded with such opprobrium as he was this evening.

When he entered the first room, with a self-possessed air, he found only those who,

being in office, were invariably invited to the large balls. They were chiefly decrepit old men, with solemn faces, and starched white neckcloths several stories high. The coats and waistcoats of these gentlemen appeared to be of the date of the last century. They stood in two formal rows, eagerly watching the door, prepared to make a proper obeisance if any great personage entered. There were some younger faces among them, in more modern attire; young artists whom the princess, being a protectress of the fine arts, made a point of inviting; but their Court existence was by no means more amusing than that of the patriarchs by whom they were surrounded. Some of the most enterprising among them did, indeed, venture on a voyage of discovery to the adjacent higher regions, but speedily returned dazzled and overawed by the glittering stars and diamonds, and the haughty air of their possessors.

Sometimes an audacious navigator, bolder than his comrades, set sail through the bril-

liant current of noblemen and chamberlains, till there seemed no water for so small a boat, or till the adventurous seaman was threatened with utter shipwreck, and brought up by massive blocks of ice, in the shape of some stiff lofty old court dames.

The baron greeted these officials politely, and also some of the artists, and was rather diverted by the formal bow of a Court thermometer, a dry old chamberlain, who had evidently got a hint that our baron was in disgrace at Court. Karl persisted in shaking hands in the most violent manner with the old gentleman, on purpose to annoy him, standing still, too, to converse with him in the most familiar way.

In the second apartment there were all kinds of brilliant uniforms—shy lieutenants, who had just entered the army, and had not yet been presented in society, moved along timidly, constantly begging every one's pardon, stumbling over their own feet, and with a thousand polite bows and speeches, striving to make their way to the ball-room.