

To die! how welcome to the brave!  
The tomb awakes no coward fear  
Save to the wretched, trembling slave  
Who for his country sheds no tear.  
To crown me with a fadeless wreath  
Be thine, O happy, sacred death!

Come, shining sword! avenge my dead!  
Alone canst thou remove this shame.  
Proud ornament! with slaughter red  
Restore my native land its fame.  
By night, by day, in sun or shade,  
Be girt around me, trusty blade.

The trumpet on the morning gale!  
Arm! forward to the bloody strife!  
From loftiest mountain to the vale  
Asks dying Freedom for her life.  
Our standard raise, to glory given,  
And higher still our hearts to Heaven.\*

\* This is one of Arndt's soul-stirring, patriotic hymns, published in 1806. It is difficult to render into readable English this species of German heroic verse so as to preserve its rhythm. All the thought of the original is however expressed in the translation. The only change of any importance is the transposition of the seventh stanza.

Keine Thräne, Hermann, für dein Volk?  
Keine Thräne, und die Schande brennet,  
Und der Feind gebietet, wo die Freien  
Siegten und fielen?

Keine Stimme laut, wo Luther sprach?  
Alle Donner, die der Himmel sendet,  
Sollten rufen: Volk erwache! feiges;  
Greife zum Schwerte.

Rache! Rache! heissen, blut'gen Tod  
Sklavenfürsten und dem Knecht der fliehst!  
Männerwort gefürchtet und gepriesen,  
Männliche Tugend!

Ach wohin? wo Winkelried erlag,  
Wilhelm schlug, und Ruyter tapfer siegte;  
Auf den höchsten Alpen, in den tiefsten  
Sümpfen ist Knechtschaft.

Auch du, Hermann's, auch du, kühnes Volk?  
Auf! Erwache! Schüttle deine Ketten,  
Dass die Schmach die Welt vernehme, bald auch  
Blutige Rache!

Lieder helfen hier and Mäler nicht.  
Mäler? Tief im Herzen sei das Denkmal,  
An dem Thurm der selbstgebornen Tugend  
Hebe dich, Jüngling!

Und voran geworfen kühn die Brust,  
Und empor das Auge zu dem Himmel,  
Hoch die Fahne! Hoch zum Himmel! Höher  
Flammende Herzen.

Tod, du süsser, für das Vaterland,  
Süsser als der Brautgruss, als das Lallen  
Auf dem Mutterschooss des ersten Kindes,  
Sei mir willkommen!

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert,  
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften!  
Vor der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,  
Zierde der Tapfern!

Just when the youth had sung the last verse in a ringing voice, he had reached the bush. And now there arose above it two pale heads, wrapped in white, blood-stained handkerchiefs, and sang in enthusiastic tone the last verse of the song they had heard:

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert!  
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften!  
Vor der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,  
Zierde der Tapfern!

## CHAPTER III.

## THE OATH OF VENGEANCE.

SPEECHLESS with surprise, the youth had listened to the song, and fixed his large eyes steadfastly on the two officers, whose uniforms and wounds revealed to him the melancholy fate that had befallen them during the last few days.

When the two were silent, he approached them with an air of profound respect.

"Bravo, officers of Auerstadt or Jena," he said, with a voice trembling with emotion, "permit a poor young wanderer to present his respects to you, and to thank you, in the name of the German fatherland, for the wounds on your foreheads. Such wounds are also an 'ornament of the brave.'"\*

"And such words are an ornament of a noble heart," exclaimed Schill, offering his hand to the youth.

He took it with a joyful gesture, and, quickly kneeling down, imprinted a glowing kiss on the feverish hand of the wounded officer.

"My God!" exclaimed Schill, surprised, "what are you doing? How can a man kiss another's hand and kneel before him? Rise!"

"I am no man," said the youth, deeply moved. "I am but a poor boy, who has not yet done any thing for his country, and, perhaps, never will be able to do any thing for it, but who feels the most profound respect for those who were more fortunate than he. I, therefore, kiss your hand as Catholics kiss the hands of their saints and martyrs. For are you not at the present hour a martyr of German liberty? Hence, sir, give me your hand, too. Let me press my poor

\* An allusion to the last line of the original song.

lips on it, also. It is the only way for me to manifest my profound respect for you."

"No," said Count Pückler, feelingly, "you shall not kiss my hand, but my cheeks and my lips. Let me embrace you, young man, let me embrace you for the boon you have conferred on us by your words. Come, sir!"

The young man uttered a joyous cry, and, rising quickly, threw himself with youthful impetuosity into the count's arms.

"I will and must have my share in the embrace," exclaimed Schill, smiling; "did not you before expressly request me, comrade, to lend you my left arm for every embrace? Well, then, here it is."

He quickly wound his left arm around the necks of the others, and pressed them firmly to his heart. When they withdrew their arms again, tears were glistening in the eyes of the officers as well as in those of the youth.

"Grief and adversity cause men easily to fraternize," said Schill, "and therefore we shall be brethren henceforward."

"You will be my brethren?" exclaimed the young man, joyfully. "You will permit the poor boy to call two heroes brethren?"

"Heroes!" said Pückler, sighing. "Then you do not know, my friends, that we were disgracefully defeated and trampled under foot in yesterday's battle?"

"I know that, but know also that the *luck* of battles is not the true standard for the bravery of warriors. *You* at least did not run, and, like true heroes, you bear your wounds on your foreheads; your mothers, therefore, will proudly bid you welcome; your betrothed or your wives will embrace you with rapturous tears, and your friends will be proud of your valor."

"Does it not seem almost as though he had heard our mournful and despondent words, and wished to comfort us?" asked Schill, turning to the count. "His blue eyes apparently do not behold only our physical wounds, but also those which cause our hearts to bleed, and he wishes to apply a balm to them by his sweet, flattering words."

"He wishes to console the poor defeated, and reconcile them to their fate," said Pückler, nodding kindly to the youth.

"You have a better and more generous opinion of me than I deserve," he said, sadly bowing his head so as to shake its exuberant mass of long, fair hair. "I simply told you what I thought, and what every one who looks at both of you will and must think."

"Would to God you spoke the truth, young man!" said Count Pückler, mournfully. "Believe me, however, but few will think like yourself; a great many will rejoice at seeing us defeated and humiliated."

"Instead of bewailing us, they will deride us," exclaimed Schill; "instead of weeping with us, they will revile us!"

"Who will dare to do so?" exclaimed the youth, in an outburst of generous anger. "Do you forget, then, that you are in Germany, and that you have shed your blood for your country? Your German brethren will not deride you; they will not rejoice at your sufferings; they will hope with you for a better and more fortunate day when you will get even with that insolent and hateful enemy, for the battles of Jena and Auerstadt."

"Pray to God, my young friend, that that day may speedily dawn!" said Count Pückler, heaving a sigh.

"Pray!" ejaculated the young man, impetuously. "In times like ours it is not sufficient to pray and to hope for divine assistance; we ought rather to act and toil, and, instead of folding our hands, arm them either with the sword or with the dagger."

"With the dagger?" asked Schill. "The dagger is the weapon of assassins."

"Was Mæros an assassin because he wanted to stab Dionysius the tyrant?" asked the youth. "Was he not rather a generous and high-minded man, whom our great Schiller deemed worthy of becoming the hero of one of his finest poems? When the fatherland is in danger, every weapon is sacred, and every way lawful which a bold heart desires to pursue, to deliver the country."

"Well, I see already that your heart will choose the right, and not shrink back from dangers," said Pückler, kindly. "But, in the first place, tell us which way you are now going to take, that we may know whether we shall be allowed to accompany you or not."

"I come from Erfurt, where my parents are living," said the young man; "last night I was at Weimar, and now I am going to do what I have sworn a solemn oath to my father to do. I am on my way to Leipsic."

"And may I inquire what you are going to do in Leipsic?"

The young man was silent, and a flaming blush mantled for a moment his delicate, innocent face. "According to my father's wishes, I shall become there a merchant's apprentice," he said, in a low and embarrassed voice.

"What! Feeling so generous an enthusiasm for the fatherland and its soldiers, you want to become a merchant?" asked Schill, in surprise.

The youth raised his blue eyes to him; they were filled with tears.

"I am ordered to become a merchant," he said in a low voice. "My father is a pious preacher, and hates and detests warfare; he says it is sinful for men to raise their weapons against their brethren, as though they were wild beasts, against which you cannot defend yourself but by killing them. My mother, in former days, became familiar with the horrors of war; she fears, therefore, lest her only son should fall prey to them, and wishes to protect him from such a fate. With bitter tears, with folded hands, nay, almost on her knees, she implored me to desist from my purpose of becoming a soldier, and not to break her heart with grief and anguish. My mother begged and wept, my father scolded and threatened, and thus I was obliged to yield and be a dutiful son. Three days ago my father administered the sacrament to me, and I swore an oath to him at the altar to remain faithful to the avocation he had selected for me, and never to become a soldier!"

He paused, and the tears which had filled his eyes rolled like pearls over his cheeks.

"Poor friend!" murmured Pückler.

"Poor brother!" said Schill, indignantly. "To be doomed to wield the yardstick in place of the sword! How can a father be so cruel as to make his son take such a pledge at the present time?"

"My father is not cruel," said the youth, gently; "his only aim is my happiness, but he wishes to bring it about in his own way, and not in mine. It behooves a son to yield and obey. Accordingly, I shall not become a soldier, but God knows whether it will be conducive to my happiness. Many a one has already been driven to commit a crime by his despair at having chosen an unsuitable avocation. But let us speak no more of myself," he added, shaking his head indignantly, as if he wanted to drive the tears from his eyes; "let us speak no more of my petty, miserable grief, but of your great sorrow, which all Germany shares with you. You know now every thing concerning my affairs, and it only remains for me to mention my name. It is Staps; 'Frederick Staps' will be my firm one day, if I should live to see it."

"Your name is Frederick, like that of Prussia's great king,"

said Schill, comfortingly, "and who knows whether you will not one day become a great soldier like him?"

"But I have told you already that I have sworn at the altar never to become a soldier," said Frederick Staps, sighing. "I shall never break the oath I have sworn to my father, nor the one either which I have sworn to myself!"

"The oath that you will become a good and honest man, I suppose?" asked Pückler.

"It is unnecessary to take such an oath, because that is a matter of course," said Frederick Staps, quickly. "I swore another oath, but nobody but God must know it. When the time has come, you shall be informed of it. Do not forget my name, and when you hear from me one day, remember this hour and the tears you saw me shed for being compelled to choose an avocation that is repugnant to me."

"And in order to remember us, you must know who we are," exclaimed Count Pückler, stating his name.

"And my name is Schill," said the lieutenant. "We fought at Auerstadt and Jena, and are now wandering about, and seeking for a place where we may spend the coming night."

"You will find it in the village in the rear of the wood," said Frederick Staps. "Come, I will guide you back to the village and to the country parson, to whom I have on my way just presented my father's respects. He is a good and generous man. You will be kindly received and nursed by him and his wife; and if French soldiers should come to his house, he would not betray, but conceal you."

"Oh, what delightful words you have just uttered!" exclaimed Schill, joyously. "Blessed be your lips which have announced to us that we shall be saved, for, let me tell you, we should prefer death to French captivity!"

"I understand that," said Frederick Staps, quietly. "Come, I will guide you thither."

"And we accept your offer, as friends ought to accept that of a friend," said Count Pückler. "We do not say: 'We cause you trouble and loss of time; let us therefore try to find our way alone;' but we say: 'In these days of affliction we are all brethren, and we must rely on each other's assistance.' Come, therefore, brother, and be our guide."

They walked slowly toward the small wood from which Staps had issued.

"You stated you had been in Weimar, and spent a night there," asked Count Pückler. "How does the place look—what do people say, and who is there?"

"It looks like a pandemonium," replied Staps. "Nothing is to be heard but curses, shouts, threats, and screams; nothing to be seen but faces pale with terror, and fleeing from the pursuing soldiers. The streets are crowded with men, wagons, and horses. The inhabitants want to leave the city; they know not whither to escape, and are forced back at the gates by French soldiers making their entry, or by vehicles filled with wounded."

"And how is it at the palace? The duchess has fled from the wrath of the conqueror, I suppose?"

"No, the duchess has remained to beg Napoleon to have mercy on her state and her husband."

"But is Napoleon already in Weimar?"

"Yes; he came over from Jena this morning. The duchess received him at the foot of the palace staircase, and did not avert her eyes from his angry and haughty glances, but looked at him with the proud calmness of a noble German lady. 'You have not fled, then?' asked Napoleon, harshly. 'Then you do not fear my anger at the senseless and hostile conduct of your husband?' The duchess looked quietly at him. 'You see, sire, I have remained because I have confided in your generosity, and wished to intercede for my husband and my people.' Napoleon looked at her during a long pause, and her quiet dignity seemed to impress him very favorably. 'That was well done,' he said at last, 'and for your sake, and because you have reposed confidence in me, I will forgive your husband.\* I do not know what occurred afterward, for I left the palace when Napoleon had retired to the rooms reserved for his personal use. My cousin, who is lady's maid of the duchess, told me what I have just related to you."

"And you did not hear any thing about our king and his consort?"

"Both are said to be on the way to Magdeburg, where they will remain, if the pursuing enemy will permit them. Napoleon's hatred and wrath are not yet satiated, and his latest bulletin is written in the same vulgar guard-room style as all the recent manifestoes in which he dares to revile the noble and beautiful queen."

"Then another bulletin has appeared?"

"It was just distributed among the troops when I left Weimar. A soldier, whom I asked for his copy, gave it to me. Do you wish to read it?"

\* Napoleon's own words.—Vide "Mémoires de Constant," vol. iv., and "History of Napoleon," by \* \* \* r, vol. ii., p. 105.

"Read it to us," said Count Pückler. "Let us rest a little in the shade of these trees, for I confess I feel greatly exhausted, and my feet refuse to carry me any farther. And how do you feel, comrade?"

"Do you believe," asked Schill, in a faint voice, "do you believe that I should not have given vent to my anger at the impudence of that Corsican who dares to revile our noble queen, if I had had sufficient strength to speak? Let us sit down and rest. See, there is a splendid old oak. Let us take breath under its shade."

They walked toward a large oak, which stood at the entrance of the wood, and the foot of which was overgrown with fragrant green moss. Assisted by Staps, the two officers seated themselves, and the roots, covered with soft turf, served as pillows to their wounded heads.

"Oh, how delightful to rest on German soil under a German oak!" sighed Schill. "I should like to lie here all my lifetime, looking up to the rustling leaves, and dreaming! Amid the stillness surrounding us, it is almost impossible to believe that we witnessed yesterday such wild strife and bloodshed. Is all this reality, or have we had merely an evil, feverish dream?"

"Touch your forehead; try to raise your right arm, and you will see that it is reality," said Pückler, laughing bitterly, "and if you should have any doubt, let our young friend read the latest bulletin issued by our *triumphator*. But will you promise not to interrupt him, nor to be angry at what we are going to hear?"

"I promise you to be perfectly calm, for my weakness compels me to be so. Read, friend Staps. But, pray, let us have the German translation, for it would be a violation of the peaceful silence of the forest, and of the sacredness of the German oak, if we should use here the language of our enemies."

Frederick Staps sat down opposite the officers, on the trunk of a fallen tree. Drawing a paper from his bosom, he unfolded it, and read as follows:

"The battle of Jena has effaced the disgrace of Rossbach, and decided a campaign in seven days. Since the ninth of October we have proceeded from victory to victory, and the battles of Jena and Auerstadt have crowned all. The Prussian army is dispersed—almost annihilated. The king is wandering about without shelter, and the queen will now regret with bitter tears that she instigated her husband to this senseless and unjust war. Admirable was the conduct of our