

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAIDEN OF BRUNEN.

THE sun was just setting, throwing its crimson glow upon the waters of the Rhine, which appeared to flow like a river of blood between the green meadows on either side of it.

From the little village of Brünen, whose red chimneys were visible above a group of oak and beech trees, the sound of the evening bell was heard, reminding the pious peasants, engaged in cutting and garnering their golden corn, of the hour for devotion.

With the sweet sounds of the bell mingled the joyous mountain *yodel* of the cowherd, who had just descended the little hill yonder, with his herd straying here and there, in picturesque confusion. Upon the green meadow in the foreground, the flocks of the village were pasturing, strictly guarded by a large white dog, whose stern, martial glance not the slightest movement among his army contrary to discipline, escaped. As soon as one of the sheep committed to his care left the fold and approached the field where the reapers were mowing the corn, which was bound at once in sheaves by busy maidens, the stern Phylax barking, growling, and snarling, rushed after the audacious wanderer who sought to appease the anger of his inexorable overseer by a speedy return.

The old shepherd, sitting not far off upon a little wooden stool, with his long, silver hair falling about him, was engaged in weaving a graceful basket of some meadow roots; at every bark of his Phylax he looked up and smiled his approval at his faithful steward; occasionally he gazed across the meadow at the reapers and busy maidens, then there came upon his venerable old countenance an expression of great interest. And well he might be pleased with what he saw there; for that tall, sturdy youth, standing in the wagon, waiting with outstretched arms to catch the sheaves which are skilfully thrown him; that youth with the bright rosy face, the sparkling eye, the full red lip, upon which there is always a merry smile, the ivory white teeth—that youth is his beloved son, Charles

Henry. And yonder maiden, not far from the wagon, binding up the corn, in whose tall, proud form, in spite of her plain peasant-gown, there is something imposing; that maiden with the youthful, blooming, lovely face, is his son's betrothed; whom all in the village called the beautiful Anna Sophia, and for whose love Charles Henry was envied by all the village boys. It is true she was a penniless orphan, but in her busy, industrious hands there was a better and surer treasure than in a purse of gold, and her ability and goodness would be a much better dowry to her husband; for Anna Sophia Detzloff could do almost every thing, and the villagers knew not whether to respect her more for her great knowledge, or love her more for her kind, good heart. Anna could read and write like a school-teacher. She wrote every letter which the women of the village sent to their sons and husbands, now far away with the King of Prussia's army, and read to them the answers; and in so beautiful and winning a manner did she read them, that to the happy women it almost seemed as if they were hearing the voices of their loved ones. But, notwithstanding her learning, she was well versed in every sort of work that becomed a woman. None in the village could prepare more delightful dishes than she; no one could equal her beautiful, rapid sewing and knitting. Anna Sophia learned all these things from her mother, who had lived and worked for many long years in Brünen. Her father had been the village school-teacher, and it was owing to his diligence and activity that the women could now receive letters from their sons and husbands. He had taught the boys to read and write; and though the girls did not learn, the example of his daughter showed that it was not owing to inability, but for a want of time and desire. From her mother, Anna had learned all her womanly duties. She had taught her to be amiable, ready with help for all, kind and sympathetic, and to strive by her good deeds to gain the love of her fellow-creatures.

A joyous family had lived in the little village school-house; though they had poverty and want to fight against, these three happy human beings did not consider this a misfortune, but a necessary evil of life. They loved each other, and when the parents looked upon the lovely, rosy countenance of their only child, they did not perceive that their bread was hard and heavy, they did not miss the butter and cheese without which the rich villagers seldom took a meal. And when, on Sundays, Anna went with her parents to church, in the faded red skirt, neat white body, and black bodice, which had been her mother's wedding-dress, she heard the boys whisper amongst themselves about her beauty and sweetness, and casting her eyes down with timid blushes she did not perceive the jeering smiles of the other girls who, though not as pretty, were

proud that they were richer and better dressed than the school-teacher's daughter.

But Death, in his inexorable manner, had disturbed this modest happiness. In a year he took the schoolmaster Detzloff and his wife from the little house which, to any one else, would have appeared a pitiful hut, but which, to them, seemed a paradise. In one year Anna became an orphan; she was entirely alone in the world, and, after she had given to her dear departed ones the tribute of her sorrows and tears, she had to arouse herself and create a new future. After death only, the villagers became aware of the great worth of the departed, they now admitted to the full the school-teacher's merits, and were anxious to pay to the daughter the debt owing to the father. As he had died partly from starvation, sorrow, and work, they wished to prove themselves generous to his daughter, and preserve her from the want and misery which had caused the death of her parents.

But Anna Sophia would be dependent on no one. To those who came in the name of the villagers to notify her that she would receive from them a monthly allowance, she showed her able hands, her brown, muscular arms, and, raising her sparkling eyes proudly to the new school-teacher, she said:

"From these alone will I receive help; they shall give me food and clothing; on them alone will I be dependent." She then went to seek work. The rich burgher of the village would gladly have taken so smart and industrious a girl into his house and paid her handsomely for her services. But Anna Sophia declared proudly that, though she was willing to work, she would be no slave; that she would sell her hands, but not her freedom.

Another house had been built and furnished for the school-teacher, because there was danger of the old one, in which the Detzloff family had lived, falling to pieces.

Anna Sophia, by the sale of some of the furniture, had bought the old, dilapidated hut for herself. And there, in her hours of leisure, she lived over the happy past. There she felt that she was still with her parents, and not alone and orphaned. In the morning, before leaving her home to go at her daily work, she entered the little garden at the back of the hut, where in the arbor, laden with dark-red blossoms, were the three chairs her father had woven in his idle moments, and the roughly-hewn deal table made by his axe. She took her seat for a moment upon the chair standing in the centre, and laid one hand upon the one to either side of her. Thus she had sat in the past, with her hands clasped in those of her parents. The Rhine flowed on as melodiously as before in the dim distance, the trees were as green, the flowers and blossoms as sweet,

the sky as blue. There was no change; all around her was as in former days, except these empty chairs. But Anna had only to close her eyes to see the beloved forms of her departed parents, to feel the pressure of their hands, and to hear them addressing her, in tones which love alone could have uttered, love alone understood. Then saying aloud, "Good-morning, mother! Good-morning, father!" she rose, with closed eyes, from her seat, and hastened from the arbor with the pleasant thought that she was followed by the loving gaze of her parents. She did not turn once, for then she would have seen that the arbor was empty, and she wished to preserve the sweet delusion to be the brighter and happier at her day's work. When, during the day, she saw the burgher's wife surrounded by her blooming daughters, she would say to herself: "I also have a father and mother at home, and they await me!" Then, when her day's work was finished, she hastened with a flying step to her home, whose solemn stillness resounded for her with the dear-loved voices of the past. Opening the bedroom of her parents, she cried: "Good-night, mother! Good-night, father!" Then she climbed up to her little attic, which had been her father's favorite room, and which, when she was with him, he had called a little spot of Eden. There stood his writing-table, and above it the book-case, which held her most precious treasures, her father's library. From the window the Rhine could be seen meandering along the smooth green meadows, finally losing itself between the distant hills.

Her father had left her this blessed little spot, and hither she fled when her heavy day's work was over. There of an evening she stood, gazing thoughtfully out into the darkening twilight, and there daily she greeted the rising sun, repeating aloud her morning prayer. Then with eager hands she took from the book-case one of the large folios. From these books Anna Sophia drew all her knowledge. And when, during the long winter evenings, the village girls were busy spinning, she would tell them the stories she had read, no hand was idle, no eye drooping. She was looked upon as the guardian angel of the village; she knew some remedy, some alleviation for every illness, every pain. In a sick-room, she was all that a nurse should be, kind, loving, patient, and gentle. She was beloved by all, and all the village boys sought to gain her hand. For a long time she would listen to none of them, and flew in terror from those who broached the subject.

How the youngest son of the old shepherd Buschman had finally won her heart, she did not herself know. It is true, he was the handsomest, best-made boy in the village, but it was not for this that she loved him; for she had known him long ago, and had been

perfectly indifferent to him, until within the last few weeks. Why was it? Because he loved her so dearly, and had told her he would die if she did not listen to him. Many others had done and said the same thing, but it had never moved her sensibilities, nor had their threats terrified her. What, then, had won her cold, proud heart?

The old shepherd had been the occasion of their frequently meeting each other. For some weeks she had been in the habit, when her day's work was over, of reading to him the daily paper, which the good-hearted burgher always sent to the old man, who had six sons in the king's army; he had given his country six soldiers. Keeling by his side upon the meadow, Anna Sophia would first read to him, and then talk over the events of the war, and prophesy many a glorious victory. And then, Charles Henry, who worked on the same farm with Anna, joined them, speaking enthusiastically of the great, heroic king. In their inspired love for their great sovereign, their hearts had first met; he seemed to her a hero, because he had six brothers in Frederick's army; she saw laurels upon his brow, won by his brothers upon the battle-field. She loved him for his brothers' sake, and she was proud of being the bride of him of whom it was said, when he passed: "It is the old man's dearest child—God preserve him to his father, whose only prop he is!" The old shepherd was thinking of all this, as he sat in the midst of his flock upon the green meadow, gazing toward the corn-field in which Anna Sophia and his son were at work.

"God be praised!" murmured the old man; "that is the last sheaf; Anna will soon be with me."

At last, the happy moment had come. The old shepherd folded his hands, and a silent prayer arose from his heart for his absent sons. He then rose from his lowly seat, and whistled to his faithful Phylax to follow. The flock arrived at the village, and were driven by the dog into the sheep-pen, from which was heard the tremulous bleating of the lambs, who were rejoicing over their dams' arrival. Father Buschman waited impatiently until the last sheep had entered, and then hastened toward the large farm-house to the left of the pen.

Anna Sophia was just leaving the house, paper in hand, and advanced, with a cheerful smile, to meet him.

"Father," said she, "I have the paper, and we are the first to read it. The good burgher and his wife are in the country, and the overseer allowed me to take it. But, hear, father, he says he glanced over it hastily, and saw something about a Prussian victory."

The old shepherd's face sparkled with joy, and he sought to draw Anna away with him.

"Come, come, my child," said he, "to my house, where it is still and quiet; there we will read of our king's victories."

But Anna shook her beautiful head.

"No, father," said she, "it would not be right to read the paper alone to-day. The king's victories belong to his people—to each one of his subjects; and every heart will beat more proudly when it hears of them, and thank God that He has blessed the weapons of their king. It is not for us to keep this joy from our men and women. Charles Henry, with the overseer's permission, had already assembled the villagers upon the open space under the beech-trees. See! all are hastening with their work. Come, father, we must read to our neighbors and friends our king's victories. A victory belongs to the whole village, but should there ever be news of a lost battle, then, father, we will read it to ourselves."

"God forbid that this should come to pass!" said the old man, following Anna to the place of general meeting.

CHAPTER II.

NEWS OF BATTLE.

THE inhabitants of the village had already assembled on the square, under the great linden; and as old Buschman now approached, supported by Anna Sophia's arm, they were joyfully greeted.

Anna waved the paper like a white flag in the air, and, hastening the old man forward impatiently, she exclaimed:

"Our king has won a battle!"

Shouts of triumph were the result.

"Did he whip the French, or the Austrians?" asked one of the peasants, as he drew close to Anna, and tried to seize the paper.

Anna drew it back hastily.

"The steward sent it to me, to read to the community, and I shall do so."

"Tell us, Anna," said another, "has he beaten the Russians or the cunning Saxons? I wish he could trample them all under foot."

"He will, if he has not yet done so," cried old Buschman. "Children, our king will conquer all his enemies; he is a hero, and has only brave fellows to fight for him. Just think of the thirty noble boys that our village alone gave him!"

"Read, Anna, read!" cried the curious crowd. And Anna, ready to please them, walked under the linden, and stepped upon the wooden bench that surrounded the tree.

Father Buschman placed himself at her feet, and several old men and women followed his example. The young people gathered around in groups, and gazed respectfully at the youthful girl, whose bright, beautiful face glowed as if lighted by the evening sun. The little boys, who had followed their parents from curiosity, were amusing themselves in turning somersets.

Anna now raised her voice and began to read in a bright tone. It was a brilliant and inspiring account of the battle of Losovitz, and Anna read it in breathless haste and burning cheeks. As she read how the Prussians were at first defeated by the powerful army of the Austrians under General Brown, whose terrific artillery sent death and ruin into the Prussian ranks, the women sobbed softly, and the men could hardly suppress their sighs. They breathed more freely when they heard that the king, adopting a new expedient, advanced a part of his cavalry into the centre of his weakened infantry, and thus turned the tide of battle. Their courage failed on hearing that this advantage was soon lost; the enemy still advanced in unbroken columns, and almost forced the Prussians to retreat. The left wing of infantry, commanded by the Duke of Bevern, which had fired unceasingly, had exhausted their ammunition, while the Austrian General Wied, who defended the post of Losovitz, kept up a brisk cannonading. The Prussian warriors pleaded loudly for powder and shot.

Anna stopped reading; her heart beat loudly; she leaned her head against the tree and closed her eyes in terror. The old people sitting at her feet prayed and wept aloud, and from the crowd there arose sounds of grief and despair. In their terror they had forgotten that it was of a victory and not a defeat they were to hear, and that the battle must at last have ended to their advantage.

"Read on, Anna," said the old shepherd, after a long pause. "Are we such cowards as not to be able even to hear an account of this murderous battle in which our sons were brave enough to fight?"

"Read on, read on!" was heard here and there.

Anna unclosed her eyes and raised the paper. Breathless stillness reigned anew. Anna read:

"In this fearful moment the Duke of Bevern felt that a decisive step must be taken, and springing in front of his troops with drawn sword, he cried: 'Boys, you have no more ammunition! Do not be discouraged! Fight with your bayonets!' These words, spoken by a brave and beloved leader, gave heart to all. They closed their ranks, and inspired by the example of their officer, attacked the enemy boldly. In vain Baron Stahremberg hastened forward with his six battalions—uselessly Baron Wied tried to defend the house of Losovitz in which his grenadiers had taken refuge. Nothing could

withstand the Prussians. Like a raging hurricane they fell upon the enemy, who were forced to give way to them. A part of the Austrian force sprang into the Elbe, and tried to save their lives by swimming. Losovitz was fired, and all its defenders fled. The Prussians had gained a complete victory."*

Anna Sophia could read no further. The delight of all was intense—wives embraced their husbands with tears of joy—old men thanked God aloud—and the boys, who had ceased their play and been listening attentively, made bolder and higher somersets and shouted more lustily. Anna Sophia alone said nothing. Her tall, slender, but full form was leaning against the tree—an inspired smile was on her lip, and her eyes, raised to heaven, beamed with holy fire. She stood as if in a dream, and at first did not hear old Buschman ask her to read on. When he repeated his request, she was startled, and turned her glance slowly down from heaven upon the joyful crowd that surrounded her.

"What do you wish, father?" she asked.

The old shepherd arose, and, taking his cap from his gray head, said solemnly, "You have read us of the victory, Anna Sophia; now read us of those who gave their lives for it. Tell us of the dead."

"Yes, read us a list of the dead!" cried the others, uncovering their heads respectfully.

Anna sought for the list, and read slowly the names of the fallen. Their faces brightened more and more; none belonging to them were dead. Suddenly Anna paused, and uttered a low cry; then looked at Father Buschman with a terrified expression. Perhaps the old man understood her, for he trembled a little, and his head fell upon his breast; but he raised it proudly again. Looking almost commandingly at Anna, he said:

"Read on, my daughter."

But Anna could not read. The paper trembled in her hand, and her face was pale as death.

"Read on," repeated the old man—"read on; I, your father, command you to read!"

Anna sighed deeply. "I will obey," she said, and casting a glance of inexpressible sorrow at the old man, two new names fell from her lips and tears to consecrate them. "Anton Buschman, Frederick Buschman," and then taking advantage of the breathless stillness, she added: "The two brothers were the first to attack the enemy—they died the death of heroes!" She ceased. The paper dropped from her trembling hands and fell at the old man's feet.

The weeping eyes of the crowd were turned upon old Buschman.

* "Characteristics of the Seven Years' War," vol. 1., p. 68.

As if crushed by the storm, he had staggered to the bench; he bowed his head upon his breast that no one might see the expression of his face; his trembling hands clasped on his knees, made a touching picture of silent sorrow.

His son Henry, who had been standing with the others, stepped softly to him, and kneeling down, put his arms around the old man's neck and spoke to him tenderly.

The old man started up with terror—his glance turned from his son to the crowd, and met everywhere sympathizing and troubled faces. "Well," he asked, in a hard, rough voice, "why do you weep? Did you not hear that my sons died the death of heroes? Have they not fallen for their country and their king? It would become us to weep if they were cowards and fled in battle. But Anna Sophia told us they died the death of heroes. Therefore, let us think of them with love and pride. 'Blessed are the dead, for they see God!'"

He sank upon his knees and murmured low prayers for the repose of the dead, and now he wept for the first time. At his side knelt his son and Anna Sophia; and the crowd, overcome by emotion and sympathy, followed their example, and with bended knees murmured the pious prayers of the Church for the dead.

The solemn stillness was broken by the beating of drums and the tramping of horses. A company of infantry, headed by the drummer and fifer, marched up the street and approached the villagers, who, rising from their knees, gazed anxiously at the troops.

"They are Prussians," said the mayor, who was amongst the crowd.

"They are Prussians," repeated the crowd, with brightening faces.

Headed by the mayor, they went forward to meet and conduct them to the middle of the square, where they halted. The mayor then approached the officer and asked him what he desired.

The officer, after making the drummer a sign, who beat the roll powerfully, drew out a roll of paper and unfolded it. The villagers pushed forward and waited with breathless attention. Close to the officer stood the old shepherd, next to him his son and Anna Sophia, who was staring, pale and trembling, at the officer, who now began to read.

This paper commanded the unmarried men of the village to place themselves under the king's flag, and to take their places in the ranks of those who fought for their country. Harvest was at an end, and the king could now demand the fighting men of villages and cities to join him and share with him his dangers and his victories. The officer then commanded the mayor to give him early

the next morning a list of the unmarried men in the village, that he might call them out and conduct them to Cleve for further orders.

A hollow murmur ran through the crowd when the officer had finished. The joyful and inspired emotion they had just felt gave way to discontent and gloom. All had been ready to celebrate the victory, but found it far from desirable to enter the ranks.

The old shepherd looked angrily at the despairing crowd, and an expression of pious peace spread over his venerable countenance. Turning to the officer, he said, in a loud voice:

"I had six sons in the army; two fell in the battle of Losovitz, and my poor old heart still weeps for the dead; but it is also content that the king calls for another sacrifice. I have one other son; he is unmarried, has no one to take care of, neither wife nor child nor his old father, for, thank God, I still have strength to support myself. Go, then, my son Charles Henry, the king calls you; and if it must be so, lie down like your brothers in a heroic grave."

He ceased and laid his hand, as if with a blessing, upon his son's head; but Henry did not partake of his father's enthusiasm. His face was pale as death, and his powerful frame trembled as if with fever.

Anna Sophia saw it; her beaming face paled, and her eye sank down with shame.

The officer, who had noticed the dejection of the people, wished to give them time to recover.

"Leave every thing alone until to-morrow," he said. "To-morrow, sir mayor, you will hand me the list, and I am sure that the unmarried boys will obey their king's call with joy. Now, sir mayor, I beg you to conduct me to the court-house, where I will pass the night, and see that my soldiers find good quarters there, and in the village."

He nodded kindly to the people, and accompanied by the mayor, moved onward. The crowd followed them silently, and the gay village boys danced gleefully around the fine procession.

CHAPTER III.

THE CERTIFICATE OF ENLISTMENT.

ANNA SOPHIA returned to her solitary home in deep meditation, and not even in the stillness of her room could she regain her accustomed serenity and cheerfulness. Her thoughts were far away; for the first time her room appeared to her gloomy and deserted. The memories of the past did not now speak to her, and when she threw

herself upon her bed, it was without having bid her parents good-night.

But even then she could find no rest. Strange visions were wafted before her waking eyes, wonderful dreams took hold of her senses. She saw her victorious king standing before her, his sparkling eyes beckoning her to follow him. Then she saw herself in the front of an army, the fluttering banner in her hand, the glittering shield on her breast, followed by many brave warriors, who were all gazing proudly upon her. And again she saw herself. But now she was all alone—alone by the side of an open grave, with a gaping wound in her breast, raising her weary eyes upward and murmuring with pale lips: "How sweet to die for one's country!" Then the brothers of her betrothed raised themselves slowly from among the dead, and signed to her to follow them. She seemed to hear them saying: "Revenge our death, our brother is faint-hearted!"

At this thought, she raised herself upon her couch.

"He is a coward," murmured she; "I saw him turn pale and tremble, and I felt as if a sword had entered my heart and destroyed all my love for him. Yes, he is a coward, and instead of rejoicing at the thought of a battle, he trembles."

She covered her face with her hands, as if to hide from the night the burning blush of shame that mounted to her brow. Thus she sat for hours motionless, as if listening to the voices whispering to her from within, until the first gleam of morning, the first ray of sun entered the open window to arouse her from her waking dreams.

She sprang from her bed, and dressed herself with trembling eagerness. The sun had arisen, and Charles Henry was no doubt already in the woods, at the place she had appointed to meet him yesterday morning. When bidding him good-by, she had whispered to him to meet her there in the morning at sunrise; she did not then know why she had appointed this meeting. She well knew it was not the longing to pass an undisturbed hour with her lover that had actuated her. Anna had no such wish; her heart was too pure, her love too cold. She had only felt that she would have something to say to him; she knew not what herself.

But now she well knew what she had to say; it was all clear, and therefore she was happy and cheerful. It seemed to her as if her soul had taken flight, and as if there was a lark within her singing songs of joy; and with these feelings she hastened down the road into the woods.

At the appointed place stood Charles Henry, and as his betrothed approached him, so proud, so smiling, sparkling with beauty and youth, it appeared to him that he had never seen her so exquisitely

beautiful; to her, as he advanced smilingly to meet her, he had never seemed so small, so devoid of attractions.

When they met, they looked at each other in amazement—there was a change in both.

"Anna Sophia," said Charles Henry at last, sadly, "you have something against me!"

"Yes," said she, "I have something against you, otherwise I would not have appointed this meeting here, where we can be heard by no one. Were this that I have to tell you something good, something pleasant, all the world might stand by and hear it; but as it is something painful, it must be heard by you alone."

She seated herself silently upon the ground, signing to Charles Henry to follow her example.

"It was here," said Anna, hastily, "that you first told me of your love."

"Yes, it was here, Anna," repeated he, "and you then told me that my love was returned, and that you would be my wife when we had saved enough to commence housekeeping. But still I have always felt that you were not kind to me, not as the other girls in the village are to their lovers. You have never permitted me to come under your window at night; I have never been allowed to take you in my arms and kiss you tenderly, as the others boys do their sweethearts; and never, no never, have you given me a kiss unasked; and, after all my entreaties, you kissed me only in the presence of my old father and his dog."

"It is not in my nature to be very tender," said Anna, shrugging her shoulders. "I read in one of my books lately a fairy tale, in which there was a young girl, of whom it was said that a bad fairy had bound her heart in iron, to prevent its full play; the girl was constantly bewailing this fatality, saying, 'I can only like, but never love.' Perhaps it is thus with me, but I do not weep over it, like the foolish girl in the book."

"And was this what you had to tell me?" asked Charles Henry, mockingly.

She gave him a look that sent the jeering smile from his lip.

"No, Charles Henry," said she, "this is not what I have to tell you."

"Well, what is it then, Anna, for this wounds me?" said he, impatiently.

"Perhaps the other will do so also," said she, sadly. "But it must come out, I cannot suppress it. Hear, Charles Henry, what I have to say, and if it is not true, forgive me. I fear you do not go willingly into the army, and that your heart does not beat with joy at the thought of becoming a soldier."

"You are right," said Charles Henry, laughing, "I do not go willingly; and how should it be otherwise? it is a wild, disorderly life, and it strikes me it cannot be right for men who, our pastor says, should love each other like brothers, to vie in cutting off each other's limbs, and to fire upon each other without mercy or pity, as if one were the butcher, the other the poor ox, who only resists because he does not wish to give up his life; and in this case all would be the butchers, and none the oxen, therefore each one gives his stroke bravely to preserve his own life."

"It would be sad if it were as you say," said Anna, shaking her head, "but it is not so. The true soldier does not think of his life; he thinks of his country, for which he will gladly shed his blood—of his king, to whom he has sworn to be true—and of the glory which he will gain for himself!"

Charles Henry looked in amazement upon Anna Sophia's agitated countenance.

"How do you know all this?" said he. "Who has told you that these are soldiers' thoughts?"

"I have read of it in my books, Charles Henry; in one of them there is the history of a man whose name was Leonidas. He defended, with three hundred of his soldiers, against many thousands of his enemy, a narrow passway. He well knew that he could not conquer; his soldiers also knew it, but they preferred death rather than the humiliation of laying down their weapons and praying for mercy. And every man of them died joyfully, giving up his life for his country."

"Well, I must say they were fools!" cried Charles Henry, excitedly; "if I had been there, I would not have done so—I would have sued for pardon."

"Yes," said Anna Sophia thoughtfully—"yes, I think you would have done as you say; and I have been wondering all through the past night whether you would willingly and joyfully go to battle?"

"I? God forefend; I will not go joyfully—I will not go at all! This morning I intend going to our pastor to receive from him a certificate, showing that I cannot join the army, as I have a decrepit old father to support, who would die without me."

"Charles Henry, your father is not decrepit, nor very old, nor would he starve if you were not here, for he can support himself."

"But he may, at any moment, become unable to help himself, and then he would need me; I would have no rest day or night when far away, but would be thinking of my poor old father, lying sick and helpless in his hut, with no one near to give him a piece of bread or a cup of water."

"Let not this trouble you, Charles Henry," said Anna, solemnly.

"I swear to you that I will love him and care for him as a daughter. He shall want for nothing; and when he can work no longer, I am strong and healthy enough to work for both of us. Go with a peaceful mind, I will be here in your place."

"No, no!" cried Charles Henry, turning pale; "I will not join the army. I cannot, I will not be separated from you, Anna. You have sworn to be my wife, and I will beseech the pastor to join us to-day; then they cannot take me away from here, for I will have a father and a wife to take care of."

"Not for me, Charles Henry, for I will not marry yet. Have we saved enough to commence housekeeping? Is this a time to marry and build a nest, when war, misery, and ruin are raging throughout the country? No, no! Charles Henry, we cannot marry now."

"Because you do not wish it, Anna. But it shall be, for I have your promise, and you must keep it. Ah, Anna Sophia, you do not know what a longing I have to call you my wife!"

"But I have no such longing," said she, drily; "no desire whatever to marry; and I will tell you, that though you wish to marry to-day, it is not out of love for me, but to save yourself."

His eyes sunk before the large, searching ones fixed upon him.

"To save myself, and from what, Anna Sophia?"

"From being a soldier, Charles Henry! For last evening, I read upon your countenance that you were devoid of courage."

"You read that?"

"Yes, Charles Henry, fear was stamped upon your brow."

"Well, then," said he, after a pause, "you have read aright. I have no courage, I fear for myself. I am not accustomed to stand still, while some one is pointing his gun at me, and to cry, 'Long live the king!' when the cannon-balls are flying around me; to attack men who have done me no harm, and to whom I wish to do none. When I think upon the possibility of my being compelled to do this, I tremble, and my heart ceases to beat. Do not require it of me, Anna, for if I have to go, I will fly at the first fight, and come back here. They may then shoot me as a deserter, if they choose; I prefer to die rather than to kill any one else."

Anna Sophia sprang from her seat with a cry of horror.

"I thought so," said she, in a low voice; and, crossing her arms upon her breast, she walked to and fro, thoughtfully.

Charles Henry looked at her in amazement, but had not the courage to speak to her; for she was so completely changed, that he was almost afraid of her. There was something so cold and proud about her to-day, something aristocratic in her beauty. He thought to himself, "It is thus that a queen would look when dressed as a peasant."

Anna Sophia stood still before him at last, and gave him a tender, almost pitiful glance.

"Charles Henry," said she, "you shall not join the army; I will not suffer it."

He sprang from his seat with a cry of joy.

"You will then marry me, Anna Sophia?" said he, exultingly. "You will become my wife, so as to keep me here? You love me too much to let me go!" He tried to embrace her, but she waved him off.

"No," said she, "I will not marry you, but, still, you must not join the army; for if you became a deserter, it would break your father's heart, and it would be a disgrace, not only for me, but for the whole village. Think well over what you have said. Perhaps you are mistaken in yourself, and only dislike joining the army on your poor father's account. Question your conscience and your heart, and remember, Charles Henry, that God will hear your answer. Do you truly believe that you are wanting in courage—that you would fly from the battle-field?"

"As truly as there is a God above us, I believe it, Anna Sophia. It is not belief, it is certainty. It is not in my nature to be brave; I was not brought up to it, and am therefore without it. I am an apt farmer, but would be a bad soldier."

Anna Sophia sighed deeply, and covered her face with her hands. Thus she stood for some time in front of her betrothed, and he saw the large tears, stealing through her fingers, fall upon the grass, to be transformed there by the sun into sparkling jewels.

"Why do you weep, Anna Sophia?" asked he, gently. "What has so suddenly made you sad?"

Her hands fell slowly and wearily from her face. "I am not weeping now," said she; "it is past—I have shed my last tear. Now we must settle upon what is to be done, for you cannot be a soldier."

"But they will force me," said he, "for I am tall, strong, and healthy—just the build for a soldier."

Anna Sophia raised herself proudly and stood beside him. "I am as tall as you," said she.

"It is true," replied Charles Henry, laughing, "we are of the same height. We can scarcely fail to have tall, good-looking children some of these days!"

She shrugged her shoulders slightly, and looked at him in a strange manner. "I am as strong and as healthy as you," said she, "my sight is as sharp, my hand as sure. Were I Charles Henry Buschman, I would be a good soldier, for I have courage—I would not tremble at the cannon-balls."

"But, fortunately, you are not a man," said Charles Henry, laughing. "You are the beautiful Anna Sophia, who is this day to become my wife to save me from being a soldier."

"No, Charles Henry; the war must be at an end, and Charles Henry Buschman must have returned a brave soldier, before I can marry him."

"You mean," said he, with trembling lips—"you mean I must be a soldier?"

"As you have said, they will not let you off. You are a strong, healthy youth—you are unmarried, and have no one to support, for your father can take care of himself. Why, then, as the king is in need of soldiers, should they pass you by?"

"It is too true," murmured Charles Henry, despondently. After a slight pause, he said: "But I will not be a soldier—I cannot! For it is true I am a coward—I have not a particle of courage! That is born with one, it cannot be acquired; I have it not, and cannot therefore be a soldier."

"Nor shall you become one," said Anna, with determination.

"What can you do?"

"I will join the army in your stead!"

Charles Henry stared at her. He was on the point of laughing, but the sight of her inspired, earnest countenance, in which a world of determination was expressed, sobered him completely.

"I will do as I said, for I have great courage, and when I think of a battle my heart beats loudly, not with fear but with rapturous joy. To me, nothing would be more glorious than to die, banner in hand, surrounded by the thunder of cannon, and to cry out exultingly, as the blood flows from my wounds, '*Vive le roi! vive la patrie!*'" Her form was raised majestically, her countenance beamed with inspiration, a daring fire sparkled in her eyes—she was so changed in form and expression, that Charles Henry drew back from her in terror.

"I am afraid of you, Anna Sophia," said he, shuddering. "You are changed—you are not like yourself."

"No," said she; "nor am I the same. Yesterday I was Anna Sophia Detzloff—from to-day I am Charles Henry Buschman. Do not interrupt me—it must be! You shall not break your father's heart—you shall not bring disgrace upon the village. The king has called you—you must obey the call. But I will go in your place; you shall remain quietly at home, thrashing your corn, cutting your hay, and taking care of your kind old father, while I shall be upon the battle-field, fighting in your place."

"Do you then love me well enough to give your life for me?" cried Charles Henry, with streaming eyes.

She shook her head slowly, thoughtfully. "I do not know if it be love," said she. "I only feel that it must be done—there is no other outlet but this to help us all. Let us speak no more about it—only tell me that you accept it."

"It is impossible, Anna Sophia."

"Only accept it, and all will be right."

"I cannot. It would be an everlasting shame to me."

She pressed her teeth tightly together—her eyes gleamed with anger. "Hear me out," said she. "Go, or stay—whichever you do—I do not remain here! I must away and seek my fortune. I have never been happy, as yet—upon the battle-field I may be. I have nothing to lose, and can therefore win all. Well, say! Am I to be a soldier in your stead?"

"If you really wish it, I must yield," said he, sadly. "You say you have nothing to lose, but I, I have you, and I cannot, will not lose you. And as you would be angry with and leave me if I said 'No,' I prefer saying 'Yes.'"

Anna Sophia gave a cry of delight, and, for the first time, gave Charles Henry a willing kiss. "Many, many thanks, Charles Henry," said she. "Now we will all be happy."

Charles Henry sighed. He could not bring himself to trust in Anna's prophecy.

"And now," said she, eagerly, "how shall we go about it?"

CHAPTER IV.

FAREWELL TO THE VILLAGE.

IN the course of the day, Charles Henry accompanied the other boys to the village, where an officer was to call out the names of those who were drafted. As his name was called out, he did not change countenance—he remained as gay and cheerful as before, while the other boys were gazing sadly, thoughtfully before them. Then the officer handed each of them a ticket upon which their names were printed, and ordered them to go immediately to the nearest city, Cleve, and receive their uniforms. Charles Henry requested a day's leave, as he had various preparations to make for his father, to whom he wished to will the little property he had inherited from his mother. The officer granted him one day. Charles Henry left the house gayly, but instead of turning his steps toward the little hut inhabited by his father, he took the path leading to the old school-house, where his bride lived.

She stood at her door waiting for him. "Well," said she, hastily, "is all right?"

"Yes," said he, sadly, "I am drafted."

She grasped the printed ticket from his hand and hid it in her bosom. "Now," said she, "you have but to bring me a decent suit of clothes."

"My Sunday suit, Anna," said he, smiling. "It is new; I intended to be married in it."

"I shall not hurt it," said she. "There is a merchant at Cleve, whom I know to be good and honest—I will leave the clothes with him, and next Sunday you can walk to the city for them."

"You will not even keep them to remember me by?"

"It is impossible for me ever to forget you, Charles Henry, for I shall bear your name."

"From now on, throughout your whole life, you shall bear it, Anna. For when you return, you will remember your promise, and marry me. You will not forget me when far away?"

"How do I know I shall return?" said she. "A soldier's life is in constant danger. There can be no talk of marriage until this war is over. But it is now time we were asleep, Charles Henry. You and I have many things to do to-morrow; we must arrange our household affairs—you for the sake of appearances, and I in good earnest. Good-night, then, Charles Henry."

"Will you not kiss me on this our last night, Anna Sophia?" said he, sadly.

"A soldier kisses no man," said she, with a weary smile. "He might embrace a friend, as his life ebbed out upon the battle-field, but none other, Charles Henry. Good-night."

She entered and bolted the door after her, then lighting a candle she hastened to her attic-room. Seating herself at her father's table, she spread a large sheet of foolscap before her and commenced writing. She was making her will with a firm, unshaken hand. She began by taking leave of the villagers, and implored them to forgive her for causing them sorrow; but that life in the old hut, without her parents, had become burdensome to her, and as her betrothed was now going away, she could endure it no longer. She then divided her few possessions, leaving to every friend some slight remembrance, such as ribbons, a prayer-book, or a handkerchief. Her clothes she divided among the village wives. But her house, with all its contents, she left to Father Buschman, with the request that he would live in it, at least in summer.

When she had finished, she threw herself upon her bed to rest from the many fatigues and heart-aches of the day. In her dreams her parents appeared to her—they beckoned, kissed, and blessed her.