CHARLES JAMES LEVER

THE DALTONS

HISTORICAL NOVEL

Charles James Lever

The Daltons
(Historical Novel)

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PREFACE.

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IF the original conception of this tale was owing to the story of an old and valued schoolfellow who took service in Austria, and rose to rank and honors there, all the rest was purely fictitious. My friend had made a deep impression on my mind by his narratives of that strange life, wherein, in the very midst of our modern civilization, an old-world tradition still has its influence, making the army of to-day the veritable sons and descendants of those who grouped around the bivouac fires in Wallenstein's camp. Of that more than Oriental submission that graduated deference to military rank that chivalrous devotion to the “Kaiser” whicli enter into the soldier heart of Austria, I have been unable to reproduce any but the very faintest outlines, and yet these were the traits which, pervaded all my friend's stories and gave them character and distinctiveness.

Many of the other characters in this tale were drawn from the life, with such changes added and omitted features as might rescue them from any charge of personality. With all my care on this score, one or two have been believed to be recognizable; and if so I have only to hope that I have touched on peculiarities of disposition inoffensively, and only depicted such traits as may “point a moral,” without wounding the possessor.

The last portion of the story includes some scenes from the Italian campaign, which had just come to a close while I was writing. If a better experience of Italy than I then

possessed might modify some of the opinions I entertained at that time, and induce me to form some conclusions at least at variance with those I then expressed, I still prefer to leave the whole unaltered, lest in changing I might injure the impression under which the fulness of my once conviction had impelled me to pronounce.

Writing these lines now, while men's hearts are throbbing anxiously for the tidings any day may produce, and when the earth is already tremulous under the march of distant squadrons, I own that even the faint, weak picture of that struggle in this story appeals to myself with a more than common interest. I have no more to add than my grateful acknowledgments to such as still hold me in their favor, and to write myself their devoted servant,

CHARLES LEVER.

CHAPTER I. BADEN OUT OF SEASON.

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A THEATRE by daylight, a great historical picture in the process of cleaning, a ballet-dancer of a wet day hastening to rehearsal, the favorite for the Oaks dead-lame in a straw-yard, are scarcely more stripped of their legitimate illusions than is a fashionable watering-place on the approach of winter. The gay shops and stalls of flaunting wares are closed; the promenades, lately kept in trimmest order, are weed-grown and neglected; the “sear and yellow leaves” are fluttering and rustling along the alleys where “Beauty's step was wont to tread.” Both music and fountains have ceased to play; the very statues are putting on great overcoats of snow, while the orange-trees file off like a sad funeral procession to hide themselves in dusky sheds till the coming spring.

You see as you look around you that nature has been as unreal as art itself, and that all the bright hues of foliage and flower, all the odors that floated from bed and parterre, all the rippling flow of stream and fountain, have been just as artistically devised, and as much “got up,” as the transparencies or the Tyrolese singers, the fireworks or the fancy fair, or any other of those ingenious “spectacles” which amuse the grown children of fashion. The few who yet linger seem to have undergone a strange transmutation.

The smiling landlord of the “Adler” we refer particularly to Germany as the very land of watering-places is a half-sulky, farmer-looking personage, busily engaged in storing

up his Indian corn and his firewood and his forage, against the season of snows. The bland “croupier,” on whose impassive countenance no shade of fortune was able to mark even a passing emotion, is now seen higgling with a peasant for a sack of charcoal, in all the eagerness of avarice. The trim maiden, whose golden locks and soft blue eyes made the bouquets she sold seem fairer to look on, is a stout wench, whose uncouth fur cap and wooden shoes are the very antidotes to romance. All the transformations take the same sad colors. It is a pantomime read backwards.

Such was Baden-Baden in the November of 182-. Some weeks of bad and broken weather had scattered and dispersed all the gay company. The hotels and assembly-rooms were closed for the winter. The ball-room, which so lately was alight with a thousand tapers, was now barricaded like a jail. The very post-office, around which each morning an eager and pressing crowd used to gather, was shut up, one small aperture alone remaining, as if to show to what a fraction all correspondence had been reduced. The Hotel de Russie was the only house open in the little town; but although the door lay ajar, no busy throng of waiters, no lamps, invited the traveller to believe a hospitable reception might await him within. A very brief glance inside would soon have dispelled any such illusion, had it ever existed. The wide staircase, formerly lined with orange-trees and camellias, was stripped of all its bright foliage; the marble statues were removed; the great thermometer, whose crystal decorations had arrested many a passing look, was now encased within a wooden box, as if

its tell-tale face might reveal unpleasant truths, if left exposed.

The spacious “Saal,” where some eighty guests assembled every day, was denuded of all its furniture, mirrors, and lustres; bronzes and pictures were gone, and nothing remained but a huge earthenware stove, within whose grating a faded nosegay left there in summer defied all speculations as to a fire.

In this comfortless chamber three persons now paraded with that quick step and brisk motion that bespeak a walk for warmth and exercise; for dismal as it was within doors, it was still preferable to the scene without, where a cold incessant rain was falling, that, on the hills around, took the form of snow. The last lingerers at a watering-place, like those who cling on to a wreck, have usually something peculiarly sad in their aspect. Unable, as it were, to brave the waves like strong swimmers, they hold on to the last with some vague hope of escape, and, like a shipwrecked crew, drawing closer to each other in adversity than in more prosperous times, they condescend now to acquaintance, and even intimacy, where, before, a mere nod of recognition was alone interchanged. Such were the three who now, buttoned up to the chin, and with hands deeply thrust into side-pockets, paced backwards and forwards, sometimes exchanging a few words, but in that broken and discursive fashion that showed that no tie of mutual taste or companionship had bound them together.

The youngest of the party was a small and very slightly made man of about five or six-and-twenty, whose face, voice, and figure were almost feminine, and, only for a very

slight line of black moustache, might have warranted the suspicion of a disguise. His lacquered boots and spotless yellow gloves appeared somewhat out of season, as well as the very light textured coat which he wore; but Mr. Albert Jekyl had been accidentally detained at Baden, waiting for that cruel remittance which, whether the sin be that of agent or relative, is ever so slow of coming. That he bore the inconvenience admirably (and without the slightest show of impatience) it is but fair to confess; and whatever chagrin either the detention, the bad weather, or the solitude may have occasioned, no vestige of discontent appeared upon features where a look of practised courtesy, and a most bland smile, gave the predominant expression. “Who he was,” or, in other words, whence he came, of what family, with what fortune, pursuits, or expectations, we are not ashamed to confess our utter ignorance, seeing that it was shared by all those that tarried that season at Baden, with whom, however, he lived on terms of easy and familiar intercourse.

The next to him was a bilious-looking man, somewhat past the middle of life, with that hard and severe cast of features that rather repels than invites intimacy. In figure he was compactly and stoutly built, his step as he walked, and his air as he stood, showed one whose military training had given the whole tone to his character. Certain strong lines about the mouth, and a peculiar puckering of the angles of the eyes, boded a turn for sarcasm, which all his instincts, and they were Scotch ones, could not completely repress. His voice was loud, sharp, and ringing, the voice of a man who, when he said a thing, would not brook being asked to

repeat it. That Colonel Haggerstone knew how to be sapling as well as oak, was a tradition among those who had served with him; still it is right to add, that his more congenial mood was the imperative, and that which he usually practised. The accidental lameness of one of his horses had detained him some weeks at Baden, a durance which assuredly appeared to push his temper to its very last intrenchments.

The third representative of forlorn humanity was a very tall, muscular man, whose jockey-cut green coat and wide-brimmed hat contrasted oddly with a pair of huge white moustaches, that would have done credit to a captain of the Old Guard. On features, originally handsome, time, poverty, and dissipation had left many a mark; but still the half-droll, half-truculent twinkle of his clear gray eyes showed him one whom no turn of fortune could thoroughly subdue, and who, even in the very hardest of his trials, could find heart to indulge his humor for Peter Dalton was an Irishman; and although many years an absentee, held the dear island and its prejudices as green in his memory as though he had left it but a week before.

Such were the three, who, without one sympathy in common, without a point of contact in character, were now drawn into a chance acquaintance by the mere accident of bad weather. Their conversation if such it could be called showed how little progress could be made in intimacy by those whose roads in life lie apart. The bygone season, the company, the play-table and its adventures, were all discussed so often, that nothing remained but the weather. That topic, so inexhaustible to Englishmen, however, offered

little variety now, for it had been uniformly bad for some weeks past.

“Where do you propose to pass the winter, sir?” said Haggerstone to Jekyl, after a somewhat lengthy lamentation over the probable condition of all the Alpine passes.

“I 've scarcely thought of it yet,” simpered out the other, with his habitual smile. “There's no saying where one ought to pitch his tent till the Carnival opens.”

“And you, sir?” asked Haggerstone of his companion on the other side.

“Upon my honor, I don't know then,” said Dalton; “but I would n't wonder if I stayed here, or hereabouts.”

“Here! why, this is Tobolsk, sir! You surely couldn't mean to pass a winter here?”

“I once knew a man who did it,” interposed Jekyl, blandly. “They cleaned him out at 'the tables;' and so he had nothing for it but to remain. He made rather a good thing of it, too; for it seems these worthy people, however conversant with the great arts of ruin, had never seen the royal game of thimble-rig; and Frank Mathews walked into them all, and contrived to keep himself in beet-root and boiled beef by his little talents.”

“Was n't that the fellow who was broke at Kilmagund?” croaked Haggerstone.

“Something happened to him in India; I never well knew what,” simpered Jekyl. “Some said he had caught the cholera; others, that he had got into the Company's service.”

“By way of a mishap, sir, I suppose,” said the Colonel, tartly.

“He would n't have minded it, in the least. For certain,” resumed the other, coolly, “he was a sharp-witted fellow; always ready to take the tone of any society.”

The Colonel's cheek grew yellower, and his eyes sparkled with an angrier lustre; but he made no rejoinder.

“That's the place to make a fortune, I'm told,” said Dalton. “I hear there's not the like of it all the world over.”

“Or to spend one,” added Haggerstone, curtly.

“Well, and why not?” replied Dalton. “I 'm sure it 's as pleasant as saving barring a man 's a Scotchman.”

“And if he should be, sir? and if he were one that now stands before you?” said Haggerstone, drawing himself proudly up, and looking the other sternly in the face.

“No offence no offence in life. I did n't mean to hurt your feelings. Sure, a man can't help where he 's going to be born.”

“I fancy we'd all have booked ourselves for a cradle in Buckingham Palace,” interposed Jekyl, “if the matter were optional.”

“Faith! I don't think so,” broke in Dalton. “Give me back Corrig-O'Neal, as my grandfather Pearce had it, with the whole barony of Kilmurray-O'Mahon, two packs of hounds, and the first cellar in the county, and to the devil I'd fling all the royal residences ever I seen.”

“The sentiment is scarcely a loyal one, sir,” said Haggerstone, “and, as one wearing his Majesty's cloth, I beg to take the liberty of reminding you of it.”

“Maybe it isn't; and what then?” said Dalton, over whose good-natured countenance a passing cloud of displeasure lowered.

“Simply, sir, that it shouldn't be uttered in my presence,” said Haggerstone.

“Phew!” said Dalton, with a long whistle, “is that what you 're at? See, now” here he turned fully round, so as to face the Colonel “see, now, I 'm the dullest fellow in the world at what is called 'taking a thing up;' but make it clear for me let me only see what is pleasing to the company, and it is n't Peter Dalton will balk your fancy.”

“May I venture to remark,” said Jekyl, blandly, “that you are both in error, and however I may (the cold of the season being considered) envy your warmth, it is after all only so much caloric needlessly expended.”

“I was n't choleric at all,” broke in Dalton, mistaking the word, and thus happily, by the hearty laugh his blunder created, bringing the silly altercation to an end.

“Well,” said Haggerstone, “since we are all so perfectly agreed in our sentiments, we could n't do better than dine together, and have a bumper to the King's health.”

“I always dine at two, or half-past,” simpered Jekyl; “besides, I'm on a regimen, and never drink wine.”

“There 's nobody likes a bit of conviviality better than myself,” said Dal ton; “but I 've a kind of engagement, a promise I made this morning.”

There was an evident confusion in the way these words were uttered, which did not escape either of the others, who exchanged the most significant glances as he spoke.

“What have we here?” cried Jekyl, as he sprang to the window and looked out. “A courier, by all that's muddy! Who could have expected such an apparition at this time?”

“What can bring people here now?” said Haggerstone, as with his glass to his eye he surveyed the little well-fed figure, who, in his tawdry jacket all slashed with gold, and heavy jack-boots, was closely locked in the embraces of the landlord.

Jekyl at once issued forth to learn the news, and, although not fully three minutes absent, returned to his companions with a full account of the expected arrivals.

“It's that rich banker, Sir Stafford Onslow, with his family. They were on their way to Italy, and made a mess of it somehow in the Black Forest they got swept away by a torrent, or crushed by an avalanche, or something of the kind, and Sir Stafford was seized with the gout, and so they 've put back, glad even to make such a port as Baden.”

“If it's the gout's the matter with him,” said Dalton, “I 've the finest receipt in the world. Take a pint of spirits poteen if you can get it beat up two eggs and a pat of butter in it; throw in a clove of garlic and a few scrapings of horseradish, let it simmer over the fire for a minute or two, stir it with a sprig of rosemary to give it a flavor, and then drink it off.”

“Gracious Heaven! what a dose!” exclaimed Jekyl, in horror.

“Well, then, I never knew it fail. My father took it for forty years, and there wasn't a haler man in the country. If it was n't that he gave up the horseradish for he did n't like the taste of it he 'd, maybe, be alive at this hour.”

“The cure was rather slow of operation,” said Haggerstone, with a sneer.

“'Twas only the more like all remedies for Irish grievances, then,” observed Dal ton, and his face grew a

shade graver as he spoke.

“Who was it this Onslow married?” said the Colonel, turning to Jekyl.

“One of the Headworths, I think.”

“Ah, to be sure; Lady Hester. She was a handsome woman when I saw her first, but she fell off sadly; and indeed, if she had not, she 'd scarcely have condescended to an alliance with a man in trade, even though he were Sir Gilbert Stafford.”

“Sir Gilbert Stafford!” repeated Dalton.

“Yes, sir; and now Sir Gilbert Stafford Onslow. He took the name from that estate in Warwickshire; Skepton Park, I believe they call it.”

“By my conscience, I wish that was the only thing he took,” ejaculated Dalton, with a degree of fervor that astonished the others, “for he took an elegant estate that belonged by right to my wife. Maybe you have heard tell of Corrig-O'Neal?”

Haggerstone shook his head, while with his elbow he nudged his companion, to intimate his total disbelief in the whole narrative.

“Surely you must have heard of the murder of Arthur Godfrey, of Corrig-O'Neal; was n't the whole world ringing with it?”

Another negative sign answered this appeal.

“Well, well, that beats all ever I heard! but so it is, sorrow bit they care in England if we all murdered each other! Arthur Godfrey, as I was saying, was my wife's brother, there were just the two of them, Arthur and Jane; she was my wife.”

“Ah! here they come!” exclaimed Jekyl, not sorry for the event which so opportunely interrupted Dalton's unpromising history. And now a heavy travelling-carriage, loaded with imperials and beset with boxes, was dragged up to the door by six smoking horses. The courier and the landlord were immediately in attendance, and after a brief delay the steps were lowered, and a short, stout man, with a very red face and a very yellow wig, descended, and assisted a lady to alight. She was a tall woman, whose figure and carriage were characterized by an air of fashion. After her came a younger lady; and lastly, moving with great difficulty, and showing by his worn looks and enfeebled frame the suffering he had endured, came a very thin, mild-looking man of about sixty. Leaning upon the arm of the courier at one side, and of his stout companion, whom he called Doctor, at the other, he slowly followed the ladies into the house. They had scarcely disappeared when a caleche, drawn by three horses at a sharp gallop, drew up, and a young fellow sprang out, whose easy gestures and active movements showed that all the enjoyments of wealth and all the blandishments of fashion had not undermined the elastic vigor of body which young Englishmen owe to the practice of field sports.

“This place quite deserted, I suppose,” cried he, addressing the landlord. “No one here?”

“No one, sir. All gone,” was the reply.

Haggerstone's head shook with a movement of impatience as he heard this remark, disparaging as it was, to his own importance; but he said nothing, and resumed his walk as before.

“Our Irish friend is gone away, I perceive,” said Jekyl, as he looked around in vain for Dalton. “Do you believe all that story of the estate he told us?”

“Not a syllable of it, sir. I never yet met an Irishman and it has been my lot to know some scores of them who had not been cheated out of a magnificent property, and was not related to half the peerage to boot. Now, I take it that our highly connected friend is rather out at elbows!” And he laughed his own peculiar hard laugh, as though the mere fancy of another man's poverty was something inconceivably pleasant and amusing.

“Dinner, sir,” said the waiter, entering and addressing the Colonel.

“Glad of it,” cried he; “it's the only way to kill time in this cursed place;” and so saying, and without the ceremony of a good-bye to his companion, the Colonel bustled out of the room with a step intended to represent extreme youth and activity. “That gentleman dines at two?” asked he of the waiter, as he followed him up the stairs.

“He has not dined at all, sir, for some days back,” said the waiter. “A cup of coffee in the morning, and a biscuit, are all that he takes.”

The Colonel made an expressive gesture by turning out the lining of his pocket.

“Yes, sir,” replied the other, significantly; “very much that way, I believe.” And with that he uncovered the soup, and the Colonel arranged his napkin and prepared to dine.

CHAPTER II. AN HUMBLE INTERIOR

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WHEN Dalton parted from his companions at the “Russie,” it was to proceed by many an intricate and narrow passage to a remote part of the upper town, where close to the garden wall of the Ducal Palace stood, and still stands, a little solitary two-storied house, framed in wood, and the partitions displaying some very faded traces of fresco painting. Here was the well-known shop of a toy-maker; and although now closely barred and shuttered, in summer many a gay and merry troop of children devoured with eager eyes the treasures of Hans Roeckle.

Entering a dark and narrow passage beside the shop, Dalton ascended the little creaking stairs which led to the second story. The landing place was covered with firewood, great branches of newly-hewn beech and oak, in the midst of which stood a youth, hatchet in hand, busily engaged in chopping and splitting the heavy masses around him. The flush of exercise upon his cheek suited well the character of a figure which, clothed only in shirt and trousers, presented a perfect picture of youthful health and symmetry.

“Tired, Frank?” asked the old man, as he came up.

“Tired, father! not a bit of it. I only wish I had as much more to split for you, since the winter will be a cold one.”

“Come in and sit down, boy, now,” said the father, with a slight tremor as he spoke. “We cannot have many more opportunities of talking together. To-morrow is the 28th of November.”

“Yes; and I must be in Vienna by the fourth, so Uncle Stephen writes.”

“You must not call him uncle, Frank, he forbids it himself; besides, he is my uncle, and not yours. My father and he were brothers, but never saw each other after fifteen years of age, when the Count that 's what we always called him entered the Austrian service, so that we are all strangers to each other.”

“His letter does n't show any lively desire for a closer intimacy,” said the boy, laughing. “A droll composition it is, spelling and all.”

“He left Ireland when he was a child, and lucky he was to do so,” sighed Dalton, heavily. “I wish I had done the same.”

The chamber into which they entered was, although scrupulously clean and neat, marked by every sign of poverty. The furniture was scanty and of the humblest kind; the table linen, such as used by the peasantry, while the great jug of water that stood on the board seemed the very climax of narrow fortune in a land where the very poorest are wine-drinkers.

A small knapsack with a light travelling-cap on it, and a staff beside it, seemed to attract Dalton's eyes as he sat down. “It is but a poor equipment, that yonder. Frank,” said he at last, with a forced smile.

“The easier carried,” replied the lad, gayly.

“Very true,” sighed the other. “You must make the journey on foot.”

“And why not, father? Of what use all this good blood, of which I have been told so often and so much, if it will not enable a man to compete with the low-born peasant. And

see how well this knapsack sits," cried he, as he threw it on his shoulder. "I doubt if the Emperor's pack will be as pleasant to carry."

"So long as you haven't to carry a heavy heart, boy," said Dalton, with deep emotion, "I believe no load is too much."

"If it were not for leaving you and the girls, I never could be happier, never more full of hope, father. Why should not *I* win my way upward as Count Stephen has done? Loyalty and courage are not the birthright of only one of our name!"

"Bad luck was all the birthright ever I inherited," said the old man, passionately; "bad luck in everything I touched through life! Where others grew rich, I became a beggar; where they found happiness, *I* met misery and ruin! But it's not of this I ought to be thinking now," cried he, changing his tone. "Let us see, where are the girls?" And so saying, he entered a little kitchen which adjoined the room, and where, engaged in the task of preparing the dinner, was a girl, who, though several years older, bore a striking resemblance to the boy. Over features that must once have been the very type of buoyant gayety, years of sorrow and suffering had left their deep traces, and the dark circles around the eyes betrayed how deeply she had known affliction. Ellen Dalton's figure was faulty for want of height in proportion to her size, but had another and more grievous defect in a lameness, which made her walk with the greatest difficulty. This was the consequence of an accident when riding, a horse having fallen upon her and fractured the hip-bone. It was said, too, that she had been engaged to be married at the time, but that her lover, shocked by the disfigurement,

had broken off the match, and thus made this calamity the sorrow of a life long.

“Where's Kate?” said the father, as he cast a glance around the chamber.

Ellen drew near, and whispered a few words in his ear.

“Not in this dreadful weather; surely, Ellen, you didn't let her go out in such a night as this?”

“Hush!” murmured she, “Frank will hear you; and remember, father, it is his last night with us.”

“Could n't old Andy have found the place?” asked Daiton; and as he spoke, he turned his eyes to a corner of the kitchen, where a little old man sat in a straw chair peeling turnips, while he croned a ditty to himself in a low singsong tone; his thin, wizened features, browned by years and smoke, his small scratch wig, and the remains of an old scarlet hunting-coat that he wore, giving him the strongest resemblance to one of the monkeys one sees in a street exhibition.

“Poor Andy!” cried Ellen, “he'd have lost his way twenty times before he got to the bridge.”

“Faith, then, he must be greatly altered,” said Dalton, “for I 've seen him track a fox for twenty miles of ground, when not a dog of the pack could come on the trace. Eh, Andy!” cried he, aloud, and stooping down so as to be heard by the old man, “do you remember the cover at Corralin?”

“Don't ask him, father,” said Ellen, eagerly; “he cannot sleep for the whole night after his old memories have been awakened.”

The spell, however, had begun to work; and the old man, letting fall both knife and turnip, placed his hands on his

knees, and in a weak, reedy treble began a strange, monotonous kind of air, as if to remind himself of the words, which, after a minute or two, he remembered thus.

“There was old Tom Whaley,
And Anthony Baillie,
And Fitzgerald, the Knight of Glynn,
And Father Clare,
On his big brown mare,
That moruin' at Corralin!”

“Well done, Andy! well done!” exclaimed Dalton. “You 're as fresh as a four-year-old.”

“Iss!” said Andy, and went on with his song.

“And Miles O'Shea,
On his cropped tail bay,
Was soon seen ridin' in.
He was vexed and crossed
At the light hoar frost,
That mornin' at Corralin.”

“Go on, Andy! go on, my boy!” exclaimed Dalton, in a rapture at the words that reminded him of many a day in the field and many a night's carouse. “What comes next?”

“Ay!” cried Andy.

“Says he, 'When the wind
Laves no scent behind,
To keep the dogs out 's a sin;
I 'll be d—d if I stay,

To lose my day,
This mornin' at Corralin.'”

But ye see he was out in his reck'nin'!” cried Andy; “for, as if

“To give him the lie,
There rose a cry,
As the hounds came yelpin' in;
And from every throat
There swelled one note,
That moruin' at Corralin.”

A fit of coughing, brought on by a vigorous attempt to imitate the cry of a pack, here closed Andy's minstrelsy; and Ellen, who seemed to have anticipated some such catastrophe, now induced her father to return to the sitting-room, while she proceeded to use those principles of domestic medicine clapping on the back and cold water usually deemed of efficacy in like cases.

“There now, no more singing, but take up your knife and do what I bade you,” said she, affecting an air of rebuke; while the old man, whose perceptions did not rise above those of a spaniel, hung down his head in silence. At the same moment the outer door of the kitchen opened, and Kate Dalton entered. Taller and several years younger than her sister, she was in the full pride of that beauty of which blue eyes and dark hair are the chief characteristics, and is deemed by many as peculiarly Irish. Delicately fair, and with features regular as a Grecian model, there was a look of brilliant, almost of haughty, defiance about her, to which her

gait and carriage seemed to contribute; nor could the humble character of her dress, where strictest poverty declared itself, disguise the sentiment.

“How soon you're back, dearest!” said Ellen, as she took off the dripping cloak from her sister's shoulders.

“And only think, Ellen, I was obliged to go to Lichtenthal, where little Hans spends all his evenings in the winter season, at the 'Hahn!' And just fancy his gallantry! He would see me home, and would hold up the umbrella, too, over my head, although it kept his own arm at full stretch; while, by the pace we walked, I did as much for his legs. It is very ungrateful to laugh at him, for he said a hundred pretty things to me, about my courage to venture out in such weather, about my accent as I spoke German, and lastly, in praise of my skill as a sculptor. Only fancy, Ellen, what a humiliation for me to confess that these pretty devices were yours, and not mine; and that my craft went no further than seeking for the material which your genius was to fashion.”

“Genius, Kate!” exclaimed Ellen, laughing. “Has Master Hans been giving you a lesson in flattery; but tell me of your success which has he taken?”

“All everything!” cried Kate; “for although at the beginning the little fellow would select one figure and then change it for another, it was easy to see that he could not bring himself to part with any of them: now sitting down in rapture before the 'Travelling Student,' now gazing delightedly at the 'Charcoal-Burners,' but all his warmest enthusiasm bursting forth as I produced the 'Forest Maiden at the Well.' He did, indeed, think the 'Pedler' too handsome, but he found no such fault with the Maiden: and here,

dearest, here are the proceeds, for I told him that we must have ducats in shining gold for Frank's new crimson purse; and here they are;” and she held up a purse of gay colors, through whose meshes the bright metal glittered.

“Poor Hans!” said Ellen, feelingly. “It is seldom that so humble an artist meets so generous a patron.”

“He's coming to-night,” said Kate, as she smoothed down the braids of her glossy hair before a little glass, “he's coming to say good-bye to Frank.”

“He is so fond of Frank.”

“And of Frank's sister Nelly; nay, no blushing, dearest; for myself, I am free to own admiration never comes amiss, even when offered by as humble a creature as the dwarf, Hans Roeckle.”

“For shame, Kate, for shame! It is this idle vanity that stifles honest pride, as rank weeds destroy the soil for wholesome plants to live in.”

“It is very well for you, Nelly, to talk of pride, but poor things like myself are fain to content themselves with the baser metal, and even put up with vanity! There, now, no sermons, no seriousness; I'll listen to nothing to-day that savors of sadness, and, as I hear pa and Frank laughing, I'll be of the party.”

The glance of affection and admiration which Ellen bestowed upon her sister was not unmixed with an expression of painful anxiety, and the sigh that escaped her told with what tender interest she watched over her.

The little dinner, prepared with more than usual care, at length appeared, and the family sat around the humble board with a sense of happiness dashed by one only

reflection, that on the morrow Frank's place would be vacant.

Still each exerted himself to overcome the sadness of that thought, or even to dally with it, as one suggestive of pleasure; and when Ellen placed unexpectedly a great flask of Margraer before them to drink the young soldier's health, the zest and merriment rose to the highest. Nor was old Andy forgotten in the general joy. A large bumper of wine was put before him, and the door of the sitting-room left open, as if to let him participate in the merry noises that prevailed there. How naturally, and instinctively, too, their hopes gave color to all they said, as they told each other that the occasion was a happy one! that dear Frank would soon be an officer, and of course distinguished by the favor of some one high in power; and lastly, they dwelt with such complacency on the affectionate regard and influence of “Count Stephen” as certain to secure the youth's advancement. They had often heard of the Count's great military fame, and the esteem in which he was held by the Court of Vienna; and now they speculated on the delight it would afford the old warrior who had never been married himself to have one like Frank, to assist by his patronage, and promote by his influence, and with such enthusiasm did they discuss the point, that at last they actually persuaded themselves that Frank's entering the service was a species of devotion to his relative's interest, by affording him an object worthy of his regard and affection.

While Ellen loved to dwell upon the great advantages of one who should be like a father to the boy, aiding him by wise counsel, and guiding him in every difficulty, Kate

preferred to fancy the Count introducing Frank into all the brilliant society of the splendid capital, presenting him to those whose acquaintance was distinction, and at once launching him into the world of fashion and enjoyment. The promptitude with which he acceded to their father's application on Frank's behalf, was constantly referred to as the evidence of his affectionate feeling for the family; and if his one solitary letter was of the very briefest and driest of all epistolary essays, they accounted for this very naturally by the length of time which had elapsed since he had either spoken or written his native language.

In the midst of these self-gratulations and pleasant fancies the door opened, and Hans Roeckle appeared, covered from head to foot by a light hoar-frost, that made him look like the figure with which an ingenious confectioner sometimes decorates a cake. The dwarf stood staring at the signs of a conviviality so new and unexpected.

“Is this Christmas time, or Holy Monday, or the Three Kings' festival, or what is it, that I see you all feasting?” cried Hans, shaking the snow off his hat, and proceeding to remove a cloak which he had draped over his shoulder in most artistic folds.

“We were drinking Frank's health, Master Hans,” said Dalton, “before he leaves us. Come over and pledge him too, and wish him all success, and that he may live to be a good and valued soldier of the Emperor.”

Hans had by this time taken off his cloak, which, by mounting on a chair, he contrived to hang up, and now approached the table with great solemnity, a pair of immense boots of Russian leather, that reached to his hips,