

CHAPTER X

I AND THE DEMON

It was already late in the evening when Bálnokházy's butler brought me a letter, and then hurriedly departed, before I could read it.

It was Lorand's writing. The message was short:

"My dear brother:—I have been betrayed and must escape: comfort our dear parents. Good-bye."

I leaped up from my bed:—I had already gone to bed that I might get up early on the morrow:—and hastened to dress.

My first idea was to go to Bálnokházy. He was my uncle and relation, and was extremely fond of us: besides, he was very influential; he could accomplish anything he wished, I would tell him everything frankly, and beg him to do for my brother what he was capable of doing: to prevent his prosecution and arrest, or, if he was convicted, to secure his pardon. Why, to such a great man nothing could be impossible.

I begged old Márton to open the door for me.

"What! *discipulus negligens!* To slip out of the house at night is not proper. He who wanders about at night can be no Lieutenant Governor—at most a night-watchman."

"No joking now; they are prosecuting my brother! I must go and help him."

"Why didn't you tell me at once? Prosecute indeed? You should have told me that. Who? Perhaps the butcher clerks? If so, let us all six go with clubs to his aid."

"No, they are not butcher clerks. What are you thinking of?"

I and the Demon

"Why, in past years the law-students were continually having brawls with butcher clerks."

"They want to arrest him," I whispered to him, "to put him in prison, because he was one of the 'Parliamentary youth' lot."

"Aha," said Márton, "that's where we are is it? That is beyond my assistance. And, what can you do?"

"I must go to my uncle Bálnokházy at once and ask him to interfere."

"That's surely a wise thing to do. Under those circumstances I shall go with you. Not because I think you would be afraid to go by yourself at night, but that I may be able to tell the old man by-and-bye that you were not in mischief."

The old fellow put on a coat in a moment, and a pair of boots, then accompanied me to the Bálnokházys.

He did not wish to come in, but told me that, on my way back, I should look for him at the corner beer-house, where he would wait for me.

I hurried up stairs.

I was greatly disappointed to find my brother's door closed: at other times that had always been my first place of retreat.

I heard the piano in the "salon": so I went in there.

Melanie was playing with the governess.

They did not seem surprised that I came at so late an hour; I only noticed that they behaved a little more stiffly towards me than on other occasions.

Melanie was deeply engrossed in studying the notes. I enquired whether I could speak with my uncle.

"He has not yet come home from the club," said the governess.

"And her ladyship."

"She has gone to the ball."

That annoyed me a little.

"And when do they come home?"

"The Privy Councillor at eleven o'clock, he usually plays whist till that hour; her ladyship probably not until after midnight. Do you wish to wait?"

"Yes, until my uncle returns."

"Then you can take supper with us."

"Thank you, I have already had supper."

"Do they have supper so early at the baker's?"

"Yes."

I then sat down beside the piano, and thought for a whole hour what a stupid instrument the piano was; a man's head may be full of ideas, and it will drive them all out.

Yet I had so much to ponder over. What should I say to my uncle when he came. With what should I begin? How could I tell him what I knew? What should I ask from him?

But how was it possible that neither was at home at such a critical time? Surely they must have been informed of such a misfortune. I did not dare to introduce Lorand's name before the governess. Who knows what others are? Besides, I had no sympathy for her. For me a governess seemed always a most frivolous creature.

In the room there was a large clock that caused me most annoyance. How long it took for those hands to reach ten o'clock! Then, when it did strike, its tone was of that aristocratic nasal quality that it must have acquired from the voices of the people around it.

Sometimes the governess laughed, when Melanie made some curious mistake; Melanie, too, laughed and peeped from behind her music to see if I was smiling.

I had not even noticed it.

Then my pretty cousin poutingly tossed back her curly hair, as if she were annoyed that I too was beginning to play a part of indifference towards her.

At last the street-door bell rang. From the footsteps I knew my uncle had come. They were so dignified.

Soon the butler entered and said I could speak with his lordship, if I so desired.

Trembling all over, I took my hat, and wished the ladies good-night.

"Are you not coming back, to hear the end of the Cavatina," inquired Melanie.

"I cannot," I answered, and left them there.

My uncle's study was on the farther side of the hall; the butler lighted my way with a lamp, then he put it down on a chest, that I might find my way back.

"Well, my child, what do you want?" inquired my uncle, in that gay, playful tone, which we are wont to use in speaking to children to express that we are quite indifferent as to their affairs.

I answered languidly, as if some gravestone were weighing upon my breast,

"Dear uncle, Lorand has left us."

"You know already?" he asked, putting on his many colored embroidered dressing-gown.

"You know too?" I exclaimed, taken aback.

"What, that Lorand has run away?" remarked my uncle, coolly buttoning together the silken folds of his dressing gown; "why I know more than that:—I know also that my wife has run away with him, and all my wife's jewels, not to mention the couple of thousand florins that were at home—all have run away with your brother Lorand."

How I reached the street after those words; whether they opened the door for me; whether they led me out or kicked me out, I assure you I do not know. I only came to myself, when Márton seized my arm in the street and shouted at me:

"Well sir Lieutenant-Governor, you walk right into me without even seeing me. I got tired of waiting in the beer-house and began to think that they had run you in too. Well, what is the matter? How you stagger."

"Oh! Márton," I stammered, "I feel very faint."

"What has happened?"

"I cannot tell anyone that."

"Not to anyone? No! not to Mr. Brodfresser,* nor

*The name given to Desiderius' professor ("bread devourer").

to Mr. Commissioner:—but to Márton, to old Márton? Has old Márton ever let out anything? Old Márton knows much that would be worth his while to tell tales about: have you ever heard of old Márton being a gossip? Has old Márton ever told tales against you or anyone else? And if I could help you in any way?"

There was a world of frank good-heartedness in these reproaches; besides I had to catch after the first straw to find a way of escape.

"Well, and what did my old colleague say?—You know the reason I call him 'colleague,' is that my hair always acts as if it were a wig, while his wig always acts as if it were hair."

"He said," I answered tremblingly, hanging on to his arm, "he knew more than I. Lorand has not merely run away, but has stolen my uncle's wife."

At these words Márton commenced to roar with laughter. He pressed his hands upon his stomach and just roared, then turned round, as if he wished to give the further end of the street a taste of his laughter; then he remarked that it was a splendid joke, at which remark I was sufficiently scandalized.

"And then he said—that Lorand had stolen his money."

At this Márton straightened himself and raised his head very seriously.

"That is bad. That is 'a mill,' as Father Fromm would say. Well, and what do you think of it, sir?"

"I think, it cannot be true; and I want to find my brother, no matter what has become of him."

"And when you have found him?"

"Then, if that woman is holding him by one hand, I shall seize the other and we shall see which of us will be the stronger."

Márton gave me a sound slap on the back, saying "Teufelskerl.* What are you thinking of?—would other children mind, if a beautiful woman ran away with their brother? But this one wishes to stand be-

* Devil's fellow: *i. e.*, devil of a fellow.

tween them. Excellent. Well, shall we look for Master Lorand? How will you begin?"

"I don't know."

"Let me see; what have you learned at school? What can you do, if you are suddenly thrown back on your own resources? Which way will you start? Right or left: will you cry in the street, 'Who has seen my brother?'"

Indeed I did not know how to begin.

"Well,—you shall see that you can at times make use of that old fellow Márton. Trust yourself to me. Listen to me now, as if I were Mr. Brodfresser. If two of them ran away together, surely they must have taken a carriage. The carriage was a fiacre. Madame has always the same coachman, number 7. I know him well. So first of all we must find Móczli: that is coachman No. 7. He lives in the Zuckermandel. It's a cursed long way, but that's all the better, for by the time we get to his house we shall be all the surer to find him at home."

"If he was the one who took them."

"Don't play the fool now, sir studiosus. I know what cab-horses are. They could not take anyone as far as the border; at most as far as some wayside inn, where speedy country horses can be found: there the runaways are waiting while the fiacre is returning."

In astonishment I asked what made him surmise all this: when it seemed to me that with speedy country horses they might already be far beyond the frontier.

"Sir Lieutenant-Governor," was Márton's hasty reproof; "How could you have such ideas? You expect to become Lieutenant-Governor some day, yet you don't know that he who wishes to pass the frontiers must be supplied with a passport. No one can go without a pass from Pressburg to Vienna; Madame has quite surely despatched Móczli back to bring to her the gentleman with whose 'pass' they are to escape farther."

"What gentleman?"

"An actor from the theatre here, who will arrange

that the young gentleman shall pass the frontier with his passport."

"How can you figure it all out?"

Márton paused for a moment, made an ugly mouth, closed his left eye, and hissed through his teeth, as if he would express by all this pantomime that there are things which cannot be held under children's noses.

"Well, never mind; you do wish to be a county officer or something of the kind. So you must know about such things sooner or later, when you will have to examine people on such questions. I will tell you—I know because Móczli once told me just such a story about madame."

"Once before?"

"Certainly," said Márton chuckling wickerly. "Ha ha! Madame is a cute little woman. But then no one knows of it—only Móczli and I; and Madame's husband. Her husband has already pardoned her for it: Móczli was well paid; and what business is it of Márton's? All three of us hold our tongues, like a broiled fish. But it is not the first time it has happened."

I do not know why, but this discovery somehow relieved my bitterness. I began to surmise that Lorand was not the most deeply implicated in the crime.

"Well, let us go first of all to Móczli," said Márton; "But I have a promise to exact from you. Don't say a word yourself; leave the talking to me. For he is a cursed fellow, this Móczli; if he finds that we wish to get information out of him, he will lie like a book: but I will suddenly drive in upon him, so that he will not know whether to turn to the right or to the left. I will spring something on him as if I knew all about it, that will scare him out of his wits and then I'll press him close, so that it'll take his breath away, and before he knows it I'll have that secret squeezed out of him to the very last drop. You must observe how it is done, so that you can make use of similar methods in the future when in the position of Lieutenant-Governor you will

have to cross-question some suspicious rascal in order to wring the truth out of him!

By this time we had started at a brisk pace along the banks of the Danube. I wasn't dressed for such a dismal night, and old Márton was doing his best to shield me with the wing of his coat against the chilling gusts that rushed against us from the river. At the same time he made every effort to make me believe that what we were engaged in was one of the finest jokes he had ever taken a hand in, and that our recollections of it will afford us no end of amusement in the future. At the foot of the castle-hill, along the banks of the Danube was a group of tottering houses; tottering because in spring, when the ice broke up, the Danube roared and dashed among them. Here lived the fiacre drivers. Here were the cab-horses in tumble-down stables.

It was a ball-night: in the windows of the tumble-down houses candles were burning, for the cabmen were waiting till midnight, when they would again harness their horses and return to fetch their patrons from the ball-room.

Márton looked in at one window so lighted; he had to climb up on something to do so, for the ground floor was built high, in order that the water might not enter at the windows.

"He is at home," he remarked, as he stepped down, "but he is evidently preparing to go out again, for he has his top-coat on."

The gate was open; the carriage was in the courtyard, the horses in the shafts, covered with rugs.

Their harness had not even been taken off: they must have just arrived and had to start again at once.

Márton motioned to me to follow him at his heels while he made his way into the house.

The door we ran up against could not be opened unless one knew the tricks that made it yield. Márton seemed to be well acquainted with the peculiarities of the entrance to Móczli's den: first he pressed down on the door knob and raised the whole door bracing

against it with his shoulder, then turning the knob and giving the door a severe kick it flew open and in the next moment we found ourselves in a dingy, narrow hole of a room smelling horribly of axle-grease, tallow and tobacco-smoke.

On a table, which was leaning against the wall with the side where a leg was broken, stood a burning tallow-dip stuck into the mouth of an empty beer-jug, and by its dim light Móczli was seated eating—no, devouring his supper. With incredible rapidity he was piling in and ramming down, as it were, enormous slices of blood-sausage in turn with huger chunks of salted bread.

His many-collared coat was thrown over his huge frame, and his broad-brimmed hat that was pressed over his eyes was still covered with hoar-frost that had no chance of thawing in that cold, damp room, the wall of which glistened like the sides of some dripping cave.

Móczli was a well-fed fellow, with strongly protruding eyes, which seemed almost to jump out of their sockets as he stared at us for bursting in upon him without knocking.

"Well, where does it 'burn?'" were his first words to Márton.

"Gently, old fellow; don't make a noise. There is other trouble! You are betrayed and they will pinch the young gentleman at the frontier."

Móczli was really scared for a moment. A tremendous three-cornered chunk of bread that he had just thrust in his mouth stuck there staring frightenedly at us like Móczli himself and looking for all the world as if a second nose was going to grow on his face; however he soon came to himself, continued the munching process, gulped it all down, and then drank a huge draught out of a monstrous glass, his protruding eyes being all the while fixed on me.

"I surely thought there was a fire somewhere, and I must go for a fire-pump again with my horses.—I must always go for the pump, if a fire breaks out anywhere. Even if there is a fire in the mill quarter, it

is only me they drive out: why does not the town keep horses of her own?"

"Do you hear, Móczli," Márton interrupted, "don't talk to me now of the town pumps don't sprinkle your throat either, for it's not there that it is burning, but your back will be burning immediately, if you don't listen to me. Her ladyship's husband learned all. They will forestall the young gentleman at the frontier, and bring him back."

Móczli endeavored to display a calm countenance, though his eyes belied him.

"What 'young gentleman' do you mean, and what 'ladyship?'"

Márton bent over him and whispered,

"Móczli, you don't want to make a fool of yourself before me, surely. Was it not you that took away Bálnokházy's wife in the company of a young gentleman? Your number is on your back: do you think no one can see it?"

"If I did take them off, where did I drive them to? Why to the ball?"

"A fine ball, indeed. You know they want to arrest the 'juratus.' He will find one for you soon where they play better music. Here is his younger brother, just come from seeing his lordship, who told him his wife had eloped with the young gentleman whom they would search for in every direction."

Móczli was at this moment deeply engaged in picking his teeth. First with his tongue, then with his fingers, until he found a wisp of straw with which to clean them, and at which, like drowning people, he clutched to save himself.

"Well, do you think I care: anyone may send for anyone else for all I mind. I have seen no one, have taken no one away. And if I did take someone, what business of mine is it to know what the one is doing with the other? And even if I did know that someone has eloped with someone else's wife, what business is it of mine? I am no 'syndic' that I should bother my head to ask questions about it: I carry woman or

man, who pays, according to the tariff of fares. Otherwise I know absolutely nothing."

"Well, good-bye, and God bless you, Móczli," said Márton hastily. "If you don't know about it, someone else must know about it. However, we didn't come here to gaze into your dreamy eyes, but to free this young gentleman's brother: we shall search among the other fiacres, until we find the right one, for it is a critical business: and if we find that fiacre in which the young fellow came to harm and cannot manage to secure his escape, I would not like to be in his shoes."

"In whose shoes?" inquired Móczli, terrified.

"In the young gentleman's not at all, but still less in the fiacre-driver's. Well, good-night, Móczli."

At these words Móczli leaped up from his chair and sprang after Márton.

"Wait a moment: don't be a fool. Come with me. Take your seats in my fiacre. But the devil take me if I have seen, heard or said anything."

Therewith he removed the rugs from his horses, placed me inside the carriage, covering me with a rug, took Márton beside him on the box, and drove desperately along the bank of the Danube.

Long did I see the lamps of the bridge glittering in the water; then suddenly the road turned abruptly, and, to judge by the almost intolerable shaking of the carriage and the profound darkness, we had entered one of those alleys, the paving of which is counted among the curses of civilization, the street-lamps being entrusted to the care of future generations.

The carriage suddenly proceeded more heavily: perhaps we were ascending a hill: the whip was being plied more vigorously every moment on the horses' backs: then suddenly the carriage stopped.

Móczli commenced to whistle as if to amuse himself, at which I heard the creaking of a gate, and we drove into some courtyard.

When the carriage stopped, the coachman leaped off the box, and addressed me through the window.

"We are here: at the end of the courtyard is a small

room; a candle is burning in the window. The young gentleman is there."

"Is the woman with him too?" I inquired softly.

"No. She is at the 'White Wolf,' waiting with the speedy peasant cart, until I bring the gentleman with whom she must speak first."

"He cannot come yet, for the performance is not yet over."

Móczli opened his eyes still further.

"You know that too?"

I hastened across the long dark courtyard and found the door of the little room referred to. A head was to be seen at the lighted window. Lorand was standing there melting the ice on the panes with his breath, that he might see when the person he was expecting arrived.

Oh how he must have loved her. What a desperate struggle awaited me!

When he saw me from the window, he disappeared from it, and hurried to meet me.

At the door we met and in astonishment he asked:

"How did you get here?"

I said nothing, but embraced him, and determined that even if he cut me in pieces, I would never part from him.

"Why did you come after me? How did you find your way hither?"

I saw he was annoyed. He was displeased that I had come.

"Those, who saw you take your seat in a carriage, directed me."

He visibly shuddered.

"Who saw me?"

"Don't be afraid. Someone who will not betray you."

"But what do you want? Why did you come after me?"

"You know, dear Lorand, when we left home mother whispered in my ear, 'take care of Lorand,' when grandmother left us here, she whispered in my ear,

'take care of your brother.' They will ask me to give account of how I loved you. And what shall I tell them, if they ask me 'where were you when Lorand stood in direst danger?'"

Lorand was touched; he pressed me close to his heart, saying:—

"But, how can you help me?"

"I don't know. I only know that I shall follow you, wherever you go."

This very naive answer roused Lorand to anger.

"You will go to hell with me! Do I want irons on my feet to hinder my steps when I scarce know myself whither I shall fly? I know not how to rescue myself, and must I rescue you too?"

Lorand was in a violent rage and strove to shake me off from him. Yet I would not leave go of him.

"What if I intend to rescue you?"

"You?" he said, looking at me, and thrusting his hands in his pockets. "What part of me will you defend?"

"Your honor, Lorand."

Lorand drew back at these words.

"My honor?"

"And mine:—You know that father left us one in common, one we cannot divide—his unsullied name. It is entirely mine, just as it is entirely yours."

Lorand shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"Let it be yours entirely: I give over my claim."

This indifference towards the most sacred ideas quite embittered me. I was beside myself, I must break out.

"Yes, because you wish to take the name of a wandering actor, and to elope with a woman who has a husband."

"Who told you?" Lorand exclaimed, standing before me with clenched fists.

I was far from being afraid of anyone: I answered coolly.

"That woman's husband."

Lorand was silent and began to walk feverishly up and down the narrow, short, little room. Suddenly he

stopped, and half aside addressed me, always in the same passionate tones.

"Desi, you are still a child."

"I know."

"There are things which cannot yet be explained to you."

"On such subjects you may hold your peace."

"You have spoken with that woman's husband?"

"He said, you had eloped with his wife."

"And that is why you came after me?"

"Yes."

"Now what do you want?"

"I want you to leave that woman."

"Have you lost your senses?"

"Mine? Not yet."

"You wish perhaps to hint that I have lost mine: it is possible, very possible."

Therewith he sat down beside the table, and leaning his chin on his hands, began to gaze abstractedly into the candle-flames like some real lunatic.

I stepped up to him, and laid my head on his shoulder.

"Dear Lorand, you are angry with me."

"No. Only tell me what else you know."

"If you wish I will leave you here and return."

"Do as you wish."

"And what shall I tell dear mother, if she asks questions about you?"

Lorand dispiritedly turned his head away from me.

"You wrote to me to cheer and comfort mother and grandmother:—tell me then, what shall I write to them, if they enquire after you?"

Lorand answered defiantly,

"Write that Lorand is dead."

At his answer the blood boiled within me. I seized my brother's hands and cried to him:

"Lorand, till now the fathers were suicides in our family: do you wish that the mothers should continue the list?"

It was a pitiless remark of mine, I knew. Lorand

commenced to shiver, I felt it. He stood up before me and became so pale.

I wished I had addressed him more gently.

"My dear brother Lorand, could you bear to become responsible for a mother, who left her child, and for another who died for her child?"

Lorand clasped his hands and bowed his head.

"If you only knew what you are saying to me now?" he said with such bitter reproach that I can never forget it.

"But I have not yet told you all I know."

"What do you know? As yet you are happy—your life mere play—passion does not yet trouble you. But I am already lost, through what, you have no idea, and may you never have!"

How he must love that woman!

It would have cost me few words to make him hate and despise her, but I did not wish to break his heart. I had other means with which to steel his heart, that he might wake up, as from a delirious dream, to another life.

I too had had visions about my piano-playing beauty: but I had forgotten that ideal for ever and ever, for being able to play, after she knew her mother had run away.—But that was mere childish love, a child's thought—there is something, however, in the heart which is awakened earlier, and dies later than passion, that is a feeling of honor, and I had as much of that as Lorand: let us see whose was the stronger.

"Lorand, I don't know what enchantment it was, with which this woman could lure you after her. But I know that I too have a magic word, which will tear you from her."

"Your magic word?—Do you wish to speak of mother? Do you wish to stand in my way with her name?—Do so.—The only effect you will produce, by worrying me very much, will be that I shall blow my brains out here before you: but from that woman you can never tear me."

"I have no intention to speak of poor mother. It is a different subject I have in mind."

"Something, or someone else."

"It is Bálnokházy, for whose sake you are going to leave this woman."

Lorand shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you think I am afraid of Bálnokházy's prosecution?"

"He has no intention of prosecuting you. He has been very considerate to his wife in similar cases. Well, don't knit your eyebrows so; I am not saying a word about his wife. I have no business with women. Bálnokházy will not prosecute you, he will merely tell the world what has happened to him."

Lorand, with a bitter smile of scorn, asked me:

"What will he relate to the world?"

"That his wife broke open his safe, stole his jewels, and his ready money, and eloped with a young man."

Lorand turned abruptly to me like one whom a snake has bitten,

"What did he say?"

"That his faithless wife in company with a young man, whom he had treated like his own child, has stolen his money, and then run away, like a thief—with her companion in theft!"

Lorand clutched at the table for support.

"Don't, don't say any more."

"I shall. I have seen the safes, empty, in which the family treasures were wont to be piled. I heard from the cabman, who handed in her travelling bag after her that 'it must have been full of gold, it was so heavy.'"

Lorand's face was burning now like the clouds of a storm-swept sky at sunset.

"Did you have the bag in your hands?" I asked him.

"Not a word more!" Lorand cried, pressing my arm so that it pained me. "That woman shall never see me again."

Then he sank upon the table and sobbed.

How glad I felt that I had been able to move him.

Soon he raised his tear-stained face, stood up, came to me, embraced and kissed me.

"You have conquered!—Now tell me what else you want with me?"

I was incapable of uttering a word, so oppressed was my heart in my delight, my anguish. It was no child's play, this. Fate is not wont to entrust such a struggle to a child's hands.

"Brother, dear!" more I could not say: I felt as he must have when he brought me up from the bottom of the Danube.

"You will not allow anyone," he whispered, "to utter such a calumny against me."

"You may be sure of that."

"You will not let them degrade me before mother?"

"I shall defend you. You see that after all I am capable of defending you.—But time is precious:—they are prosecuting you for another crime too, you know, from which to escape is a duty. There is not a moment to lose. Fly!

"Whither? I cannot take new misfortunes to mother's house."

"I have an idea. We have a relation of whom we have heard much, far off in the interior of the country, where they will never look for you, since we were never on good terms with him, Uncle Topányi."

"That infidel?" exclaimed Lorand; then he added bitterly, "It was a good idea of yours, indeed: I shall have a very good place in the house of an atheist, who lives at enmity with the whole earth, and with Heaven besides."

"There you will be well hidden."

"Well and for ever."

"Don't say that. This danger will pass away."

"Listen to me, Desi," said Lorand severely. "I shall abide by what you say: I shall go away, without once looking behind: I shall bury myself, but on one condition, which you must accept, or I shall go to the nearest police station and report myself."

"What do you wish?"

"That you shall never tell either mother or grandmother, where I have gone to."

"Never?" I inquired, frightenedly.

"No, only after ten years, ten years from to-day."

"Why?"

"Don't ask me: only give me your word of honor to keep my secret. If you do not do so, you will inflict a heavy sorrow on me, and on all our family."

"But if circumstances change?"

"I said, not for ten years. And, if the whole world should dance with delight, still keep peace and don't call for me, or put my mother on my tracks. I have a special reason for my desire, and that reason I cannot tell you."

"But if they ask me, if they weep before me?"

"Tell them nothing ails me, I am in a good place. I shall take another name, *Bálint Tátray. Topányi also shall know me under that name. I shall find my way to his place as bailiff, or servant, whichever he will accept me as, and then I shall write to you once every month. You will tell my loved ones at home what you know of me. And they will love you twice as well for it: they will love you in place of me."

I hesitated. It was a difficult promise.

"If you love me, you must undertake it for my sake."

I clung to him and said I would undertake to keep the secret. For ten years I would not say before mother or grandmother where their dearest son had gone.

"Would they reach the end of those ten years?"

"You undertake that—on your word of honor?" said Lorand, gazing deeply into my eyes; on that honor by which you just now so proudly appealed to me? Look, the whole Áronffy name is borne by you alone. Do you undertake it for the honor of that whole name, not to mention this secret before mother or grandmother?"

"I do—on my word of honor."

* A name peculiarly Maygar.

He grasped my hand. He trusted so much to that word!

"Well, now be quick. The carriage is waiting."

"Carriage? With that I cannot travel far. Besides it is unnecessary. I have two good legs, they will carry me, if necessary, to the end of the world, without demanding payment afterwards."

I took a little purse, on the outside of which mother had worked a design, from my pocket, and wished to slip it into Lorand's side-pocket without attracting attention.

He discovered it.

"What is this?"

"A little money. I thought you might want it for the journey."

"How did you come by it?" enquired my brother in astonishment.

"Why, you know, you yourself paid me two twenties a sheet, when I copied those writings."

"And you have kept it?"—Lorand opened the purse, and saw within it about twenty florins. He began to laugh.

How glad I was to see him laugh now, I cannot tell you, his laughter infected me too, then I do not know why, but we laughed together, very good-spiritedly. Now as I write these words the tears stand in my eyes—and I did laugh so heartily.

"Why, you have made a millionaire of me."

Then cheerfully he put my purse into his pocket. And I did not know what to do in my delight at Lorand's accepting my money.

"Now comrade mine, I could go to the end of the world. I don't have to play 'armen reisender' * on the way."

When we stepped out again through the low door into the narrow dark courtyard, Márton and Móczli were standing in astonishment before us. Anyone

* Poor traveller.

could see they could not comprehend what they had seen by peeping through the window.

"I am here," said Móczli, touching the brim of his hat, "where shall I drive, sir?"

"Just drive where you were told to," said Lorand, "take him for whom you were sent, to her who sent you for him.—I am going in another direction."

At these words Márton grasped my arm so savagely I almost cried out with pain. It was his peculiar method of showing his approval.

"Very good, sir," said Móczli, without asking any further questions, and clambering up onto the box.

"Stop a moment," Lorand exclaimed, taking out his purse. "Let no one say that you were paid for any services you did me with other people's money."

"Wha-at?" roughly grumbled Móczli. "Pay me? Am I a 'Hanák fuvaros' * that someone should pay me for helping a 'juratus' to escape? That has never happened yet."

With that he whipped up his horses, and drove out of the courtyard.

"That's the trump for you," said Márton, "that's Móczli. I know Móczli, he's a sharp fellow, without him we should never have found our way here. Well, sir, and whither now?"

This remark was made to Lorand. My brother was acquainted with the jesting old fellow, and had often heard his humorous anecdotes, when he came to see me.

"At all events away from Pressburg, old man."

"But which way? I think the best would be over the bridge, through the park."

"But very many people pass there. Someone might recognize me."

"Then straight along the Danube, down-stream; by morning you will reach the ferry at Mühlau, where they will ferry you over for two kreuzers. Have you some change? You must always have that. Men on

* A Slavonian coachman who hires out his coach and carriages.

foot must always pay in copper, or they will be suspected. It's a pity I didn't know sooner, I could have lent you a passport. You might have travelled as a baker's assistant."

"I shall travel as a 'legatus.'*" "

"That will do finely."

Meantime we reached the end of the street. Lorand wished to bid us farewell.

"Oho!" said Márton, "we shall accompany you to the outskirts of the town; we cannot leave you alone until you are in a secure place, on the high-road. Do you know what? You two go on in advance and I shall remain close behind, pretending to be a little drunk. Patrols are in the street. If I sing loudly they will waste their attention on me, and will not bother you. If necessary, I shall pitch into them, and while they are running me in, you can go on. To you, Master Lorand, I give my stick for the journey. It's a good, honest stick. I have tramped all over Germany with it. Well, God bless you."

The old fellow squeezed Lorand's hand.

"I have a mind to say something. But I shall say nothing. It is well just as it is,—I shall say nothing. God bless you, sir."

Therewith the old man dropped back, and began to brawl some yodling air in the street, and to thump the doors with his fists, in accompaniment, like some drunken reveller.

"Hai-dia-do."

Taking each other's hand we hastened on. The streets were already very dark here.

At the end of the town are barracks, before which we had to pass: the cry of the sentinel sounded in the distance. "Who goes there? Guard out!" and soon behind our backs we heard the squadron of horsemen clattering on the pavement.

* A travelling preacher. A kind of missionary sent out by the "Legatio."

Márton did just as he had said. He pitched into the guard. Soon we heard a dream-disturbing uproar, as he fell into a noisy discussion with the armed authorities.

"I am a citizen! A peaceful, harmless citizen! Fugias Mathias (this to us)! Ten glasses of beer are not the world! I am a citizen, Fugias Mathias is my name! I will pay for every thing. If I have broken any bottles I will pay for them. Who says I am shouting? I am singing. 'Hai-dia-do;' let any one who doesn't like it try to sing more beautifully himself!"

We were already outside of the town, and still we heard the terrible noise which he made in his self-sacrifice for our sakes.

As we came out into the open, we were both able to breathe more freely; the starry sky is a good shelter.

The cold, too, compelled us to hasten. We had walked a good half-hour among the vineyards, when suddenly something occurred to Lorand.

"How long do you wish to accompany me?"

"Until day breaks. In this darkness I should not dare to return to the town alone."

Now he became anxious for me too. What could he do with me? Should he let me go home alone at midnight through these clusters of houses in that suburb of ill-repute. Or should he take me miles on his way with him? From there I should have to return alone in any case.

At that moment a carriage approached rapidly, and as it passed before us, somebody leaped down upon us from the back seat, and laughing came where we were beside the hedge.

In him we recognized old Márton.

"I have found you after all," said the old fellow, smiling. "What a fine time I have had. They really thought I was drunk. I quarrelled with them. That was the 'gaude!' They tugged and pulled, and beat my back with the flat of their sabres: it was something glorious!"

"Well, how did you escape?" I asked, not finding

that entertainment to the accompaniment of sabre-blows so glorious.

"When I saw a carriage approaching, I leaped out from their midst and climbed up behind:—nor did they give me a long chase. I soon got away from them."

The good old man was quite content with the fine amusement which he had procured for himself.

"But now we must really say adieu, Master Lorand. Don't go the same way as the carriage went: cut across the road here in the hills to the lower road; you can breakfast at the first inn you come to: you will reach it by dawn. Then go in the direction of the sunrise."

We embraced each other. We had to part. And who knew for how long?

Márton was nervous. "Let us go! Let Lorand too hurry on *his* way."

Why, ten years is a very long way. By that time we should be growing old.

"Love mother in my place. Then remember your word of honor." Lorand whispered these words. Then he kissed me and in a few moments had disappeared from my sight down the lower road among the hills.

Who knew when I should see him again?

Márton's laugh awoke me from my reverie.

"You know—" he inquired with a voice that showed his inclination to laugh—"You know ha! ha—you know why I told Master Lorand not to go in the same direction as the carriage?"

"No."

"Did you not recognize the coachman? It was Móczli."

"Móczli?"

"Do you know who was inside the carriage?—Guess!—Well, it was Madame."

"Bálnokházy's wife?"

"The same—with that certain actor."

"With whose passport Lorand was to have eloped?"

"Well if one is on his way to elope—it is all the

same:—one must have a companion, if not the one, then the other."

It was all a fable to me. But such a mysterious fable that it sent a cold chill all over me.

"But where could they go?"

"Where?—Well, as far as the frontier, perhaps. Anyhow, as far as the contents of that bag, which Móczli handed into the carriage after her ladyship, will last.—Hai-dia-do."

Now it was really exuberance of spirits that made old Márton sing in Tyrolese manner, that refrain, 'hai-hai-dia-hia-do.'

He actually danced on the dusty road—a galop.

Was it possible? That madonna face, than which I have never seen a more beautiful, more enchanting—either before or since that day!