

The Banner of the Upright Seven

Gottfried Keller

The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction, Vol. XV, Part 2.

Selected by Charles William Eliot

Copyright © 2001 Bartleby.com, Inc.

[Bibliographic Record](#)

Contents

[Biographical Note](#)

Criticisms and Interpretations

I. [By John Firman Coar](#)

II. [By Calvin Thomas](#)

[Paras. 1–99](#)

[Paras. 100–199](#)

[Paras. 200–322](#)

Biographical Note

GOTTFRIED KELLER was born in Zurich on July 19, 1819. His father, who was a turner, died when his son was only five; but his energetic and devoted mother contrived to provide Gottfried with a good elementary education. When he was fifteen he was expelled from school for taking part in a boyish conspiracy against a teacher, and he at once set about becoming a painter. Finding it difficult to obtain proper instruction in Zurich, he went in 1840 to Munich; but though the opportunities of the Bavarian capital were important for his general development, he returned home in 1842 without assurance of making a success in his art. The next six years, spent at home with his mother and sister, saw his gradual turning from painting to literature; and in 1846 he issued a volume of poems to which little attention was paid. When he was twenty-nine, the government of the canton gave him a scholarship of eight hundred francs for foreign study, and with this he went to Heidelberg, where, in spite of the confusion of the revolution of 1848, he made friends of men like Henle the pathologist, Hettner the literary historian, and Feuerbach the philosopher, all of whom had a profound effect upon his thinking. From Heidelberg he went to Berlin, where he hoped to equip himself as a dramatist; and there in 1854–5 he published his

great autobiographical novel, “Green Henry.” This work was appreciated by his friends and brought him some money, though at the time no very wide reputation, and after six years of semi-starvation in the Prussian capital he again went home to his mother’s house. “The People of Seldwyla,” a collection of admirable short stories, was issued in 1856, but still he made no great popular success.

But at last fortune favored him when, in 1861, he was appointed Clerk of the Canton of Zurich, a position he filled efficiently for fifteen years. In 1872 appeared his “Seven Legends,” the whimsical humor and mock realism of which brought general recognition. Five years later came the historical stories called “Zurich Novels”; in 1881 “The Epigram”; in 1883 “Collected Poems,” establishing his place as a lyric poet of high rank; and in 1886 “Martin Salander,” a novel of contemporary Switzerland. His genius was now generally recognized both at home and abroad; and when he died on July 15, 1890, he stood at the head of German letters. He was never married.

Keller was a writer of great independence, and cannot be classed with any of the schools. The closeness of his observation and his fidelity in rendering both the good and the bad sides of life ally him with the realists; but his imagination was too much alive to allow of his being properly described by their label. He knew the Swiss of his own time intimately, and he has portrayed them in their homely provincialism as well as in their sturdy self-respect and love of freedom.

“The Banner of the Upright Seven,” one of the stories from “The People of Seldwyla,” is an excellent example of the faculty which made him the greatest of German humorists. The story has genuine sentiment, but sentiment restrained as always in his books; it has sympathy for youthful ambition and youthful love, as well as for the political enthusiasm of the delightful old fellows whose name it bears; but both sentiment and sympathy are overshadowed by the rich humor which pervades the whole. Pure Swiss it no doubt is, but its appeal is to all hearts open to wholesome human affection and aspirations.

W. A. N.

Criticisms and Interpretations

I. By John Firman Coar

SCHILLER has been criticised for letting the Swiss peasants in “William Tell” speak as they do. What peasants, it is asked, would utter such thoughts? The peasants and simple burghers of the life that Keller studied and depicted is the reply. To a German these peasants seem curiously unreal. But Keller was no idealist when he depicted peasant and burgher life. His people speak as they think and they think as they speak, and they do both as Keller knew them to do it in everyday life. Theirs was the inestimable benefit of democratic government and democratic culture. A compact nationality, self-educated to the duties and privileges of citizenship, leaders in the widest possible dissemination of knowledge as the best guaranty of civic progress and justice—could Keller, a Swiss, depict the life of this people as anything else than a civic and intellectual democracy?

This perspective gives to situations, characters, and actions their true proportions. They are supremely real. His individuals are not equal in civic worth and intellectual capacity, but shade off in wonderfully fine lines, thereby enhancing the effect. Paragons and deep-dyed villains do not challenge our credulity, nor are we wearied by the persistent greetings of familiar faces in new garments. One of the triumphs of Keller’s art is the ever new form in which humanity presents itself. And this is the glory of his social

democracy, that it recognizes the inviolable right of individuality, since it founds state and society upon the achievement of individual worth. Ethic manhood is something that neither state nor society can impart. It lies in the power of the individual to make or unmake his life, and he alone can solve the secret of his personality. Easier it is for him to do so amid surroundings that open his heart to the great glory of life, but still he alone can do so. That is Keller's doctrine.

Keller grew to manhood in surroundings which were as nearly identical with Schiller's philosophic ideal of freedom as human conditions can well be. The Switzerland of his manhood days was the best possible justification of the ideal picture that Schiller drew in "William Tell." Therefore the optimism of Keller is so sturdy, so free from sentimentality, and so thoroughly human. His poetry is the noblest consummation of Heine's gospel of the divine beauty of life.

Keller believed with all his soul in the self-redemption of society, and used the word society in its broadest signification. And his belief was vitalized by that which he saw in Swiss life. The germs of the past were bearing fruit in the present, and in the present the germs of a future harvest were swelling. He was not one of those complacent optimists who cannot discern with critical eye and whose complacency deadens the best impulses and stands in the way of energetic striving. Swiss life in his stories is by no means a paradise. His words to B. Auerbach (June 25, 1860) betoken the attitude he took toward this life, as they also reveal the genuine democracy of his artistic striving: "Here in Switzerland we have, to be sure, many good qualities, and in respect to public character, evidently at present an honest purpose to acquire respectable and inspiring forms of living, and the people is proving itself plastic (mobile), happy, and buoyant; but all is not gold that glitters by any means. However, I consider it the duty of a poet not merely to glorify the past, but to strengthen the present, the germs of the future, and beautify it in such a manner that people may still be able to believe: yes, we are like that, and that is the course of our life. If poets do this with a certain measure of kindly irony which deprives their productions of false pathos, then I am convinced that the people will come to be in fact and in appearance what it good-naturedly imagines itself to be and what even now it really is in its inmost disposition."—From "Studies in German Literature" (1903).

Criticisms and Interpretations

II. By Calvin Thomas

UP to a dozen years before his death Keller had received little attention in Germany; to-day there is a library of books about him, and he is universally considered a fixed star of high magnitude. While he was an ardent Swiss republican, and while the life that he depicts is almost exclusively Swiss, the Germans of the empire have pretty generally accepted him as their greatest master of prose fiction since Goethe.

Keller was a romantic realist with the soul of a poet, the eye of a man of science, and the temperament of an artist who loves life in all its manifestations. But this leaves his humour out of the account, and his humour is precisely the best part of him. In a broad sense he is didactic—like Goethe; that is, he felt that it was his mission to comprehend and describe the character of his Swiss countrymen, to the end of furthering them toward higher ideals of communal life. But this attitude never clouds his vision for the facts. He sees at every pore, as Emerson said of Goethe. He does not select ugliness for special or angry scrutiny, any more than he avoids it through excess of daintiness, but takes all things as they come. What he offers is not medicine but food—the nourishment of sane and delightful art. But no one should go to him for an exciting narrative. His spell is not in his plot. In "Green Henry," particularly, his pace is so

very leisurely that one sometimes wishes there were not so many little things to be taken note of by the way.—From “A History of German Literature” (1909).

Paras. 1–99

KASPAR HEDIGER, master tailor of Zurich, had reached the age at which an industrious craftsman begins to allow himself a brief hour of rest after dinner. So it happened that one beautiful March day he was sitting not in his manual but in his mental workshop, a small, separate room which for years he had reserved for himself. He was glad that the weather was warm enough for him to occupy it again. In winter neither the old customs of his class nor his income permitted him to have an extra room heated simply that he might sit there to read. And this was at a time when there were already tailors who went shooting and rode their horses daily. So closely do the gradations of culture dovetail into one another.

Master Hediger, however, might have been proud of the appearance he presented in his neatly kept little back room. He looked almost more like an American settler than a tailor. A strong and intelligent face with heavy whiskers, surmounted by a powerful, bald dome was bending over “The Swiss Republican.” while he read the leading article with a critical expression. There were at least twenty-five well-bound folio volumes of this “Republican” in a little walnut bookcase with a glass door, and they contained scarcely anything that Hediger, for twenty-five years, had not lived and fought through. The case also held Rotteck’s “Universal History.” a Swiss history by Johannes Müller, and a handful of political brochures and such like; a geographical atlas and a portfolio full of caricatures and pamphlets—mementoes of bitterly passionate days—lay on the lowest shelf. The wall of the little room was adorned with the portraits of Columbus, Zwingli, Hutten, Washington, and Robespierre; for Hediger was not to be trifled with and sanctioned the Reign of Terror, after it was over. Besides these world-famous heroes, there were portraits of several progressive Swiss to which were affixed in their own handwriting highly edifying and discursive inscriptions, regular little essays. Leaning against the bookcase was a well-kept, shining musket with a short side-arm hanging on it and a cartridge-pouch in which, at all times, there were thirty cartridges. That was *his* fowling-piece with which he went out, not for hares and partridges, but for aristocrats and Jesuits, for breakers of the constitution and traitors to the people. Until now his lucky star had kept him from shedding any blood, owing to lack of opportunity; nevertheless more than once he had seized his musket and hurried to the square. That was at the time of the riots, when he kept the gun standing between the bed and the wardrobe and would not allow it to be moved, “for,” he used to say, “no government and no battalions can protect justice and liberty where a citizen is not able to step out of doors and see what is going on.”

While the stout-hearted master was absorbed in his article, now nodding approvingly, now shaking his head, his youngest son Karl, a fledgling clerk in a government office, came in.

“What do you want?” asked Master Hediger harshly, for he did not like to be disturbed in his little den.

Karl, somewhat uncertain as to the success of his request, asked whether he might have his father’s gun and cartridge-pouch for the afternoon as he had to go to the drill-ground.

“No use to ask, I won’t hear of it!” said Hediger shortly.

“But why not? I won’t hurt it,” his son continued humbly and still insistently, because he simply had to have a gun if he did not want to be marched off to the detention room. But the old man only repeated in a louder tone:

“Won’t hear of it! I can only wonder at the persistence of these gentlemen sons of mine who show so little persistence in other things that not one of them has stuck to the occupation which I allowed him to learn of his own free choice. You know that your three older brothers, one after another, as soon as they had to begin to drill, wanted my gun and that they none of them got it. And yet now here you come slinking along after it. You have your own fair pay, no one to support—get your own weapons, as becomes a man of honor. This gun doesn’t leave its place except when I need it myself.”

“But it’s only for a few times. You surely don’t expect me to buy an infantry rifle when I’m going to join the sharpshooters later and shall have to get myself a carbine.”

“Sharpshooters! That’s good too! I should only like to know why you feel it to be so necessary to join the sharpshooters when you’ve never yet fired a single shot. In my day a man had to have burnt a good deal of powder before he might make such an application. Nowadays a man turns sharpshooter haphazard, and there are fellows wearing the green coat who couldn’t bring down a cat off the roof, but who, to be sure, can smoke cigars and act the gentleman. It’s no concern of mine.”

“Oh,” said the boy almost whimpering, “give it to me just this once. I’ll see about getting another to-morrow, but it’s impossible for me to do anything today, it’s too late.”

“I will not give my gun to anyone,” replied Master Hediger, “who does not know how to handle it. If you can take the lock off this gun and take it apart properly you can have it, otherwise it stays here.”

With that he hunted in a drawer for a screwdriver, handed it to his son and pointed to the gun. In desperation Karl tried his luck and began to loosen the screws in the lock. His father watched him scornfully and it was not long before he cried:

“Don’t let the screwdriver slip so; you’ll spoil the whole thing. Partly loosen all the screws and then take them out, it’s easier that way. There, at last!”

Karl now held the lock in his hand but didn’t know what next to do with it, so he laid it down with a sigh, already, in imagination, seeing himself in the detention room. But old Hediger, once interested, now picked up the lock to give his son a lesson, explaining it as he took it apart.

“You see,” he said, “first you remove the plunger-spring with this spring-hook—like this; then comes the screw of the sear-spring, you only unscrew that half way, then knock the sear-spring like this so that the pin here comes out of the hole; now you take the screw out entirely. Now the sear-spring, then the sear-pin, the sear; now then, the bridle-screw and here the bridle-hammer; next the tumbler-pin, the trigger, and finally the tumbler; this is the tumbler. Hand me the neat’s-foot oil out of the little cupboard there; I’ll oil the screws a bit while I have them here.”

He had laid all the parts on the newspaper. Karl watched him eagerly and handed him the little bottle, thinking that the atmosphere had cleared. But after his father had wiped off the parts of the lock and oiled them afresh, instead of putting them together again he threw them promiscuously into the cover of a little box and said,

“We’ll put the thing together again this evening; now I will finish reading my paper.”

Disappointed and savage, Karl went out to complain to his mother. He stood in intense awe of the state authority whose school he was now to enter as a recruit. He had never been punished since he had

outgrown school and not during his last years there either, and now the thing was to begin again on a higher plane, merely because he had depended upon his father's gun.

His mother said: "Your father is really quite right. All you four boys earn more than he does, and that thanks to the education he gave you; but not only do you spend all your money on yourselves, you keep on coming all the time to annoy your father by borrowing all sorts of things: his dress-coat, field-glass, drawing instruments, razor, hat, gun, and sabre. The things that he takes such good care of you borrow and bring back ruined. It seems as if the whole year round you are busy thinking up something else to borrow from him; but he, on his part, never asks anything of you, although you owe him your life and everything else. Just this once more I will help you."

Hereupon she went in to Master Hediger and said: "I forgot to tell you that Frymann the carpenter sent a message to say that the Band of Seven would meet this evening to discuss certain matters, something political, I think." He was at once pleasantly affected.

"Is that so?" he said, rose, and began to walk up and down; "I am surprised that Frymann didn't come himself to speak with me first about it, to consult me." After a few minutes he dressed quickly, put on his hat, and left with the words.

"Wife, I am going out now at once, I must find out what it's about. I haven't been out of the house this spring anyway, and it's such a beautiful day to-day. Good-bye!"

"There! Now he won't be home before ten o'clock to-night," said Mrs. Hediger laughing, and she bade Karl take the gun, be careful of it and bring it home early.

"Take it!" lamented her son, "why he's got the lock all apart and I can't put it together again."

"Well, I can," answered his mother and went into the little room with her son. She turned the parts of the lock out of the cover, sorted out the springs and screws and very skilfully began to put them together.

"Where the devil did you learn that, mother?" cried Karl, amazed.

"I learnt it in my father's house," she replied. "My father and my seven brothers used to make me clean all their guns and rifles when they had been shooting. I often cried as I did it, but I was finally able to handle them like a gunsmith's apprentice. The whole village called me 'Gunsmithy,' # and I nearly always had dirty hands and a black smudge on the tip of my nose. My brothers shot and drank us out of house and home, so that I, poor child, was glad enough that your father, the tailor, married me."

While she talked her dexterous fingers had really put the lock together and fastened it to the stock. Karl hung the shining cartridge-pouch over his shoulder, took the gun and hurried off as fast as he could go to the drill-ground, where he arrived only just in time. Soon after six o'clock he brought the things back again, succeeded to taking the lock apart himself, and mixed the parts together in the box-cover.

By the time he had finished supper it had grown dark. He went to the boat-landing, hired a boat and rowed along the shore till he came to that part of the lake where carpenters and stone-cutters had their yards. It was a glorious evening; a mild south wind gently rippled the water, the full moon shone on the distant stretches of the lake and sparkled brightly on the little waves near by, and the stars burned brilliantly in the sky. The snow mountains, their presence felt rather than seen, looked down on the lake like pale spectres. All industrial litter, the petty and restless outline of the buildings, disappeared in the darkness and were transformed by the moonlight into great calm masses—in short, the landscape was

appropriately set for the coming scene.

Karl Hediger rowed rapidly on until he was close to a large lumber-yard; there he softly sang the first verse of a little song a couple of times, and then rowed slowly and easily out from the shore. A slender girl rose from where she had been sitting among the piles of lumber, untied a skiff, stepped into it and rowed deliberately, making a few turns as she went, after the soft-voiced boatman. When she caught up with him the young people greeted each other and rowed on without stopping, gunwale to gunwale, far out into the liquid silver of the lake. With youthful vigor they described a wide curve with several spirals, the girl leading and the boy following with gentle strokes of his oar, without leaving her side, and one could see that the couple were not unpractised in rowing together. When they found themselves in absolute silence and solitude, the young woman pulled in her oars and stopped. That is, she shipped only one oar and continued to hold the other over the gunwale as if playing with it, but not without a purpose, for when Karl, who had also stopped, tried to approach quite close to her, to board her skiff in fact, she was most skilful in keeping his boat off by giving it a single push with her oar every now and then. Nor did this manœuvre seem to be new, for the young man soon resigned himself and sat still in his little boat.

Now they began to chat, and Karl said:

“Dear Hermine! Now I can really turn the proverb about and say: what I had in abundance in my youth I wish for in old age, but in vain. How often we used to kiss when I was ten and you were seven, and now that I am twenty I mayn’t even kiss your finger-tips.”

“Once for all, I never want to hear another word of those impudent lies!” cried the girl half angrily, half laughing. “You’ve made it all up and it’s false, I certainly don’t remember any such familiarity.”

“Unfortunately!” cried Karl; “but I remember it so much the better. And I remember too that it was you who began it and were the temptress.”

“Karl, how horrid of you!” interrupted Hermine, but he went on unrelentingly:

“You must remember how often, when we were tired helping the poor children fill their broken baskets with shavings—and how cross it always made your carpenters—I used to have to build a little hut out of ends of boards, hidden away in among the big piles of lumber, a little hut with a roof and a door and a bench in it. And then when we sat on the little bench, with the door shut, and I might at last sit idle a minute, who was it that used to throw her arms around my neck and kiss me more times than I could count?”

At these words he nearly pitched into the water, for as he had tried again to approach unnoticed as he talked, she suddenly gave his little boat such a violent push that it almost upset. Her clear laugh rang out as his left arm slipped into the water to the elbow and he swore.

“Just you wait,” he said; “I’ll pay you out for this some day!”

“There’s time enough ahead,” she replied, “you needn’t be in too much of a hurry, my dear sir.” Then she continued somewhat more seriously, “Father has found out about our intentions; I didn’t deny them, in the main; he won’t hear of such a thing, and forbids us ever to think of it again. So that is how we stand now.”

“And do you intend to bow to your father’s decree as dutifully and unresistingly as you seem to?”

“At least I shall never do the exact opposite of his wishes, and still less would I dare to stand in open hostility to him, for you know that he bears a grudge a long time, and is capable of a deep, slow-consuming anger. You know too, that, although he has been a widower for five years, he has not married again on my account; that is something that a daughter ought certainly to consider. And, now that we are on this subject, I must tell you too, that, under these circumstances, I don’t think it proper for us to see each other so often. It’s bad enough for a child to be disobedient in her heart; but there would be something hateful in our actually doing things every day that would displease our parents if they knew about them, and so I don’t want to meet you alone oftener than once a month at the most, instead of nearly every day as we have been doing. And for the rest just let time go on.”

“Let time go on! And you really can and will let things go like this?”

“Why not? Are they so important? It is possible that we may have each other after all, it is also possible that we may not. But the world will go on just the same, perhaps we will forget each other of our own accord, for we are still young; in any case, it doesn’t seem to me that we’ve any reason to make a great to-do.”

The seventeen-year-old beauty delivered this speech in an apparently cold and matter-of-fact tone, at the same time picking up her oars and heading for the shore. Karl rowed beside her full of anxiety and apprehension, and no less full of vexation at Hermine’s words. She was half glad to know that the hot-headed fellow had something to worry about, but at the same time, the conversation had made her, too, pensive, and particularly the separation of four weeks which she had imposed on herself.

Thus Karl finally succeeded in taking her by surprise and bringing his boat up against hers with a sudden pull. In an instant he held her slender body in his arms, and drew her part way towards him, so that they both leaned over the deep water, their boats tipped away over threatening to overturn at the slightest movement. Hence the girl was helpless and had to submit when Karl pressed seven or eight passionate kisses on her lips. Then gently and carefully he righted her and her boat. She stroked her hair back out of her face, seized her oars, panted, and, with tears in her eyes, cried angrily and threateningly:

“Just wait, you scamp, till I hold the reins! Heaven knows, I’ll make you feel that you’ve got a wife!”

With that she rowed rapidly, without looking round at him again, towards her father’s yard and home.

Karl, however, filled with triumph and bliss, called after her, “Good night, Miss Hermine Frymann; that tasted good.”

Mrs. Hediger had told her husband nothing but the truth when she caused him to go out. She had merely saved up the message to use when she thought best, and then had done so at the right moment. A meeting really was held, a meeting of the Band of Seven, or of the Staunch, or of the Upright, or of the Lovers of Liberty, as they interchangeably called themselves. They were simply a circle of seven old and tried friends, all master-craftsmen, patriots, arch-politicians and stern domestic tyrants after the pattern of Master Hediger. Born, one and all, in the previous century, they, as children, had seen the downfall of the old régime, and then for many years had lived through the storms and birth-pangs of the new period, until, with the clearing of the political atmosphere in the late forties, Switzerland once more came into power and unity. Several of them came from the common domains, the former subject-land of the Swiss Confederates, and they remembered how, as peasant children, they had been obliged to kneel by the roadside when a coach with Confederate barons and the court-usher came driving by. Others were distant relatives or connections of captive or executed revolutionaries; in short, they were all filled with an

unquenchable hatred of all aristocracy, which, since the downfall of the latter, had merely turned to bitter scorn. But when later the same thing reappeared in democratic garb, and, combined with the old usurpers of power, the priests, stirred up a struggle that lasted for several years, there was added to their hatred of the aristocracy a hatred of the "blackcoats"; indeed their belligerent temper now turned not only against lords and priests, but even against their own kind, against entire masses of the excited populace. This demanded of them in their old age an unexpected, composite expenditure of power, which test, however, they stood bravely.

These seven men were anything but insignificant. In all popular assemblies, meetings and such like, they helped to form a solid centre, stuck to their posts indefatigably, and were ready day and night to do for their party errands and business which could not be trusted to paid workers, but only to those who were absolutely reliable. The party leaders often consulted them and took them into their confidence, and if a sacrifice was required, the seven men were always the first to contribute their mite. For all this they desired no other reward but the triumph of their cause, and their clear conscience; never did one of them put himself forward, or strive for his own advantage or aspire to an office, and their greatest honor was, on occasion, to shake the hand of this or that "famous Confederate"; but he must be the right sort and "clean above the loins" as they put it.

These stout-hearted citizens had grown accustomed to one another through decades of intimacy, called one another by their Christian names, and finally came to form a strong private society, but without any other statutes than those they bore in their hearts. They met twice a week, and as, even in this small band, there were two inn-keepers, the meetings were held alternately at their houses. Those were very pleasant and informal times; quiet and grave as the Seven were in larger assemblies, they were equally noisy and merry among themselves; none of them made any pretences, and none beat round the bush; sometimes they all talked at once, sometimes they listened attentively to one of their number, according to their humor and mood. Not only politics was the subject of their conversations, but also their domestic life. If one of them was in trouble and anxiety, he laid before the others whatever oppressed him; the cause was discussed, and its remedy was made a common matter; if one of them felt himself injured by another, he would bring his complaint to the Seven, who would sit in judgment and admonish the offender. During these proceedings they were alternately very passionate, or very quiet and dignified, or even ironical. Twice, traitors, crooked fellows, had sneaked in among them, been recognized and in solemn assembly condemned and turned out, that is, beaten black and blue by the fists of the doughty greybeards. If a real misfortune overtook the party to which they were attached that entirely eclipsed any domestic misfortune, they would hide singly in the darkness and shed bitter tears.

The most eloquent and prosperous among them was Frymann, the carpenter, a veritable Croesus with an imposing establishment. The most impecunious was Hediger, the tailor; but his opinion was only second in importance to Frymann's. His political fanaticism had long since lost him his best customers; nevertheless he had educated his sons well, and so had no means left. The other five men were well situated; they listened more than they talked when important matters were under discussion by the Band of Seven, but made up for that by the weightiness of their words at home, and among their neighbors.

To-day there were really important transactions on hand, which Frymann and Hediger had already discussed. The period of unrest, of struggle and of political effort, was past for these stout-hearted citizens, and their long experiences seemed for once to have come to an end with the conditions that they had attained. "All's well that ends well," they might say, and they felt themselves to be victorious and content. And so, as the shades of evening were falling on their political life, they felt that they might

indulge in a crowning festivity, and, as the Band of Seven, attend in a body the first national shooting match to be held since the adoption of the new constitution of 1848, which was to take place at Aarau the following summer.

Now most of them had long since become members of the Swiss Shooting Association, and they all, except Hediger, who contented himself with his musket, possessed good rifles, with which in former years they had sometimes gone shooting on Sunday. Singly, they had also already attended other festivals, so that there seemed to be nothing so very unusual in their present purpose. But a spirit of outward pomp had taken possession of some of them, and the proposal made was really nothing less than that they should appear in Aarau with their own banner, bringing a handsome trophy as a gift.

When the little company had drunk a few glasses of wine and were in good spirits, Frymann and Hediger came out with the proposal, which somewhat surprised their modest fellow-members nevertheless, so that they wavered irresolutely for some minutes. For the idea of attracting so much attention and marching out with a banner did not quite appeal to them. But as they had long since forgotten how to refuse their support to any bold stroke or undertaking with a real meaning, they resisted only long enough for the speakers to paint to them in glowing colors the banner as a symbol, and their procession as a triumph of true and tried friendship, and to show them that the appearance of seven old greybeards such as they, with a banner of friendship, would certainly make good sport. Only a little banner should be made, of green silk, with the Swiss coat of arms and a fitting inscription.

Once the question of the banner was settled, the trophy was taken up; its value was fixed fairly easily at about two hundred francs, old style. But the choice of the object itself caused a lengthier and almost heated discussion. Frymann opened the general inquiry and invited Kuser, the silversmith, as a man of taste, to give his opinion. Kuser gravely drank a good draught, coughed, thought a while, and said it was fortunate that he just happened to have a beautiful silver cup in his shop, which, if that were agreeable to the others, he could thoroughly recommend, and would let them have at the very lowest price. Hereupon followed a general silence broken only by brief remarks such as "That might do!" or "Why not?" Then Hediger asked whether anyone else wished to propose anything. Whereupon Syfrig, the skilful smith, took a swallow, plucked up courage, and said:

"If it is agreeable to you all, I will also express an idea now. I have forged a very practical plough of solid iron, which, as you know, won praise at the agricultural exhibition. I am prepared to part with this fine piece of work for two hundred francs, although that would not pay for the labor of making it; but it is my opinion that this tool and symbol of agriculture would be the kind of prize that would most suitably represent the common people. Not that I wish to reflect on other proposals."

During this speech Bürigi, the crafty cabinet-maker, had also been thinking the matter over, and when again a short silence ensued and the silversmith began to pull a long face, the cabinet-maker unburdened himself thus:

"An idea has occurred to me too, dear friends, which would probably give rise to a great deal of fun. Years ago I had an order from a couple from out of town who were about to be married, for a double canopy bed of the finest walnut, with bird's-eye maple veneer; the young couple hung round my workshop every day measuring the length and the breadth, and billing and cooing before the journeymen and apprentices, minding neither their jokes nor their insinuations. But when the time came for the wedding they suddenly parted, hating each other as a cat hates a dog, not a soul knew why; one went this way, one went that, and the bedstead was left standing as immovable as a rock. At cost price it's worth a

hundred and eighty francs, but I'll gladly lose eighty and let it go for a hundred. Then we can have a mattress made for it and set it up in the trophy hall, fully made up, with the inscription: 'For a single Confederate, as an encouragement!' How's that?"

Merry laughter rewarded this idea; only the smiles of the silversmith and the blacksmith were faint and wry; but Pfister, the inn-keeper, immediately raised his hearty voice and said with his accustomed frankness:

"Well gentlemen, if it's the programme for each of us to bring his own pig to market, then I know of something better than anything yet proposed. I have in my cellar a well-sealed cask of '34 claret, so-called Swiss blood, which I bought myself in Basle more than twelve years ago. You are all so temperate and modest in your demands, that I have never ventured to tap the wine, and yet I have two hundred francs tied up in it, for there are just a hundred measures. I will give you the wine for what it cost, and reckon the cask as cheaply as possible, glad if I can only make room for something that will sell better, and may I never leave this place if such a gift wouldn't do us honor."

This speech, during which the three who had made their suggestions had already begun to murmur, was scarcely ended, when Erismann, the other inn-keeper, took the floor and said:

"If this is the way it's going, I won't be left behind either, but am ready to declare that I think I have the best thing for our purpose, and that is my young milch cow, a thoroughbred Oberland, that I am just ready to sell if I can find a good purchaser. If we tie a bell round the neck of this handsome animal, a milking stool between her horns, adorn her with flowers—"

"And put her under a glass globe in the trophy hall!" interrupted Pfister, irritated; and with that, one of those thunderstorms broke that sometimes made the meetings of the Seven tempestuous, but only to be succeeded by sunshine that was all the brighter for what had passed. They all talked at once, defended their own proposals, attacked those of the others and accused one another of selfish motives. For they always came right out with what they thought, and settled matters by means of the plain truth, not by dissimulation and covering up, as a kind of false culture often leads men to do.

When the noise had become almost deafening Hediger tapped his glass loudly, and, raising his voice, said:

"Men! Don't get excited but let us proceed calmly to our goal. As trophies there have been suggested a cup, a plough, a complete canopy bed, a cask of wine and a cow. Permit me to examine your proposals more closely. Your cup, my dear Ruedi, I know well; it is a fixture in your in your shop, has been there in your show window for years and years; in fact, I believe it was once your masterpiece. Nevertheless, its antiquated form would forbid our choosing it and presenting it as new. Your plough, Chueri Syfrig, seems to be not absolutely practical after all, otherwise you would certainly have sold it three years ago. But we must bear in mind that our prize ought to give real pleasure to whoever wins it. Your canopy bed, on the contrary, Henry, is a novel and certainly a delightful idea, and it would undoubtedly occasion remarks of a very popular character. But to carry it out properly, would require plenty of fine bedding and that would exceed the sum we have fixed by too much for only seven people. Your 'Swiss blood' Lienert Pfister is good, and it will be still better if you will give us a cheaper price, and finally tap the cask for us so that we can have it to drink on our anniversaries. Finally, against your cow, Felix Erismann, there is nothing to be said except that she kicks over the pail regularly whenever she is milked. That is why you want to sell her; for, to be sure, that is not a pleasing habit. But what do you think?"

Would it be right if some honest young peasant won the animal, took it joyfully home to his wife, who would joyfully start to milk it, and then would see the sweet, frothy milk upset on the ground? Think of the poor woman's disgust, vexation, and disappointment, and of the embarrassment of the good marksman after this scene had been repeated two or three times. Yes, my dear friends, don't take it amiss, but it must be said: all our proposals have the common fault of thoughtlessly and hastily seeking to make the honor of the fatherland a source of profit and calculation. What if the same thing has been done thousands of times by high and low, we, in our circle, have not done it, and we wish so to continue. So let every man bear the cost of the gift without ulterior motive, so that it may really be a trophy of honor!"

The five profit-seekers who had hung their heads in shame, now cried in one voice, "Well said! Kaspar has spoken well," and they demanded that he himself should propose something. But Frymann took the floor and said:

"It seems to me that a silver cup is more suitable than anything else to be given as a trophy. It retains its value, cannot be used up, and is a handsome reminder of happy days and of the valiant men of the house. The house in which a silver cup is preserved can never quite decay, and who can say whether much else is not also preserved for the sake of such a memorial. And is not art given the opportunity by fashioning ever new and pleasing forms, to increase the variety of these vessels, and thus to exercise its creative power and to bear a ray of beauty into the most distant valley, so that gradually a vast treasure of precious prize-cups will accumulate in our fatherland, precious alike in form and metal? And how fitting it is that these treasures, scattered over the whole country, cannot be made to serve the common uses of every-day life, but in their pure brilliance, in their chaste forms, continue to keep the higher things before our eyes, and thus seem to hold fast the idea of unity and the sunlight of days ideally spent. Away then with the trash that is beginning to pile up in our trophy-halls, a prey to moths and to the most ordinary uses, and let us hold fast to the venerable old drinking-cup! Truly, if I were living in the days when all that is Swiss was drawing to its end, I could not imagine a more uplifting crowning festivity than to gather together the thousands and tens of thousands of cups of all sorts and shapes belonging to all the clubs, societies and individuals, in all their radiance of by-gone days, with all their memories, and to drink a last toast to the declining fatherland—"

"Hush, churlish guest! What unworthy thoughts!" cried the Upright and Staunch, and shuddered. But Frymann continued:

"As it becomes a man in the vigor of his prime sometimes to think of death, so, too, in a meditative hour he may turn his gaze on the certain end of his fatherland, that he may love its present all the more fervently, for everything is transitory and subject to change on this earth. Have not much greater nations than we perished? Or would you linger on like the Wandering Jew who cannot die, serving in turn all the new nations as they arise, he who buried the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans? No, a nation that knows that a time will come when it will no longer be makes all the more intense use of its days, lives so much the longer, and leaves a glorious memory; for it will not rest until it has brought to light and exercised the capabilities that lie within it, like a man who knows no rest until he has set his house in order before he leaves this life. That, in my opinion, is the chief thing. Once a nation has performed its task, what do a few longer or shorter days of existence matter? New figures are already waiting at the portals of their time. And so I must confess that once a year, during some sleepless night, or on quiet paths, I fall a prey to such thoughts, and try to imagine what the nation will be like that will some day hold sway in these mountains after we are gone. And each time I return to my work with greater energy,

as if I could thus hasten the work of my nation so that that people of the future will walk over our graves with respect.

“But away with these thoughts and back to our joyful prospects! I would suggest that we order a new cup from our master silversmith, on which he promises to make no profit, but to give as much value as possible. For this purpose let us have an artist make a good design which shall depart from the ordinary meaningless pattern, but because of our limited means let him pay more attention to the proportions, to the form and simple grace of the whole, than to rich ornamentation and, after this design, Master Kuser will furnish us with a pleasing and substantial piece of work.”

This proposal was accepted and the business disposed of. Frymann, however, immediately took the floor again and began:

“Now that we have settled these matters of general interest, my friends, permit me to bring up another special question, and to make a complaint that we may adjust it together in friendly fashion according to our old custom. You know that our good friend, Kaspar Hediger, is the father of four lively boys whose desire to marry as youngsters makes the whole neighborhood unsafe. In fact, three of them already have wives and children, although the eldest is not yet twenty-seven. There remains the youngest, just turned twenty, and what is he doing? Running after my only daughter and turning her head. Thus these diabolical marriage-fiends have penetrated into the circle of intimate friendship, and now threaten to cloud it. Apart from the fact that the children are much too young, I frankly confess here that such a marriage would be contrary to my wishes and intentions. I have a large business and a considerable fortune; therefore, when the time comes, I shall seek a son-in-law who is a business man with a capital corresponding to mine, and thus able to carry on the building enterprises that I have in mind; for you know that I have bought up extensive building lots, and am convinced that Zurich will grow considerably larger. But your son, my good Kaspar, is a government clerk, and has nothing but his scanty salary, and even if he rises it will never be much bigger, and his income is fixed once for all with no way of augmenting it. Let him stick to his position, he is provided for for life, if he is economical; but he doesn't need a rich wife. A rich official is an absurdity, taking the bread out of other people's mouths, and I certainly would not give my money for a fellow to loaf on, or, in his inexperience, to use for all sorts of experiments. In addition to all this, it would go against the grain with me to have the true and tried friendship that exists between Kaspar and me transformed into a relationship. What, are we to burden ourselves with family trials and mutual dependence? No, my friends, let us remain closely united until death, but independent of each other, free and answerable to none for our actions, and let us hear nothing of 'son's father-in-law' and 'daughter's father-in-law' and all such titles. And so I call upon you, Kaspar, to declare in this intimate circle of friends that you will support me in my purpose and will oppose your son's course. And no offense, we all know one another.”

“We know one another, that is well said,” said Hediger solemnly after slowly taking a pinch of snuff. “You all know what bad luck I have had with my sons, although they are smart and lively lads. I had them taught everything that I wish I myself had learnt. They all knew something of languages, could write a good composition, were splendid at figures and had sufficient grounding in other branches of knowledge to keep, with a little effort, from ever relapsing into complete ignorance. Thank God, I used to think, that we are at last able to educate our boys to be citizens who can't be made to believe that black is white. And then I allowed each one to learn the trade he chose. But what happened? Scarcely did they have their indentures in their pockets and had looked about them a little, when the hammer got too heavy for them, they thought themselves too clever for artisans and began to look for clerical jobs. The devil

knows how they did it, but the young scamps went like hot cakes. Well, apparently they do their work satisfactorily. One's in the post office, two are employed by railroad companies and the fourth sits in an office and maintains that he's a government official. After all, it's none of my business. He who doesn't want to be a master must remain a journeyman and work under others all his life. But, as money passes through their hands, all these young gentlemen clerks had to give security; I have no property myself, and so you all, in turn, furnished security for my boys, amounting to forty thousand francs; the old tradesmen, their father's friends, were good enough for that! And now, how do you suppose I feel? How would I stand in your eyes if only one out of the four should take a false step, be guilty of some indiscretion or piece of carelessness?"

"Fiddlesticks!" cried the old men, "put all such nonsense out of your head. If they hadn't been good boys we wouldn't have done it, you can be sure."

"I know all that," replied Hediger, "but a year is a long time, and when it's gone there's another to come. I can assure you that it frightens me every time one of them comes into the house with a better cigar than usual. Will he not fall a victim to habits of luxury and self-indulgence? If I see one of their young wives coming along in a new dress, I fear that she is plunging her husband into difficulties and debt. If I see one of them talking in the street to a man who lives beyond his means, a voice within me cries, "Will he not lead him into some piece of folly?" In short, you see that I feel myself humble and dependent enough, and am far from wishing to add a feeling of obligation towards a rich kinsman, and from turning a friend into a master and patron. And why should I want my cocky young son to feel rich and safe, and to run round under my eyes with the arrogance that such a fellow assumes when he has never had the slightest experience of life? Shall I help to close the school of life to him so that he shall early become hard-hearted, an unmannerly and insolent duffer, who doesn't know how to earn his bread, and still has a tremendous opinion of himself? No, rest easy, my friend, here is my hand on it. No kith and kin for us!"

The two old men shook hands, the others laughed, and Bürgi said,

"Who would believe that you two who have just spoken such wise words in the cause of the fatherland, and have rapped us so hard on the knuckles, would turn round and do anything so foolish. Thank Heaven, I've still a chance to dispose of my double bed and I propose that we give it to the young couple for a wedding present."

"Voted!" cried the other four, and Pfister, the innkeeper, added.

"And I demand that my cask of Swiss blood be drunk at the wedding, which we shall all attend."

"And I'll pay for it if there is a wedding," shouted Frymann angrily, "but if not, as I know for certain will be the case, you pay for the cask, and we'll drink it at our meetings until it's gone."

"We'll take the wager," they agreed; but Frymann and Hediger pounded the table with their fists and continued to repeat:

"No kith and kinship for us! We don't want to be kinsmen, but independent, good friends!"

This declaration brought the eventful meeting at last to an end, and staunch and upright the Lovers of Liberty wandered to their homes.

The next day at dinner, after the journeymen had gone, Hediger informed his son and his wife of the solemn decision of the day before, that from now on no romance between Karl and the carpenter's daughter would be tolerated. Mrs. Hediger, the "Gunsmithy," was so tempted to laugh by this decree that the last drop of wine in her glass, which she was just about to swallow, got into her windpipe and caused a terrible fit of coughing.

"What is there to laugh at about that?" said Master Hediger irritatedly.

His wife answered: "Oh, I can't help laughing because the adage 'a cobbler should stick to his last' fits your club so well. Why don't you stick to politics instead of meddling with love affairs?"

"You laugh like a woman and talk like a woman," replied Hediger, very much in earnest, "it is just in the family that true politics begin; we are political friends, it is true, but in order to remain so it is necessary that we should not mix our families up, and treat the wealth of one as common property. I am poor and Frymann is rich, and so it shall remain we enjoy our inward equality so much the more. And now, shall a marriage be the means of my sticking my finger into his house and his affairs, and arousing jealousy and embarrassment? Far be it from me!"

"Oh my, my, what wonderful principles!" answered Mrs. Hediger; "that's a fine friendship when one friend won't give his daughter to the son of the other! And since when has it meant treating wealth as common property when prosperity is brought into a family through marriage? Is it a reprehensible policy when a fortunate son succeeds in winning a rich and beautiful girl, because he thus attains to property and prominence, and is able to assist his aged parents and brothers, and help them to a place in the sun? For where once good fortune has entered it easily spreads, and without doing any damage to the one, the others can skilfully throw out their hooks in his shade. Not that I am looking for a life of luxury! But there are very many cases in which it is right and proper that a man who has become rich should be consulted by his poor relatives. We old people shall need nothing more; on the other hand, the time might come perhaps, when one or another of Karl's brothers might venture on a promising enterprise, or make a fortunate change if someone would lend him the means. And one or another of them will have a talented son who would rise to great things, if there was money enough to send him to the university. One might perhaps become a popular physician, another a prominent lawyer or even a judge, another an engineer or an artist, and all of them, once they had got so far, would find it easy to marry well, and so at last would form a respected, numerous, and happy family. What could be more natural than to have a prosperous uncle who, without harming himself, could throw open the doors of the world to his industrious but poor relatives? For how often does it happen that, owing to the presence in a family of one fortunate member, all the others get a taste of the world and grow wise? And will you drive in the bung on all these things and seal good fortune at its source?"

Hediger gave a laugh, full of annoyance, and cried

"Castles in the air! You talk like the peasant woman with her milk pail! I see a different picture of the man who has become rich among his poor relatives. He, it is true, denies himself nothing and has always thousands of ideas and desires which he gratifies, and which lead him to spend money on thousands of occasions. But let his parents and his brothers come to him, down he sits at his account book, looking important and vexed, sighs, and says, with his pen between his teeth: 'Thank God that you haven't the trouble and burden of administering such a fortune. I'd rather herd goats than watch a pack of spiteful and procrastinating debtors! No money coming in from any of them, and all of them trying to get out of paying and slip through my fingers. Day and night you have to be on the lookout that you are not cheated

right and left. And if ever you do get a scoundrel by the collar, he sets up such a howl that you have to let him go in a hurry, or be decried as a usurer and a monster. Every official paper, every notice of days of expiration, every announcement, every advertisement has to be read over and over, or you will miss some petition or overlook some term. And there's never any money on hand. If someone repays a loan, he lays his money bag on the table in all the taverns in town and announces with a swagger that he's paid, and before he's out of the house there are three others waiting to borrow the money, one of whom even wants it without giving security! And then the demands made on you by the community, the charitable institutions, public enterprises, subscription lists of all kinds—they can't be avoided, your position demands it; but I can tell you, you often don't know whether you are standing on your head or your heels. This year I'm harder pressed even than usual; I've had my garden improved and a balcony built on to the house, my wife has been wanting to have it done for a long time, and now here are the bills. My physician has advised me a hundred times to keep a saddle horse—I can't even think of it, for new expenses keep coming up to prevent. Look there, see the little wine-press, of the most modern construction, that I had built so that I could press out the Muscatel grapes that I grow on trellises—God knows, I can't pay for it this year. Well, my credit is still good, thank Heaven.'

“That is the way he talks with a cruel boast underlying all his words and thus so intimidates his poor brothers and his old father that they say nothing about their request, and take themselves off again after admiring his garden and his balcony and his ingenious wine-press. And they go to strangers for help and gladly pay higher interest simply to avoid listening to so much chatter. His children are handsomely and expensively dressed, and tread the streets daintily; they bring their poor cousins little presents and come twice a year to invite them to dinner, and that is a great lark for the rich children; but when the guests lose their shyness and even begin to be noisy, their pockets are filled with apples and they are sent home. There they tell all that they have seen and what they had to eat and everything is criticized; for rancor and envy fill the hearts of the poor sisters-in-law who flatter the prosperous member of the family notwithstanding, and are eloquent in their praise of her fine clothes. Finally some misfortune overtakes the father or the brothers and, whether he will or not, the rich man has to step into the breach for the sake of the family reputation. And he does so without much persuasion; but now the bond of brotherly equality and love is completely severed. The poorer brothers and their children are now the servants and slave-children of the master; year in, year out they are nagged at and corrected, they have to wear coarse clothing and eat black bread in order to make up a small part of the damage. The children are sent to orphan asylums and schools for the poor, and if they are strong enough they have to work in the master's house and sit at the lower end of the table in silence.”

“Phew!” cried Mrs. Hediger, “what a tale! And do you really think that your own son here would be such a scoundrel? And has Fate ordained that just his brothers should meet with misfortunes that would make them his servants? They, who have always managed to take care of them-selves till now? No, for the honor of our own blood I believe that a rich marriage would not turn all our heads like that, but that, on the contrary, my view would prove to be right.”

“I don't mean to assert,” replied Hediger, “that it would be just that way with us; but in our family too we should introduce outward differences and in time they would be followed by inward inequality; he who aspires to wealth, aspires to rise above his equals—”

“Bosh!” interrupted his wife, taking up the table cloth and shaking it out the window; “has Frymann, who actually owns the property that we are quarrelling about, grown any different from the rest of you? Aren't you of one mind and one heart and always putting your heads together?”

“That’s different,” cried her husband, “entirely different. He didn’t get his property by scheming, nor win it in the lottery, but acquired it slowly franc by franc through the toil of forty years. And then we are not brothers, he and I, and are not concerned in each other’s affairs, and that’s the way we want it to continue, that’s the point. And finally, he is not like other people, he is still one of the Staunch and Upright. But don’t let us keep on considering only these petty personal affairs. Fortunately there are no tremendously rich people among us, prosperity is fairly well distributed; but let men with many millions spring up, men with political ambition, and you’ll see how much mischief they do. There is the well-known spinner-king; he really has millions and is often accused of being an indifferent citizen and a miser, because he doesn’t concern himself with public matters. On the contrary, he is a good citizen who consistently lets everyone go his own way, governs himself, and lives like any other man. But let this goldbug be a politically ambitious genius, give him some amiability, pleasure in ostentation and love of all sorts of theatrical pomp, let him build palaces and institutions and then see what harm he would do in the community, and how he would ruin the character of the people. There will come a time when, in our country, as elsewhere, large masses of money will accumulate without having been honestly earned and saved; then it will be for us to show our teeth to the devil; then it will be seen whether the bunting of our flag is made of fast colors and strong thread. To put it briefly, I don’t see why a son of mine should stretch out his hand for another’s goods, without having done a stroke to earn them. That’s a fraud as much as anything is!”

“It’s a fraud that’s as old as the world,” said his wife, laughing, “for two people who love each other to want to marry. All your long and high-sounding words won’t change that. Moreover, you are the only one to be made a fool of; for Master Frymann is wisely trying to prevent your children from becoming equal to his. But the children will have a policy of their own and will carry it out if there’s anything in the affair, and that I don’t know.”

“Let them,” said Master Hediger; “that’s their business; mine is, not to favor anything of the sort, and in any case to refuse my consent as long as Karl is a minor.”

Paras. 100–199

With this diplomatic declaration and the latest number of the “Republican” he withdrew to his study. Mrs. Hediger, on the contrary, now wanted to get hold of her son and satisfy her curiosity by calling him to account; but she suddenly discovered that he had made off, as the whole discussion seemed to him to be absolutely superfluous and useless, and he did not care, in any case, to talk over his love affairs with his parents.

So much the earlier did he get into his little boat that evening and row out to where he had been on many previous evenings. But he sang his little song once and twice, and even through to the last verse without anyone showing herself, and after rowing up and down in front of the lumber yard for more than an hour in vain, he went back puzzled and depressed, and thought his affair was really in a bad way. On the following four or five evenings he had the same experience, and then gave up trying to meet the faithless girl, as he took her to be; for although he remembered her resolution only to see him once in four weeks, he thought that to be merely the preparation for a final rupture, and fell into indignant sadness. Hence the practice period for the sharpshooter recruits, which was just about to begin, came at a very welcome time. On several afternoons beforehand he went out to the range with an acquaintance who was a marksman to get at least a little practice, and be able to show the number of hits necessary for his

application. His father looked on at this rather scornfully, and unexpectedly came to the range himself to dissuade his son in time from carrying out his foolish purpose, if, as he supposed, Karl knew nothing about shooting.

But he happened to get there just as Karl, with half a dozen misses behind him, was making a number of rather good shots.

“You needn’t tell me,” said Hediger astonished, “that you’ve never shot before; you’ve secretly spent many a franc on it, that’s sure.”

“I have shot secretly, that’s true, but at no cost. Do you know where, father?”

“I thought as much!”

“Even as a boy I often watched the shooting, listened to what the men said about it, and for years have so longed to do it that I used to dream about it, and after I had gone to bed I used to spend hours aiming at a target, and in that way I’ve fired hundreds of good shots.”

“That’s capital! At that rate, they’ll order whole companies of riflemen into bed in the future, and put them through such a mental drill; that’ll save powder and shoe leather.”

“It’s not so ridiculous as it sounds,” said the experienced marksman who was teaching Karl, “it is certain that, of two riflemen who are equally gifted as regards eye and hand, the one who is accustomed to reflection will outstrip the other. Pulling the trigger requires an inborn knack and there are very peculiar things about it as there are about all exercises.”

The oftener and the better Karl shot, the more did old Hediger shake his head; the world seemed to him to be turned upside down, for he himself had only attained to what he was and knew how to do by industry and strenuous practice; even his principles, which people often pack into their minds as easily and numerously as herrings, had only been acquired by persevering study in his little back room. Now, however, he no longer ventured to interfere, and departed, not without inward satisfaction at numbering among his sons one of his country’s sharpshooters; and by the time he had reached home he was resolved to make Karl a well-fitting uniform of good cloth. “Of course, he will have to pay for it,” he said to himself, but he knew in his heart that he never asked his sons to repay anything, and that they never offered to do so. That is wholesome for parents, and enables them to reach a good old age when they can see how their children in turn are merrily fleeced by their grandchildren, and so it goes down from father to son, and all survive and enjoy good appetites.

Karl now had to go into barracks for several weeks, and developed into a good-looking and trained soldier who, although he was in love and neither saw nor heard anything of his sweetheart, nevertheless attentively and cheerfully performed his duties as long as the daylight lasted; and at night the conversation and jokes of his comrades gave him no chance to brood. There were a dozen of them, young fellows from different districts, who exchanged the tricks and jokes of their homes and continued to make the most of them long after the lights were out and until midnight came on. There was only one from the city besides Karl, and the latter knew him by name. He was a few years older than Karl and had already served as a fusilier. A bookbinder by trade, he had not done a stroke of work for a long time, but lived on the inflated rents of old houses which he cleverly managed to buy without capital. Sometimes he would sell one again to some simpleton at an exorbitant price, then if the purchaser could not hold it he would pocket the forfeit and the paid instalments and again take possession of the house, at the same

time raising the rents once more. He was also skilful in making slight changes in the construction of the dwellings, thus enlarging them by the addition of a tiny chamber or little room, so that he might again raise the rent. These alterations were by no means practical or planned for convenience, but quite arbitrary and stupid; he knew, too, all the bunglers among the artisans, who did the worst and cheapest work and with whom he could do as he liked. When he could think of absolutely nothing else to do, he would have the outside of one of his old buildings whitewashed and ask a still higher rent. By these methods he enjoyed a good annual income without doing an hour's actual work. His errands and appointments did not take long, and he would spend as much time in front of other people's buildings as before his own reconstructed shanties, play the expert and give advice about everything. In all other matters he was the stupidest fellow in the world. Hence he was considered a shrewd and prosperous young man who would make an early success in life, and he denied himself nothing. He considered himself too good for an infantry private and had wanted to become an officer. But there he had failed owing to his laziness and ignorance, and now by obstinate and importunate persistence he had got into the sharpshooters.

Here he sought to force himself into a position of respect, without exerting himself, solely with the aid of his money. He was forever inviting the non-commissioned officers and his comrades to eat and drink with him, and thought that by clumsy liberality he could obtain privileges and freedom. But he only succeeded in making himself a laughing-stock, though, to be sure, he did enjoy a sort of indulgence, in that the others soon gave up trying to make anything out of him and let him go his own way as long as he did not bother the rest.

A single recruit attached himself to him and acted as his servant, cleaned his arms and clothes and spoke in his defence. This was the tight-fisted son of a rich peasant, who had always a frightful appetite for food and drink whenever he could satisfy it at another's expense. He thought heaven would be his reward if he could carry back home all his shining silver and still be able to say he had lived merrily during his service and caroused like a true sharpshooter; at the same time he was jolly and good-natured and entertained his patron, who had much less voice than he, with his thin falsetto in which, from behind his bottle, he sang all sorts of popular country songs very oddly indeed; for he was a merry miser. And so Ruckstuhl, the young extortioner, and Spörri, the young skinflint, lived on in glorious friendship. The former always had meat and wine before him and did as he chose, and the latter left him as little as possible, sang and cleaned his boots and did not even scorn the tips that the other gave.

Meanwhile the others made fun of them and agreed among themselves that they would not tolerate Ruckstuhl in any company. This did not apply to his factotum, however, for, strangely enough, he was a good shot, and anyone who knows his business is welcome in the army whether he be a Philistine or a scamp.

Karl was foremost in making fun of the pair; but one night he lost his desire to joke, when the wine-gladdened Ruckstuhl boasted to his follower, after the room had grown quiet, of what a fine gentleman he was and of how he soon expected to marry a rich wife, the daughter of the carpenter Frymann, whom, if he read the signs aright, he could not fail to get.

Karl's peace of mind was now gone, and the next day, as soon as he had a free hour, he went to his parents to find out, by listening, what was going on. But as he did not care to introduce the subject himself, he heard nothing of Hermine until just before he went, when his mother told him she had wanted to be remembered to him.

“Why, where did you see her?” he asked as indifferently as he could.

“Oh, she comes to the market every day now with the maid to learn how to buy supplies. She always asks me for advice when we meet and then we make the rounds of the market and find a lot to laugh at; for she’s always in good spirits.”

“Oh, ho!” said Hediger, “so that’s why you stay out so long sometimes! And it’s match-making that you are up to? Do you think it’s fitting for a mother to behave like that, running around with people who are forbidden to her son, and carrying messages?”

“Forbidden people! Nonsense! Haven’t I known the dear child since she was a baby and I carried her in my arms? And now I’m not to associate with her! And why shouldn’t she ask to be remembered to the people in our house? And why shouldn’t a mother take such a message? And may not a mother be allowed to make a match for her child? It seems to me that she’s the very person to do it! But we never talk about such things, we women are not half so keen about you ill-mannered men, and if Hermine takes my advice she won’t marry anyone.”

Karl did not wait for the end of the conversation, but went his way; for she had sent him a message and there had been no mention of any suspicious news. Only he *did* tap his forehead, puzzled by Hermine’s good spirits, for it was not like her to laugh so much. He finally decided it was a sign in his favor and she had been merry because she had met his mother. So he resolved to keep quiet, have faith in the girl, and let things take their course.

A few days later Hermine came to visit Mrs. Hediger, bringing her knitting with her, and there was so much cordiality, talking, and laughing that Hediger, cutting out a frock coat in his workshop, was almost disturbed and wondered what old gossip could be there. Still, he did not pay much attention to it till finally he heard his wife go to a cupboard and begin to rattle the blue coffee set. For the “Gunsmithy” was making as good a pot of coffee as she had ever brewed; she also took a good handful of sage leaves, dipped them in an egg-batter and fried them in butter, thus making so-called little mice, since the stems of the leaves looked like mouse-tails. They rose beautifully and made a heaping dish full, the fragrance of which, together with that of the fresh coffee ascended to Master Hediger above. When, finally, he heard her pounding sugar he became highly impatient to be called to the table; but he would not have gone one moment earlier, for he belonged to the Staunch and Upright. As he now entered the room he saw his wife and the graceful “forbidden person” sitting in close friendship behind the coffee-pot and, moreover, it was the blue-flowered coffee-pot; and besides the little mice there was butter on the table and the blue-flowered pot full of honey; it was not real honey, to be sure, but only cherry-jam, about the color of Hermine’s eyes; and it was Saturday too, a day on which all respectable middle-class women scrub and scour, clean and polish, and never cook a bite that’s fit to eat.

Hediger looked very critically at the whole scene and his greeting was rather stern; but Hermine was so charming and at the same time so resolute that he sat there as if muzzled and ended by going himself to get a “glass of wine” out of the cellar and even drawing it from the small keg. Hermine responded to this mark of favor by declaring that she must have a plate of mice kept for Karl, as he probably didn’t get very good things to eat in the barracks. She took her plate and pulled out the finest mice by their tails with her own dainty fingers and kept on piling them up till at last Karl’s mother herself cried that it was enough. Hermine then put the plate beside her, looked at it with satisfaction from time to time, and occasionally picked out a piece and ate it, saying that she was Karl’s guest now; after which she would conscientiously replace the plunder from the dish.

Finally it got to be too much for the worthy Hediger; he scratched his head and, urgent though his work was, hastily put on his coat and hurried forth to seek the father of the little sinner.

“We must look out,” he said to him; “your daughter and my old woman are sitting at home in all their glory, hand in glove, and it all looks mighty suspicious to me; you know women are the very devil.”

“Why don’t you chase the young scallywag off?” said Frymann, annoyed.

“I chase her off? Not I; she’s a regular witch! Just come along yourself and attend to her.”

“Good, I’ll come along with you and make the girl thoroughly understand how she’s to behave.”

When they got there, however, instead of Miss Hermine they found Karl, the sharpshooter, who had unbuttoned his green waistcoat and was enjoying his mice and what wine there was left all the more because his mother had just happened to mention that Hermine was going rowing on the lake again that evening as it would be bright moonlight and she hadn’t been on the lake for a month.

Karl started out on the lake all the earlier because he had to be back in barracks at the sound of “taps,” blown in heavenly harmonies by the Zurich buglers on beautiful spring and summer evenings. It was not yet quite dark when he reached the lumber yard; but alas, Master Frymann’s skiff was not floating in the water as usual; it lay bottom up, on two blocks, about ten yards from the shore.

Was that a hoax, or a trick of the old man’s, he wondered and, disappointed and angry, he was just about to row off when the great, golden moon rose out of the woods on Mt. Zurich and at the same time Hermine stepped out from behind a blossoming willow that hung full of yellow cattails.

“I didn’t know that our boat was being freshly painted,” she whispered, “so I’ll have to come into yours, row fast!” And she sprang lightly in, and sat down at the other end of the skiff which was scarcely seven feet long. They rowed out till they were beyond the range of any spying eye and Karl began at once to call Hermine to account as regarded Ruckstuhl, telling her of the latter’s words and acts.

“I know,” she said, “that this cavalier wants to marry me and that, in fact, my father is not disinclined to consent; he has already spoken of it.”

“Is he possessed of the devil to want to give you to such a vagabond and loafer? What’s become of his weighty principles?”

Hermine shrugged her shoulders and said: “Father is full of the idea of building a number of houses and speculating with them; for that reason, he wants a son-in-law who can be of assistance to him in such matters, particularly in speculating, and who will know that he is working for his own advantage in furthering the whole enterprise. He has in mind that he wants someone with whom he can take pleasure in working and scheming, as he would have done with a son of his own, and now this fellow appears to him to have just that kind of talent. All he needs, father says, to make him a practical expert, is a thorough business life. Father knows nothing of the foolish way he lives because he doesn’t watch other people’s doings and never goes anywhere except to his old friends. In short, as to-morrow is Sunday, Ruckstuhl has been invited to dine with us, to strengthen the acquaintance, and I’m afraid that he will plunge right into a proposal. Besides, I’ve heard that he’s a wretched flatterer and an impudent fellow when he’s trying to grab something that he wants.”

“Oh well,” said Karl, “you’ll easily out-trump him.”

“And I’ll do it too; but it would be better if he didn’t come at all and left my papa in the lurch.”

“Of course that would be better; but it’s a pious wish, he’ll take good care not to stay away.”

“I’ve thought of a plan, though it’s rather a queer one to be sure. Couldn’t you lead him into doing something foolish to-day or early to-morrow morning so that you’d both be sent to the guard-room for twenty-four or forty-eight hours?”

“You’re very kind to want to send me to the lock-up for a couple of days just to spare you a refusal. Won’t you do it cheaper?”

“It’s necessary that you should share his suffering so that we may not have too much on our consciences. As for my refusal, I don’t want it to come to the point where I shall have to say yes or no to the fellow; it’s bad enough that he should talk about me in the barracks. I don’t want him to get a step beyond that.”

“You’re right, sweetheart! Nevertheless I think the rascal will have to be locked up alone; a scheme is beginning to dawn on me. But enough of that, it’s a pity to waste our precious time and the golden moonlight. Doesn’t it remind you of anything?”

“What should it remind me of?”

“Of the fact that we haven’t seen each other for four weeks and that you can hardly expect to set foot ashore again to-night unkissed.”

“Oh, so you would like to kiss me?”

“Yes, even I; but there’s no hurry, I know you can’t escape. I want to enjoy the anticipation a few minutes longer, perhaps five, or six at the most.”

“Oh, indeed! Is that the way you repay my confidence in you, and do you really care much about it? Wouldn’t you consider a bargain?”

“Not though you spoke with the eloquence of an angel, not for a minute! There’s no way out of it for you to-night, my lady.”

“Then I will also make a declaration, my dear sir. If you so much as touch me with the tips of your fingers to-night against my will, it’s all over between us and I will never see you again; I swear it by Heaven and my own honor. For I am in earnest.”

Her eyes sparkled as she spoke. “That will take care of itself,” replied Karl, “I’m coming soon now, so keep still.”

“Do as you like,” said Hermine curtly and was silent.

But whether it was that he thought her capable of keeping her word, or whether he himself did not want her to break her vow, he stayed obediently in his seat and gazed at her with shining eyes, peering to see by the moonlight if the corners of her mouth were not twitching and she were not laughing at him.

“Then I shall have to console myself with the past again and let my memories compensate me,” he began after a brief silence; “who would believe that those stern and firmly closed lips knew how to kiss so sweetly years ago!”

“You mean to begin on your shameless inventions again, do you? But let me tell you that I won’t listen to such irritating nonsense any longer.”

“Be calm! Just this once more we will direct our gaze back to those golden hours and more particularly to the last kiss that you gave me; I remember the circumstances as clearly and distinctly as if it were to-day, and I am sure that you do too. I was thirteen and you about ten and it was several years since we had kissed each other, for we felt very old and grown-up. But there was to be a pleasant ending after all—or was it the lark, the herald of the morn? It was a beautiful Whitmonday—”

“No, Ascension—” interrupted Hermine, but broke off in the middle of the word.

“You are right, it was a glorious Ascension Day in the month of May and we were on an excursion with a party of young people, we two being the only children among them; you stuck close to the big girls and I to the older boys and we disdained to play with each other or even to talk. After we had walked hither and yon we sat down in a bright grove of tall trees and began to play forfeits; for evening was coming on and the party did not want to go home without a few kisses. Two of them were condemned to kiss each other with flowers in their mouths without dropping them. After they, and the couple that tried it after them, had failed, you suddenly came running up to me without a trace of embarrassment, with a lily-of-the-valley in your mouth, stuck another between my lips and said, ‘Try it!’ Sure enough, both blossoms fell to join their sisters on the ground, but, in your eagerness, you kissed me all the same. It felt as if a beautiful, light-winged butterfly had alighted, and involuntarily I put up two finger-tips to catch it. The others thought I wanted to wipe my lips and laughed at me.”

“Here we are at the shore,” said Hermine and jumped out. Then she turned round again pleasantly to Karl.

“Because you sat so still and treated my word with the respect due to it,” she said, “I will, if necessary, go out with you again before four weeks have passed and will write you a note to say when. That will be the first writing I have ever confided to you.”

With that she hurried to the house. Karl rowed rapidly to the public landing so as not to miss the blast of the worthy buglers that pierced the mild air like a jagged razor.

On his way through the street he encountered Ruckstuhl and Spörri who were slightly tipsy; greeting them pleasantly and familiarly, he grasped the former by the arm and began to praise and flatter him.

“What the devil have you been up to again? What new trick have you been planning, you schemer? You’re certainly the grandest sharpshooter in the whole canton, in all Switzerland, I *should* say.”

“Thundering guns!” cried Ruckstuhl, highly flattered that someone else besides Spörri should make up to him and compliment him, “it’s a shame that we have to turn in so soon. Haven’t we time to drink a bottle of good wine together?”

“Sst! We can do that in our room. It’s the custom among the sharpshooters anyway to take in the officers, at least once during their service and secretly carouse in their room all night. We’re only recruits, but we’ll show them that we’re worthy of the carbine.”

“That would be a great lark! I’ll pay for the wine as sure as my name is Ruckstuhl! But we must be sly and crafty as serpents, or we’ll do for ourselves.”

“Don’t worry, we’re just the boys for this sort of thing. We’ll turn in quite quietly and innocently and make no noise.”

When they reached the barracks their room-mates were all in the canteen drinking a night-cap. Karl confided in a few of them, who passed the tidings on, and so each of them provided himself with a few bottles which, one after the other, they carried out unnoticed and hid under their cots. In their room they quietly went to bed at ten o’clock to wait till the rounds had been made to see if the lights were out. They then all got up again, hung coats over the windows, lighted the lights, brought out the wine and began a regular drinking bout. Ruckstuhl felt as if he were in paradise, for they all drank to him and toasted him as a great man. His ardent desire to be considered somebody in military as well as in civil life without doing anything to deserve it made him stupider than he naturally was. When he and his henchman seemed to have been put completely out of business, various drinking feats were carried out. One of the men, while standing on his head, had to drink a ladle of wine which someone else held to his lips; another, seated in a chair, with a bullet suspended from the ceiling swinging round his head, had to drink three glasses before the bullet touched his head; a third had some other trick to perform, and on all who failed some droll penalty was imposed. All this was done in perfect silence; whoever made a noise also did penance, and they were all in their nightshirts so that, if surprised, they could crawl quickly into bed. Now as the time approached when the officer would make his rounds through the corridors, the two friends were also assigned a drinking-feat. Each was to balance a full glass on the flat of his sword and hold it to the other’s mouth and each had to drain the glass so held without spilling a drop. They drew their short-swords with a swagger and crossed the blades with the glasses on them; but they trembled so that both glasses fell off and they did not get a drop. They were, therefore, sentenced to stand guard outside the door, in “undress uniform,” for fifteen minutes, and this prank was admiringly said to be the boldest ever carried out in those barracks within the memory of man. Their haversacks and short-swords were hung crosswise over their shirts, they were made to put on their shakoes and blue leggings, but no shoes, and thus, their rifles in their hands, they were led out and posted one on either side of the door. They were scarcely there before the others bolted the door, removed all traces of the carousal, uncovered the windows, put out the lights and slipped into bed as if they had been asleep for hours. In the meantime the two sentries marched up and down in the gleam of the corridor-lamp, their rifles on their shoulders, and looked about them with bold glances. Spörri, filled with bliss because he had been able to get drunk at no expense, grew quite reckless and suddenly began to sing, and that hastened the steps of the officer on duty who was already on the way. As he approached they tried to slip quickly into the room; but they couldn’t open the door and before they could think of anything else to do the enemy was upon them. Now everything whirled through their heads in a mad dance. In their confusion each placed himself at his post, presented arms and cried, “Who goes there?”

“In the name of all that’s holy, what does this mean? What are you doing there?” cried the officer on duty, but without receiving a sufficient answer, for the two clowns could not get out a sensible word. The officer quickly opened the door and looked into the room, for Karl who had been straining his ears, had hopped hastily out of bed, pushed back the bolt and as hastily hopped in again. When the officer saw that everything was dark and quiet and heard nothing but puffing and snoring, he cried, “Hallo there, men!”

“Go to the devil!” cried Karl, “and get to bed, you drunkards!” The others also pretended that they had been wakened and cried,

“Aren’t those beasts in bed yet? Turn them out, call the guard!”

“He’s here, I’m he,” said the officer, “one of you light a light, quick.”

This was done, and when the light fell on the two buffoons peals of laughter came from under all the bedclothes as if the entire company were taken utterly by surprise. Ruckstuhl and Spörri joined crazily in the laughter and marched up and down holding their sides, for their minds had now taken a tack in a different direction. Ruckstuhl repeatedly snapped his fingers in the officer’s face and Spörri stuck out his tongue at him. When the derided officer saw that there was nothing to be done with the joyful pair, he took out his pad and wrote down their names. Now, as ill-luck would have it, he happened to live in one of Ruckstuhl’s houses and had not yet paid the rent—due at Easter which was just over—it might be because he was not in funds or because he had been too busy while on military duty to attend to it. In any case, Ruckstuhl’s evil genius suddenly hit on this fact and, reeling towards the officer, he laughed foolishly and stuttered,

“P-pay your d-debts fir-firsht, m-mister, before you t-ta-take down peo-people’s namesh. You know!”

Spörri laughed still louder, lurched and staggered back like a crab and, shaking his head, piped shrilly,

“P-p-pay your d-debts, mister, that-tha-that is well s-said.”

“Four of you get up,” said the officer quietly, “and take these men to the guard-house, see that they’re well locked up at once. In about three days we’ll see if they have slept this off yet. Throw their cloaks over their shoulders and let them take their trousers on their arms. March!”

“T-t-t-trousers,” shouted Ruckstuhl, “th-that’s what we need; there’s sh-sh-shtill s-something left to fa-fall out—if-you-shake-them.”

“If you sh-sh-shake them, mister,” repeated Spörri and both of them swung their trousers about till the coins jingled in the pockets. So they marched off with their escort, laughing and shouting, through the corridors and down the stairs and soon disappeared in a cellar-like room in the basement, whereupon it grew quiet.

The following day at noon, Master Frymann’s table was more elaborately set than usual. Hermine filled the cut-glass decanters with the vintage of ’46, put a shining glass at every place, laid a handsome napkin on every plate, and cut up a fresh loaf from the bakery at the sign of the Hen where they baked an old-fashioned kind of bread for high days and holidays, the delight of all the children in Zurich and of the women who sat gossiping over their afternoon coffee-cups. She also sent an apprentice, dressed in his Sunday best, to the pastry-cook’s to fetch the macaroni pie and the coffee cake, and finally she arranged the dessert on a small side table: little curled cookies, and wafers, the pound cake, the little “cocked hats,” and the conical raisin loaf. Frymann, pleasantly affected by the beautiful Sunday weather, interpreted his daughter’s zeal to mean that she did not intend seriously to resist his plans, and he said to himself with amusement, “They’re all like that! As soon as an acceptable and definite opportunity offers itself they make haste to seize it by the forelock!”

According to ancient custom Mr. Ruckstuhl was invited for twelve o’clock sharp. When, at a quarter past, he was not yet there, Frymann said,

“We will begin; we must accustom this cavalier to punctuality from the start.”

And when the soup was finished and Ruckstuhl had still not arrived the master called in the apprentices and the maidservant who were eating by themselves that day and had already half done, and said to them:

“Sit down and eat with us, we don’t want to sit staring at all this food. Pitch in and enjoy yourselves,
‘Whoever late to dinner comes
Must eat what’s left or suck his thumbs.’”

There was no need to ask them a second time, and they were jolly and in good spirits, and Hermine was the merriest of all, and her appetite grew better and better the more annoyed and displeased her father became.

“The fellow seems to be a boor!” he growled to himself, but she heard it and said:

“He probably couldn’t get leave; we mustn’t judge him too hastily.”

“Not get leave! Are you ready to defend him already? Why shouldn’t he get leave if he cares anything about it?”

He finished his meal in the worst of humors and, contrary to his habit, went at once to a coffee-house simply that he should not be at home if the negligent suitor should finally come. Towards four o’clock, instead of joining the Seven as usual, he came home again, curious to see whether Ruckstuhl had put in an appearance. As he came through the garden, there sat Mrs. Hediger with Hermine in the summer-house, as it was a warm spring day, and they were drinking coffee and eating the “cocked hats” and the raisin loaf and seemed to be in high spirits. He said good afternoon to Mrs. Hediger, and although it annoyed him to see her there, he asked her at once whether she had no news from the barracks, and if all the sharpshooters had not perhaps gone on an excursion.

“I think not,” said Mrs. Hediger, “they were at church this morning and afterwards Karl came home to dinner; we had roast mutton and that is a dish he never deserts.”

“Did he say nothing about Mr. Ruckstuhl or mention where he had gone?”

“Mr. Ruckstuhl? Yes, he and another recruit are in close confinement for getting dreadfully intoxicated and insulting their superiors; they say it was a most laughable scene.”

“The devil take him!” said Frymann and straightway departed. Half an hour later he was saying to Hediger:

“Now it’s your wife who is sitting with my daughter in the garden and rejoicing with her that my plan for a marriage has been wrecked.”

“Why don’t you drive her away? Why didn’t you growl at her?”

“How can I, in view of our old friendship? You see, how these confounded affairs are already confusing our relations with one another. Therefore let us stand firm! No kinship for us!”

“No kinship indeed!” corroborated Hediger, and shook his friend by the hand.

July, and with it the National Shooting Match of 1849, was now scarcely a fortnight distant. The Seven held another meeting; for the cup and banner were finished and had to be inspected and approved. The

banner was raised aloft and set up in the room, and in its shadow there now took place the stormiest session that had ever stirred the Upright Seven. For the fact suddenly became apparent that a banner carried in a presentation procession involves a speaker, and it was the choice of the latter that nearly wrecked the little boat with its crew of seven. Each in turn was chosen thrice, and thrice did each in turn most decisively decline. They were all indignant that none would consent, and it made each of them angry to think that just he should be picked out to bear this burden and do this unheard-of thing. As eagerly as other men come forward when it's a question of taking the floor and airing their views, just so timidly did these men avoid speaking in public, and each plead his unfitness, and declared that he had never in his life done anything of the kind and never would. For they still believed speechmaking to be an honorable art requiring both talent and study, and they cherished an unreserved and honest respect for good orators who could touch them, and accepted everything that such a man said as true and sacred. They distinguished these orators sharply from themselves and imposed upon themselves the meritorious duty of attentive listeners, to consider conscientiously, to agree or to reject, and this seemed to them a sufficiently honorable task.

So when it appeared that no speaker was procurable by vote, a tumult and general uproar arose, in which each tried to convince another that he was the man who should sacrifice himself. They picked out Hediger and Frymann in particular and vigorously assaulted them. They, however, resisted forcibly, and each tried to shift it to the other till Frymann called for silence and said:

“My friends! We have made a thoughtless mistake and now we cannot fail to see that, after all, we had better leave our banner at home; so let us quickly decide to do that and attend the festival without any fuss.”

Heavy gloom settled down on them at these words.

Paras. 200–322

“He's right!” said Kuser, the silversmith.

“There's nothing else for us to do,” added Syfrig, the ploughmaker.

But Bürgi cried: “We can't do that; people know what we intend to do and that the banner is made. If we give it up the story will go down to history.”

“That's true, too,” said Erismann, the innkeeper, “and our old adversaries, the reactionaries, will know how to make the most of the joke.”

Their old bones thrilled with terror at such an idea, and once again the company attacked the two most gifted members; they resisted anew and finally threatened to withdraw.

“I am a simple carpenter and will never make a laughing stock of myself,” cried Frymann, to which Hediger rejoined:

“Then how can you expect me, a poor tailor, to do it? I should bring ridicule on you all and harm myself, all to no purpose. I propose that one of the innkeepers should be urged to undertake it; they are most accustomed to crowds than any of the rest of us.”

But the innkeepers protested vehemently, and Pfister suggested the cabinet-maker because he was a wit

and a joker.

“Joker! Not much!” cried Bürgi, “do you call it a joke to address the president of a national festival in the presence of a thousand people?”

A general sigh was the answer to this remark which made them realize the difficulties of the task more vividly than ever.

After this several members rose one by one from the table, and there was a running in and out and a whispering together in the corners. Frymann and Hediger alone remained seated, with gloomy countenances, for they divined that a fresh and deadly assault on them was being planned. Finally, when they were all assembled again, Bürgi stood up before these two and said:

“Kaspar and Daniel! You have both so often spoken to our satisfaction here, in this circle, that either of you, if he only will, can perfectly well make a short, public address. It is the decision of the society that you shall draw lots between you and that the result shall be final. You must yield to a majority of five to two.”

Renewed clamor supported these words; the two addressed, looked at each other and finally bowed humbly to the decision, each in the hope that the bitter lot might fall to the other. It fell to Frymann who, for the first time, left a meeting of the Lovers of Liberty with a heavy heart, while Hediger rubbed his hands with delight—so inconsiderate does selfishness make the oldest of friends.

Frymann’s pleasure in the approaching festival was now at an end and his days were darkened. He thought constantly of his speech without being able to find a single idea, because he kept seeking for something remote instead of seizing upon what lay near at hand and using it as he would have among his friends. The phrases in which he was accustomed to address them seemed homely to him, and he hunted about in his mind for something out of the ordinary and high-sounding, for a political manifesto, and he did so not from vanity but from a bitter sense of duty. Finally he began to cover a sheet of paper with writing, not without many interruptions, sighs, and curses. With infinite pains he wrote two pages, although he had intended to compose only a few lines; for he could not find a conclusion, and the tortured phrases clung to one another like sticky burrs and held the writer fast in a confused tangle.

With the folded paper in his waistcoat pocket he went worriedly about his business, occasionally stepping behind some shed to read it again and shake his head. At last he confided in his daughter and read the draft to her to see what effect it made. The speech was an accumulation of words that thundered against Jesuits and aristocrats, richly larded with such expressions as “freedom,” “human rights,” “servitude,” and “degradation”; in short it was a bitter and labored declaration of war, in which there was no mention of the Seven and their little banner, and moreover, the composition was clumsy and confused, whereas he usually spoke easily and correctly.

Hermine said it was a very strong speech, but it seemed to her somewhat belated, as the Jesuits and aristocrats had been conquered at last, and she thought a bright and pleasant declaration would be more appropriate since the people were contented and happy.

Frymann was somewhat taken aback and although, even as an old man, the fire of passion was still strong within him, he rubbed his nose and said:

“You may be right, but still you don’t quite understand it. A man must use forcible language in public

and spread it on thick, like a scene-painter, so to speak, whose work, seen close to, is a crude daub. Still, perhaps I can soften an expression here and there.”

“That will be better,” continued Hermine, “for there are so many ‘therefores’ in it. Let me look at it a minute. See, ‘therefore’ occurs in nearly every other line.”

“It’s the very devil,” he cried, took the paper from her hand and tore it into a hundred pieces. “That’s the end of it! I can’t do it and I won’t make a fool of myself.”

But Hermine advised him not to try to write anything, to wait until just about an hour before the presentation and then to settle on some idea and make a brief speech about it on the spur of the moment, as if he were at home.

“That will be best,” he replied, “then if it’s a failure, at least I have made no false pretenses.”

Nevertheless he could not help beginning at once to turn over and torture the idea in his mind without succeeding in giving it form; he went about preoccupied and worried, and Hermine watched him with great satisfaction.

The festival week had come before they knew it, and one morning in the middle of it, the Seven started for Aarau before daybreak in a special omnibus drawn by four horses. The new banner fluttered brightly from the box; on its green silk shone the words, “Friendship in Freedom!” and all the old men were joyful and gay, serious and merry by turns, and Frymann alone appeared to be depressed and dubious.

Hermine was already staying with friends in Aarau, for her father rewarded her perfect housekeeping by taking her with him on all his jaunts; and more than once she had adorned the joyful circle of greybeards like a rosy hyacinth. Karl, too, was already there; although his military service had made demands enough on his time and his money, yet at Hermine’s invitation he had gone to the festival on foot, and oddly enough had found quarters near where she was staying; for they had their affair to attend to, and no one could say whether they might not be able to make favorable use of the festival. Incidentally, he also wanted to shoot and, in accordance with his means, carried twenty-five cartridges with him; these he intended to use, no more and no fewer.

He had soon scented the arrival of the Upright Seven and followed them at a distance as, with their little banner, they marched in close order to the festival grounds. The attendance was larger on that day than on any other in the week, the streets were full of people in their best clothes, going and coming; large and small rifle clubs came along with and without bands; but none was as small as that of the Seven. They were obliged to wind their way through the crowd but, taking short paces, they kept in step nevertheless; their fists were closed and their arms hung straight at their sides in military fashion. Frymann marched ahead with the banner, looking as if he were being led to execution. Occasionally he looked from side to side to see if no escape were possible; but his companions, glad that they were not in his shoes, encouraged him and called out to him bracing and pithy words. They were already nearing the festival grounds; the crackling rifle-fire already sounded close by, and high in the air the national marksmen’s flag flew in sunny solitude and its silk now stretched out quiveringly to all four corners, now snapped gracefully above the people’s heads, now hung down sanctimoniously, close to the staff, for a moment—in short, it indulged in all the sport that a flag can think of in a whole long week, and yet the sight of it stabbed the bearer of the little green banner to the heart.

Karl, seeing the merry flag and stopping to watch it a moment, suddenly lost sight of the little group and

when he looked all round for it he could not discover it anywhere; it seemed as if the earth had swallowed it. Quickly he pressed through to the spot and then back to the entrance of the grounds and looked there; no little green banner rose from the throng. He turned to go back again, and in order to get ahead faster he took a side way along the street. There stood a little tavern, the proprietor of which had planted a few lean evergreens in front of the door, put up a few tables and benches and spread a piece of canvas above the whole, like a spider that spins her web close to a large pot of honey, so as to catch a fly now and then. Through the dirty window of this little house Karl happened to see the shining gilt tip of a flag-pole; in he went at once and behold, there, in the low-ceilinged room, sat his precious old men as if blown there by a thunderstorm. They lay and lounged this way and that on chairs and benches and hung their heads, and in the centre stood Frymann with the banner and said:

“That’s enough! I won’t do it! I’m an old man and don’t want to bear the stigma of folly and a nickname for the rest of my days.”

And with that he stood the banner in a corner with a bang. No answer followed until the pleased innkeeper came and placed a huge bottle of wine in front of the unexpected guests, although they had been too upset to order anything. Hediger filled a glass, stepped up to Frymann and said:

“Come, old friend and comrade, take a swallow of wine and brace up.”

But Frymann shook his head and spoke not another word. They sat in great distress, greater than they had ever known; all the riots, counter-revolutions, and reactions that they had experienced were child’s play compared to this defeat at the gates of paradise.

“Then in God’s name, let us turn round and drive home again,” said Hediger who feared that even now fate might turn against him. At that Karl, who until now had stood on the threshold, stepped forward and said gaily:

“Gentlemen, give me the banner! I will carry it and speak for you, I don’t mind doing it.”

They all looked up in astonishment and a ray of relief and joy flashed across their faces; but old Hediger said sternly:

“You! How did you come here? And how can an inexperienced young shaver like you speak for us old fellows?”

But from all sides came cries of “Well done! Forward unflinching! Forward with the lad!” And Frymann himself gave him the banner, for a heavy weight had fallen from his heart and he was glad to see his old friends saved from the distress into which he had led them. And forward they went with renewed zest; Karl led, bearing the banner grandly aloft, and in the rear the innkeeper looked sadly after the vanishing mirage that had for a moment deceived him. Hediger alone was now gloomy and unhappy, for he did not doubt that his son would lead them deeper into the mire than ever. But they had already entered the grounds; the Grisons were just marching off, a long brown procession, and, passing them and in time to their music, the old men marched through the crowd, keeping step as perfectly as they had ever done. Again they had to mark time when three fortunate shots who had won cups crossed their path with buglers and followers; but all that, together with the loud noise of the shooting, only increased their festive intoxication and finally they uncovered their heads at the sight of the trophy-temple which blazed with treasures, and from the turrets of which a host of flags fluttered showing the colors of all the cantons, towns, districts and parishes. In their shade stood several gentlemen in black and one of them

held a brimming silver goblet in his hand ready to receive the arrivals.

The seven venerable heads floated like a sunlit cake of ice in the dark sea of the crowd, their scanty white hair fluttered in the gentle east wind and streamed in the same direction as the red and white flag high above them. By reason of their small number and their advanced age they attracted general attention, people smiled not without respect, and everyone was listening as the youthful standard-bearer stepped forward and in a fresh clear voice delivered this address:

“Beloved Countrymen! Here we come with our little banner, eight of us all told, seven greybeards with a young standard-bearer. As you see, each carries his rifle, without claiming to be a remarkably good shot; to be sure, none of us would miss the target and sometimes one of us hits the bull’s eye, but if that should occur you can swear that he didn’t mean to. So, as far as the silver is concerned that we shall carry away from your trophy-hall, we might just as well have stayed at home.

“Nevertheless, although we are not eminent marksmen, we couldn’t keep away; we have come not to win trophies, but to present a modest little cup, an almost immodestly joyful heart, and a new banner that trembles in my hand with eagerness to fly from your fortress of flags. But we shall take our little banner home with us again, it is only here to receive its consecration. See, what it bears in golden letter: ‘Friendship in Freedom’! Yes, it is friendship personified so to speak, that we bring to this festival, friendship based on patriotism, friendship rooted in the love of liberty. Friendship it was that brought together these seven hoary heads that glisten here in the sunlight, thirty, no forty years ago, and it has held them together through every storm, in good and evil days. It is a society that has no name, no president and no statutes; its members neither bear titles nor hold offices, it is unmarked timber from the forest depths of the nation, and it now steps forth for a moment into the sunlight of the national holiday only to return presently to its place, to rustle and roar with thousands of other tree-tops in the hidden forest-dusk of the people, where only a few can know and call each other by name, and yet all are familiar and acquainted.

“Look at them, these old sinners! None of them stands in the odor of particular sanctity! Rarely is one of them seen at church! They do not speak well of ecclesiastical matters. But here, beneath the open sky, I can confide something strange to you, my countrymen: as soon as their fatherland is in danger they begin quite gradually to believe in God; first each one cautiously in his own heart, then ever more boldly, till one betrays his secret to another and they then, all together, cultivate a remarkable theology, the first and only doctrine of which is: ‘God helps him who helps himself’! On days of rejoicing too, like this, when crowds of people are assembled and a clear blue sky smiles above them, they again fall a prey to these religious thoughts and then they imagine that God has hung the Swiss standard aloft and made the beautiful weather especially for us. In both cases, in the hour of danger and in the hour of joy, they are suddenly satisfied with the words that begin our constitution: ‘In the name of God Almighty’! And such a gentle tolerance pervades them then—cross-grained though they are at other times—that they do not even ask whether it is the Roman Catholic or the Protestant God of Hosts that is meant.

“In short, a child who has been given a little Noah’s ark filled with painted animals and tiny men and women, cannot be more pleased with it than they are with their beloved little fatherland and all the thousands of good things that are in it, from the moss-covered old pike lying at the bottom of its lakes to the wild bird that flutters round its icy peaks. Oh, what different kinds of people swarm here in this little space, manifold in their occupations, in manners and customs, in costume and language! What sly rascals and what moon-struck fools we see running around, what noble growth and what weeds thrive here

merrily side by side, and it is all good and fine and dear to our hearts, for it is in our fatherland.

“So, considering and weighing the value of earthly things, they grow to be philosophers; but they can never get beyond the wonderful fact of the fatherland. True, they traveled in their youth and have seen many countries, not with arrogance, but honoring every land in which they found people of worth; but their motto remained ever the same: respect every man’s mother country, but love your own!

“And how graceful and rich it is! The closer one looks at it the finer does its warp and woof appear, beautiful and durable, a model piece of handiwork!

“How diverting it is that there is not just one monotonous type of Swiss, but that there are various stamps of people from Zurich and Bern, Unterwalden and Neuenburg, the Grisons and Basle, and even two kinds of Baslers; and that Appenzell has a history of its own and Geneva another! This variety in unity—which God preserve—is the proper school in which to learn friendship, and it is only where political homogeneousness is transformed into the personal friendship of a whole people that the highest plane has been attained; for where the sense of citizenship fails, friendship will be successful and both will combine to form a single virtue.

“These old men have spent their years in toil and labor; they are beginning to feel the frailty of all flesh, it pinches one in one place, one in another. Yet, when summer comes, they go, not to the baths, but to the national festival. The wine of the Swiss festival is the healing spring that refreshes their hearts, the outdoor summer life of the nation is the air that strengthens their old nerves, surging waves of happy fellow-countrymen are the sea that bathes their stiff limbs and makes them active again. You will presently see their white heads disappear in this sea. So now, fellow Helvetians, give us the cup of welcome! Long live friendship in the fatherland! Long live friendship in freedom!”

“Long may it live! Bravo!” rang out from all sides, and the welcoming speaker replied to the address and saluted the old men, who made an odd and touching appearance as they stood before him.

“Yes,” he concluded, “may our festivals never become anything worse than a school of manners for the young, and, for the old, the reward of a clear public conscience, of faithful civic loyalty, and a fountain of pleasure! May they ever celebrate inviolable and vigorous friendship in our country, between district and district and between man and man! May your nameless and statuteless society, my venerable friends, live long!”

Again the toast was echoed all around and amid general applause the little banner was added to the others. Here-upon the little troop of the Seven wheeled about and made straight for the great festival hall to refresh themselves with a good luncheon and they were scarcely there before they all shook hands with their speaker and cried:

“Spoken from our hearts! Hediger, Kaspar! your boy is made of good stuff, he’ll turn out well, let him go his own way. Just like us, but cleverer, we are a lot of old donkeys; but steadfast and unflinching, stand firm, Karl!” and so on.

But Frymann was quite dumbfounded; the boy had said just what he ought to have thought of, instead of banging away at the Jesuits. He too gave Karl his hand in friendship and thanked him for his help in time of need. Last of all, old Hediger came up to his son, took his hand also, fixed his eye keenly and firmly upon him and said:

“Son, you have revealed a fine but dangerous gift. Nurse it, cultivate it with loyalty, with a sense of duty, with modesty. Never lend it to the false and the unjust, to the vain and the trivial; for it may become as a sword in your hand that turns against you yourself, or against the good as well as the evil. Or it may become a mere fool’s bauble. Therefore, look straight ahead, be modest, studious, but firm and unswerving. As you have done us honor to-day, remember always to do honor to your fellow-citizens, to your country, to give them joy; think of this and so you will be best preserved from false ambition! Unswerving! Don’t think that you must always speak, let some opportunities pass, and never speak for your own sake, but always for some worthy cause. Study men, not in order to outwit and plunder them, but in order to awaken and set in motion the good in them, and, believe me, many who listen to you will often be better and wiser than you who speak. Never use sophisms and petty hair-splitting which only move the chaff; the heart of the people can only be stirred by the full force of truth. Do not, therefore, court the applause of the noisy and restless, but fix your eye unswervingly on the cool-headed and the firm.”

Scarcely had he finished this speech and released Karl’s hand when Frymann seized it and said:

“Try to acquire an equal knowledge of all branches and enrich your store of principles that you may not sink into the use of empty phrases. After this first dash allow considerable time to pass without thinking of such things again. If you have a good idea, never speak just in order to air it but rather lay it aside; the opportunity will come more than once later for you to use it in a more developed and better form. But should someone else forestall you in uttering it, be glad instead of annoyed, for that is a proof that you have felt and thought something universal. Train and develop your mind and watch over your nature and study in other speakers the difference between a mere tongue-warrior and a man of truthfulness and feeling. Do not travel about the country nor rush through all the streets, but accustom yourself to understand the course of the world from your own hearth, in the midst of tried friends; then, when it is time for action, you will come forward with more wisdom than the hounds and tramps. When you speak, speak neither like a facetious hostler nor like a tragic actor, but keep your own natural character upspoil and then speak as it dictates. Avoid affectation, don’t strike attitudes, do not look about you like a field marshal before you begin, or, worse, as if you were lying in wait to spring upon the audience. Never say that you are not prepared when you are, for people will know your style and will perceive it at once. When you have done, do not walk about collecting compliments, or beam with self-satisfaction, but sit quietly down in your seat and listen attentively to the next speaker. Save your harsh phrases as you would gold, so that when, on occasion, you use them in just indignation, it will be an event, and they will strike your opponent like a bolt from the blue. But if you think you may ever associate with an opponent again and work with him, beware of letting your anger carry you into the use of extreme expressions, that the people may not say,

‘Rascals fight, and when the fight is o’er,
They’re greater friends than e’er before’.”

Thus spake Frymann, and poor Karl sat astonished and bewildered by all these speeches and did not know whether to laugh or to be puffed up. But Syfrig, the smith, cried:

“Now look at these two who didn’t want to speak for us and can talk like books, as you see.”

“Just so,” said Bürgi, “but that has been the means of our gaining new growth; we have put forth a vigorous young shoot. I move that the lad be taken into the circle of us old fellows and from now on attend our meetings.”

“So be it!” they all cried and clinked glasses with Karl, who somewhat unthinkingly drained his to the bottom, which lapse however the old men let pass without a murmur in view of the excitement of the moment.

When, thanks to a good lunch, the party felt sufficiently recovered from its adventure, the members scattered. Some went to try a few shots, some to see the trophy-hall and other arrangements, and Frymann went to fetch his daughter and the women whose guest she was; for they were all to meet again for dinner at the same table which stood nearly in the centre of the hall and not far from the platform. They took note of its number and separated in the best of spirits and free from all care.

Exactly at twelve o’clock the dinner guests, who were different ones every day and numbered several thousand people, sat down at the table. Country and city people, men and women, old and young, scholars and the unlearned—they all sat joyfully side by side and waited for the soup, opening bottles and cutting bread meanwhile. Not a single malicious face, not a scream or shrill laugh was seen or heard among them, nothing but the steady hum of a glad wedding feast magnified a hundredfold, the tempered wavebeat of a happy and self-contained ocean. Here a long table filled with marksmen, there a double row of blooming country girls, at a third table a meeting of so-called “old fellows” from all parts of the country, who had finally passed their examinations, and at a fourth a whole “immigrated” hamlet, men and women together. Yet these seated hosts formed only half of the assemblage; an equally numerous crowd of spectators streamed uninterruptedly through the aisles and spaces and circled ceaselessly about the diners. They—praise and thanks be to God!—were the careful and economical ones who had counted the cost and satisfied their hunger elsewhere for even less money, that half of the nation that always manages things so much more cheaply and frugally, while the other half flings away money right and left; then there were also the over-fastidious ones who did not trust the cooking and thought the forks were too cheap; and finally there were the poor and the children, who were involuntary spectators. But the former made no unkind remarks and the latter displayed neither torn clothes nor jealous looks; on the contrary, the thrifty ones took pleasure in the spendthrifts, and the super-refined who thought the dishes of green peas in July ridiculous, walked about as good-humoredly as the poor who found their fragrance most tempting. Here and there, to be sure, a piece of culpable selfishness appeared as, for instance, when some tight-fisted young peasant succeeded in slipping unseen into a vacated place and eating away with the rest without having paid; and, what was still worse in the eyes of those who love order and discipline, this reprehensible act did not even result in an altercation and forcible ejection.

The head festival-host stood in front of the broad kitchen door and blew on a hunting horn the signal for a course to be served, whereupon a company of waiters rushed forward and dispersed to the right, to the left and straight ahead, executing a well practised manœuvre. One of them found his way to the table at which sat the Upright and Staunch, among them Karl, Hermine, and her friends, cousins or whatever they were. The old men were just listening eagerly to one of the principal speakers who had mounted the platform after a loud roll on the drum. There they sat, grave and composed, with forks laid down, stiff and upright, all their seven heads turned towards the platform. But they blushed like young girls and looked at each other when the speaker began with a phrase from Karl’s speech, told of the coming of the seven greybeards, and made that the starting-point for his own speech. Karl alone heard nothing, for he was joking quietly with the women, until his father nudged him and expressed his disapproval. As the orator finished amid great applause, the old men looked at one another again; they had been present at many assemblies, but for the first time they themselves had been the subject of a speech and they dared not look around, so embarrassed were they, though at the same time more than happy. But, as the way of the world is, their neighbors all around did not know them, nor suspect what prophets were in their midst,

and so their modesty was not offended. With all the greater satisfaction did they press one another's hands after each of them had gently rubbed his own to himself, and their eyes said: Forward unswervingly! That is the sweet reward of virtue and enduring excellence!

After this Kuser cried: "Well, we have to thank our young Master Karl for this pleasure. I think we shall have to promise him Bürgi's canopy bed after all and lay a certain doll in it for him. What do you think, Daniel Frymann?"

"And I am afraid," said Pfister, "that he is going to lose his bet and will have to buy my Swiss blood."

But Frymann suddenly frowned and said:

"A clever tongue alone isn't always rewarded with a wife! At least in my house a skilful hand has to go with it. Come, my friends, don't let us try to include in our jokes things that don't rightly belong there."

Karl and Hermine were blushing and looking away into the crowd with embarrassment. Just then came the boom of the cannon-shot that announced the recommencement of the shooting and for which a long line of marksmen were waiting, rifle in hand. Immediately their rifle-fire crackled all down the line; Karl rose from the table saying that he too now wanted to try his luck, and betook himself to the range.

"And at least I want to watch him even if I can't have him," cried Hermine jestingly, and followed him, accompanied by her friends.

But it happened that the women lost sight of one another in the crowd and at last Hermine was left alone with Karl and went with him faithfully from target to target. He began at the extreme end where there was no crowd and, although he shot with no particular earnestness, made two or three hits in succession. Turning round to Hermine who stood behind him he said laughing:

"That's doing pretty well!" She laughed too, but only with her eyes, while her lips said earnestly:

"You must win a cup."

"I can't do that," answered Karl, "to get twenty-five numbers I should have to use at least fifty cartridges and I only have twenty-five with me."

"Oh," she said, "there's powder and lead enough for sale here."

"But I don't want to buy any more; that would make the cup a pretty expensive prize! Some fellows, to be sure, do spend more money on powder than the trophy is worth, but I'm not such a fool."

"You're very high-principled and economical," she said almost tenderly, "I like that. But it's the best fun of all to accomplish with a little just as much as the others with their elaborate preparations and terrible exertions. So pull yourself together and win with your twenty-five cartridges. If I were a marksman I'd make myself succeed."

"Never! Such a thing never occurs, you little goose!"

"That's because you are all only Sunday marksmen. Go ahead, begin and try it."

He shot again and got a number and then a second. Again he looked at Hermine and she laughed still more with her eyes and said still more earnestly:

“There, you see! It can be done, now go ahead.”

He looked at her steadily, and could scarcely withdraw his gaze, for he had never seen her eyes look as they did now; there was a stern and tyrannical gleam in the smiling sweetness of her glance, two spirits spoke eloquently out of its radiance: one was her commanding will, but with that was fused the promise of reward and out of that fusion arose a new mysterious being. “Do my will, I have more to give than you suspect,” said those eyes, and Karl gazed into them searchingly and eagerly until he and the girl understood each other, there, surrounded by the tumult and surge of the festival. When he had satisfied his eyes with this radiance, he turned again, aimed calmly and scored once more. Now he himself began to feel that it was possible; but as people were beginning to gather about him, he went away and sought a quieter and emptier range, and Hermine followed him. There he again made several hits without wasting a shot; and so he began to handle his cartridges as carefully as gold coins, and Hermine accompanied every one with avaricious, shining eyes as it disappeared into the barrel; but each time, before Karl took his aim without haste or agitation, he looked into the beautiful face beside him. As soon as people began to notice his luck and collect round him, he went on to another range; nor did he stick the checks he received in his hatband, but gave them to his companion to keep; she held the whole little pack and never did a marksman have a more beautiful number-bearer. Thus he actually did fulfill her wish and made such fortunate use of his twenty-five cartridges that not one of them struck outside the prescribed circle.

They counted over the checks and found this rare good fortune confirmed.

“I’ve done it once, but I’ll never be able to again as long as I live,” said Karl, “and it’s you who are responsible, with your eyes. I am only wondering what all else you intend to accomplish with them!”

“Wait and see,” she answered, and now her lips laughed too.

“Now go back to the party,” he said, “and ask them to come and fetch me from the trophy-hall, so that I may have an escort, as there is no one else with me, or do you want to march with me?”

“I’d almost like to,” said she, but hurried away nevertheless.

The old men were sitting deep in pleasant conversation; most of the crowd in the hall had changed but they stuck fast to their table and let life surge about them. Hermine went up to them laughing and cried:

“Karl wants you to come and get him; he’s won a cup!”

“What! How’s that?” they cried and rejoiced loudly; “so that’s what he’s up to?”

“Yes,” said an acquaintance who had just come up, “and, moreover, he won the cup with twenty-five shots, that doesn’t happen every day! I was watching the young couple and saw how they did it.”

Master Frymann looked at his daughter in astonishment. “You didn’t shoot too, did you? I hope not. Women sharpshooters are all right in general, but not in particular.”

“Don’t be alarmed,” said Hermine, “I didn’t shoot, I only ordered him to shoot straight.”

Hediger, however, paled with wonder and satisfaction to think that he should have a son gifted with eloquence, and famous in the use of arms, who would go forth with deeds and actions from his obscure tailor-shop into the world. Inwardly he began to sing small, and decided that he would no longer try to act the guardian. But now they all started for the trophy-temple where they really found the young hero,

standing beside the buglers, the shining cup already in his hand, waiting for them. And so to the tune of a merry march off they went with him to the festival hall to christen the cup, as the saying goes, and again their steps were short and firm, their fists were clenched and they looked triumphantly about them. Arrived again at their headquarters, Karl filled the cup, set it in the middle of the table and said,

“I herewith dedicate this cup to the Band of Seven, that it may never leave their banner.”

“Accepted!” they shouted. The cup began to go the round and new merriment rejuvenated the old men, who had now been in good spirits since dawn. The evening sun streamed in under the countless beams of the hall and gilded thousands of faces already transfigured with pleasure, while the resounding tones of the orchestra filled the room. Hermine sat in the shadow of her father’s broad shoulders, as modest and quiet, as if she couldn’t count three. But golden lights from the sun, falling across the cup before her and flashing on its golden lining and the wine, played about her rosy and glowing face and danced with every movement of the wine when the old men in the heat of discussion pounded on the table; and then one could not tell whether she herself was smiling or only the playing lights. She was now so beautiful that young men, looking about the hall, soon discovered her. Merry groups settled themselves near her in order to keep her in sight and people asked one another: “Where is she from? Who is the old man? Doesn’t anyone know him?” “She’s from St. Gallen; they say she’s a Thurgovian,” answered one. “No, all the people at that table are from Zurich,” said another. Wherever she looked, merry young fellows raised their hats in respectful admiration and she smiled modestly and without affectation. But when a long procession of young men passed the table and all took off their hats she had to cast down her eyes, and still more when a handsome student from Berne suddenly appeared beside her, cap in hand, and with courteous audacity said that he had been sent by thirty friends who were sitting at the fourth table from there, to inform her, with her father’s permission, that she was the most charming girl in the hall. In short, everyone did regular homage to her, the sails of the old men swelled with new triumph, and Karl’s fame was almost obscured by Hermine’s. But he too was to come to the front once more.

For a stir and a crush arose in the middle aisle caused by two cowherds from Entlibuch who were pushing their way through the throng. They were regular bumpkins with short pipes in their mouths, their Sunday jackets under their brawny arms, little straw hats on their big heads and shirts fastened together across their chests with silver buckles in the shape of hearts. The one who went ahead was a clodhopper of fifty and rather tipsy and unruly; for he wanted to try feats of strength with every man he saw and kept trying to hook his clumsy fingers into everything, at the same time blinking pleasantly, or at times challenging, with his little eyes. So his advance was everywhere marked by offense and confusion. Directly behind him, however, came the second, a still more uncouth customer of eighty, with a shock of short yellow curls, and he was the father of the fifty-year-old. He guided his precious son with an iron hand, without ever letting his pipe go out, by saying from time to time:

“Laddie, keep quiet! Orderly, laddie, orderly!” and at the same time pushing and pulling him in accordance with his words. So he steered him with able hand through the angry sea until, just as they reached the table of the Seven, a dangerous stoppage occurred, as a group of peasants came up who wanted to call the quarrelsome fellow to account and attack him from both sides. Fearing that his laddie might do some fiendish damage, the father looked about for a place of refuge and saw the old men. “He’ll be quiet among these old baldpates,” he growled to himself, grasped his son with one fist in the small of his back and steered him in between the benches, while with the other he fanned the air behind him to keep off the irritated pursuers, for several of them had already been properly pinched, in all haste.

“With your permission, gentlemen,” said the octogenarian to the younger old men, “let me sit down here a minute so that I can give my laddie another glass of wine. Then he will grow sleepy and be as quiet as a little lamb.”

So he wedged himself into the party with his offspring, and the son really did look about him meekly and respectfully. But presently he said:

“I want to drink out of the little silver mug over there.”

“Will you be quiet, or I’ll knock the senses out of you before you can turn round,” said his father. But when Hediger pushed the full cup towards him he said: “Well, then, if the gentlemen will allow it, take a drink, but don’t guzzle it all.”

“That’s a lively youngster you’ve got there, my good man,” said Frymann, “how old is he?”

“Oh,” replied the father “around New Year’s he’ll be about fifty-two; at least he was screaming in his cradle in 1798 when the French came, drove away my cows and burnt my house. But because I took a couple of them and knocked their heads together, I had to fly, and my wife died of misery in the meantime. That’s why I have to bring up my boy alone.”

“Didn’t you get a wife for him who could have helped you?”

“No, he’s still too clumsy and wild; it won’t do, he smashes everything to pieces.”

In the meantime the youthful ne’er-do-well had drained the fragrant cup. He filled his pipe and looked round the circle blinking most happily and peacefully. Thus he discovered Hermine and the womanly beauty that radiated from her suddenly rekindled ambition in his heart and the desire to show his strength. As his eye fell simultaneously on Karl who was sitting opposite him, he invitingly stretched out his crooked middle finger across the table.

“Stop that, Sonny! Has Satan got into you again?” cried his father wrathfully, and was about to take him by the collar, but Karl told him to let the other be and hooked his middle finger into that of the young bear and then they tried, each to pull the other over to him.

“If you hurt the young gentleman or sprain his finger,” warned the old father, “I’ll take you by the ears so that you’ll feel it for three weeks.”

The two hands now wavered for a considerable time over the centre of the table; Karl soon ceased laughing and grew crimson in the face, but at last he gradually drew the arm and shoulder of his opponent perceptibly towards his side of the table and with that the victory was won.

The man from Entlibuch looked at him quite bewildered and downcast, but not for long; his old father, now enraged at his defeat, boxed his ears, and much ashamed he looked at Hermine; then he suddenly began to cry and said, sobbingly:

“And now at least I want a wife!”

“Come, come,” said his papa, “you’re ready for bed now.” He grasped him by the arm and marched him off.

After the departure of this odd pair, a silence fell on the old men and they wondered anew at Karl’s

deeds and achievements.

“That’s entirely due to gymnastics,” he said modestly; “they give you training, strength, and knack for such things and almost anyone can learn to do them who is not a born weakling.”

“That is true,” said Hediger, his father, and, after some reflection he continued enthusiastically: “Therefore let us forever and ever praise the new era which is again beginning to train men to be men and which commands not only the country gentleman and the mountain herdsman but the tailor’s son as well to train his limbs and develop his body so that it can do something.”

“That is true,” said Frymann also awaking from meditation, “and we too have all taken part in the struggle to bring on this new era. And to-day, as far as our old heads are concerned, we, with our little banner, are celebrating the final result, the command ‘Cease firing!’ and the rest we leave to the young ones. But now, no one has ever been able to say of us that we stuck obstinately to our errors and misunderstandings. On the contrary, we have always striven to keep our minds open to all that was rational, true, and beautiful; and so I herewith frankly and openly take back my declaration in regard to the children and invite you, Friend Kaspar, to do the same. For what better memorial of this day could we found, plant, and establish than a living line; springing directly from the loins of our friendship, a family whose children will preserve and transmit the principles and the unswerving faith of the Upright Seven? Well then, let Bürgi bring his canopy-bed that we may equip it. I will lay in it grace and womanly purity; you, strength, resolution and skill, and with that, forward with the waving green banner, because they are young. It shall be left to them and they shall keep it after we are gone. So do not resist longer, old Hediger, but give me your hand as my kinsman.”

“Accepted,” said Hediger solemnly, “but on the condition that you don’t give the boy any money to spend on foolishness and heartless ostentation. For the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour.”

“Accepted,” cried Frymann, and Hediger continued:

“Then I greet you as my kinsman, and the Swiss blood may be tapped for the wedding.”

All the Seven now rose and Hermine’s hand was laid in Karl’s amid great jubilation.

“Good luck! There’s betrothal, that’s the way it ought to be!” cried some of those sitting near, and at once a throng of people came up to clink glasses with the young couple. As if by arrangement the orchestra struck up, but Hermine managed to slip out of the crowd without letting go of Karl’s hand, and he led her out of the hall to the festival grounds where already nocturnal silence reigned. They walked round the fortress of flags and as no one was near they stood still. The flags waved with animation and whispered together but they could not discover the little banner of friendship, for it had disappeared in the folds of a huge neighbor and was well taken care of. But overhead in the starlight the Swiss flag snapped in its constant solitude and the sound of the bunting could plainly be heard. Hermine put her arms round her betrothed’s neck, kissed him of her own accord. and said tenderly and with emotion:

“But now we must see that we order our life aright. May we live just as long as we are good and competent, and not a day longer!”

“Then I hope to live long, for I feel that life will be good with you,” said Karl and kissed her again; “but what do you think now about who shall rule? Do you really want to hold the reins?”

“As tight as I can. In the meantime, law and a constitution will surely develop between us and it will be

a good one whatever it is.”

“And I will guarantee the constitution and claim the first chance to be godfather,” suddenly rang out a strong bass voice.

Hermine craned her neck and seized Karl’s hand; but he went nearer and saw one of the sentries of the Aargau sharpshooters standing in the shadow of a pillar. The metal on his equipment gleamed in the dark. Now the two young men recognized each other and the sentry was a tall, fine-looking fellow, the son of a peasant. Karl and Hermine sat down on the steps at his feet and chatted with him for a good half hour before they returned to their party.

Bibliographic Record

AUTHOR: Keller, Gottfried, 1819–1890.

TITLE: The banner of the upright seven, by Gottfried Keller.

SERIES: The Harvard classics shelf of fiction, selected by Charles W. Eliot, with notes and introductions by William Allan Neilson.

PUBLISHED: New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1917.

PHYSICAL DETAILS: Vol. 15, Part 2, of 20; 21 cm.

OTHER AUTHORS: Eliot, Charles William, 1834–1926
Neilson, William Allan, 1869–1946, ed.

ISBN: .

CITATION: Keller, Gottfried. *The Banner of the Upright Seven*. Vol. XV, Part 2. Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1917; Bartleby.com, 2001. www.bartleby.com/315/2/. [Date of Printout].

ELECTRONIC EDITION: Published November 2000 by Bartleby.com; © 2000 Copyright Bartleby.com, Inc.

About Bartleby.com

Named after the humble character of Melville’s classic, *Bartleby the Scrivener*, Bartleby.com publishes contemporary and classic reference, literature and nonfiction free of charge for the home, classroom and desktop of each and every Internet participant. What began as a personal research experiment in 1993 with the publication of the first classic book on the web, Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, has grown with the patronage of millions of loyal readers to incorporate in 1999 and engage a staff of editors and Internet professionals who select, design and create an innovative electronic book experience. Our ever-expanding list of great books—currently thousands of works by hundreds of authors—provides millions of students, educators and the intellectually curious with unparalleled access to classics and reference books online and forms the preeminent electronic publishing enterprise of the twenty-first

century.

Access Bartleby.com on the Web at
<http://www.bartleby.com>

Bartleby.com, Inc.
224 W. 30th Street, Suite 1005
New York, New York 10001
Phone: (212) 375-6288
Email: webmaster@bartleby.com