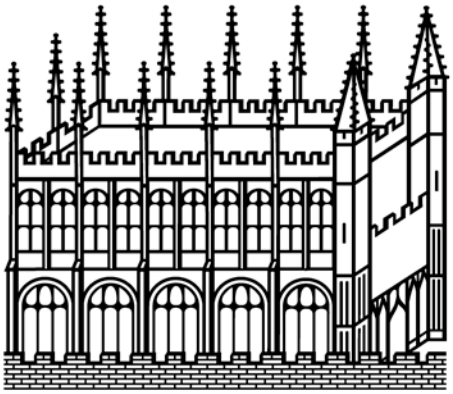

FRITZ

OR, THE

STRUGGLES OF A YOUNG LIFE

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THE STRUGGLES OF A YOUNG LIFE.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.)

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MAX."

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LONDON:
ET & CO., 21 BERN
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CHAPTER I.

THE ORPHAN.

THE morning light was just dawning, and the gray, early mist had scarcely begun to rise out of the mountain ravines, when the tones of a distant bell resounded over the table-land, upon which lay scattered groups of cottages. It was the bell which, day by day, called the industrious miners to their work in the depths of the earth.

Obedient to its summons, there soon

gleamed behind the window-panes of these humble dwellings a faint glimmer of light, intimating that their inmates were astir, and preparing for their subterranean toil.

All was activity, too, in the cottage of the brave old Father Brenner. At the first sound of the bell he sprang from his couch, kindled his miner's lamp, and stuck it in front of his cap; and, putting on his black smock frock, called loudly to his son Fritz.

"Here I am, father; good morning," resounded from a cheerful voice on the other side of the partition which separated the room; and a smart, rosy-cheeked boy of about thirteen or fourteen years of age bounded towards him. "I am quite ready, father," said he.

"But I cannot take you with me to-day, Fritz," answered Father Brenner. "I have a strong presentiment that some accident awaits us. I had a frightful dream last night, which lies heavy on my heart, and I cannot dismiss it. Remain at home, and take care of the house. Above all things, do not go

near the entrance to the mine. Do you hear me, my son?"

Fritz's eyes were full of amazement, as he looked inquiringly in his father's face. He had been in the habit of accompanying him every morning to his work, and lending a helping hand, as far as lay in his power; he was, therefore, surprised beyond measure at this unexpected prohibition.

"What can have come over you, father?" he asked, seizing with much feeling the hand, hardened by toil, which was extended to him. "I must share your danger, whatever it be. Nay, leave me not at home; I should be miserable were I left here in anxiety."

Father Brenner strove to dismiss the gloomy forebodings which oppressed him; but, shaking his gray head, he said, smiling at the same time, but with a tone of determination, "No, Fritz, you must remain at home. It may be that my fears are groundless; dreams are worthless; and we know that whatever happens, be it good or ill, comes to us ever with God's permission, and from His hand; not-

withstanding, a heavy weight lies this morning on head and heart, and for that reason I would rather that you obeyed my wishes."

"But, dear father, if you have these fears," asked the boy, anxiously, "why do you go yourself? Remain in the house, and I will run to the overseer, and tell him you are ill, for, indeed, you do look pale and suffering. Yes, yes, stay here to-day; it will signify nothing your losing one day's work; we live very frugally, and I have two groschen in my savings-box. Good father, remain with me!"

"Duty calls me, my son, and this call an upright man must always follow," was the answer of the other. "What avails it, either, to avoid danger? What God has appointed for us must be met, therefore detain me not. Maybe, there is nothing to fear; and, perhaps, restlessness only has caused these evil dreams."

"Let me, at least, go with you, father," pleaded Fritz earnestly. "I could have no rest at home, if you were not with me."

"With you the case is very different, my

son; it is not your duty, and therefore you must not go," said Father Brenner decidedly. "Trouble me no longer, Fritz; I must be off; and should it be that anything happens to me, then may God be with you in all your ways."

As if in blessing, he laid his hands on the boy's curly head, turned quickly away, and left the cottage.

But Fritz hastened after him. "Let me, at least, accompany you to the shaft," he said, imploringly, "and see if all is right there; it will be some satisfaction. Forbid me not, father, and I will then obey you, and return quietly home."

"Well, then, come," answered the old man; "but remember, only to the entrance, not one step further."

Fritz hung tenderly on his father's arm, as they walked quickly side by side. Nature was still wrapped in the silence of night. One golden streak in the east alone foretold the approach of sunrise. All was activity, however, on the way. From every direction

were to be seen the miners, hastening to the appointed meeting-place; and from many a powerful voice came the morning greeting to Father Brenner, who was invariably beloved and respected.

And now the heavens began to glow with gold and purple. Already his heart became lighter, and he cast a look upwards of quiet confidence. Just as the sun rose, and his brilliant beams glided over the dew-besprinkled earth, the old man reached the mine, where already a number of his comrades were assembled.

"Good luck to you!" cried one to another of the men, as they descended good-humouredly into the depths below, to pursue their accustomed work among the pits and galleries.

Father Brenner lingered till the last. Then once more he embraced his son, and, warmly and heartily pressing his hand, said—

"God be with you, my boy; do not be anxious, nor distress yourself about me; for in the depths of the earth, as well as on its

surface, there watches a kind and loving Eye, and the Lord is everywhere our staff and our light. He has removed the heavy burden from my heart; therefore go home, and trust that He may soon bring me back to you again."

With these words he vanished from sight, within the dark abyss of the mine.

"God be with you, father," cried Fritz; and then he sank down on his knees at the edge of the shaft, and, folding his hands, prayed fervently that that gracious, unseen Protector would keep and guard him from all danger.

The prayer composed, in some measure, the uneasiness of the boy's mind, though it did not altogether restore him to cheerfulness, or tend entirely to banish some vague foreboding of evil.

"But perhaps I am over-anxious," said Fritz, consoling himself. "What evil could happen to him more than at any other time? He is surrounded, also, by many friends. I shall think of his last saying, that a Father's

eye would watch over him. Wherefore I must take courage, and leave him in the hands of the good God, who will not suffer calamity to befall him."

For a few minutes he tarried at the mouth of the pit, listening; but, all being quiet, he turned his steps in the direction of his own home. His walk thither calmed him still more. Outward nature seemed to restore equanimity. The flowers bloomed in the meadows, the trees were bright with their green leaves, the crickets chirped in the grass, kind and friendly countenances nodded to him from the windows of the cottages, the heavens were blue, and the sun smiled upon the earth so cheerfully with his early beams. No, no; nothing surely could happen that was sad, when all around appeared so bright and friendly.

With each step, anxiety was banished more and more from the heart of the boy, and he looked even cheerful when he reached his father's house.

Here he found plenty to do; and, as he

was no friend to idleness, he no sooner entered than he set himself actively to work. First of all, he put everything in order within doors. He swept out the room, shook the beds, cleaned the window, removed the dust from the simple furniture, and made up the fire in the kitchen, that he might cook his morning meal; then he looked after the bird in the cage, the favourite and favoured bullfinch, talked a little to him, and gave him fresh seed and water. The tick, tick of the old wooden clock on the wall reminded him that it must be wound up. After this was done, he found he had nearly finished all his duties in the house; at least there remained nothing more but to fetch some water from the neighbouring well. Fritz bounded along the street with the earthen pitcher in his hand, which he filled.

And now all was done, and he stood for a few minutes at the cottage door, gazing across in the direction of the shaft. He saw the place distinctly. Perhaps this new glimpse, combined with cessation from active work,

caused the anxieties of the morning to return.

"What a foolish boy I am," he murmured to himself. "Surely my father, being more restless in his sleep, and dreaming, is not enough to make me thus anxious! 'Dreams are mere bubbles,' the schoolmaster has often said, when he spoke to us of the folly of superstition. Courage, Fritz! God will no more forsake us to-day than He has done in time past."

The boy returned to the room, and sat himself down for a while in the wooden arm-chair by the fire, absorbed in quiet meditation. But he soon sprang hastily up again, saying—

"Why should I rack my brains and distress myself, as I one day must, should I indeed lose my dear, dear father! And the result of these stupid fancies is to make me idle. I will take my knife, and finish cutting out the flock of goats I began; it is some days now since I worked at them."

He went to a cupboard near the large stove at the end of the room, opened the

door, and took out about a dozen little figures, prettily carved in wood. First the goatherd, leaning upon his staff; then the dog, sitting near him on his hind feet, his sagacious head turned round to his master; then some sheep and goats, some lying on the ground and resting, others grazing in all manner of picturesque positions—springing, clambering, or butting with their horns. Fritz placed them all in order on the table, quite delighted at having made such a successful group. He then took a half-finished piece from the cupboard, the outline of which plainly showed a goat with her two little kids, cut out of one piece. The mother turned her head to the lamb who was at her side, whilst the other lay on its back, with its fore-feet in the air, and was looking so pertly around. Any one could see, from the slight sketch, that, if completed with the same care with which it had been begun, it would make a charming little work of art. After considering for a few minutes, and looking at the figures from all sides, he took up his well-used pocket-knife, and began to

cut anew quickly. Under his nimble fingers the group attained greater form and delicacy; and the better he succeeded, the more diligently he pursued his work. Twice only did he cease; when laying figure and knife aside, he looked through the open window towards the place where his father was labouring deep under ground, blasting the ore from the rocky walls. He seemed not yet entirely to have overcome the anxiety which the old man's unusual behaviour had excited.

Notwithstanding, hour after hour elapsed; and, as far as Fritz could see from the distance, everything around the shaft was as quiet as in the early morning.

He sat down again to his employment. Meanwhile the sun ascended higher and higher, and mid-day was approaching. Suddenly he started from his chair, threw down what was in his hands, and, deadly pale, rushed out of the room to the house door. He looked earnestly towards the mine, but yet observed nothing to account for any alarm.

"O Lord God, my Saviour!" he whispered, with trembling heart. "Could I be deceived? It seemed as if I heard a shriek."

He stood still for a few seconds. The momentary apprehension would have passed away, had he not seen here and there, from the different cottages, men, women, and children wringing their hands, and hastening in the direction of the shaft. Immediately the tolling of a bell came vibrating over the plain; and from the distance his ear caught louder cries of anguish. An icy shudder ran through his frame, his lips quivered, and cold drops of perspiration stood on his brow.

"My father's presentiment," he stammered, with stifled voice. "Some accident has happened!"

For a few moments it seemed as if his knees would give way under him. He became giddy—all was dark before his eyes: with a powerful effort he collected himself—a cry burst from his heaving breast. He flew with excited speed across the plains, towards the entrance of the mine, where it

was evident something terrible had taken place.

"What has happened? What is it?" he cried, while yet far off, to the people who were already at the place.

"Have you not heard, Fritz," said a man who passed him, "that the wild waters have burst into the mine, and no one can tell the full extent of the mischief?"

"Have compassion, O my God," said Fritz to himself; then, turning to the man, "My father is there, and will be lost, if God help not."

"Be calm, boy," returned the man who had given him the information. "You need not yet despair. It is possible they may be all saved; at least, if they were able to get out in time; we must wait for the investigation of the superintendent, who is already busily engaged at the mine."

Fritz ran forward. He looked like one bewildered, his mouth twitched, his hair fluttered in the wind; and reaching the place where the people were standing, he pressed

himself, regardless of all, into the midst of the circle.

"Tell me the whole truth," he asked, with a voice full of anxiety, "are they still alive?"

"God alone knows that, my son," was the answer of the officer. "All that human power can do will be done to save the unfortunate men, but it is quite impossible to foretell the result. Go now aside, my good boy, you only disturb us, and can do no good." Then, turning to his men, the other continued, "we must first of all ascertain on which side we can bring them most speedy assistance."

"Yes, that is the important thing," said the superintendent, who had laid the charts and plans of the underground passages and galleries before him, and was diligently studying them. Whilst another officer standing by him expressed aloud his opinion, Fritz cowered down as near to them as possible, and awaited the determination of the officials, whilst the bright tear-drops continued flowing down his cheeks.

"Now, do not cry as if you would break your heart," said a gentle voice near him; and a strange hand patted him kindly on the shoulder, "have you any relations amongst them?"

Fritz looked up, and recognised the bailiff of the Count's estates, which lay in the heart of the mountains.

"Yes, indeed, indeed," answered he, sobbing, "my poor father went this morning to the mine, and if I should lose him——ah! he is all I have on earth.

"Now, now, we must not yet fear the worst," said the bailiff, kindly; "if they are alive, and have been fortunate enough to reach one of the high-lying galleries, then they are not lost. As soon as the masters have calculated whither the poor men could betake themselves, there is no lack of stout and willing arms ready to render assistance, and open up a way for their escape. All the hands in the district, not belonging to this particular mine, stand ready prepared, and my colliers and wood-cutters also are on the

way to aid. Therefore, meanwhile be comforted. Many a time the good God protects those that are His in a wonderful manner."

Fritz dried his tears, and looked about him. There was a crowd of miners gathered all around, with their tools. They needed but a sign to tell them to begin. There could be seen also, pouring from the neighbouring woods and forests, men with shovels and axes in their hands, and who ranged themselves around the bailiff as their commander. Fritz saw, indeed, that of powerful arms there was no lack, and this inspired his almost despairing heart with quiet confidence.

Meanwhile the officers of the mine had ended their consultations, and formed their plans, which were communicated by the overseer to the assembled crowd.

"It is impossible," he said, "that our unhappy friends could have escaped by any other than the Georges-galleries, these alone being high enough to place them out of reach of the waters. These galleries have no outlet from above, it having been shut up some

time since; and therefore there remains nothing else before us but to make a new opening. If we determine on this, and go to the work with all our strength, within four and twenty hours we may succeed in forcing an entrance. Supposing our poor friends to have escaped the first imminent danger, I think we may rely on their holding out till that time. Therefore, forward to your duty, my men. Portion yourselves off in so many divisions, that you may be relieved every two hours; none will then be fatigued, and the work will always be kept going on with fresh vigour."

A cheer from a hundred of them, answered, as with one voice, the summons, and all pressed eagerly forward to begin. Fritz, of course, was among the foremost. A mattock was given him, and he laboured with an amount of strength that was marvellous in so young a boy.

The masters having portioned off the people into so many companies, showed the place where they were to break ground, and

the axes and shovels engaged in right earnest.

Fritz vied with the rest in unceasing exertion. When the first two hours had elapsed, and a new division came to the front, he would not leave his post, but worked on till the third party arrived, when his hands were bleeding and his arms almost paralysed.

"Now, give up, boy," said an old miner, good-naturedly, to him, "you have done more than all the rest of us put together; it would be madness to work any more just now; why, you can hardly stand upon your feet. Go and lie down—we will get on quite well without you. Go, my son, go."

Fritz shook his head, and was taking anew the axe, to give another blow, when his strength failed;—it dropped from his hands, and he himself fell to the ground in a faint.

"Poor boy! what a love he has for his father!" said the same sympathising miner to some men who had just been relieved. "Lift him up, and carry him away. He will

soon fall asleep, which is the best we could wish for him; carry him to the first cottage you come to; any one of us will gladly receive him."

"We will take him to mine," said one of the workers; "it is but a few hundred yards from this. Raise him, men."

They required no second order,—ten or twelve strong arms offered themselves,—he was lifted from the ground, and borne away. When they had gone a few steps they met the forester.

"No accident has happened, my men, I hope?" said he.

"No," they answered. "Fritz Brenner, whose father is among the poor men yonder, has fainted; the boy wrought till his strength failed him."

"Yes, yes, he is a good tender son," said the forester, compassionately. "Take care of him, my men, and here are two groschen for refreshments."

The men took the offered gift without hesitation, for they were poor, and the ex-

hausted boy was greatly in need of something to revive him.

The forester stood looking after them, deep in thought.

"Poor boy, poor boy," he murmured to himself; "what anguish may be yet in store for you!"

As the old miner had prophesied, Fritz, after taking a little refreshment, sank into a deep sleep, which, for some hours at least, kept him in a state of happy unconsciousness. While he quietly rested, the work proceeded with uninterrupted vigour, each one appearing to think that the rescue of the unhappy men depended on his own individual efforts. The whole night through, there was not a moment's rest, and just as the sun's first rays began to reach the earth, the manager pronounced that they were now near the place.

Fritz meanwhile awoke out of his sleep, and looked wondering around. The first moment he could not think what had happened to him; but, putting his hand to his

forehead, the blood that was trickling from it brought all to remembrance. Springing hastily out of the bed which a compassionate hand had prepared for him, he cried—

"My father! my poor father! and could I sleep whilst thou art hovering between life and death?"

He would have immediately hastened forth, had he not now for the first time felt the effects of the unusual exertions of yesterday. His limbs were so stiff he could scarcely move; he staggered about as one intoxicated. It was only by the assistance of a stick, which he found in a corner of the room, that he was able to stand upright. By its aid he succeeded at last in getting outside the door. With difficulty he dragged himself along towards the place where the work had unceasingly been carried on.

By degrees his legs became more flexible; a loud shout, which arose at the moment from the place where the men were boring, went through him like an electric shock, and served as a new stimulus to his strength.

He quickened his pace to reach the scene of busy activity; and to his joy listened to the surveyor announcing that they had reached the point towards which they had been working.

"Some of them, at least, are still alive," he added. "Now, go briskly forwards, my lads," said he, "and in less than an hour your labours will be rewarded with success."

A loud hurrah arose from the men's strong voices, and with redoubled force they wielded the axe and crowbar. Fritz drew a deep breath, and sat down on a boulder of rock, lest the excitement of the scene should again overcome him.

"What has happened? tell me what has happened," he asked, with trembling voice, of the person nearest to him.

"Only good, my boy," answered the voice of the kindly forester. "Rejoice—the people have now come close upon the Georges-gallery. They have already heard from within some knocking, which shows that the unfortunate men are so far rescued, and are aware

that help is at hand. Their mental torture is, God be thanked, well-nigh ended."

"But are *all* saved—*all?*" asked Fritz, anxiously.

"That, indeed, no one can tell yet," rejoined the forester; "have patience for a short time only, my boy."

Fritz did not answer, but folded his hands and prayed earnestly that he who was so justly dear to him might be among the rescued ones.

Suddenly there was a general shout.

"We are through," cried a powerful voice.

"Are you alive still, down there?" was the question, demanded with deepest anxiety.

"Yes, yes," resounded back from the pit. "God be praised; but we have endured mortal anguish. Help us as quickly as you can, we cannot hold out much longer."

"Father! father!" cried Fritz, in piercing tones, "are you alive also? Oh, answer me."

No answer followed, or it was lost in the renewed noise of the axes, which were again vigorously swung against the rocky wall,

which soon yielded sufficiently to admit of a passage.

It was known that eighteen men had entered the mine that morning; and now one after the other came from the deep grave with pallid faces, and were received at the mouth of the pit by their friends and relations, who embraced them with tears of joy. Twenty or thirty torches enlightened the darkness of the scene, and allowed each face to be recognised as it emerged from the cavity. With breathless suspense Fritz stood watching on the boulder. His heart beat louder as in succession they appeared. His anxiety increased as another and another came, but not the one he longed for. Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen of the rescued were already with their friends. Now, surely, it must be his father's turn. The seventeenth appeared—it was a well-known friend of his, the old man Bartels.

"Oh, where is my father, Bartels? where is my father?" cried the boy, with trembling voice.

An expression of agony passed over the old miner's features, as casting a look of compassion on the boy, he answered, "Prepare for the worst, my son, and bear your trial with submission to the will of God. Your father is beyond all the pains and sorrows of this life; he died a noble death, for he was sacrificed to the generosity and goodness of his heart."

A cry of distress, which thrilled through all present, burst from the lips of poor Fritz. He turned giddy, and fell into the arms of the man standing nearest to him. Tears flowed afresh over his cheeks. At length, suddenly rousing himself, he said, "Where is he? I must see him;" and looking wildly around, added, "Have you not even saved his body?"

"It was impossible," answered old Bartels sorrowfully, in the midst of deathlike silence, and each eye was fixed compassionately on the poor boy—the only unhappy one among so many who rejoiced. "It was impossible! When the waters broke in with such tremendous force, every one flew hither to the

Georges-gallery, being well aware that this was the only secure refuge. All were beyond their reach but myself. Being at the farthest end of the passage, I had not observed the fearful state of matters. Your father remembered me, and thinking there might still be a possibility of rescuing me, regardless of his own danger, he plunged through the waters, which were continually increasing in volume."

"Fly, save yourself," he cried to me, and at the same time dragging me from my seat, urged me on through the passages to the galleries. As soon as we came within reach of the flood I comprehended it all, and, with redoubled haste, pressed forwards. We reached the entrance, though the waters were breast deep. Our comrades received us with a cry of joy, and many arms were stretched out to help us. I seized one, and was drawn up, and then a shrill cry sounded in my ear. I looked round, and saw my poor friend carried off by a fresh influx, just as he was about to seize a rescuing hand, and he vanished for

ever from our eyes. I would have plunged in after him, had not my comrades held me forcibly back. This old heart of mine bled, and my eyes for the first time for many years shed tears. Fritz! thy father died a noble death, and we will never cease to deplore his loss together. In future you must be my son.

At these words he extended his hands to the poor orphan, who took them and pressed them warmly, to show his appreciation of the kind offer, though he could not make up his mind to accept it.

"I thank you for your goodness, Bartels," said he, "but I cannot take advantage of it. You are yourself poor, and have already four children to maintain; a fifth would fall heavy on you. Moreover, I am big and strong enough to work for myself. Let me go my way. God will not forsake a poor orphan; but will be my Heavenly Father, having seen meet to deprive me of my earthly one."

His feelings overpowered him, and tears gushed anew from his eyes. Loudly sobbing,

he hid his face in his hands, and hastened away that he might weep in the quiet loneliness of his home. No one kept him back, but all followed him with heartfelt sympathy.

"His father was an upright brave man, and his son will no doubt follow in his steps," murmured one of the men.

"Yes, if he is not crushed in the struggle with grief and poverty," said another; "he is very young, and his father can have left him nothing but the small cottage and its furniture, which will not go far to keep the life in him."

"He will need one to take him by the hand and help him in his distress," said the forester, who was standing near, and had overheard the low whispering of the men. "You can tell him how I sorrow with him and for him, and that he will always find a welcome at the hearth of Forester Buchman. Assure him also that these are not mere words. I am much pleased with the youth, and will gladly take him up and help him to the best of my power."

"Thanks, sir, thanks, in the name of the poor orphan," answered one of the honest miners, "the boy shall be made acquainted as soon as possible with your goodness."

"You can let him know that he may come to me as soon as he likes," answered the forester. "And now God be with you, my men; I must away to see after my woods."

He walked off with rapid steps, and was followed with a hearty "God bless him," for he was a general favourite.

"That will be a comfort to poor Fritz," said one of the miners; "and as my cottage is next to his, I will look in and tell him what the forester has promised."

The crowd now soon dispersed. The happy rescued ones returned to their homes and families. And the mine, which had but a short time before been the scene of so much intense joy and sorrow, was left in perfect silence.

Solitary sat poor Fritz in his cottage, struggling with the first heavy trial of his life,

which had so suddenly torn from him the best friend on earth.

Did he murmur against God?

Oh no! he was too devout and humble for that. He remembered that many a time his father had said—and his father had always striven to impress upon him—that whatever comes from God is sent in wisdom, and must be borne with submission. Nevertheless, it must have been indeed a hard battle he had to fight with his first bitter grief. He felt as if he stood alone in the world; no wonder, therefore, that his tears for a time flowed unceasingly.

CHAPTER II.

THE SHEPHERD BOY.

A GOOD warrior, who, in addition to his own courage and endurance, trusts in a mightier than human arm, is sure at last to gain the victory. And so gradually was it with Fritz, who besought God constantly to give him strength equal to his day. To be sure, many weeks elapsed ere the poor boy succeeded in regaining any measure of composure, or could think of his parent's sad death without deep pain; still he had much consolation, and one great source of it was, that his father's body, after the force of the waters had subsided, was found and brought out of the mine. As Fritz gazed on it, he shed indeed many tears; but the calm expression of the features

proved that his death had been a painless one, and soothed the weeping child. He was glad, too, at the thought that the dear remains would be near him; that he would be able to visit the grave, cover it with green sods, and sprinkle it with choice flowers.

Numerous were the proofs of love and goodwill shown him from all quarters, which he received with great thankfulness. Not only had he been made acquainted with the kind offer of a home, sent him by Forester Buchman, but there were other more trifling but no less sincere proofs of friendship showered upon him. Scarcely a day passed but he was invited to share the simple fare of the neighbours. Many things were also sent to his cottage by tender considerate friends, who were resolved at least that he should not suffer from want of the necessaries of life.

Fritz was very grateful for these acts of kindness, and tried in return to do what little lay in his power to help his benefactors. He took care of their children when they were

busy, delighting them with presents of some of his pretty wood-work groups. He also cut out others, which not the young only, but the grown-up people, were happy to accept. They were surprised at his cleverness; and he was only too glad that he could do anything to express his thankfulness.

In this manner the summer and the following winter passed, and spring advanced. It happened one day, when Fritz was sitting at home in his little cottage, that he received a visit from the guardian who was employed by the authorities to look after the interests of the orphans residing in that district. He said that he had come to speak a few words with him on a matter of some importance. Fritz placed his best chair at the table for his visitor, and waited respectfully to hear what he had to say. The latter held the office also of overseer of the mines. He was a good man, and was highly esteemed, not only by those immediately under him, but by all who knew him.

"Listen to what I have to say, Fritz," he began; "hitherto I have not liked to intrude upon your grief, but time passes, and we must begin to think of some employment by which you may be able to earn your daily bread. You are now, I think, fifteen years old, and it is time you should maintain yourself. Am I not right, Fritz?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," answered Fritz promptly. "That same thing has been often in my mind of late, but I was quite at a loss to know what I could do."

"Well, then, Fritz, we must see. Have you any wish to become a miner? You could first begin as a stoker, if your inclinations run in that direction."

At this proposal, a cloud passed over the features of the young orphan, and a slight pallor overspread his open countenance.

"It has passed through my mind, sir; but I cannot entertain it."

"And why not, my boy?"

"Because the very thought of going into the place where my poor father met his

death makes me shudder. It is not fear of meeting the same fate, sir. No! But I feel that I should never go below, but his image would be before my eyes.

The overseer slowly nodded his head as if entering into the boy's feelings.

"I can quite understand it," said he gravely, "and although I believe that feeling would in time wear off, yet I will speak no further on the subject. But what can be done? Wood-cutting, pretty as it is, will not support you. You would not readily find a sale for it here. We have not money enough in our rough mountains for these superfluous things, but are contented if we can only get a decent subsistence, and keep free of debt. You have had no education to fit you, my boy, for anything else, and I really know not what to say. There is one other opening that just occurs to me if you would like it."

"Whatever you think right, sir," answered Fritz modestly, "I will gladly agree to, provided only I am fitted for it."

"Well, then, I have a brother who is chief

shepherd to Count Rothenstein; he is well off, better than I am myself, and has three or four men under him; the Count possesses numerous flocks. It is possible you might obtain a situation there, and thus earn an honest livelihood. Consider over it, Fritz. If you agree to accept my proposal, I will then lose no time in speaking to my brother.'

"Wherefore should I not accept it?" said the boy, without hesitation. "A poor orphan like me can have no great choice, and in such a calling as that, a man can be both upright and honest. There are not so many temptations as in some other trades. If you would only speak to your brother for me, sir, I would be ready to go at any time."

"Well, if you like, I will go to him to-day," said the kind man. "I do not like postponing, and the sheep farm is not more than an hour's walk from here; you can come with me, if you have a mind."

Fritz was quite pleased to go; he put on his cap, and walked cheerfully by the side of the overseer. In less than an hour they

reached the place, and were fortunate in finding the shepherd brother at home. When the first salutations were past, the overseer brought the case of the boy before him, and was rejoiced to find so ready an acquiescence to his proposal.

"I feel sure I can rely on your recommendation, brother, that the boy is in good health, and will be honest," said the shepherd, after scanning him with a penetrating look. "He will then be welcome. He will be fed and clothed, and at first only his food and clothing will be given him; but if he is active and behaves well, he will, after a time, receive wages. He can remain at once if he wishes."

"Not immediately, sir, if you please," returned Fritz. "I have a few trifles to put up at home, and would also desire to set the cottage in order, and to close it. It is not much worth, but I would not like it to fall into ruin and neglect. You may guess why."

"The best thing would be for us to sell it, Fritz," said the guardian. "We should then

get a little capital that we might put out to interest for you; it would accumulate and give you some extra money in time of need. A house that is not inhabited soon goes to decay, and in two or three years it would be worth nothing."

Fritz was convinced that the overseer was right, though it seemed hard to part with the little dwelling that had been the scene of his early happy years. Notwithstanding, he left his guardian free to do as he thought best; and it was then arranged that he should go early on the following morning to enter on his new calling as shepherd boy. His master having admonished him to be punctual, parted from him with a few kind words.

"Now, that is all arranged satisfactorily," said the overseer on the way home. "You will be fed and clothed, and not have laborious work. If you are faithful, and perform your duties with attention and diligence, it cannot fail to go well with you. You will, by-and-bye, become one of the principal shepherds; and who knows but that in time, should my

brother resign his post, or should it please God to take him to Himself, you may hold his situation, and your fortune will be made. So be of good courage, my dear Fritz. The Lord forsakes none of those who cleave to Him."

The boy appeared quite pleased, and thanked the guardian gratefully for the interest he had shown, and for his care and sympathy. Having reached home, he put together his few belongings, which consisted principally of his knife and some wooden carvings; packed them carefully, and leaving his little bundle in the cottage, went out to take leave of the friends who had been so kind to him in his time of trouble.

There was not one but was grieved to part with the boy, and they all wished him, in the sincerity of their hearts, happiness in his future career. Last of all, he repaired to the churchyard. Kneeling on his father's grave, he adorned it once more with the varied tributes of a child's love and tenderness, and

then committed himself with confidence to his father's God. He went home, retired to rest, and slept soundly till the sun arose, when he sprang up, and put his room in order for the last time. He took his bundle in one hand, and the bullfinch's cage in the other, and, closing the door and murmuring "God grant me His blessing," he carried the key and the bird to the overseer, and set out with a calm spirit on his way to Rothenstein. He arrived just as his master was mustering the flocks. He received him with a friendly shake of the hand. One of the under shepherds was then called, and the boy was committed to his charge with the following injunction:—

"Simon, this is the youth of whom I spake to you. Be good to him; at the same time, suffer no negligence or idleness. As far as you are concerned, Fritz, this is the man under whose superintendence I have put you. He will instruct you in the duties of a shepherd. Render to him at all times will-

ing obedience, and all will go well. And now, God be with you ; drive the sheep to the pastures, my men."

Fritz went with Simon, and was without further ceremony installed in his new office. He was a shepherd boy, henceforth to earn a living by his own industry.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH ART ACQUIRES FAVOUR.

FRITZ was at first quite pleased with his new employment; for, simple as were the duties confided to him, yet he was always learning, and doing something; and therefore the time was neither tedious, nor did it pass unpleasantly. He proved to be willing and adroit; and the shepherd Simon soon began to place confidence in him. Indeed, it was not long before he could entrust the entire flocks to him and to the two faithful dogs. In this way he was enabled to gain many spare hours for himself, which he could not otherwise have enjoyed. Fritz was often quite alone in the meadows, or on the wide extensive pastures of the mountains. The animals, parti-

cularly the dogs Dachs and Mohr, knew him as well as their old master Simon, and rendered as quick and ready obedience to his orders, whether given by word or sign. The charge of the sheep, therefore, gave him very little trouble, the well-trained dogs doing really the principal part of the work.

After a time, however, Fritz began to feel it rather a wearisome and cheerless thing to have nothing but his own thoughts for amusement. Besides, he had been accustomed from his childhood to a life of industry and activity; this continued idleness, therefore, he found depressing. To while away the time, he would talk to his two dogs, who looked at him earnestly with their sagacious eyes, and appeared to comprehend right well what he said to them; or he amused himself with the bell-wether of the flock, who was by no means so simple and stupid an animal as people generally imagine sheep to be. Then he would pluck nosegays of pretty wood and field flowers, which he tastefully arranged, but only to throw them away when withered.

At other times he would contemplate for hours together, from one of the lofty hills, the beautiful landscape outspread before him, with towns and villages, rivers and lakes, and the many-coloured carpets, composed of cornfields, and meadows, and scattered groups of trees; or he would watch the different forms of the clouds high up at heaven's gate, or the birds which, swiftly as an arrow, glided through the air; he would listen to the flute-like notes of the thrush, the cry of the cuckoo, the shriek of the jay, and the twittering of the robin-redbreast and wren, as they hopped so merrily between the branches of bush and hedge; then, again, he would stand at a brook or a cascade, and look thoughtfully at the splashing waters, in which the beams of the sun were brilliantly reflected. But all availed little or nothing to fill up the void of so many idle hours, and he longed from the bottom of his heart for some active occupation.

One day, which happened to be a public holiday, he was looking about for something to amuse himself with. His knife, curiously

enough, dropped out of his bundle. On seeing an old and cherished friend, he could not resist crying out for joy.

"Foolish boy that I am," said he to himself "I have been suffering, for weeks, languor and weariness, and might have employed my time so happily, had I only thought before of this. Never mind, it is all right; to-morrow I will drive the sheep to the mountain slopes, where the pine forests are, and where is the best wood for the purpose."

The knife was slightly rusted, having lain unused for so many weeks; but Fritz set immediately to work to sharpen and brighten it; and, having done so, looked at it with intense inward pleasure.

"This will be a most delightful way of passing the time," he murmured to himself. "There will be no lack of excellent wood hereabouts, and then shall I work to my heart's content."

And Fritz was right. On the next day he drove the sheep to the higher pastures. Simon lent him a hatchet and a saw, so that

he might have no difficulty in providing himself with a store of logs suitable for his carvings (his play-work, as Simon called it).

So happy and joyful of heart Fritz had not felt for a long while, as he did this morning. When he had driven the sheep to the pastures, and given them over to the care of the two dogs, he went immediately to cut some pine wood, and saw it into pieces. He had very soon a heap of large and smaller logs, which he piled one above the other in such a way that they might be quickly dried by the sun and wind, choosing from them two blocks which, he thought, might serve for present use. His eye, at the moment, rested on Dachs and Mohr, the shaggy, strong dogs with their pointed noses and long hairy tails; and he thought how pleased Simon would be if he could make a faithful copy of them.

"Yes, yes; he will laugh when he sees the good old animals cut out in wood, and placed on the shelf above his door; and I will make them so well that he will recognise them at once,—Dachs with the long, pointed, lynx-

like ears, and old Mohr with his beautiful tail waving like a banner."

No sooner said than done. Fritz went cheerfully to work with his usual cleverness, and continued cutting the whole day, not forgetting, at the same time, to keep a watchful eye on the sheep. When evening approached, and the sun in his splendid mantle of purple and gold went to rest, he wondered how the time had passed away, which before had seemed so tedious. The hours had flown as minutes; and he rejoiced anew, that just at the very right time, he had remembered his favourite amusement. Cheerfully he drove the flock home that evening, and felt happier and more contented than he had done since he became a shepherd boy. With ever fresh pleasure he continued his carving, till Dachs' and Mohr's likenesses were finished.

The shepherd had no idea of the surprise that awaited him; for, when he was near, Fritz had always some other work in hand, and kept the dogs out of sight. At length they were completed; and, on his return

home one evening, he placed them on the table before Simon. The surprised man recognised them at the first glance; but, on making a closer inspection, and looking at them from all sides, he saw more distinctly the points of striking similarity, and exclaimed aloud, joyfully—

"Why, this is, indeed, the wolf-headed Dachs, with his long pointed ears, and faithful honest eyes, his broad chest and slender legs; and Mohr, as like as he can stand, with his long sweeping tail, his shaggy coat, and broad back. Tell me, boy, how you have managed to copy them so ingeniously!"

When he said this,—at the same time shaking Fritz heartily by the hand,—the youth could have no doubt of the pleasure he had given, and was doubly glad that he had sought out the forgotten knife.

"Yes, yes, Master Simon," said he, quite pleased; "and now, as you have discovered the likenesses, you must accept them; and you might let them stand on the shelf over your door, where they will be out of your way."

"Out of the way, my boy! I do not wish that by any means. It will be a great pleasure to me to have them always near me. Now, that is a beautiful present, and I value it much. But before I put them in their place, I must go and let the other shepherds see them: they will envy me, I am sure. Many thanks, dear Fritz; many thanks."

And he lost no time in doing as he had said. Scarcely had he finished his supper, than he ran off to the master-shepherd, and to his companions, Niklas, Peter, and Christian, who were quite surprised, and would at first hardly believe that it was Fritz who had carved them so cleverly. But when Simon assured them that it really was the case, the chief shepherd said—

"If the boy is so clever, he must cut out my Tiras also; and I will give him eight groschen, if he succeeds as well as he has done with yours."

"I will do it with pleasure for you, but not for payment, sir," said Fritz, who had

followed his friend, that he might hear what they said of his work.

As you may believe, he was not a little pleased when he heard their favourable verdict.

"Only let me have the dog," said he, "for two or three days on the pasture-ground, and I will try hard to make a good likeness of him."

"Will you, my boy?" said his master. "That is very good of you. But instead of being in the pasture-ground, you must work here in my house, taking your meals with me, and Simon will see to the care of the flocks till you have finished it. My Tiras I must have; and I adhere to my promise of eight groschen, if you are as successful as with Dachs and Mohr."

"I will at once select the finest piece of wood; and the likeness shall be as good, if not better, sir," answered Fritz; "at least I will do all in my power to make it so."

It was evident to see, by sundry unmistakable hints, that the other shepherds also would be ambitious to have their dogs simi-

larly immortalised. Fritz understood their longings.

"Only wait," said he, "until Tiras is finished, and your turn shall come too. I will gladly do what you all wish; the carving is an amusement to me; it costs me nothing; only give me time."

In order fully to estimate the joy which Fritz's promise called forth, on hearing his kind offer, they shook hands with him, and promised to testify their gratitude in some way, though they were not able to offer him money. Fritz was thus, all at once, installed a favourite among them. Simon felt quite proud that *his boy* should be regarded and honoured by them as a genius. If Fritz gained no further advantage than the kindly feeling they expressed, it was sufficient recompense.

The boy worked diligently, and in the course of two or three weeks a faithful copy of Tiras found a place in his master's room, while the others were in due time ranged on the shelves above their respective doors.

The fulfilment of his promises did not prevent his taking up new subjects. He seized every opportunity that offered, whether it were a bird singing on the branches, or a deer that, towards evening, would come out cautiously from the thickets to seek his food, or a powerful bull that was being driven past, —everything he put his hand to succeeded, much to the surprise and pleasure of his friends.

One day he pastured his sheep in a paddock adjoining the Count's park, surrounded by an iron railing, forming a barrier to prevent trespassers. Fritz had often driven them hither, under the shade of the fir-trees. On the green grass plots were placed, here and there, lovely statues, chiselled out of marble or finest sandstone, the extreme beauty of which attracted him, and made him long to inspect them more closely. He felt deterred, however, from attempting such a minute study as he could have desired; for no shepherd boys dare enter the park. It would be a punishable offence to climb the

palings without permission. After contemplating them for a long time, he determined, with a heavy sigh, to abandon all thought of a nearer and more thorough inspection, and go on with the more ordinary work which had engaged him the last few days.

Count Rothenstein, amongst his other possessions, had a well-known stud of the finest horses; and among these there was one, in particular, that called forth the admiration of Fritz. It was a gray Arabian,—a splendid creature, that a king might well have coveted. Fritz, always keenly alive to beauty, had, for some time past, specially observed this graceful animal. He was often allowed to range the park free and unfettered; and it happened one day in particular when loose, that he approached near the railing, on the other side of which the boy was sitting on a grassy bank. Fritz seized his opportunity, and began immediately (for he never came without material for work in his pocket), on a piece of wood, to copy the noble quadruped. He had already made several attempts, which

proved unsuccessful; but this time he was encouraged. The animal's fine head, with the small ears and wide nostrils, the graceful bend of the neck, with the flowing mane, the beautifully-formed body, the delicate limbs, all were there. It needed but the turn of his head, and the expression of the large fiery eyes, to make it a complete success, but this he could not, by any means, accomplish to his satisfaction. Suddenly, however, the horse, as if he had understood the boy's intention, stood before him, threw his head proudly back, and neighed loud and distinctly.

"Oh, just one moment more, please!" said Fritz, fixing his eyes on him, and making some quick and clever touches with his knife. "There! now I have succeeded," he cried out joyfully; "I think I could not hit it better."

"And what has succeeded?" unexpectedly asked a voice behind him. Fritz looked round affrighted; for in his eagerness he had not noticed the sound of approaching foot-

steps. Hastily springing up, he took off his cap. The Count and his only daughter were standing behind him, beholding with evident surprise and satisfaction the wood-work which Fritz's quick movement had disclosed.

FRITZ'S INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNT AND HIS DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ENEMY.

"WHY do you look so terrified, my boy," said the Count, turning his eyes back from the miniature horse to Fritz himself. "You have done nothing wrong that I can see; but, on the contrary, have cut out a really artistic likeness of my noble horse. Who taught you to do this work? Only look, Mathilda. It is really capitally done."

"Wonderfully well," said the Count's daughter, a little girl of about twelve years of age. "I should very much like to have it for my own, papa."

"Do you hear, my boy?" said the Count, "my daughter is anxious to have your work. What do you ask for it?"

Fritz was struck dumb with confusion; but, blushing deeply, he took up his horse, and bashfully presented it to the young lady without uttering a word. Mathilda seized it with both hands, and was quite delighted with the gift.

"No, that is not what I meant," said the Count, smiling. "We did not wish it as a present. Speak out boldly, and tell me how much it is?"

"Oh, nothing, your Grace; nothing!" stammered the boy at last. "I shall be quite proud and happy if the gracious lady will accept it."

"You are a very unselfish boy," said the Count, fixing his eyes more earnestly on him than before. "What is your name?"

Fritz told his name. It sounded strange to the Count.

"You do not belong to the people in my village," he replied. "How is it you have come here? I see, however, that these are my sheep you are taking charge of."

The boy told his story in few and simple

words. It was listened to by the Count and his gentle daughter with true sympathy. Mathilda's heart especially was deeply touched, and she whispered a petition in her father's ear, that he would do something for him. The Count, who was a generous hearted man, seemed quite inclined to help him, and asked if he were pleased with his new situation, telling him to speak freely, and not to be shy, as he wished to assist him.

"Oh, I like my situation very much," answered the boy frankly; "the master and the other shepherds are so kind to me."

"Well, I am glad to hear it," said the Count; "but have you no desire for anything that I could carry out for you?"

A bold thought darted across Fritz's mind. What if he dared ask for permission to visit the park and grounds occasionally. Whilst these thoughts were passing through his mind he cast his eyes to the ground, and, changing colour, showed that there was something he would ask could he summon up courage.

"Do speak," whispered Mathilda to him, "my father is so good, and will not refuse you any reasonable request."

"I cannot be so bold," answered Fritz timidly.

"What is it now? out with it," continued the other encouragingly; "perhaps you are very fond of horses, and are wishing to have a situation here as groom? Only say now."

"No, that is not it," stammered Fritz.

"Well, what is it, then? do not be so shy," said the young Countess, half impatiently.

At length Fritz took courage. "I have so often longed to go into the beautiful park," said he hurriedly; and then, as if frightened at the boldness of the request, "but I fear it is too much for a shepherd boy to think of."

"And why so?" rejoined Mathilda, laughing. "Is that all? You need not have been so particular; need he, papa?"

"The wish is certainly modest enough, and shall be granted," returned the Count, smiling; "but I should very much like to

know why it would give you so much pleasure to go into my park?"

"Ah, only because I should see those marble and stone figures more closely," answered Fritz. "I have a great desire to copy them in wood; but I cannot see them distinctly enough, unless I were near."

"And do you think you could really copy such works of art?" said the Count, much interested with the superior intelligence and manner of the boy.

"I do not know if I should succeed," returned Fritz, "but I should like very much to try."

"Well, you *shall* try," said the Count, smiling; "but I fear you will find it a more difficult matter than you expect. I will speak to my gardener, nevertheless, and tell him to let you come and go as you will. And here, my boy, take this *thaler*, and buy a new knife, for your old one is almost worn out. Good-bye."

Ere Fritz recovered from his surprise, the Count had walked on with his little girl,

who smiled kindly at him, and nodded her farewell; then, turning round, she called out, "Come to the park as often as you like; no one shall interfere with you."

Fritz stood for some time as if transfixed to the spot. His cap, in his surprise, had fallen out of his hand, and lay near him on the grass. He gazed fixedly on his benefactors, who were now in the far distance; and even when they had vanished from sight among the trees, did not stir till the cold nose of his honest dog thrust itself into his hand, and aroused him to consciousness, when he cried aloud for joy, and said,—

"This is a happy day. I have the Count's permission to go into the park, and he has also given me a *thaler* as a present. The good, good Count! If he had not spoken to me first, I could never have had the courage to make such a bold petition; but now I can see the beautiful statues and study them, and the first group that I make shall be for the kind little lady. I will seize the very first opportunity to begin."

The poor boy felt as if his happiness were now complete, the fondest wish of his heart having been so unexpectedly fulfilled. With very different feelings than formerly, he contemplated the exquisite statues through the iron railings of the fence, nodding and smiling to himself, as if he would say,—"Yes, yes; only wait a little, and we shall become better acquainted with one another." The money was little esteemed in comparison; still he was pleased to have it, and put it carefully in his pocket, to be kept for some future necessity.

When he drove his flock homewards that evening, his face beamed with happiness; so much so that Simon noticed it, and knew that something more than ordinarily pleasant must have happened. Fritz, in answer to his inquiries, concealed nothing from him; and you may well believe that the man wondered not a little when he heard how kind and sympathisingly both the Count and his daughter had spoken to this young shepherd boy.

"Why, Fritz," said he, "if you are thus

taken into favour by the gracious Count, you will certainly be installed as head shepherd some day, when you will be fortunate indeed."

Simon's predictions were but lightly regarded. Fritz could think of nothing but the charming park and the statues, and how splendid it would be if he could only have a holiday soon, that he might take advantage of the permission. At night he dreamt of nothing but marble figures standing round about him on high pedestals, looking at him with their beautiful, earnest countenances, which were all to be carved by himself; and then, as in dreams is often the case, his knife was unaccountably lost; or, when found, it broke in two pieces; or the wood yielded, and split up the centre; or he worried himself with doubts as to how he could ever accomplish the amount of work. But a voice seemed to proceed from one of the figures, saying to him,—"Courage, boy, patience and perseverance overcome all difficulties." His heart became full of confidence,—he would

sink anew into earnest contemplation of the glorious forms, till at last they appeared as if they were floating in mist, and melted away as a small light cloud in the summer heavens. In the morning he awoke quite delighted with his dream, and tried to recall how their lovely countenances had all appeared to him. Thus he lived on in hope till his next holiday, when he would see them in reality, for the park was to be no longer a closed sanctuary to him.

The day came at length; and, having obtained Simon's permission, he was on his way early in the morning. On reaching the park, he found the gates still shut. He had not to wait long, however, for the gardener soon appeared, and unlocked them, when Fritz, thinking he had done so for his admission, entered, with a heart beating for joy.

Scarcely had he ventured inside, than the man approached, and with a dark and menacing expression called out sharply,—"Oho, youngster, not so quick; no one dares to enter here."

"But I am Fritz, the shepherd boy," said he, quite distressed. "The Count has given me permission to come at any time."

"A shepherd boy to have access to the park at all times!" cried the other, half in scorn and half in anger; "that is very likely, indeed. Be off, and never let me see your face again, you impudent fellow; or, as true as I am gardener, I will thrash you with the first stick I can lay my hands on. Be off, I say."

"But I am the boy who gave the horse to the Countess Mathilda," stammered out Fritz, the tears starting to his eyes. "Do you not know me? Try and remember."

"And that is indeed the height of presumption. Why, you must be mad, boy! You, a begging scamp, presented the young countess with a horse! that is too much. I will teach you a lesson for your folly; only wait a minute." And seizing hold of a broom that was leaning against the wall, and drawing the handle from it, he hurried, full of rage, after Fritz.

Fritz was on the point of avoiding the man's vengeance by running away; when at that very moment the Countess Mathilda appeared, like a guardian angel, and throwing herself between the trembling boy and his angry opponent, said—

"What is all this about, Martin? What are you going to do with that stick?"

"I am going to chastise this lad," he said, his face crimson with rage, at the same time a little embarrassed at the unexpected arrival of his young mistress. Only think, gracious lady, the fellow has the boldness to assert that he has both presented you with a carved horse, and also has received permission from your father to go into the parks. I never heard such self-sufficiency in all my life!"

"But why be so angry, Martin?" rejoined the young lady, smiling; "what he said is true, every word of it. Have you forgotten already that I myself, some days ago, ordered you to give admittance to the young man from the sheep farm? And this is he."

"Indeed!" said the man, quite confused.

"I thought he was a young *gentleman.* But the horse, gracious mistress, the horse, I cannot believe that story."

"Oh yes, indeed, and a very beautiful horse it is; as fine a one as my father's 'Ali Pasha,'" said the Lady Mathilda, laughing. "So look well at the young man, that when he comes back you may know him; and I advise you, Martin, not to deny him an entrance. Lest, however, you should be inclined to treat him in the same way again, I tell you that he is under my protection, and no one dares to do him any harm. Remember that. And now come, Fritz—I will show you our beautiful statues myself."

The boy felt as if he could have fallen at the feet of his kind protectress.

"How good you are—how very good," he stammered, with bright tears of joy flowing over his cheeks. "And to a poor boy like me. You see now, gardener (addressing himself to the man), that I did not tell you an untruth."

"But how was I to know?" growled the

other to himself, in an angry voice, and casting a look of resentment on his young mistress' protégée. "Well, notwithstanding the gracious lady may command; but if, by-and-bye, the finest fruit and flowers come to be stolen, I wash my hands of it. I know how it will be—when first this thing, and then that, comes to be missed. But, as I have said, I shall not hold myself responsible."

"Why harbour such evil suspicions, Martin?" said the young girl, indignantly. "How can you suspect the poor youth in that unkind way. Look at his honest countenance—does he look like a thief? Fie! shame on you, Martin, you have made the poor fellow quite pale. But do not distress yourself, Fritz, it is the last time, rely upon it, that he shall treat you like this." And, taking the boy by the hand, she led him away to the shady part of the beautiful park. The kind words of the child had gone to his very heart, and he followed her willingly.

The gardener looked spitefully after them.

"Only wait, my lad, till the next time I

meet you," he muttered to himself, doubling his fist. "Nothing shall be wanting on my part to bring such rascals to their senses. Only wait—I shall not forget you." Then, stamping passionately on the gravel walk, he returned to his house at the park gates.

Meanwhile Fritz walked, with a thankful heart, by the side of his protectress. She led him through the drives of the park, till they came to the finest of the marble statues. It was truly a study to behold the boy's face. It beamed with delight at the sight of these works of art. He was, of course, too ignorant to guess what the figures represented; still he could appreciate their pure and elevated beauty, and expressions of wonder and admiration burst involuntarily from his lips. The young lady, delighted with his enthusiasm, told him all she knew about them. The most striking among them were Ceres, the goddess of nature; Diana, the goddess of the chase; and Apollo, the god of song, with the lyre in his arms. This last was the one Fritz liked the best. His mind was fired

with the earnest desire to copy it in wood; feeling, however, at the same time, how far, far more difficult it would be than anything he had formerly done. For this reason he gave not the slightest hint of his intention to the Lady Mathilda, for he feared she would laugh outright at his presumption; but in his heart he was determined to carry out his purpose.

When the young girl left him, to return to the castle, he did not delay to make a beginning. His knife and a piece of wood which he had carried in his pocket, soon made acquaintance with one another; and, after a little hesitation as to which figure should be first attempted, he kept to his first decision, and chose the statue of Apollo. Eagerly he commenced the work—eagerly he proceeded. The whole morning passed;—the sun stood high in mid firmament;—still he cut, and cut continually—the calls of hunger were forgotten. The gardener passed on the opposite side, and cast an evil glance at him, but Fritz was indifferent, or rather

never observed him. It was not till three o'clock in the afternoon, when a numerous party of visitors from the castle came out to stroll through the beautiful walks, and he heard the sound of cheerful voices, that for the first time he looked round. The Count was approaching, with his daughter and several guests, and appeared to be coming right in the direction of the Apollo. Fritz did not wish to be surprised at his work; moreover, dreading to encounter so many finely-dressed people in his poor clothes, he hastily sprang up, gathered his things together, put his knife into his pocket, and ran rapidly in the opposite direction. Fortunately, he made his escape unobserved, and having reached the open field, and beginning to feel as if his dinner would be acceptable, went as quickly as his feet could carry him towards the sheep farm. His goodnatured friend, Simon, had put aside for him a goodly portion of soup and meat, which he took thankfully. Fritz, at the same time, related the events of the day, describing the reception he met from

the gardener, and how he had been saved cruel treatment by the timely arrival of the Lady Mathilda.

"Well, I would have you take care of that man in future," said Simon. "I have known him for some time;—he has a wicked, revengeful disposition; be on your guard, for if an opportunity presents, he will certainly do you some harm, rely upon that."

"What harm can he do me?" answered the boy, carelessly. "I am innocent; but should he, in spite of this, persecute me, I know for certain that I shall find a protectress in the young Countess. She is so good, that I am sure I can reckon on her support."

"Well, may it be so," answered Simon. "Only take my word," he added, with a shrug of the shoulders — "be upon your guard."

"I will remember," said Fritz; but, truth to say, he had memory for little else, at present, save his Apollo, which he was anxious to finish as soon as possible, that he might

present it as a token of gratitude to his kind patroness.

Had it not been for the faithful services of the two dogs, who carefully watched the flocks, the boy might have received many a reprimand from Simon, for he allowed the sheep to go where and how they pleased. His thoughts were continually wandering to the park, and its fascinating relics of antiquity. He longed impatiently for his next holiday, that he might resume his interrupted work; and when at last it came, the early morning found him standing before the gates waiting for the gardener to open them. The suspicious janitor came at last, and though he gave an angry glance, let him quietly pass. Fritz continued to come occasionally from this time till autumn's leaves were strewing the ground. His experience confirmed what he had imagined from the commencement—that it was indeed not so easy a matter to copy a great work of art as the subjects he had formerly executed.

The first attempt proved such a perfect

failure, that he threw it into the fire. It was not till towards winter, that he completed one which he deemed sufficiently good to offer to the young Countess. It was cut of the finest white maple wood, and he had taken infinite pains to make it worthy her acceptance.

He resolved to take the earliest opportunity to present her with the first fruits of his diligence.

With beating heart he was early on the way, and having reached the castle, requested one of the servants to ask the Lady Mathilda if he might speak to her. The servant knew the boy already, and was also aware of the interest he had excited in the castle.

"Come with me at once, Fritz," he said. "There is a visitor here, but I am quite sure you will meet with a gracious reception from my young mistress, particularly when you have got, if I conjecture rightly, something pretty to show her. What have you there in your hand, wrapped up so carefully? is it another horse, or what?"

"You have guessed rightly, John; it is a present for my gracious protectress, if she will accept it," said Fritz, looking embarrassed and bashful.

"Let me see it first, Fritz," said the man.

Fritz removed the covering,—John looked perfectly bewildered.

"Why! that is the Apollo in the park," he cried. "You have indeed succeeded well. I do not understand about these things myself, but I must say you have cut it out very nicely—the Lady Mathilda is sure to be delighted with it. Come quickly with me."

The servant led him through a long hall, till he stood outside a door, through which was heard the sound of voices.

"Here are the family," he said; "wait a moment, till I tell them you are here."

Scarcely had he entered, than the door was again opened, and the Lady Mathilda herself, with her amiable and beautiful smile, came out to the corridor, and greeted the bashful shepherd boy.

"Well, Fritz, I am so glad you have come

to-day; it was only a minute ago we were talking of you to a gentleman from the capital, who has been admiring your horse, and he would like to speak to you. Come in."

"Wait a moment, gracious lady," Fritz entreated. "I would like first to beg your acceptance of a trifling present that I have cut out in the course of the summer. You were so very good to allow me an entrance into the park, and here you will see what use I have made of the permission. Please receive it from me as a token of thankfulness."

He uncovered the little model, and the young girl was no less surprised than the servant, though she knew better than he how to appreciate the cleverness of the work, as well as the patience and diligence required to execute it.

"But this is quite beautiful," she said, quite delighted, "a real piece of art. Father! Lord Linden! only look at this, which the shepherd boy Fritz has made."

At these words, she left Fritz standing in the corridor, and ran into the room to exhibit her present. For some moments after, there was silence, and Fritz was beginning to fear that it had met with but a small amount of approbation, when he heard a deep powerful voice say, "This is really well done; and has the young man done it entirely himself without any instruction, did you say?"

"He has, indeed; you can speak to himself, he is waiting outside. Come in, Fritz, and do not be afraid."

The boy bashfully hesitated; when quick steps were heard approaching the door, and there appeared before him the tall form of a gentleman, whose dark eyes, looking from under grizzled eyebrows, scanned him with a searching and earnest gaze.

"Is it you who has modelled that Apollo?" he asked, in the same deep voice which Fritz had already heard.

"Yes, my lord," answered he, not daring to look up.

"Well, you have nothing truly to be

ashamed of. Come in here, and tell me all about it."

Without further ceremony he laid hold of his arm, and drew him into the room, and up to the table on which stood his little statue.

"How did you make this, my boy," said Lord Linden, "I mean what tools did you use?"

"Only my knife, sir," returned Fritz, drawing it out of his pocket. "With this knife here."

"No, no, that is impossible, you are not telling the truth," said that gentleman with a look of severity. "Only look, Count Rothenstein; it is scarcely to be credited that he could cut out that little figure with its pedestal with such a rough instrument as this, and rendered too with such faithfulness. Now, boy, tell the truth."

Fritz reddened at the suspicion which had been so inconsiderately expressed. He made no answer, but seized his knife, and taking rom his pocket a piece of wood, which he seldom went without, he began and cut in a

few minutes an outline of just such a little figure as was before their eyes. He quietly handed it to Lord Linden, who regarded the clever little sketch with astonishment.

"Well, truly," he cried, "that is the best answer you could have given—an answer in deed, instead of word. Count Rothenstein, this lad is a born artist; you will ruin his prospects if you allow him to continue with the sheep. When I go home, I will undertake, with your permission, that he is brought under the instruction of a first-class master, or at all events, I will take advice as to what should be done with him. What do you think about it, my lad? How would you like to become a sculptor, and model beautiful figures such as are in the park here?"

Fritz listened with breathless attention. The blood forsook his cheeks, and he became deadly pale, though delight at the same time sparkled in his eyes.

"Oh, my lord," he stammered, "if it were possible; but a poor boy like me! Such a thing can never be!"

"That is my affair," answered Lord Linden. "You will get word from me by-and-bye. I must first speak to the teacher I mentioned. A talent like yours must not be lost. Depend upon it you shall ere long hear from me. But the little model at all events I must take. You could make the Countess Mathilda another, could you not? I wish you could yourself have come with me. The Count will henceforth release you from your situation as shepherd boy. Is it not so, Count?"

"Certainly, Linden, if you are really in earnest."

"Quite in earnest, my friend, I never joke on matters where the future and happiness of a fellow creature is concerned. So we may consider that matter as settled."

"Yes," said the Count, "I should have taken the boy at once into my own house; but, as you know, I am going off in a few days with my daughter to Paris, so he must for the present remain at the farm, till something further is settled regarding him. But I will

take care that his time shall be at his own disposal. I see Mathilda is not very well pleased at parting with her Apollo, but Fritz will have time to make her another. Will you set about it at once?" he said to the boy.

"Oh, yes! anything for my kind, gracious protectress," answered Fritz impetuously. "I will begin immediately, and shall be able to cut out a second far more quickly than the other. I will not work at anything else till it is completed."

"Well, you will have eight or ten days for it," said Lord Linden, "whilst I am arranging matters with your teacher. Now you can go. Good-bye, my boy."

Fritz bowed, and left the room. But the young Countess, following him to the door, whispered,—

"Thank you, Fritz, so much! And if you make me another Apollo as beautiful as the last, I will bring you some nice present from Paris."

At which she nodded kindly to him, and Fritz departed.

When he came out from the Castle, he scarcely knew what he was about; everything seemed to be whirling in circles round him; his brain was giddy with the delightful prospect which had opened so suddenly before him. He, the poor miner's son, that he should be taken up by Lord Linden, become an artist, and have for his regular occupation modelling such lovely statues, it seemed like a dream. Still he had heard it from the gentleman's own mouth, and his appearance and manner seemed sufficient guarantee that he would be true to his word.

Fritz continued running,—shouting aloud from time to time, in order to give vent to his excitement; and with a heart glowing with joy and thankfulness he reached his home. Having arrived at Simon's cottage, he related to him what had happened, when he was told that the Count had already sent and given orders that he was from henceforth to give up his service at the farm. This was a confirmation of the auspicious prospects that were opening before him.

After he had been refreshed by a glass of warm milk, he went to bed, delighting in the anticipation of days that he thought would be full of nothing but happiness.

Alas, poor Fritz! Little did he know what the next week was to bring, or rather withhold. There is merciful consideration in the Divine saying, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow."

CHAPTER V.

A FRIEND.

FRITZ'S first thought on the morning of the following day, was to begin his other figure of the Apollo, according to promise. He worked unceasingly, for the time was short, and had the pleasure of completing it so as to present it before the lady's departure for the Continent. The day following the presentation, she started with her father for Paris. Very sorrowfully did Fritz follow with his eyes the carriage which was to convey to a distance, and for so long a time, his kind patroness.

He now very seldom went beyond the sheep farm, waiting with longing expectation the arrival of the letter from Lord Linden

that was to make arrangements for his own departure to the capital. But nine, ten, fourteen days elapsed, and still the post had not brought the desired news. Poor Fritz became anxious, and not without reason. Could it be possible that his benefactor had forgotten him? With the fear of such a calamity weighing down his spirits, he hastened to the Castle in order to see his friend the butler, thinking it not unlikely he might have received tidings. But what was his dismay, on reaching the park gates and entering them as he had been accustomed to do, to meet his old enemy the gardener, who with haughty scorn refused him admittance.

"Oho, my lad," said he, "I am master now, and I tell you, once for all, that you are to come no more here as formerly. Away! There is no longer any soft-hearted young lady to come between you and a sound thrashing; so never let me see your face again."

"But, sir," returned Fritz, full of dismay, "the gracious young Countess told me the

day she left home, that I might come as before to the park at any time, as long as I remained here."

"She may have said what she likes, what do I care?" was the rough answer. "I am governor here, and you shall not pass the threshold. Be off."

"But if you would only allow me to inquire at the Castle if there is any letter for me," said Fritz, "I would ask no more."

"A letter for you, indeed! You may wait long enough; all the letters that come to the Castle go through my hands, and there are none for you, beggar boy that you are! Once more I say, leave the place."

The words were sufficiently spiteful, but were surpassed by the expression of malicious hatred on the features of the man, while a strange sarcastic smile played upon his lips.

"A suspicious thought darted through Fritz's mind, which had been before so buoyant and trusting. The gardener, he knew, had been his enemy from the time of his first visit to the park. Simon had warned him

long ago to beware of him. Involuntarily he exclaimed,—

"You have a letter for me—I am sure of it. I entreat you do not be so cruel, but give it up to me."

The man only laughed, and said provokingly,—

"And if I have, do you think you will ever receive it? No, never, not if you went down on your knees for it."

Fritz burst into tears; he begged, he entreated. A stone might almost have been moved to pity, but the gardener's heart was harder than any rock. Fritz turned back again, wringing his hands in despair; and at length in his distress he did actually fall on his knees before this malevolent oppressor. But all was of no avail. With a kick of contempt he pushed the boy away, closed the park gates, and turning his back, returned, laughing contemptuously, to his own house.

Poor Fritz! it seemed as if his very heart must break. For a few minutes he lingered

at the gate, pressing his hot forehead against the cold iron bars, whilst the tears flowed down his cheeks. Then calling to mind his friend Simon, he hastily ran home to bespeak his advice and help.

Simon tried, as well as he could, to comfort him, and offered to go at once to the gardener and demand the letter; and, if he refused to give it up, threaten to communicate with the Count or Lord Linden. This was accordingly done. The letter, however, he would not surrender, though he did not deny having received it; but the threatening of the shepherd made not the slightest impression; he only continued in his taunting tone of voice,—

"Report to them both," he said; "that is to say, if you can find them; but you may seek long enough, for you will certainly not get their address from me."

"Well, may God forgive your malicious dealings to this poor youth," said the honest man, quite angrily. "I would advise you to take care. If it continues, I shall take the

earliest opportunity, on his return, of acquainting the Count myself with your shameful conduct; besides, there is such a thing as justice in the world, and we will yet see if you cannot be compelled to surrender a letter that does not belong to you. Come, Fritz, we will go to the sheriff."

They went away, followed by the jeering laugh of the man, who cried after them,—

"Go now, go. You will have some little trouble for your pains; and you will only find yourselves just where you were before."

Neither Simon or Fritz returned any answer, but went direct to the officer of justice, and related the whole affair; but, to their dismay, he shrugged his shoulders, and asked if they could prove that such a letter had been received; "because, if not, I fear," said he, "I can do nothing in the matter."

"But the gardener acknowledged as much, sir," said Simon.

"Yes, he may have said so, in order to annoy," answered the lawyer; "but were I to go and charge him with it, he might pos-

sibly say he knew of no such letter, and was only joking with you. Of course, I could then proceed no further. Your best plan will be to go to the Post-office, which is but two miles from this, and inquire if such a letter has passed through their hands. Should it be so, it will be a different consideration, and we can bring him up, and oblige him to surrender it.

As a drowning man clings to a rope of straw, Fritz seized this new idea, and was not long in reaching the Post-office. But, alas ! here again his hopes were disappointed. On putting the question, he was told that only one letter had been received for the Castle during the course of some days, and that this was directed to the gardener himself. Poor boy ! he returned sorrowfully to the farm, and told Simon the result of his inquiries.

"Well, Fritz, but who knows," said Simon, "that this one may be intended for you. It is possible Lord Linden may have forgotten your name and address, and, in order to make

sure, has written to the gardener, requesting him to communicate with you. This, no doubt, is the explanation; and therefore he persists in saying that he has intercepted no letter, because it is the case, although he has most probably concealed the message he was requested to convey. If his lordship had only known the spite the man bore you, he would most certainly have fallen on some other way of communicating with you. But, as it has so happened, my advice would be to go at once straight to the capital. There you can seek out your patron, which surely will not be very difficult, for such a distinguished person will be well known, and any one will tell you where he lives; then you can hear from his own mouth what is to be done for you, and you will be out of your enemy's way."

Fritz entered heartily into this proposal.

"Your advice is good," he said; "it will certainly be the wisest plan." Then suddenly recollecting himself, "But such a journey will require money, and I possess no

more than a single thaler, given me by the Count, and that will not go far."

"No, indeed," thought Simon; "but if your guardian would sell the little cottage, it would bring in, at least, sufficient to take you to your journey's end."

"Right! I never thought of that," said Fritz, highly delighted. "I will run across early to-morrow, and acquaint him with the circumstances."

The morning came, and Fritz was early on his way to the superintendent, who had so befriended him in his time of distress, and had procured him his present situation. He had, however, been anticipated in his wishes and his errand, for the cottage had already been disposed of, and Fritz returned well pleased, with forty thalers in his pocket, which were readily handed over to him at his earnest request. He now had money more than sufficient to pay his expenses, and could think of little else than the projected journey. Having taken leave of the head shepherd and his other friends, he set out,

accompanied by Simon for fully three miles. The latter then left him, with every good wish that success might attend his long expedition.

"Do not forget your old friend Simon," were his last words; "and should you not feel comfortable in the large and busy city, return again to us without ceremony; we will receive you with open arms, and be delighted to take you in."

Fritz could not part without deep emotion. He watched the sturdy figure till it vanished in the distance. Much as he rejoiced at the thought of beginning his career as an artist, it was natural he should feel distressed at leaving one who had been from the first a true friend under all circumstances. But the hope of a happy future at length preponderated, and he walked briskly on, that he might as soon as possible reach the place of his destination. He met no one by the way, except some pedestrians, who gave him a passing salutation. He was, therefore, at liberty to indulge his own thoughts, pondering

over his future prospects, and building many fine castles in the air. He never allowed himself to imagine there would be any difficulty in finding Lord Linden; and even supposing it should so happen that he was not successful for the first few days, he had money sufficient to support him for a week, at least, without assistance.

So he went courageously on his way, till the daylight began to wane, and the shades of evening darkened around him. Only once during the day had he allowed himself a short interval of rest, when he turned into a little village inn, and partook of some simple refreshments. He came now to one by the roadside, which seemed to be frequented specially by carters and carriers; at least so Fritz conjectured, there being four or five heavily-laden waggons drawn up in the stable-yard, or about the house, with their white tilted tops, protecting the goods from rain or dust. The horses stood unharnessed in the stalls; and, on his entering the coffee-room, Fritz saw the drivers seated round an oaken

table, covered with a clean white cloth, and filled with dishes smoking with various tempting contents. He took off his cap politely and modestly as he entered; and, wishing the men good evening, sat quietly down in a corner of the room, till he could see some one disengaged, and ready to attend to him. The waggoners looked kindly at him; and, pushing their chairs a little closer together, they made a place for him at their table.

"Come here and sit down with us, lad," said one of them, good-naturedly. "You have come exactly in the very nick of time; the dishes are so well filled that you can partake with us of the good things without scruple; so please attack them without further ceremony; we are glad to see you among us."

On looking around at the good-humoured countenances, Fritz saw that the invitation was not a mere compliment, but sincerely meant, so he accepted it as frankly as it was offered; and, laying down his bundle, which contained his small wardrobe, he joined his

new friends. The man who had first spoken to him heaped on his plate a pyramid of nice dumpling and meat. He saw Fritz was about to remonstrate; but, patting him good-naturedly on the shoulder, he said—

"Only begin; you will find it soon disappear. A young fellow like you should have a good appetite,—more especially when you have all the appearance of having had a long walk to-day."

Thus encouraged, Fritz took his knife and fork. In less than half an hour his plate was empty, and he found himself drifting into a general conversation with his new friends. They seemed interested in their young guest, and began to question him as to whence he had come, and whither he was going, to which Fritz returned a candid answer, not concealing from them his object in going to the capital.

"So you intend to become a sculptor, do you?" said the waggoner who had first addressed him. "Well, and not a bad thing either; for I know that stone-masons earn a

lot of money by the hammer and chisel. When my eldest daughter died, two years ago (God bless her!) I had a stone put on her grave, on which was an urn, and a butterfly—the emblem of immortality, as the workman said; and a right pretty thing it was, with the name of the dear child cut neatly on the stone, together with the day of her birth and death. The letters and dates were beautifully gilded, too. As I said before, the whole thing was very well done; but I can tell you I had to pay a great deal of money for it,—more than the earnings of a whole week. I paid it gladly," he added, wiping a tear from his eye; "for my Gussy was a good child, and the monument was worth it. I only wished to let you know that the stone-cutting trade is a lucrative one; and I should say you have done quite right in thinking of it, Fritz. Is not that your name? And now, one thing more, my boy; might you not as well ride to the capital as go on foot?"

"Yes, I might just as well, if my purse were a little better filled," answered Fritz, laughing.

"Who asked about your purse, foolish boy?" answered the carrier. "The long and short of it is, I am myself, with my four browns, on my way thither; and it will make no difference to them if, in addition to their present burden, they draw a little chap like you; so, if you would like to go with us, do so, and welcome. To-morrow, about three o'clock in the morning, we shall start."

The boy was not a little pleased at this unexpected offer. It was accepted with a hearty shake of the carter's offered hand. Shortly afterwards he rose to retire to rest, in the hopes of getting two or three hours' sleep, before he set out anew on his travels.

"Can you not just as easily sleep in the waggon?" said the kind man. "There is plenty of straw, and no end of woollen coverings. The tilt above will make it like a four-post bed; I will show you how to manage, and that will save you the cost of a bed here; for you will have plenty to do with your little money by-and-bye."

Fritz was well pleased with this novel

arrangement, and willingly accompanied his friend to the waggon. Under his directions he very quickly prepared a soft, warm couch, and as quickly took possession of it. He slept excellently, in spite of the fresh, cold night air, not once waking till early the next morning, when the powerful whistle of the driver reached his ears. He then roused himself; and, putting his head out from the covering, cried to his friend, who was walking beside his horses—

"Good morning, sir; good morning."

"Oho! there you are!" answered the man. "Well, you did not sleep badly up there, did you?"

"Splendidly, sir. May I ask what your name is?"

"Thomas, my boy; Thomas."

"I slept splendidly, Mr. Thomas. I do not think I ever slept better in all my life. But now I should like to get down and walk with you."

"Do so if you like," answered the waggoner. "When you are tired you can get in again."

Fritz sprang nimbly to the ground, and joined his new benefactor. Slowly they walked beside one another; for the "four browns" did not think it necessary to subject themselves to inconvenient haste,—knowing, as they well did, that many a weary mile lay before them, ere they should reach their journey's end. Master Thomas and Fritz chatted to one another; the latter relating the incidents of his childhood, while Thomas had no end of interesting adventures which had befallen him during his many travels through Germany; and thus the time passed quickly away, till breakfast, and so on till mid-day and evening, when they halted in some little country town, in order to take up their night's quarters.

In this manner several days elapsed. Fritz slept regularly in the waggon at night, and in the day-time either trudged by the side of the horses, or took a seat when he was tired, or if bad weather set in. On the way, he had learnt that his friend the waggoner lived in the town to which he was bound, that he

owned a small house there with a garden, that he had an excellent wife and two little children, whom he managed to support comfortably on his earnings.

"We have none of the superfluities of this life," he said, one day; "but we have daily bread; and if at any time you would pay us a visit, Fritz, you will be heartily welcome. I live at No. 12 William Street."

The day following, just as the horses had reached the top of a hill, and were standing to take breath, the man pointed with his whip to a large town in the distance, saying—

"Fritz, do you see those high towers over yonder? They are partly concealed in mist, but can be distinctly enough discerned, too."

"Yes, yes; I see some towers," answered Fritz quickly; "they are not surely the towers of the capital?"

"Yes, indeed, they are," rejoined Master Thomas; "and if we cannot accomplish the distance to-day, we shall certainly be there betimes to-morrow. So cheer up, my boy;

FRITZ GETS HIS FIRST SIGHT OF THE CAPITAL.

you are approaching the end of your journey."

Fritz was not sorry to find he was so near. Master Thomas had told him so much of the beauty of the great town, that his longings to see it had increased every day, to say nothing of the eagerness with which he looked forward to the main object of his visit. The very horses appeared to know that they were not far distant from their own stables; for they pulled their considerable load with fresh vigour, and the waggon rolled cheerfully on.

With the approach of twilight they turned into their last night's quarters, and supped; after which Fritz fell asleep, with the happy thought that on the following day he would be introduced to all the glories of a great world of life hitherto unknown to him.

But how strange! When he awoke the next morning, and rose from his waggon-bed, to his astonishment he observed that the horses were not yet harnessed, although the sun had already risen. He went into the stable, and there found poor Thomas full of

anxiety about his trusty animals, two of which had become very ill during the night.

"I yet hope it may be nothing serious," said he, on Fritz sympathising with him, "and that it may be just from the effect of bad fodder which the good-for-nothing hostler has given them; but they cannot proceed on the journey, and must wait here till they are better."

Fritz truly bewailed the accident, and declared his determination not to leave his friend in his trouble, but to keep him company to the very last. Master Thomas would not hear of such a thing, urging him by every persuasion he could think of to accomplish the two or three remaining miles alone. Yet, though Fritz's heart was burning to reach the capital, he was firm in his determination to remain, and be of all the use he could.

"Well, then, if it must be so," said old Thomas, "it must, and so much the better for me. It is possible they may recover by mid-

day, and we shall then have more than time to reach the town before evening.

But midday came, and the poor "browns," instead of being better, became worse and worse. The veterinary surgeon was sent for; still, for a time the anxiety was not lessened, for, after a thorough examination, he shook his head, and looked very grave.

"I do not know what is the matter with them," he said; "knees and limbs are sound, and they seem in their general health not to be out of order. I have a strong suspicion that they must have eaten something poisonous. Similar cases have come to my knowledge, and this is not the first time I have been called in on such occasions. It is very strange; but we shall see. One thing I will tell you to comfort you. I have never lost a horse under similar circumstances; but it will not be possible for you to proceed on your journey at the earliest before to-morrow, my good friend."

"That does not signify, sir," answered Thomas, "if only the poor animals' lives

are saved. I care not for being a day longer."

"I have no fears as far as that is concerned," said the surgeon confidently. "Only I would ask you to wait upon them yourself, give them their fodder with your own hands, and I will send some medicine that will soon bring them, I hope, to their legs again."

Thomas promised to give strict attention to the doctor's orders, and never left the stable the whole day long. No one but he and Fritz came near the invalid horses, the latter remaining faithfully by his friend till quite late in the evening, when his eyes dropped from sheer fatigue.

"Go you and lie down," said Thomas to him; "here you can no longer be of any use, and youth needs sleep and rest. Go; and keep your mind quite easy, for we may consider the danger now as over."

Fritz hesitated no longer. Slowly and quietly he crept out of the stable, sought for the waggon in the dark night, and crept under its tilted top, where he settled himself

in his accustomed place, and five minutes afterwards was fast asleep.

It must have been about the middle of the night, and pitch dark, when Fritz was suddenly aroused by the trembling and shaking of the waggon; it seemed as if the bales and chests of goods were being pushed about and unloaded. Nothing could he see, but could quite distinctly hear a smothered sound, and on listening more attentively discerned the whispering of men's voices.

"It is impossible that it can be Master Thomas," he thought, and lay as still as a mouse, that he might hear more.

Attention! there was renewed whispering. "Here is a bundle of silks," said the voice, "I took care to mark the place where it lay when I was examining the waggon to-day. Seize it, boys; it must first of all be brought into a place of safety."

Fritz was now more frightened than before, for he could no longer doubt that thieves had entered the waggon, and were turning over

its valuable contents, in order to carry off the best. A cold perspiration broke out upon him, and he scarcely ventured to breathe. Should the rogues discover him, he thought, his life would not be worth much; and in the first few moments of anxiety he scarcely knew what to do for the best—he could decide on nothing.

But he soon regained his self-possession and firmness. The thought of his good old friend Thomas, and all the kindness he had shown him, occurred powerfully to his mind, and he set himself earnestly to think how he could frustrate the evil designs and intentions of these dishonest people. He was well aware that he was himself helpless in the matter, for there were at least three men engaged in the work of plunder; but if he could succeed quietly to slide down, creep into the stables, and make the old man acquainted with what was going on, something might yet be done. At all events the attempt must be made, come what might.

Slowly he raised himself up; but with all his caution could not prevent the straw from rustling a little.

"What was that?" he heard a voice ask in a whisper. "Something moved."

"Stupid," said another, in a low voice, "there is no one here; make haste, and finish the work."

"But I could swear that there was a rustling," whispered the first voice again. "Did you hear nothing, Hans?"

"I did; it seems as if all were not quite right," replied a third. "Are you sure, John, that the old man has not left the stable?"

"As sure as that we are here," was the answer; "at least at ten o'clock both the old man and the boy were safe there. They would not leave the horses. I took good care of that when I mixed the arsenic with the hay; so we need not fear being surprised."

"You are right," said another, "but we must at all events search and see; quick and down with the bundles."

Fritz lay still during the conversation, every syllable of which he heard with the utmost anxiety. He feared the men would at once begin to examine the waggon, and then they must discover his still warm bed, and possibly himself too. Fortunately, however, for him, the danger passed over, and he breathed more freely when he heard the snapping of the cords and felt the slight shaking of the waggon, for he knew by that, they were again at their dishonest work.

"How fortunate that no one had observed his leaving the stable," he thought to himself; "but now no time is to be lost in making an effort to elude the vigilance of the plunderers."

Slowly and cautiously he glided along the waggon till he had got as far as possible from the end where they were working. Having listened for a moment to ascertain if his movement had been detected, he let himself down by a rope to the ground. He was safe; no one had observed him. Although the night was very dark, there were some stars

sparkling in the sky, and by their feeble light he could just discern what was going on. He was delighted to find that they had placed no watch, and also that the way to the stables was quite clear. Bending down, he crept along, and reached the door without being noticed. He opened it quietly. There sat old Thomas still wide awake, and not a little alarmed to see the boy hastily enter, his face as white as a sheet.

"In the name of wonder, what has happened to you?" he asked.

"Be quiet, be quiet," the other answered. "Nothing at all has happened to me; but thieves have been turning out your waggon. I have escaped unobserved. The hostler John is among them, and I heard him say with his own lips that he had mixed arsenic with the horses' food."

"Boy! you are dreaming," cried Thomas, terrified. "But no. I see too well you are speaking the truth. Now let us be calm, and think what must be done, not only to rescue the goods, but also to apprehend the

thieves. You remain here, Fritz, with the horses, whilst I go and give the alarm at the hotel. I must rouse the landlord; he at least is an honest man, and will know his own people. Do not be afraid; I will soon be back again.

"I have no more fear now," answered Fritz. "Besides, if I had I could bolt the stable door from within."

"Do so, and I will manage to awake the landlord. Fortunately, I know the place well, for this is not the first time I have put up here; but the hostler is a stranger to me, he cannot have been long in this inn. Nevertheless, I have no doubt we shall succeed in catching both him and his choice companions."

Saying this, Thomas clambered up into the loft, knowing there was a communication between that and the house. Fritz waited in anxious suspense to know what would follow. For some time (it must have been fully a quarter of an hour) the most unbroken silence reigned around. Then it seemed to

him as if a door slowly creaked on its hinges, and as if people were slipping across the yard barefoot. Again breathless silence, broken very soon by a loud cry of—

"Hollo! you rogues, what business have you about the loaded waggons?" This was followed again by a wild confused cry,—by roaring and groaning, till at length, after a short silence, there was again the sound of many voices talking to one another.

Fritz could wait no longer. He rushed out into the yard, and saw by the light of his friend's lantern the landlord of the inn and five or six sturdy men standing in a circle round the thieves, who had been secured, and bound hand and foot.

"Come away, Fritz!" cried the waggoner when he saw him approaching. "We have got all three of them, and a good thing too; for they had turned out nearly the whole waggon, and were appropriating the greatest part of its valuable contents. My warmest thanks to you, my boy; you have indeed done me a good service, for all that I possess

could not have repaired the loss had they succeeded in carrying out their wicked plans. But we have them safe now, and will take care that this shall be the last opportunity they get of poisoning horses, and stealing costly goods! And to you I am indebted for all this, my boy. How happy I am that I happened to think of offering you a seat in my cart. But now we must have the rascals off to prison."

"Yes, away with them," answered the landlord, at the same time giving a sign to the servants. "And I thank you also, my lad; for had it not been for your cleverness, the guilty one's conduct would not have been exposed; and so in time the good name of my house would have been called in question."

Fritz did not see that so much praise was due to him; but he was content to have done his friend a good turn, and rejoiced at having been the means of averting the threatened loss. Whilst the thieves were carried off, he returned with Thomas to the stables,

and slept the remainder of the night as quietly as if he had only been startled for a few moments from his rest by an unpleasant dream. When he awoke, and all the strange events in which he had so recently borne an important part flashed across him, he could not help vividly recalling a Scripture verse that had early been impressed on his memory by his pious father—"*Be sure your sin will find you out.*"

CHAPTER VI.

BEWARE.

On the following morning, old Thomas' horses were so far recovered as to be able for the short distance which now lay between them and the town. Fritz, of course, accompanied him, and without any further mishap they reached the gates.

The young traveller must now take leave of his trusty companion, and without loss of time seek out his patron and benefactor, Lord Linden. Thomas was very unwilling to part, and urged him to go home with him for two or three days, that he might rest after his long journey. Fritz thanked him very much for the invitation, but declined it at present, being anxious, with the least possible delay, to begin his career as artist.

"Well, then, go in peace, my son," said the carrier, when he saw that he was bent on proceeding. "Still I hope you will not altogether forget your old friend, when you find your noble patron, but will bear him in remembrance. If at any time you would like to visit my little cottage, you will always receive a hearty welcome. Promise me, Fritz, that you will come and see me sometimes."

"That I do, most sincerely," said the boy, warmly; "it will be a great pleasure to me; and as soon as I have found out Lord Linden, and heard what I am to do, I will come and tell you."

"The bargain is made," said the waggoner; "I shall expect you in the course of a few days. Delay not too long, for it is possible I may soon have to set out on my travels again, and it is difficult to say beforehand how long I may be in returning. You understand me, Fritz; do not be long in coming."

Fritz promised; the two shook hands again,

and honest Thomas then turned down the long streets leading to his home. Fritz looked after him with feelings of gratitude, till the lumbering waggon was lost in the turmoil and throng of the city. It never occurred to him that it might perhaps have been better had he accepted the hospitable invitation, and sought advice from his friend, instead of trusting to his own inexperience and ignorance of the place. But what necessity was there? Lord Linden was his protector, and it surely could not be difficult to discover him.

Fritz lost no time in going to work. He pressed forward bravely through the crowded streets, and cared little for being jostled hither and thither. With the extent of the town he was not a little astonished. He would remain at one time standing at the shop windows, looking at the beautiful articles with which they were filled; at another, contemplating the splendid palaces. Then again he would stand still and watch the ebbing and flowing of the ever restless

human tide. Becoming hungry, as well as tired, he observed, on the opposite side of the street, a baker's shop, and close to it an eating house, where he bought some rolls and sausages, sat himself down on the nearest curb stone, and feasted heartily if not luxuriously; his thirst he quenched at a running fountain close by. Thus fortified, he forthwith began to make inquiries regarding Lord Linden. He thought he could not do better than request the needed information at the shop where he had procured his dinner.

"Lord Linden," answered the man. "Oh yes, that name is well known here, and highly respected; but which of the Lindens do you want?—there is the chamberlain, the major, the president, the director, the counsellor for finance, and I do not know what besides, for the family are numerous here. If you will only tell me which of them you seek, I shall willingly give you information."

Fritz stood with his mouth wide open, and looked extremely foolish. It had never occurred to him that there could be more than

one of the name. Which could be the right one he knew not, and the man, of course, still less.

"That is bad," he said, when Fritz had acquainted him with the circumstances. "The town is large, and a weary fruitless walk you are likely to have, ere you find your patron. Still you must not despair. If he is here you cannot fail to find him, sooner or later. You must just search till you do. I will gladly give the addresses of those having the name whom I know."

He took a slip of paper and a pencil, and wrote down five or six, with the street and number of the houses. He advised him to lose no time.

"If you are successful, all well; but if not, your best plan would be to go to the police office,—it will only cost you two groschen, and you will be certain of receiving the fullest information that can be given."

Very much disconcerted and downcast, Fritz took leave of the goodnatured shopman, who had directed him to the best of

his knowledge, and went on inquiring the way to the streets where one and the other of the Linden family dwelt.

He was able, for the first time, fully to note what a very large city it was; for many half miles must he have walked before he reached any one of the houses on his list; and the worst of it was, that, after all, his trouble was in vain; not one of the gentlemen to whom he was directed was his friend; and more and more distressed, evening arrived, and he knew he could do no more that day, for he could prosecute his search no further in the dark.

What should he determine?

His first thought was of his old friend, Thomas. He would seek him out; he was quite sure he would be welcomed in his dwelling for the night; and with that friendly interest he had already evinced, the old man would also give him advice and direction for the morrow. But suddenly he stood still, as one thunderstruck, for when he began to try and recall the name of the

street where the waggoner lived, he could not for the world remember it. It had been only once or twice casually mentioned, and in his long walks through the city he had heard and read the names of so many that his brains were perfectly addled, and his memory failed him.

"Now, then, what is the next best thing?" he murmured to himself, in desperation. "I must find a night's lodging. I have money to pay for it. To-morrow I will try and collect my thoughts, and surely at last my friend's street will come to my mind." So weary was he, he could have sank down with fatigue; his feet burned like coals with the hard pavements, to which he was not accustomed; he therefore did not hesitate long, but asked the first person he met, if he could tell him where he might find accommodation for the night.

The person he addressed was a youth who appeared to be about the same age as himself. He had by no means an open expression of face, and with a pair of small pierc-

ing eyes he scanned poor Fritz from top to toe.

"Have you money to pay for a lodging?" he asked, after a short time, rather distrustfully.

"Oh yes," answered Fritz, incautiously, and in his accustomed frank manner. "I have no intention of cheating you."

"Ah, well! It might fare ill with you here, where one or other of the police are always on the watch," answered the lad; "but if you will come with me, I will take you to my quarters, where you can at any rate get a lodging. You have not been long in the city, I think?"

"To-day for the first time," rejoined Fritz.

"Well then, come," said the youth; "I see you are tired, and I am very sorry for you; but you shall have a bed in which a king might sleep."

Fritz congratulated himself on his good fortune in meeting with a sympathising stranger, and willingly walked on by his side. On the way the boy asked his object in coming to the capital, to which Fritz

answered openly—concealing nothing from him. His companion thereupon bid him be of good courage, for there would be no difficulty, he said, in finding Lord Linden. He stated, also, that he knew Thomas, the carrier, and would be happy to conduct him to his house next morning. Fritz was quite touched with the kindness of the youth, and warmly and heartily expressed his thankfulness.

"Do not speak of it," said the lad, interrupting him. "But here we are at the place; walk in; the evening is cold, and you will be far more comfortable sitting in the room than outside."

Saying this, he took Fritz by the hand, and leading him through a dingy entrance, opened a door, from which issued a most unpleasant close odour, and clouds of tobacco smoke. Fritz would have shrunk back,—his companion, however, beckoned him to follow. They passed through the crowded room into a dark corner, where he told him to sit down.

"You can wait quietly here till I come back," said the youth. "I shall be here immediately. I am only going to speak to the landlord about a bed for you."

Fritz obeyed, though, to tell the truth, he was not particularly pleased or satisfied with the look of the place. Most of the men around him had a very common dirty appearance, and they talked in such a wild and excited manner to one another, that he felt somewhat alarmed and anxious. He would gladly have got up and crept quietly out; but ere he could do so his companion returned, bringing with him two glasses full to overflowing, one of which he placed before Fritz, whilst the other he took himself.

"There, drink that," he said, kindly, "it will do you good after your long run in the cold raw night air."

Fritz sipped it,—it tasted both sweet and fiery. He took a second mouthful, and in less than a quarter of an hour had finished the whole glass. Jacob, for so his companion was called, ordered a second, which Fritz

also swallowed, but experienced immediately after such a sensation of stupefaction, that his head sank on the table, and in a moment after he had fallen fast asleep.

"Poor boy, we must carry him to bed," said his companion sympathisingly to the landlord; "is there any one who could assist me ?"

A waiter was called. He and Jacob took the unconscious Fritz under the arms, and dragged him into a small chamber, where they laid him down on the bed.

"That will do. I can undress him myself," said Jacob to the waiter, "so you can go now. I shall be lying down also immediately."

The man went, and scarcely had he closed the door, than the lad, by the faint light of a taper, began to take off poor Fritz's clothes, making at the same time a careful examination of the pockets. When he came to the purse filled with money, the proceeds of his father's little cottage, he laughed maliciously to himself, and transferred the sum to his

own custody, replacing where he found them one certificate after another, as so much worthless paper. He then covered his victim carefully over, so that he might at least not take cold, put out the light, and disappeared, never to return.

On the next morning, Fritz awoke with a beating headache, and had to collect his thoughts before he could remember the circumstances of the preceding evening. As to how he had got into bed he had not the slightest recollection. He took it for granted that Jacob had placed him there, and involuntarily called him by name. No one answered; he looked round the room, and found himself quite alone.

"This is strange," he murmured; "the lad was to have accompanied me to Lord Linden's, and also taken me to my old friend Thomas. But he must have gone on some errand of his own, and will doubtless soon come back."

A little tranquillised by this hope, he dressed himself, and waited rather impatiently

for a whole hour. At length it occurred to him that Jacob might be below in the coffee-room, and he took himself thither immediately; but here also he was nowhere to be seen, and on Fritz making inquiry, the landlord told him he knew nothing of the youth, never having seen him before yesterday. This surprised Fritz very much, Jacob having boasted of his intimate acquaintance with him, which the landlord said looked very suspicious.

"I know nothing about him," answered he, "but that is no affair of mine. Only pay me for what you had last night, young gentleman, and all is right,—four glasses of grog, a bedroom, and attendance,—that will be sixteen groschen.

Fritz put his hand in the pocket where his little money was carefully stowed away, and found only fourteen loose groschen. He was going to make up the deficiency from his purse when he discovered to his horror that it had vanished.

"Oh, what shall I do? I have been

robbed," he said in dismay, and looked so pale, and trembled so violently, that the landlord himself felt compassion for him.

"I was beginning to suspect something of the sort," said the latter. "The lad had a villainous countenance, but when he ordered lodging for himself and his cousin, of course I could not refuse to give it him. He is not your cousin, then?"

"Protect me from such a one," sobbed Fritz, whilst the bright tears rolled down his cheeks; and he then related at intervals, how he had come to be in his company.

"Well, the thing is clear as daylight," said the landlord; "he has taken advantage of an inexperienced youth, and made an easy prey of you. He made you insensible with strong grog, and then having robbed you, he secretly sneeked away. Now you ought to pursue him; but what affair is it of mine? You still owe me two groschen, but I must make you a present of them, I suppose, for I see you have nothing left. Never mind, my boy, take

courage, but see to it that you soon get under shelter, else it may go ill with you in a large town like this. Christel, give him a piece of bread to take with him; I am very sorry for the poor boy, but really I can do no more to help him. Learn wisdom by your experience, and in future be very cautious in your intercourse, when you have money about you."

Poor Fritz was beside himself with grief and despair; he knew not who would advise and help him, and it was very evident that the landlord would have nothing more to do with him. He put the piece of bread which the waiter had given him mechanically in his pocket, thanked him also mechanically, and went out of the lodging-house only to wander about at random. For several hours he moved purposeless and objectless through the streets and squares, till at length he called to mind that he had at least two friends in the city on whose advice and protection he could reckon, viz., Lord Linden, and the brave old Thomas. He determined

to resume his inquiries, and immediately began to set about it. If he could find either one or the other, he knew that he would at all events be speedily released from his present miserable plight.

CHAPTER VII.

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

DISTRESS imparts courage. Fritz had discovered that shyness did not ensure success, so now he inquired well-nigh of every one he met. But none gave him a satisfactory answer. Many scarcely replied to him, some not at all; others dismissed him and his inquiry with an angry look and word of displeasure at the interruption. There were a few good-natured people who advised him to go to the Police Office, and Fritz would gladly have done so had he known how much he would have to pay, for he had now only two penny pieces in his pocket. Evening came, the poor boy was worn out with fatigue, yet had no place to go for

shelter. He cowered down in the corner of a church porch on the hard cold stones, hid his face in his hands, and wept bitterly. So lonely, so forsaken, so helpless and miserable he had never felt in his whole life before, not even at his poor father's death. How he yearned after the sheep farm, and his friends there, who had always been so good and kind to him. The thought of leaving the large strange town and returning thither, darted through his mind, but he did not seriously entertain it, for how could he travel such a distance without any money. Besides, he could not yet give up all hope of finding his benefactor. In these sorrowful circumstances, he cried himself to sleep.

The cold morning air awoke him just as the sun was rising. He felt very wretched. There had been frost, and he was thoroughly chilled; his limbs shook, his teeth chattered, every joint in his body was stiff, and it was not till he had kept himself for several minutes in rapid motion, that he could succeed in attaining any degree of warmth. He

was also dreadfully hungry, but how could he appease it? Involuntarily putting his hand in his pocket to feel for some pence, he came upon the piece of bread which the compassionate landlord had given him the day before, and which he had forgotten in his trouble and perplexity. He eagerly devoured it, and making a cup of his two hands, he drank some water from the nearest well. With this most frugal repast he felt in some measure strengthened and refreshed.

But now, what was best to be done? Should he, as before, continue his unavailing search? Or should he try to find, in the meantime, some situation where he might offer himself as a servant? On second thoughts, it would be time enough for that to-morrow; to-day he would again devote to seeking one or other of his friends.

Mid-day came. Fritz had inquired here, there, and everywhere till he was tired, and what was worse, had not received any clue to the much-desired information. However, a beam of hope appeared to gleam at last, for

he heard of one gentleman of the name of Linden, whose dwelling he had not yet visited. Cherishing the sanguine hope that this surely must be the right one, he hastened thither, found the gentleman fortunately at home, and was admitted to his room; but poor Fritz! he again stood, as had been the case so many times previously, before a perfect stranger. The disappointment was a bitter one; he could not restrain his tears, and cried as if his heart would break.

"But what is it you want, my boy?" asked Mr. Linden, wonderingly, and much surprised. "Who are you? and whom are you seeking here?"

Fritz gradually gained sufficient composure to explain the object of his visit. The gentleman patted him kindly on the shoulder, and said,—

"I am very sorry indeed. Lord Linden, whom you seek, must be Alexander, a cousin of my own; at least, so I suspect from your description. But he is not here just now, having gone on an expedition to Egypt,

Palestine, and no one knows where else, and I have no idea when he will return. It is, therefore, only vain trouble to inquire any further. But here are four groschen, go to the Police Office, and they will give you information about the carrier, who has indeed, from what you say, been a good friend to you. Good-bye, and I wish you success."

Fritz took the money, stammered out a few confused words of thanks, and went away. In spite of the distressing news he had received, some confidence returned to his timid heart. Of course he must give up all hope of assistance from his patron, but he thought he might safely reckon on finding honest old Thomas; for at the Police Office they had every one's address, and he had now money to pay for the information. He clutched it firmly in his hands, lest it too should be lost, and ran full speed to the Station, which was well known to him, having passed it with a longing eye several times the previous day. He walked in confidently, told his business, and awaited,

trembling with impatience, the answer. The clerk took down his register, sought and sought for the name Thomas, and shook his head.

"Not here," he said at length. "There is no carrier of that name. You must have made some mistake, or some one has been deceiving you, and given you a false name."

Fritz grew pale, as he stammered out,—

"Impossible, impossible, I entreat you, look again."

The evident despair of the poor youth touched the man. He once more examined his book, inquired of his companions, and called in some policemen who were standing about the door to inquire of them. All in vain. No one could remember any of that name.

"I am very grieved," said the clerk, "but you must see yourself that there is some mistake, or that you have been misinformed."

Fritz attempted to speak, but his heart was like to burst, and the words stuck in his throat. His whole body trembling with ex-

citement, he laid down the four groschen piece, and was going away when the man pushed it back, saying smilingly,—

"Keep it, my boy; you appear to have far greater need of it than I, and you are quite welcome to any little trouble I have had. You must look out for some employment; no one who is willing to work will starve here."

Fritz walked slowly away, having looked his thanks to the friendly officer. He was perfectly shattered at the extinction of this last remaining hope, and, unspeakably sorrowful, he wandered along the street, not heeding where he was going.

A hard push from a passing porter brought him to his senses.

"Oho! look before you!" said the man. "If people will run right in the way, it is their own fault if they get hurt."

Fritz made no answer.

"He is happy," thought the poor boy, as he watched a smile on the face of the person who had just addressed him, "whilst I can do nothing but cry. But could I not under-

take work similar to his? I am strong enough, surely? Yes, yes; I will see if I can get something of the sort to gain my livelihood in the meantime, until better days come."

But these resolutions were as transient as others which had preceded them, and in a few moments he was again pursuing his aimless wanderings through the streets. He had tasted nothing since morning, when he took his piece of dry bread. Again he invested a few pence in a roll and small porringer of milk,—this forming the only other and concluding meal of the day.

When it was dark he repaired to the same church porch which had afforded him shelter the previous night. He cowered down in the corner of it. Weary enough truly he was; his eyes soon dropped, and he fell fast asleep. The next morning found him awaking, half-frozen as before. But after taking a quick walk to restore circulation, he began to consider what was to be done to rescue himself from his present condition of increasing misery. It was hard, after his repeated

failures, to determine what was best. Yet, to find employment could not, he thought, be so very difficult. The town was large; there were many people in it. Could he not find among its thousands some one or other who would take an honest lad into their place of business? Fritz had no doubt about it; so little, that he spent his last remaining two groschen in the purchase of his breakfast, with the confident expectation that when dinner time came, he would have obtained supply from another quarter.

He now started, well pleased with the prospect of work, and busily looked this way and that, hoping for some occasion where his services would be required. Sad to say, however, no such opportunity occurred. The people whom he met appeared to be all too much occupied with their own concerns to think of him. He asked first a man who was hacking wood in a workshop if he could render him any assistance for a few groschen; but his proposal was dismissed with the short, gruff answer—

"I have enough to do to earn money myself; be off!"

Fritz walked on to where he saw a number of men, who appeared busy carrying logs, and repeated his offer. No one required his help, they said; and they, too, turned their backs upon him. The whole day thus passed. After receiving many a rough and unkind answer, the boy's heart sank within him. He began to fear that, even with the greatest desire for some occupation, he must miserably starve to death. A bitter feeling of despair took possession of him. With eager eyes he looked in at the shop windows as he passed. There lay food for hundreds of people, but he had not now a farthing in his pocket. It cannot be denied that hunger would have tempted him to put out his hand to take what was not his own, had not conscience, God's vicegerent, spoke with her warning voice; and the Divine command, which human lips, now sealed in death, had sacredly enforced, was called to his remembrance—"Thou shalt not steal." Religious principle gained the vic-

tory. He tore himself away from the enticing sights, and wandered on in a state almost of stupefaction, not knowing what to do. His courage had so failed him, that he thought if he were compelled to lie another night on the cold, hard stones, he should die.

He was ashamed to beg; but, passing the market-place, he could no longer resist. As an old lady, handsomely attired, passed him, he held out his trembling hand, and entreated, with a half-stifled voice, for alms. Ah, had she only given one look at the white, haggard countenance of the poor boy before her,—at his hollow eyes and thin cheeks—she surely would have been moved to pity! But other cases of imposition had hardened her nature against appeals like his. She turned her eyes the other way, and rustled past, whilst a bitter sigh escaped him. His hand dropped, and the big tears rushed afresh to his eyes.

He still kept lingering, however, in the same spot, thinking that perhaps there might pass by some compassionate person, who

would give him sufficient to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

So he remained standing; and, indeed, his former shyness seemed all at once to give place to a spirit of defiance.

"There *must* come some one who will have pity on me," he murmured to himself; "there must, else I shall starve; and I am sure that would not be the will of the merciful and gracious God. No, I am sure it would not."

Again and again he bitterly stretched out the entreating hand, only, however, to be refused, and by some ungenerously rebuked. This embittered him still more. From at first scarcely venturing to ask alms, he now became excited. It was the madness of utter despair, the blank sense of utter human abandonment.

"I am hungry," was his simple appeal to a gentleman who passed him; "give me a trifle to buy some bread; you are rich and I am poor, and near to death. It is your duty to assist your fellow-creatures."

"The police will assist you, my man, if

you are so impudent," was the answer he received. "Take care you are not put into prison."

He pushed the boy on one side so violently, that he fell against the nearest wall. The flickering spark of courage was now quite extinguished; and, leaning his head against the cold stones, he sobbed as if his heart would break.

"Stupid boy!" suddenly whispered a voice close to his ear. "Begging leads to nothing but imprisonment. Follow me, and you shall live in luxury and happiness. Come!"

Fritz raised himself up, and looked about him. His blurred eyes met unexpectedly the gaze of a countenance he had seen before. The light of the gas lamp shone clearly upon it, and called forth a cry of surprise, or rather of indignation.

"You are the rogue who robbed me," he said, at the same time, with an almost involuntary effort, seizing the treacherous villain by the collar.

The other found no difficulty in extricating

himself from the hands of poor Fritz, who was weak from hunger and sorrow.

"My advice to you, Young Ignorance," rejoined that repulsive citizen, as if he had inflicted no injury on the person he now addressed, "is to forget your past dealings with me. Meanwhile, if you are wise, follow me, and I promise you a fine warm supper—soup, roast, and salad, with a good strong drink; and, for the night, a soft bed; only come."

Fritz laughed scornfully.

"You mean you would like to rob me again, I suppose? but, let me tell you, you are mistaken. You would have a poor bargain of me, for my pockets are empty."

"I know that quite well, and that you are hungry," answered the youth quite composedly; "but I repeat it. I offer you meat and drink, together with a comfortable bed, without it costing you a penny. I will stand treat for the whole this time,—only come with me."

Fritz would never have thought of entertaining the proposal which came from such

a quarter, and would have disdainfully repelled the temptation. One inducement alone inclined him to yield,—the vain and foolish expectation that he might possibly succeed in getting back his lost money, if he accompanied the lad. The long and short of it therefore was, that he yielded to the invitation. His companion took hold of his arm, and, supporting his tottering steps, conducted him unresistingly along.

They had not gone far, when the stranger turned off into one of the dark side streets, and led Fritz into a warm and brightly-illuminated room, making him sit down at a neatly-covered table, on which was soon placed some viands, the sight of which was very inviting to the starving boy.

"Now," said his companion abruptly, "I can wait till you are satisfied; for with a half-starved man one cannot expect to hold any reasonable conversation."

Fritz needed not a second reminder, but continued in silence till he had finished the contents of his plate.

"Well, was that good?" asked his companion.

Fritz, however mingled his feelings towards his strange companion, could not resist an expression of approval. He ventured to add the query—

"What is your name?"

"You know it already; Jacob," said the lad; "and we shall soon become better acquainted. Listen, my old boy; if you like, you can live all your days in luxury, without requiring to beg or to work. Only cast in your lot with mine; you shall at all times have money enough and to spare."

"What trade do you follow?" asked Fritz.

"I take what I can lay my hands on," said the plain-speaking Jacob; "that is all,—what is vulgarly called stealing. It is a good business, if one only understands it a little, and knows how to escape being caught."

Fritz drew back, terrified. The colour forsook his cheeks, and he sprang from his chair.

"Well, well! you need not be so shocked,"

began Jacob anew. "I tell you that you have no other choice; you must either agree to my proposal or starve. Consider the matter when you go to rest. I do not urge you, but only give my advice; of course, the rest must be left to your own free will."

"Never! never!" said Fritz, unhesitatingly. "Ere I would break God's commandments in this way, I would rather on my knees beg my way back again to my home."

"And die on the road, and be buried on the highway!" said Jacob, scornfully. "Well, as you will. However, waking thoughts are best; go to bed, and to-morrow we will talk over the matter again."

Fritz was very much averse to remaining any longer in the company of this unprincipled fellow; for that he was a professional thief he had himself acknowledged. There was, however, no alternative; for the lad assured him the house was closed for the night, and he could not possibly leave it. He therefore followed his tempter up two flights of stairs, to a prettily-furnished room, and lay down on,

perhaps, the most comfortable bed he had ever rested in. Most welcome it was, after having been two nights in the open air, and on the cold stones; and he wished secretly in his heart that he could always enjoy such repose. But when he reflected on the disgraceful means through which he might attain it, a shudder ran through his whole frame, and he murmured to himself, "Rather die than steal."

Being in a state of great excitement, he lay awake for a considerable time, but at last he fell asleep. When he awoke in the morning, Jacob was already up and dressed. When Fritz went down stairs, he was sipping his coffee at a table in the window.

"Well, how stands it this morning?" said the former, when the boy approached. "Have your dreams brought you good advice?"

"Yes, indeed," rejoined Fritz. "I will have nothing more to do with you. This is my final determination."

"Be it so," Jacob quietly answered. "Take your own way; but I know right well that

after two or three days of hard struggle for a livelihood, you will be only too glad to return to me. Take this paper, on which I have written my address,—keep it safely; and if at any time you are in need, you have only to come here and inquire for me. If I am not at home, wait for my return. And now you can depart; I will not detain you longer. Good-bye; and earn a living if you can."

"Well, then, I will go," answered Fritz; "but first let me ask about the money you took from me. Are you not going to give it me back?"

"Do you think I should be such a fool?" rejoined the other.

"But what," said Fritz, "if I go to the police, and lodge an information against you?"

"Do so, young man, if you please, and success to you. But I can tell you you may save yourself the pains. You are a stranger —you can prove nothing, and I can deny it all. So I am pretty safe. No, no," he continued, "if you want an independent way of

living, I will be your willing instructor. Despite of all you have said and threatened, I again say, come back to me, and in a couple of days I will show you how to get more money than you ever possessed in all your life before."

"I will never come back again," said Fritz, decidedly; "no, never!" and went out, followed by a loud laugh of derision from Jacob.

Poor Fritz! Again, as on the previous day, he sought everywhere for work; but it was only a sad repetition of previous failures. Yes, Jacob was right—the battle with life was a hard one. For two nights he had to sleep again under the church porch, hungry and shivering with cold. In the morning of the third day he was so exhausted that he could scarcely lift himself from his hard couch. Hollow-eyed he wandered yet again through the streets, often sitting down to rest whenever he found a stone bench, for his legs tottered under him. Despairing thoughts anew brooded in his brain. Often the remembrance

of Jacob, and his brilliant promises, forced itself upon him, and less and less became the abhorrence with which he had at first entertained his proposals. The voice of conscience, therefore, became gradually weaker, till at length he arose, with the guilty determination to throw himself into the arms of the tempter.

"If honest men push me from them," said he, with quivering lips, "I must just go to those who are willing to receive me."

He crept—for he could scarcely be said to walk—in the direction of Jacob's dwelling. In his way thither he passed by the church, under the porch of which he had so often slept. The door stood open, and the sound of the organ proceeded from it. Fritz leant against one of the pillars outside, and listened. The full tones penetrated to his inmost soul. He drew nearer, and at length entered. The organ ceased; in its place there rose a soft clear voice—it was that of the preacher. The theme on which he dwelt was, in the

circumstances, remarkable and singularly appropriate. He spoke of the struggle which many had to experience with the reverses of fortune; of the sorrows of life; of that man, whoever he might be, who had to battle with poverty, with passion, with suffering, with temptation. Let him only strive to come forth victorious, taking firm hold of the Lord as the light and support of his wavering footsteps; let him not swerve from the right way, be the temptation ever so alluring.

"God my light and my staff," murmured Fritz, on whose soul the words of the preacher had fallen as a flame of fire.

"I will rather die than commit sin. Away from me, tempter! the battle of life must be bravely fought."

Suddenly he clutched convulsively with both his hands the pillar against which he leant. Everything was dark before his eyes. The church appeared as if wheeling round in confusion; his knees failed him; his thoughts

wandered; and he fell down at length in a state of unconsciousness.

Another hard battle of life had been fought out and won by the poor boy.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOUND.

MANY hours elapsed ere Fritz recovered consciousness. When he opened his eyes he thought he must be dreaming. He was lying on a bed, the curtains of which were drawn; but a sunbeam had found its way through them, and was playing fitfully on the opposite wall.

"Where am I?" he said, in a weak voice, striving to raise himself, and push the curtains aside.

"He is awake," some one said, in a low voice, and came quickly forward.

"Why, Fritz, my boy, God be praised that you have come to yourself again, and that we

have you with us; but, I can assure you, you have given me a great fright."

Fritz knew not how to give expression to his feelings at the delightful surprise, for the form that now stood before him was none other than that of the brave, honest old Thomas, whose house he had so long and anxiously sought to find, but in vain. The boy stretched out his trembling arms, and greeted him with looks of delight.

"Mr. Thomas," he said at length, "am I with you? Oh, what happy chance has led me here?"

"Let me ask you, you stupid fellow-traveller," said the carrier, not reproachfully, but in a playful mood, "why you did not come to me long ago?"

"I could not find you, kind, good friend," said Fritz; "I had quite forgotten your address, and no one, not even the police, could tell me where was the house of the carrier Thomas."

The honest waggoner all of a sudden looked quite vexed, and struck his hand on his forehead.

"Foolish old man that I was," he cried out. "Now it is all explained how you did not make your appearance. I am always called Thomas, but that is only my Christian name, my surname is Engelbrecht. If you had only inquired for old Engelbrecht, many a one would have directed you. But how could you know? It was all my fault. That is a pretty story, indeed—but God be praised, who led me to discover you in His own house, and now everything will be made right."

"Where did you say you found me, Mr. Thomas?" asked the boy.

"Why, in the church, to be sure. Do you not know as much as that?" answered the carrier. "What a crowd there was at the entrance when the congregation were coming out. 'What is the matter?' I asked—because, fortunately, I happened to be there with my wife at service. 'Ah, they have found a poor boy who has fainted away, if he is not dead,' said one of the bystanders to me. I instantly pressed forward, and what was my anxiety

and astonishment when I got the first glimpse of you. 'Why, it is Fritz!' I said. 'Give way, good people, and let me get to this young friend of mine.' They instantly made room, and I took you up in my arms off the cold stones, and seeing a cab passing I put you in, and we drove as quick as the horse could go, till we reached my house. Then we got you to bed, sent for the doctor, and did all we could to revive you. Nothing at first seemed to have any effect. Then said the doctor, 'Arrange to let him be quiet for a while, and he will, probably, soon come to himself. Have ready some strong soup, for he is weak with hunger. When he revives let him take a little, not too much at a time; and in two hours I will return and inquire for him.' Saying this, he went away. And now, ending this long story, I wish to know, Are you hungry, my boy?"

"Starving," whispered Fritz.

Upon this the kind old man, with hearty good will, cried out,—

"Bring the soup, wife, for Fritz has come to himself."

His wife came speedily, a cheerful, kind-looking woman. Fritz partook of a small cupful, and it revived him wonderfully. Soon after, the doctor came back, gave his patient another cup, and a quarter of an hour after a third, which restored him still farther. No one rejoiced at this more than Thomas. His wife and children also shared his joy, when they saw the poor boy smile, and look at them with his large blue eyes.

"And now you must let him rest," said the doctor; "and cheer him up. It is not hunger alone, I can see, that has made him ill, for he has had sorrow and care too. But in such good quarters I engage he will be to-morrow as merry as a lark."

And so it was. The next morning Fritz was able to leave his bed, and felt quite a different creature.

"Well, God has been very good to you, my boy!" said Thomas, when he heard all he had undergone. "What a happy thing it

was that you rejected that rogue Jacob's wicked proposal, for it would have led to misery in this life, and, if persisted in, to misery in the next. Well, indeed, was it for you that you held fast by the Lord; and preferred honestly to endure and suffer, rather than yield to the power of temptation. But now your trouble and anxiety is at an end; you are safe with us; and we will see what can be done for you. You must not go away from me again."

Well, indeed, was it for poor Fritz that he had fallen into such good hands. The tender love and sympathy shown him by parents and children, made the carrier's cottage like a little paradise to him. After a few days, when he began to feel brisk and strong again, it occurred to him that he might give his friends some pleasure by cutting out something for them; so he sought his knife, which the knave Jacob had left him, and sat down, delighted, to his old favourite occupation. He cut out all sorts of pretty things, which not only pleased the children, but

called forth the grateful acknowledgment of honest Thomas.

"Listen, Fritz," he said to him one evening. "I had at one time thought that you should remain altogether with us, and learn my business; but when I see your decided turn for modelling, it would be wrong in me to stand in your way. What would you say to my speaking to the statuary who made my little daughter's monument. It would need but a word from me to get him to take you in as apprentice; and as for the fees and other expenses, that is my affair. Consider the matter, and follow the bent of your own inclination. If you go to him, we shall not lose sight of you altogether; for I shall make my bargain with Mr. Borner that you spend your Sundays and holidays with us."

There was no need for any lengthened consideration. The old artist spirit revived powerfully within Fritz, and he thanked his good and fatherly friend from the bottom of his heart for this kind proposal. Accordingly, the next day Thomas went to his friend the

stone-cutter, and matters were speedily arranged for the boy to enter on his apprenticeship. Two days after, he said good-bye to his kind benefactors, and took possession of a small attic in his master's house, which Mrs. Thomas had furnished neatly for him.

They would not hear of any thanks. "Do not speak of it," said Thomas. "Remember what I owe you for the timely rescue of my waggon-load on that memorable night. If you had not been so on the alert, I should have suffered great loss. So speak no more of what is a mere trifle, I only thank God that I am able to do it."

So the business was all settled, and Fritz withdrew to his new quarters, in the hope that the heaviest struggles of his life had been surmounted. They were, however, not quite yet at an end.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REWARD.

THE master to whom Fritz was apprenticed was very strict and exacting. From early morning till late in the evening he had to be in the workshop, working hard with the hammer and chisel. He was allowed an hour at dinner-time, and half an hour for his breakfast and supper. Mr. Borner was a man of few words, and gave his instructions in a short and decided manner: Fritz had to take good care that they were carried out with alacrity and precision. Did he, at any time, make a mistake, there was sure to follow a sharp reprimand; if he did his duty,

he need not expect to receive any word of praise or commendation. In the earlier stages of his apprenticeship his artist tendencies had not much scope, for he was mostly occupied with the chisel in chipping and preparing the rough stone, the master himself doing all the finer work.

Nothwithstanding, Fritz did his duty indefatigably, and attained, gradually, such proficiency in the use of the chisel, that, under his expert hands, the stone became as pliable and easily worked, as formerly was the wood of the lime and maple.

He looked forward with the greatest delight to the Sunday, when he was free, and allowed to go and visit his good friend Thomas. There he was always received (whether the old man were at home, or away on one of his journeys) as a member of the family. Indeed, in the simple, homely circle of these true people, he passed his happiest hours. There he could open his heart, and frankly communicate his thoughts and feelings. These days were quite a refreshment

and gave him new strength for the fatigues and exertions of the following week.

Thus a year and a half elapsed in busy industry, when his master was suddenly seized with a severe illness, and it devolved on Fritz to supply his place as well as he was able. The sculptor was naturally anxious. He feared that many of his beautiful and expensive works might be ruined by clumsy and bungling workmanship. But what could he do? He could not find, all at once, a partner to his mind; and yet the business on hand must be carried out, else he would lose his custom. There were two special commissions that had been given, namely, a marble cross for a gravestone, with ornaments; and a statue of Neptune, with trident and sea-horses, which was to adorn the fountain of a rich and distinguished gentleman.

"You will never be able to do them," said the master anxiously to his pupil. "You might perhaps undertake a simple cross without anything upon it, but certainly

nothing more. I would rather the order would stand over, than run the risk of an inexperienced hand spoiling the marble."

"Well, then, sir," said Fritz, who was burning with anxiety to attempt its execution, "please to listen to me. I will first make a model of the cross in clay, and chisel it in common sandstone. Should I succeed, you could then make your final determination."

"Very well, let it be so," rejoined the master. "The clay is nothing, and a piece of sandstone is not much worth, so you can make the attempt."

Fritz went zealously to the work. With clever and industrious hands he formed the clay model, and was able, after a few days, to bring it for his master's inspection.

The stern, earnest man started, and said,—

"Is the cross your doing, boy? Have you modelled it quite by yourself?"

"Yes, sir, I have," answered Fritz modestly.

"And these ornaments? this butterfly, and

the figure with the inverted torch? and these cherub's heads?"

"Yes, sir, every one."

"Well, then, if that is the case, you need not try it on the sandstone; cut it out in marble at once. I begin to think there is more in you than I hitherto have suspected."

Oh, how happy Fritz felt! A long cherished wish was fulfilled. He was to be allowed to give up the dry mechanical work, and, quite by himself, to execute something artistic. He did not rest till the cross was finished. Hope and fear were mingled, when he brought his master the intelligence of its completion; and Mr. Borner, though not yet recovered from his illness, allowed the boy to lead him into the studio, that he might inspect the result of his labour.

"Fritz, you have succeeded beyond my expectations," he said after a minute survey. "That is a work of art, and will not bring discredit upon us. It may be delivered at once; and you can now proceed with the

group for the fountain. I see I can safely entrust it to you."

Fritz trembled for joy. His hitherto laconic and stern master had praised him, and given over into his hands the execution of a far more difficult work than the cross.

He had spent many an hour pondering over the Neptune. In one of the ponds in the Count's park there was a statue of the ocean-god, and the young Countess Mathilda had related to him many things about it. He would form a group something similar, but not entirely; for he had an ideal which was more distinctly in his mind than even that statue. The cross was sent home, and gave great satisfaction. The price was gladly paid down for it at the time.

And now Fritz commenced his second model. Of course it was not so quickly completed as the cross. It was a large group, and there were many difficulties to be overcome; but he battled bravely with them, as he had done formerly with the reverses of his life; and, at length, after hard labour

and anxious study, he succeeded in finishing it too, to his satisfaction. His master came, as before, to inspect his scholar's new work. He stood gazing before it for a long time without speaking a word. Fritz waited with a beating heart for the verdict. At last, after a long pause, it came.

"The work has its faults," said he. "This foreshortening of the legs is false, this bend of the arm is not quite easy and natural, and the horse is large in proportion. But still it is a good work; yes, a clever work, and you shall carry it out. The faults will be easily remedied. Give me a little clay, Fritz? Yes, yes, the idea is great, and well worked out. Give me the clay, and I will soon put it all right.

Fritz joyfully obeyed. For his master to improve the work with his own hands, was indeed an honour, and a proof of his favour and approval. In less than an hour's time, under the sculptor's experienced handling, the faults were remedied.

"Now, it is all right," said Mr. Borner.

"I think you may well be pleased with it, Fritz. You have evidently talent, and a feeling for art, which should be cultivated; and I am going to send you, for two or three hours daily, to the School of Design, which is near this, and it will be at my expense. You will there have an opportunity of acquiring what you are most deficient in; and are quite the sort of boy to improve. You can carry out the model you have made in marble; and do it as quickly as you can, for they have urged its speedy completion."

I think a happier person could scarcely have been found on earth than was our friend Fritz that day. A quiet gladness filled his mind. A boon had been granted him, such as he had never, even in his dreams, ventured to hope for. He was no longer to be a mere mechanical worker. A place, also, in the Academy of Art had been accorded, and he would now strive after a noble and brilliant career. He went daily to this school from that time forward, and by unwearied diligence strove to acquire a

knowledge in whatever he felt himself most defective. That was another battle and struggle, but it was a glorious one, and crowned with greater success than any that had preceded it. Even here, however, there were not wanting some small trials and sorrows. Some of his fellow students despised him because of his poverty; some treated him with indifference, and refused to associate with the pupil of a common statuary. But Fritz soon got above these disagreeables, and devoted himself with the ardour of an enthusiast to his interesting studies.

Among the prizes given at the Academy, one was offered for the best work of art in marble; and an appointed time was given to the students in which to complete it. It was a sum of money, not only sufficient to defray the expense of a trip to Italy, but sufficient also to pay for a three years' residence in that land of art. It was a noble object. Fritz felt his cheeks glow when he read the intimation.

Dare he venture to compete for it? Yes,

he felt he could; but the difficulty was as to how and where he could procure the block of marble. His poverty seemed at once to quench his hopes, and he felt obliged to abandon all thoughts of it. Bravely he struggled with himself to suppress his disappointed feelings; but he could not succeed entirely in doing so. Even Mr. Borner observed the sorrow which found expression in his features. He questioned him in his usual rough way as to the cause of his distress. On Fritz acknowledging what it was, the master, already proud of his pupil's advancement, cried out,—

"You shall certainly have the marble. I will see to that; only take care that you do something that will be to your, and my credit."

He kept his word. Fritz received a valuable block of marble; and now worked daily in his room with closed doors. Even the master himself knew nothing of what his subject was. He observed the strictest secresy. When at length it was finished,

he sent it by two porters, to whom he was unknown, to be set in its appointed place in the Exhibition Hall. It was handed in, as directed, to the committee of management without any name attached to it. No one knew who the competing sculptors were, till the papers containing the addresses were opened at the distribution of the prizes.

With burning anxiety Fritz awaited the day of decision. He dared not hope that he would be the successful competitor, still he had a secret expectation that he might gain one of the lesser prizes.

At length the important day arrived. Fritz could not venture to go himself to the exhibition; but his master did, bestowing at the same time an inquiring glance at his pupil, which was only answered by a shrug of the shoulders. Fritz, meanwhile, to quiet his restlessness by abstracting his thoughts, went to the workshop, and chiselled busily a piece of rough sandstone.

The master was long in returning; it was the middle of the day before he was back.

When at last he came, Fritz watched his countenance with breathless anxiety.

"I have no news for you to-day," he said; "the distribution is put off till to-morrow, because one of the chief judges was prevented coming. Nevertheless, they seem to have a very good idea as to which of the statues is to gain the highest prize. All the other judges are agreed, and so are the audience. The Prince himself has expressed his approbation, and promised to the young artist his gracious patronage. It is, truly, a splendid work."

"And what is the subject?" asked Fritz, in a low voice.

The master looked compassionately at him while he said, "My poor boy, I do believe you are yet cherishing hope that it may be yours, but you may give it up; I know well enough you have talent, which you may by great efforts improve, to enable you to take a certain position in the world, but that is all. If you must know the successful statue, it is a boy playing with a tortoise."

A cry escaped the boy's lips, and he became pale as a sheet.

"Yes, yes," said the master, "it is easy to see that your hopes are disappointed. Well, I will leave you to yourself, that you may try and get over it as soon as possible;" saying which, he left the workshop without giving another look at his pupil.

Fritz threw himself on his knees, and prayed, and wept. When his master came back again, he had recovered his composure, and was not only calm but cheerful.

"That is right, my boy," said Mr. Borner. "One must not take too much to heart the disappointment of our hopes, there are so many of them in our struggles through life."

Fritz only nodded and smiled to himself. On the next morning he went to his work as usual in the workshop.

"Would you not like to go to the Exhibition to-day?" said his master; "I suppose the distribution of prizes will take place about this time."

"No, thank you, sir," answered Fritz. "I

shall learn soon enough; and who knows whether my name may be called at all?"

"Well, if you have no hope you may just as well remain where you are," said Mr. Borner, and both went on silently working.

Two hours elapsed—when the sound of many footsteps was heard without, and voices with the cry, "Holloa! does Fritz Brenner live here? and is he at home?"

"What is all that about?" said Mr. Borner, "are they calling for you?"

Fritz stood there, pale, and struggling to retain his composure.

"Fritz Brenner! Fritz Brenner!" resounded anew. "Is no one here?"

"Yes, here we are," said the master, walking out of the workshop, taking Fritz with him. "Here is the person you seek."

A loud shout of triumph met him, at which Mr. Borner stood quite perplexed; and no wonder, for the judges of the exhibitors were before him, together with a crowd of the Academy pupils. One of the professors came forward, shook hands with Fritz,

and wished him health and happiness on his having won the first prize by his beautiful work.

"But who has gained it?" asked the master as if he had dropped down from the skies. "Do you mean to say that Fritz is the fortunate one?"

"The sculptor of the boy playing with the tortoise has gained the prize. Yes, my dear sir," said the professor, "all honour is due to him. Come, young man, and clever artist, the Prince wishes to speak to you. Make haste, get ready, and come immediately."

Fritz was not long in attiring himself in the best clothes he possessed, which, to be sure, were poor enough. His master accompanied him; and so the whole train returned to the hall, where Fritz, being eyed with wonder by the whole assembly, was presented to the Prince. He spoke a few kind words to him, assuring him of his interest, and offering the sum of fifty louis d'or if the young artist would sell his statue.

Fritz knew not what he stammered out.

The Prince, however, was much pleased with him, for he nodded kindly when he turned to go away. Fritz was quite beside himself with happiness, and fell on his master's breast, weeping tears of joy.

When the Prince had departed, there came from the crowd, up to the place where Fritz was standing, a man of distinguished appearance. Tapping him on the shoulder, the stranger said,—

"I ought to know you, young man. If I mistake not, we have had some communication with one another before. My name is Lord Linden."

Fritz interrupted him; saying, "How joyful I am that at last I have found you; but what a long and sorrowful search I have had."

"Is it possible," cried Lord Linden,—"are you—were you at one time a shepherd boy in the employment of Count Rothenstein, that was to have come to me several years ago?

"The same, sir, the same," said Fritz. "And I followed you here, but could find you nowhere; and after long searching, I

heard you had gone to the East. It was a sorrowful time, and many severe struggles have I had in the course of it, but the good God was my friend, and rescued me from the deepest degradation and misery."

"You must tell me all about it," said Lord Linden, sympathisingly. "Come with me now, and you will meet some old friends of former times. Count Rothenstein and his daughter Mathilda are staying with me at present."

Fritz was obliged to go whether he would or no. Lord Linden led him to his splendid house, where he was received with astonishment by his old benefactors. They all listened to his tale with sincere interest and pity; and many exclamations of impatience and anger proceeded from the lips of the Count, when he heard of the shameful way in which his gardener had behaved.

"The rascal," said Lord Linden angrily; "I wrote to him because I thought it the surest way of communicating with you, Fritz. That it was not so, is not my fault."

"But he shall not escape punishment" said the Count. "He shall be dismissed immediately from my service; an unfaithful servant I cannot suffer."

Fritz was beginning to intercede for the man, but Lord Linden decidedly declined to join suit with him in this.

"No, my dear fellow," said he, "the evil-doer must take the consequences. The man has been the cause of great annoyance and misery to you, and it might have been, of utter destruction. You owe no thanks to him, that you have come out unscathed from your fiery trials. It is the result of your trust in God, your faithful adherence to truth, duty, and religious principles. These, after all, are the successful weapons in the conflicts of life. You have overcome, and a golden, brilliant future is before you. Accept our hearty congratulations."

Lord Linden had not miscalculated the success of the young shepherd boy. In a few years Fritz returned from Italy, a distinguished artist, and earned both money and

reputation in the city which had been the scene of his former struggles. The truest attachment subsisted between himself and his patrons. He was a guest, now and then, at the Count's castle, and still delighted to accompany the Lady Mathilda to the group of statuary in the park, which had first inspired his boyish genius, and led, though through many an arduous conflict, to fame and distinction. The humbler associates of his boyhood, who had been so kind to him in the midst of early sorrow, shared his grateful regard, and those who stood in need of it, his generous consideration.

His old friend Thomas specially was not forgotten by him in his years of prosperity. The good waggoner, when he had retired from his humble professional life, was always a welcome visitor in Fritz's studio. Over and over again, they there enjoyed recounting the story of their first meeting and its strange consequences. Moreover, Thomas in his old age, came to live in a neat cottage with a small garden around it. No one ever knew

(I believe the aged man himself was ignorant,) who had been the means of providing him with an abode so superior in itself, and so much more pleasant in its locality, than his former home in the city. But he had the strong impression—which, it need not be said, was well founded—that Fritz was responsible for this well-earned token of gratitude and regard.

The young hero of our story lived long and highly respected. His success, as in the case of many, did not prove a snare to him. His hard struggles had served to impart strength and solidity to his character. He always cherished a thankful sense of the Divine mercies, and of the gifts of genius and fortune which the good God had bestowed on him, and used these blessings with moderation and modesty.

THE END.

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