ADVENTURES OF A NEW−YEAR'S EVE

HEINRICH ZSCHOKKE

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I

Mother Kate, the watchman's wife, at nine o'clock on New Year's Eve, opened her little window, and put out her head into the night air. The snow was reddened by the light from the window as it fell in silent, heavy flakes upon the street. She observed the crowds of happy people, hurrying to and fro from the brilliantly lighted shops with presents, or pouring out of the various inns and coffee−houses, and going to the dances and other entertainments with which the New Year is married to the Old in joy and pleasure. But when a few cold flakes had lighted on her nose, she drew back her head, closed the window, and said to her husband: "Gottlieb, stay at home, and let Philip watch for thee to−night; for the snow comes as fast as it can from Heaven, and thou knowest the cold does thy old bones no good. The streets will be gay to−night. There seems dancing and feasting in every house, masqueraders are going about, and Philip will enjoy the sport."

Old Gottlieb nodded his assent. "I am willing, Kate," he said. "My barometer, the old wound above my knee, has given me warning the last two days of a change of weather. It is only right that my son should aid me in a service to which he will be my successor."

We must give the reader to understand that old Gottlieb had been a sergeant of cavalry in one of the king's regiments, until he was made a cripple for life by a musket−ball, as he was the first mounting the walls of a hostile fort in a battle for his fatherland. The officer who commanded the attack received the cross of honor on the battlefield for his heroism, and was advanced in the service; while Gottlieb was fain to creep homewards on a pair of crutches. From pity they made him a schoolmaster, for he was intelligent, liked to read, and wrote a good hand. But when the school increased they took it away from him to provide for a young man who could do none of these as well as he, merely because he was a godson of one of the trustees. However, they promoted Gottlieb to the post of watchman, with the reversion of it to his son Philip, who had in the meantime bound himself to a gardener. It was only the good housewifery of Mistress Katharine, and the extreme moderation of old Gottlieb, that enabled them to live happily on the little they possessed. Philip gave his services to the gardener for his board and lodging, but he occasionally received very fine presents when he carried home flowers to the rich people of the town. He was a fresh, handsome young fellow, of six−and−twenty. Noble ladies often gave him sundry extra dollars for his fine looks, a thing they would never have thought of doing for an ugly face. Mrs. Kate had already put on her cloak to go to the gardener's house to fetch her son, when he entered the apartment.

"Father," said Philip, giving a hand to both father and mother, "it's snowing, and the snow won't do you much good. I'll take the watch to−night, and you can get to bed."

"You're a good boy," said old Gottlieb.

"And then I've been thinking," continued Philip, "that as to−morrow is New Year's Day, I may come and dine with you and make myself happy. Mother perhaps has no joint in the kitchen, and—"

"No," interrupted the mother, "we've no joint, but then we have a pound and a and a half of venison; with potatoes for a relish, and a little rice with laurel leaves for a soup, and two flasks of beer to drink. Only come, Philip, for we shall live finely to−morrow! Next week we may do better, for the New Year's gifts will be coming in, and Gottlieb's share will be something! Oh! we shall live grandly."

"Well, so much the better, dear mother," said Philip; "but have you paid the rent of the cottage yet?"

Old Gottlieb shrugged his shoulders.

Philip laid a purse upon the table.

"There are two−and−twenty dollars that I have saved. I can do very well without them; take them for a New Year's gift, and then we can all three enter on the new year without a debt or a care. God grant that we may end it in health and happiness! Heaven in its goodness will provide for both you and me!"

Tears came into Mother Katharine's eyes as she kissed her son; old Gottlieb said: "Philip, you are the prop and stay of our old age. Continue to be honest and good, and to love your parents, so will a blessing rest on you. I can give you nothing for a New Year's gift, but a prayer that you may keep your heart pure and true—this is in your power—you will be rich enough—for a clear conscience is a Heaven in itself."

So said old Gottlieb, and then he wrote down in an account−book the sum of two−and−twenty dollars that his son had given him.

"All that you have cost me in childhood is now nearly paid up. Your savings amount to three hundred and seventeen dollars, which I have received."

"Three hundred and seventeen dollars!" cried Mistress Katharine, in the greatest amazement; and then turning to Philip with a voice full of tenderness, "Ah, Philip," she said, "thou grievest me. Child of my heart! Yes, indeed thou dost. Hadst thou saved that money for thyself thou might have bought some land with it, and started as gardener on thy own account, and married Rose. NOW that is impossible. But take comfort, Philip. We are old, and thou wilt not have to support us long."

"Mother!" exclaimed Philip, and he frowned a little; "what are you thinking of? Rose is dear to me as my life, but I would give up a hundred Roses rather than desert you and my father. I should never find any other parents in this world but you, but there are plenty of Roses, although I would have none but Mrs. Bittner's Rose, were there even ten thousand others."

"You are right, Philip," said Gottlieb; "loving and marrying are not in the commandments—but to honor your father and mother is a duty and commandment. To give up strong passions and inclinations for the happiness of your parents is the truest gratitude of a son. It will gain you the blessing from above:—it will make you rich in your own heart."

"If it were only not too long for Rose to wait," said Mrs. Katharine, "or if you could give up the engagement altogether! For Rose is a pretty girl, that can't be denied; and though she is poor, there will be no want of wooers. She is virtuous and understands housekeeping."

"Never fear, mother," replied Philip; "Rose has solemnly sworn to marry no man but me; and that is sufficient. Her mother has nothing to object to me. And if I was in business and had money enough to keep a wife with, Rose would be my wife to−morrow. The only annoyance we have is, that her mother will not let us meet so often as we wish. She says frequent meetings do no good; but I differ from her, and so does Rose—for we think meeting often does us both a great deal of good. And we have agreed to meet to−night, at twelve o'clock, at the great door of St. Gregory's Church, for Rose is bringing in the year at a friend's house, and I am to take her home."

In the midst of such conversation the clock of the neighboring tower struck three−quarters, and Philip took his father's great−coat from the warm stove where Katharine had carefully laid it, wrapped himself in it, and taking the lantern and staff, and wishing his parents good−night, proceeded to his post.

II.

Philip stalked majestically through the snow−covered streets of the capital, where as many people were still visible as in the middle of the day. Carriages were rattling in all directions, the houses were all brilliantly lighted. Our watchman enjoyed the scene, he sang his verses at ten o'clock, and blew his horn lustily in the neighborhood of St. Gregory's Church, with many a thought on Rose, who was then with her friend. "Now she hears me," he said to himself; "now she thinks on me, and forgets the scene around her. I hope she won't fail me at twelve o'clock at the church door." And when he had gone his round, he always returned to the dear house and looked up at the lighted windows. Sometimes he saw female figures, and his heart beat quick at the sight; sometimes he fancied he saw Rose herself; and sometimes he studied the long shadows thrown on the wall or the ceiling to discover which of them was Rose's, and to fancy what she was doing. It was certainly not a very pleasant employment to stand in frost and snow and look up at a window; but what care lovers for frost and snow? And watchmen are as fiery and romantic lovers as ever were the knights of ancient ballads.

He only felt the effects of the frost when, at eleven o'clock, he had to set out upon his round. His teeth chattered with cold; he could scarcely call the hour or sound his horn. He would willingly have gone into a beer−house to warm himself at the fire. As he was pacing through a lonely by−street, he met a man with a black half− mask on his face, enveloped in a fire−colored silken mantle, and wearing on his head a magnificent hat turned up at one side, and fantastically ornamented with a number of high and waving plumes.

Philip endeavored to escape the mask, but in vain. The stranger blocked up his path and said: "Ha! thou art a fine fellow; I like thy phiz amazingly. Where are you going, eh? I say, where are you going?"

"To Mary Street," replied Philip. "I am going to call the hour there."

"Enchanting!" answered the mask. "I'll hear thee: I'll go with thee. Come along, thou foolish fellow, and let me hear thee, and mind thou singest well, for I am a good judge. Canst thou sing me a jovial song?"

Philip saw that his companion was of high rank and a little tipsy, and answered: "I sing better over a glass of wine in a warm room, than when up to my waist in snow."

They had now reached Mary Street, and Philip sang and blew the horn.

"Ha! that's but a poor performance," exclaimed the mask, who had accompanied him thither. "Give me the horn! I shall blow so well that you'll half die with delight."

Philip yielded to the mask's wishes, and let him sing the verses and blow. For four or five times all was done as if the stranger had been a watchman all his life. He dilated most eloquently on the joys of such an occupation, and was so inexhaustible in his own praises that he made Philip laugh at his extravagance. His spirits evidently owed no small share of their elevation to an extra glass of wine.

"I'll tell you what, my treasure, I've a great fancy to be a watchman myself for an hour or two. If I don't do it now, I shall never arrive at that honor in the course of my life. Give me your great−coat and wide−brimmed hat, and take my domino. Go into a beer− house and take a bottle at my expense; and when you have finished it, come again and give me back my masking−gear. You shall have a couple of dollars for your trouble. What do you think, my treasure?"

But Philip did not like this arrangement. At last, however, at the solicitations of the mask, he capitulated as they entered a dark lane. Philip was half frozen; a warm drink would do him good, and so would a warm fire. He agreed for one half−hour to give up his watchmanship, which would be till twelve o'clock. Exactly at that time the stranger was to come to the great door of St. Gregory's and give back the great−coat, horn, and staff, taking back his own silk mantle, hat, and domino. Philip also told him the four streets in which he was to call the hour. The mask was in raptures: "Treasure of my heart, I could kiss thee if thou wert not a dirty, miserable fellow! But thou shalt have naught to regret, if thou art at the church at twelve, for I will give thee money for a supper then. Joy! I am a watchman!" The mask looked a watchman to the life, while Philip was completely disguised with the half−mask tied over his face, the bonnet ornamented with a buckle of brilliants on his head, and the red silk mantle thrown around him. When he saw his companion commence his walk he began to fear that the young gentleman might compromise the dignity of the watchman. He therefore addressed him once more, and said:

"I hope you will not abuse my good nature and do any mischief or misbehave in any way, as it may cost me

the situation."

"Hallo!" answered the stranger. "What are you talking about? Do you think I don't know my duty? Off with you this moment, or I'll let you feel the weight of my staff. But come to St. Gregory's Church and give me back my clothes at twelve o'clock. Good−bye. This is glorious fun!"

The new guardian of the streets walked onward with all the dignity becoming his office, while Philip hurried to a neighboring tavern.

III.

As he was passing the door of the royal palace, he was laid hold of by a person in a mask who had alighted from a carriage. Philip turned round, and in a low whispering voice asked what the stranger wanted.

"My gracious lord," answered the mask, "in your reverie you have passed the door. Will your Royal Highness—"

"What? Royal Highness?" said laughing. "I am no highness. What put that in your head?"

The mask bowed respectfully, and pointed to the brilliant buckle in Philip's hat. "I ask your pardon if I have betrayed your disguise. But, in whatever character you asume, your noble bearing will betray you. Will you condescend to lead the way? Does your Highness intend to dance?"

"I? To dance?" replied Philip. "No—you see I have boots on."

"To play, then?" inquired the mask.

"Still less. I have brought no money with me," said the assistant watchman.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed the mask. "Command my purse—all that I possess is at your service!" Saying this, he forced a full purse into Philip's hand.

"But do you know who I am?" inquired Philip, and rejected the purse.

The mask whispered with a bow of profound obeisance: "His Royal Highness, Prince Julian."

At this moment Philip heard his deputy in an adjoining street calling the hour very distinctly, and he now became aware of his metamorphosis. Prince Julian, who was well known in the capital as an amiable, wild, and good−hearted young man, had been the person with whom he had changed his clothes. "Now, then," thought Philip, "as he enacts the watchman so well, I will not shame his rank; I'll see if, for one half−hour, I can't be the Prince. If I make any mistake, he has himself to blame for it." He wrapped the red silken mantle closer round him, took the offered purse, put it in his pocket, and said: "Who are you, mask? I will return your gold to− morrow."

"I am the Chamberlain Pilzou."

"Good—lead the way—I'll follow." The Chamberlain obeyed, and tripped up the marble stairs, Philip coming close behind him. They entered an immense hall lighted by a thousand tapers and dazzling chandeliers, which were reflected by brilliant mirrors. A confused crowd of maskers jostled each other, sultans, Tyrolese, harlequins, knights in armor, nuns, goddesses, satyrs, monks, Jews, Medes, and Persians. Philip for a while was abashed and blinded. Such splendor he had never dreamt of. In the middle of the hall the dance was carried on with hundreds of people to the music of a full band. Philip, whom the heat of the apartment recovered from his frozen state, was so bewildered with the scene that he could scarcely nod his head as different masks addressed him, some confidentially, others deferentially.

"Will you go to the hazard table?" whispered the Chamberlain, who stood beside him, and who Philip now saw was dressed as a Brahmin.

"Let me get thawed first," answered Philip; "I am an icicle at present."

"A glass of warm punch?" inquired the Brahmin, and led him into the refreshment−room. The pseudo−prince did not wait for a second invitation, but emptied one glass after the other in short time. The punch was good, and it spread its genial warmth through Philip's veins.

"How is it you don't dance tonight, Brahmin?" he asked of his companion, when they returned into the hall. The Brahmin sighed, and shrugged his shoulders.

"I have no pleasure now in the dance. Gayety is distasteful to me. The only person I care to dance with—the Countess Bonau—I thought she loved me; our families offered no objection—but all at once she broke with me." His voice trembled as he spoke.

"How?" said Philip, "I never heard of such a thing."

"You never heard of it?" repeated the other; "the whole city rings with it. The quarrel happened a fortnight ago, and she will not allow me to justify myself, but has sent back three letters I wrote to her, unopened. She is a declared enemy of the Baroness Reizenthal, and had made me promise to drop her acquaintance. But, think how unfortunate I was! When the Queen−mother made the hunting party to Freudenwald, she appointed me cavalier to the Baroness. What could I do? It was impossible to refuse. On the very birthday of the adorable Bonau I was

obliged to set out.....She heard of it.....She put no trust in my heart!"

"Well, then, Brahmin, take advantage of the present moment. The New Year makes up all quarrels. Is the Countess here?"

"Do you not see her over there—the Carmelite on the left of the third pillar beside the two black dominos. She has laid aside her mask. Ah, Prince! your intercession would—"

Philip thought: "Now I can do a good work!" and, as the punch had inspired him, he walked directly to the Carmelite. The Countess Bonau looked at him for some time seriously, and with flushed cheeks, as he sat down beside her. She was a beautiful girl; yet Philip remained persuaded that Rose was a thousand times more beautiful.

"Countess," he said,—and became embarrassed when he met her clear bright eye fixed upon him.

"Prince," said the Countess, "an hour ago you were somewhat too bold."

"Fair Countess, I am therefore at this present moment the more quiet."

"So much the better. I shall not, then, be obliged to keep out of your way."

"Fair lady, allow me to ask one question. Have you put on a nun's gown to do penance for your sins?"

"I have nothing to do penance for."

"But you have, Countess!—your cruelties—your injustice to the poor Brahmin yonder, who seems neglected by his God and all the world."

The beautiful Carmelite cast down her eyes, and appeared uneasy.

"And do you know, fair Countess, that in the Freudenwald affair the Chamberlain is as innocent as I am?"

"As you, Prince?" said the Countess, frowning, "what did you tell me an hour ago?"

"You are right, dear Countess, I was too bold. You said so yourself. But now I declare to you the Chamberlain was obliged to go to Freudenwald by command of the Queen−mother—against his will was obliged to be cavalier to the hated Reizenthal—"

"Hated—by him?"—interrupted the Countess with a bitter and sneering laugh.

"Yes—he hates,—he despises the Baroness. Believe me, he scarcely treated her with civility, and incurred the Royal displeasure by so doing. I know it; and it was for your sake. You are the only person he loves—to you he offers his hand, his heart—and you!—you reject him!"

"How comes it, Prince, that you intercede so warmly for Pilzou? You did not do so formerly."

"That was because I did not know him, and still less the sad state into which you have thrown him by your behavior. I swear to you he is innocent—you have nothing to forgive in him—he has much to forgive in you."

"Hush!" whispered the Carmelite, "we are watched here; away from this." She replaced her mask, stood up, and placing her arm within that of the supposed Prince, they crossed the hall and entered a side−room. The Countess uttered many bitter complaints against the Chamberlain, but they were the complaints of jealous love. The Countess was in tears, when the tender Brahmin soon after came timidly into the apartment. There was a deep silence among the three. Philip, not knowing how to conclude his intercession better, led the Brahmin to the Carmelite, and joined their hands together, without saying a word, and left them to fate. He himself returned into the hall.

IV.

Here he was hastily addressed by a Mameluke: "I'm glad I have met you, Domino. Is the Rose−girl in the side−room?" The Mameluke rushed into it, but returned in a moment evidently disappointed. "One word alone with you, Domino," he said, and led Philip into a window recess in a retired part of the hall.

"What do you want?" asked Philip.

"I beseech you," replied the Mameluke, in a subdued yet terrible voice, "where is the Rose−girl?"

"What is the Rose−girl to me?"

"But to me she is everything!" answered the Mameluke, whose suppressed voice and agitated demeanor showed that a fearful struggle was going on within. "To me she is everything. She is my wife. You make me wretched, Prince! I conjure you drive me not to madness. Think of my wife no more!"

"With all my heart," answered Philip, dryly; "what have I to do with your wife?"

"O Prince, Prince!" exclaimed the Mameluke, "I have made a resolve which I shall execute if it cost me my life. Do not seek to deceive me a moment longer. I have discovered everything. Here! look at this! 'tis a note my false wife slipped into your hand, and which you dropped in the crowd, without having read."

Philip took the note. 'T was written in pencil, and in a fine delicate hand: "Change your mask. Everybody knows you. My husband watches you. He does not know me. If you obey me, I will reward you."

"Hem!" muttered Philip. "As I live, this was not written to me. I don't trouble my head about your wife."

"Death and fury, Prince! do not drive me mad! Do you know who it is that speaks to you? I am the Marshal Blankenswerd. Your advances to my wife are not unknown to me, ever since the last rout at the palace."

"My Lord Marshal," answered Philip, "excuse me for saying that jealousy has blinded you. If you knew me well, you would not think of accusing me of such folly. I give you my word of honor I will never trouble your wife."

"Are you in earnest, Prince?"

"Entirely."

"Give me a proof of this?"

"Whatever you require."

"I know you have hindered her until now from going with me to visit her relations in Poland. Will you persuade her to do so now?"

"With all my heart, if you desire it."

"Yes, yes! and your Royal Highness will prevent inconceivable and unavoidable misery."

The Mameluke continued for some time, sometimes begging and praying, and sometimes threatening so furiously, that Philip feared he might make a scene before the whole assembly that would not have suited him precisely. He therefore quitted him as soon as possible. Scarcely had he lost himself in the crowd, when a female, closely wrapped in deep mourning, tapped him familiarly on the arm, and whispered:

"Butterfly, whither away? Have you no pity for the disconsolate Widow?"

Philip answered very politely: "Beautiful widows find no lack of comforters. May I venture to include myself amongst them?"

"Why are you so disobedient? and why have you not changed your mask?" said the Widow, while she led him aside that they might speak more freely. "Do you really fancy, Prince, that every one here does not know who you are?"

"They are very much mistaken in me, I assure you," replied Philip.

"No, indeed," answered the Widow, "they know you very well, and if you do not immediately change your apparel, I shall not speak to you again the whole evening. I have no desire to give my husband an opportunity of making a scene."

By this Philip discovered whom he was talking with. "You were the beautiful Rose−girl; are your roses withered so soon?"

"What is there that does not wither? not the constancy of man? I saw you when you slipped off with the Carmelite. Acknowledge your inconstancy—you can deny it no longer."

"Hem," answered Philip, dryly, "accuse me if you will, I can return the accusation."

"How,—pretty butterfly?"

"Why, for instance, there is not a more constant man alive than the Marshal."

"There is not indeed!—and I am wrong, very wrong to have listened to you so long. I reproached myself enough, but he has unfortunately discovered our flirtation."

"Since the last rout at Court, fair Widow—−"

"Were you so unguarded and particular—pretty butterfly!"

"Let us repair the mischief. Let us part. I honor the Marshal, and, for my part, do not like to give him pain."

The Widow looked at him for some time in speechless amazement.

"If you have indeed any regard for me," continued Philip, "you will go with the Marshal to Poland, to visit your relations. 'Tis better that we should not meet so often. A beautiful woman is beautiful— but a pure and virtuous woman is more beautiful still."

"Prince!" cried the astonished Widow, "are you really in earnest? Have you ever loved me, or have you all along deceived?"

"Look you," answered Philip, "I am a tempter of a peculiar kind. I search constantly among women to find truth and virtue, and 'tis but seldom that I encounter them. Only the true and virtuous can keep me constant—therefore I am true to none; but no!—I will not lie— there is one that keeps me in her chains—I am sorry, fair Widow, that that one—is not you!"

"You are in a strange mood to−night, Prince," answered the Widow, and the trembling of her voice and heaving of her bosom showed the working of her mind.

"No," answered Philip, "I am in as rational a mood to−night as I ever was in my life. I wish only to repair an injury; I have promised to your husband to do so."

"How!" exclaimed the Widow, in a voice of terror, "you have discovered all to the Marshal?"

"Not everything," answered Philip, "only what I knew."

The Widow wrung her hands in the extremity of agitation, and at last said, "Where is my husband?"

Philip pointed to the Mameluke, who at this moment approached them with slow steps.

"Prince," said the Widow, in a tone of inexpressible rage,—"Prince, you may be forgiven this, but not from me! I never dreamt that the heart of man could be so deceitful,—but you are unworthy of a thought. You are an impostor! My husband in the dress of a barbarian is a prince; you in the dress of a prince are a barbarian. In this world you see me no more!"

With these words she turned proudly away from him, and going up to the Mameluke, they left the hall in deep and earnest conversation. Philip laughed quietly, and said to himself: "My substitute, the watchman, must look to it, for I do not play my part badly; I only hope when he returns he will proceed as I have begun."

He went up to the dancers, and was delighted to see the beautiful Carmelite standing up in a set with the overjoyed Brahmin. No sooner did the latter perceive him, than he kissed his hand to him, and in dumb−show gave him to understand in what a blessed state he was. Philip thought: 'T is a pity I am not to be prince all my life−time. The people would be satisfied then; to be a prince is the easiest thing in the world. He can do more with a single word than a lawyer with a four−hours' speech. Yes! if I were a prince, my beautiful Rose would be—lost to me for ever. No! I would not be a prince." He now looked at the clock, and saw 't was half−past eleven. The Mameluke hurried up to him and gave him a paper. "Prince," he exclaimed, "I could fall at your feet and thank you in the very dust. I am reconciled to my wife. You have broken her heart; but it is better that it should be so. We leave for Poland this very night, and there we shall fix our home. Farewell! I shall be ready whenever your Royal Highness requires me, to pour out my last drop of blood in your service. My gratitude is eternal. Farewell!"

"Stay!" said Philip to the Marshal, who was hurrying away, "what am I to do with this paper?"

"Oh, that,−'tis the amount of my loss to your Highness last week at hazard. I had nearly forgotten it; but before my departure, I must clear my debts. I have indorsed it on the back." With these words the Marshal disappeared.

V.

Philip opened the paper, and read in it an order for five thousand dollars. He put it in his pocket, and thought: "Well, it's a pity that I'm not a prince." Some one whispered in his ear:

"Your Royal Highness, we are both discovered; I shall blow my brains out."

Philip turned round in amazement, and saw a negro at his side.

"What do you want, mask?" he asked, in an unconcerned tone.

"I am Colonel Kalt," whispered the negro. "The Marshal's wife has been chattering to Duke Herman, and he has been breathing fire and fury against us both."

"He is quite welcome," answered Philip.

"But the King will hear it all," sighed the negro. "This very night I may be arrested and carried to a dungeon; I'll sooner hang myself."

"No need of that," said Philip.

"What! am I to be made infamous for my whole life? I am lost, I tell you. The Duke will demand entire satisfaction. His back is black and blue yet with the marks of the cudgelling I gave him. I am lost, and the baker's daughter too! I'll jump from the bridge and drown myself at once!"

"God forbid!" answered Philip; "what have you and the baker's daughter to do with it?"

"Your Royal Highness banters me, and I am in despair!—I humbly beseech you to give me two minutes' private conversation."

Philip followed the negro into a small boudoir dimly lighted up with a few candles. The negro threw himself on a sofa, quite overcome, and groaned aloud. Philip found some sandwiches and wine on the table, and helped himself with great relish.

"I wonder your Royal Highness can be so cool on hearing this cursed story. If that rascally Salmoni was here who acted the conjurer, he might save us by some contrivance, for the fellow was a bunch of tricks. As it is, he has slipped out of the scrape."

"So much the better," interrupted Philip, replenishing his glass; "since he has got out of the way, we can throw all the blame on his shoulders."

"How can we do that? The Duke, I tell you, knows that you, and I, and the Marshal's wife, and the baker's daughter, were all in the plot together, to take advantage of his superstition. He knows that it was you that engaged Salmoni to play the conjurer; that it was I that instructed the baker's daughter (with whom he is in love) how to inveigle him into the snare; that it was I that enacted the ghost, that knocked him down, and cudgelled him till he roared again. If I had only not carried the joke too far, but I wished to cool his love a little for my sweetheart. 'T was a devilish business. I'll take poison."

"Rather swallow a glass of wine—'t is delicious," said Philip, taking another tart at the same time. "For to tell you the truth, my friend, I think you are rather a white−livered sort of rogue for a colonel, to think of hanging, drowning, shooting, and poisoning yourself about such a ridiculous story as that. One of these modes would be too much, but as to all the four—nonsense. I tell you that at this moment I don't know what to make out of your tale."

"Your Royal Highness, have pity on me, my brain is turned. The Duke's page, an old friend of mine, has told me this very moment, that the Marshal's wife, inspired by the devil, went up to the Duke, and told him that the trick played on him at the baker's house was planned by Prince Julian, who opposed his marriage with his sister; that the spirit he saw was myself, sent by the Princess to be a witness of his superstition; that your Highness was a witness of his descent into the pit after hidden gold, and of his promise to make the baker's daughter his mistress, and also to make her one of the nobility immediately after his marriage with the Princess. 'Do not hope to gain the Princess. It is useless for you to try,' were the last words of the Marshal's wife to the Duke."

"And a pretty story it is," muttered Philip; "why, behavior like that would be a disgrace to the meanest of the people. I declare there is no end to these deviltries."

"Yes, indeed. 'T is impossible to behave more meanly than the Marshal's lady. The woman must be a fury. My gracious Lord, save me from destruction."

"Where is the Duke?" asked Philip.

"The page told me he started up on hearing the story, and said, 'I will go to the King.' And if he tells the story to the King in his own way—"

"Is the King here, then?"

"Oh, yes, he is at play in the next room, with the Archbishop and the Minister of Police."

Philip walked with long steps through the boudoir. The case required consideration.

"Your Royal Highness," said the negro, "protect me. Your own honor is at stake. You can easily make all straight; otherwise, I am ready at the first intimation of danger to fly across the border. I will pack up, and to−morrow I shall expect your last commands as to my future behavior."

With these words the negro took his leave.

VI.

"It is high time I were a watchman again," thought Philip. "I am getting both myself and my substitute into scrapes he will find it hard to get out of—and this makes the difference between a peasant and a prince. One is no better off than the other. Good heavens! what stupid things these court lords are doing which we do not dream of with our lanterns and staff in hand, or when at the spade. We think they lead the lives of angels, without sin or care. Pretty piece of business! Within a quarter of an hour I have heard of more rascally tricks than I ever played in my whole life. And—" but his reverie was interrupted by a whisper.

"So lonely, Prince! I consider myself happy in having a minute's conversation with your Royal Highness."

Philip looked at the speaker; and he was a miner, covered over with gold and jewels.

"But one instant," said the mask. "The business is pressing, and deeply concerns you."

"Who are you?" inquired Philip.

"Count Bodenlos, the Minister of Finance, at your Highness's service," answered the miner, and showed his face, which looked as if it were a second mask, with its little eyes and copper−colored nose.

"Well, then, my lord, what are your commands?"

"May I speak openly? I waited on your Royal Highness thrice, and was never admitted to the honor of an audience; and yet—Heaven is my witness—no man in all this court has a deeper interest in your Royal Highness than I have."

"I am greatly obliged to you," replied Philip; "what is your business just now? But be quick."

"May I venture to speak of the house of Abraham Levi?"

"As much as you like."

"They have applied to me about the fifty thousand dollars which you owe them, and threaten to apply to the King. And you remember your promise to his Majesty, when last he paid your debts."

"Can't the people wait?" asked Philip.

"No more than the Brothers, goldsmiths, who demand their seventy− five thousand dollars."

"It is all one to me. If the people won't wait for their money, I must—"

"No hasty resolution, my gracious Lord! I have it in my power to make everything comfortable, if—"

"Well, if what?"

"If you will honor me by listening to me one moment. I hope to have no difficulty in redeeming all your debts. The house of Abraham Levi has bought up immense quantities of corn, so that the price is very much raised. A decree against importation will raise it three or four percent. higher. By giving Abraham Levi the monopoly, the business will be arranged. The house erases your debt, and pays off your seventy−five thousand dollars to the goldsmiths, and I give you over the receipts. But everything depends on my continuing for another year at the head of the Finance. If Baron Griefensack succeeds in ejecting me from the Ministry, I shall be unable to serve your Royal Highness as I could wish. If your Highness will leave the party of Griefensack, our point is gained. For me, it is a matter of perfect indifference whether I remain in office or not. I sigh for repose. But for your Royal Highness, it is a matter of great moment. If I have not the mixing of the pack, I lose the game."

Philip for some time did not know what answer to make. At last, while the Finance Minister, in expectation of his reply, took a pinch out of his snuff−box set with jewels, Philip said:

"If I rightly understand you, Sir Count, you would starve the country a little, in order to pay my debts. Consider, sir, what misery you will cause. And will the King consent to it?"

"If I remain in office I will answer for that, my gracious Lord! When the price of corn rises, the King will, of course, think of permitting importation, and prevent exportation by levying heavy imposts. The permission to do so is given to the house of Abraham Levi, and they export as much as they choose. But, as I said before, if Griefensack gets the helm, nothing can be done. For the first year he would be obliged to attend strictly to his duty, in order to be able afterwards to feather his nest at the expense of the country. He must first make sure of his ground. He is dreadfully grasping!"

"A pretty project," answered Philip; "and how long do you think a finance minister must be in office before he can lay his shears on the flock to get wool enough for himself and me?"

"Oh, if he has his wits about him, he may manage it in a year."

"Then the King ought to be counselled to change his finance minister every twelve months, if he wishes to be faithfully and honorably served."

"I hope, your Royal Highness, that since I have had the Exchequer, the King and Court have been faithfully served?"

"I believe you, Count, and the poor people believe you still more. Already they scarcely know how to pay their rates and taxes. You should treat us with a little more consideration, Count."

"Us!—don't I do everything for the Court?"

"No! I mean the people. You should have a little more consideration for them."

"I appreciate what your Royal Highness says; but I serve the King and the Court, and the people are not to be considered. The country is his private property, and the people are only useful to him as increasing the value of the land. But this is no time to discuss the old story about the interests of the people. I beg your Royal Highness' answer to my propositions. Shall I have the honor to discharge your debts on the above specified conditions?"

"Answer,—no—never, never! at the expense of hundreds and thousands of starving families."

"But, your Royal Highness, if, in addition to the clearance of your debts, I make the house of Abraham Levi present you with fifty thousand dollars in hard cash? I think it may afford you that sum. The house will gain so much by the operation, that—"

"Perhaps it may be able to give YOU also a mark of its regard."

"Your Highness is pleased to jest with me. I gain nothing by the affair. My whole object is to obtain the protection of your Royal Highness."

"You are very polite!"

"I may hope, then, Prince? My duty is to be of service to you. To− morrow I shall send for Abraham, and conclude the arrangement with him. I shall have the honor to present your Royal Highness with the receipt for all your debts, besides the gift of fifty thousand dollars."

"Go, I want to hear no more of it."

"And your Royal Highness will honor me with your favor? For unless I am in the Ministry, it is impossible for me to deal with Abraham Levi so as—"

"I wish to Heaven you and your Ministry and Abraham Levi were all three on the Blocksberg! I tell you what, unless you lower the price of corn, and take away the monopoly from that infernal Jew, I'll go this moment and reveal your villainy to the King, and get you and Abraham Levi banished from the country. See to it—I'll keep my word." Philip turned away in a rage, and proceeded into the dancing− room, leaving the Minister of Finance petrified with amazement.

VII.

"When does your Royal Highness require the carriage?" whispered a stout little Dutch merchant in a bob−wig.

"Not at all," answered Philip.

"'Tis after half−past eleven, and the beautiful singer expects you. She will tire of waiting."

"Let her sing something to cheer her."

"How, Prince? Have you changed your mind? Would you leave the captivating Rollina in the lurch, and throw away the golden opportunity you have been sighing for for two months? The letter you sent to−day, inclosing the diamond watch, did wonders. The proud but fragile beauty surrenders. This morning you were in raptures, and now you are as cold as ice! What is the cause of the change?"

"That is my business, not yours," said Philip.

"I had your orders to join you at half−past eleven. Perhaps you have other engagements?"

"Perhaps."

"A petit souper with the Countess Born? She is not present here; at least among all the masks I can't trace her out. I should know her among a thousand by that graceful walk and her peculiar way of carrying her little head—eh, Prince?"

"Well, but if it were so, there would be no necessity for making you my confidant, would there?"

"I will take the hint, and be silent. But won't you at any rate send to the Signora Rollina to let her know you are not coming?"

"If I have sighed for her for two months, she had better sigh a month or two for me. I sha'n't go near her."

"So that beautiful necklace which you sent her for a New Year's present was all for nothing?"

"As far as I am concerned."

"Will you break with her entirely?"

"There is nothing between us to break, that I know of."

"Well, then, since you speak so plainly, I may tell you something which you perhaps know already. Your love for the Signora has hitherto kept me silent; but now that you have altered your mind about her, I can no longer keep the secret from you. You are deceived."

"By whom?"

"By the artful singer. She would divide her favors between your Royal Highness and a Jew."

"A Jew?"

"Yes! with the son of Abraham Levi."

"Is that rascal everywhere?"

"So your Highness did not know it? but I am telling you the exact truth; if it were not for your Royal Highness, she would be his mistress. I am only sorry you gave her that watch."

"I don't regret it at all."

"The jade deserves to be whipped."

"Few people meet their deserts," answered Philip.

"Too true, too true, your Royal Highness. For instance, I have discovered a girl—O Prince, there is not such another in this city or in the whole world! Few have seen this angel.—Pooh! Rollina is nothing to her. Listen—a girl tall and slender as a palm tree—with a complexion like the red glow of evening upon snow—eyes like sunbeams—rich golden tresses,—in short, the most beautiful creature I ever beheld—a Venus—a goddess in rustic attire. Your Highness, we must give her chase."

"A peasant girl?"

"A mere rustic; but then you must see her yourself, and you will love her. But my descriptions are nothing. Imagine the embodiment of all that you can conceive most charming—add to that, artlessness, grace, and innocence. But the difficulty is to catch sight of her. She seldom leaves her mother. I know her seat in church, and have watched her for many Sundays past, as she walked with her mother to the Elm−Gate. I have ascertained that a handsome young fellow, a gardener, is making court to her. He can't marry her, for he is a poor devil, and she has nothing. The mother is the widow of a poor weaver."

"And the mother's name is?"

"Widow Bittner, in Milk Street; and the daughter, fairest of flowers, is in fact called Rose."

Philip's blood boiled at the sound of the beloved name. His first inclination was to knock the communicative Dutchman down. He restrained himself, however, and only asked:

"Are you the devil himself?"

"'T is good news, is it not? I have taken some steps in the matter already, but you must see her first. But perhaps such a pearl has not altogether escaped your keen observation? Do you know her?"

"Intimately."

"So much the better. Have I been too lavish of my praises? You confess their truth? She sha'n't escape us. We must go together to the widow; you must play the philanthropist. You have heard of the widow's poverty, and must insist on relieving it. You take an interest in the good woman; enter into her misfortunes; leave a small present at each visit, and by this means become acquainted with Rose. The rest follows, of course. The gardener can be easily got out of the way, or perhaps a dozen or two dollars slipped quietly into his hand may—"

Philip's rage broke forth.

"I'll throttle you—"

"If the gardener makes a fuss?" interposed the Dutchman. "Leave me to settle this matter. I'll get him kidnapped, and sent to the army to fight for his country. In the meantime you get possession of the field; for the girl has a peasant's attachment for the fellow, and it will not be easy to get the nonsense out of her head, which she has been taught by the canaille. But I will give her some lessons, and then—"

"I'll break your neck."

"Your Highness is too good. But if your Highness would use your influence with the King to procure me the Chamberlain's key—"

"I wish I could procure you—"

"Oh, don't flatter me, your Highness. Had I only known you thought so much of her beauty, she would have been yours long ago."

"Not a word more," cried the enraged Philip, in a smothered voice; for he dared not speak aloud, he was so surrounded by maskers, who were listening, dancing, talking, as they passed him, and he might have betrayed himself; "not a word more!"

"No, there will be more than words. Deeds shall show my sincerity. You may advance. You are wont to conquer. The outposts will be easily taken. The gardener I will manage, and the mother will range herself under your gilded banners. Then the fortress will be won!"

"Sir, if you venture," said Philip, who now could hardly contain himself. It was with great difficulty he refrained from open violence, and he clutched the arm of the Dutchman with the force of a vice.

"Your Highness, for Heaven's sake, moderate your joy. I shall scream—you are mashing my arm!"

"If you venture to go near that innocent girl, I will demolish every bone in your body."

"Good, good," screamed the Dutchman, in intense pain; "only let go my arm."

"If I find you anywhere near Milk Street, I'll dash your miserable brains out. So look to it."

The Dutchman seemed almost stupefied; trembling, he said:

"May it please your Highness, I could not imagine you really loved the girl as it seems you do."

"I love her! I will own it before the whole world!"

"And are loved in return?"

"That's none of your business. Never mention her name to me again. Do not even think of her; it would be a stain upon her purity. Now you know what I think. Be off!"

Philip twirled the unfortunate Dutchman round as he let go his arm, and that worthy gentleman slunk out of the hall.

VIII.

In the meantime Philip's substitute supported his character of watchman on the snow−covered streets. It is scarcely necessary to say that this was none other than Prince Julian who had taken a notion to join the watch—his head being crazed by the fire of the sweet wine. He attended to the directions left by Philip, and went his rounds, and called the hour with great decorum, except that, instead of the usual watchman's verses, he favored the public with rhymes of his own. He was cogitating a new stanza, when the door of a house beside him opened, and a well−wrapped−up girl beckoned to him, and ran into the shadow of the house.

The Prince left his stanza half finished, and followed the apparition. A soft hand grasped his in the darkness, and a voice whispered:

"Good−evening, dear Philip. Speak low, that nobody may hear us. I have only got away from the company for one moment to speak to you as you passed. Are you happy to see me?"

"Blest as a god, my angel,—who could be otherwise than happy by thy side?"

"I've some good news for you, Philip. You must sup at our house to− morrow evening. My mother has allowed me to ask you. You 'll come?"

"For the whole evening, and as many more as you wish. Would we might be together till the end of the world! 'T would be a life fit for gods!"

"Listen, Philip; in half an hour I shall be at St. Gregory's. I shall expect you there. You won't fail me? Don't keep me waiting long—we shall have a walk together. Go now—we may be discovered." She tried to go, but Julian held her back and threw his arms round her.

"What, wilt thou leave me so coldly?" he said, and tried to press a kiss upon her lips.

Rose did not know what to think of this boldness, for Philip had always been modest, and never dared more than kiss her hand, except once, when her mother had forbidden their meeting again. They had then exchanged their first kiss in great sorrow and in great love, but never since then. She struggled to free herself, but Julian held her firm, till at last she had to buy her liberty by submitting to the kiss, and begged him to go. But Julian seemed not at all inclined to move.

"What! go? I'm not such a fool as that comes to! You think I love my horn better than you? No indeed!"

"But then it isn't right, Philip."

"Not right? why not, my beauty? there is nothing against kissing in the ten commandments."

"Why, if we could marry, perhaps you might—but you know very well we can't marry, and—"

"Not marry? why not? You can marry me any day you like."

"Philip!—why will you talk such folly? You know we must not think of such a thing."

"But *I* think very seriously about it—if you would consent."

"You are unkind to speak thus. Ah, Philip, I had a dream last night."

"A dream—what was it?"

"You had won a prize in the lottery; we were both so happy! you had bought a beautiful garden, handsomer than any in the city. It was a little paradise of flowers—and there were large beds of vegetables, and the trees were laden with fruit. And when I awoke, Philip, I felt so wretched—I wished I had not dreamed such a happy dream. You've nothing in the lottery, Philip, have you? Have you really won anything? The drawing took place to−day."

"How much must I have gained to win you too?"

"Ah, Philip, if you had only gained a thousand dollars, you might buy such a pretty garden!"

"A thousand dollars! And what if it were more?"

"Ah, Philip—what? is it true? is it really? Don't deceive me! 'twill be worse than the dream. You had a ticket! and you've won!— own it! own it!"

"All you can wish for."

Rose flung her arms around his neck in the extremity of her joy, and kissed him.

"More than the thousand dollars? and will they pay you the whole?"

Her kiss made the Prince forget to answer. It was so strange to hold a pretty form in his arms, receive its caresses, and to know they were not meant for him.

"Answer me, answer me!" cried Rose, impatiently. "Will they give you all that money?"

"They've done it already—and if it will add to your happiness I will hand it to you this moment."

"What! have you got it with you?"

The Prince took out his purse, which he had filled with money in expectation of some play.

"Take it and weigh it, my girl," he said, placing it in her hand and kissing her again. "This, then, makes you mine!"

"Oh, not THIS—nor all the gold in the world, if you were not my own dear Philip!"

"And how if I had given you twice as much as all this money, and yet were not your own dear Philip?"

"I would fling the purse at your feet, and make you a very polite curtsey," said Rose.

A door now opened; the light streamed down the steps, and the laughing voices of girls were heard. Rose whispered:

"In half an hour, at St. Gregory's," and ran up the steps, leaving the Prince in the darkness. Disconcerted by the suddenness of the parting, and his curiosity excited by his ignorance of the name of his new acquaintance, and not even having had a full view of her face, he consoled himself with the rendezvous at St. Gregory's Church door. This he resolved to keep, though it was evident that all the tenderness which had been bestowed on him was intended for his friend the watchman.

IX.

The interview with Rose, or the coldness of the night, increased the effect of the wine to such an extent that the mischievous propensities of the young Prince got the upper hand of him. Standing amidst a crowd of people, in the middle of the street, he blew so lustily on his horn that the women screamed, and the men gasped with fear. He called the hour, and then shouted, at the top of his lungs:

The bus'ness of our lovely state
Is stricken by the hand of fate—
Even our maids, both light and brown,
Can find no sale in all the town;
They deck themselves with all their arts,
But no one buys their worn−out hearts."

"Shame! shame!" cried several female voices from the window at the end of this complimentary effusion, which, however, was crowned with a loud laugh from the men. "Bravo, watchman!" cried some; "Encore! encore!" shouted others. "How dare you, fellow, insult ladies in the open street?" growled a young lieutenant, who had a very pretty girl on his arm.

"Mr. Lieutenant," answered a miller, "unfortunately watchmen always tell the truth, and the lady on your arm is a proof of it. Ha! young jade, do you know me? do you know who I am? Is it right for a betrothed bride to be gadding at night about the streets with other men? To−morrow your mother shall hear of this. I'll have nothing more to do with you!"

The girl hid her face, and nudged the young officer to lead her away. But the lieutenant, like a brave soldier, scorned to retreat from the miller, and determined to keep the field. He therefule made use of a full round of oaths, which were returned with interest, and a sabre was finally resorted to, with some flourishes; but two Spanish cudgels were threateningly held over the head of the lieutenant by a couple of stout townsmen, while one of them, who was a broad−shouldered beer−brewer, cried: "Don't make any more fuss about the piece of goods beside you—she ain't worth it. The miller's a good fellow, and what he says is true, and the watchman's right too. A plain tradesman can hardly venture to marry now. All the women wish to marry above their station. Instead of darning stockings, they read romances; instead of working in the kitchen, they run after comedies and concerts. Their houses are dirty, and they are walking out, dressed like princesses; all they bring a husband as a dowry are handsome dresses, lace ribbons, intrigues, romances, and idleness! Sir, I speak from experience; I should have married long since, if girls were not spoiled."

The spectators laughed heartily, and the lieutenant slowly put back his sword, saying peevishly: "It's a little too much to be obliged to hear a sermon from the canaille."

"What! Canaille!" cried a smith, who held the second cudgel. "Do you call those canaille who feed you noble idlers by duties and taxes? Your licentiousness is the cause of our domestic discords, and noble ladies would not have so much cause to mourn if you had learned both to pray and to work."

Several young officers had gathered together already, and so had some mechanics; and the boys, in the meantime, threw snowballs among both parties, that their share in the fun might not be lost. The first ball hit the noble lieutenant on the nose, and thinking it an attack from the canaille, he raised his sabre. The fight began.

The Prince, who had laughed amazingly at the first commencement of the uproar, had betaken himself to another region, and felt quite unconcerned as to the result. In the course of his wanderings, he came to the palace of Count Bodenlos, the Minister of Finance, with whom, as Philip had discovered at the masquerade, the Prince was not on the best terms. The Countess had a large party. Julian saw the lighted windows, and still feeling poetically disposed, he planted himself opposite the balcony, and blew a peal on his horn. Several ladies and gentlemen opened the shutters, because they had nothing better to do, and listened to what he should say.

"Watchman," cried one of them, "sing us a New Year's greeting!"

This invitation brought a fresh accession of the Countess' party to the windows. Julian called the hour in the usual manner, and sang, loud enough to be distinctly heard inside:

"Ye who groan with heavy debts,

And swift approaching failure frets,
Pray the Lord that He this hour
May raise you to some place of power;
And while the nation wants and suffers,
Fill your own from the people's coffers."

"Outrageous!" screamed the lady of the Minister; "who is the insolent wretch that dares such an insult?"

"Pleashe your exshellenshy," answered Julian, imitating the Jewish dialect in voice and manner, "I vash only intendsh to shing you a pretty shong. I am de Shew Abraham Levi, vell known at dish court. Your ladyship knowsh me ver' well."

"How dare you tell such a lie, you villain?" exclaimed a voice, trembling with rage, at one of the windows; "how dare you say you are Abraham Levi? I am Abraham Levi! You are a cheat!"

"Call the police!" cried the Countess. "Have that man arrested!"

At these words the party confusedly withdrew from the windows. Nor did the Prince remain where he was, but quickly effected his escape through a cross−street. A crowd of servants rushed out of the palace, led by the secretaries of the Finance Minister, and commenced a search for the offender. "We have him!" cried some, as the rest eagerly approached. It was in fact the real guardian of the night, who was carefully perambulating his beat, in innocent unconsciousness of any offence. In spite of all he could say, he was disarmed and carried off to the watch−house, and charged with causing a disturbance by singing libellous songs. The officer of the police shook his head at the unaccountable event, and said: "We have already one watchman in custody, whose verses about some girl caused a very serious affray between the town's people and the garrison."

The prisoner would confess to nothing, but swore prodigiously at the tipsy young people who had disturbed him in the fulfilment of his duty. One of the secretaries of the Finance Minister repeated the whole verse to him. The soldiers standing about laughed aloud, but the ancient watchman swore with tears in his eyes that he had never thought of such a thing. While the examination was going on, and one of the secretaries of the Finance Minister began to be doubtful whether the poor watchman was really in fault or not, an uproar was heard outside, and loud cries of "Watch, watch!"

The guard rushed out, and in a few minutes the Field−Marshal entered the office, accompanied by the captain of the guards on duty. "Have that scoundrel locked up tight," said the Marshal, pointing behind him—and two soldiers brought in a watchman, whom they held close prisoner, and whom they had disarmed of his staff and horn.

"Are the watchmen gone all mad to−night?" exclaimed the chief of police.

"I'll have the rascal punished for his infamous verses," said the Field−Marshal angrily.

"Your excellency," exclaimed the trembling watchman, "as true as I live, I never made a verse in my born days."

"Silence, knave!" roared the Marshal. "I'll have you hanged for them! And if you contradict me again, I'll cut you in two on the spot."

The police officer respectfully observed to the Field−Marshal that there must be some poetical epidemic among the watchmen, for three had been brought before him within the last quarter of an hour, accused of the same offence.

"Gentlemen," said the Marshal to the officers who had accompanied him, "since the scoundrel refuses to confess, it will be necessary to take down from your remembrance the worlds of his atrocious libel. Let them be written down while you still recollect them. Come, who can say them?"

The officer of police wrote to the dictation of the gentlemen who remembered the whole verses between them:

"On empty head a flaunting feather,
A long queue tied with tape and leather;
Padded breast and waist so little,
Make the soldier to a tittle;
By cards and dance, and dissipation,
He's sure to win a Marshal's station."

"Do you deny, you rascal," cried the Field−Marshal to the terrified watchman; "do you deny that you sang these infamous lines as I was coming out of my house?"

"They may sing it who like, it was not me," said the watchman.

"Why did you run away, then, when you saw me?"

"I did not run away."

"What!" said the two officers who had accompanied the Marshal—"not run away? Were you not out of breath when at last we laid hold of you there by the market?"

"Yes, but it was with fright at being so ferociously attacked. I am trembling yet in every limb."

"Lock the obstinate dog up till the morning," said the Marshal; "he will come to his senses by that time!" With these words the wrathful dignitary went away. These incidents had set the whole police force of the city on the qui vive. In the next ten minutes two more watchmen were brought to the office on similar charges with the others. One was accused of singing a libel under the window of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which it was insinuated that there were no affairs to which he was more foreign than those of his own department. The other had sung some verses before the door of the Bishop's palace, informing him that the "lights of the church" were by no means deficient in tallow, but gave a great deal more smoke than illumination. The Prince, who had wrought the poor watchmen all this woe, was always lucky enough to escape, and grew bolder and bolder with every new attempt. The affair was talked of everywhere. The Minister of Police, who was at cards with the King, was informed of the insurrection among the hitherto peaceful watchmen, and, as a proof of it, some of the verses were given to him in writing. The King laughed very heartily at the doggerel verse about the miserable police, who were always putting their noses into other people's family affairs, but could never smell anything amiss in their own, and were therefore lawful game, and ordered the next poetical watchman who should be taken to be brought before him. He broke up the card−table, for he saw that the Minister of Police had lost his good humor.

X.

In the dancing−hall next to the card−room, Philip had looked at his watch, and discovered that the time of his appointment with Rose at St. Gregory's had nearly come. He was by no means sorry at the prospect of giving back his silk mantle and plumed bonnet to his substitute, for he began to find high life not quite to his taste. As he was going to the door, the Negro once more came up to him, and whispered: "Your Highness, Duke Herrman is seeking for you everywhere." Philip shook his head impatiently and hurried out, followed by the Negro. When they got to the ante−chamber, the Negro cried out, "By Heaven, here comes the Duke!"—and slipped back into the hall.

A tall black mask walked fiercely up to Philip, and said: "Stay a moment, sir; I've a word or two to say to you; I've been seeking for you long."

"Quick, then," said Philip, "for I have no time to lose."

"I would not waste a moment, sir; I have sought you long enough; you owe me satisfaction, you have injured me infamously."

"Not that I am aware of."

"You don't know me, perhaps," said the Duke, lifting up his mask; "now that you see me, your own conscience will save me any more words. I demand satisfaction. You and the cursed Salmoni have deceived me!"

"I know nothing about it," said Philip.

"You got up that shameful scene in the cellar of the baker's daughter. It was at your instigation that Colonel Kalt made an assault upon me with a cudgel."

"There's not a word of truth in what you say."

"What!—you deny it? The Lady Blankenswerd, the Marshal's lady, was an eye−witness of it all, and she has told me every circumstance."

"She has told your grace a fancy tale—I have had nothing to do with it; if you made an ass of yourself in the baker's cellar, that was your own fault."

"I ask, once more, will you give me satisfaction? If not, I will expose you. Follow me instantly to the King. You shall either fight with me, or—go to his Majesty."

Philip was nonplussed. "Your grace," he said, "I have no wish either to fight with you or to go to the King."

This was indeed the truth, for he was afraid he should be obliged to unmask, and would be punished, of course, for the part he had played. He therefore tried to get off by every means, and watched the door to seize a favorable moment for effecting his escape. The Duke, on the other hand, observed the uneasiness of the Prince (as he thought him), and waxed more valorous every minute. At last he seized poor Philip by the arm, and was dragging him into the hall.

"What do you want with me?" said Philip, sorely frightened, and shook off the Duke.

"To the King. He shall hear how shamefully you insult a guest at his court."

"Very good," replied Philip, who saw no hope of escape, except by continuing the character of the Prince. "Very good. Come, then, I am ready. By good luck I happen to have the agreement with me between you and the baker's daughter, in which you promise—"

"Nonsense! stuff!" answered the Duke, "that was only a piece of fun, which may be allowed surely with a baker's daughter. Show it if you like, I will explain all that."

But it appeared that the Duke was not quite so sure of the explanation, for he no longer urged Philip to go before the King. He, however, insisted more earnestly than ever on getting into his carriage, and going that moment—Heaven knows where—to decide the matter with sword and pistol, an arrangement which did not suit our watchman at all. Philip pointed out the danger and consequences of such a proceeding, but the Duke overruled all objections. He had made every preparation, and when it was over he would leave the city that same night.

"If you are not the greatest coward in Europe, you will follow me to the carriage—Prince!"

"I—am—no—prince," at last stuttered Philip, now driven to extremities.

"You are! Everybody recognized you at the ball. I know you by your hat. You sha'n't escape me."

Philip lifted up his mask, and showed the Duke his face.

"Now, then, am I a prince?"

Duke Herrman, when he saw the countenance of a man he had never seen before, started back, and stood gazing as if he had been petrified. To have revealed his secrets to a perfect stranger! 'T was horrible beyond conception! But before he had recovered from his surprise, Philip had opened the door and effected his escape.

XI.

The moment he found himself at liberty he took off his hat and feathers, and wrapping them in his silk mantle, rushed through the streets towards St. Gregory's, carrying them under his arm. There stood Rose already, in a corner of the high church door, expecting his arrival.

"Ah, Philip, dear Philip," she said, pressing his hand, "how happy you have made me! how lucky we are! I was very uneasy to get away from my friend's house, and I have been waiting here this quarter of an hour, but never cared for the frost and snow—my happiness was so great: I am so glad you're come back."

"And I too, dear Rose, thank God that I have got back to you. May the eagles fly away with these trinkum−trankums of great people. But I'll tell you some other time of the scenes I've had. Tell me now, my darling, how you are, and whether you love me still!"

"Ah! Philip, you've become a great man now, and it would be better to ask if you still care anything for me."

"Thunder! How came you to know so soon that I've been a great man?"

"Why, you told me yourself. Ah! Philip, Philip, I only hope you won't be proud, now that you've grown so rich. I am but a poor girl, and not good enough for you now—and I have been thinking, Philip, if you forsake me, I would rather have had you continue a poor gardener. I should fret myself to death if you forsook me."

"What are you talking about, Rose? 'T is true that for one half−hour I have been a prince; 't was but a joke, and I want no more of such jokes in my life. Now I am a watchman again, and as poor as ever. To be sure, I have five thousand dollars in my pocket, that I got from a Mameluke; that would make us rich, but unfortunately they don't belong to me!"

"You're speaking nonsense, Philip," said Rose, giving him the purse of gold that the Prince had given her. "Here, take back your money, 't is too heavy for my bag."

"What should I do with all this gold? Where did you get it, Rose?"

"You won it in the lottery, Philip."

"What! have I won? and they told me at the office my number was not yet out. I had hoped and wished that it might come to give us a setting up in the world; but gardener Redman said to me as I went a second time towards the office: 'Poor Philip—a blank.' Huzzah! I have won! Now I will buy a large garden and marry you. How much is it?"

"Are you crazy, Philip, or have you drunk too much? You must know better than I can tell you how much it is. I only looked at it quietly under the table at my friend's, and was frightened to see so many glittering coins, all of gold, Philip. Ah! then I thought, no wonder Philip was so impertinent—for, you know, you were very impertinent, Philip,—but I can't blame you for it. Oh, I could throw my own arms round your neck and cry for joy."

"Rose, if you will do it I shall make no objections. But there's some misunderstanding here. Who was it that gave you this money, and told you it was my prize in the lottery? I have my ticket safe in my drawer at home, and nobody has asked me for it."

"Ah! Philip, don't play your jokes on me! you yourself told me it half an hour ago, and gave me the purse with your own hand."

"Rose—try to recollect yourself. This morning I saw you at mass, and we agreed to meet here to−night, but since that time I have not seen you for an instant."

"No, except half an hour ago, when I saw you at Steinman's door. But what is that bundle under your arm? why are you without a hat this cold night? Philip! Philip! be careful. All that gold may turn your brain. You've been in some tavern, Philip, and have drunk more than you should. But tell me, what is in the bundle? Why—here's a woman's silk gown.—Philip, Philip, where have you been?"

"Certainly not with you half an hour ago; you want to play tricks on me, I fancy; where have you got that money, I should like to know?"

"Answer me first, Philip, where you got that woman's gown. Where have you been, sir?"

They were both impatient for explanations, both a little jealous— and finally began to quarrel.

XII.

But as this was a lovers' quarrel, it ended as lovers' quarrels invariably do. When Rose took out her white pocket−handkerchief, put it to her beautiful eyes, and turned away her head as the sighs burst forth from her breast, this sole argument proved instantly that she was in the right, and Philip decidedly in the wrong. He confessed he was to blame for everything, and told her that he had been at a masked ball, and that his bundle was not a silk gown, but a man's mantle and a hat and feathers. And now he had to undergo a rigid examination. Every maiden knows that a masked ball is a dangerous maze for unprotected hearts. It is like plunging into a whelming sea of dangers, and you will be drowned if you are not a good swimmer. Rose did not consider Philip the best swimmer in the world—it is difficult to say why. He denied having danced, but when she asked him, he could not deny having talked with some feminine masks. He related the whole story to her, yet would constantly add: "The ladies were of high rank, and they took me for another." Rose doubted him a little, but she suppressed her resentment until he said they took him for Prince Julian. Then she shook her little head, and still more when she heard that Prince Julian was transformed into a watchman while Philip was at the ball. But he smothered her doubts by saying that in a few minutes the Prince would appear at St. Gregory's Church and exchange his watch−coat for the mask.

Rose, in return, related all her adventure; but when she came to the incident of the kiss—

"Hold there!" cried Philip; "I didn't kiss you, nor, I am sure, did you kiss me in return."

"I am sure 'twas INTENDED for you, then," replied Rose, whilst her lover rubbed his hair down, for fear it should stand on end.

"If 'twas not you," continued Rose, anxiously, "I will believe all that you have been telling me."

But as she went on in her story a light seemed to break in on her, and she exclaimed: "And, after all, I do not believe it was Prince Julian in your coat!"

Philip was certain it was, and cried: "The rascal! He stole my kisses—now I understand! That's the reason why he wanted to take my place and gave me his mask!" And now the stories he had heard at the masquerade came into Philip's head. He asked if anybody had called at her mother's to offer her money; if any gentleman was much about Milk Street; if she saw any one watching her at church; but to all his questions her answers were so satisfactory, that it was impossible to doubt her total ignorance of all the machinations of the rascally courtiers. He warned her against all the advances of philanthropical and compassionate princes—and Rose warned him against the dangers of a masked ball and adventures with ladies of rank, by which many young men have been made unhappy—and as everything was now forgiven, in consideration of the kiss not been wilfully bestowed, he was on the point of claiming for himself the one of which be had been cheated, when his designs were interrupted by an unexpected incident. A man out of breath with his rapid flight rushed against them. By the great−coat, staff, and horn, Philip recognized his deputy. He, on the other hand, snatched at the silk cloak and hat. "Ah! sir," said Philip, "here are your things. I would not change places with you again in this world! I should be no gainer by the operation."

"Quick! quick!" cried the Prince, and threw the watchman's apparel on the snow and fastened on his mask, hat, and cloak. Philip returned to his old beaver and coat, and took up the lantern and staff. Rose had shrunk back into the door.

"I promised thee a dole, comrade—but it's a positive fact—I have not got my purse."

"I've got it here," said Philip, and held it out to him. "You gave it to my intended there; but, please your Highness, I must forbid all presents in that quarter."

"Comrade, keep what you've got, and be off as quick as you can. You are not safe here."

The Prince was flying off as he spoke, but Philip held him by the mantle.

"One thing, my Lord, we have to settle—"

"Run! watchman! I tell you. They're in search of you."

"I have nothing to run for. But your purse, here—"

"Keep it, I tell you. Fly! if you can run."

"And a billet of Marshal Blankenswerd's for five thousand dollars—"

"Ha! what the plague do you know about Marshal Blankenswerd?"

"He said it was a gambling debt he owed you. He and his lady start to−night for their estates in Poland."

"Are you mad? how do you know that? Who gave you the message for me?"

"And, your Highness, the Minister of Finance will pay all your debts to Abraham Levi and others if you will use your influence with the King to keep him in office."

"Watchman! you've been tampering with Old Nick."

"But I rejected the offer."

"YOU rejected the offer of the Minister?"

"Yes, your Highness. And, moreover, I have entirely reconciled the Baroness Bonau with the Chamberlain Pilzou."

"Which of us two is a fool?"

"Another thing, your Highness. Signora Rollina is a bad woman. I have heard of some love affairs of hers. You are deceived—I therefore thought her not worthy of your attentions, and put off the meeting to−night at her house."

"Signora Rollina! How did you come to hear of her?"

"Another thing. Duke Herrman is terribly enraged about that business in the cellar. He is going to complain of you to the King."

"The Duke! Who told you about that?"

"Himself. You are not secure yet—but I don't think he'll go to the King, for I threatened him with his agreement with the baker's daughter. But he wants to fight you; be on yoor guard."

"Once for all—do you know how the Duke was informed of all this?"

"Through the Marshal's wife. She told all, and confessed she had acted the witch in the ghost−raising."

The Prince took Philip by the arm. "My good fellow," he said, "you are no watchman." He turned his face towards a lamp, and started when he saw the face of this strange man.

"Are you possessed by Satan, or...Who are you?" said Julian, who had now become quite sober.

"I am Philip Stark, the gardener, son of old Gottlieb Stark, the watchman," said Philip, quietly.

XIII.

"Lay hold on him! That's the man!" cried many voices, and Philip, Rose, and Julian saw themselves surrounded by six lusty servants of the police. Rose screamed, Philip took her hand, and told her not to be alarmed. The Prince clapped his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"'Tis a stupid business," he said, "and you should have escaped when I told you. But don't be frightened; there shall no harm befall you."

"That's to be seen," said one of the captors. "In the meantime he must come along with us."

"Where to?" inquired Philip; "I am doing my duty. I am watchman of this beat."

"That's the reason we take you. Come."

The Prince stepped forward. "Let the man go, good people," he said, and searched in all his pockets for his purse. As he found it nowhere, he was going to whisper to Philip to give it him, but the police tore them apart, and one of them shouted: "On! We can't stop to talk here."

"The masked fellow must go with us too; he is suspicious−looking."

"Not so," exclaimed Philip; "you are in search of the watchman. Here I am, if you choose to answer for taking me from my duty. But let this gentleman go."

"We don't want any lessons from you in our duty," replied the sergeant; "march! all of them!"

"The damsel too?" asked Philip; "you don't want her surely!"

"No, she may go; but we must see her face, and take down her name and residence; it may be of use."

"She is the daughter of Widow Bittner," said Philip; and was not a little enraged when the whole party took Rose to a lamp and gazed on her tearful face.

"Go home, Rose, and don't be alarmed on my account," said Philip, trying to comfort her; "my conscience is clear."

But Rose sobbed so as to move even the policemen to pity her. The Prince, availing himself of the opportunity, attempted to spring out of his captors' hands, but one of the men was a better jumper than he, and put an obstacle in his way.

"Hallo!" cried the sergeant, "this conscience is not quite so clear; hold him firm; march!"

"Whither?" said the Prince.

"Directly to the Minister of Police."

"Listen," said the Prince, seriously but affably, for he did not like the turn affairs were taking, as he was anxious to keep his watchman frolic concealed. "I have nothing to do with this business. I belong to the court. If you venture to force me to go with you, you will be sorry for it when you are feasting on bread and water tomorrow in prison."

"For Heaven's sake, let the gentleman go," cried Philip; "I give you my word he is a great lord, and will make you repent your conduct. He is—"

"Hush; be silent," interrupted Julian; "tell no human being who I am. Whatever happens keep my name a secret. Do you hear? an entire secret from every one!"

"We do our duty," said the sergeant, "and nobody can punish us for that; you may go to a prison yourself; we have often had fellows speak as high, and threaten as fiercely; forward!"

"Men! take advice; he is a distinguished man at court."

"If it were a king himself he should go with us. He is a suspicious character, and we must do our duty."

While the contest about the Prince went on, a carriage, with eight horses and outriders, bearing flambeaux, drove past the church.

"Stop!" said a voice from the carriage, as it was passing the crowd of policemen who had the Prince in custody.

The carriage stopped. The door flew open, and a gentleman, with a brilliant star on the breast of his surtout, leaped out. He pushed through the party, and examined the Prince from head to foot.

"I thought," he said, "I knew the bird by his feathers. Mask, who are you?"

Julian was taken by surprise, for in the inquirer he recognized Duke Herrman.

"Answer me," roared Herrman in a voice of thunder.

Julian shook his head, and made signs to the Duke to desist, but he pressed the question he upon him, being determined to know who it he had accosted at the masquerade. He asked the policemen. They stood with heads uncovered, and told him they had orders to bring the watchman instantly before the Minister of Police, for he had been singing wicked verses, they had heard some of them; that the mask had given himself out as some great lord of the court, but that they believed that to be a false pretence, and therefore considered it their duty to take him into custody.

"The man is not of the court," answered the Duke; "take my word for that. He himself clandestinely into the ball, and himself off for Prince Julian. I forced him to unmask, and detected the impostor, but he escaped me. I have informed the Lord Chamberlain; off with him to the palace! You have made a fine prize!"

With these words the Duke strode back to his carriage, and once more urging them not to let the villains escape, gave orders to drive on.

The Prince saw no chance left. To reveal himself now would be to make his night's adventures the talk of the whole city. He thought it better to disclose his incognito to the Chamberlain or the Minister of Police. "Since it must be so, come on then," he said; and the party marched forward, keeping a firm hand on the two prisoners.

XIV.

Phipip was not sure whether he was bewitched, or whether the whole business was not a dream, for it was a night such as he had never passed before in his life. He had nothing to blame himself for except that he had changed clothes with the Prince, and then, whether he would or no, been forced to support his character. He felt pretty safe, for it was the princely watchman who had been at fault, and he saw no occasion for his being committed. His heart beat, however, when they came to the palace. His coat, horn, and staff were taken from him. Julian spoke a few words to a young nobleman, and immediately the policemen were sent away. The Prince ascended the stairs, and Philip had to follow.

"Fear nothing," said Julian, and left him. Philip was taken to a little ante−room, where he had to wait a good while. At last one of the royal grooms came to him, and said: "Come this way; the King will see you."

Philip was distracted with fear. His knees shook so that he could hardly walk. He was led into a splendid chamber. The old King was sitting at a table, and laughing long and load; near him stood Prince Julian without a mask. Besides these, there was nobody in the room.

The King looked at Philip with a good−humored expression. "Tell me all—without missing a syllable—that you have done to−night."

Philip took courage from the condescension of the old King, and told the whole story from beginning to end. He had the good sense, however, to conceal all he had heard among the courtiers that could turn to the prejudice of the Prince. The King laughed again and again, and at last took two gold−pieces from his pocket and gave them to Philip. "Here, my son, take these, but say not a word of your night's adventures. Await your trial; no harm shall cone of it to you. Now go, my friend, and remember what I have told you."

Philip knelt down at the King's feet and kissed his hand as he stammered some words of thanks. When he arose, and was leaving the room, Prince Julian said: "I beseech your Majesty to allow the young man to wait a few minutes outside. I have some compensation to make to him for the inconvenience he has suffered."

The King, smiling, nodded his assent, and Philip left the apartment.

"Prince!" said the King, holding up his forefinger in a threatening manner to his son, "'tis well for you that you told me nothing but the truth. For this time I must pardon your wild scrape, but if such a thing happens again you will offend me. There will be no excuse for you! I must take Duke Herrman in hand myself. I shall not be sorry if we can get quit of him. As to the Ministers of Finance and Police. I must have further proofs of what you say. Go now, and give some present to the gardener. He has shown more discretion in your character than you have in his."

The Prince took leave of the King, and having changed his dress in an ante−room, sent for Philip to go to his palace with him; there he made him go over—word for word—everything that had occurred. When Philip had finished his narrative, the Prince clapped him on the shoulder and said: "Philip, listen! You're a sensible fellow. I can confide in you, and I am satisfied with you. What you have done in my name with the Chamberlain Pilzou, the Countess Bonau, the Marshal and his wife, Colonel Kalt, and the Minister of Finance—I will maintain—as if I had done it myself. But, on the other hand, YOU must take all the blame of my doings with the horn and staff. As a penalty for verses, you shall lose your office of watchman. You shall be my head−gardener from this date, and have charge of my two gardens at Heimleben and Quellenthal. The money I gave your bride she shall keep as her marriage portion,—and I give you the order of Marshal Blankenswerd for five thousand dollars, as a mark of my regard. Go, now; be faithful and true!"

Who could be happier than Philip! He almost flew to Rose's house. She had not yet gone to bed, but sat with her mother beside a table, and was weeping. He threw the purse on the table and said: "Rose, there is thy dowry! and here are five thousand dollars, which are mine! As a watchman I have transgressed, and shall therefore lose my father's situation; but the day after to−morrow I shall go, as head− gardener of Prince Julian, to Heimleben. And you, mother and Rose, must go with me. My father and mother also. I can support you all. Huzza! Gods send all good people such a happy New Year!"

Mother Bittner hardly knew whether to believe Philip or not, notwithstanding she saw the gold. But when he told her how it had all happened—though with some reservations—she wept with joy, embraced him, laid her her

daughter on his breast, and then danced about the room in a perfect ecstasy, "Do thy father and mother know this, Philip?" she said. And when he answered no, she cried: "Rose, kindle the fire, put over the water, and make some coffee for all of us." She then wrapped herself in her little woollen shawl and left the house.

But Rose lay on Philip's breast, and forgot all about the wood and water. And there she yet lay when Mother Bittner returned with old Gottlieb and Mother Katharine. They surrounded their children and blessed them. Mother Bittner saw if she wanted coffee, she would be obliged to cook it herself.

Philip lost his situation as watchman. Rose became his wife in two weeks; their parents went with them to—; but this does not belong to the adventures of a New Year's Eve, a night more ruinous to the Minister of Finance than any one else; neither have we heard of any more pranks by the wild Prince Julian.