

The Hofraadinde

A THRILLING TALE

On the evening of the second of August, I and a number of young people, assembled at the house of a friend to celebrate the anniversary of his marriage. Our host possessed that courtesy and gaiety of manner which never fails to promote the mirth and enjoyment of a party; and as to his young wife, whose joyous and blooming countenance spoke the happiness of her lot, she was the first in every scheme suggested for the amusement of her guests. After having spent a most delightful evening, we were just about to bid good night to our kind entertainers. When we heard a carriage roll down the street, upon which I stepped to the window, and by the light of the carriage lamps, I saw a splendid chariot stop at the opposite dwelling.

“Who comes home so late?” asked one of the party.

“That is our beautiful neighbor, the Hofraadinde,” replied our host, [“]who seldom returns before midnight from her fashionable parties.”

“Is she a widow?” said one of the ladies.

“By no means,” replied our hostess; “but she finds little pleasure in having her husband always by her side, who might almost be her father from the disparity of their years, and who would find some difficulty in keeping pace with the dissipation of his young wife; while she is amusing herself with the gaieties of the world, the old gentleman is shut up in his study, engrossed with his pen and his politics.”

Meanwhile the step of the carriage was let down, and an elegant female alighted, whose costly attire showed the high rank to which she belonged. The important business of bonneting and shawling being accomplished we departed; but hardly had we got without the door, when the window of the opposite house was violently thrown open, and a female voice, in a tone of horror and anguish, exclaimed—

“Help! Murder! Help, for the love of Heaven?”

“What was that?” exclaimed our host, as he suddenly threw the light from his hand, with which he had lighted us downstairs.—

“Some villains must have got into the house of the counsellor—that is the voice of his lady.”

With the shriek of horror still ringing in my ears, followed by my companions, I quickly crossed the street and knocked loudly at the door, which, after some time, was at length opened by a female, from whom we in vain endeavored to learn the cause of the disturbance, as she was too much terrified to bring forth a reply. We flew upstairs and rushed into the saloon, where we found the Hofraadinde; the flowers which had ornamented her beautiful hair lay strewed upon the carpet; her dress was in the greatest disorder, her countenance was pale as death, her hands

were clasped convulsively together, and trembling with agitation, she motioned us to proceed to an adjoining department.

We hastily obeyed, and approaching the bed, round which the curtains were carefully wrapped, we quickly drew them aside, and with horror beheld the strangled body of the counsellor. A rope was round his neck, his countenance was fearfully distorted and perfectly black; his underlip was swelled and covered with blood, and his eyes protruded from their sockets. One hand hung out of bed, whilst the other appeared to have struggled hard with the murderer, who in the conflict had torn open the vest of the deceased.

A cabinet, which stood near, was burst open, the drawers of which were left closed, and a strange hand seemed to have discomposed the papers. I instantly untied the rope, while my friend ran for medical assistance; a vein was quickly opened, but all to no purpose, life was totally extinct, he was past the power of human aid. Just as I was about to leave the apartment, my eyes happened to fall on something steeped in blood, which was lying near the bed; I immediately picked it up, it was a handkerchief. "Has anyone lost a handkerchief?" said I. All replied in the negative, and I was just going to throw it aside, when I accidentally noticed the letters with which it was marked.

"Now we will discover the owner," said I; it was marked D. L.

"You need not go far," said my friend, "to find the owner; these are your own initials."

"It does not belong to me," I replied, whilst I put it in a drawer of the bureau; "it may remain there till someone claims it."

I now returned to the Hofraadinde. I found her somewhat recovered, though still much agitated; she warmly expressed her acknowledgements for the kind interest we had taken in her distress, and her obligations for the very prompt assistance we had rendered her.

The officers of justice now ventured to inquire into the affair, and the Hofraadinde having again thanked us for our attentions, and said she would no longer trespass upon our kindness, we took our departure.

The streets were deserted, and a light only occasionally glimmered here and there from a window; the lamps burnt dimly, and as my shadow flitted along I felt as if a spectre were pursuing me, and strode along at a more rapid rate. In — Place I was obliged to pass a milestone, and as I approached, a man suddenly started from beside it, as with the intention of attacking me; I started back—he came towards me, and laying his hand gently on my arm, and looking earnestly in my face, said in a significant tone:

"It is not the shadow which follows your footsteps, which you need fear; but the avenger of crime, if any lies upon your conscience."

The countenance of the stranger made a singular impression upon me, it is still as vividly before me as that moment, grief seemed to have altered its natural expression.

“What is the hour?” said he suddenly.

“It is not yet one,” I replied.

“The awful stillness,” he rejoined, “which precedes the hour is dreadful, but still more horrible is the tolling of that single one. I wish I were deaf that I might never hear the clock strike one.”

He spoke as if his mind was wandering; but I felt as if there were truth and reason in what he said.

“Go home,” he continued, “and pray to God to give you peaceful slumbers—everything may become frightful in the midnight hour.”

He left me, but suddenly returning, he whispered: “he has breathed his last sigh, poor man, and I was in danger of doing the same—but tell this to no one.”

At this moment the clock of the neighboring belfry struck one, upon which the stranger—exclaiming, “*O Dio! che questa vita e funesta*, (O God! how wretched is this life),”—hurried away.

On reaching home I threw myself in bed, and soon fell into a most disturbed and feverish slumber. The strangled counsellor, the agony of the Hofraadinde, the handkerchief marked with my initials, the mysterious looks of the officers of justice, and the wild looks of the Italian, were mingled together in a confused and horrible dream. Early the following morning I repaired to my friend. “What do you think of this business?” said I.

“What should I think of it?” he replied, “the murderer understood his profession too well to leave the widow a spark of hope for her husband’s life. A physician has examined the body, and declares that the deceased died of apoplexy.”

“You jest!” said I, in surprise, “and the Hofraadinde—”

“Even she,” he rejoined; “it was herself who told me, and with the most perfect composure too. It is incredible what this philosophical age will accomplish. A woman who yesterday was wringing her hands in the deepest despair, can today talk so composedly of the horrible adventure, and examines her husband’s lifeless body as calmly as if he were some wax puppet. Louisa acknowledges she never met with so active a housewife; she has already seen that everything is prepared for the funeral, and with the most praiseworthy composure, has given orders for her mourning, consoling herself with the thought how well her sable weeds will contrast with her fair complexion.”

I could not conceal my horror and indignation at such unfeeling conduct.

“Does that surprise you?” said my friend,—“I have still more wonders to relate. The money and bills which were in the bureau, as also a valuable brooch and gold repeater, which was set with

diamonds, remained untouched; but the will, in which the counsellor left the whole of his fortune to his nephew, is nowhere to be found. It would appear that the murderer had false keys to all the locks, as there was no marks of violence having been used, except to the bureau, the contents of which the counsellor kept secret even from the Hofraadinde."

"Who is his nephew?" asked I.

"You will be surprised," replied he, "when I tell you it is Mastorf, our brother soldier, who made the first campaign with us, and was taken prisoner by the French at Maresburgh."

"He!" I exclaimed in surprise, "as brave a fellow as ever lived, and one of my dearest friends. Has he been to the counsellor's?"

"The poor fellow is ill," he replied, "and confined to bed."

"Where does he live?" asked I; "I have a great desire to see him."

"That I cannot tell you, but I think I shall be able to find him out; but where do you go from this?"

"To Conditor Street."

"Good," he replied; "I shall meet you there."

As it was early when I reached Conditor Street, there were but few people in the coffee room; however, I remarked, in one corner of the room, an elderly gentleman, who was busily employed in reading a paper; and in another, two young men, who were carrying on a whispering conversation, in which they appeared deeply interested. I knew not how it was, but I felt myself irresistibly impelled to approach them, and I placed myself at a table close beside them. One of them was a tall fine-looking man about thirty, his features were more expressive than handsome, his eyes indicated a haughty and impetuous soul, and the whole countenance bore traces of deep and violent passion; his dark mustachios gave him a military air, and although his German was both elegant and fluent, yet from his foreign accent it was evident it was not his native tongue. The sight of the other surprised me,—yes, surely I had seen that face before; he was younger than his companion, and his appearance much more feminine; an eye of fire glared from under a pair of thick, shaggy eyebrows; and as I continued to examine him, I soon recognized the strange apparition of the previous evening. I now gave my whole attention to the strangers, who appeared to have some secret understanding together, and while apparently engrossed by my paper, I overheard a few sentences which gave me a clue to the purport of their conversation.

"Do you still keep your resolution?" said the Italian.

"The carriage is ordered at five," replied the officer; "I cannot delay a day longer, the earth seems to burn under my feet, and the sooner I am upon my way the better."

"You will reach it on Wednesday," replied his friend, "and will lodge as agreed upon, in

Kralowna Unice; she will not expect you, and your arrival will surprise her.” They whispered afterwards, but from what I could learn it appeared that their conversation related to a beautiful daughter and an old father, from whom something was to be concealed[.]

“You will know her at the first glance,” said the Italian; “but in case you make any mistake[,] you may as well take another look”; and he gave the officer a box, on the lid of which was the miniature of a lovely female.

“I would have no fears, but all might yet go well,” replied his friend, “were she but prudent; but who can have any dependance upon a changeable woman?”

“Leave that to me,” said the Italian, “fulfil your promise; my happiness in your hands; give me only that, and I shall never forsake you; but remember, before you set off to leave out the letter; she does not know, and will not believe; tie a knot upon your handkerchief to remind you of it.”

“I shall not forget,” replied the officer; [“]but to make certain of it”—he felt in vain for the handkerchief; he reflected a moment—then searched again, and betrayed a considerable anxiety at not finding it. “Yes,” said he, “yes, I must have left my handkerchief at home. Come, come with me rather, and I will give you the letter,” and they departed.

My curiosity was roused, and I would have followed them, had I not promised to wait for my friend, who soon made his appearance, and to whom I related all I had heard and seen: but he thought I gave more weight to the behavior and conversation of the strangers than the circumstances warranted. He had been fortunate to procure Mastorf’s address, which he gave me.

“Have you had no opportunity,” said I, “of going over to the Hofraadinde?”

“She requested me to call for this evening, as she wishes to consult me regarding some family affairs.”

“Then I entreat,” said I, “that you will obtain the handkerchief for me”; this he promised to do, and we parted.

Mastorf had just wakened from a short slumber when I entered. I was shocked and grieved at the change which illness had made on his once robust and handsome countenance; he was pale, and so exhausted as to be incapable of the slightest exertion. An inflammation of the lungs had brought him to the brink of the grave, and though all danger was now happily past[,] yet his physicians thought it would be long ere his health was restored.

I asked him if his uncle had visited him lately, but he was so agitated as to be unable to reply; and his attendant informed me, that not being aware of his relationship to the counsellor, she had told him of the dreadful occurrence.

“My poor fellow,” said I, “have you been so unfortunate as to learn this in your weak state?”

“You may imagine,” he replied, “how much it shocked me. I thought it would have killed me.

But, tell me, is there anything of consequence taken?"

"Nothing," said I, "except a brooch and a gold repeater—the money is untouched."

"My lot is cast," said he, "I dreaded what would happen; what a malicious artifice?"

Without inquiring the meaning of these words, I consoled him by assuring him, that we would do all in our power to serve him. He looked calmly upon me, and answered the pressure of my hand with silent emotion.

On reaching home, I found a small box, in which was the handkerchief; and a note from my friend informed me that he had sent a servant for it, as if one of his guests had dropped it,—it was found in the drawer where I had put it.

I now formed my plans, and determined to set out the following day, to endeavor to discover the murderer; but circumstances prevented me from carrying out my intentions; and after arranging matters with my friend, on the fourth day set off on my journey. I travelled day and night until I reached Dresden; but as I could get no information regarding the object of my search, and after resting a few hours, I again set off for Prague, where I arrived early the following morning. The first person I inquired for was a Mr. Henneberg, a rich merchant, who, on my return from Italy, received me with great hospitality; he had been some years a widower, but was now engaged to the younger sister of his wife, and was just about to celebrate his marriage.

"You could not have come more opportunely," said he, as he shook me by the hand. "You must be my guest this evening, when you will meet my bride, the musical composer, Deedesdorf, whom you admire so much, and another agreeable guest. We shall have a very delightful evening—which your presence will add to—but I wish to give them a surprise; don't mention to anyone that we are acquainted.["]

I promised to come, and we separated. I made a thousand inquiries regarding the object of my journey, but no one could give any intelligence of the stranger whom I described. I found it necessary to think of other means to trace him out, and meanwhile sauntered along to view the city. There was a considerable crowd on the bridge, which forced me to stop a few minutes before a toy shop, from which at that moment there issued an elderly gentleman with a young girl leaning on his arm, who was playfully patting his cheek as if thanking him for some present he had given her. She had a little lapdog in her arms, and as she turned to the shop-people to say she would send for her purchase, I had a full view of her countenance, and immediately recognized the original of the miniature I had seen on the lid of the box, in the coffeehouse. Although not decidedly beautiful, yet she possessed that species of fascination which is even more engaging than beauty itself; animated and expressive eyes, and a smile so irresistible, that it found its way to every heart. She was dressed with great taste and elegance, and her air and manner seemed to indicate a cultivated mind. Astonishment for some moments rooted me to the spot, but on recovering myself, I determined to follow them. They crossed the bridge, then bent their way towards the ramparts of the town, where there was a pleasant promenade.—When they arrived below the trees, the girl put down her little favorite and seemed to enjoy its gambols. They took several turns up and down, and the more I examined her countenance, the more I was

struck with the power and fidelity with which the artist had depicted her. At this moment a young man approached with a greyhound, which ran at the little spaniel, and though but in sport, it hurt the little creature, which yelled with pain. The young girl looked round and fancied her favorite wounded to death; the stranger paid no regard to what was passing, but coolly walked on! The opportunity was a favorable one; I ran to the dogs, and seizing the terrified little creature in my arms, carried it to its mistress, who was so overjoyed at its escape, she could hardly find the words to thank me. The old gentleman made ample amends for the silence of his daughter, he warmly expressed his acknowledgements for the service I had rendered them, and I was too anxious to improve my acquaintance with my new friends to allow the conversation to drop, and accordingly made good use of the adventure which fortune had thus thrown in my way. I remarked how very attentive the young girl became when she heard I had come from B—. We had not been long engaged in conversation when a gentleman, evidently a man of high rank, and who appeared to be intimate with my new acquaintance, joined us; he took the old gentleman aside, saying he had some private intelligence to give him.

“Are there many strangers in B—?” said my companion.

“A good many,” I replied, “particularly Italians.”

“Perhaps,” she continued, with increasing curiosity, “you have met with one of that country who gives lessons in Italian?”

“Oh! yes,” I replied; “we have met frequently at the coffeehouse, and had much pleasant conversation together, but I never thought of inquiring his name.”

“Cæsar Buonaventura,” replied my companion; but she suddenly checked herself, and seemed provoked at having committed herself thus far.

“Quite right,” said I. “I now recollect having seen a letter in his hand with that address”—she blushed deeply—“I think,” I continued, “the poor man bears the traces of great unhappiness.”

“Is that so very evident?” she replied, and she was just on the point of adding more, when the return of the old gentleman interrupted her.

“Excuse me, sir,” said he, as he joined us, “that was my brother-in-law, the president, who followed me here on some particular business connected with his office”; and giving his address and an invitation for the following evening, which I gladly accepted, they departed.

I found my friend Henneberg waiting at the door to receive me—he led me to the drawing room and presented me to his bride, a lovely young creature. Leidesdorf was already there, and we soon renewed our acquaintance.

“You will meet a very talented and interesting young man this evening,” said my host, “who is also from B—. I think you will be happy to make his acquaintance; his name is Linkowsky, he is highly accomplished and draws beautifully.”

“So, we shall have some disciples of the muses,” said the bride. “Here, Leidesdorf reigns supreme in the kingdom of harmony, and I have already been indebted to him for many a pretty song.”

The long-expected guest at length arrived, and with a beating heart I recognised the object of my journey; he was most elegantly dressed, his manners were extremely fascinating, and his behaviour to the ladies was so completely that of the finished gentleman, that they were all loud in his praise, and with one consent declared he was one of the most delightful companions they had ever met with; and I must confess that, under any other circumstances, I too would have joined in their opinions. I remarked how very attentive he became when our host informed him that I had just come from B—, a piece of intelligence, however, which appeared far from grateful. He could not recognise me again, as I never uttered a word when I met him in the coffeehouse, and indeed hardly once raised my eyes from the papers which I held in my hands. He entertained us with an animated account of the manners and customs of the different countries he had visited, and he appeared to have travelled through most parts of Europe. With equal fidelity he described the most polished nations and the most savage hordes, and related many interesting scenes which he had witnessed in Italy, France, Hungary, and Poland. He gave us a most spirited account of the burning of a Polish village, which he had seen in his childhood, the fearful countenances of the incendiaries—the merciless plunderers—the blazing roofs—the shrieks of the spectators, and the screams of the terrified children, were depicted with a vividness which made us shudder; he talked most of those countries which none of us had visited, and it was evident he wished to turn the conversation from B—.

When the tea equipage was removed, the bride, who had a great deal of wit and fancy, opened the piano and said gaily—

“Come, here are you, three disciples of the muses, and I propose that each shall give us a specimen of his different talents; let a theme be chosen for the musician, the poet, and the painter, and while you are at work, I shall go and order refreshments. As for you, my love,” she added, turning to her husband, “you shall snuff the candles.”

“A noble employment really,” said Henneberg, with a smile; “but come, what is the theme to be, on which our friends are to exercise their talents?”

“The choice belongs to our friend from B—,” she replied; “he arrived first, therefore he shall choose.”

“Agreed,” said I; “will you, gentlemen, accept of the theme I shall give?”

“Yes,” said all.

* * * * *

My theme was a night-scene. A young wife on returning home finds her husband strangled in bed. The company appeared surprised at the tragic nature of my choice, but certainly the subject was one which gave great scope to the imagination, and even Linkowsky, who thought it an

unpleasant subject for company, was forced to acknowledge it was one particularly adapted for the pencil. The bride quitted the room, and we commenced our occupations. No sound, save a chord from the musician, broke the silence which reigned. About a quarter of an hour had elapsed when Linkowsky suddenly gazed at his sketch, then sprung from his seat, took several hurried steps through the apartment, again hastily approached the table, and seizing the drawing, prepared to destroy it.

“Hold!” exclaimed our host, as he arrested his hand. “Whatever is done in this apartment belongs to me. Is your drawing so powerfully executed as even to terrify yourself?—But, by Heavens, one’s very hair might stand on end at the sight of it”; and on saying this, he handed me the drawing.

I shuddered as I looked at it; it was the Counsellor just as I had seen him, as he lay strangled on that eventful night.

“You may stop your employment,” said I to Leidesdorf, “and I shall throw away my pen, for there is a power of delineation in this sketch which we can never come in competition with; we are but bunglers—the drawing has gained the prize, and whoever has seen a strangled man must acknowledge its fidelity. I admire your power of imagination, Herr Linkowsky, but one may readily suppose that a genius such as yours must often be tormented with extraordinary dreams.”

“Not at all,” he replied, “I sleep too composedly to be so disturbed; it is only when I take my pencil in my hand that my imagination retains such mastery over me; but that sketch is not merely my own fancy. I saw, somewhere in my travels, I think in Geneva, a painting, the remembrance of which guided my hand.”

At these words he stretched out his hand to take my handkerchief, which lay on the table beside me, to wipe away the cold drops of perspiration which started to his forehead.

“Pardon me,” said I, “that is my handkerchief.”

“Excuse me,” he replied, “if I have made a mistake—but no—my initials are upon it.”

“My name has the same,” I replied.

“You are right,” answered he, as he took his from his pocket.

This occurrence drew us into conversation.

“Perhaps we may be namesakes,” he continued, “and perhaps called for the same person?”

“Perhaps so,” I replied; “my name is Daniel Lessman.”

“It is then only our initials which are the same,” he rejoined, “for my name is David.”

The entrance of the bride put a stop to our conversation, and on finding that neither the poet nor

the musician had completed their tasks, she asked Linkowsky what he had done, and requested he would show it to her.

“You must pardon me,” said he “that I must deny your first request. These gentlemen flatter me that my drawing is powerfully done—no, no, it is only the beautiful that this art should have anything to do with, and not the horrible. Away then with this sketch, it shall no longer disturb our cheerfulness”; he drew the sketch over to him, and then commenced another subject of conversation.

The attention of the lady being called away to something else, she soon forgot her awakened curiosity, while our host seemed well pleased that the amusement of the evening had taken another turn. Herr Linkowsky repeated some of his most entertaining anecdotes, but there was a total change in his manner. In fact, the cheerful tone of the company was evidently forced, and my attempts to restore our gaiety met with but indifferent success. Linkowsky would, on no account give up the drawing, and he several times looked inquiringly towards me.

“May I ask,” said he, “before we separate, for your address?—your acquaintance interests me more than I shall take the liberty to express, and I shall be happy to pay you a visit.”

I assured him that I should be extremely happy to see him; and giving him my address, he departed much sooner than the rest of the party.

“That is a most singular man,” said the bride, as soon as he had disappeared, “and I assure you, my dear bridegroom, were we not already engaged, I know not what might happen, for I admire him excessively.”

On inquiring of my friend Henneberg, where Linkowsky lodged, he informed me at Kralowna Unice, but said he had forgotten the number. The carriage having arrived for the bride and her friends, the party broke up, and Ludesdorf accompanied me part of the way to my lodgings. On the following morning I began to reflect on the steps which I should take to accomplish my object; but in the meantime sat down to write to B—. I had not been long engaged in this occupation, when someone knocked at the door, a stranger entered, and, stepping up to me, said,

“Are you from B—?”

On expressing my displeasure at this intrusion, and refusing to answer his abrupt and impertinent question, he replied,

“I am one of the officers of justice, and you must answer. Are you Herr Daniel Lessman, from B—?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Then I have orders to arrest you; and in the name of the President, I command you to follow me.”

“Willingly,” said I, and having arranged my chamber, I quickly followed him to the street, where a carriage awaited us. After driving a considerable way, the carriage stopped at a spacious court, and we alighted. I followed my conductor along a vaulted passage, at the extremity of which we found a jailer awaiting our arrival; and the officer having delivered me over to his care, and wished me a happy termination to the business, took his departure. The jailer fixed his eyes upon me as if he would impress every feature on his mind, and then ushered me into my apartment. The chamber would not of itself have been disagreeable, but for the prospect without: not a living creature was to be seen—I had not even a glimpse of the blue heavens—and opposite was a dead wall. Though convinced of my perfect innocence, still it was a sad thought that here I must remain in this dreary solitude till the affair was inquired into. Except the jailer, I did not see the face of a human creature the first day of my imprisonment, and he looked so sympathising that I had nearly requested he would favor me with pen and paper; but it is so painful to meet with a disappointment where one has encouraged a hope, that I relinquished my intention. I went early to bed, and slept better than I expected. Next morning, when my jailer entered my prison, I remarked that his countenance was unusually cheerful; he desired me, in a friendly tone, to prepare to receive some visitors, who would be with me in the course of the day. At an early hour the door of my solitary prison was hastily thrown open, and the old gentleman, whose daughter’s little favorite I had protected, stepped into the room.

“It grieves me much, my dear sir,” he said, as he shook me warmly by the hand, “that in place of seeing you at my house, I visit you here. I beg to assure you how much both my daughters feel indebted to you for your politeness, and also how deeply interested we are for your present distress.”

I thanked him for his kindness, but added, “I cannot imagine how you became so soon acquainted with what has occurred.”

“It was my brother-in-law, the President,” he said, “who saw you alight from the carriage, he instantly recognized you, and mentioned it to me in the evening. It surprised me exceedingly—we must not, however, lose hope; all will yet go well.”

“I suppose,” said I, “that from your relationship to the President, he has told you the reason of my being here?”

“He did so, indeed, and seldom has any occurrence caused me more regret.”

“May I entreat,” I rejoined, “that you will inform me of what I am accused?—it will set my mind at rest to know the cause of my imprisonment.”

“It is very painful to me to be obliged to tell it to you—but, how is it possible?—it is little more than twenty-four hours since you arrived[,] and you have already—the longer I look at you the less inclined am I to believe it—they say that you issued banknotes which you have forged.”

As the good old man said this, he looked half inquiringly, half sorrowfully at me. The accusation astonished me so much that for a moment I was unable to reply:—but I quickly regained my self-possession. Crime of any kind was so far from my mind that I did not allow it to make an

impression upon me.

“I am too incompetent,” continued the old man, “to give an opinion of the affair at present; but what I can do for you, be assured shall be done. Meanwhile, I have ordered a more comfortable apartment to be prepared for you: in the course of the day your lodgings will be searched, and I have obtained permission that you shall be present.”

I thanked the old gentleman for his kindness, and could not but think how strange that the trifling incident of the fright of a little lapdog should be the means of softening my present situation; the old man warmly pressed my hand, and then departed. His promise was fulfilled: a short time after he left me, the jailor came and conducted me to a chamber in the opposite side of the building, the windows of which looked into the street, and open view delighted me more than I can describe. I now took courage to ask my jailor for writing materials. He civilly replied, “that until my lodgings were searched he could not comply with my request.” Dinner being over, after pacing my apartments for some time, I approached the window in the hope of seeing some known countenance.

Many were the pedestrians and carriages which hurried past my window; and I could scarcely believe my eyes, when in one of them I discovered David Linkowsky seated beside my friend and his daughter, to whom he seemed to be addressing some animated conversation. He was quite as elegantly dressed as the evening I met him at Henneberg’s, but there was some difference in his appearance which I could not at first account for, till I discovered he wore no moustachios. I had hardly recovered from my surprise at this event, when one of the officers of justice entered to conduct me to the examination of my lodgings.

“The moment you quitted your lodgings,” he said, “your apartment and papers were sealed up—and if you have a clear conscience, you will feel tranquil as to the event.”

He entered a carriage, and soon reached my lodgings, where we found the officers of justice who had sealed my apartment, waiting for us. The seals being broken, and nothing being discovered to criminate me, they congratulated me on the result of the search, and assured me I should be set at liberty the following morning.

I thanked them for the interest they seemed to take in the matter, and said I was inclined to treat the affair as of no moment, and pointing jestingly to a coat which hung on the back of a chair, and which the servant, the evening I was taken prisoner, had brushed and thrown there, desired them to examine it as strictly as they thought necessary. They examined it with the closest scrutiny[,] and drew from one of the side pockets two papers carefully folded together, which, on examination, were found to be forged notes. What I felt at this moment it is impossible to describe; although my conscience was clear, I could scarcely stand the looks of the officers of justice. Every corner of the apartment was now minutely examined, but no further proof of my guilt appeared. Some of my clothes were thrown into a trunk, and I was led back to prison. The jailor, who was a good-hearted fellow, shrugged his shoulders on being ordered to take me back to my former apartment. What had occurred seemed [inexplicable] to me—was it possible that the rascal could have put the forged notes in my pocket at Henneberg’s; but no—suddenly a light broke in upon me. On that morning in which I sat writing to B—, the servant brought me a list

of wares which he said a pedlar had given him to show the stranger—the man was unknown to him—was it not possible that it was the rogue himself?—could he not have hurriedly thrust the notes into my coat pocket while the servant brought me in the list—yes, it must be so. I had passed three days in my dark dungeon[,] when, on the morning of the fourth the door of my apartment was suddenly thrown open, and the old gentleman burst in.

“Oh, my friend,” he exclaimed, “the hour of your deliverance has arrived—yes, you may look at me with inquiring eyes—yes, you are free, but I stood on the brink of a fearful gulph, and was unconsciously hastening my own destruction; and had not some good angel watched over the poor shortsighted mortal, my happiness would have been destroyed and the comfort of my old age lost forever. But God be praised, who has dealt so mercifully with the poor old man; but in place of standing here, I must go home, and show my gratitude to Heaven, by giving alms to the unfortunate.”

Seeing me about to interrupt him, he continued:

“Ask me no questions, I cannot tell you what has happened, this business lies like a stone at my heart. Farewell, I must go home and see my happiness again with my own eyes—but come to me in the evening, and then you shall hear all. And now if you do not, with me, fall down on your knees and thank God for your preservation, I shall have nothing more to say to you,” and with these words he left me.

At twelve o’clock my door was again opened—with a beating heart I approached it, thinking I was free; but no, it was only the jailor with my dinner—he looked gloomy, and my courage sunk again; but this was only assumed, for on taking another look at him, I saw he in vain tried to conceal a smile. Without uttering a word, he placed my repast upon the table, and then withdrew to a corner of the room, where he could observe me. I removed the cover from the dish where in place of food I found a letter from the President, in which he expressed his regret that his duty had forced him to treat me as he had done: that he would not rest satisfied until he done all in his power to obliterate from my mind the recollection of the late unpleasant occurrence, but that he would defer further explanation till the evening, when we would meet at the house of his brother-in-law.

“How do you relish your dinner?” said my attendant, as he suddenly approached and seized my hand. “Do you think I would treat you with common fare today? No doubt you will have better food at the President’s, but it will not be offered with a warmer heart; for although for five years it has been my lot to lock up [unhappy] criminals from the light of heaven, my breast is not locked up to pity and compassion.” Tears stood in the poor fellow’s eyes, who appeared to have conceived an affection for me. An officer of justice now entered with instructions to conduct me to my lodgings. So bidding adieu to my kind jailer, I returned to my old abode, where I proposed to remain one night before taking up my quarters at the old gentleman’s. Just as the carriage stopped at my lodgings, I saw two figures hurriedly approaching, and the next moment I was pressed in the arms of Henneberg and Leidesdorf.

“My dear friend,” exclaimed the latter, “what anxiety have we not suffered on your account—it was only lately that we heard anything of the matter, and were too certain of your innocence to

fear the result.”

“And yet,” interrupted Henneberg, “that would not have prevented me from going to the President’s to assure him of your honour and principle, had Linkowsky told me that your imprisonment was occasioned by some absurd mistake, and that you would be set at liberty immediately.”

“Have you seen him today?”

“I have only seen him once,” he replied, “when he gave this intelligence respecting you.”

After talking the matter over for a while, we separated, with the promise of meeting at Henneberg’s in the evening. On entering my apartment, I immediately proceeded to examine my trunk, and found everything there but the handkerchief.

At an early hour the carriage of my kind and hospitable friend conveyed me to his dwelling, where I was received with the welcome of a son; and the old gentleman waited with impatience the arrival of his brother-in-law. In vain I looked for his daughter. My hunger was soon appeased, and my curiosity satisfied regarding this mysterious affair.

In Krowlina Unice there was a two-story house, the entrance to which was by a flight of steps; the owner lived upon his means, and as he was fond of pigeons, he had built a dovecot in the court, at the back of the house. One evening as he was returning home, just as night was closing in, he went to take some remedy to one of the doves which was sick. On entering the court he observed that the ladder, which usually stood against the dovecot, was placed under a window; the window was not open, nor was there any light in the apartment, which belonged to a lodger; he thought nothing more of the circumstance, but took the ladder to the dovecot and brought down the sick pigeon. As he was about to quit the court he heard a window hastily thrown open; he looked up and saw a man, with a bundle in his teeth, just ready to spring from the ledge of the window. Terrified at this, the good man threw the pigeon from him, and calling to the stranger to desist from his purpose, he seized the ladder and ran to his assistance; but the man thinking there was no great danger in the leap, and that he would escape through the house into the street, jumped down and ran into the house; but here his progress was arrested by one of the domestics, who instantly seized him, calling out stop thief! Finding escape impossible, the poor wretch begged hard for mercy; the landlord of the house now entered and asked him what he got in the bundle, he confessed it was some articles which he had stolen from the apartment above, but declared that necessity alone, and the cries of his starving children had tempted him to this crime; he added that by means of the ladder he had entered the stranger’s apartment, he had broken open his desk, and taken from it what the bundle contained; and also that if they would have compassion on his poor children, he would willingly endure the severest punishment they could inflict. The humane master of the house was moved by these words, and replied that had the stolen property been his, he would have instantly allowed him to escape, but as it was his lodger[’]s, who seemed to be a person of consequence, he might be severely blamed for permitting anyone who had broken into his apartment to escape without further inquiry and therefore his duty compelled him to send for the officers of justice; but whatever his fate might be, he might rest assured that his children would be taken care of. This assurance appeared to

comfort the unhappy criminal, for whom the kindhearted landlord ordered a plentiful supply of food, but the wretched man was in no situation to taste it. A servant was instantly despatched after an officer of justice, who were not long in obeying the summons; they strictly examined the prisoner, and remarked that he had never been upon their list. They now proceeded to examine the bundle, the contents of which caused them no small surprise.

“By my faith,” said the officer, as he unfolded something which was carefully wrapped up in paper, “the gentleman above stairs has not been born in a fisherman’s hut,” saying which he handed the landlord a magnificent brooch.

“This does not surprise me[,]” replied the latter, “for at the first glance I said he was a man of fortune.”

The next article which they took from the bundle was a small box, containing a gold repeater, which was still more splendid than the brooch.

“My poor fellow,” said the landlord, turning to the prisoner, “you made a valuable capture, but you have not much luck with your prize; but what is that?” he continued, as he saw the officer take a long flat *euli* case from the bundle.

“This,” said the officer, “certainly does not correspond with the other articles, it seems to be worn away from constant use; but what the devil—I cannot open it—try as I will, I can neither find clasp nor spring.”

“Let me try,” said the landlord. His efforts were for a time equally fruitless; but at length he accidentally touched a small cross on the underside of the box, which turned round and the box flew open. “Here is the riddle,” exclaimed the host, while the officers came near to examine the contents. They looked at them, contracted their brows, and then hastily approached the lights on a side table to scrutinize them more narrowly; then turning to the landlord, said—

“May I request that you will instantly send one of your domestics to the Dresden Gate, to seek out the other officer who belongs to our district? I shall write him a note, which will bring him here in the space of an hour; therefore I request writing materials[;] ’tis a matter of consequence.”

The master of the house complied with his wish; the note was quickly written, and a servant instantly despatched with it.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the host, “what can be of any consequence in that little case?”

“Fellow[,]” said the officer, turning to the criminal, “you have committed a great crime in breaking into your neighbor’s house with such intentions; but justice itself might almost forgive you, nay, regard you as being the most honest man of the two. A flask of wine, if you please, the rogue shall moisten his tongue—I may venture to say that his punishment will not be very great.”

“As much wine as you will, but surely you will let me see the contents of the little case?” said

the landlord.

It was some time before he could prevail with the officer to gratify his curiosity; but at length he reached the case to him, under promise of the strictest secrecy. His curiosity was soon satisfied, but it was for some time ere he recovered from the shock of having harbored such instruments in his house. Along with a [flask] of ink, two pencils, and several very fine pointed pens, was a folded banknote, half executed. The thief learnt with astonishment that he had stolen from a greater rogue than himself, and looked upon himself as an instrument in the hands of Providence to bring him to justice. Meanwhile the servant who had been dispatched, found the officer surrounded by several friends, and he was in the middle of an animated speech at the moment he delivered him the note; he opened it with an air of indifference, but no sooner had he glanced at it, than he started up and seized his hat and stick.

“I am exceedingly sorry,” said he, [“]to leave this good company, but were one of my five girls changed to a boy, I would not be half so happy as the contents of this note have made me; I must now hasten away, for duty must be minded.”

Followed by the messenger, the officer hurried on, and scarcely paused to take breath till they reached the road, which stretched far to the left of the Dresden Gate.

“What is that?” said the officer, “surely that is a carriage under the trees!”

“I think you are right,[”] replied his companion.

“Plague on the fellow,” he rejoined, “had he nothing to do but to drag us after him to Kralowna Unice, that is no step.[”]

They approached the carriage.

“Look, look,” whispered the domestic, “there is someone stealing away from the carriage and hastening towards the gate!”

“Faith, you are right,” rejoined the officer; [“]it approaches the houses, there is a light—ah, ’tis a woman, I’ll venture my neck upon that; the carriage is there with no good intention, that is certain.”

Hastily, but softly, they drew near the carriage, it was a travelling one, to which there was a large trunk strapped on behind.

“Are you asleep, coachman?” said the officer, but no answer was returned. The servant went close to him and tapped him on the back.

“What do you mean by that?” said the coachman, “get along, and leave honest people in peace.”

“For whom are you waiting?” asked the officer.

“For whom do you inquire?” was the reply.

“Not so insolent, if you please, fellow,—’tis an officer of justice who speaks to you, and if you are not a little more civil, I must teach you to be so; turn round the carriage, and drive me to Kralowna Unice; if you comply readily you shall have some money for drink, now mount and be off.”

“Impossible, sir, I wait for someone here.”

“For whom can you be waiting at this late hour, and so far from the gate too?”

“For a young gentleman of the university,” replied the coachman, “who is going to his father, who is dangerously ill.”

“Why not wait for him at his own lodgings,” said the officer, “in place of on this distant spot?”

“Oh, one of his young friends gave an entertainment today, which prevented him getting away early, therefore he must steal quietly through the gates.”

“Your story does not hang very well together,” rejoined the officer; “turn round instantly, I command you, and do as I order you.”

The postilion was frightened, and obeyed. The officer stepped in, the servant sprung up behind, and the carriage drove off. They had not gone far, when they saw a man running at full speed; he was hastening past, when he suddenly glanced at the carriage, and instantly stopped: the postilion drew up.

“Is it you, Joseph?” exclaimed the stranger, panting,—“in the devil’s name,” he continued, not observing the servant behind the carriage, “have you drunk your five senses away? What could possess you to turn back?”

“He is taking me to Kralowna Unice,” said the officer from the carriage.

“What is the meaning of this?” replied the stranger.

“He has my orders to do so,” rejoined the officer, “and if you will do me the favor to step into the carriage and accompany me there, you can then proceed on your journey.”

“What insolence is this?” rejoined the stranger, “and what right have you, sir, to take possession of anyone’s carriage?”

“The pressing duties of my situation,” replied the officer, “which gives an officer of justice the right to make use of any carriage he may encounter.”

The stranger was silent for a few moments, then turning to the coachman, he asked, in an unsteady voice, if the young man had come?

“Yes, and he is in the carriage,” was the reply.

“My dear sir,” said he to the officer, in a tone which had suddenly changed from fiery vehemence to gentleness, “I implore you to allow me to continue my journey; my father lies at the point of death, and I entreat you not to let him long for the last embrace of his only son in vain.”

With these words he opened the door of the carriage, in the expectation that the officer would descend.

“Drive on,” said the officer. “I cannot,” he continued, addressing the stranger, “allow you to prosecute your journey; there is something suspicious in the whole affair.”

At the same moment he made a movement as if to let the stranger get into the carriage.

“If prayers,” exclaimed the latter, with looks of despair, “are unavailing, I must try what force will do.”

He suddenly seized the officer, and dragged him from the carriage; but at this moment the servant leaped from the back of the carriage, and threw himself upon the stranger, who exclaimed,

“Turn, Joseph, and put your horses to their utmost speed.”

And while the postillion prepared to obey, he measured with his eye the strength of his two opponents, and finding the servant the most powerful of the two, he suddenly pulled a pistol from his breast, and levelled it at him.

“Oh, Heavens!” shrieked a youthful voice from the carriage, as it drove off, but the ball missed, and passed harmless by the side of the servant, who, furious with passion, seized the stranger, and before he could strike the dagger, which he held in his hand, at the breast of the officer, struck down his hand, and wrested the weapon from his grasp; but on looking attentively at the stranger, the servant suddenly exclaimed,

“Help, for the sake of Heaven! ’tis my master’s lodger.”

“Is it he?” said the officer, in surprise: “is it he? This is a fortunate occurrence; we must search him,” he continued, “in case he may have other weapons upon him. Hold him fast, while I shall run after the carriage, which I think I shall be able to overtake and bring back.”

* * * * *

The stranger was searched, but there was nothing found upon him; his hands were tied together with his own handkerchief, and his arms closely pinioned by the servant, while the officer hurried away to the direction in which the carriage had driven off. He feared that it might have

turned aside, and so escape him, but he was delighted to find it had stopped near the wall of a house. As he drew near he observed that the door of the carriage was standing open, and a few steps from it was the slender figure of a youth, carefully enveloped in a cloak, who advanced towards him.

“Is it you, my friend?” said the figure, in an anxious voice.

“All has gone well,” whispered the officer, in reply.

The youth, seemingly relieved, extended his hand, as with the intention of leading him to the carriage; but as a light from one of the lamps gave him a view of his companion, the youth suddenly shrunk, altogether unable to utter a word.

“Fear nothing, young man,” said the officer; “get into the carriage, we shall return to the city; your youth leads me to hope that you are innocent, but I must immediately know what you have to do with that villain.”

“Oh, Heavens! I am lost,” exclaimed he, wringing his hands; “would to God that the ball had pierced my heart!”

Meanwhile the servant, with his prisoner, joined them; the officer seated himself in the carriage along with him and the young man, while the servant got up behind; and in a short time they found themselves at the house in Kralowna Unice.

It was a fresh shock to the prisoner to find his case, with all its contents, in the hands of the officers of justice.

On finding that matters were in this state, and fearing a tumult from the crowd,—whom the news of the robbery had assembled together, and who seemed to expect some great discovery,—after a few moments’ hesitation, he at length determined to lay everything before the President. When this request was conveyed to the President, he was engaged with his brother-in-law, and some other friends, but being curious to see the criminals, he gave orders to admit them. The supposed criminal was first led in; he entered the apartment with an assumed composure.

“Herr Linkowsky!” exclaimed the President, in a tone of astonishment, while the rest of the company looked at him with wonder and expectation. In a few moments after, his youthful companion was ushered in; he appeared scarcely able to support himself, from excess of agitation; he fixed his eyes on the ground, while he covered his face with both hands, and it was only by force that the officers of justice could remove them. A pair of beautiful eyes and a lovely countenance met the astonished gaze of the spectators.

“Julia! unhappy girl!” exclaimed the brother-in-law of the President, in a tone of terror, and clasping his hands together he sank insensible on his seat.

“Now, my friend,” said the old gentleman the following morning, as he reached me a pipe, “may our sentiments blend like the smoke of our pipes.”

“Have you spoken with your daughter?” said I, “and extended your parental forgiveness to her?”

“Forgive!” he replied; “you don’t seem to understand how a man should guide his children. No, no, forgiveness must not so soon follow the commission of a fault. It would only lead to its repetition. Heavens! she is all that is left to me. I have lost my wife, my only son, and she, my only consolation, would leave her old father to throw herself into the arms of an unprincipled scoundrel. It is very grievous that one must share the love of one’s only child with a villain!”

I had great difficulty in calming the old man. He depicted to me the felicity he enjoyed with his amiable wife, but added, that even while she lived the sun of his happiness began to be overcast. The whooping cough had raged in Prague, and had proved fatal to a great many children; anxiety for the life of his boy induced him to send him to his brother, on his estate near the Polish frontier; the boy was received and watched over with a father’s care, but the angel of destruction was not to be cheated of his prey. In a few weeks the child died, his brother brought him the melancholy tidings, and deeply sympathised in a father’s affliction. He bore this stroke with Christian resignation. It seemed as if Providence designed to repair this loss, by giving them the promise of another; but his wife survived her confinement but a few hours, and all that now remained to him was his daughter, that daughter who would have deserted him. “I had her instructed,” continued the old man, “in every accomplishment; no expense was spared on her education; heaven had given her a charming voice. I gave her a master, and she soon made wonderful progress. She then entreated that I would allow her to learn Italian, as she said it was the only language, combined with music, which would touch the heart.”

“But how,” said I, “could you admit such a character into your house, and by whom was he introduced to you?”

“He had been here several months before I knew it,” he replied; “one of our bankers was acquainted with him at Leipsic, and he it was who brought him to me. He gave himself out as the son of a Florentine, who, for some crime against the state, was obliged to leave Europe. This stranger was highly accomplished, was an excellent linguist, and also a finished musician; so that his society was much courted, and in short, no party was thought complete unless Buonaventura made one of it. I could not deny my daughter’s request; and Buonaventura assured me that, before a year had passed, she would speak Italian as if she were born on the banks of the Arno; but this stranger never pleased me; there was a shyness of manner, a look that could not openly meet yours. Meanwhile my daughter certainly did great credit to her master, and anyone who ventured to breathe a word against the Italian was sure to incur her displeasure. It happened that one evening when a party of young ladies were assembled, they commenced the game of Who is the most beautiful of Libussa’s daughters? and each begun to describe her in rhyme. Buonaventura called the goddess of his idolatry Julia, and in every line it was evident that the portrait of my daughter was meant. Someone told her of it, and it seemed to bewitch her, and she soon became deeply attached to him. Soon after this, I one day surprised her embroidering a purse for him: alarmed at this, I instantly forbid him the house—Julia promised to think no more

of him; and to convince me of it, she gave me all the letters she had received from him. About three months after this, some debts which he had incurred forced him to leave Prague; I was delighted at this, as I thought that absence would entirely extinguish the flame. Fool that I was! it was as vivid as ever. They corresponded, and then arrived this rascal Linkowsky, who prevailed upon her to elope with him in boy's apparel. Read that!" he exclaimed, as he took a letter from his desk; "it is short, but full of deep passion."

"Linkowsky," it began, "is the only human being, except yourself, on whom my heart relies— trust to him as love's protecting angel; he will bring you to me; it is only by such a step that the gates of happiness can be opened to us." Linkowsky had known in B— a friend of the old gentleman, and through him he obtained an introduction to the house, where he was received with the greatest hospitality. The old gentleman was charmed with his agreeable manners, which rendered him at all times a welcome guest, and his daughter lost no opportunity of instructing him how to win the favor of her father; above all, she counselled him to avoid showing a partiality for anything military, as her father could not endure them. In consequence of which he instantly laid aside his moustachios, and spoke of the military with great dislike.

"There is a widow in B—," said the old man, "whom Linkowsky assured my daughter would afford her protection for the present, and from whom she would always experience the tenderness of a parent."

"Can you describe the widow to me?" said I.

"I found a letter in my daughter's chamber," he replied, "but without signature; and the only thing that I could discover regarding her was, that she lived in K— Street."

"In K— Street!" exclaimed I, in amazement, "and a widow!"

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "and my daughter tells me that her husband was a counsellor, and that Linkowsky is nearly related to her, and resided with her the last time he was in B—."

"Her husband a counsellor, and she a widow?" said I, in still greater amazement.

"So it appears," replied my friend; "but Julia assuredly does not know her name; but, however, I shall ask her again." He desired his daughter to be called; she entered pale and dejected; grief had so changed her, that had I met her anywhere but in her father's house, I would not have recognised her; she bent down and kissed her father's hand.

"Julia," said he, "I ask you once more if you really do not know the name of the counsellor whose widow invited you to B—?" She earnestly assured him that she really did not.

"You would perhaps remember it if you heard it," said I, while I named the strangled counsellor. Julia looked as if she had heard the name before.

"Good Heavens!" said the old gentleman, "that is my old friend, the same who introduced the rascal who would have carried off my daughter."

“Merciful powers!” I exclaimed, “he has introduced his own murderer to you. Your friend is no more; the grave covers him—and it was this widow who robbed him of life.” The old gentleman was speechless from astonishment, while Julia walked to the window in agitation and doubt whether she ought to give credit to so horrible a disclosure.

“Gracious Providence!” exclaimed the old gentleman, “how appearances deceive one! for even without letters from the counsellor, I would have given up my whole heart to him. I know not what powerful feeling attracted me towards him, but I could have confided to him the most private of my affairs; and I found a singular pleasure in looking on his manly and expressive countenance. Go to your chamber, Julia,” he continued, “and thank heaven for having saved you from the hands of such a monster.” She threw a distrustful look towards me, which grieved me much, and then quitted the apartment. Scarcely had she left us when the President entered; my friend informed him of the information I had just given him.

“I do not doubt it,” he replied. “Last night I received letters from B——, which caused me to observe the criminal narrowly; he shows a determination of mind which, with my long experience, I have never seen equaled. Nothing will induce him to utter a syllable; he resolutely refuses to allow a morsel of food to pass his lips, and it is my opinion that he means to starve himself to death, to escape the hands of justice.”

“Have you searched his papers?” said I, “that will surely bring something to light.”

“They are still unopened,” he replied, “but I shall have them examined this evening.”

“May I request,” said I to the President, “that you will allow me to glance at these papers?” He paused for a moment, and then replied:

“Let it be so then; but you must come to my chamber, as I cannot allow them to go out of my hands.” We entered the carriage and drove to the President’s. The first thing that we saw was the handkerchief, with my initials. I asked how it came there.

“It belongs to the prisoner,” he answered; “it was that, with which his hands were bound the night he was taken, but I promised him he shall soon have fetters of a different kind to keep him fast.”

“He must,” said I, “have taken it away the morning he contrived to slip the forged banknotes into my pocket; but I shall retain it as a remembrance of these extraordinary events.” I then related to him my reasons for attaching so much importance to it, and he immediately acquiesced in my wish to retain it. The trunk of the criminal was now opened, and amongst his clothes were found a great many papers in Italian, French, and German. Everything was arranged with the utmost care. I can scarcely describe the eagerness with which I glanced over those papers; but the contents were of greater moment than I had even anticipated.

Before proceeding further I shall unfold the plan of the runaways. Leipsic was the place where they had appointed to meet. Buonaventura had intrusted Julia to the care of his friend, as his

greatest worldly treasure. The deepest solicitude and anxiety seemed to guide his pen. The further I read, the more the traces of crime appeared to diminish, and I felt my sympathy powerfully excited, but though not criminal, yet still he did not appear to be totally free from error; his peace of mind was evidently lost, and fate had precipitated him into an abyss of sorrow, through the means of a villain, who bound him to himself with chains of iron.

My opinion regarding these two men underwent a change which a few hours previous I little dreamt of. I gave the papers to the President, at the same time entreating, for Heaven's sake, to keep them from his brother-in-law, and then hastened home. The old gentleman had gone out, and I took advantage of his absence to soften the displeasure of his daughter towards me. I could not but remark that my presence was anything but agreeable to her, though she endeavored to overcome her dislike. I expressed my regret that my presence should be so distasteful to her, but added, that she should reflect that had it not been for me, she would have fallen into the hands of an unprincipled villain; that I had not only endeavored to soften the displeasure of her father, but that having read over the papers of Linkowsky, I was now ready to do all in my power to promote her wishes; that Buonaventura was far from being the criminal that I had imagined, and that the only thing against him was his connexion with Linkowsky; that it was my most anxious desire to give her every consolation in my power, but that she must shew no distrust of me, but meet me with the fullest confidence. She listened attentively while I spoke, then raising her dark eyes to my face, gazed fixedly on me, as if reflecting if I were acting sincerely by her. She then seized my hand, and vehemently pressing it, implored me to tell her if I indeed spoke truth. After a short time, I happily succeeded in convincing her of my sincerity. She entreated me to pardon her distrust of me, and then, in the most engaging manner possible, related how she and Buonaventura had become attached.

Little conversation passed this day at table, and I could not but feel melancholy, when I looked at the benevolent countenance of the old man, and thought how soon it would be darkened by sorrow. After dinner, I went to Leidsdorf, to bid him farewell, and requested he would make my apologies to Henneberg; and in a few hours I was on my journey to Leipsic. I was still some miles from the termination of my journey, and could with difficulty distinguish the towers of Leipao in the distance—when, upon a little rising ground to the left, I saw two men standing, one of whom pointed towards me with a stick; as they approached, I perceived that one was a shepherd, the other a stranger, who looked earnestly at the carriage through a glass. I instantly conjectured that this must be Buonaventura, and my conjecture proved right. He approached the carriage, into which he looked with great anxiety, as if in search of someone, but not finding the object of his inquiry, he suddenly crushed his hands together, as if stung by disappointment, but still remained standing by the carriage.

“Perhaps,” said I, “you expect some travelers from Prague!”

“I do, sir,” he replied; “perhaps you have encountered them?”

“They are detained,” I replied, “in a little village some miles from this, by an accident to their carriage. They cannot reach Leipsic before tomorrow, at midday, and they entreat me to take their friend, who would probably come to a considerable distance to meet them, back to town with me.[”]

The Italian turned round and looked towards the sun.

“It will be some hours before it is dark,” he replied, “so I shall continue my way, and hope to reach my friends before midnight. What,” he continued, “is the name of the village?”

“That I must not tell you,” said I, “as the youngest of your friends entreated me to keep it from you.”

“Did he indeed?” he rejoined. “Oh, she is so kind, so considerate; with your permission, then,” he added, “I shall accept of your kind offer,”—and with these words he stepped into the carriage.

“The young friend,” said I, “to whom you seem so tenderly devoted, appears to be a very amiable girl?”

“A girl!” he exclaimed, in surprise.

“Yes,” I answered, “I once saw her picture on the lid of a box.” He looked alarmed. “It is a shame,” I continued, “that she should travel with such a companion; she appears like an angel of light by the side of a demon of darkness. How can you entrust so precious a gem to a David Linkowsky!”

“Sir, he is a man of honour,” he replied, “a man whose friendship I am proud to possess; but how do you know—I cannot imagine—[”]

“Friendship!” interrupted I, “’tis easy to conceive what kind of friendship that must be which had its origin in a house where a midnight murder was committed, and an intimacy commenced during the flight in consequence of it.”

“Heavenly powers!” exclaimed my companion—“who are you? your words make me shudder.”

“’Tis no wonder that you tremble,” said I, “to have such a friend! but be calm, it is not yet the hour for spectres—your conscience may be quiet for the clock has not yet tolled one, and you see I am alone.”

The Italian became pale as death, and starting from his seat would have sprung from the carriage,

“Be composed, Buonaventura,” said I, “and thank God for having saved you from the fangs of a demon, and torn asunder the disgraceful bonds in which he held you. Linkowsky has fallen into the hands of justice, and it is doubtful whether he is yet alive. Julia is not on her way to hasten to your arms, but she is in her father’s house; but I, who bring you this disappointment, am also love’s messenger, and should the inquiries which I must make prove satisfactory, I shall return with you to Prague, and hope to unite two hearts which have suffered so deeply for their errors.” Buonaventura listened to me in speechless astonishment, and overwhelmed with shame and confusion, he covered his face with his hands and wept. After various questions, I at length asked if he was present at the Counsellor’s murder? He solemnly swore, that at the time it happened he

knew nothing of it, but that after the event he suspected it, but never had the courage to ask the murderer anything concerning it.

“Then hope the best,” said I, “and tomorrow we shall return to Prague.” We spent most of the night together, and if I gained on Buonaventura’s confidence, he rose rapidly in my estimation. The more I saw of him, the more deeply did I deplore that a mind so noble should have been tarnished by the seduction of the world. I asked my companion if he knew the Hofraadinde; he assured me he had never spoken to her, but that he had frequently met her in company, when Linkowsky always paid her the most marked attentions.

We returned to Prague. I stopped at the place where I had formerly lodged, and desiring my companion not to quit the house for the present, I bent my steps towards my old friend’s dwelling. I found him seated at the tea table; Julia was pouring out his coffee, and it gratified me much to observe that confidence seemed again restored between them. Julia appeared to greet me with pleasure, and she trembled a little as she handed me my cup. Linkowsky, they informed me, was still alive, but death hovered over him; he continued to refuse all sustenance, lay immovable upon his bed, and no one could force a word from him.

After some time I led the conversation to Buonaventura, and I could easily perceive how much the old gentleman was surprised at the different style in which I now talked of him. It was in vain that I tried to moderate his indignation against him; but from the benevolence and mildness of his disposition, I did not lose hope of accomplishing this at some future period.

About eight days after his imprisonment Linkowsky died, and though his last struggles were violent in the extreme, he did not allow one exclamation to escape him. Determined to accomplish my purpose, I never ceased speaking in favor of the Italian, until I softened in some degree, the displeasure of the old gentleman. The president gave a splendid entertainment, at which Julia was to appear in her brilliancy and beauty. Buonaventura could not deny himself the gratification of stealing a glance at Julia as she stepped from the carriage. I could not join the party at the president’s, having engaged myself at Henneberg’s. The entertainment passed off with great eclat, and although there was scarcely a countenance there that was not a lovely one, still Julia was acknowledged by all, to be queen of the night. The company continued their amusement with great spirit till a late hour, when the elder part of it began to retire, leaving the young people to continue their enjoyments; but Julia’s father had promised to remain to the last.

The president now hastily called a servant to attend one of the guests who was departing, and in his haste to obey this summons, the domestic carelessly set a lamp on a table in the cabinet of the president! A lustre hung above it, over which was thrown a gauze covering; this instantly caught fire, and a dense smoke quickly filled the apartments, while flames began to burst forth; the company, seized with affright, ran against each other and rushed towards the staircase.

While the president was at the other end of the house, and found it impossible to force his way through the crowd, his brother-in-law recollecting that he had some valuable papers in a closet adjoining his cabinet, hurried to the spot, and seizing a box gave it in charge to a servant, with orders to carry at home immediately and place it in his chamber.—Meanwhile the fire was happily extinguished, and the old gentleman hastened home with Julia; but the fright he had

undergone would not permit him to sleep, and after tossing in bed for some time, he impatiently arose, and his eyes happening to fall upon the box which he had sent from the president's, and thinking that it might possibly contain Linkowsky's papers, which his brother-in-law had not yet shown him, he could not resist the desire of opening it. His supposition was correct. After glancing over several, he took from amongst them a letter addressed to a lady whose name was not unknown to him or to the reader, and in which he imparted to her some remarkable circumstances. The old man was standing while he read—suddenly his hand trembled—his countenance became pale as death, and he fell insensible to the ground. David Linkowsky was his own son.

David Linkowsky was, indeed, the son of my old friend. The boy had not been long with his uncle, when one evening a band of robbers attacked the house, to which they set fire, and along with the plunder, carried [off] the child to Poland, with the intention of selling him as a serf to some nobleman. His uncle believing that the boy had been murdered, and fearing the reproaches of his brother, he told him that his son had died of the very whooping cough which they had so much dreaded. An Illyrian who was in the Venetian service, saw the boy, took a fancy to him, and bought him; he treated him with the greatest kindness, educated him, and taught him drawing, the only thing for which he showed a decided partiality. But when he grew up, he repaid his benefactor's kindness with the blackest ingratitude, deserted him in a dangerous illness, went to Venice, and from that, travelled through the greatest part of Italy.

His engaging appearance and manners gained him admittance into many families, but under the most polished exterior he concealed a depraved and vicious heart. His powers of fascination won many an amiable heart, but pure feelings found no corresponding ones in his bosom, and the most devoted affection had no influence over him. He wandered over the Alps, and in the south of France he became acquainted with Cæsar Buonaventura; without a guide and with no object in view, this unhappy young man wandered through the world. The turbulent and seditious spirit of his father had occasioned his banishment from Florence, and he left his son in a very desolate situation. With no one to love him, he clung to Linkowsky with all the confiding feelings of his nature; however, he was not long in discovering something of the evil spirit, to whose guidance he had given himself up; yet he did not possess energy sufficient to free himself from the bonds, in which the more powerful mind of Linkowsky held him prisoner, and with reluctance he allowed himself to be dragged by him into the haunts of vice. A passion more powerful, and of longer continuance than usual, now took possession of Linkowsky's mind.

A woman whose grace and beauty were universally acknowledged, had at length touched his heart, and he gave her more of his confidence than he had ever before done to any human being. Linkowsky and his mistress had appointed a meeting, and Buonaventura promised to watch in the antechamber, to prevent their being surprised; but he witnessed a scene that night, which destroyed his peace, and had nearly deprived him of his senses. This house is branded in the history of human crime, as the scene of the horrible murder of Fauldes, and Linkowsky's mistress was that very Madame Manson, whose beauty and fascination had so powerful an influence upon her judges. It was from her that he had received the watch and brooch, which were found in his possession; and it was to her that the letter was addressed, in which he imparted to her all his youthful feelings and recollections, even from the days of his childhood. He depicted to her the burning of his uncle's property, and the wild plunderers who had carried

him off; he also related to her, in the most interesting manner, how his father, whom he never could recollect under any other circumstance, had taken him one evening to see a windmill which had taken fire, and who said to him, whilst pointing to its [blazing] arms—

“Look, my child, it is thus that the chastising angel stretches forth his arm to punish wicked men and children who will not obey their parents.”

It was this circumstance which revealed to the old gentleman that Linkowsky was his son. While Buonaventura was concealed in this chamber, Bankal, the landlord of the house, and his accomplices, entered, and locking the doors they proceeded to execute their bloody purpose; but on discovering Buonaventura, they instantly seized him, and terrified that he would betray them, they determined to make him an accomplice in their crime. They forced him into an adjoining closet, where the horrible deed was committed, and compelled him to hold the vessel in which they shed the blood of their unhappy victim, and from that time the miserable Buonaventura shuddered even to look upon the hands which had been thus polluted, and whenever the clock struck one he trembled, and involuntarily clasped them together.

Bankal and his companions having completed the bloody purpose, hastened to carry the body to the river, and Buonaventura and Linkowsky seized the opportunity of their absence to escape from the house. They immediately took to flight and were soon a considerable way from the scene of crime.

They fixed on Basil as their place of residence, where Linkowsky gave instructions in drawing, and Buonaventura taught Italian; but with all Linkowsky's powers of persuasion, he could not prevail on his companion to remain long with him—Buonaventura went first to Leipsic, and from that to Prague, while Linkowsky took his departure for B—, where, from want of money, he was forced to dispose of his brooch and watch to a jeweler. While at B—, he happened one evening to meet the counsellor's lady at a party, and during the games of the evening, he was desired to kiss the hand of the lady in company whom he thought he could love with most truth and fidelity; he chose the Hofraadinde, and this compliment gained him her favour; he accompanied her home, was received by her husband with great hospitality, and was soon upon the most intimate footing in the house. But notwithstanding this, his visits were not frequent, and he never went to the house when the counsellor was from home. He soon obtained an extraordinary influence over the Hofraadinde, they often met elsewhere, as Linkowsky always felt unpleasant at the counsellor's[,] perhaps from the sight of his watch and brooch, which the latter had bought from the jeweller to whom he had sold it, as a present to his nephew, whose promotion he shortly expected.

About a week before Linkowsky strangled the counsellor, Buonaventura arrived in B—, Linkowsky soon saw how deep his attachment was to Julia, and he was delighted to learn from him that her father was a man of fortune.

He fervently entreated him not to lose hope, and suggested several plans by which he might accomplish his wishes, and gave him every assurance of his unchanged regard and interest in him, and he concluded by saying,

“Be composed, my friend, I shall go myself and bring your Julia, when once you are married the old gentleman must forgive you; and were my beloved but separated from the counsellor, then we would all go to some delightful valley in Switzerland, and enjoy our happiness unseen by all the world.”

A lover’s heart could not withstand anything that held out hope to him, and throwing himself into the arms of his friend, he gave himself up to his guidance; but while he beguiled the credulous Buonaventura with a picture of future fecility, the murderous plan was already formed in his breast; everything was arranged, and he determined that the 12th of August should secure to his mistress the possession of her fortune. In the morning the counsellor wrote the letter he requested, to his old friend in Prague, and by night he lay murdered in his bed.

The President was not a little alarmed, when, on the morning after the fire, he missed the box with Linkowsky’s papers, and learnt who had taken them; he hastened to his brother-in-law’s, found him stretched upon his bed, and the box with the papers lying open on the table; he hurried towards the bed, and in the deepest anxiety seized his hand; he found him almost speechless, but the physician whom he summoned gave him hope of his recovery. Julia and Buonaventura never quitted his couch; in a few days he sat amongst us again; he was pale and depressed, it is true, but perfectly resigned to the stroke of fate.

Some weeks after this I quitted Prague, leaving Julia and Buonaventura a betrothed pair. I carried away the handkerchief to B—, and carefully preserve it. I found Mastorf restored to health, his fortune was secured to him; whether or not the Hofraadinde had participated in the murder of her husband, I could never learn; it rests with her conscience.

Bizarre: For Fireside and Wayside, May 21, May 28, & June 4, 1853