

Joseph Victor von Scheffel

Ekkehard



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Historical Novel - A Tale of the Tenth Century

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PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

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Heine, that sharp-witted and unsparing critic once said that the relation of translator to author, were about the same as that of a monkey to a human being,--while Gœthe, a man of larger mind and more harmonious nature, compared the translator to a prophet, quoting a verse from the Koran which says: "God gives a prophet to every nation in its own tongue."--For sixteen years the following "Tale,"--which since its first appearance has made and held its place, not only in the esteem, but in the hearts of the German reading public, and which has already been translated into several languages,--has waited in vain for an *English "prophet"* to render it into that tongue, which being that most akin to the German language, is therefore, also the one best fitted for this purpose. It is true that the peculiarity of the style, which in the original is so wonderfully adapted to the matter it treats, as well as the number of old German words, might have proved a not inconsiderable difficulty for any but a German translator, and therefore, it is to be hoped, that the venturesome attempt of a German girl to render the book into English, may be excused. It need hardly be said, that with regard to expression she may often have need to appeal to the indulgence of the reader, but perhaps these defects may at least in some degree be compensated, by the strict, truthful adherence to the original, and further it should be observed that great care has been taken in choosing words of Saxon derivation whenever they were to

be had. Her love for the book, and her admiration for the writer thereof, have made her spare no trouble in this undertaking, and if she could but hope to win some friends to "Ekkehard" in an English dress, she would deem herself amply repaid for the many hours spent over this work. May her critics "take all in all," and treat her *fairly!*

Heidelberg, December, 1871.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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This book was written with the firm belief that neither history nor poetry will lose anything, by forming a close alliance, and uniting their strength by working together.

For the last thirty years or so, the bequest of our ancestors has been the subject of universal investigation. A swarm of busy moles have undermined the ground of the middle-ages in all directions, and produced by their untiring industry such a quantity of old material, as to surprise even the collectors themselves. A whole literature, beautiful and perfect in itself; an abundance of monuments of the plastic art; a well organized political and social life, lies extended before our eyes. And yet all the labour and goodwill spent on this subject, has hardly succeeded in spreading to wider circles, pleasure and interest in this newly won historical knowledge. The numberless volumes stand quietly on the shelves of our libraries. Here and there, well-to-do spiders have begun to spin their cobwebs, and the pitiless, all-covering dust has come too, so that the thought is hardly improbable, that all this old German splendour, but just conjured back into life, may one morning at cockcrow fade away and be buried in the dust and mouldering rubbish of the Past,--like to that weird cloister by the lake, the existence of which is only betrayed by the faint low tinkle of the bell, deep, deep under the waters.

This is not the place to examine how far this result is attributable to the ways and methods of our scientific men.

The accumulation of antiquarian lore, as well as the accumulation of gold, may become a passion, which collects and scrapes together for the sake and pleasure of scraping; quite forgetting that the metal which has been won, needs to be purified, remelted, and put to use. For else, what do we attain by it? Merely the being for ever confined within the narrow limits of the rough material; an equal valuation of the unimportant and the important; an unwillingness ever to finish and conclude anything, because here and there some scrap might still be added, which would lend a new significance to the subject;--and finally a literature *of* scholars *for* scholars, which the majority of the nation passes by with indifference and while looking up at the blue sky feel intensely grateful to their Creator, that *they* need read nothing of it.--

The writer of this book,--in the sunny days of his youth,--once took a ramble with some friends through the Roman Campagna. There, they lit on the remains of an old monument, and amongst other rubbish and fragments, there lay, half hidden by dark green acanthus leaves, a heap of mosaic stones, which, united into a fine picture with graceful ornaments, had formerly adorned the floor of a grave. Then, there arose a lively discussion as to what all the dispersed square little stones might have represented, when they were still united. One, a student of archæology, took up some of the pieces, to examine whether they were black or white marble. A second who occupied himself with historical studies, talked very learnedly about ancient sepulchres;--meanwhile a third had quietly sat down on the old wall, taken out his sketch-book and drawn a fine chariot

with four prancing steeds, and charioteers, and around it some handsome Ionic ornaments. He had discovered in a corner of the floor, some insignificant remains of the old picture; horses feet and fragments of a chariot wheel, and at once the whole design stood clearly before his mind, and he dashed it down with a few bold strokes, whilst the others dealt in words merely ...

This little incident may serve to throw some light on the question, how one can work with success, at the historical resurrection of the Past. Surely, this can be done then only, when to a creative, reproducing imagination are given its full rights; when he who digs out the old bodies, breathes upon them the breath of a living soul, so that they may rise and walk about, like the resuscitated dead.

In this sense, the historical novel may become what epic poetry was in the time of the blooming youth of the nations,--a piece of national history, in the conception of the artist, who within a certain space, shows us a series of distinctly-drawn, clearly coloured figures, in whose individual lives, strivings and sufferings, the life and substance of the time in which they lived, is reflected as in a mirror.

Erected on the basis of historical studies, and embracing the beautiful and important part of an epoch, the historical novel may well claim to be the twin brother of history; and those who, shrugging their shoulders are inclined to reject the former as the production of an arbitrary and falsifying caprice, will please to remember, that history as it is generally written, is also but a traditional conglomeration of the true and the false, which merely by its greater

clumsiness is prevented from filling up the occasional gaps, as the more graceful poesy can do.

If all the signs are not deceiving us, our present time is in a peculiar state of transition.

In all branches of knowledge, the perception is gaining ground, how intensely our thinking and feeling has been damaged by the supremacy of the Abstract and of Phraseology. Here and there, efforts are being made, to return from dry, colourless, hyperbolic abstractions, to the tangible, living, glowing Concrete; from idle self-contemplation, into close relation with life and the present, and from hackneyed formulas and patterns, to an investigating analysis of nature, and a creative productivity, instead of mere barren criticism.

Who knows, but our grandchildren may yet live to see the day, when people will speak of many a former colossus of science, with the same smiling veneration, as of the remains of a gigantic antediluvian animal; and when one may avow, without fear of being cried down as a barbarian, that in a jug of good old wine, there is as much wisdom, as in many a voluminous production of dry dialectics.

To the restitution of a serene, unbiassed view of things, adorned by poetry, the following work would wish to contribute; taking its materials out of our German Past.

Amongst the vast collection of valuable matter, enclosed in the big folios of the "*Monumenta Germaniae*" by Pertz, are the tales of the monasteries in St. Gall, which monk Ratpert began, and Ekkehard the younger (called also the fourth, to distinguish him, from three other members of the

cloister, bearing the same name), continued till the end of the 10th century.

Whoever has painfully tracked his weary road, through the many unsatisfactory dry-as-dust chronicles of other monasteries, will linger with real pleasure and inward delight, over these last named annals. There, one finds, in spite of manifold prejudices and awkwardnesses, an abundance of graceful and interesting tales, taken from accounts of eye and ear witnesses. Persons and circumstances are drawn with rough, but distinct lineaments, whilst a sort of unconscious poetry,--a thoroughly honest and genuine view of life and the world, as well as a naïve freshness and originality, puts a stamp of truth and genuineness on everything that is told; even when persons and events are not strictly subjected to the laws of time; and when a very tangible anachronism, causes very slight uneasiness to the chronicler.

Quite unintentionally, these sketches lead one far beyond the boundaries of the cloister-walls; painting the life and ways, the education and customs of the *Allemannic* country,¹ as it then was, with all the fidelity of a picture painted from nature. Times were pleasant then in the south-western part of Germany, and everyone who prefers a striving and healthy, though rough and imperfect strength, to a certain varnished finish, will feel much sympathy with them. The beginning of church and state,--whilst a considerable roughness, tempered by much natural kindness, still clung to the people in general; the feudal spirit, so pernicious to all later development, as yet harmless, in its first stage of existence; no supercilious,

overbearing knighthood, and wanton ignorant priesthood as yet,--but rough, plainspoken, honest fellows, whose social intercourse frequently consisted in an extended system of verbal and real injuries, but who, under their coarse husk, hid an excellent kernel; susceptible of all good and noble things. Scholars, who in the morning translate Aristotle into German, and go wolf-hunting in the evening; noble ladies, full of enthusiasm for the old classics; peasants, in whose memory the old heathen beliefs of their forefathers still exist, unimpaired and side by side with the new christian creed,--in short, everywhere primitive but vigorous life, and conditions under which one feels inclined without contempt or rational ire, to put up even with sprites and hobgoblins.

In spite of political discord and a certain indifference towards the empire, of which Saxony had become the central point, there was much courage and valour, inspiring even monks in their cells, to exchange the breviary for the sword, in order to resist the Hungarian invasion; and although there were many elements opposed to science, serious study and much enthusiasm for the classics were preserved.

The highly frequented cloister-schools were full of zealous disciples, and the humane principles taught there, remind one of the best times in the 16th century. Besides this, the fine arts began to bud,--some eminent minds rising here and there above the multitude; a general culture of national history, though mostly dressed up in outlandish garments.

No wonder then, that the author of this book, when making some other researches concerning the first stages of

the middle-ages, chancing to meet with those chronicles, felt like a man, who after long wanderings through a barren unfertile land, comes suddenly upon a comfortable wayside inn; which, with excellent kitchen and cellar, and a lovely view from the windows, offers all that heart could desire.

So he began to settle down in that cozy nook, and by diligently exploring the surrounding land, to gain the best possible knowledge of the country and people who lived in it.

But the poet meets with a peculiar fate, when trying to acquaint himself with the old Past. Where others, into whose veins nature has instilled some "*aqua fortis*,"--as the result of their labours produce many an abstract theory, and a quantity of instructive deductions,--to him appear a host of fantastic figures, that, at first surrounded by floating mists, become always clearer and clearer; and they look at him with pleading eyes, dance around his couch in midnight hours, and always whisper to him, "give us a living form."

Thus it was here. Out of the old Latin cloister-tales there arose, like rocks out of the water, the towers and walls of the monastery of St. Gall. Scores of grey-headed, venerable friars wandered up and down in the ancient cross-passages; behind the old manuscripts sat those who had once written them; the cloister-pupils played merrily in the courtyard; from the choir rose the solemn chaunts at midnight, and from the tower the clear sound of the bugle announced the approach of visitors. But before all other forms, there arose in dazzling beauty, that noble, haughty Dame, who carried off the youthful master from the quiet and peace of the cloister of St. Gall, to her rocky castle high over the

Bodensee, there, to teach and propagate the old classics. The simple account given by the chronicler, of that quiet life, dedicated to the study of Virgil, is in itself a piece of poetry as beautiful and genuine as can be found anywhere.

He, however, who is beset by such apparitions cannot exorcise them otherwise, but by doing their will; trying to condense and fix their fleeting shapes. And not having read in vain in the old stories, how "Notker the stutterer," once treated similar visions, viz. by taking a strong hazel wand and therewith belabouring the spectres, until they revealed unto him their finest songs,--I also took to my arms, the steel-pen, and saying good-bye to the old folios which had been the sources of all these visionary fancies, I betook myself to the ground which had once been trodden by the Duchess Hadwig, and her contemporaries.

There, I sat in the venerable library of St. Gallus; took long rows in little rocking boats over the Bodensee; found a nest for myself under the old linden-tree at the foot of the Hohentwiel, where a worthy old Suabian bailiff has at present charge of the ruins of the ancient fortress, and finally climbed the airy Alpine heights of the Säntis, where the "*Wildkirchlein*" hangs like an eagle's nest over the green valley of Appenzell. There, in the wards of the "*Suabian Sea*," mind and soul filled with the life of bygone generations; the heart refreshed by warm sunshine and balmy mountain air, I first sketched and then completed the greater part of this story.

That not much has been said therein, which is not founded on conscientious historical studies, can be boldly asserted; though persons and dates have sometimes been

dealt with a little freely. The poet, in order to enhance the inward harmony of his work, may occasionally take liberties which would be most blameworthy, if indulged in by the strict historian. And yet the great historian Macaulay himself says: "I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history if I can succeed in placing before the English of the 19th century, a true picture of the life of their ancestors."

Following the advice of some competent judges, I have given in an appendix some proofs and references to the sources out of which I have taken my materials, in order to satisfy those, who might otherwise be inclined to treat the subject as a mere fable or idle invention. Those, however, who do not require these same proofs to believe in the genuineness of the matter, are requested not to trouble themselves further with the notes, as they are otherwise of little import, and would be quite superfluous, if this book did not go out into the world in the garb of a novel, which is somewhat open to the suspicion of playing carelessly with facts and truths.²

The attacks of the critics will be received with great imperturbability. "A tale of the 10th century?" will they exclaim. "Who rideth so late, through night and wind?" And has it not been printed in the last manual of our national literature, in the chapter treating of the national novel: "If we ask which epoch in German history might be best suited to combine the local with the national interests, we must begin by excluding the middle-ages. Even the times of the Hohenstaufen, can only be treated in a lyrical style, as all

efforts in other directions, are sure to turn out utter failures."

All the scruples and objections of those who prefer an anatomizing criticism, to a harmless enjoyment, and who spend all their strength in trying to force the German spirit into an Alexandrine or Byzantine form,--these have already been well answered by a literary lady of the tenth century, viz. the venerable nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim, who wrote in happy, self-conscious pleasure in her own work, in the preface to her graceful comedies: "If anybody should derive pleasure, from these my modest productions, I shall be much pleased thereat; but if on the contrary, on account of the objectivity displayed therein, or of the roughness of an imperfect style, it should please no one, then at least I myself shall take pleasure in that which I have created."

Heidelberg, February, 1855.

J. V. Scheffel.

¹ The *Allemannic* land or *Allemannia* as it was then called, consisted of part of the present Würtemberg, Baden and Lothringen; where a dialect, called "*Allematmisch*" has been preserved to the present day.

² These notes, for the greatest part have been omitted, as being of no possible interest to the English reader.

CHAPTER I.

Hadwig, the Duchess of Suabia.

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It was almost a thousand years ago. The world knew as yet nothing of gunpowder or the art of printing.

Over the Hegau there hung a gloomy leaden grey sky, corresponding to the mental darkness, which, according to general opinion, oppressed the whole time of the middle ages. From the lake of Constance white mists floated over the meads, covering up the whole country. Even the tower of the new church at Radolfszell was thickly enveloped, but the matinbell had rung merrily through mist and fog like the words of a sensible man, which pierce the cloudy atmosphere, that fools create.

It is a lovely part of Germany which lies there, between the Blackforest and the Suabian lake. All those who are not too strict and particular with poetical similes, may be reminded of the following words of the poet:

"Ah fair is the Allemannic land
With its bright transparent sky;
And fair is its lake, so clear and blue
Like a bonny maiden's eye;
Like yellow locks, the corn-clad fields
Surround this picture fair:
And to a genuine German face
This land one may compare."

--though the continuation of this allegory might tempt one to celebrate either of the Hegau mountains, as the prominent feature on the face of this country.

Sternly the summit of the Hohentwiel, with its craggy points and pinnacles rises into the air. Like monuments of the stormy stirring Past of our old mother Earth those steep picturesque mountain-pyramids rise from the plains which were once covered by undulating waves, as the bed of the present lake is now. For the fish and sea-gulls it must have been a memorable day, when the roaring and hissing began in the depths below, and the fiery basaltic masses, made their way, rising out of the very bowels of earth, above the surface of the waters. But that was long, long ago, and the sufferings of those, who were pitilessly annihilated in that mighty revolution, have long been forgotten. Only the hills are there still to tell the weird tale. There they stand, unconnected with their neighbours, solitary and defiant; as those, who with fiery glowing hearts break through the bars and fetters of existing opinions, must always be. Whether they in their inmost heart have still a recollection of the glorious time of their youth, when they greeted this beautiful upper world, for the first time with a jubilant cry, who knows?

At the time when our story begins, the Hohentwiel was crested already by stately towers and walls. This fortress had been held during his lifetime by Sir Burkhard, Duke of Suabia. He had been a valiant knight, and done many a good day's fighting in his time. The enemies of the Emperor, were also his, and so there was always work to do. If everything was quiet in Italy, then the Normans became

troublesome, and when these were fairly subjugated, perhaps the Hungarians would make an invasion, or some bishop or mighty earl grew insolent and rebellious, and had to be put down. In this way Sir Burkhard had spent his days more in the saddle than in the easy-chair, and it was not to be wondered at, that he had gained for himself the reputation of great valour and bravery.

In Suabia it was said that he reigned like a true despot; and in far off Saxony the monks wrote down in their chronicles, that he had been an almost "invincible warrior."

Before Sir Burkhard was gathered to his forefathers, he had chosen a spouse for himself, in the person of the young Princess Hadwig, daughter of the Duke of Bavaria. But the evening-glow of a declining life is but ill matched with the light of the morning-star. Such a union is against nature's laws and Dame Hadwig had accepted the old Duke of Suabia, merely to please her father. It is true that she had nursed and tended him well, and held his grey hairs in honour; but when the old man laid himself down to die, grief did not break her heart.

When all was over, she buried him in the vault of his ancestors, erected a monument of grey sandstone to his memory, placed an everburning lamp over his grave, and sometimes, not too often, came down there to pray.

Thus Dame Hadwig lived now all alone in the castle of Hohentwiel. She remained in possession of all the landed property of her husband, with the full rights to do with it what she pleased. Besides this she was lady patroness of the bishopric of Constance and all the cloisters near the lake, and the emperor had given her a bill of feoffment

signed and sealed by his own hand, by which the regency of Suabia remained her own, as long as she kept true to her widowhood. The young widow possessed a very aristocratic mind and no ordinary amount of beauty. Her nose however was a trifle short, the lovely lips had a strong tendency to pout, and in her boldly projecting chin, the graceful dimple so becoming to women, was not to be found. All those whose features are thus formed, unite to a clear intellect, a not over tender heart, and their disposition is more severe than charitable. For this reason the Duchess in spite of her soft beautiful complexion, inspired many of her subjects with a sort of trembling awe.--On that misty day mentioned before, the Duchess was standing at one of her chamber-windows, looking out into the distance. She wore a steelgrey undergarment, which fell down in graceful folds on her embroidered sandals; and over this a tightfitting black tunic, reaching to the knees. In the girdle, encircling her waist, there glittered a large precious beryl. Her chestnut brown hair was confined within a net of gold thread, but round her clear forehead some stray curls played unrestrainedly. On a small table of white marble, stood a fantastically shaped vessel of dark green bronze, in which some foreign frankincense was burning, sending its fragrant white little cloudlets up to the ceiling. The walls were covered with many-coloured finely woven tapestry.

There are days when one is dissatisfied with everything and everybody, and if one were suddenly transported into paradise itself, even paradise would not give contentment. At such times the thoughts wander gloomily from this to that subject, not knowing on what to fix themselves,--out of

every corner a distorted face seems grinning at us, and he who is gifted with a very fine ear, may even hear the derisive laughter of the goblins. It is a belief in those parts that the universal contrariety of such days, arises from people having stepped out of bed with their left foot foremost; which is held to be in direct opposition to nature.

Under the spell of such a day, the Duchess was labouring just now. She wanted to look out of the window, and a subtle wind blew the mist right into her face, which annoyed her. She began to cough hastily, but no doubt if the whole country had lain before her bathed in sunshine, she would have found fault with that also.

Spazzo the chamberlain had come in meanwhile and stood respectfully waiting near the entrance. He threw a smiling complacent look on his outward equipment, feeling sure to attract his mistress's eye to-day, for he had put on an embroidered shirt of finest linen and a splendid sapphire coloured upper-garment, with purple seams. Everything was made in the latest fashion; and the bishop's tailor at Constance had brought the articles over only the day before.

The wolf-dog of the knight of Friedingen had killed two lambs of the ducal herd; therefore Master Spazzo intended to make his dutiful report and obtain Dame Hadwig's princely opinion, whether he should conclude a peaceful agreement with the dog's master, or whether he were to bring in a suit at the next session of the tribunal, to have him fined and sentenced to pay damages. So he began his well-prepared speech, but before he had got to the end, he saw the duchess make a sign, the meaning of which could

not remain unintelligible to a sensible man. She put her forefinger first up to her forehead, and then pointed with it to the door. So the chamberlain perceived that it was left to his own wits, not only to find the best expedient with regard to the lambs,--but also to take himself off as quickly as possible. With a profound bow he withdrew accordingly.

In clear tones Dame Hadwig called out now: "Praxedis!"--and when the person thus named did not instantly make her appearance, she repeated in sharper accents, "Praxedis!"

It was not long before Praxedis with light, graceful steps entered the closet. Praxedis was waiting-maid to the Duchess of Suabia. She was a Greek and a living proof, that the son of the Byzantine Emperor Basilius had once asked the fair Hadwig's hand in marriage. He had made a present of the clever child, well instructed in music and the art of the needle, together with many jewels and precious stones, to the German duke's daughter, and in return had received a refusal. At that time one could give away human beings, as well as buy and sell them. Liberty was not everybody's birthright. But a slavery, such as the Greek child had to endure, in the ducal castle in Suabia, was not a very hard lot.

Praxedis had a small head with pale delicate features; out of which a pair of large dark eyes looked into the world, unspeakably sad one moment and in the next sparkling with merriment. Her hair was arranged over her forehead in heavy braids, like a coronet. She was very beautiful.

"Praxedis, where is the starling?" said Dame Hadwig.

"I will bring it," replied the Greek maid; and she went and fetched the black little fellow, who sat in his cage, with an

important impudent air, as if his existence were filling up a vast gap in the universe. The starling had made his fortune at Hadwig's wedding-feast. An old fiddler and juggler had taught him with infinite pains, to repeat a Latin wedding-speech, and great was the merriment, when at the banquet the bird was put on the table, to say his lesson, "A new star has risen on the Suabian firmament, its name is Hadwig. Hail all hail!" and so forth.

But this was not all the knowledge which the starling possessed. Besides these rhymes, he could also recite the Lord's prayer. Now the bird was very obstinate, and had his caprices, as well as the Duchess of Suabia.

On this particular day, the latter must have been thinking of old times, and the starling was to deliver the wedding-speech. The starling, however, had one of his pious moods, and when Praxedis brought him into the chamber he called out solemnly: "Amen!" and when Dame Hadwig gave him a piece of gingerbread, and asked him in coaxing tones: "what was the name of the star on the Suabian firmament, my pretty one?"--he slowly responded: "Lead us not into temptation." But when she whispered to him to brighten his memory: "The star's name is Hadwig, all hail!"--then the starling continuing in his pious strain, said: "And deliver us from evil."--

"What, do birds even become insolent now?" exclaimed Dame Hadwig angrily. "Pussy, where art thou?" and she enticed towards her the black cat, which had long had an evil eye upon the starling, and who crept near softly, but with glittering eyes.

Dame Hadwig opened the cage, and left the bird to its mercy, but the starling, although the sharp claws had got hold of him already, ruffling and tearing his feathers, yet managed to escape, and flew out at the open window.

In a few moments he had become a mere black speck in the mist.

"Well, now really I might as well have kept him in the cage," said Dame Hadwig, "Praxedis, what dost thou think?"

"My mistress is always right whatever she does," replied the Greek maiden.

"Praxedis," continued the Duchess, "go and fetch me my trinkets. I wish to put on a bracelet."

So Praxedis, the everwilling, went away, and returned with the casket of jewels. This casket was made of silver; on it a few figures had been embossed, representing the Saviour as the good Shepherd; St. Peter with the keys and St. Paul with the sword, and around these, manifold leaves and twisted ornaments. Probably it had served for the keeping of relics formerly. Sir Burkhard had once brought it home, but he did not like to speak about it; for he returned at that time from a feud, in which he had vanquished and heavily thrown some bishop of Burgundy.

When the Duchess opened the casket, the rich jewels sparkled and glittered beautifully on their red velvet lining. Looking at such tokens of remembrance, many old memories came floating up to the surface again. Amongst other things there lay also the miniature of the Greek prince Constantine, smooth, pretty and spiritless, it had been painted by the Byzantine master on a background of gold.

"Praxedis," said Dame Hadwig, "how would it have been, if I had given my hand to that yellow-cheeked peaknosed prince of yours."

"My liege Lady," was the answer, "I am sure that it would have been well."

"Well," continued Dame Hadwig, "tell me something about your own dull home. I should like to know what my entrance into Constantinopolis would have been like."

"Oh, princess," said Praxedis, "my home is beautiful," and with a melancholy look her dark eyes gazed into the misty distance--"and such a dreary sky at least, would have been spared you on the Marmora sea. Even you would have uttered a cry of surprise, when carried along by the proud galley, past the seven towers, the glittering masses of palaces, cupolas, churches, everything of dazzling white marble from the quarries of Prokonnesos, had first burst on our sight. From the blue waves the stately waterlily, proudly lifts her snowy petals, here a wood of dark cypress trees, there the gigantic cupola of the Hagia Sophia; on one side the long stretched cape of the Golden Horn, and opposite on the Asiatic shore, another magnificent city. And like a golden blue girdle, the sea, freighted with its innumerable ships, encircles this magic sight,--oh, my mistress, even in my dreams far away here in the Suabian land, I cannot realize the splendour of that view. And then, when the sun has sunk down, and the sable night steals over the glittering waves, then everything is bathed in blue Greek fire, in honour of the royal bride. Now we enter the port. The big chain which usually bars it, drops down before the bridal ship. Torches burn on the shore. There stand the emperor's body-guard,

the Waragians with their two edged battle-axes, and the blue-eyed Normans; there the patriarch with innumerable priests; everywhere one hears music and shouts of joy, and the imperial prince in the bloom of youth, welcomes his betrothed, and the royal train direct their steps towards the palace of Blacharnae... "

"And all this splendour I have thrown away," sneered Dame Hadwig. "Praxedis, thy picture is not complete, for on the following day, comes the patriarch, to hold a sharp discourse with the western Christian, and to instruct her in all the heresies, which flourish on the barren, arid soil of your religion, like deadly nightshade and henbane. Then I am instructed what to believe of their monkish pictures and the decrees of the Councils of Chalcedon and Nicaea. After him comes the mistress of the ceremonies, to teach me the laws of etiquette and court-manners; what expression to wear on my face, and how to manage my train; when to prostrate myself before the emperor and when to embrace my mother-in-law. Further, how to treat this favourite with courtesy, and to use this or that monstrous form of speech, in addressing some wonderful personage: 'If it please your Eminence, your Highness, your adorable Greatness!'-- Whatever can be called originality and natural strength is nipped in the bud, and my Lord and Master turns out to be a painted doll like the rest. Then perhaps some fine morning the enemy appears before the gates, or the successor is not to the liking of the blues and greens of the Circus; revolution rages through the streets, and the German duke's daughter is put into a convent bereft of her eyesight... what good does it do her then, that her children were addressed as

their Highnesses when still in the cradle? Therefore, Praxedis, I did not go to Constantinople!"

"The emperor is the Master of the universe, and his will is for ever just," said the Greek, "so I have been taught to believe."

"Hast thou ever reflected, that it is a very precious boon, for a man to be his own master?"

"No," said Praxedis.

The turn which the conversation had taken pleased the Duchess.

"What account of me did your Byzantine painter, who was sent to take my likeness, carry home, I wonder?"

The Greek maid seemed not to have heard the question. She had risen from her seat and gone to the window.

"Praxedis," said the Duchess with asperity, "I want an answer."

Thus questioned Praxedis turned round, and faintly smiling said: "that was a pretty long time ago, but Master Michael Thallelaios did not speak over well of you. He told us that he had prepared his finest colours and goldleaves, and that you had been a lovely child, and when brought before him to be painted, that he had felt as if he must do his very utmost, and a thrill of awe had come over him, as when he painted God's holy mother, for the monastery of Athos. But Princess Hadwig had been pleased to distort her eyes; and when he had ventured to raise a modest objection, her Grace put out her tongue, held two openspread hands to her nose, and said in very graceful broken Greek, that this was the right position to be painted in. The imperial court-painter profited by the occasion to

express his opinion, about the want of manners and education in German lands, and has vowed never again to try and paint a German Fräulein. And the emperor Basilius on hearing this account growled fiercely through his beard...
"

"Let his Majesty growl, as long as he chooses," said the Duchess, "and pray to Heaven that he may bestow the patience which I then lacked on others. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing a monkey, but according to all that is told about them, by trustworthy men, Master Michael's pedigree must extend to those members of creation."

Meanwhile she had put on the bracelets. It represented two serpents twisted together and kissing each other. On the head of each rested a tiny crown. From the mass of other trinkets, a heavy silver arrow, had got into her hands and it also left its prison-house for a fairer abode. It was drawn through the meshes of the golden threaded net.

As if to try the effect of the ornaments, Dame Hadwig now walked with stately steps through the chamber. Her attitude seemed to challenge admiration, but the hall was empty; even the cat had slunk away. Mirrors there were none on the walls, and as for the furniture, its adaptation to comfort was but small, according to our present views.

Praxedis' thoughts were still busy with the subject just discussed. "My gracious Mistress," said she, "I nevertheless felt very sorry for him."

"Sorry for whom?"

"For the emperor's son. He said that you had appeared to him in a dream, and that all his happiness depended upon you."

"Let the dead rest," said Dame Hadwig testily, "I had rather that you took your guitar and sang me the Greek ditty:

"Constantine thou foolish lad,
Constantine leave off thy weeping!"

"The lute is broken, and all the strings torn, since my Lady Duchess pleased to... "

"To throw it at the head of Count Boso of Burgundy," said Dame Hadwig. "That was well done indeed, for who told him to come uninvited to Sir Burkhard's funeral, and to preach to me, as if he were a saint?--So we will have the lute mended, and meanwhile, my Greek treasure, canst thou tell me, why I have donned these glittering ornaments to-day?"

"God is all-knowing," said the Greek maid, "I cannot tell."

After this she was silent. So was Dame Hadwig, and there ensued one of those long significant pauses generally preceding self-knowledge. At last the Duchess said: "Well to say the truth I don't know myself!"--and looking dismally at the floor, added: "I believe I did it from ennui. But then the top of the Hohentwiel is but a dreary nest,--especially for a widow. Praxedis, dost thou know a remedy against dullness?"

"I once heard from a very wise preacher" said Praxedis, "that there are several remedies. Sleeping, drinking and travelling--but that the best is fasting and praying."

Then Dame Hadwig rested her head on her lily-white hand, and looking sharply at the quick-witted Greek, she said: "To-morrow we will go on a journey."

CHAPTER II. The Disciples of St. Gallus.

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The next day, the Duchess crossed the Bodensee in the early glow of the morning-sun, accompanied by Praxedis and a numerous train. The lake was beautifully blue; the flags floated in the air, and much fun was going on, on board the ship. And who could be melancholy, when gliding over the clear, crystal waters; past the green shores with their many towers and castles; snowy peaks rising in the distance; and the reflection of the white sails, trembling and breaking in the playful waves?

Nobody knew where the end of the journey was to be. But then they were accustomed to obey without questioning.

When they approached the bay at Rorschach, the Duchess commanded them to land there. So the prow was turned to the shore, and soon after she crossed lightly over the rocking plank and stepped on land. Here the toll-gatherer, who received the duty from all those who travelled to Italy, and the market-master, as well as those who held any official position, came to meet their sovereign; and calling out lustily "Hail Herro!" "Hail Liebo"³ waved big branches of mighty fir-trees over their heads. Graciously returning their salutations, the Duchess walked through the deferential crowd, which fell back on either side, and ordered her chamberlain to distribute some silver coins;-- but there was not much time for tarrying. Already the horses