

THE MERCHANT OF BERLIN.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE FESTIVAL.

THE sufferings of the long war still continued; still stood Frederick the Great with his army in the field; the tremendous struggle between Prussia and Austria was yet undecided, and Silesia was still the apple of discord for which Maria Theresa and Frederick II. had been striving for years, and for which, in so many battles, the blood of German brothers had been spilt.

Everywhere joy seemed extinguished; the light jest was hushed; each one looked silently into the future, and none could tell in whose favor this great contest would finally be decided, whether Austria or Prussia would be victorious.

The year 1760, the fifth of the war, was particularly sad for Prussia; it was marked in the history of Germany with tears and blood. Even Berlin which, up to that time, had suffered but little from the unhappy calamities of war, assumed now an earnest, mournful aspect, and it seemed as if the bright humor and sarcastic wit which had always characterized the inhabitants of this good city had now entirely deserted them. Going through the wide and almost empty streets there were to be met only sad countenances, women clothed in black

who mourned their husbands or sons fallen in one of the many battles of this war, or mothers who were looking with anxiety into the future and thinking of their distant sons who had gone to the army.

Here and there was seen some wounded soldier wearily dragging himself along the street, but hearty, healthy men were seldom to be met, and still more seldom was seen the fresh countenance of youth.

Berlin had been obliged to send not only her men and youths, but also her boys of fourteen years to the army, which, according to the confession of Frederick the Great, consisted, in the campaign of the year 1760, only of renegades, marauders, and beardless boys.

For these reasons it seemed the more strange to hear at this time issuing from one of the largest and handsomest houses on the Leipsic Street the unwonted sounds of merry dance-music, cheerful singing and shouting, which reached the street.

The passers-by stopped and looked with curiosity up to the windows, at which could be seen occasionally a flushed joyous man's face or pretty woman's head. But the men who were visible through the panes evidently did not belong to the genteeler classes of society; their faces were sunburnt, their hair hung down carelessly and unpowdered upon the coarse and unfashionable cloth coat, and the attire of the maidens had little in common with the elegance and fashion of the day.

"The rich Gotzkowsky gives a great feast to his workmen to-day," remarked the people in the street to one another; and as they passed on they envied with a sigh those who were able at the same time to enjoy a merry day in the rich and brilliant halls of the great manufacturer, and admire the splendor of the rich man's house.

The mansion of Gotzkowsky was indeed one of the handsomest and most magnificent in all Berlin, and its owner was one of the richest men of this city, then, despite the war, so wealthy and thriving. But it was not the splendor of the furniture, of the costly silver ware, of the Gobelin tapestry and Turkish carpets which distinguished this house from all others. In these respects others could equal the rich merchant, or even surpass him.

But Gotzkowsky possessed noble treasures of art, costly paintings, which princes and even kings might have envied. Several times had he travelled to Italy by commission from the king to purchase paintings, and the handsomest pieces in the Royal Gallery had been brought from the land of art by Gotzkowsky. But the last time he returned from Italy the war of 1756 had broken out, and the king could then spare no money for the purchase of paintings: he needed it all for his army. Therefore Gotzkowsky was obliged to keep for himself the splendid originals of Raphael, Rubens, and other great masters which he had purchased at enormous prices, and the wealthy manufacturer was just the one able to afford himself the luxury of a picture gallery.

The homely artisans and workmen who this day had dined in Gotzkowsky's halls felt somewhat constrained and uncomfortable, and their countenances did not wear a free, joyous expression until they had risen from table, and the announcement was made that the festival would continue in the large garden immediately adjacent to the house, to which they at once repaired to enjoy cheerful games and steaming coffee.

Bertram, Gotzkowsky's head book-keeper, had been commissioned by him to lead the company, consisting of more than two hundred persons, into the garden, where

Gotzkowsky would follow them, having first gone in search of his daughter.

With lively conversation and hearty laugh the people retired, the halls were emptied, and now the deep silence of these state-apartments was only interrupted by the gentle ticking of the large clock which stood over the sofa on its handsomely ornamented stand.

When Gotzkowsky found himself at last alone, he breathed as if relieved. The quiet seemed to do him good. He sank down into one of the large chairs covered with gold-embroidered velvet, and gazed earnestly and thoughtfully before him. The expression of his countenance was anxious, and his large dark eyes were not as clear and brilliant as usual.

John Gotzkowsky was still a handsome man, despite his fifty years; his noble intellectual countenance, his tall proud figure, his full black hair, which, contrary to the custom of that period, he wore unpowdered, made an imposing and at the same time pleasing impression.

And certainly it was not because of his personal appearance that Gotzkowsky, notwithstanding the early death of his wife, had never contracted a second marriage, but had preferred to remain a solitary widower. Nor did this occur from indifference or coldness of heart, but solely from the love for that little, helpless, love-needing being, whose birth had cost his young wife her life, to whom he had vowed at the bedside of her dead mother to stand in stead of that mother, and never to make her bend under the harsh rule of a step-mother. Gotzkowsky had faithfully fulfilled his vow; he had concentrated all his love on his daughter, who under his careful supervision had increased in strength and beauty, so that with the pride and joy of a father he now styled her the handsomest jewel of his house.

Where then was this daughter whom he loved so dearly? Why was she not near him to smile away the wrinkles from his brow, to drive with light chat serious and gloomy thoughts from his mind? She it was, doubtless, whom his wandering glance sought in these vast, silent rooms; and finding her not, and yearning in vain for her sweet smiles, her rosy cheeks, he sighed.

Where was she then?

Like her father, Gotzkowsky's daughter sat alone in her room—her gaze, as his, fixed upon empty space. The sad, melancholy expression of her face, scarcely tinged with a delicate blush, contrasted strangely with her splendid dress, her mournful look with the full wreath of roses which adorned her hair.

Elise was the daughter of the wealthiest man in Berlin, the world proclaimed her the handsomest maiden, and yet there she sat solitary in her beautiful chamber, her eyes clouded with tears. Of a sudden she drew a golden case from her bosom and pressed it with deep feeling to her lips. Looking timidly at the door she seemed to listen; convinced that no one approached, she pressed a hidden spring of the medallion; the golden cover flew open and disclosed the portrait of a handsome man in Russian uniform.

The young girl contemplated this portrait with a strange mixture of delight and melancholy, and then, completely overpowered by its aspect, she approached it to her lips. "Feodor!" murmured she, so softly that it sounded almost like a sigh, and stretching out the hand which held the medallion, in order to be able better to contemplate the picture, she continued—

"Feodor, why did we meet, to be separated forever again? Why did not Fate allow me to be born as a poor serf upon one of thy estates, giving to thee the right to

possess me, to me the sweet duty of loving thee? O Heaven, why art thou an enemy of my country, or why am I a German? Men call me happy; they envy me my father's wealth; they know not how wretched and forsaken I am."

She bowed her head upon her breast and wept bitterly. Suddenly steps were heard quite close to her door. She started, and concealed the medallion quickly in her breast. "My father," murmured she, and drying her tears she arose to open the door. She was right, it was her father. He held out his hand to her. She took it and pressed it to her lips respectfully, but she did not see the look of almost passionate tenderness with which he regarded her, for she had cast down her eyes and did not dare to look at him.

"I have come, Elise, to lead you to our garden festival. You will go with me, my child?"

"I am ready," said she, taking her hat and shawl.

"But why in such a hurry, my child?" asked her father. "Let us leave these good people yet a little while to themselves. We will still be in time to witness their games. I would like to stay a quarter of an hour with you, Elise."

Without answering, she rolled an arm-chair to the window, and laid aside her hat and shawl.

"It is very seldom, father, that you make me such a present," said she.

"What present, my child?"

"A quarter of an hour of your life, father."

"You are right," said he, thoughtfully. "I have little time for pleasure, but I think so much the more of you."

She shook her head gently.

"No," said she, "you have no time to think of me.

You are too busy. Hundreds of men claim your attention. How could you have time, father, to think of your daughter?"

Gotzkowsky drew a dark-red case from his breast pocket and handed it to her.

"Look, Elise! see if I have not thought of you. To-day is your birthday, and I have celebrated it as I have done every year by giving my workmen a festival, and endowing a poor bridal pair who on this day become betrothed. Their prayers and tears constitute the most beautiful thank-offering to you, and being happy they bless you, the authoress of their happiness. But how is this? You have not yet opened the case. Are you so little like other girls that diamonds cause you no pleasure?"

She opened the case, and contemplated the jewels with weary looks and scarcely concealed indifference.

"How wonderfully they shine and sparkle, and what tempting promises their brilliant colors hold forth! But this is a princely present, father; your poor Elise it not worthy to wear this diadem and collar."

"Oh, you are worthy to wear a crown!" cried her father with tender pride. "And let me tell you, my child, you have only to choose whether you will place on this beautiful hair an earl's coronet or a prince's diadem. And this, my child, is the reason of my visit to-day."

"On business," murmured she, almost inaudibly, with a bitter smile.

Gotzkowsky continued—

"Young Count Saldem applied to me yesterday for your hand."

"Count Saldem?" asked Elise. "I hardly know him. I have only spoken to him twice in the saloon of Countess Herzberg."

"That does not prevent him from loving you ardently," said Gotzkowsky, with scarcely perceptible irony. "Yes, Elise, he loves you so ardently that he would overcome all obstacles of rank and make you a genuine countess, if I will only promise to endow you with half a million."

The habitually pale countenance of Elise suddenly assumed life and color. She drew herself up and threw her head proudly back.

"Do you wish to sell me, father? Do you wish to give some value to this noble nonentity by the present of half a million, and will his lordship be kind enough in return to take the trifling burden of my person into the bargain?"

Her father gazed at her glowing countenance with eyes beaming with joy; but he quickly suppressed this emotion, and reassumed a serious air.

"Yes," he said, "the good count, in consideration of half a million, will consent to raise the manufacturer's daughter to the rank of a countess. But for a whole million we can obtain still more; we can rise yet higher in the scale. If I will advance his uncle, Prince Saldem, half a million to redeem his mortgaged estates, the prince promises to adopt the nephew, your suitor, as his son. You would then be a princess, Elise, and I would have the proud satisfaction of calling a prince my son."

"As if the king would consent to a nobleman thus demeaning himself!" cried Elise; "as if he would graciously allow the count so far to degrade himself!"

"Oh, the king will consent," continued her father in a light tone. "You know that he is fond of me. Only say whether you consent to become Countess Saldem."

"Never!" cried she proudly. "I am no chattel to

be bartered, and this miserable title of princess has no charms for me. You can command me, father, to renounce the man I love, but you can never compel me to give my hand to a man I do not love, were he even a king!"

Her father clasped her vehemently in his arms.

"That is blood of my blood, and spirit of my spirit," cried he. "You are right, my child, to despise honors and titles; they are empty tinsel, and no one believes in them any longer. We stand at the portal of a new era, and this era will erect new palaces and create new princes; but you, my child, will be one of the first princesses of this new era. Manufactories will be the new palaces, and manufacturers the new princes. Instead of the sword, money will rule the world, and men will bow down before manufacturers and merchants as they are wont to do before generals. Therefore I say you are right in refusing Prince Saldem's offer, for I promise you, you shall be a princess, even without the title, and the great and noble shall bow as low before your riches as if they were a ducal diadem."

Elise shook her head with a melancholy smile: "I have no desire for such homage, and I despise the base metal with which you can buy everything."

"Despise it not!" cried her father, "prize it rather! Gold is a holy power; it is the magic wand of Moses which caused springs to gush forth from the sterile rock. See, my child—I, who despise all the rank and honors which the world can offer me, I tell you gold is the only thing for which I have any respect. But a man must perceive and understand the secret of this magic power. He who strives for wealth only to *possess* it is a heartless fool, and his fate will be that of Midas—he will starve in the midst of his treasures. But he who

strives for wealth for the purpose of *giving*, he will discover that money is the fountain of happiness; and in his hands the dead metal is transformed into a living blessing. You may believe your father, who knows the world, and who has drunk the bitter cup of poverty."

"You were once poor?" asked Elise, looking at her father with astonishment.

Gotzkowsky smiled, and sank back in his chair, musing and silent. After a pause he resumed: "Yes, I was poor. I have endured all the horrors of poverty. I have hungered and thirsted, suffered misery and privation, even as a little boy. Thus lay I once, wretched and forsaken, in a ditch by the highway, and raised my hands to God on high, praying but for a drop of water, but for a morsel of bread. Ah! so strong was the belief of the goodness of God in my heart, that I was convinced He would open the heavens, and reach to me with His own hand the food for which I prayed. I waited and waited, in despairing anxiety, but the heavens were not opened, and not even a drop of rain came to cool my parched lips. But the cloud, which I had looked for in vain in the sky, was seen at last on the highway, and, as I saw this whirling cloud of dust, in the midst of which a splendid equipage came rolling on, I said to myself: 'Here comes God!' and then I found strength enough to raise myself from my knees, to hurry toward the rapidly passing vehicle, and to cry with a voice which was almost overpowered by the noise of the wheels, 'Pity! pity! give me a morsel of bread, a drop of water! Have pity on me!' A hand was stretched toward me out of the cloud of dust, and I saw a small, brightly shining object drop. The carriage rolled on, and disappeared in its cloud. But I sank on my knees and searched the dust for the piece of money, for in this coin lay for

me life, health, and strength. I was obliged to hunt in the dust for a long time with hands tremulous with anxiety, and finally, when I found it, I rejoiced aloud and thanked God. Then I hurried with fleet steps toward the neighboring town, to the same baker's shop near the gate, where, shortly before, they had refused to my entreaties a bit of bread. Now, willingly and with smiles, they handed me a loaf, for I had money to pay for it. In that hour I said to myself: 'I must seek money, even if I have to grovel in the dust for it; for money is life, and poverty is death!' The hand which, from the cloud of dust threw me that piece of money, decided my whole future, for it taught me that even dust was not to be despised, as therein money might be found; but it taught me something more—it taught me compassion and charity. Then, as I crouched down with bleeding feet at the street-corner and devoured my loaf, I vowed to myself that I would become rich, and when I had grown rich, to be to each poor and needy one the helping hand stretched forth out of the cloud of dust."

Elise had listened to her father with deep emotion, and in the depth of her heart she at this moment absolved him from many a silent reproach, and many a suspicion, which her soul had harbored against him.

"You have kept your word, my father!" cried she. "How did you contrive to become a rich man from a beggar?"

Gotzkowsky laughed. "How did I contrive that?" said he. "I worked, that is the whole secret—worked from sunrise until late in the night, and by work alone have I become what I am. But no, I had one friend who often helped me with his sympathy and valuable counsel. This friend was the king. He protected me against my malicious enemies, who envied me every little

piece of fortune. He cheered me on. Frederick's eye rested on me with pleasure, and he was delighted to see my manufactories thrive and increase. The king's satisfaction was for many years the only spur to my exertions, and when he looked on me with smiling benevolence, it seemed to me as if a sunbeam of fortune shone from his large blue eyes into my heart. I have learned to love the king as a man, and because I love mankind I love the king. It is said that he likes the French better than he does us, and prefers every thing that comes from them; but, indeed, he was the first to supply his wants from my manufactories, and in that way to encourage me to new undertakings.* Mankind, in general, do not like to see others favored by fortune in their enterprises, and they hate him who succeeds where they have failed. I have experienced that often in life. I knew that men hated me because I was more fortunate than they were, and yet I saw how they cringed before me, and flattered me. Oh, my child, how many bitter and painful experiences do I not owe to my wealth! In wealth lies wisdom, if one would only listen to her. It has humbled and subdued me, for I said to myself, 'How quickly would all these men who now surround me with attention and flattery, disappear if I became suddenly poor!' These princes and counts, who now invite me as a guest to their tables, would no longer know me if I appeared before them as a poor man. Wealth is rank and worth; and no prince's title, no star of honor, shines so brightly as golden coin. But we must learn how to use it, and

* "Gotzkowsky founded the first large velvet and silk manufactories in Berlin. He was also the first to attend the Leipsic fair with domestic goods, and thus open the commerce with Poland and Russia."—*History of a Patriotic Merchant of Berlin*. 1768, pages 10-12.

not convert the means of fortune into the end. We must also learn to despise men, and yet to love mankind. My philosophy may be condensed into a few sentences. Strive for gold; not to take, but to give. Be kind and faithful to all men; most faithful, however, to thyself, thy honor, and thy country."

Elise looked at him with a strange expression: "You love all mankind! Do you then include our country's enemies?"

"The enemies of our country are the only men whom I hate," cried Gotzkowsky quickly.

"Even were they noble and good?" asked Elise with reproachful tone.

Gotzkowsky looked at her with astonishment and curiosity, and a cloud flitted across his brow. Then, as if shocked at his own thoughts, he shook his head, and murmured in a low tone, "No, that were too terrible!" He rose and paced the room in thoughtful mood. Suddenly a burst of lively music and gleeful shouts were heard from the garden. Gotzkowsky's brow brightened immediately, and he extended his hand with a tender look.

"Come, my child," exclaimed he, "come, and see how happy you have made men! Come, and see the power of wealth!"

CHAPTER II.

THE WORKMAN'S HOLIDAY.

THE garden, which stretched from behind Gotzkowsky's house to the limits of the city, was really of artistic beauty, and he had spent thousands in creating a

park out of this dead level of sand. Now, his work was completed, and all Berlin spoke with praise and admiration of this garden, which ranked among the lions to be visited by every traveller. The most splendid groups of trees were seen here and there, interspersed among green plats of grass, ornamented by marble statues or graceful fountains; in other places, trimmed hedges stretched along, and from the conservatories exotic plants filled the air with perfume.

On this day, however, the garden presented a peculiarly lively spectacle. On the lawn, the young girls and lads were dancing to the music of a fiddle and bass-viol, while the older workmen and their wives had seated themselves around tables, on which all kinds of refreshments were spread.

At the largest of these tables, ornamented with flowers, was seated the betrothed couple, the workman Balthazar and Gretchen his young bride, who bashfully and affectionately clung to his side. They had loved each other long and faithfully in silence, but without hope, for they were both poor, and had to support themselves and their parents by the work of their hands. But Gotzkowsky had come to them as a helping benefactor; he had given Balthazar a considerable sum of money, and his daughter Elise had bestowed a dowry upon the bride. On this day, Elise's eighteenth birthday, was to be celebrated the marriage of the happy couple. No wonder, then, that they regarded Gotzkowsky with feelings almost of adoration, and that this young girl appeared to them as a benevolent angel.

Elise had just come into the garden with her father, and had taken her seat at the table of the bridal pair. Next to her sat a young man, whose mild and noble countenance seemed to be lighted up with happiness

and adoration whenever he looked upon her. He followed every one of her motions with watchful eyes, and the most trifling shade, the slightest change in the expression of her countenance, did not escape him. At times he sighed, reading perhaps in her features the secret thoughts of her soul, and these thoughts saddened him, and clouded his bright clear eye.

This young man, who sat at Elise's side, was Bertram, Gotzkowsky's head book-keeper. From his earliest youth he had been in the house of the rich manufacturer, who had adopted the poor orphan, and treated him as a tender father would have done, and Bertram loved him with all the affection of a son. And never by the lips of a true son was the name of father pronounced with more warmth and tenderness than by this son, adopted and won by deeds of generosity.

But Bertram, who called Gotzkowsky father, had never ventured to call Gotzkowsky's daughter sister. Brought up together, they had in their childhood shared their games, their childish joys and sorrows with one another; he had been a protecting brother to her, she an affectionate sister to him. But ever since Bertram had returned from a journey of three years, which Gotzkowsky had caused him to make, all this had changed. Elise, whom he had left almost a child, he found on his return a blooming young woman, and a feeling of joyous emotion flashed through him as he stood blushing before her; while she, perfectly collected, with a quiet look bade him welcome.

Under the charm of this look he had lived several weeks of rapture and yet of anxiety. He soon felt that he loved this young girl passionately, but he also felt that she returned his passion with the lukewarm affection of a friend or a sister, and that she had no suspicion

of the tumult and pain, the joy and ecstasy which filled his breast. And yet he had a right to strive for the prize of her love; and if he raised his eyes to the daughter of his benefactor, it was not presumption, it was Gotzkowsky himself who emboldened him to do so. He had said to him, "Seek to win the love of my daughter, and I will cheerfully bid you welcome as my son, for I know that in your hands Elise's happiness is safe."

Thus he had the consent of her father, but Elise's love was wanting, and how could he ever deserve this love, how win this heart which shone as bright and clear, as hard and cold as rock crystal? Of what avail was it that he worked indefatigably in the service of his benefactor? how did it help him that the money, which Gotzkowsky had given to him as a boy, had borne rich interest and made him a man of means, and even, if he chose, of independence? What did it profit him that all men loved him, if this one being, by whom he so ardently longed to be loved, always remained the same, unchanged toward him, always affectionate and friendly, always open and candid, never abashed, never blushing, never casting her eyes down before him?

"It must at last be decided," thought Bertram, as he sat next Elise; "I must at last know whether she returns my love, or whether that be true which I have heard whispered since my return. I must at least have certainty, even if it annihilates all my wishes."

At this moment there sounded near him merry shouts and laughter. Gotzkowsky had accosted the bridal pair with a jest, and the grateful audience had taken up this jest with delight.

"Long life to the bridal pair!" cried he, raising his glass on high. "Health, wealth, and happiness to them!" A perfect uproar followed this appeal, and

brought tears of delight into the eyes of the blushing little bride, who stood up with the bridegroom and bowed her thanks.

Balthazar laughed, and, as soon as every thing had become quiet, replied: "There, that will do! you have hurraed enough. I don't wish for wealth; health, happiness, and content are enough for me with my little Gretchen; but for these blessings I have to thank, we have all to thank, our lord and master, our father Gotzkowsky. Therefore, you boys up there, stop your clatter and dancing, and listen to what I have to say to you."

Balthazar's loud clear voice overpowered the music which now ceased, and the lads and maidens crowded around him.

"Balthazar is going to make a speech!" cried one with hearty laughter, in which the others joined lustily. "Silence, silence! Balthazar is going to make a speech. Come, Balthazar, out with it! It's a failing he has."

"Well, why shouldn't I?" said Balthazar, laughing; "many a great lord does nothing else all his life but make pretty speeches. Why shouldn't I play the great lord on this my wedding-day?" He drew himself up, cleared his throat, and continued: "I want to talk to you about our master, who turned us from good-for-nothing drones into industrious workmen, who gave us bread when nobody else had bread for us. Nobody, I say, not even our mayor, who is a very good mayor, but who cannot help the poor, feed the hungry, and give bread and work to hands willing to work. Who is able to do that, and who does it? Who in Berlin is the rich, the good man, who gives work to all, and in his large and celebrated mills procures us food and wages? Who is it?"

"Gotzkowsky, our father Gotzkowsky!" cried the crowd unanimously.

Balthazar waved his hat joyfully in the air. "Therefore, say I, long live Gotzkowsky our father!" cried he with stentorian voice. And loud shouts and cheers followed this appeal. Men and women surrounded Gotzkowsky and offered him their hand, and thanked him with those simple and plain words which never fail to reach the heart, because they come from the heart. All hailed him as friend and father, benefactor and master. Gotzkowsky stood in their midst, proud and erect. A deep emotion was evident in his noble features, and he raised his beaming, radiant face to heaven, thanking God in the humbleness of his heart for the proud joy of this hour.

"Long live Gotzkowsky, our father!" reiterated the happy multitude.

He lowered his eyes, and glanced with friendly looks at the cheerful assemblage.

"Thank you, my children," said he, "but I beg you not to overrate my merits. You are of as much service to me as I am to you. He who gives work is nothing without the worker; the one has need of the other, to increase and thrive. Of what avail would my looms and my money be if I had not your industrious hands and your good will to serve me? Money alone will not do it, but the good will and love of the workmen carry the day. I thank you all for your good will and your love; but above all," continued he, turning to Bertram, "above all things I must thank you, my friend. You have stood by me and helped me bravely, and it is full time that I should try to reward you. Children, one more surprise have I in reserve for you to-day. I appoint Mr. Bertram my partner and sole director of the silk factory."

"That's right, that's noble!" cried the workmen.

Bertram said nothing. He only turned his eyes, clouded with tears, toward Gotzkowsky, and the latter read in his looks his deep emotion and affectionate gratitude.

"My son," said he, opening his arms.

"My father, oh my dear, noble father," cried the young man, throwing himself, with streaming eyes, on Gotzkowsky's breast. The workmen stood round, deeply moved, and in silence; and in their hearts they sent up quiet prayers to God on high for their employer. At last Gotzkowsky raised himself from Bertram's arms and sought his daughter with his eyes. She was still sitting, silent and pensive, at the table, and did not appear to have observed what was going on around her. A light cloud crossed his brow as he took Bertram's hand and approached Elise.

"Well, Elise, have you no word of congratulation for him?"

She shuddered, as if awaking from a dream. "Oh," said she, "my good brother Bertram knows that I rejoice in his fortune."

"Brother! still brother?" murmured Gotzkowsky impatiently.

"And why should she not give me that sweet name?" asked Bertram, quickly. "Have you not often called me son, and allowed me to call you father?"

"Oh, I would like indeed to be your father, my son, without Elise's having to call you brother. But we will speak of this another time," said he, interrupting himself; and turning to his workmen, continued: "Come, let us be merry, and of good cheer. Who knows how long Heaven will grant us sunshine? Come, you young folks, I have caused a target to be set up in the court."

Let us go there. He who makes the best shot shall get a new coat. Come, bride Greta, take my arm; I will be your groomsman to-day. Bertram, you and Elise follow us. Now, music, strike up a song for the bride."

Gotzkowsky offered his arm to the bride and led her out. Cheerfully the motley crowd followed him, and soon there was heard in the distance their happy laughter and the merry sound of the music.

CHAPTER III.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

ELISE did not follow the joyous multitude. She still sat musing, unaware that Bertram was standing opposite to her, considering her attentively. At last he ventured to pronounce her name softly. She looked up at him with perfect composure.

"You do not go with them, Elise?" asked he. "Do you not take any part in the general rejoicing?"

She tried to smile. "Oh yes," said she, "I am glad to see how much these good people love my father. And he deserves it too. The welfare of his workmen is his only thought, and the only fame for which he strives."

"You are too modest in your estimate of your father, Elise," cried Bertram. "Gotzkowsky's fame extends far beyond the walls of this town. All Germany, yes, even Holland and England, are familiar with his name, and the Prussian merchant is as much a hero on 'Change' as the Prussian king is on the battle-field."

"Only my father's victories are less bloody," said Elise, smiling.

A pause ensued. Both felt anxious and embarrassed, and neither dared to break the silence. It was the first time, since Bertram's return from his grand tour, that she had found herself in his presence without witnesses, for she had carefully avoided being alone with him. This had not escaped Bertram's notice, and he had therefore determined to take advantage of the present opportunity to have his fate decided. But yet he did not venture to speak, and the words died away on his lips as he remarked her silent, indifferent composure. As he contemplated her, memories of former days rose up before him. He saw her as, half child, half maiden, she clung trustingly and affectionately to his side, and with charming blushes listened to the teasing jokes of her father. Then her whole soul lay open and clear before him; then she disclosed to him the entire treasure of her pure, full heart, and all the fanciful and dreamy thoughts of her young virgin soul were perceptible; then he had participated in her joys, her little sorrows, every feeling which agitated her breast.

And now, why was it all so different?

A deep, painful melancholy took possession of him, and made him overcome his fear of her decision. He sat down resolutely at her side, and took her hand.

"Elise," said he, "do you still remember what you said to me three years ago, as I took leave of you?"

She shook her head and turned her eyes toward him. These eyes were full of tears, and her countenance was agitated with painful emotion.

Bertram continued: "You then said to me, 'Farewell, and however far you may travel my heart goes with you, and when you return I will be to you the same loving, faithful sister that I now am.' These were your

words, Elise; you see that I have preserved them in my memory more faithfully than you, my sister."

Elise shuddered slightly. Then she said, with a painfully subdued voice, "You were so long absent, Bertram, and I was only a child when you left."

"The young woman wishes, then, to recall the words spoken by the child?"

"No, Bertram, I will always love you as a sister."

Bertram sighed. "I understand you," said he, sadly; "you wish to erect this sisterly love into an impassable barrier separating me from you, and to pour this cool and unsubstantial affection like a soothing balm upon my sufferings. How little do you know of love, Elise; of that passion which desires every thing, which is satisfied with nothing less than extreme happiness, or, failing that, extreme wretchedness, and will accept no pitiful compromise, no miserable substitute!"

Elise looked at him firmly, with beaming eyes. She too felt that the decisive hour had come, and that she owed the friend of her youth an open and unreserved explanation.

"You are mistaken, Bertram," said she. "I know this love of which you speak, and for that very reason, because I know it, I tell you I will always love you as a sister. As a true sister I bid you welcome."

She offered him her hand; but as she read in his pale face the agony which tormented his soul, she turned her eyes away and drew her hand back.

"You are angry with me, Bertram," said she, sobbing.

He pressed his hand convulsively to his heart, as if he would suppress a cry of agony, then held it firmly to his eyes, which were scalded by his hot tears. He wrestled with his sufferings, but he wrestled like a hero

and a man who would not be subjugated, but is determined to conquer. As his hand glided from his face his eyes were tearless, and nothing was visible in his countenance but an expression of deep earnestness.

"Well, then," said he, recovering himself, "I accept this sisterly love as a sick man accepts the bitter medicine which he will not cast away lest he commit suicide. I accept you as my sister, but a sister must at least have confidence in her brother; she must not stand before him like a sealed book whose contents he is ignorant of. If I am to be your brother, I demand also the rights of a brother. I demand truth and trust."

"And who says that I will deny you either?" asked she, quickly.

"You, yourself, Elise; your whole conduct, your shyness and reserve, the manner in which you avoid me, the intentional coldness with which you meet me. Oh! even at this moment you would withdraw from me, but I will not let you, Elise; I will compel your heart to reveal itself to me. I will move you with my devotion, my tender anxiety, so that the cruel crust will fall from your gentle and pure heart, and you will become again my candid and confiding sister. Oh, Elise, have compassion on me! tell me what secret, mysterious charm has suddenly seized you; what wicked, hurtful demon has suddenly converted this bright ingenuous girl into a pale, sad, serious woman. Have courage and trust me, and let me read as in those happier days."

Elise looked at his noble countenance with a deep and painful emotion, and met his inquiring look with unabashed eye.

"Well, then," said she, "I will trust you, Bertram. I will tell you what I have confided to no human ear. Know, then, that my heart also has felt the pains which

affect yours. Know that an ardent, hopeless love burns my soul."

"A hopeless love?" asked Bertram.

"Yes, hopeless," said she, firmly; "for never can I hope for my father's blessing on this love, and never, without it, will I leave my father's house to follow the man I love."

"The man you love!" cried Bertram, painfully. "Does he also then love you, and does he know that you love him?"

She looked at him with astonishment. "Can one then love without being beloved?" asked she, with the unconscious pride of a young girl.

"You are right," said Bertram; "I was a fool to ask this question of you. But why do you doubt your father's consent? Why do you not go confidently to him and confess your love? But how? Is this love such that it dare not face the light, and must conceal itself from the eyes of your father?"

"Yes, Bertram, it is such a love; but yet you must not doubt me, you must not think that this love which conceals itself from the eyes of my father need therefore fear the light of the world. My father would, perhaps, if he knew my secret, declare me unworthy of him; but never, be assured, never would I commit any act unworthy of myself, and for which I would have to blush. It is possible that not only my father but the whole world would pronounce me guilty if it knew my love; but, believe me, that in the consciousness of my rectitude I would have the courage to brave the verdict of the whole world, provided that my own heart acquitted me, and that I am guilty of no other crime than this accidental one, which fate, and not my own will and trespass, imposes on me. Love allows itself neither to

be given nor taken, and when it cannot command fortune, it can at least lighten misfortune. More I cannot tell you, my brother, and what is the use of words? Only depend on what I assure you, I will never be faithless to my honor nor my love. You may think," continued she, proudly and passionately, "that my love is a crime, but never that I could love unworthily, or that I could bow my head under the disgrace of a dishonorable love."

She looked beautiful in her proud, flashing maidenhood; and Bertram felt, as he looked on her handsome, glowing countenance, that he had never loved her so sincerely, and at the same time so painfully, as at this moment.

"Elise," said he, grasping her hand, "will you not have entire confidence in your brother? Will you not tell me the name of your lover?"

She shook her head earnestly. "Only God and my heart dare know it."

"Elise," continued he more urgently, "shall I tell you what has been whispered in my ear as I returned from a long absence? Shall I tell you what your enemies—for your youth and beauty and your father's wealth have made you enemies—shall I tell you what your enemies whisper to each other with malicious joy?"

"No, no!" said she anxiously, "how would it help me to know it?"

Bertram continued inexorably, "They say that the captive Russian, General Sievers, was welcomed by your father into his house as a friend, and that he overwhelmed the noble prisoner with kind attention."

Elise breathed more freely. "It was with the consent and by the wish of the king that my father was kind to the captive Russian general."

"And was it also by the wish of the king that Gotzkowsky's daughter accepted the homage of the Russian general's adjutant?"

A slight shudder ran through Elise's whole frame, and her cheeks became crimson.

"Ah," cried Bertram sadly, "I see you understand me. You will not tell me the name of your lover—let me tell it to you. It is Feodor von Brenda."

"No, no!" cried Elise, looking around in alarm, and fearful lest some treacherous ear had heard the dangerous secret.

"Yes," said Bertram, "his name is Feodor von Brenda; he serves as a colonel in the Russian army; he fights against our brothers and our king; he is the enemy of our country."

"You have no pity on me," cried Elise, wringing her hands, her eyes streaming with tears. "You wish to kill me with your cruel words."

"I wish to show to the daughter of the noblest and truest patriot, I wish to point out to the young, inexperienced, credulous maiden, to my sister, that she stands at the edge of an abyss. I wish to open her eyes that she may be aware of the danger which threatens her. I wish to draw her back from this abyss which threatens to engulf her."

"It is too late," said Elise, rising proudly and drying her tears. "I know it all, Bertram; I stand at the edge of this abyss with open eyes, conscious of the danger; but I will not, cannot draw back, for my heart holds me fast."

Elise took leave of him with a sad smile, and hurried rapidly down the dark walk which led to the retired and unfrequented parts of the garden.

Bertram looked after her until her pink dress disappeared behind the dark foliage of the hedge.

"She loves him," murmured he, letting his head drop upon his breast, "it is certain she loves him."

CHAPTER IV.

FEODOR VON BRENDA.

ELISE directed her hasty steps toward the now retired parts of the garden. She longed to be alone. Her soul, agitated by painful emotions, required silence and solitude, in order to settle down again gently to rest and peace. Slowly, and with bowed head, she traversed the dark, silent garden-walks. Her thoughts wandered afar off, and she sought some little comfort, some relief from the privations of the present, in the sweet and blissful recollections of bygone days.

"What can keep him?" asked she of herself; and as she thought of him, her countenance assumed a cheerful, almost happy expression. "He swore to brave every danger, every difficulty, in order to let me hear from him; and now, alas! ten weeks have passed, and no news, no token, from him. My God! is it possible that in all this long time he could have found no opportunity to write to me?—or perhaps his love has not survived the test of separation and silence."

At this thought she stopped, as if stunned, and pressed her hand to her breast. A sharp pain shot through her, and her heart seemed to cease to pulsate. But, in a moment, her countenance brightened up, and she murmured, with a gentle smile, "Oh, to doubt his love were a greater treason than to love my country's enemy. Oh, no! Feodor, my heart does not doubt you;