

"Yes, Lizzie, it is. Tell Andy what has happened here, and do not forget to tell him how you brought down the keg of wine that the boys might drink courage from it."

"No, father, I shall not tell him that. It would look as though I thought I had done something great, and wished to be praised for it. But now, farewell, dearest father. I will hasten to Andreas Hofer."

"Farewell, dearest Lizzie. The angels and the Holy Virgin will protect you. I have no fears for your safety."

"Nor I either, dearest father. The good spirits of the mountain will accompany me. Farewell!"

She kissed her hands to him, and bounded up the mountain-path with the speed and gracefulness of a gazelle.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### ON THE STERZINGER MOOS.

WHILE these events were going on below Brixen, Andreas Hofer had marched with the men of the Passeyr valley across the Janfen. The inhabitants everywhere had received him with loud exultation: they had risen everywhere, ready to follow him, to fight under him for the deliverance of the fatherland, and to stake their fortunes and their lives for the emperor and the beloved Tyrol. Hofer's column accordingly gained strength at every step as it advanced. He had set out with a few hundred men on the 9th of April; and now, on the morning of the 11th of April, already several thousand men had rallied around him, and with them he had reached the heights of Sterzing. Andreas Hofer halted his men here, where he had a splendid view of the whole plain, and ordered his Tyrolese to encamp and repose after their long and exhausting march. He himself did not care for repose, for his heart was heavy and full of anxiety; and his glance, usually so serene, was clouded and sombre.

While the others were resting and partaking gayly of the wine and food which the women and girls of the neighboring

villages had brought to them with joyous readiness, Andreas Hofer ascended a peak from which he had a full view of the mountain-chains all around and the extensive plain at his feet. His friend and adjutant, Anthony Sieberer, had followed him noiselessly; and on perceiving him, Andreas Hofer smiled and nodded pleasantly to him.

"See, brother," he said, pointing with a sigh down to the valley, "how calm and peaceful every thing looks! There lies Sterzing, so cozy and sweet, in the sunshine; the fruit-trees are blossoming in its gardens; the daisies, primroses, and hawthorns have opened their little eyes, and are looking up to heaven in silent joy. And now I am to disturb this glorious peace and tranquillity, tear it like a worthless piece of paper, and hurl it like Uriah's letter, into the faces of the people. Ah, Sieberer, war is a cruel thing; and when I take every thing into consideration, I cannot help thinking that men commit a heavy sin by taking the field in order to slay, shoot, and stab, as though they were wild beasts bent on devouring one another, and not men whom God created after His own likeness; and I ask myself, in the humility of my heart, whether or not I have a right to instigate my dear friends and countrymen to follow me and attack men who are our brethren after all."

"If you really ask yourself such questions, and have lost your courage, then we are all lost," said Sieberer, gloomily. "It is Andreas Hofer in whom the men of the Passeyr valley believe, and whom they are following into the bloody struggle. If Hofer hesitates, all will soon despond; and it would be better for us to retrace our steps at once, and allow Bonaparte and the French to trample us again in the dust, instead of lifting our heads like freemen, and fighting for our rights."

"We have gone too far, we can no longer retrace our steps," said Andreas Hofer, shaking his head gently, and lifting his eyes to heaven. After a pause he added in a loud, strong voice: "And even though it were otherwise, even though we could still retrace our steps, I should not consent to it. I shall never repent of having raised my voice in behalf of the Tyrol and the emperor; nor have I lost my cour-

age, as you seem to think, brother Sieberer. I know full well that we owe it to our good emperor and the fatherland to defend it to the last breath, and I do not tremble for myself. I have dedicated my life to the dear fatherland; I have taken leave of my wife and my children, and belong now only to the Tyrol and the emperor. If my blood were sufficient to deliver our country, I should joyously and with a grateful prayer throw myself down from this peak and shatter my bones; and dying, I should thank God for vouchsafing such an honor to me, and allowing me to purchase the liberty of the country with my blood. But I am but a poor and humble servant and soldier of the Lord, and my blood will not be sufficient; but many will have to spill theirs and die, that the rest may be free and belong again to our dear emperor. And this is the reason why, on contemplating the brave men and courageous lads who have followed my call, I feel pity, and ask myself again and again, Had I a right to call them away from their homes, their wives and children, and lead them, perhaps, into the jaws of death? Will not the Lord curse me for preaching insurrection and war instead of submissiveness and humility?"

"Well, you are a pious man, Andy," said Sieberer, with a reproachful glance, "and yet you have forgotten what our Redeemer said to the Pharisees."

"What do you mean, Anthony? Tell me, if it will comfort me."

"He said, 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' Now, I think that our Tyrol is the emperor's, and that the Bavarians and French have nothing to do with it, but have merely stolen it from the emperor. Therefore, we act only in accordance with the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ, if we stake our lives and fortunes to restore to the emperor that which is the emperor's. And I think, too, that the churches and convents are the houses of the Lord and belong to Him alone. Now, the Bavarians have stolen the houses of the Lord in the Tyrol, and have ignominiously driven out His servants. Hence we act again in accordance with the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ, if we stake our lives and fortunes to restore to God that which

is God's; and if, in doing so, we should all lose our lives, we should die in the holy service of God and the emperor!"

"You are right, brother Sieberer," exclaimed Hofer, joyfully, "and I thank you for comforting and strengthening my heart. Yes, we are in the service of God, our emperor, and the beloved Tyrol."

"And God and the emperor have imposed on Andreas Hofer the duty of acting at the same time as prophet of the Lord and as captain of the emperor. Go, then, Andreas, and do your duty!" said Sieberer, solemnly.

"I shall do my duty bravely and faithfully to the last!" exclaimed Hofer, enthusiastically. Then he raised the small crucifix from his breast, kissed it devoutly, and prayed in a low voice.

A sarcastic smile overspread Anthony Sieberer's face, but it disappeared quickly when he happened to turn his eyes to the neighboring mountains. He looked keenly and searchingly toward the mountain-path leading to Mittewald. He saw there a small black speck which was advancing with great rapidity. Was it a bird? No, the speck had already become larger; he saw it was a human being—a woman speeding along the mountain-path. Now she was so close to them that he could distinguish her face; it was that of a young girl; her cheeks flushed, her eyes radiant; bold and intrepid as a chamois, she hastened forward; her long, black tresses were waving round her head, and her bosom heaved violently under the folds of her white corset.

Now, she stood still for a moment, and seemed to listen; then she bent far over the precipice, on the brink of which she was standing, and below which the Tyrolese were encamped. No sooner had she perceived them than she uttered a loud cry of exultation, and bounding forward, she exclaimed joyously: "There are the men of the Passeyr valley! Now I shall find their leader, Andreas Hofer, too!—Andreas Hofer! where are you, Andreas Hofer?"

"Here I am!" shouted Andreas Hofer, starting up from his fervent prayer, and advancing a few steps.

The young girl gave a start on discovering the two men, who had hitherto been concealed from her by a large rock;

but she looked at them searchingly, and did not seem to be frightened or anxious.

"Are you really Andreas Hofer?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Ask him if I am," said Hofer, smiling and pointing to Sieberer.

"That is unnecessary," she replied calmly; "I see that you are Andreas Hofer. You look precisely as my father described you to me. There is the long beard, the crucifix, the saint's image on your breast; and there are the kind eyes, and the whole dear face. God bless you, Andreas Hofer! I bring you many cordial greetings from my father, Anthony Wallner-Aichberger."

"God bless you, maiden," exclaimed Andreas Hofer, holding out both his hands to her. Eliza took them, bent over Hofer's right hand, and imprinted a glowing kiss on it.

"Girl, what are you doing?" asked Hofer, blushing with confusion.

"I kiss the dear hand which the Lord has chosen to deliver the Tyrol," she said; "the dear hand which holds the rosary so piously and the sword so bravely; the hand into which my father laid his hand, as if on an altar, when he swore to God that he would assist in delivering the Tyrol from the enemy and restoring it to the emperor."

"Look at this girl, Sieberer; how well she knows how to flatter me," exclaimed Andreas, smilingly patting her flushed cheek. "And you say your father sent you to me?"

"Yes, he did, Andreas Hofer. I ran all day yesterday; and this morning I rose with the sun and continued my trip in order to reach you as soon as possible, and deliver my father's message to you."

"You must be tired, poor little girl!" said Hofer, compassionately. "Sit down on the rock yonder. There! And now speak!"

"In the first place, Anthony Wallner sends greeting, and informs you that he has kept his word faithfully. The whole Puster valley has already risen in insurrection; all the men followed him, and were ready and eager to fight for the Tyrol and the dear Emperor Francis. We have fought already a bloody battle at the bridge of St. Lawrence, and another at

the bridge of Laditch. Many soldiers of the enemy were killed in the gap of Brixen, and many French and Bavarians fell at the bridge of Laditch; but we also lost a great many men there. Our men fought bravely, but there were too many of the Bavarians and French, and so they finally succeeded in breaking through our ranks and continued their march toward Sterzing. Hence, my father sent me to you in the greatest haste to inform you of what has occurred, and tell you to be on your guard. There are several thousand Bavarians and French on the march to Sterzing. It is true, our men have occupied the Mühlbach pass; but the enemy is too strong, our men will not be able to annihilate him entirely."

"Then he will come hither," exclaimed Andreas Hofer.

"Yes, and we shall have a fight at length," said Anthony Sieberer, joyously. "I am glad that our men will at length be face to face with the enemy and see bloodshed."

"And the Austrians are not coming yet," sighed Andreas Hofer.

"Yes! they are!" exclaimed Eliza. "Anthony Wallner instructed me to tell you that too. Several hundred Austrians joined us already at the bridge of Laditch. It was their advanced guard, and they said that all the others would follow them soon."

"It is General Hiller with the troops moving up from Salzburg," said Hofer. "But where are Chasteler and Hormayr, who were to join us from Carinthia? I think they are tarrying too long."

"But the Bavarians do not tarry," said Eliza, "and they are savage and cruel men. I did not enter the town of Sterzing, but the people on the road told me how the Bavarians killed, burned, and plundered there yesterday; and those who told me cried with rage and grief. The whole town is in insurrection; all have armed for the Emperor Francis, and will die rather than longer obey the Bavarians and French. Major von Bärenklau, the commander of the Bavarians in Sterzing, finally got frightened; and on being informed that Andreas Hofer was moving against him on one side with the men of the Pässe valley, and that Anthony Wallner with the men of the Puster valley, on the other side,

had occupied the bridge of Laditch, he deemed it prudent to evacuate Sterzing and await our men in the open plain. I saw his troops marching through the valley while I was walking on the heights; and I think it will not be long until we can see them below in the plain."

"See, there they are already!" exclaimed Anthony Sieberer, who, while Eliza was speaking, had spied with his keen eyes far into the plain called the Sterzinger Moos.

In fact, a large, motley mass was to be seen moving up in the distance yonder; yes, they were Bavarian soldiers, and they were drawing nearer and nearer.

"Hurrah! the Bavarians are coming, the struggle begins," exclaimed Anthony Sieberer, joyously; and the Tyrolese encamped below echoed his shout with loud exultation: "The Bavarians are coming! The struggle begins!"

"The struggle begins," said Hofer, "and God grant, in His mercy, that not too much blood may be shed, and that we may be victorious! Come, dear girl, I will take you under my protection, for you cannot immediately set out for home, but must stay here with me. I shall see to it that no harm befalls you, and, while we are fighting, we will try to find a cave or nook in the rocks where we may conceal you."

"I do not want to conceal myself, Andreas Hofer," said Eliza, proudly. "The priests and women have likewise to perform their parts in war-times: they must carry the wounded out of the range of the enemy's bullets and dress their wounds; they must pray with the dying, and nurse those whose lives are spared."

"You are a brave daughter of the Tyrol; I like to listen to your soul-stirring words," exclaimed Andreas Hofer. "Now come, we will speak with our men."

He grasped Eliza's hand, beckoned to his adjutant Sieberer, and descended with them the path toward the Tyrolese.

They were no longer reposing, but all had risen and were looking with rapt attention in the direction of the enemy. On beholding Hofer, they burst into loud cheers, and asked him enthusiastically to lead them against the enemy.

"Let us ascertain first where he is going, and what his intentions are," said Hofer, thoughtfully. "Perhaps he does

not know that we are here, and intends to continue his march. In that case we will let him pass us, follow him, and attack him only after he has entered the Mühlbach pass."

"No, he does not intend to continue his march," exclaimed Sieberer. "Look, he takes position in the plain and forms in squares as he has learned to do from Bonaparte. Oh, brethren, let us attack him now. Never fear. I know such squares, for, in 1805, I often attacked them with our men, and we broke them. Forward, then, my friends, forward! Now let us fight for God and our emperor!"

"For God and our emperor!" shouted the Tyrolese; and all seized their arms and prepared for the struggle.

"Hold on!" cried Hofer, in a powerful voice. "As you have elected me commander, you must be obedient to me and comply with my orders."

"We will, we will!" shouted the Tyrolese. "Just tell us, commander, what we are to do, and we shall obey."

"You shall not descend into the plain, nor attack the enemy on all sides. For you see, the squares are ready to shoot in all directions, and if you attack them on all sides in the open plain, you will be exposed to their most destructive fire; moreover, as they are by far better armed than we, and have cannon, many of our men would be uselessly sacrificed in such an attack."

"What the commander says is true," growled the Tyrolese. "It is by far better for us to attack the enemy from a covered position, and have our rear protected by the mountains."

"And I will show you now such a covered position from which you are to attack the enemy," said Andreas Hofer, with impressive calmness. "Look there, to the left. Do you see the ravine leading into the mountains yonder? Well, we will now ascend the mountain-path rapidly, descend into the ravine, and thence rush upon the enemy."

"Yes, yes, that is right! We will do so. Andreas Hofer is a good captain!" said the Tyrolese to each other.

Hofer waved his hand imperatively toward them. "Now keep very quiet," he said, "that we may not attract the attention of the enemy prematurely, and thereby cause him to occupy the ravine before we have reached it. Forward, then,

quickly through the forest, and then descend noiselessly into the valley. But before setting out, we will pray two rosaries. If we long for success in battle, we must invoke God's assistance."

He took his rosary and prayed; and the Tyrolese bent their heads devoutly, and prayed like their commander. Then they glided quickly and noiselessly through the thick forest, headed by Andreas Hofer, who led Eliza Wallner with tender solicitude by the hand. At length they reached the gorge, and Andreas Hofer was just about entering it with the others, when Anthony Sieberer, Jacob Eisenstocken, and a few other prominent Tyrolese, stepped to him and kept him back with tender violence.

"A general does not accompany his soldiers into the thickest of the fight," said Eisenstocken. "That is not his province. He has to direct the battle with his head, but not to fight it out with his arm."

"But bear in mind that Bonaparte does not leave his soldiers even in battle," said Andreas Hofer, trying to push them aside and advance.

"No, dearest commander," exclaimed Anthony Sieberer, "you must not go down with the men. Think of it, what would become of us and our cause if an accident befell our commander and a bullet shattered his beloved head! Our friends and sharpshooters would feel as though that bullet had shattered all their heads; they would be discouraged and give up our cause as lost. No, no, Andreas Hofer, you owe it to your fatherland, your emperor, and your Tyrolese, not to expose yourself to too great dangers; for your life is necessary to us, and you are the standard which the Tyrolese are following. If our standard sinks to the ground, our Tyrolese will be panic-stricken and run away. Consequently you must not go into battle, either to-day or at any time hereafter."

"You are right, I see it," said Hofer, mournfully. "They would be thunderstruck if a bullet should hit their commander; hence I submit, and shall stay here. You will stay with me, Lizzie Wallner, and Ennemoser, my secretary, shall do so too. Now go, all of you, and God grant that we may all meet again. I shall stay at this very spot, and he who

wants to see me must come hither. I can survey from here the whole plain of the Sterzinger Moos. Now, my dear friends and brethren," he shouted in a loud, ringing voice, "for God, the fatherland, and your emperor!"

"For God, the fatherland, and our emperor!" shouted the Tyrolese, rushing down the mountain-path into the ravine whence they were to attack the enemy.

But the Bavarians had been on their guard, and their commander, Colonel Bärenklau, divining the tactics of the Tyrolese, had ordered his two guns to be pointed against the ravine.

Now the first shots thundered from their mouths, and volleys of musketry were discharged from all the squares at the same time, at the advancing column of the Tyrolese. The Tyrolese, not prepared for so sudden and violent an attack, dismayed at the havoc produced in their ranks by the balls and bullets of the Bavarians, gave way and ran over the corpses of their brethren back to the ravine. But there stood the crowd of women who had accompanied the column, who had hastened up from Sterzing, and the whole neighborhood, and had advanced with the Tyrolese out of the ravine almost close to the squares of the enemy. They received the fugitives with invectives and angry glances; they strove to kindle their courage; they went and begged them with clasped hands and tearful eyes not to desert the cause of the fatherland, become discouraged in so disgraceful a manner in the very first battle, and thereby make themselves the laughing-stock of the hateful Bavarians and French.

And the men listened to these voices; they drank courage from the wine which the women handed to them, and rushed forward a second time. Their rifles crashed and mowed down the front ranks of the Bavarians, but behind the corpses stood the rear ranks, and their volleys responded to the Tyrolese, and the cannon thundered across the plain reeking with gore and powder.

The Tyrolese gave way a second time, for the murderous fire of the Bavarians filled them with stupor and dismay.

"In this manner we shall never gain a victory, and our men will be uselessly slaughtered," said Andreas Hofer, who

was watching the struggle with breathless suspense. "But we must not incur the disgrace of losing the first battle, for that would discourage our men for all time to come. Come, Ennemoser, run down to them and tell them to try a third time. If they do not, Andreas Hofer will rush all alone upon the enemy and wait for a bullet to shatter his head."

Young Ennemoser, the secretary, sped down the ravine; Hofer pressed his crucifix to his lips and prayed; Eliza Wallner advanced close to the edge of the precipice, and peered down into the plain. Her eyes filled with tears when she perceived the many corpses piled up on both sides of the ravine, but the squares of the enemy likewise had been considerably thinned, and death had made fearful havoc in their ranks.

"Andreas Hofer," she cried, exultingly, "your message was successful. Our men are rushing forward. Do you not hear their cheers?"

"I do, and may the good God grant them success!" sighed Andreas Hofer, stepping close up to Eliza.

They saw the Tyrolese emerging again at the double-quick from the ravine, and rushing upon the enemy, who received them with volleys of musketry and artillery-fire. But, alas! they saw the Tyrolese give way again and retreat, though more slowly than before, to the ravine.

"This will never do," cried Hofer, despairingly. "Our men are slaughtered in this way, and cannot reach the enemy, whose cannon are mowing them down like scythes. O God, show me a way to help our men!"

His eyes glanced despairingly over the plain, as if searching for relief. All at once a bright flash of joy lit up his features.

"I have found a way! I thank Thee, my God!" he exclaimed, aloud. "See, Lizzie, look there! What do you see in the plain yonder behind the ravine?"

"I see there four large wagons filled with hay," said Lizzie; "yes, four wagons filled with hay, nothing else."

"And these wagons filled with hay will save us. They must be driven toward the ravine directly toward the enemy; our sharpshooters will conceal themselves behind them, and will safely advance; and when close enough to the enemy,

they will discharge their rifles, and first pick off the gunners, in order to silence the guns which have made such havoc among our men. Come, Lizzie, we will go down to Sieberer and the other captains, and give them my orders. I hope there will be four lads intrepid enough to drive the hay-wagons toward the enemy."

"There will be!" exclaimed Eliza, enthusiastically.

"It is only necessary for one to risk his life, and drive the first wagon. The other wagons will be covered by the first. But the driver of the first wagon will doubtless be killed, and I shall be responsible for his death."

"He will die for the fatherland," exclaimed Eliza. "Go, Andreas Hofer, descend and tell our men what is to be done, for it is high time for the hay-wagons to come up and cover our men."

"Come, let us go, Lizzie; give me your hand."

"No, lead the way; I will follow you immediately."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE HAY-WAGONS.

ANDREAS HOFER had already descended half the mountain-path with a rapid step, and he did not once look behind him, for he was sure that Wallner's daughter was following him, and he kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on his friends and brethren.

But Eliza did not follow him. She looked after him until the dense shrubbery below concealed her from his eyes; then she knelt down, and, lifting both her hands to heaven, exclaimed, in a loud, beseeching voice: "Holy Virgin, protect me! Grant success to my enterprise for the beloved fatherland!"

She then jumped up, and, quick as a chamois, scarcely touching the ground with her feet, she hastened toward the point where the hay-wagons were standing.

Meanwhile, Andreas Hofer had descended into the ravine