

The Left-Foot Shoe

I DON'T know what made my father settle at Baden-Baden, after leaving Ireland on account of two writs and a duel, and seeing life in various towns of the continent. But there he did settle with my mother, who had accompanied him on his travels, and myself, their only child; turned steady with the help of friends; grew half a German in process of time; got himself naturalized; and finally wormed his way into the legal profession and practice, for which, thanks to the baths and gaming-tables, Baden affords a most excellent field. My father had been called to the Irish bar, before what he was in the habit of calling his exile took place. I suppose he had a natural adaptation for the law, which enabled him to slide into the German part of it, for he realized a good business, educated me to inherit and increase it, and left me clients and all with his blessing, while I was yet a promising young man. Promising I was, not only in the eyes of my mother and her female friends, but in that of all Baden who knew my powers and prospects. My family were thorough Germans by this time, having taken an early opportunity to call themselves Von Doranbach—I have got back my proper name of Doran these twenty years—and it was agreed on all hands that I was likely to transcend my father's fame and gettings, and become a notable limb of the law, till an untoward event made people say the never believed there was anything in me, and upset even my mother's faith in living to see me an Aulic councillor.

There is no German soil like Baden for growing companies; they bank and build, fetch and carry, send their shares into the market, and smash sometimes, just as in England or any other advanced country. So it happened that a short time before I succeeded to my father's place and practice, a company—including a half-dozen barons, sundry of the court officials, and it was whispered the grand-duke himself, but of course, privately and by proxy—had been started for the purpose of building a new set of baths, more elegant and commodious than any of their predecessors and chemists who had an interest in the matter discovered to be the special gift of a beneficent Providence for the cure of all human diseases. Of course, there was considerable opposition from all concerned in the existing baths, and no want of doctors with contrary opinions. Baden was divided between the rival factions, which became known as the Old and New Wellers; but like everything which the court is believed to patronize in a little German state, the company succeeded; its shares went up; the new baths were built, and solemnly opened with a torch-light procession, a grand march, and an ode to the Healing Spring. The site was good, but rather solitary, being in the extreme outskirts of Baden, where streets and houses gave place to gardens and fields. However, between the cures they were to effect, the solemn opening, and the grand-duke's interest in them, the baths got pretty well frequented, and were doing a fair share of business, when, to the confusion of the company, and the horror of all Baden, it was discovered one morning early in what is there called the season, that a gentleman had been murdered in one of the handsomest and best-paying parts of the establishment.

The crime must have been committed in the preceding evening, for the stranger was seen to enter at the last hour, which happened to be an unusually quiet one, all the bathers being gone, and all the attendants except one man, generally known as Old Karl, whose duty it was to shut up the place after seeing that the water-taps were all right, and whose home was in a cottage hard by, where he lodged with Widow Speiler, a middle-aged, hard-working woman, who bore the best of characters, had two nearly grown-up sons, and did all the scrubbing and scouring of the bath-rooms. The widow and her sons had gone to spend that day with a relation in the country. Karl

shut up the place at the accustomed hour, and retired to a favorite beer-shop, where most of his leisure time was passed; but nobody had seen the stranger come out; and next morning, he was found in the marble basin, with a long, sharp gipsy-knife driven deep into his left side.

The doctors who examined the body gave it as their opinion that death had been instantaneous, and must have taken place ten or twelve hours before the discovery. There was no appearance of a struggle; the gentleman had evidently been surprised, and stabbed to the heart in the act of bathing; yet his clothes, with a watch, purse, and other valuables, remained undisturbed on the bench hard by. The room showed no signs of the deed or the doer. It was not only one of the best, but the most private in the establishment, situated on the ground-floor, at the end of a long passage, having no communication with any other, and but one window looking into a small shrubbery, which formed part of the bath-grounds, and also shaded a deep tank or reservoir for supplying the baths, crossed by a narrow plank, by way of bridge, to a by-path leading through the fields beyond. The plank had been placed there to quiet a troublesome neighbor, obstinately bent on preserving an ancient right of way; but few cared to use it, especially when the night was falling, as must have been the case when the deed was done; and the dry ground and well-trimmed shrubbery gave no tokens that anybody had passed that way. The window of the room was securely shut; Karl declared he had fastened it as well as the other windows, but accounted for his knowing nothing of the murder by the fact, that it was almost quite dark, and he never lit candles so early in the season.

Together with these particulars, it was ascertained that the murdered man was Baron von Laganstein, from the neighboring kingdom of Wurtemberg. The people of the hotel where he had been staying recognized the body, and stated that he had arrived in Baden at the beginning of the week, as they understood, to take the benefit of the waters; that he was accompanied by his brother, who at first seemed intent to remain with him; but either owing to a dispute or a change of purpose, the brother had left their house on his homeward way only a few hours before the baron repaired to the New Bath. Who was the assassin, and what had been his motive, nobody could conjecture. The baron had neither friends nor enemies in Baden; he had made no acquaintances, avoided the gaming-tables, and did not seem to have much money or jewelry for a man of rank. Moreover, there were the watch and purse, proving that robbery had not been the moving cause; but a murder had been committed in the New Bath, to the probable ruin of its credit, and the equally probable ruin of the company. If the criminal remained undiscovered, who would think himself safe in its elegant apartments? Somebody must be brought to justice, or all the doctors in Baden would fail in bringing custom to the place; and after vainly offering unprecedented rewards for information, and making the most searching inquiry on all sides, no sacrifice to the legal Nemesis could be come at but Old Karl. All Baden had known him for years as an honest, harmless creature, with no fault but a general leaning to strong liquor, and a consequent haziness of the little mind he had. People would as soon have thought of accusing one of the townpumps of crime; but circumstances were against him; he had been alone in the bath-house when the baron, who was never to come out again, went in; he had shut it up with murder done in one of the best rooms, and adjourned to his favorite beer-shop. Besides the fact, that he lit no candles, Karl had no explanation to give, except that he had seen the baron come in, knew him to be a customer who wanted no attendance, went to get his supper in Widow Speiler's cottage, and came back in time to shut up the house, believing that the baron was gone.

It was a meager account, but Karl stuck to it. It was all he had to say in half a score of examinations, which the poor soul underwent as quietly as if he had been on duty at the baths, and never thought himself in danger till the commissary of police sent him to the town-prison. Then Karl sent the only familiar friend he had, Widow Speiler, to me, with an earnest entreaty that I would take his case in hand, and save him from the gallows. The man had been a trusty messenger to my father and myself before he got employment in the New Bath. We never knew him to tell a fib or to attempt to swindle. He had no relations, rich or poor, in Baden, having come there a peasant-youth from some village in the Upper Rhine. He had no money to pay for legal defence, and the counsels assigned by law to the accused do very little for them, at least in Germany. I believed Karl innocent; perhaps I also believed that a great opportunity for building up my own glory and honor as a lawyer had come. In short, I undertook the case with all the energy and ability I was master of; but Karl could give me no information, no hint to found a plea upon beyond the statement already given; and all my search and sifting failed to discover a particle of evidence in his favor, or against anybody else, except the improbability of a man in his circumstances taking the life of a stranger, yet leaving his purse and valuables untouched.

German criminal courts are less interesting to the public than those of England; but the trial for the mysterious murder in the New Bath created such a sensation among towns-people and visitors, that both the wells and the gaming-tables suffered a serious loss of custom. Great sympathy was expressed for the brother of the murdered baron, who had parted from him only a few hours before he met so dark a fate. Notwithstanding the difference suspected by the people of the hotel, report said that no brother could be more warmly attached. It was known that he labored under some deformity, had been always in delicate health, and though the death of the baron made him lord of the family estate, there being no other heir, the shock of the intelligence brought on an illness, so long and dangerous, that he could not stir from home throughout the whole time of the inquiry and the trial, but had to be represented by his man of business.

It was with this gentleman's wits that mine came in contact, and I must say that the process was a sharpening one. He was an old gray little man, with something of the Jew in his manner and appearance. The Lagansteins had owned him as their legal adviser for more than half a century; and if his determination to get poor Karl condemned were any proof of it, he must have been as much attached to the late baron as his employer. My argument regarding the untouched purse and watch was at once overthrown by his producing from among the effects of the deceased a valuable diamond pin, which, according to his testimony, supported by that of the bereaved brother, the baron had always worn. It was not to be found, and the inference was that Karl had made it his prey. Through the energy of the man of business, it was discovered that he spent more than usual at the beer-shop on the night of the murder. Karl accounted for that by parting gratuities given him by some foreign visitors in the day; but he could offer no proof of his statement, and the lost pin and spent thalers remained as circumstantial evidence against him. Still my faith in Karl's innocence was unshaken. I had got warm in the cause by this time; the poor fellow had no barrier between him and the gallows but me; I left no legal stone unturned to raise doubts and procure delay, always hoping that time would bring me the end of some clue to the mystery. I endeavored to engage the sympathies of my friends and the public on his behalf; talk goes a long way in Germany, and I talked at the wells, in the coffee-houses, in the ten-gardens, on the promenades—in short, wherever I could get listeners, endeavoring to impress

people with my own convictions, and staking, as a matter of course, my own professional reputation on the perfect innocence of Old Karl.

Time went on, nevertheless, and so did the trial, in spite of all my delays and expedients. Karl was found guilty after the fashion of the land, sentenced by the presiding judge, and sent to the capital, Carlsruhe, where all such solemn things are transacted, to await execution. According to the law or custom of Baden, no man can be executed till he has confessed his guilt. This made me feel safe on Karl's account; time would bring something to light; Providence would interfere in some way; I told him so in our last interview, when the poor fellow once more assured me of his absolute innocence. I hoped, and talked on, and had succeeded in getting up a considerable party in his favor, when one afternoon it was announced by the authorities that Karl had confessed the murder of Baron Laganstein on the preceding evening, and the law had been duly executed on the morning of that day. Everybody said they always knew he was guilty, but it was a comfort that the creature had confessed. The man of business went home satisfied. The bath company congratulated themselves and the public on the complete clearing up of the mysterious affair, and the certainty that the like could never happen on their premises again.

As for myself, I was more than astonished—confounded is the only word for such an upsetting of one's conscientious convictions. It was my first great lesson against believing in honest appearances—lawyers are apt to get many of the kind—but Karl's case was a striking one, and fairly unsettled my faith in human nature. It did more material damage to my professional repute and prospects; the considerable party I had formed snubbed me to a man; the newspaper showed me up as a remarkable example of gullibility and self-conceit; and my legal rivals sounded trumpets of triumph over me, loud enough to have brought down the walls of another Jericho. They were sufficient to bring down my business; clients fell away at a rapid rate; friends went and did likewise; and partly to avoid these unpleasant consequences of poor Karl's defence, partly in hopes of regaining my status, I retired from Baden to Nassau.

My mother accompanied me; she broke up her old home, rather than part from her only son, to whom in her belief, the town's-people had behaved so very ill; and ours were not the only feet that Karl's confession set a-wandering. Soon after my removal, I learned that Widow Speiler had abandoned her cottage and work at the New Bath. I had an interest in the widow; she had been as obstinate an unbeliever in Karl's guilt as myself; she had first engaged me in the unlucky business of his defence, and kept well out of my way after the case was concluded; yet her neighbors were not sure whether it was a dispute with the daughter-in-law one of her sons had brought home, a dislike to the young woman the other was about to marry, or the sad fate of her old friend and lodger, that made her pack up her chattels and move away to live with relations she had in the Black Forest. I am not going to inflict my autobiography in full with suitable reflections at the close, but having told the first part of the queerest case that ever came within my professional experience, I mean to tell the second.

My exit from Baden was followed by many movings. I flitted from one to another of the small German states, in pursuit of the good fortune which had left but was always beckoning me, it seemed, from no great distance. I could practice in them all, the laws and usages being the same; but I failed in getting a practice of consequence or profit at any of their little courts or small capitals; the officials would not patronize me, the burghers would not intrust me with their legal

affairs; there was no want of lawsuits—there never is in German towns—but none of the paying or important ones could I get hold of; and so things went on till about ten years after old Karl's execution, when I formed a partnership with a country lawyer, whom business had brought to Stuttgart, and in consequence flitted to the little university town of Tübingen, on the borders of the Black Forest. My partner, or rather principal, Herr Scripling, did all the law-business of the place, and had been doing it for nearly forty years. Having grown comfortably rich thereby, he was now willing, not exactly to retire, but to take a sub, who might do the drudgery, and be directed in all his ways. That was my office; not such a bad one either; for Herr Scripling, though blest with the rare union of sharp and slow in his legal practice, which I supposed suited his clients, was a kindly, considerate superior; if he left me all the work, he allowed me some of the profit, and the best of understandings was between us from the first.

Both work and profits were small, but constant; the Tübingeners had no amusement that I was ever aware of but law and theology; and most of them, clergy, students, and laymen, played continually on both strings. But it was a cheap place, and I found a home for my mother and myself in a house occupied by three maiden sisters of the name of Zetel. Von Zetel, they might have called themselves, being of gentle birth, and once of good prospects, their father having filled the office of burgomaster, and owned a handsome share of house-property. But a prodigal brother had brought the family down, and the Zetel sisters were a manner of women sure to lose and be plucked bare in a world like this. More honest, generous, unselfish souls I never new; a little fussy, perhaps, and fond of being chief ministers in all domestic affairs; but their tears, their hands, and their purses were ready for every tale of woe or case of need, and the less gain there was to be got by the service, the more ready they were to do it. Their names were Gerturde, Agnes, and Caroline; the two eldest were tall women, and somewhat gaunt and gray. I never knew their ages; but Caroline was years younger, some inches shorter, not half so thin, a great deal more lively, and what the divines call fair to look upon, with dark-brown hair, which she knew how to dress, and a ruddy German face of the best type. She was as good as her sisters, much handsomer, and I thought more sensible; but they were in the habit of calling her "that child," and keeping a sort of kindly watch over her general conduct. I suppose they had been doing so for more than twenty years before I got acquainted with the family; but my mother and I found a pleasant home with the Zetels. She was growing old and feeble by this time, and theirs were just the hands I could trust for her comfort. Their house was one of the oldest in the town, the lower story of stone, and the rest of timber; but it was substantially enough to outlast many a generation of inhabitants, and its internal arrangements could not be improved by all our modern devices. Such snug rooms of every size, such secure windows to shut and open, such stoves against the hard Tübingen winters, such cupboards for stowing away, could never be found out of an old German house, not to speak of furniture to match, and a trimmed garden in the rear. That house was the last remnant of the Zetels' property, as I at first understood. One nephew had undertaken to manage for them what the prodigal brother had not spent, and contrived to mortgage it; another had borrowed the little money they had, and never found it convenient to pay, having married early, and got a considerable family, and they had no resource but to take in and do for lodgers. The quietest students of the university—and there never were such quiet ones as in Tübingen—formed their chief dependence; they had five of them, well-conducted, hard-reading young men, besides my mother and myself; and we all lived together like one family, till a new misfortune fell upon the Zetels.

I had observed the sisters looking anxious and troubled for some days, when Caroline, who had become confidential with my mother, revealed to her, and she to me, a state of things I had never suspected. The house, instead of being their own, had been mortgaged by their managing nephew for a sum they could never raise; the time of repayment had now expired, and there was nothing between them and turn-out but the days of grace allowed by German law. Caroline had mentioned the matter with the consent of her sisters, in hopes that, being a lawyer, I might find some way of escape for them. Nobody could have been more willing to serve the Zetels than I was, as Caroline probably knew; but on getting into particulars, I found there was not a legal loop-hole or crevice to creep out of. The poor spinsters had duly signed the papers their nephew got ready—I think it was under a threat of suicide; and the gentleman was at this time in a government office at Stuttgart, and of some celebrity at the public halls. I also discovered that the name of the mortgagee was Baron von Laganstein, and that his man of business was my senior officer, Herr Scripling. He kept the concerns of noble clients entirely in his own hands; but I felt sure that if the case of the helpless women were properly brought before him, he would do what he could for them; and I took an opportunity, when we met in the office next day, to give him a full account of their state and prospects. But, to my great surprise, Herr Scripling knew them as well as myself.

“What you say is true,” said he. “These poor souls can live by their domestic industry within the four walls where they were born; but if turned out with their old-fashioned chattels, where will they find another home to let and manage like it? It is a hard case, and I know the Zetels deserve better than has befallen them in this world! but, Herr von Doranbach, I can do nothing, positively nothing. The baron is a man of flint; no tittle of his dues will he let go; his mind seems divided between pride and profit, but the one always stoops to the other. They say that, before he came to the family estate by the death of his brother, who was murdered at Baden in one of the baths—a remarkable case; you must have heard of it—he was very poor, and rather looked down on for a club-foot of uncommon deformity. May be that has helped to make him what he is—a proud, cross-grained, penurious old bachelor, living in his antiquated castle with a few ill-fed servants, and sitting down to cabbage-soup or cheese-crust with state and ceremony enough for a wedding-feast. But his tenants have cause to curse the day of his accession: he is forever discovering some due or homage which they are bound to pay him; and the only one he was ever known to treat with common justice is a certain Widow Speiler, who came to his place a stranger, and, to the astonishment of everybody, got possession of a farm belonging to a deceased relation of hers. There she lives and thrives, and suffers no exactions from the baron, nor attacks on her reputation by the neighbors. The woman is above sixty, and honest in word and deed; but why she is behaved well to I could never make out, neither could my uncle, who was man of business to the baron before me, and a great deal more trusted. But there is the man we have to deal with. I pity the poor Zetels, but I can do nothing.”

Herr Scripling’s account of his patron was not promising, but something must be done or tried. I knew more of the man we had to deal with than he dreamed of; and my name might not have a favorable effect on the baron’s memory; yet as my principal absolutely declined the business, I wrote to him in the most moving terms, requesting grace for the Zetels. I had exerted myself to flatter his pride, and held out hopes of profit through the charity. But my first application remained unanswered; so did the second. The days of grace were running to an end. The sisters seemed likely to lose their reason with the dread of being turned out of house and home. The

baron's seat was not many miles distant, but the road was a wild and rough one; and as Herr Scripling suggested that my letters might not have come to hand, posts being rather uncertain in the Black Forest, I determined to go and plead the cause of my poor friends personally.

All my arrangements were made for the journey; I was to set out before daybreak on the following morning with a wagoner who did all the carrying-trade of Laganstein, and I was alone in the office winding up matters till the fall of night. It was the very same season in which the murder had been committed by old Karl ten years before—the time when summer merges into autumn, and people perceive the shortening of the days. The mission I was going upon in the morning brought the case and all connected with it to my recollection, and I was wondering what sort of a reception the baron would give me, when a low knock at the door broke up my speculations.

“Come in,” said I. And in walked a woman in the usual dress of the country people. At first I did not recognize her in the deepening twilight; but when she said, “Good evening, honored sir,” I knew her to be none other than Widow Speiler. “You will maybe remember me at Baden,” she continued, “and not take amiss what I have come to say.”

“I remember you well, widow, and I am sure you will say nothing that anybody could take amiss. Sit down, and tell me your business. I heard you were settled at Laganstein.”

There was a chance of getting useful information from the honest woman.

“I have left it, and sold my farm. It was hard to find one willing to buy under the baron; but I have settled that at last, and come to live in Tubingen. I thought of lodging with the Zetels, sir. I am not poor now, and they were kind to me when I fell sick on my way from Baden, nearly ten years ago.” And the widow drew a long sigh of recollection. Then she looked cautiously round the office, and added, “I have been seeing them this afternoon; they tell me the baron is going to take their house from them, and you are going to intercede with him. Honored sir, you might as well ask for charity or kindness from the rocks about his castle; but you were kind to my old friend Karl, and the Zetels have been kind to me; for his sake and for theirs I will lend you something to manage the baron with, if you give me your solemn promise that nobody shall see or hear of it but yourself and him.”

The widow looked perfectly sane and sober, an though much astonished, I gave her the required promise without further parley. As soon as it was fairly spoken, she took from the pocket of her gown a small parcel, wrapped in coarse brown paper, and tied with common twine, which she deposited in my hands, saying, “I will call for it when you come back. Good evening, honored sir!” And before I could answer or question, Widow Speiler was gone.

I turned the key in the office door, lighted a candle, and opened the parcel; but if my surprise at the widow's words had been great, it was increased tenfold when, out of the coarse brown paper I took an old discolored shoe, intended for a club-foot of such singular deformity that one could hardly imagine it belonged to a human being. There was nothing else but a slip of paper, on which was written, in a rustic hand, “Show him this; but for charity's sake, keep it out of his hands, for if he gets hold of it, you will get nothing.” It was a strange weapon to move the

baron's heart with; his deformed foot was no secret to give the holder of it owner over his pride. The shoe was most likely his own—made for the left foot, too—surely the presenting of such an article would rouse his wrath as an insult rather than gain his good graces; and what a strange injunction was that to keep it out of his hands. Well, the widow had been the only person that ever got good or favor from Baron Laganstein; she must have had sound reasons for sending the old shoe with me in such a private manner; and I determined that if no other argument availed, he should get a sight of it.

Next morning found me on the road to Laganstein, in the only conveyance it boasted—namely, the carrier's wagon. There were no passengers but myself, and I don't think there was a worse road in Germany; mostly up hill, diversified with deep ruts and great stones, and leading over dreary moorlands. The wagoner said it had been the same in his grandfather's time; and with these poor facilities for travelling, it was not till sunset that we came in sight of a poor straggling village at the foot of a steep and wooded hill, which he told me was Laganstein.

“And where is the baron's castle?” said I.

“Up yonder; you may see the top of it through the trees, sir. But the way is so steep and narrow, that nobody tries it except on foot, and people that keep to its windings can't go wrong.”

I looked in the direction the wagoner indicated, and could see something like a building half way up the wooded hill. As we drew near, I could discern a winding path to it, narrow and steep enough, but I felt sure not long; and when we reached the village inn, a small shabby place, where I had some difficulty in arranging for supper and bed, having no hope of hospitality at the castle, I took my way up the hill, resolved to make my first attack by the last of the daylight.

The long day's journey had tired me, and I found the path steeper than I expected, most of it being a narrow ridge of rock running between the trees; but I held on, till a sharp turn brought me to an opening where the hill seemed to have given way or been excavated, for on the right hand side of the path yawned a fearful chasm with rugged sides and the rocky bottom. There was neither fence nor rail to keep an unwary foot from sliding over. The depth was terrible, and as I stopped to look at it, a little man with almost white hair, and wearing what had once been a court-dress, but was now in the last degree of shabbiness, came down the hill at a rapid and extraordinary pace.

“What is your business in my wood, sir?” was his first salutation to me.

“I am going to wait on the Baron von Laganstein. Is not this the way to his castle?” said I, guessing at once who my gentle friend was.

“I am the Baron von Laganstein,” said the little man, looking as if all Germany belonged to him. “What is your business with me?”

I summoned up all my eloquence to plead for the poor and helpless sisters in the soft evening light among the woodland trees, but the moment I mentioned their names, the baron cut me short with, “My mind is made up, sir. I will hear nothing on the subject. If you do not go directly, I

will call my servants, and have you kicked down to the village.” He turned on his club-foot as he spoke, and pulled out a small silver whistle. “I’ll see what the widow’s parcel will do with the little wretch,” thought I, and the next moment the old shoe was out of my pocket, and flourished in his face. At the sight of it, he started as if something had stung him, and turned deadly pale, then made a sudden clutch, and before I was aware, got hold of the shoe by the heel. All was lost if he got it from me. I believed that now, and held fast with the one hand, while I endeavored to wrench his grasp away with the other. He never uttered a word, but held on with clenched teeth and eyes glaring like those of a wild animal. We strove and struggled. In spite of my utmost exertions, he got hold with both hands, and made one tremendous pull, which drew me half across the path. We were both nearing the precipice, but he was the nearest when all at once the old leather gave way. I fell back against a tree, and the baron fell back, too, I heard a sort of gasp, a scrambling sound, and a dull crash on the rocks below.

As soon as I recovered myself, I fled for help to the village. The people came out with torches and lanterns; they knew a by-path by which the place could be reached, and there they found the baron, quite dead, and terribly shattered, but still holding with a death-grasp the fragment of the old shoe. They took him up, and carried him to his castle. There was no grief among servants or peasants, and none of them attempted to arrest me for causing the death of their lord. I was no murderer, but how could I have proved myself innocent? Nobody in Laganstein knew me. I stayed that night at the village inn, returned to Tubigen next day, and was making preparations for a hasty departure, when Widow Speiler called. I told her exactly what had happened, and requested an explanation of her parcel.

“I’ll tell you.” said the widow, “and you will see the judgement of God in the whole matter. A fortnight after they hanged my old friend Karl, the bath-pumps went wrong, the tank got low, and went to draw water out of it with my own bucket and rope. With the first bucketful, what should come up but that shoe! I knew to whom it belonged for I had seen the gentleman walking about the bath-grounds, and one who saw his left foot could never mistake it. I knew, too, who had crossed the plank and done the deed for which poor Karl suffered. May God forgive them who made a false confession for him! They say the prison chaplain has had money to spend and spare ever since. But there was no good to be done by what I had found, except when I had troubles at home, to go and get my relation’s farm in the Black Forest. It helped me to that, and I thought it would have helped to keep the Zetels in their house. So it will, for there is nobody now to disturb them. But, honored sir, flee away from Wurtemberg till the talk and the wonder are over.”

I took her advice, and left Wurtemberg as quickly as possible. I subsequently left the German territory, thinking it a good opportunity to visit an extensive circle of relations I had in Ireland. That visit proved my way back to the good fortune I had been so long in search of, for it enabled me to slip into the good graces of an heirless relative, from whom, in due time, I inherited a small estate among the Wicklow Hills. Thither I finally retired from legal profession and practice; brought my mother to close her days in comfort among the scenes of her youth; and also Caroline Zetel, to share our home under the title of Mrs. Doran. Long before those changes were accomplished, the talk and wonder, the widow said, were over. The people of Laganstein assure the police authorities that their lord’s death was an accident, for a stranger who had gone up the hill saw him fall, and gave the alarm. The report satisfied them, particularly, as for want of

heirs, the estate went to the crown. I don't know what Herr Scripling suspected, but he made neither inquiry nor comment. There was nobody to disturb the Zetels, so they kept their house. Widow Speiler lived and died with them; but between her and myself rested the story of the Left-foot Shoe.

Flag of Our Union, December 23, 1865