

Brothers to the last of several counterpart letters of credit drawn upon the house of Puget and Bainbridge in London.

As the eye of the forger glanced rapidly but scrutinisingly over the work of his hands, to enable him to decide which of the counterfeiters before him was least liable to awake suspicion, a slight noise near caused him to start, and raising his head he saw peering through the grated door of his box two dark, burning and searching eyes, which, fixed intently upon him, seemed as if they would read the most hidden secrets of his soul. The rest of the countenance was in shadow, and the figure of the gazer was completely hidden from view by a large black cloak.

Such an apparition, which would have been under even ordinary circumstances sufficiently extraordinary and startling, was now rendered peculiarly so to Braunbrock by its suddenness, the unusual time, the sepulchral dimness of the place, and, above all, the consciousness that the occupation he was engaged in was one that would scarcely bear inspection from a pair of eyes even much less inquisitorial than those of the stranger. A moment's reflection, however, served in some sort to re-assure him. The distance between himself and the intruder, whoever he might be, was, though slight, still sufficient, he flattered himself, to preclude all chance of detection. Recovering himself, therefore, he grew bold enough to return the stranger glance for glance.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"It concerns you to know, perhaps?" was the interrogative reply, delivered in a strange and hollow voice, the accents of which thrilled through every nerve and fibre of the cashier.

"To know your business, at least," said Braunbrock. "What is it?"

"Merely to receive payment of this from you," answered the Unknown, and he handed a paper to the cashier.

"The Bank is closed," said Braunbrock.

"Your office is open," said the stranger, significantly. "To-morrow will be Sunday; you will not be here. Perhaps you may be absent on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday—all the week, and beyond it. Do you understand? Come, then, do not delay me now. The sum, you perceive, is one hundred thousand dollars: you have so much in the drawer beside you. Be quick and let me have it."

"How did you obtain admittance?" asked the cashier, still dallying, with the bill between his fingers.

"What is that to the purpose?" said the stranger. "I am here."

The cashier now scanned the letter of exchange, and finding it, as he fancied, or chose to fancy, correct, he slowly opened the drawer and counted out bank notes and bills to the amount required. Having given them to the stranger, he again took up the letter and looked at it.

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK.

A VERY GERMAN STORY.

THE GREAT clock of the Banking-house of Willibald and Company struck four.

"The Bank is closed!" cried the porter, in his usual sonorous tones. At the words there was a general opening and shutting of desks; every inmate of the Bank took off his office coat and donned his walking-habit. In five minutes the bureaux were deserted, the runners had walked out, the clerks disappeared;—the two bankers, both married men, were driving off in their curricles, one to dine with a friend, the other with a mistress. Silence reigned through the spacious buildings; and the daylight which found its way through the windows gradually deepened into dusk, for the season was November and the day had been cloudy. Any one who would now see to read or write must avail himself of an artificial illumination; and accordingly at twenty minutes before five a solitary lamp shed a sickly light over a heap of legers¹ and papers, notes and rouleaus, confusedly scattered to and fro through the different recesses of the Cash-office, and developed the features and part of the figure of a man seated before a desk, conning several documents, which he passed in review before him, with an anxious eye, and from time to time casting abstracted glances around him, which now rested upon vacancy and now upon the iron safes and sealed strong boxes imbedded in the walls of his temporary prison.

The Herr Johann Klaus Braunbrock, he to whom we thus introduce the reader, was cashier to the Banking-house, and had lingered somewhat beyond his time on this evening, from what motive we may possibly understand by-and-by. Let us try to depict his appearance. He was a man of the middle size, rather clumsily made, but with a finely-shaped head, and features expressive of considerable intellect—mingled, however, with a large proportion of worldly astuteness and an air of penetration and distrust that bespoke but an indifferent opinion of mankind, or, possibly, a mind ill at ease with itself. His age might be about forty. His grizzled hair had retreated from his forehead, which was broad, but not high, and indented with many wrinkles. Upon the breast of his blue coat glittered a military star, for he had served in the Imperial Army as a colonel of Austrian dragoons, and his salary of six hundred crowns a month as cashier was reinforced by a pension of five hundred dollars, paid to him quarterly by the War-office. A pen was in his hand, with which he had just completed the signature of *Willibald and*

"Your signature is not to the receipt," said he. "How is this?"

"Give it to me, and a pen with it," said the other, "and I will supply the omission."

Braunbrock gave the letter and a pen to the stranger, who wrote in English, and in English characters,² at the foot of the receipt, *M. The Man in the Cloak*.

"What the plague sort of signature and handwriting is this?" demanded the cashier, as he tried in vain to read it; "I can make nothing of it." He looked at the stranger. "You are not German, mein Herr?"

"No."

"You are scarcely French, I should think?"

"Scarcely."

"Ah! English, I presume?"

"Your presumption is unwarrantable; I am not English," answered the stranger; "I am an Irishman. Enough: farewell: we shall meet again." In a minute more his form was lost in the gloom and shadows around. His retreat was so sudden and so silent that the cashier could not tell by which passage he had departed.

How the deuce can he get out at all? he asked himself. Or how did he come in? What eyes! he continued—and what an unreadable name! Who can he be? The circumstance is exceedingly strange altogether.—But I am wasting time. I must finish my business, and be off.

With these words he proceeded to consume at the flame of the lamp such of the forgeries as he had rejected, and carefully deposited the selected one in his pocket-book. He next took out from his desk bank notes to the amount of ten thousand ducats, and stowed them safely away in the same morocco leather repository. Then, putting on his hat, he extinguished his lamp, and taking down his umbrella from a crook, he locked the door of his office and coolly proceeded, according to his custom, to deliver up the key to Madame Wilhelmina Willibald, the wife of the principal partner in the firm.

"Ah! you fag yourself so much, Herr Braunbrock!" said the lady. "But I have good news for you. We have made up a party to Isbein on Monday, and you are to be Master of the Ceremonies, Cicerone, Factotum in short. So, be with us early—and let the cash-office mind itself for one day."

"As you please, Madam; I shall be most happy," answered Braunbrock. "Meantime, will you be good enough to tell your husband that the bill of exchange from the Merciers for a hundred thousand dollars was paid this evening. It came in rather late."

"I shall tell him so," said the lady. "Will you have a glass of Tokay, Herr Braunbrock?"

"I thank you; not this evening. Good night, Madam." And the cashier went out.

"That gentleman has a very marked head," said the Baron Queerkopf,³ determined, thick-and-thin, anti-loop-hole phrenologist, who had been lounging on a sofa during this short colloquy.

"Marked?—marked with what?" asked the lady.

"I mean a characteristic head," said the Baron. "He has enormous Secretiveness and but little Conscientiousness."

"You give an indifferent character of our honest cash-keeper," said the banker's wife. "But do you know, Baron, I think he has rather a classic head."

"Cash-keeper!—ay, he is better fitted to keep cash than pay it," returned the Baron. "I saw his Acquisitiveness at a glance. But as to classic heads, pardon me, Madam, for taking leave to differ from you: people make the most horrible and petrifying mistakes on that point. Mankind do not sufficiently consider"—and the Baron spoke with great emphasis—"that for the formation of what is popularly designated a classic head, there must be large Self-esteem, considerable Destructiveness, and deficient Veneration. The best heads—those which confer the most commanding intellects or sunshiny dispositions—are not unfrequently altogether at variance with our preconceived notions of the *beau-ideal* of physical beauty. The truth is, that to a common observer the head is any thing but an index to the nature of the man. Look, for example, at Byron's head. It is a positive and undeniable fact that what we imagine the superior appearance of that head is solely attributable to its deficiency in several of the most beneficial organs, and its redundancy in some of the most morally deteriorating. It lacked Faith, Hope and Veneration, and exhibited but moderate Benevolence, while, on the other hand, though Conscientiousness was fair, an undue and preponderating proportion of cerebral development manifested itself in Self-esteem, Combativeness and Firmness."

"Well, now, Baron, do you know," said the Banker's wife, whose eyes and mind had been wandering to a thousand things while the phrenologist was lecturing, "I don't understand one word of what you have been saying."

"Suffer me to render it lucider," said the Baron. "Phrenological induction, you will please to comprehend, is grounded upon the irrefragable principle that——" and the Baron, once fairly mounted upon his hobby, galloped on at a rate that left toiling common-sense an infinity of leagues behind. At the close of a monologue of half an hour he paused to take breath, and, looking round him, he saw that his auditors had vanished. The Baron sighed. Alas! he soliloquised, it is ever thus with the sex: they have no powers of analysis, and they are incapable of continuous attention. Yet that bankeress is a beautiful and stately woman—really a fine animal. What a subject for everlasting regret that she should be so deficient in Causality and Concentrativeness!—And the Baron, sighing again, helped himself to a

pinch of snuff from a box upon the lid of which were represented in separate views of the head of Goethe, phrenologically mapped out according to the very newest charts laid down by the most fashionable predecessors of his darling theory.

Meanwhile Braunbrock walked into the porter's lodge. "What the devil, Karl," he asked, with an assumed sharpness, "made you leave the Bank-doors open until five o'clock this evening?"

"I leave the doors open till five, mein Herr!" exclaimed the menial, astonished. "No such thing at all, mein Herr; would I be mad? I looked them at four punctually, leaving ajar only the private postern for you, mein Herr."

Very odd, said the cashier, as talking to himself. "Are you certain you are telling the truth?" he demanded, sternly.

"Quite certain, mein Herr."

I suppose, then, muttered Braunbrock, as he walked out, I suppose that bizarre Irishman must have somehow found his way in and out through the private entrance. Well: I thought that the devil himself, exclusive of the few persons who know it, would have been puzzled to find his way in through that. But it is of no consequence. I have other and graver affairs to demand my attention. Let us see, he proceeded, as he directed his steps along the Hochstrasse. Have I managed matters with the requisite finesse? I hope so. First, here is to-night and to-morrow;—and then for Monday—egad, this party is a lucky incident, for Willibald sleeps out to-morrow night, and will not be home until noon next day; so that I have at least until Tuesday to hammer away upon the anvil;—and, by my faith, I will not let the iron cool!—I have two passports and two different disguises—such, I fancy, as would leave the cleverest police in Europe gropers in the dark. At London I shall touch half a million before any decisive steps can be taken to discover the fugitive; and then for the remainder of my days I shall play the part of the accomplished nobleman in my Italian villa at Strozzi, with the title of Count Rimbombari, or some other of the kind; I prefer his, however, as I, and nobody else, saw him die in the marches of Zemin, where his bones are whitening this night. But, ah!—Livonia—what shall I do with her? Do with her?—Bah! what have I, at forty, to do with foolish girls at all? I must leave her behind. Yet, confound it, I really love the girl!—ay, love her, ass that I am! Shall I take her with me? Or shall I leave her where she is?"

"You shall leave her where she is," said a voice which Braunbrock had recently heard. He turned round, and saw, fixed upon his face, the terrific eyes of—the Man in the Cloak.

Braunbrock was astounded, and somewhat annoyed. "Who the devil, Sir——" he began.—But the Irishman had already glided by him and disappeared.

Damn his eyes! muttered Braunbrock, what does he mean by staring at me in that unearthly manner? "You shall leave her where she is, forsooth! Curse the fellow! does he dare to dictate to me? Who can he be?—The next time I see him, here, in England, in France, or in Italy, hang me if I don't tear that old cloak from his shoulders, and see whether he wears a tail or not! A tail—hal ha! Well—if I were a believer in humbug I should say that there is something supernatural about the man—though I own I deprecate the idea. It would be rather too bad, faith, to have the devil and the police at one's heels together: I couldn't stand that. Hey-day! here I am, at the house of my darling. Now for a scene! I will sound the girl's feelings for me, and act accordingly."

Livonia Millenger, a pretty brunette, with the finest eyes and teeth in all the world, was reclining, while her admirer was indulging in this mental soliloquy, on a handsome ottoman, and talking to her confidante, Maud, upon that one subject nearest (if we except, perhaps, the passion for Power) to the hearts of all women—Love.

"I am afraid, Maud," she said, "you are a little of a visionary. Ah! you don't know the world like me. You are a child, Maud, an infant, a babe. Men never love in the way you speak; they have not the soul."

"Well, I am sure, I don't know," said the attendant damsel, "but I do think Rudolf unlike anybody else; if any one can love sincerely, it is he; there is no deceit, Livonia, in such blue eyes as his—in such a smile—such an angelic look. And oh! if you could see him sometimes when he fancies no one is noticing him—how he gazes on you, and sighs, and then looks away from you again—and then——"

"Ay—looks away from me again, Maud—that is just it! I would rather he would not, though! Ah! Maud, I guess his thoughts better than you, and I can tell you——"

A loud knocking at the door interrupted the conversation.

"O, Heavens!" cried Livonia, "that is Braunbrock's knock—I know it—if Rudolf should come, as he says he will, while he is here, what shall I do?"

"Have no fear," said Maud. "We'll manage matters." And down she tripped to open the door.

I must burn this note, said Livonia, snatching up a rose-colored *billet* from the table; but she lingered to take a last glance at the characters that Love had traced upon its surface; and, bounding up the stairs quicker than was his wont, Braunbrock entered the room. Livonia flung the little missive into the fire.

"Do you destroy all your *billets-doux* in that way?" demanded he.

"No; only about nine-tenths of them," she answered; "the rest I use in papering my hair." Still I think the flames the most appropriate fate for them all: words that burn, you know, are quite at home in the fire—don't you agree with me?"

"You speak, Livonia, just as if that had been a real *billet-doux*." "A real? And do you think, then, that I am not good enough, or beautiful enough, to receive such a thing? You horrid monster!" And she stretched out her lips to Braunbrock to be kissed, but with an air of negligence and *insouciance* that would have convinced any man less blinded by love than the infatuated cashier that in so doing she considered herself merely going through a ceremony which the nature of the *liaison* between them rendered in some sort unavoidable, but which she would have willingly evaded, if circumstances had allowed her.

"I have taken a box this evening in the Crescent," said he; "we had better dine at once, to be in time; the entertainments will begin early. You will be greatly delighted."

"P?"

"Yes; you will come with me, of course; will you not?"

"O, no, no! not I," said Livonia, "I should be sick and tired to death. Take Maud with you; I'll stay at home here by my fire-side."

"Nonsense, Livonia, you must come. What should hinder you?"

"I have a head-ache."

"The theatre will cure it; you will laugh it away."

"I should be *emmyléé* to excess of *you*, you beast," said Livonia, laughing, "even if my head-ache were gone."

"Bear with me this evening," said Braunbrock, also laughing, though in a different spirit, "for I shall not be here longer to kill you with either *ennui* or extacy. I am going away from you, Livonia, going to another land. I shall not return for a considerable time. But no matter; while I am absent, you know, you are mistress of this house, these gardens, every thing here in short. Will you keep your heart for me till I come back, Livonia?"

"No, not my little finger, nor the least paring of the little nail on it," said Livonia, with a playful emphasis. "But when will you be back?"

"Ahal—is it so?" said Braunbrock. "When do I come back, indeed? Is that your cold question, Livonia?—Well, well, love, it is said, cannot be hidden—but neither, say I, can the want of love! So, you do not think of following me?"

"Why, you vain creature," said Livonia, "what right have you to exact or expect such a sacrifice on my part? Is Beauty to harness herself to the car of Ugliness? Must Youth be subservient to the caprices of Age? O, go to! I am ashamed of you: you are a monster, like every one of your sex; an ingrate, a wretch, a huge heap of animated selfishness. I have no patience with you. But I'll tell you how I'll punish you; I'll give you no dinner and turn you out of my house; that's the way I'll serve you."

"Come, come, Livonia; this is all folly. You intend to accompany me, of course?"

"To the theatre?"

"Bah! to England."

"To England!—What! and leave my troops of lovers behind me?"

"You have no lovers but me, now, surely, Livonia—and you love no one but me?"

"No one but you!" exclaimed Livonia. "Oh, positively now I shall expire"—and she burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. "You my lover! Why, you brute, you are half a century old, if you are a day! And, you abominable-looking barbarian, you are as ugly as an Indian idol! Then you are so frightfully made—and you have such a wheezing when the asthma takes you, that is, about fifteen times a day. O, you detestable wretch, how I hate you! Do you know, I think I shall hire somebody to assassinate you some night!"

"I wish you would drop this tone of badinage, Livonia, I am not in a mood for joking. Consider: I am bidding farewell to my Fatherland for ever."

"Oh, then, you have a balloon in readiness, I presume, waiting for floating orders," said the lively girl.

"Balloon! what do you mean?"

"Are you not going to England to-night?"

"I leave Vienna to-night for England, most certainly," said Braunbrock; "and I expect you to come with me, Livonia. I expect so much from your attachment. Really and seriously, Livonia, I am going," he added, seeing a smile of incredulity on her lips.

"Then, really and seriously, you are a greater fool than I took you to be," said she. "You may go, but I shall stay. I wish you a pleasant voyage, but I would rather abandon life itself almost than my dear, darling, delightful, native town, W***."7

"But Livonia, my dear girl—hear me: I do not mean to stop in England; I shall proceed to France and thence into Italy."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Livonia. "From Germany to England, from England to France, and from France to Italy! Really the Wandering Jew⁸ may begin to tremble for his reputation: he has a dangerous rival in the Herr Johann Klaus Braunbrock."

"I see it is idle to talk to you," said the gentleman, pettishly, and stretching himself on a sofa. "But you will come with me to the Crescent, at least—that pleasure you will not deny me?"

"Well, my poor calf, if you are really leaving us, I will consent to oblige you so far. But see, your cravat is quite loose: let me fasten it for you." So saying she approached him, and stooping over him began to arrange the folds of his neck-kerchief. "And at what hour do you leave me?" she asked, tenderly.

"At twelve, dearest," he answered, playing with her hair.

"See, now, thus I tie a gentleman's cravat," she said, executing with her delicate hands a movement the enamoured quadragenarian had by no manner of means anticipated.

"Oh, oh! Livonia!—Death and fury, you will strangle me, woman!" and by a vigorous bound forward he disengaged his neck from her grasp. In the meantime Livonia had made a sign to Maud to approach, and while the astonished lover, half inclined to laugh, and half to scold, was recovering himself she whispered—

"Tell Rudolf, if you see him, not to venture hither until one o'clock."

The maid-servant announced dinner.

"Very good," said Braunbrock, "we will dine together, and then you will dress and accompany me."

At about seven accordingly they drove off to the Crescent, and entered a box near the stage. The entertainments consisted of three pieces. As soon as the second piece was over, Braunbrock apologised to Livonia for leaving her for a few minutes, and went out to converse with some friends whom he had observed going round to the saloon from an opposite box. He had scarcely advanced half a dozen steps, however, when he felt himself touched upon the shoulder. Turning nervously around, he saw before him for the third time the figure of the Man in the Cloak, who in a moment stepped before him and intercepted his passage onward.

"What do you mean, Sir?" asked Braunbrock.

"I mean to smoke," replied the Irishman, as he drew a long pipe, already ignited, from beneath the folds of his cloak.

"Come, come, Sir," cried Braunbrock, "I don't understand this buffoonery. Let me pass, or take the consequences!"

A number of persons had already assembled around them, to watch the issue of this singular rencontre.

"So serious a matter as forgery, I fancy, has unfitted you for relishing buffoonery," said the Irishman, aloud, and in the hearing of all.

"Forgery!" exclaimed Braunbrock, turning three colours, white, blue and yellow. "Who dares——But such language can only be resented in one way, when a gentleman has to deal with a ruffian!" So saying, he aimed a furious blow with his clenched fist at the Irishman, who received it with exemplary science and imperturbability precisely upon the bowl of his pipe, from which it did not elicit a single sparkle.

The lookers on were seized with amaze; and no wonder. "Come," said the Man in the Cloak, proffering his pipe to one by-stander, who mechanically took it, "come, Herr Braunbrock, this is child's play on both sides; you and I must know each other better. Give me your arm and we will walk and talk a little. Make way, gentlemen, if you please," and seizing the arm of the bewildered cashier, who was now almost passive in his grasp, he dragged

rather than led him to a remote and silent part of the saloon, where they might converse without hazard of *espionage* or interruption.

"Poor handful of dust!" he here exclaimed—"did you think to resist me? As well might you attempt to pluck the planets from their spheres. Know that on this vile ball of earth all that man can dream of in the shape of Power is mine. I wield, or if I chose, could wield, all the engines of governments and systems. I read every heart; I see into the future; I know the past. I am here; and yet I may be elsewhere, for I am independent of time and place and distance. My eye pierces the thickest walls; my hands can dive into exhaustless treasures. At my nod proudest palaces crumble. I can overspread the waste with flowers, or blast in a moment the loveliest landscape that eye delights to revel in. Poor, degraded, imbecile being, how can you cope with me? Can you bend this iron arm? Are you able to quench the torch-light of this all-scrutinising eye? Dare you hope to humanize a heart of granite? Go to; helpless, blind, weak worm that you are! Delude not yourself. You are my slave. Though oceans should roll above your corpse, you are my bondsman. Though you should hide yourself from the eyes of men and angels in the central caverns of the earth, you are still mine, and I can trample you to impalpable powder! Neither by might nor guile can you escape me, for I am—be wide awake and listen to me—I am——"

"You are—Who?" demanded the confounded cashier.

"I am," replied the Irishman—and bending his head, he suffered his lips to approach within an inch of Braunbrock's ear—"I am—the Man in the Cloak!"

"Strange and mysterious being!" exclaimed Braunbrock, whose superstition was awakened, though his religion still slumbered—"and what would you with me?—you who represent yourself so powerful as to need nothing at the hands of others."

"You rightly guess," said the Man in the Cloak, "that, after all, I require your help—yes, even yours. I am all-powerful in every respect but one: I cannot conquer my own destiny. To achieve such a conquest, I require the assistance of another—a reckless and desperate man—and I have pitched on you as the aptest instrument I could find. Will you give me the aid I ask?"

"What is it?" asked Braunbrock.

"You shall know soon. Meantime let us return to our box—and I shall show you *your* destiny. Mark it well! for unless you evade it by *one mode*,—and there is no other open for you—you must undergo all its torture! You came to see a sight—ha! ha! so you shall. Come, now, and present me to the girl Livonia Millenger as one of your best friends."

Braunbrock returned to his box, accompanied by the Man in the Cloak, whom he introduced to Livonia, as a particular friend of his, but without mentioning any name, simply because he had heard none. Livonia looked at

the stranger, and then testified in a whisper to Braunbrock, her astonishment at the glare of the stranger's eyes; but made no other remark. With respect to the Man in the Cloak himself, he retired to a back-seat in the box, and resumed his pipe, of which he had managed to repossess himself as he walked along with Braunbrock.

"How rude your friend is!" whispered Livonia. "Smoking such a long pipe in a box at the theatre!"

"He is a foreigner," returned Braunbrock; "and it may be the custom in his country to smoke very long pipes in the boxes of theatres."

"When we are at Rome we should do as Rome does," observed Livonia. But at that instant the curtain rose, and the closing vaudeville of the evening's entertainments began. Expectation was high, for the popular player, Twigger, was to enact four parts, as a Jew pedlar, a French dancing-master, a German student, and an English alderman, in this piece.

The cashier, however, had scarcely cast his eyes upon the boards before he uttered a half-stifled shriek of terror. Could he credit his senses? A private room, into which he had been more than once introduced, in the house of the Willibalds, was represented on the stage; and in this room Herr Willibald the elder himself was discovered in close conference with the Minister of Police upon the flight of Braunbrock and the robbery and forgery he had committed! There was a good deal of very animated discussion, which terminated in the drawing up of informations deposing to all the facts, and which were to be forthwith transmitted to the official authorities.

"After all," said Willibald, "the infernal rascal may give us the slip. Are you certain he is at the Crescent?"

"Positive," answered the Minister of Police; "and escape is quite impossible: I have planted guards at every avenue."

Braunbrock trembled from head to foot; he rose up. "I—I must leave this, Livonia," said he stammering—"Business——" He turned round and was about to make his exit from the box when the Man in the Cloak tapped him on the shoulder with his pipe. "Just stay where you are," said he, "and note what passes before you. Would you rush into the lion's mouth?"

The effect experienced by Braunbrock from the touch of the Irishman's pipe was similar to that resulting from a sudden attack of nightmare, or a blow from the tail of a torpedo. He felt paralysed; his limbs refused to sustain him; he tried to raise his arms; they sank powerless by his side. He looked imploringly at the Man in the Cloak and his regards were met by a glance of fire and a volume of smoke, which savoured considerably of a sulphury origin.

"What have I done?" he asked, faintly. "Say at once what you would have of me—and cease to torture me."

The Man in the Cloak took the pipe from his mouth and pointed towards the stage. "Look and learn or you are lost!" said he. Braunbrock, who felt as if under the influence of a spell, trembled more than before, but he obeyed the Irishman.

The scene changed to the interior of Livonia's house. Maud was conversing by the fireside in her mistress's room with a sergeant-major of cavalry in a Bavarian regiment, then in garrison at W***.

"So, Braunbrock is going," said the military man. "I am very glad of that; I shall have a clear stage, and, I hope, a great deal of favour. I love Livonia too well to suffer her to sacrifice herself to the whims of that sneaking old robber. I shall espouse her myself."

"Sneaking old robber!" muttered Braunbrock, as he heard this. "The scoundrel!—I could blow his brains out!"

The play went on; the conversation between the sergeant-major and Maud was continued. By-and-by a knocking was heard at the door.

"I vow they are come!" cried Maud. "Here, Rudolf, hide yourself in this closet: I thought to have got you out of the house before they returned—but no matter—Braunbrock will not stop many minutes. There, keep quiet as a mouse!"

Braunbrock saw the young officer thrust into the closet, and immediately afterwards beheld *himself* enter the room, accompanied by Livonia. Here, after partaking of refreshments, the double of the unfortunate cashier bade farewell to his mistress, who hung about his neck in apparent fondness and sorrow, but kept all the while silently laughing over his shoulder in the face of Maud, who grinned back her approbation, and, pointing to the closet, intimated to her mistress by signs that Rudolf was there.

"Vile girl!" cried Braunbrock, looking at her who sat by his side—"have I then at last discovered your dissimulation—your treachery?" But his exclamations were lost in the plauditory shouts and irrestrainable laughter of the audience, who were during all this time deriving the most exquisite, if not the most intellectual pleasure, from the happy manner in which Twigger, as a gouty old English alderman, was devouring an entire haunch of venison, at the rate of about half a pound a mouthful,—and swilling from time to time—O, hear it, ye fashionable British novelists and blush for the continental reputation of your aldermanic countrymen—*porter!*—and out of *a tin gallon can!*

"O, I shall expire!" cried the real Livonia, in a convulsion of laughter. "Was there ever such a delightful man!" Then looking at Braunbrock, and round at the Irishman—she exclaimed, while the tears of mirth filled her eyes, "How *can* you forbear from laughing? Why you are both as gloomy as night-owls in the midst of all this merriment. What ails you?"

"Do you want *ME* to laugh, lady?" demanded the Man in the Cloak, solemnly, as he withdrew the pipe from his mouth.

"Hal ha! ha!" cried Livonia; "that is really better than Twigger. Do you only laugh, then, by particular request?"

"I have never laughed in all my life," said the Man in the Cloak, with increased solemnity. "But if you desire it, I will exert myself to laugh now."

"Nay, nay," said Livonia, "I have no wish to balk your grave humour. But you," turning to Braunbrock—"what witchery has come over you? You sit as pallid and wordless as if you were turned into stone."

"Silence, girl!" cried Braunbrock; "you will speedily enough learn the reason of my pallor and wordlessness!"

"O, as you please," said Livonia, carelessly.

Once more the scene was changed to the eye of Braunbrock. A public Strass in W*** was dimly lighted by half-extinguished lamps. The watchmen were drowsily crying Two o'clock from their turrets. A post-chaise rolled along the street and stopped before a house which Braunbrock recognised as that of an Englishman in whose name, the better to preclude suspicion, he had really designed to hire such a conveyance. Braunbrock watched the result with intense anxiety. "How, then?" said he to himself, "have I made good my escape from the theatre? In that case there is yet a chance for me; I may escape; who is to prevent me?" The carriage drove on; the scene changed to the barrier of the city: still the post-chaise was visible and alone: Braunbrock's heart beat high with hope—alas! even then all was over. Troops of horse and foot police immediately dashed forward and surrounded the carriage. Resistance was useless. Braunbrock saw his double taken prisoner and strongly fettered on the spot. A cry of terror and despair broke from him.

"Hush!" said the Man in the Cloak. "The end is yet to come. Mark it well!" There were now but two remaining scenes for Braunbrock. The first was the trial scene in the assize-court, which terminated in his condemnation to twenty years of hard labour in a stone fortress at G***. The second was the fortress itself, in which, after being branded on the arm and breast by the common executioner, he saw himself loaded with irons, in the midst of sixty other criminals, and driven along into a wide and drear court-yard—the place of labour and punishment—under the *surveillance* of an overseer, who carried a knotted knout in his hand for the instruction and advantage of the lazy or the refractory.

The curtain fell amid universal applause, and the audience rose to depart. Livonia took her mantle from the box-keeper, who assisted her in putting it on. As for Braunbrock, he still sat in the one position, with his eye glaring upon the fallen curtain, like a man petrified.

"Come," said the Man in the Cloak, "all is over. Do you hear, Herr Braunbrock? *All is over.*"

"Eternal Heavens! what am I to do?" cried Braunbrock, starting up. "O, let me but escape from this accursed place, and I am safe—let me breathe the fresh air in the open street!"

"Escape is impossible," said the Irishman in a low tone, "except on one condition. I would speak ten words with you: step aside." He then added, turning to Livonia. "Mein Fräulein, Herr Braunbrock and I will join you in the saloon."

"Be quick, then," said Livonia; and she tripped along the passage. "What you have seen you remember," said the Man in the Cloak to Braunbrock. "Flight—detection—detention—trial—conviction—despair—ignominy—irons—mill-horse drudgery—black bread, and neither snuff nor coffee!—such is the prospect that awaits you. No human power can rescue you."

"Why? How?" cried the agitated betrayer of trust.

"Why?" said the Man in the Cloak, seizing the arm of Braunbrock. "Dunce! Because the adamant hand that grasps you thus will not relinquish its grasp until you are delivered up to justice. Is that German or not?"

"Cursed be the day that I was born!" exclaimed Braunbrock, in a paroxysm of despair. "Yet—" he cried, suddenly recollecting himself—"yet, you spoke, or my memory deceives me, but just now of a condition by which I might be saved. Is there any such, or do you but mock me?"

"There is ONE," said the Man in the Cloak, after a pause.

"Name it—name it—my brain is burning—I will consent to any thing, cried Braunbrock.

"Will you really?" asked the Man in the Cloak. "Will you consent to—and inclining his head, he whispered a few words in the ear of Braunbrock.

"Could you consent to that compact?" he asked, aloud. "Such a compact is not possible," said Braunbrock. "We live in the

second quarter of the nineteenth century."

"Believe it to be possible," said the Man in the Cloak. "At any rate you

had better give your consent. The century will ask you no questions. "And will my consent ensure the possession of all you have whispered to me?"

"Of all, and more than all that."

"So be it then, I freely consent."

"Enough: you are at liberty. I will restore the sum of which you have plundered Willibald: the forgery you can yourself destroy. Then your conscience will be satisfied. There exists no longer any necessity that you should have recourse to dishonest stratagem; henceforth a word, a wish, makes you as rich as you please. Come, let us forth."

They rejoined Livonia, and proceeded towards the door. "I shall now take your place," said the Man in the Cloak to Braunbrock. "These dogs of

justice must be baffled, and I shall show them a trick worth a dozen of the best they have seen yet. Help Livonia into the carriage and take care of her?"

"There he is—there is your man: seize him!" cried the voice of a police-officer to three of his myrmidons,¹⁰ who at the words instantly rushed forward and captured the Man in the Cloak.

"Gentlemen," said the latter, "I make no resistance, but I submit to you very respectfully that you are somewhat precipitate. I have committed, it is true, a robbery and a forgery—two very serious infractions of the social compact; but any man who has studied the philosophy of life with liberal views and a mind emancipated from prejudices will acknowledge that circumstances may, in some degree, be allowed to plead for me and extenuate my guilt. When I perpetrated those crimes I was under the soporific influence of bad tobacco. Gentlemen, bad tobacco is an instigator to insanity. This pipe, gentlemen,—this long and melancholy-looking pipe——"

"Gammon!"¹¹ cried the police-officers. "Come off with us, old cock; we stand no nonsense." And in a minute more, the Man in the Cloak, his hands and feet having been first secured by cords, was thrust into a coach and left to his meditations as it rattled over the streets towards the office of police.

At length the vehicle, having reached its destination, stopped, and the door was opened by one officer, while three others stood ready in the midst of links and flambeaux to help the prisoner out and bear him into the guard-room.

"Come, old twaddler, which are your legs?" asked the officer. "What the deuce!" he continued, as he now looked in: "what do I see? Surely this is not our prisoner." He put his hand into the carriage. "Why, grill me alive," he exclaimed, at the top of his voice, "if you haven't made prisoner of a bag of feathers!"

"A bag of devils! What are you talking of? You must be drunk, Schnapps," said the nearest, advancing closer and looking in. "I cannot well see him: hold up the light, here, Gripper, I say!" The light was held up; the policeman looked in; but he had no sooner obtained a glimpse of his prisoner than he, too, started back in dismay.

"A sack of chaff, as I am a living idiot!" he exclaimed.

"What is all this delay for," bellowed a rotund and spectacled sergeant, coming out of the office. "Why don't you take out your prisoner?"

"There is none to take out," said Gripper, sullenly.

"What, scoundrels! have you suffered him to escape!"

"No," said Schnapps, "he is inside, but he has changed himself into a bundle of hay. I thought he had a wizard look."

"I will have every mother's son of you reported to-morrow morning for this," said the sergeant. "Smash my spectacles if this thing ain't always occurring! Take out this moment whatever you have got crammed into the carriage."

The prisoner was accordingly released from durance. He proved to be a mere man of straw, with very thick legs of about ten inches in length, and a hollow pumpkin, stuffed with old rags, for a head!

"Was there ever any thing so disgraceful?" exclaimed the sergeant, as he examined this singular figure through his spectacles, and forgetting in his wrath, his previous assertion of the perpetual occurrence of similar disappointments. "Upon whom the blame of the rescue may fall I know not, but it will be no wonder, if, after a circumstance of this kind, our police should sink in the estimation of Europe, Australia, and the two Americas!"

And the story went that Braunbrock, after being captured, had been rescued, nobody knew how, and that his rescuers had supplied his place with a man of straw. This was not exactly the fact; but it is not our business to know how far the rumour differed from the reality. After a lapse of eleven years, history can offer little but vague conjectures in solution of similar enigmas.

In the meanwhile our hero and Livonia drove homeward. They had scarcely entered the house when they were again joined by the Man in the Cloak: he took Braunbrock aside and whispered in his ear a notification to the effect that the paction between them must be forthwith completed. "Lead the way, therefore," said he, "into a dark room. The talisman does not bear the light."

"May I not bring a candle?" asked Braunbrock.

"Upon no account: there is no occasion," answered the Man in the Cloak, and in fact his eyes, as they proceeded along, were as good as a gas-lamp, though rather more lurid.

"What mischief are they about, I wonder?" asked Maud of Livonia, following them with her looks. "I don't half like that fire-eyed stranger in the cloak." She then drew nearer to her mistress, and placing the forefinger of her left hand on her lips, while she glanced stealthily around, she pointed with the right to the closet in which the young cavalry-officer was immured.

"Rudolf?" interrogated Livonia, softly.

"Yes, he has been here an hour," answered Maud, in an equally subdued tone.

"Shall I speak to him?" asked Livonia. "I think I may venture. Stand at the door and see whether those brutes are coming in again."

Maud went to the door and listened. In a moment afterwards she returned. "I am afraid I have heard their footsteps," said she. "Yes, yes, here they are."

The door of the room was now pushed open violently, and Braunbrock entered alone. There was a wild and foreign expression in his features. He did not look the same man that he had been two minutes before. His swarthy complexion had given place to a ghastly paleness. His eyes had that

wandering brilliancy by which a physiognomist at once detects the poet or the madman among ten thousand. Even his bearing was altered; he carried himself haughtily and sternly, and trod the floor with a step that seemed to disdain the earth.

"What, in the name of Heaven, has happened you?" inquired Livonia, looking at him in wonder, not wholly unblended with terror.

"Better ask me in the name of Hell than Heaven," said he; and his voice was deep and thrilling.

"What *have* you been doing? What has passed between that frightful man and you, and where is he?"

"Where is he?" echoed Braunbrock. "He is gone—*home*. I have taken his place. I am now *the Man in the Cloak*,—in other words, I am henceforth a being of mystery—none must see me as I really am."

"What nonsense! But really, what have you been doing to yourself? You are so changed I hardly know you. Bless me! surely you were never a dabbler in sorcery?"

"Woman! Wheedling devil! be silent! It is for *me* to speak to *you*. I know all—*all*, I tell you! You have deceived, duped, betrayed, swindled me! Therefore I cast you off. Livonia, scorn, or at best, indifference, is the only sentiment I can entertain for you henceforth. And I am justified. I trusted you; you imposed upon me. Do I speak the truth?"

"I never pretended to be able to love you," said Livonia; "and I think you might have spared me the hard words you have just uttered, if you had a spark of generosity in your bosom."

"You think so? Poor girl!" sneered Braunbrock. "How you are to be compassionated! Such innocence as yours in such a corrupt world is at once admirable and saddening! When a lover visits you, of course you know nothing of his intrusions; he might clasp you round the waist, and you would not feel the pressure of his arm; he might step into your closet before your face, and when he had closed the door you would be ready to take heaven and earth to witness that there was nobody there. Oh, you are too guileless altogether for society or for your own happiness, purest of maidens!"

While Braunbrock spoke thus, Livonia's color shifted from pale to red, from red to pale, and from pale to red again. She felt that her secret was discovered, that all was known, that the *liaison* between herself and Braunbrock was terminated. For this last consummation she did not care much—but, though fallen as regarded virtue, she was still sensitive to the opinion of society, and she dreaded the *esclandre*¹² which was likely to result from an exposure of the double part she had for some time been playing with her lover and her protector. Afraid to speak to or look upon Braunbrock, she cast her eyes downwards, and awaited in silence the conclusion to which it might please him to bring this unhappy interview.

Nor had she to wait long. Braunbrock, almost as soon as he had ceased speaking, walked to the end of the room and kicked open the closet-door. "Talking of closets," said he, "one may as well take a survey of the contents of this.—Ah!" he continued, "well, it is odd how people will stumble upon the truth by accident. Rudolf Steiglitz, I protest!—the length and breadth of as neat a gallows-bird as ever sang small before a large multitude! Come forth my good fellow, and let me see whether you stand as stout upon your pins as you did last Thursday in the Hall at the Liongate."

Livonia, trembling from head to feet and white as ashes, flung herself into a *fauteuil*, while her lover, with an air which mortification, pride, shame, and anger were mingled, obeyed the bidding of Braunbrock.

"I am ready to give you satisfaction," said he, "when and where you please. You are an old soldier."

"And you are a young jackass," retorted Braunbrock. "You will give me satisfaction when I see the carrion-crows feeding on your carcase. Why should I take the trouble of blowing out your brains? I see a purple circle round your neck already: the gallows are groaning for you. You are the especial property of the hangman; I have no right and no desire to poach on his manor."

"I despise your vulgar vituperation, Sir, I am a man of honor."

"So they all say and swear at the Liongate, among the Devilmaycares, those new conspirators against government, who have just been *déterrés*¹³ and will be thrown into prison neck and heels, all of them, before to-morrow's sun has set."

The young man grew paler as he listened, and Livonia, clasping her hands, exclaimed in anguish, "O Rudolf, Rudolf!"

"It is too true for a German ballad," pursued Braunbrock. "The Minister of Police is on the alert. The Attorney-general has already got hold of all your names, and the gaoler in a short time will get hold of all your bodies. The crown-lawyer, Kellenhoffer, is at this moment busy drawing up the indictment that is to accuse your entire gang."

"And you, monster, you have betrayed Rudolf!" cried Livonia, gathering courage and energy from her despair; and she rose, and rushing towards her lover, clasped him round the neck with passionate fondness, bursting into tears as she did so, and sobbing aloud.

"You know me too well to believe what you assert," said Braunbrock, with great and laudable *sang-froid*. "I was ignorant of the facts myself an hour ago. Since then, however, I have undergone a singular change, as you have perceived, and now I see every thing, I know every thing, I can do every thing."

"Oh, then," cried Livonia, casting herself at his feet,—“if you have the power you say, if you can do every thing, save, save him! Save *him*, and I will

love you; I will adore you; I will be the slave of your wildest caprices! I will traverse the world at your bidding;—if it be possible I will plunge myself into the depths of hell for your sake. Only let not him perish, so young, so good, so noble as he is!" and her passionate tears almost blinded her.

"Maud," said Braunbrock coldly, "foddlle into the next room, like a decent wench, and bring me out the pipe you will find on the table."

Maud obeyed, and Braunbrock began to smoke. The pipe was that which had belonged to the Irishman. After a few inhalations and exhalations he replied coldly:

"It is in vain, Livonia; you make yourself ridiculous merely; every man must fulfil his destiny; and that of this young gentleman is to embellish the gallows one of these days. Perhaps I could save him—perhaps not; no matter; he dies; and there is an end of discussion on the subject." "But cold—Cruel! cruel!" cried Livonia, rising and wringing her hands. "But cold-hearted fiend! you shall not triumph! Go, Rudolf, while there is yet time. Make your escape." She attempted to open the door as she spoke, but Braunbrock stepped before her and pushed her back with a jerk into the middle of the room.

"I am master in my own house, I suppose," said he, "and doors are to be opened or closed as I please."

"Coward and villain!" cried Rudolf, drawing his sword. "You shall answer on the spot for your monstrous inhumanity. Draw this moment: it were but an act of justice to rid the earth of such a miscreant. Draw, I say!"

Maud shrieked, and Livonia, grasping her lover's arm, exclaimed in terror, "O, no, Rudolf, no!" He gently but determinedly disengaged his arm. "But don't you perceive, Don Bombastes,¹⁴ are you ass enough not to see," said Braunbrock, coolly, addressing Rudolf, "that your chance of being able to rid the earth of me is rather better while I am unarmed than it will be if even might happen to be slit by some ugly mistake instead of mine."

"I am no assassin, sir!" exclaimed Rudolf; "and I again call on you to draw. Draw this instant, I say!"

"You would have better success in calling on me for a song; though we are in a *drawing-room*," said Braunbrock, "I have never learned to draw, though singing and dancing are very much in my way,—favorite amusements of mine. But this farce must end,—and now to treat you to a sample of dexterity unparalleled—observe!" He struck up as he spoke, the sword of the young officer with his pipe. The effect was instantaneous; Rudolf's arm fell relaxed and nerveless by his side, and the weapon dropped on the carpet. Braunbrock took it up again and returning it to the officer, commanded him to replace it in the sheath, a command which the astounded young man obeyed with the look and action of one who doubts whether he is awake or dreaming.

"Livonia!" cried Braunbrock, turning to the girl, who had witnessed this exercise of superhuman power with no less astonishment than her lover, "Livonia, you must leave this house." He rang the bell, and ordered a carriage to be called. "Go where you please," he pursued, "but as I do not wish to return you personally evil for evil, here is money for you—more than you have a right to expect;" and he took from his pocket a parcel of bank notes to the amount of sixty thousand crowns, and laid them down before her.

"May my right arm wither from my shoulder," replied Livonia, "when it touches a single shilling of your money! Come, Rudolf, we will leave this house together, and, in spite of the prediction you have heard, I am certain there is no fear and no peril for us. Come; I feel myself choking in this room. Come, Maud."

"Don't mention choking to him," said Braunbrock drily: "the subject is a ticklish one. Well, I am sorry you refuse to pocket the cash, for nothing can be done in this world without it. But the carriage has stopped at the door: shall I light you down the stairs?"

A look of mingled scorn, fear and hatred was the only reply which either party vouchsafed him, as they left the room and descended to the street. In another moment the sound of the carriage wheels in motion over the pavement reached his ears.

He was *now alone*. He resumed his pipe and continued smoking all night long.

Yes, he was thenceforth alone. And he felt that he was alone. And a presentiment mastered him even then that he should be alone through all the revolving cycles of eternity. The first use to which he was determined to put the tremendous power he had acquired by his talisman was to gratify all the tastes and animal longings of his being, hitherto in a great degree circumscribed in their indulgence by the limitedness of his means. Accordingly, changing his name, a precaution scarcely necessary, as the singular alteration in his features and person had rendered him almost unrecognizable by his former friends, he purchased a magnificent villa, furnished it in the costliest manner, stocked its cellars with the rarest wines, and spared no expense to procure every luxury that art could devise or gold purchase. He plunged into dissipation with a zest and avidity that for a time enchained all his faculties and left no room for reflection. But after a while the novelty of pleasure faded, and his dreadful situation became revealed to him in all its terrors. In the midst of his banquetings and revellings he saw inscribed as it were upon all things the same fearful handwriting that startled Belshazzar upon the wall of his palace, and told him that the days of his power were numbered;¹⁵ he felt that every succeeding hour robbed him of a portion of his soul; and anticipations of the Future perpetually haunted him, terrible as those gigantic and undefinable images of horror which rise

before the ulcerated conscience in dreams, and from which the sleeper would gladly plunge even into the unexplored abysses of Death itself. The enormous nature of his power only made him acquainted with the essential desolation of heart which flows from being alone in the universe and unsympathised with by others. The relations that had existed between his finer faculties and the external world gradually suffered an awful and indescribable change. Like his predecessor, he could in an instant transport himself into the blooming valleys of the East, or the swarthy deserts of Africa; the treasures of the earth were his, and the ocean bared her depths, teeming with gold and lustrous jewels, before him. But the transitions and vicissitudes by which mortals are taught to appreciate pain and pleasure, and the current of life is guaranteed from stagnating, were lost to him. His tastes were palled; his passions sated. Wine ceased to excite him and woman to charm. He had exhausted all pleasures; he had fathomed every depth of voluptuousness: he had denied himself no gratification; and the eternal and uniform result, grafted by necessity on nature, followed: he became incapable of further enjoyment. He was like to a rocky beach, strewn with wrecks and redolent of barrenness, when the full and gushing spring-tide of the morning has rolled back from it to the ocean. It was then, that for the first time in his life a question he remembered having met with somewhere in his boyhood recurred to him in its full force: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'¹⁶ He gave to this question a more figurative interpretation than it usually receives, but on that very account, perhaps, its applicability to himself came home the stronger to his bosom. *His* soul, he felt, was lost, even while yet he lived and breathed and moved among men: between him and the Power that governs the universe in love and wisdom there was hostility; and the further his mind sought to dive into the recesses of eternity, the denser became the blackness of that darkness to which he felt himself compelled to look forward as at once his refuge and his torment. His state, in fine, was wretched beyond the power of language to shadow forth. Could such a state be endured always? Could it be endured always even upon earth? No: all the resources of human nature, aided even by infernal agency, are insufficient to battle against the mighty agony of that despair which the prospect of an eternity of woe, incessantly before the mind's eye, must of necessity generate. Before the lapse of seven years all the energies of Braunbrock—let us still call him by that name—were devoted night and day to the task of discovering a victim—a substitute—even as the Man in the Cloak had discovered *him*. Month after month he prosecuted his search wherever he thought it likely to be successful. He traversed Spain, Italy, Holland, England, and France. Crossing the Mediterranean he passed as a pilgrim through Asia from east to west. Borne on the broad waters of the Atlantic he visited America. But

the day of his enfranchisement was not yet to be, and he at last returned to his native land. And there he remained, alone among men, groaning under the intolerable burden of his gifted and terrible nature, and a perpetual prey to a despair that already communicated to him a foretaste of that proper demoniacal existence upon the horrors of which he felt that he must soon and finally enter.

One night, at length, in the zenith of his wretchedness, he slumbered for a few moments, and in his slumber he had a dream: he dreamed that he stood in the aisle of the Church of St. Sulpice at Paris, and that he saw a figure in a cloak resembling that of the Irishman, leaning against a pillar, but that his face was that of a corpse. He awoke before he could approach the dead man. Next day he transported himself to Paris, and repaired to the church of St. Sulpice. A number of priests were singing the office for a departed soul around a bier. Braunbrock, seeing an ecclesiastic in the chancel alone, approached, and requested to be informed of the name of the deceased.

"His name was *Melmoth*," replied the priest. "Unless I am greatly deceived, too, that name should also be yours. There is a marked resemblance in feature between you both. Perhaps you were his brother?"

"No," said Braunbrock. "But, the name—did you say it was Melmoth?"

"Yes."

"An Irishman?"

"The same."

"Who always wore a cloak?"

"Precisely."

"And whose eyes were of a blasting brightness?"

"Right."

"And *his* name was Melmoth? I thought Melmoth had been long since in his grave—had been damned these ten years."

"So the story went," said the priest; "but it was false: Melmoth the Wanderer died within the precincts of this church only last week; and his soul, I trust, if not already in heaven, is on its way thither. He made indeed a pious and penitent end. His crimes, it is true, were great, but his repentance has cancelled them all. I am not at liberty to speak of his confession, whatever it was, either horrible or otherwise, but of his prayers I will say that I never listened to any more humble and fervent. The finger of God was visible in the conversion of such a man. He has left all his wealth, which is considerable, to the poor. He would have bestowed a portion upon this church, but after mature deliberation my reverend brethren decided upon rejecting, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, any donation for themselves or the altar on this occasion. Stranger! though not his brother, you are probably related to him; the resemblance

evening descended over the city, "can I then find none—none to deliver me? Is there in this world of cupidity not one wretch to be met with, who, at such a price, will accept of inexhaustible riches and boundless power?"

"Who talks of bestowing inexhaustible riches?" said a man with a hawk's eye and a hooked nose, who at the moment came out of the Bourse. "Is it you, *mon ami*?"

"Yes," answered Braunbrock, eagerly, as he glanced at the physiognomy of the stranger, and began to hope that he had found his man at last.

"Why, you are not such a fool?" said the other.

"If I were?" demanded Braunbrock.

"*En ce cas*," said the hook-nosed Parisian, "I would just trouble you for five hundred thousand francs. I am a ruined man, to be candid with you, unless I can obtain that sum by to-morrow."

"You shall have millions," answered Braunbrock—"on one condition."

"Ah!—a condition!" said the Hawk-eyed.

"A mere trifle."

"Its nature?"

"You must sell—"

"My pictures?"

"Pish!"

"My houses?"

"Psha!"

"My wife?"

"Bah!"

"What then?"

"Your ****," said Braunbrock, with a solemnity of tone he did not intend, but which he could not avoid.

"Is that all?" said the Parisian. "Done. It is a bargain. But how do you propose getting at my ****?"

"That is *my* affair," said Braunbrock. "Here is my card. Will you meet me in an hour hence at the hotel named here."

"I shall be punctual. *Au revoir*."

At seven o'clock, accordingly, the Parisian, whose name was Malaventure, arrived; and the awful terms of the mutual contract were ratified on both sides. Malaventure obtained possession of the talisman which had acquired and secured for Braunbrock his tremendous prerogatives, and Braunbrock was restored to his ancient identity, which for so many years he had forfeited.

"And what will become of you now?" demanded Malaventure. "Have you any resource independent of cutting your throat and going to the devil?"

"I shall go to-morrow to the Church of St. Sulpice, to make my first and last confession to a priest," said Braunbrock. "The hand of death is upon me. I feel that I shall die, but I shall die in peace with GOD."

between you and him, especially in the eyes, strikes me at this moment even more than when you spoke first. Kneel down with me here and we will offer up a short prayer for the repose of his soul."

"No," said Braunbrock. "I cannot: I have never knelt or prayed since I was sixteen years of age."

"Unfortunate man!" said the priest, surveying him with compassion. "Is it true? Yet kneel now, at least."

"I will try, since you wish," said Braunbrock. And he knelt.

The priest then offered up an audible prayer for the soul of the deceased. Braunbrock remained silent. "And that it may please thee, O Lord," added the priest, "to soften the hard heart of the living, and make of it a heart of flesh!"

Still Braunbrock was silent.

"Will you not join in the prayer?" asked the priest.

"I cannot," said Braunbrock. Yet when he cast his eyes around, and they were met by the Gothic windows, and tall pillars and solemn altars veiled in black of the sacred edifice he was in, and when the chorusing chant of the priests fell upon his ear, he could not help on the instant mentally exclaiming, "Yes, all this must have had its origin in a Something!" But Conscience and his heart, ashamed of the word, went further, and demanded, "Miserable atom! dost thou call the Author of all Existence a *Something*?"

"Invoke the assistance of God, unhappy man!" said the priest.

"Impossible," answered Braunbrock.

"Can you not call upon God for mercy?"

"I do not know what to say," replied the German.

"Repeat after me, and with as much sincerity and unction as you can command, O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

And Braunbrock repeated the words, *O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*

"It is enough," said the priest. "Rise!"

Braunbrock rose up.

"Go now in peace," said the priest; "but return hither, and be here again on this day week, a changed man—a man who need no longer shroud himself in a cloak."

The sequel of our tale may be easily divined by the penetrating Religion and Hope from that hour found their way slowly into the heart of Braunbrock. Still he was not able to disembarrass himself of the fatal gift that had been bestowed on him. But an invisible agency was at length operating in his behalf.

One evening he happened to be passing the Bourse.¹⁷ Five days from the period of his interview with the priest in St. Sulpice had gone by, and the consciousness that the talisman still clung to him oppressed him more heavily than ever. "Oh," he exclaimed aloud, as the dusk of a chill Autumn

Church,—priest,—God! muttered the Frenchman to himself. *Pauvre imbécile!* He really believes he has a soul to be saved! And, shrugging his shoulders, he left the hotel.

Early the next morning Braunbrock repaired to St. Sulpice. It was precisely the date that the priest had signified for his return. He made his confession and was reconciled with the Church. As he had predicted, he died in a few days afterwards. His last moments were characterised by a penitence as sincere as that of Melmoth himself had been previously; and he was buried side by side with the Irishman.

Here, reader, our narrative ends. Though not, we hope, overpharisaical ourselves, we may be excused for wishing to keep ourselves aloof from such gentry as Malaventure, and any or all of those through whose hands the talisman he has purchased may hereafter pass. Besides, if we must acknowledge all the truth, we are somewhat in the dark with respect to the subsequent history and adventures of the said talisman. We have heard, indeed, that the atheist, growing frightened after he had paid his debts, disposed of it to a bankrupt notary; that the notary transferred it to a ruined speculator in the funds; that from the speculator it passed into the hands of a briefless lawyer; and that this latter made it over to a stock-broker's clerk, whom he had accidentally heard saying that for one hundred louis he would blow up the king of the barricades,¹⁸ the pope, and the whole college of cardinals with gunpowder. But whether these reports correspond with the actual truth we cannot take it upon ourselves to decide. We can only say, for certain, that all the accounts that have reached us concur in representing the stock-broker's clerk as the latest possessor of the diabolical charm in question. This young man is described by all who knew him as of a wild and impetuous but generous character. He was unfortunate in his love, and lost large sums in play. One evening he left his lodgings, telling his landlady that he should return before midnight. He never returned more. The next day his body was taken up from the Seine, and deposited in the Morgue. Whether his death was self-inflicted or the result of accident was never ascertained. Of the talisman nothing was ever heard afterwards: in all probability it slipped from his pocket as he fell into the river, and at this moment lies embedded in the mud of the Seine.

As the following authentic document, in reference to the young man last-mentioned may gratify some of our readers, we have cut it out from the *Belgian Courier* newspaper and sent it to our printers as an addendum to our story.

Brussels, July 27th, 1835.—Our Parisian correspondent transmits us the following singular narrative:

Yesterday, about two o'clock, the hottest hour in the day, the whole city of Paris was thrown into a state of commotion by seeing a stranger in a German dreadnought wrap-rascal with a fur collar, admirably adapted for the climate of Siberia, passing down the rue St. Honoré. The stranger seemed totally unconscious that there was anything in his appearance to call for observation until the hootings of the boys and girls who gathered in crowds about him convinced him to the contrary. When informed of the cause of the hullabaloo, he with great good nature and politeness disengumbered himself of the offending garment and delivered it into the hands of a by-stander to keep for him while he went into the house of M. Villerot, the stock-broker, to transact some business there. I was curious to see more of the man, and I followed him.

On stepping in he looked about him, and in accents that at once told me he was from Germany, inquired whether a young man of the name of Valdenoir had not formerly done business in that office. The reply was in the affirmative, and that he had been drowned.

"Ah!—drowned,—yes," said the stranger:—"well, he is now in the planet Jupiter."

"In the planet Jupiter?" cried the head clerk, opening his eyes.

"But whether he is happy or not is the mystery," pursued the German, who I soon found out was an astrologer—"for Mercury was in the seventh house on the night he was drowned—and that is ambiguous. Borrowing a light from the old mythology, too, we should say that Jupiter was the chief of the gods—but then, saith Holy Writ, the gods of the heathens are devils—and Jupiter is thus but an arch-demon. I have a book here in my pocket—Jacob Bœhmen¹⁹—which—" and he fumbled in five pockets successively for the book, which at length he was so fortunate as to find.

"Is the man mad?" asked one of another.

"In the forty-eighth proposition of the book called *The Threefold Life of Man*,²⁰ we find it laid down—" began the German.

"Who is the writer of that quaint-titled volume, sir?" demanded one of the secretaries, a flippanit *littérateur*, who translated German poetry and wrote German stories for the magazines, and therefore deemed himself entitled to assume the critic on the present occasion.

"Jacob Bœhmen," said the astrologer.

"Bemmen?—Van Bemmen, the Hague banker?"

"No, no, sir; this illustrious man was a shoemaker."

"Pooh,—*un cordonnier!*—Made shoes for—what country was he of?"

"Prussia, sir, had the honor of his birth."

"Made pumps for old Freddy?"²¹

"Monsieur?"

"Made shoes for the royal family?"

"I hope not," said the German: "for not one of them was worthy to unloose the latches of *his*."

"Permit me to look—to review for a moment—I am a—judge—"

The book accordingly was handed across the counter by the German.

"This is a very poor writer, Doctor—leaves out his hyphens—I see a semicolon in the very second sentence of the preface where there should be a full stop."

"Sir," said the German gravely, "he was one of the profoundest of philosophers."

"What did he know of *la Charte*?"²² demanded the second clerk, twirling his moustache at the German.

"Or of Taglioni?"²³ said the third.

"Could he grin a hole through a frying-pan?" asked an understrapper, whose salary had not yet enabled him to ascend for amusement from the tavern to the theatre.

"How was he off for soap?"²⁴ inquired an errand-boy.

A series of similar questions recommenced with the head-clerk, and again terminated with the errand-boy. I confess I could not help laughing. As for the astrologer, he looked the very picture of stupefaction and bewilderment. He put his book up into his pocket. "*Mein Gott*," said he, as he made his way out of the office, "*was ist denn das? Sind das Menschen—oder vielleicht Troglodyten?*"²⁵ Shortly afterwards he turned down an adjoining street, and I lost sight of him.—Your's, *mon cher Courier Belge*.

[1838]

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GELLERT'S TALES AND FABLES.

THE world is about to come to an end. Here is a book from the Leipsic press,—printed legibly—on paper in which hairs and straws do not usurp the place of every third line of types. Have the recent improvements made in *their* typography by the Calmuc Tartars and the Kirghizians of the Russian Steppes begun to awaken the jealousy of Saxony? Or is there a conspiracy to smash the glass-manufactories by enabling all classes to read without spectacles? Whatever be the cause, we rejoice in the effect, and accordingly receive this first earnest of a willingness in our German friends to send us something in the shape of books which *wæ* shall not be under the necessity of sending to the chandler's shop—we receive this, we say, as thankfully as if we had got it for nothing.

Our first surprise being over, let us inspect the phenomenon a little more nearly. *Gellert's Fabeln und Erzählungen*. Very good. Gellert's was the hand to spin out such articles.

"Like a ropemaker's were his ways,

For still one line upon another

He formed; and, like his hempen brother,

Kept going backward all his days."¹

But the retrograde progression of our fabulist was wholly as to his corporeal man. He laboured under perpetual hypochondriacism—

"And Melancholy marked him for her own."²

From nineteen to fifty-four

"that surly spirit

Did bake his blood, and make it thick and heavy."³

He saw about him, within the narrow precincts of his chamber,

"more (blue) devils than vast hell can hold,"⁴

and when he went abroad