

colors of Prussia, a greeting that Deesen imitated with the fervor of a patriot.

The king did not unite in their enthusiasm; he was writing with his stick upon the ground.

"Come here, Balby, and read this," he said, pointing to the lines he had traced. "Can you read them?"

"Certainly," said Balby, "the words are, 'majesty' and 'sire.'"

"So they are, friend. I leave these two words on the borders of Prussia; perhaps on our return we may find and resume them. But as long as we are on the soil of Holland there must be no majesty, no sire."

"What, then, must I call my king?"

"You must call him friend, *voilà tout*."

"And I?" asked Deesen, respectfully; "will your majesty be so gracious as to tell me your name?"

"I am Mr. Zoller, travelling musician; and should any one ask you what I want in Amsterdam, tell them I intend giving a concert. *En avant, mes amis*. There lies the first small village of Holland; in an hour we shall be there, and then we will take the stage and go a little into the interior. *En avant, en avant!*"

CHAPTER XII.

TRAVELLING ADVENTURES.

THE stage stood before the tavern at Grave, and awaited its passengers. The departure of the stage was an important occurrence to the inhabitants of the little town—an occurrence that disturbed the monotony of their lives for a few moments, and showed them at least now and then a new face, that gave them something to think of, and made them dream of the far-off city where the envied travellers were going.

To-day all Grave was in commotion and excitement. The strangers had arrived at the post-house, and after partaking of an excellent dinner, engaged three seats in the stage. The good people of Grave hoped to see three strange faces looking out of the stage window; many were the surmises of their destiny and their possible motives for travelling. They commenced these investigations while the strangers were still with them.

A man had seen them enter the city, dusty and exhausted, and he declared that the glance which the two men in brown coats had cast at his young wife, who had come to the window at his call, was very bold—yes, even suspicious; and it seemed very remarkable

to him that such plain, ordinary-looking wanderers should have a servant—for, doubtless, the man walking behind them, carrying the very small carpet-bag, was their servant; but, truly, he appeared to be a proud person, and had the haughty bearing of a general or a field-marshal; he would not even return the friendly greetings of the people he passed. His masters could not be distinguished or rich, for both of them carried a case under their arms. What could be in those long cases; what secret was hidden there? Perhaps they held pistols, and the good people of Grave would have to deal with robbers or murderers. The appearance of the strangers was wild and bold enough to allow of the worst suspicions.

The whole town, as before mentioned, was in commotion, and all were anxious to see the three strangers, about whom there was certainly something mysterious. They had the manners and bearing of noblemen, but were dressed like common men.

A crowd of idlers had assembled before the post-house, whispering and staring at the windows of the guests' rooms. At last their curiosity was about to be gratified—at last the servant appeared with the little carpet-bag, and placed it in the stage, and returned for the two cases, whose contents they would so greedily have known. The postilion blew his horn, the moment of departure had arrived.

A murmur was heard through the crowd—the strangers appeared, they approached the stage, and with such haughty and commanding glances that the men nearest them stepped timidly back.

The postilion sounded his horn again; the strangers were entering the stage. At the door stood the postmaster, and behind him his wife, the commanding postmistress.

"Niclas," she whispered, "I must and will know who these strangers are. Go and demand their passports."

The obedient Niclas stepped out and cried in a thundering voice to the postilion, who was just about to start, to wait. Stepping to the stage, he opened the door.

"Your passports, gentlemen," he said, roughly. "You forgot to show me your passports."

The curious observers breathed more freely, and nodded encouragingly to the daring postmaster.

"You rejoice," murmured his wife, who was still standing in the door, from whence she saw all that passed, and seemed to divine the thoughts of her gaping friends—"you rejoice, but you shall know nothing. I shall not satisfy your curiosity."

Mr. Niclas still stood at the door of the stage. His demand had not been attended to; he repeated it for the third time.

"Is it customary here to demand passports of travellers?" asked a commanding voice from the stage.

"We can demand them if we wish to do so."

"And why do you wish it now?" said the same voice.

"I wish it simply because I wish it," was the reply.

A stern face now appeared at the door, looking angrily at the postmaster.

"Think what you say, sir, and be respectful."

"Silence!" interrupted the one who had first spoken. "Do not let us make an unnecessary disturbance, *mon ami*. Why do you wish to see our passports, sir?"

"Why?" asked Niclas, who was proud to play so distinguished a part before his comrades—"you wish to know why I desire to see your passports? Well, then, because you appear to me to be suspicious characters."

A gay laugh was heard from the stage. "Why do you suspect us?"

"Because I never trust people travelling without baggage," was the laconic reply.

"Bravo! well answered," cried the crowd, and even Madame Niclas was surprised to see her husband show such daring courage.

"We need no baggage. We are travelling musicians, going to Amsterdam."

"Travelling musicians! All the more reason for mistrusting you; no good was ever heard of wandering musicians."

"You are becoming impertinent, sir," and Balby, the tallest and youngest of the two friends, sprang from the stage, while the servant swung himself from the box, where he was sitting with the postilion, and with an enraged countenance placed himself beside his master.

"If you dare to speak another insulting word, you are lost," cried Balby.

A hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice murmured in his ear:

"Do not compromise us."

The king now also left the stage, and tried to subdue the anger of his companion.

"Pardon, sir, the violence of my friend," said the king, with an ironical smile, as he bowed to the postmaster. "We are not accustomed to being questioned and suspected in this manner, and I can assure you that, although we are travelling musicians, as it pleased you to say, we are honest people, and have played before kings and queens."

"If you are honest, show me your passports; no honest man travels without one!"

"It appears to me that no rascal should travel without one," said the king.

"I cannot tell who is a rascal; you may be one for aught I know."

Balby uttered an angry exclamation and stepped nearer to the daring postmaster, while his servant shook his fist threateningly at Niclas.

The king dispelled their anger with a single glance.

"Sir," he said to Niclas, "God made my face, and it is not my fault if it does not please you; but concerning our passports, they are lying well preserved in my carpet-bag. I should think that would suffice you."

"No, that does not suffice me," screamed Niclas; "show me your passports if I am to believe that you are not vagabonds."

"You dare to call us vagabonds?" cried the king, whose patience now also appeared exhausted, and whose clear brow was slightly clouded.

"The police consider every one criminal until he has proved he is not so," said Niclas, emphatically.

The king's anger was already subdued.

"In the eyes of the police, criminality is then the normal condition of mankind," he said, smilingly.

"Sir, you have no right to question the police so pointedly," said Niclas, sternly. "You are here to be questioned, and not to question."

The king laughingly arrested the uplifted arm of his companion.

"*Mon Dieu*," he murmured, "do you not see that this is amusing me highly? Ask, sir, I am ready to answer."

"Have you a pass?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then give it to me to *visé*."

"To do so, I should have to open my bag, and that would be very inconvenient; but, if the law absolutely demands it, I will do it."

"The law demands it."

The king motioned to his servant, and ordered him to carry the bag into the house.

"Why this delay—why this unnecessary loss of time?" asked Niclas. "The postilion can wait no longer. If he arrives too late at the next station, he will be fined."

"I will not wait another minute," cried the postilion, determinedly; "get in, or I shall start without you."

"Show me your passports, and then get in," cried Niclas.

The strangers appeared confused and undecided. Niclas looked triumphantly at his immense crowd of listeners, who were gazing at him with amazement, awaiting in breathless stillness the unravelling of this scene.

"Get in, or I shall start," repeated the postilion.

"Give me your passports, or I will not let you go!" screamed

Niclas; and taking the two mysterious cases from the stage, he placed them before the strangers.

"Let us go into the house," whispered the king to his friends; "we must make *bonne mine à mauvais jeu*;" and he approached the door of the house—there stood the wife of the postmaster, with sparkling eyes and a malicious grin.

"The postilion is going, and you will lose your money," she said; "they never return money when once they have it."

"Ah! I thought that was only a habit of the church," said the king, laughing; "nevertheless, the postmaster can keep what he has. Will you have the kindness to show me a room, where I can open my bag at leisure, and send some coffee and good wine to us?"

There was something so commanding in the king's voice, so imposing in his whole appearance, that even the all-conquering Madame Niclas felt awed, and she silently stepped forward and showed him her best room. The servant followed with the two cases and the bag, and laid them upon the table, then placed himself at the door.

"Now, madame, leave us," ordered the king, "and do as I told you."

Madame Niclas left, and the gentlemen were once more alone.

"Now, what shall we do?" said the king, smilingly. "I believe there is danger of our wonderful trip falling through."

"It is only necessary for your majesty to make yourself known to the postmaster," said Colonel Balby.

"And if he will not believe me, this *fripou* who declares that no one could tell by my appearance whether I was a rascal or not, this dull-eyed simpleton, who will not see the royal mark upon my brow, which my courtiers see so plainly written there? No, no, my friend, that is not the way. We have undertaken to travel as ordinary men—we must now see how common men get through the world. It is necessary to show the police that we are at least honest men. Happily, I believe I have the means to do so at hand. Open our ominous bag, friend Balby; I think you will discover my portfolio, and in it a few blank passes, and my state seal."

Colonel Balby did as the king ordered, and drew from the bag the portfolio, with its precious contents.

The king bade Balby sit down and fill up the blanks at his dictation.

The pass was drawn up for the two brothers, Frederick and Henry Zoller, accompanied by their servant, with the intention of travelling through Holland.

The king placed his signature under this important document.

"Now, it is only necessary to put the state seal under it, and we shall be free; but how will we get a light?"

"I will obtain one immediately," said Balby, hastening to the door.

The king held him back. "My brother, you are very innocent and thoughtless. You forget entirely that we are suspected criminals. Should we demand a light, and immediately appear with our passes, do you not believe that this dragon of a postmaster would immediately think that we had written them ourselves, and put a forged seal under them?"

"How, then, are we to get a light?" said Balby, confused.

The king thought a moment, then laughed gayly.

"I have found a way," he said; "go down into the dining-room, where I noticed an eternal lamp burning, not to do honor to the Mother of God, but to smokers; light your cigar and bring it here. I will light the sealing-wax by it, and we will have the advantage of drowning the smell of the wax with the smoke."

Balby flew away, and soon returned with the burning cigar; the king lit the sealing-wax, and put the seal under the passport.

"This will proclaim us free from all crime. Now, brother Henry, call the worthy postmaster."

When Niclas received the passport from the king's hand his countenance cleared, and he made the two gentlemen a graceful bow, and begged them to excuse the severity that his duty made necessary.

"We have now entirely convinced you that we are honest people," said the king, smiling, "and you will forgive us that we have so little baggage."

"Well, I understand," said Mr. Niclas, confusedly, "musicians are seldom rich, but live from hand to mouth, and must thank God if their clothes are good and clean. Yours are entirely new, and you need no baggage."

The king laughed merrily. "Can we now go?" he asked.

"Yes; but how, sir? You doubtlessly heard that the postilion left as soon as you entered the house."

"Consequently we are without a conveyance; we have paid for our places for nothing, and must remain in this miserable place," said the king, impatiently.

Niclas reddened with anger. "Sir, what right have you to call the town of Grave a miserable place? Believe me, it would be very difficult for you to become a citizen of this miserable place, for you must prove that you have means enough to live in a decent manner, and it appears to me—"

"That we do not possess them," said the king; "*vraiment*, you are right, our means are very insufficient, and as the inhabitants of Grave will not grant us the rights of citizens, it is better for us to

leave immediately. Have, therefore, the goodness to furnish us with the means of doing so."

"There are two ways, an expensive and a cheap one," said Niclas, proudly: "extra post, or the drag-boat. The first is for respectable people, the second for those who have nothing, and are nothing."

"Then the last is for us," said the king, laughing. "Is it not so, brother Henry?—it is best for us to go in the drag-boat."

"That would be best, brother Frederick."

"Have the kindness to call our servant to take the bag, and you, Mr. Niclas, please give us a guide to show us to the canal."

The king took his box and approached the door.

"And my coffee, and the wine," asked Mrs. Niclas, just entering with the drinks.

"We have no time to make use of them, madame," said the king, as he passed her, to leave the room.

But Madame Niclas held him back.

"No time to make use of them," she cried; "but I had to take time to make the coffee, and bring the wine from the cellar."

"*Mais, mon Dieu, madame,*" said the impatient king.

"*Mais, mon Dieu, monsieur, vous croyez que je travaillerai pour le roi de Prusse, c'est-à-dire sans paiement.*"

The king broke out into a hearty laugh, and Balby had to join him, but much against his will.

"Brother Henry," said the king, laughing, "that is a curious way of speaking; '*travailler pour le roi de Prusse,*' means here to work for nothing. I beg you to convince this good woman that she has not worked for the King of Prussia, and pay her well. Madame, I have the honor to bid you farewell, and be assured it will always cheer me to think of you, and to recall your charming speech."

The king laughingly took his friend's arm, and nodded kindly to Madame Niclas as he went down the steps.

"I tell you what," said Madame Niclas, as she stood at the door with her husband, watching the departing strangers, who, in company with the guide and their servant, were walking down the street that led to the canal—"I tell you I do not trust those strangers, the little one in particular; he had a very suspicious look."

"But his passport was all right."

"But, nevertheless, all is not right with them. These strangers are disguised princes or robbers, I am fully convinced."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRAG-BOAT.

WHAT a crowd, what noise, what laughing and chatting! How bright and happy these people are who have nothing and are nothing! How gayly they laugh and talk together—with what stoical equanimity they regard the slow motion of the boat! they accept it as an unalterable necessity. How kindly they assist each other; with what natural politeness the men leave the best seats for the women!

The boat is very much crowded. There are a great number of those amiable people who are nothing, and have nothing, moving from place to place cheerily.

The men on the shore who, with the aid of ropes, are pulling the boat, those two-legged horses, groan from exertion. The bagpipe player is making his gayest music, but in vain—he cannot allure the young people to dance; there is no place for dancing, the large deck of the boat is covered with human beings. Old men, and even women, are obliged to stand; the two long benches running down both sides of the boat are filled.

The king enjoyed the scene immensely. The free life about him, the entire indifference to his own person, charmed and delighted him. He leaned against the cabin, by which he was sitting, and regarded the crowd before him. Suddenly he was touched on the shoulder, and not in the gentlest manner. Looking up, he met the discontented face of a peasant, who was speaking violently, but in Dutch, and the king did not understand him; he therefore slightly shrugged his shoulders and remained quiet.

The angry peasant continued to gesticulate, and pointed excitedly at the king, and then at a pale young woman who was standing before him, and held two children in her arms.

The king still shrugged his shoulders silently, but when the peasant grasped him for the second time he waved him off, and his eye was so stern that the terrified and astonished peasant stepped back involuntarily.

At this moment a displeased murmur was heard among the crowd, and a number arranged themselves by the side of the peasant, who approached the king with a determined countenance.

The king remained sitting, and looked surprised at the threatening countenances of the people, whose angry words he tried in vain to comprehend.

The still increasing crowd was suddenly separated by two strong

arms, and Balby, who had been sitting at the other end of the boat, now approached the king, accompanied by a friend, and placed himself at the king's side.

"Tell me what these men want, *mon ami*," said Frederick, hastily; "I do not understand Dutch."

"I understand it, sir," said the friend who accompanied Balby, "these people are reproaching you."

"Reproaching me! And why?"

The stranger turned to the peasant who had first spoken, and who now began to make himself heard again in loud and angry tones.

"Monsieur," said the stranger, "these good people are angry with you, and, it appears to me, not entirely without cause. There is a language that is understood without words, its vocabulary is in the heart. Here stands a poor, sick woman, with her twins in her arms. You, monsieur, are the only man seated. These good people think it would be but proper for you to resign your seat."

"This is unheard-of insolence," exclaimed Balby, placing himself determinedly before the king; "let any one dare advance a step farther, and I—"

"Quiet, *cher frère*, the people are right, and I am ashamed of myself that I did not understand them at once."

He rose and passed through the crowd with a calm, kindly face, and, not appearing to notice them, approached the young woman, who was kneeling, exhausted, on the floor. With a kind, sympathetic smile, he raised her and led her to his seat. There was something so noble and winning in his manner, that those who were so shortly before indignant, were unconsciously touched. A murmur of approval was heard; the rough faces beamed with friendly smiles.

The king did not observe this, he was still occupied with the poor woman, and, while appearing to play with the children, gave each of them a gold piece. But their little hands were not accustomed to carry such treasures, and could not hold them securely. The two gold pieces rolled to the ground, and the ringing noise announced the rich gift of Frederick. Loud cries of delight were heard, and the men waved their hats in the air. The king reddened, and looked down in confusion.

The peasant, who had first been so violent toward the king, and at whose feet the money had fallen, picked it up and gave it to the children; then, with a loud laugh, he offered his big, rough hand to the king, and said something in a kindly tone.

"The good man is thanking you, sir," said the stranger. "He thinks you a clever, good-hearted fellow, and begs you to excuse his uncalled-for violence."

The king answered with a silent bow. He who was accustomed

to receive the world's approval as his just tribute, was confused and ashamed at the applause of these poor people.

The king was right in saying he left his royalty on Prussian soil; he really was embarrassed at this publicity, and was glad when Deesen announced that lunch was prepared for him. He gave Balby a nod to follow, and withdrew into the cabin.

"Truly, if every-day life had so many adventures, I do not understand how any one can complain of *ennui*. Through what varied scenes I have passed to-day!"

"But our adventures arise from the peculiarity of our situation," said Balby. "All these little *contretemps* are annoying and disagreeable; but seem only amusing to a king in disguise."

"But a disguised king learns many things," said Frederick, smiling; "from to-day, I shall be no longer surprised to hear the police called a hateful institution. *Vraiment*, its authority and power is vexatious, but necessary. Never speak again of my god-like countenance, or the seal of greatness which the Creator has put upon the brow of princes to distinguish them from the rest of mankind. Mons. Nielas saw nothing great stamped upon my brow; to him I had the face of a criminal—my passport only made an honest man of me. Come, friends, let us refresh ourselves."

While eating, the king chatted pleasantly with Balby of the charming adventures of the day.

"Truly," he said, laughing, as the details of the scene on deck were discussed, "without the interference of that learned Dutchman, the King of Prussia would have been in dangerous and close contact with the respectable peasant. Ah, I did not even thank my protecting angel. Did you speak to him, brother Henry? Where is he from, and what is his name?"

"I do not know, sir; but from his speech and manner he appeared to me to be an amiable and cultivated gentleman."

"Go and invite him to take a piece of pie with us. Tell him Mr. Zoller wishes to thank him for his assistance, and begs the honor of his acquaintance. You see, my friend, I am learning how to be polite, to flatter, and conciliate, as becomes a poor travelling musician. I beg you, choose your words well. Be civil, or he might refuse to come, and I thirst for company."

Balby returned in a few moments, with the stranger.

"Here, my friend," said Balby, "I bring you our deliverer in time of need. He will gladly take his share of the pie."

"And he richly deserves it," said the king, as he greeted the stranger politely. "Truly, monsieur, I am very much indebted to you, and this piece of pie that I have the honor to offer you is but a poor reward for your services. I believe I never saw larger fists

than that terrible peasant's; a closer acquaintance with them would have been very disagreeable. I thank you for preventing it."

"Travellers make a variety of acquaintances," said the stranger, laughing, and seating himself on the bench by the king's side, with a familiarity that terrified Balby. "I count you, sir, among the agreeable ones, and I thank you for this privilege."

"I hope you will make the acquaintance of this pie, and find it agreeable," said the king. "Eat, monsieur, and let us chat in the mean while—Henry, why are you standing there so grave and respectful, not daring to be seated? I do not believe this gentleman to be a prince travelling incognito."

"No, sir, take your place," exclaimed the stranger, laughing, "you will not offend etiquette. I give you my word that I am no concealed prince, and no worshipper of princes. I am proud to declare this."

"Ah! you are proud not to be a prince?"

"Certainly, sir."

"It appears to me," said Balby, looking at the king, "that a prince has a great and enviable position."

"But a position, unfortunately, that but few princes know how to fill worthily," said the king, smiling. "Every man who is sufficient for himself is to be envied."

"You speak my thoughts exactly, sir," said the stranger, who had commenced eating his piece of pie with great zeal. "Only the free are happy."

"Are you happy?" asked the king.

"Yes, sir; at least for the moment I am."

"What countryman are you?"

"I am a Swiss, sir."

"A worthy and respectable people. From what part of Switzerland do you come?"

"From the little town of Morges."

"Not far, then, from Lausanne, and the lovely lake of Geneva; not far from Ferney, where the great Voltaire resides, and from whence he darts his scorching, lightning-flashes to-day upon those whom he blessed yesterday. Are you satisfied with your government? Are not your patrician families a little too proud? Are not even the citizens of Berne arrogant and imperious?"

"We have to complain of them, sir, but very rarely."

"Are you now residing in Holland?"

"No, I am travelling," answered the stranger, shortly. He had held for a long time a piece of pie on his fork, trying in vain to put it in his mouth.

The king had not observed this; he had forgotten that kings and

princes only have the right to carry on a conversation wholly with questions, and that it did not become Mr. Zoller to be so inquisitive.

"What brought you here?" he asked, hastily.

"To complete my studies, sir," and, with a clouded brow, the stranger laid his fork and pie upon his plate.

But the king's questions flowed on in a continued stream.

"Do you propose to remain here?"

"I believe not, or rather I do not yet know," answered the stranger, with a sarcastic smile, that brought Balby to desperation.

"Are not the various forms of government of Switzerland somewhat confusing in a political point of view?"

"No, for all know that the cantons are free, as they should be."

"Does that not lead to skepticism and indifference?"

The stranger's patience was exhausted; without answering the king, he pushed back his plate and arose from the table.

"Sir, allow me to say that, in consideration of a piece of pie, which you will not even give me time to eat, you ask too many questions."

"You are right, and I beg your pardon," said the king, as he smilingly nodded at Balby to remain quiet. "We travel to improve ourselves, but you have just cause of complaint. I will give you time to eat your piece of pie. Eat, therefore, monsieur, and when you have finished, if it is agreeable, we will chat awhile longer."

When the stranger arose to depart, after an animated and interesting conversation, the king offered him his hand.

"Give me your address," he said, "that is, I beg of you to do so. You say you have not yet chosen a profession; perhaps I may have the opportunity of being useful to you."

The Swiss gave him his card, with many thanks, and returned to the deck.

The king gazed thoughtfully after him.

"That man pleases me, and when I am no longer a poor musician, I shall call him to my side.—Well, brother Henry, what do you think of this man, who, as I see, is named Mr. Le Catt?"

"I find him rather curt," said Balby, "and he appears to be a great republican."

"You mean because he hates princes, and was somewhat rude to me. Concerning the first, you must excuse it in a republican, and I confess that were I in his place I would probably do the same as to the last, he was right to give Mr. Zoller a lesson in manners. Poor Zoller is not yet acquainted with the customs of the common world, and makes all manner of mistakes against *bon ton*. I

believe to-day is not the first time he has been reproved for want of manners."

"Mr. Zoller is every inch a king," said Balby, laughing.

[NOTE.—The king's conversation with Mr. Le Catt is historical (see Thiébauld, vol. i. p. 218). The king did not forget his travelling adventure, but on his return to Prussia, called Le Catt to court and gave him the position of lecturer, and for twenty years he enjoyed the favor and confidence of the king.]

CHAPTER XIV

IN AMSTERDAM.

WEARIED, indeed utterly exhausted, the king and Balby returned to the hotel of the Black Raven, at that time the most celebrated in Amsterdam. They had been wandering about the entire day, examining with never-ceasing interest and delight the treasures of art which the rich patricians of Amsterdam had collected in their princely homes and the public museums. No one supposed that this small man in the brown coat, with dusty shoes and coarse, unadorned hat, could be a king—a king whose fame resounded throughout the whole of Europe. Frederick had enjoyed the great happiness of pursuing his journey and his studies unnoticed and unknown. He had many amusing and romantic adventures; and the joy of being an independent man, of which he had heretofore only dreamed, he was now realizing fully.

The king was compelled now to confess that his freedom and manhood were completely overcome. Hunger had conquered him—hunger! the earthly enemy of all great ideas and exalted feelings. The king was hungry! He was obliged to yield to that physical power which even the rulers of this world must obey, and Balby and himself had returned to the hotel to eat and refresh themselves.

"Now, friend, see that you order something to rejoice and strengthen our humanity," said Frederick, stretching himself comfortably upon the divan. "It is a real pleasure to me to be hungry and partake of a good meal—a pleasure which the King of Prussia will often envy the Messieurs Zoller. To be hungry and to eat is one of life's rare enjoyments generally denied to kings, and yet," whispered he, thoughtfully, "our whole life is nothing but a never-ceasing hungering and thirsting after happiness, content, and rest. The world alas! gives no repose, no satisfying portion. Brother Henry, let us eat and be joyful; let us even meditate on a good meal as an ardent maiden consecrates her thoughts to a love-poem which she will write in her album in honor of her beloved. Truly there

are fools who in the sublimity of their folly wish to appear indifferent to such earthly pleasures, declaring that they are necessary evils, most uncomfortable bodily craving, and nothing more. They are fools who do not understand that eating and drinking is an art, a science, the soul of the soul, the compass of thought and feeling. Dear Balby, order us a costly meal. I wish to be gay and free, light-minded and merry-hearted to-day. In order to promote this we must, before all other things, take care of these earthly bodies and not oppress them with common food."

"We will give them, I hope, the sublimest nourishment which the soil of Holland produces," said Balby, laughing. "You are not aware, M. Frederick Zoller, that we are now in a hotel whose hostess is worshipped, almost glorified, by the good Hollanders."

"And is it this sublime piece of flesh which you propose to place before me?" said the king, with assumed horror. "Will you satisfy the soul of my soul with this Holland beauty? I do not share the enthusiasm of the Hollanders. I shall not worship this woman. I shall find her coarse, old, and ugly."

"But listen, Zoller. These good Dutchmen worship her not because of her perishable beauty, but because of a famous pie which she alone in Amsterdam knows how to make."

"Ah, that is better. I begin now to appreciate the Dutchmen, and if the pie is good, I will worship at the same shrine. Did you not remark, brother Henry, that while you stood carried away by your enthusiasm before Rembrandt's picture of the 'Night Watch'—a picture which it grieves me to say I cannot obtain," sighed the king—"these proud Hollanders call it one of their national treasures, and will not sell it—well, did you not see that I was conversing zealously with three or four of those thick, *rubicund*, comfortable-looking *mynheers*? No doubt you thought we were rapturously discussing the glorious paintings before which we stood, and for this the good Hollanders were rolling their eyes in ecstasy. No, sir; no, sir. We spoke of a pie! They recognized me as a stranger, asked me from whence I came, where we lodged, etc., etc. And when I mentioned the Black Raven, they went off into ecstatic raptures over the venison pasty of Madame von Blaken. They then went on to relate that Madame Blaken was renowned throughout all Holland because of this venison pasty of which she alone had the recipe, and which she prepared always alone and with closed doors. Her portrait is to be seen in all the shop windows, and all the *stadtholders* dine once a month in the Black Raven to enjoy this pie. Neither through prayers nor entreaties, commands, or threatenings, has Madame Blaken been induced to give up her recipe or even to go to the castle and prepare the pasty. She declares that this is

the richest possession of the Black Raven, and all who would be so happy as to enjoy it must partake of it at her table. Balby! Balby! hasten my good fellow, and command the venison pastry," said Frederick, eagerly. "Ah! what bliss to lodge in the Black Raven! Waiter, I say! fly to this exalted woman!"

Balby rushed out to seek the hostess and have himself announced.

Madame Blaken received him in her boudoir, to which she had withdrawn to rest a little after the labors of the day. These labors were ever a victory and added to her fame. There was no better table prepared in Holland than that of the Black Raven. She was in full toilet, having just left the dinner table where she had presided at the *table d'hôte* as lady of the house, and received with dignity the praise of her guests. These encomiums still resounded in her ears, and she reclined upon the divan and listened to their pleasing echo. The door opened and the head waiter announced Mr. Zoller. The countenance of Madame Blaken was dark, and she was upon the point of declining to receive him, but it was too late; the daring Zoller had had the boldness to enter just behind the waiter, and he was now making his most reverential bow to the lady. Madame Blaken returned this greeting with a slight nod of the head, and she regarded the stranger in his cheap and simple toilet with a rather contemptuous smile. She thought to herself that this ordinary man had surely made a mistake in entering her hotel. Neither his rank, fortune, nor celebrity could justify his lodging at the Black Raven. She was resolved to reprove her head waiter for allowing such plain and poor people to enter the best hotel in Amsterdam.

"Sir," said she, in a cold and cutting tone, "you come without doubt to excuse your brother and yourself for not having appeared to-day at my *table d'hôte*. You certainly know that politeness requires that you should dine in the hotel where you lodge. Do not distress yourself, however, sir. I do not feel offended now that I have seen you. I understand fully why you did not dine with me, but sought your modest meal elsewhere. The *table d'hôte* in the Black Raven is the most expensive in Amsterdam, and only wealthy people put their feet under my table and enjoy my dishes."

While she thus spoke, her glance wandered searchingly over Balby, who did not seem to remark it, or to comprehend her significant words.

"Madame," said he, "allow me to remark that we have not dined. My brother, whose will is always mine, prefers taking his dinner in his own apartment, where he has more quiet comfort and can better enjoy your rare viands. He never dines at a *table d'hôte*. In every direction he has heard of your wonderful pie, and I come in his

name to ask that you will be so good as to prepare one for his dinner to-day."

Madame Blaken laughed aloud. "Truly said; that is not a bad idea of your brother's. My pasty is celebrated throughout all Holland, and I have generally one ready in case a rich or renowned guest should desire it. But this pie is not for every man!"

"My brother wants it for himself—himself alone," said Balby, decisively. Even the proud hostess felt his tone imposing.

"Sir," said she, after a short pause, "forgive me if I speak plainly to you. You wish to eat one of my renowned pies, and to have it served in a private room, as the General Stadtholder and other high potentates are accustomed to do. Well, I have this morning a pasty made with truffles and Chinese birds'-nests, but you cannot have it! To be frank, it is enormously dear, and I think neither your brother nor yourself could pay for it!"

And now it was Balby's turn to laugh aloud, and he did so with the free, unembarrassed gayety of a man who is sure of his position, and is neither confused nor offended.

Madame Blaken was somewhat provoked by this unrestrained merriment. "You laugh, sir, but I have good reason for supposing you to be poor and unknown. You came covered with dust and on foot to my hotel, accompanied by one servant carrying a small carpet-bag. You have neither equipage, retinue, nor baggage. You receive no visits; and, as it appears, make none. You are always dressed in your simple, modest, rather forlorn-looking brown coats. You have never taken a dinner here, but pass the day abroad, and when you return in the evening you ask for a cup of tea and a few slices of bread and butter. Rich people do not travel in this style, and I therefore have the right to ask if you can afford to pay for my pasty? I do not know who or what you are, nor your brother's position in the world."

"Oh," cried Balby, who was highly amused by the candor of the hostess, "my brother has a most distinguished position, I assure you—his fame resounds throughout Germany."

"Bah!" said Madame Blaken, shrugging her shoulders; "the name is entirely unknown to us. Pray, what is your brother, and for what is he celebrated?"

"For his flute," answered Balby, with solemn gravity.

Madame Blaken rose and glanced scornfully at Balby. "Are you making sport of me, sir?" said she, threateningly.

"Not in the least, madame; I am telling you an important truth. My brother is a renowned *virtuoso*."

"A *virtuoso*?" repeated the hostess; "I do not understand the word. Pray, what is a *virtuoso*?"

"A *virtuoso*, madame, is a musician who makes such music as no other man can make. He gives concerts, and sells the tickets for an enormous price, and the world rushes to hear his music. I assure you, madame, my brother can play so enchantingly that those who hear his flute are forced to dance in spite of themselves. He receives large sums of gold, and if he gives a concert here you will see that all your distinguished people will flock to hear him. You can set your pasty before him without fear—he is able to pay richly for it."

Madame Blaken rose without a word and advanced toward the door. "Come, sir, come. I am going to your brother." Without waiting for an answer, she stepped through the corridor and tapped lightly at the stranger's door. She was on the point of opening it, but Balby caught her hand hastily.

"Madame," said he, "allow me to enter and inquire if you can be received." He wished to draw her back from the door, but the hostess of the Black Raven was not the woman to be withdrawn.

"You wish to ask if I can enter?" repeated she. "I may well claim that privilege in my own house."

With a determined hand she knocked once more upon the door, opened it immediately and entered, followed by Balby, who by signs endeavored to explain and beg pardon for the intrusion.

Frederick did not regard him, his blue eyes were fixed upon the woman who, with laughing good-humor, stepped up to him and held out both of her large, course hands in greeting.

"Sir, I come to convince myself if what your brother said was true."

"Well, madame, what has my brother said?"

"He declares that you can whistle splendidly, and all the world is forced to dance after your music."

"I said play the flute, madame! I said play the flute!" cried Balby, horrified.

"Well, flute or whistle," said Madame Blaken, proudly, "it's the same thing. Be so good, sir, as to whistle me something; I will then decide as to the pasty."

The king looked at Balby curiously.

"Will you have the goodness, brother, to explain madame's meaning, and what she requires of me?"

"Allow me to explain myself," said the hostess. "This gentleman came and ordered a rich pie for you; this pasty has given celebrity to my house. It is true I have one prepared, but I would not send it to you. Would you know why? This is an enormously expensive dish, and I have no reason to believe that you are in a condition to pay for it. I said this to your brother, and I might

with truth have told him that I regretted to see him in my hotel—not that you are in yourselves objectionable, on the contrary, you appear to me to be harmless and amiable men, but because of your purses. I fear that you do not know the charges of first-class hotels, and will be amazed at your bill. Your brother, however, assures me that you can afford to pay for all you order; that you make a great deal of money; that you are a *virtuoso*, give concerts, and sell tickets at the highest price. Now, I will convince myself if you are a great musician and can support yourself. Whistle me something, and I will decide as to the pie."

The king listened to all this with suppressed merriment, and gave Balby a significant look.

"Bring my flute, brother; I will convince madame that I am indeed a *virtuoso*."

"Let us hear," said Madame Blaken, seating herself upon the sofa from which the king had just arisen.

Frederick made, with indescribable solemnity, a profound bow to the hostess. He placed the flute to his lips and began to play, but not in his accustomed masterly style—not in those mild, floating melodies, those solemn sacred, and exalted strains which it was his custom to draw from his beloved flute. He played a gay and brilliant solo, full of double trills and rhapsodies; it was an astounding medley, which seemed to make a triumphal march over the instrument, overcoming all difficulties. But those soft tones which touched the soul and roused to noble thoughts were wanting; in truth, the melody failed, the music was wanting.

Madame Blaken listened with ever-increasing rapture to this wondrous exercise; these trills, springing from octave to octave, drew forth her loudest applause; she trembled with ecstasy, and as the king closed with a brilliant cadence, she clapped her hands and shouted enthusiastically. She stood up respectfully before the *artiste* in the simple brown coat, and bowing low, said earnestly:

"Your brother was right, you can surely earn much money by your whistle. You whistle as clearly as my mocking-bird. You shall have the pie—I go to order it at once," and she hastened from the room.

"Well," said the king, laughing, "this was a charming scene, and I thank you for it, brother Henry. It is a proud and happy feeling to know that you can stand upon your feet, or walk alone; in other words, that you can earn a support. Now, if the sun of Prussia sets, I shall not hunger, for I can earn my bread; Madame Blaken assures me of it. But, Henry, did I not play eminently?"

"That was the most glittering, dazzling piece for a concert which I ever heard," said Balby, "and Mr. Zoller may well be proud of it,

but I counsel him not to play it before the King of Prussia; he would, in his jealousy, declare it was not music, nothing but sound, and signifying nothing."

"Bravo, my friend," said Frederick, taking his friend's hand; "yes, he would say that. Mr. Zoller played like a true *virtuoso*, that is to say, without intellect and without soul; he did not make music, only artistic tones. But here comes the pasty, and I shall relish it wondrous well. It is the first meat I have ever earned with my flute. Let us eat, brother Henry."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING WITHOUT SHOES.

THE pie was really worthy of its reputation, and the king enjoyed it highly. He was gay and talkative, and amused himself in recalling the varied adventures of the past five days.

"They will soon be *tempi passati*, these *giorni felici*," he said, sighing. "To-day is the last day of our freedom and happiness; to-morrow we must take up our yoke, and exchange our simple brown coats for dashing uniforms."

"I know one, at least, who is rejoicing," said Balby, laughing. "the unhappy Deesen, who has just sworn most solemnly that he would throw himself in the river if he had to play much longer the part of a servant without livery—a servant of two unknown musicians; and he told me, with tears in his eyes, that not a respectable man in the house would speak to him; that the pretty maids would not even listen to his soft sighs and tender words."

"Dress makes the man," said the king, laughing; "if Deesen wore his cabinet-hussar livery these proud beauties who now despise, would smile insidiously. How strangely the world is constituted! But let us enjoy our freedom while we may. We still have some collections of paintings to examine—here are some splendid pictures of Rembrandt and Rubens to be sold. Then, last of all, I have an important piece of business to transact with the great banker, Witte, on whom I have a draft. You know that Madame Blaken is expensive, and the picture-dealers will not trust our honest faces; we must show them hard cash."

"Does your— Shall I not go to the bankers and draw the money?" said Balby.

"Oh no, I find it pleasant to serve myself, to be my own master and servant at the same time. Allow me this rare pleasure for a few hours longer, Balby."

The king took his friend's arm, and recommenced his search for paintings and treasures to adorn his gallery at Sans-Souci. Everywhere he was received kindly and respectfully, for all recognized them as purchasers, and not idle sight-seers. The dealers appreciated the difference between idle enthusiasm and well-filled purses.

The king understood this well, and on leaving the house of the last rich merchant he breathed more freely, and said:

"I am glad that is over. The rudeness of the postmaster at Gravo pleased me better than the civilities of these people. Come, Balby, we have bought pictures enough; now we will only admire them, enjoy without appropriating them. The rich banker, Abramson, is said to have a beautiful collection; we will examine them, and then have our draft cashed."

The banker's splendid house was soon found, and the brothers entered the house boldly, and demanded of the richly-dressed, liveried servant to be conducted to the gallery.

"This is not the regular day," said the servant, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, as he measured the two strangers.

"Not the day! What day?" asked the king, sharply.

"Not the day of general exhibition. You must wait until next Tuesday."

"Impossible, we leave to-morrow. Go to your master and tell him two strangers wish to see his gallery, and beg it may be opened for them."

There was something so haughty and irresistible in the stranger's manner, that the servant not daring to refuse, and still astonished at his own compliance, went to inform his master of the request. He returned in a few moments, and announced that his master would come himself to receive them.

The door opened immediately, and Mr. Abramson stepped into the hall; his face, bright and friendly, darkened when his black eyes fell upon the two strangers standing in the hall.

"You desired to speak to me," he said, in the arrogant tone that the rich Jews are accustomed to use when speaking to unknown and poor people. "What is your wish, sirs?"

The king's brow darkened, and he looked angrily at the supercilious man of fortune, who was standing opposite him, with his head proudly thrown back, and his hands in his pockets. But Frederick's countenance soon cleared, and he said, with perfect composure:

"We wish you to show us your picture-gallery, sir."

The tone in which he spoke was less pleading than commanding, and roused the anger of the easily-enraged *parvenu*.

"Sir, I have a picture-gallery, arranged for my own pleasure.