

Maria in the Rose-Bush

By M. P. Shiel

Dreadfully like an immortal goddess i' the face!—Homer

Albrecht Dürer—artium lumen, sol artificum—pictor—calcographus—sculptor—sine exemplo—one day sent, as we know, a black-and-white wash of his face, untouched by pencil, to his friend, a certain Raphaelo Santi at Rome: a piece of work said to have been much admired of the Master. Two years later, Dürer despatched just such another to the morganatic Gräfin von Hohenschwangau—a great lover of Art, herself an artist—and it was the burning of this portrait that was the undoing of the Lord of Schwangau himself and so of all that branch of the race of the Herzogs of Swabia, till now.

The history is in part archived in the Bertha room of the little yellow-stone Schloss which now occupies the heights of the Schwanstein—a spot strange ‘picturesqueness,’ wondered at within the last decade by some of those British pilgrims who have taken the Constance route to see at Oberammergau. One stops at drowsy Füssen on the torrent Lech, and mounting an Einspanner, penetrates five miles into the richly-forested mountains. The new castle, like the one which preceded it, occupies the loneliness of a sharply-defined ridge-summit, and looks down upon the grey old lazy race of swans which haunts the Schwansee below, and upon the vague blue dream of yet three lakes visible from the height; but the oldest castle of all was lower down, near the plain, on the borders almost of the See. The top of Schwanstein could not, in fact, have contained its massive spread. For gaunt background, the bare breasts of the cleft Säuling.

The incident is, moreover, sketched in a rare old folio of one Aventin von Tottenweis, called: Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Mittelalterlichen Malerschulen, mit verschiedenen damaligen Familien-Geschichten.

Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, having the lust to harry Turks south of Danube, had drawn in his wake many a thirsty sword of Southern *Wehrfähige* from Franconia to utmost Rheinpfalz; and even when only the fame of the Ungarn king still lived, Caspar of Schwangau, observing with disquiet a fleck of rust on his two-handed sword, and a white wire in his long beard, enticed after him a small body, *Freiherren*, barons, holding, some of them, in feof of his house, and set out on the well-worn route: by no means with injurious intent to any person, but merely in order that that might happen which our Lady of Zugspitze, in her gracious pleasure, might will to happen.

And now, scarce any rough work presenting, the band meeting only with cullions and caitiff curs, and so dispersing by mere centrifugal perversity and dissent,—what more simple than that Caspar, headlong man, should find himself alone with sword and jazeran at Stamboul; cross over into the Troad; thence by the Ægean to the legs of Piræus; and in the neighbourhood of Colonus, near the very grove, sacrosanct, solemn, where the *Semnai* gave everlasting rest to way-weary Œdipus, there finally be meshed?

In precipitate fashion, he wooed, and partly won. She was of ancient priestly family, a genuine *Hellçn* of antique descent, unmixed, chaste, and over-tall in the half-revealing draperies of the old daughters of the gods.

Over the Knie-pass, west of Wetterstein, a train of sumpter-mules, following behind them, laboured out of the Tyrol toward the flat table-land of Ober-Bayern, under a burden of precious

things, a Hera by Praxiteles, immortal amphoræ, MSS, paintings older than the Lyceum. This was the Countess's *dot*.

The grandeur of the alp must have been novel after sylvan Colonus, and even Caspar's eye was not callous: but Deianira saw here nothing but rudeness. Only, let once a lonely *Sennhaus* appear, the overhanging roof of thatch weighted with boulders, the variegated *Sennerinn* herself in thick-waisted shin-frock at the door, and instantly the Greek interest would flutter up at the hint of fitness, the making hand of man, and the artist reined to look with sidling head.

And so they came to the Schloss by the Schwansee; drawbridge and portcullis felt a throe, and through a double hedge of pikes and arquebuses they passed by the base-court to the great black round Keep, tower-flanked; and here in the gloom of the old Ritter-saal, before castle-chaplain, and God, and every saint, Caspar tendered the left hand of a true knight, and his whole passionate and subservient heart.

Said old Wilhelm of the Horneck, garrulous as a rattle, inveterate tri-ped, having shot out an oaken limb ever since the reign of Caspar's father: 'But, Gräfin, you must e'en know that these are not the days that have been. Hey for the fair, gallant times when Wilhelm was tall as the rest; and land and laws were supple to the will of the grand reckless old Adels; and a free imperial knight might e'en marry a scullion, and forthwith have her 'nobled without ado. But Wilhelm is old now, Gräfin, and things do flow to change. There was Lippe-Detwold wedded a wench from the market-place at Strassburg; and there was Heinrich von Anhalt-Dessau married a hind's pullet in Schwarzwald, as indeed nearly every Anhalt-Dessau has stooped to the *unebenbürtig* since the time of Conrad *le Salique*. Ennobled! the whole company of them, and nothing said. But now! by the Three Kings, the Empire melts, with your upstart free cities, and the rest. Why, can you credit it, dear lady, that the Elector Frederick himself, a Reichs-unmittelbarer-Furst, who married a ballad-singer from the Court at Munich when I was a lad, can't yet obtain a dispensation, and the children remain what you guess? And here now is our own Herr Graf gone to the diet at Ratisbon to talk with Maximilian, if something cannot be done for *you*; and there's Maximilian, stubborn as a Lombard mule, or a bürger of Augsburg—'

A luminous narrow lake of grape-purple, clear hyaline, showed gaudily beneath her half-opened lids.

'Is that, then, the reason of the Count's absence?'

'What! did he not tell you? I thought I heard him—'

'Possibly. It can be of no moment.'

'Of no moment! hear her! by the gebenedeite Jungfrau Maria of Eichstadt! and the children then are nothing—'

'What children?'

'The children that are coming, though late—that are e'en now coming, I think——'

Her face was as when a drop of blackest dragon's blood falls and melts into a silver bowl of cream.

'Twittering sparrow that thou art, Wilhelm!'

'Ay, ay, Gräfin, Wilhelm's no eyas—an old fowl. I was burg-vogt of this castle half a score of years before our good lord was born: and right proud of it: and you think me an eyas, a stripling! people have me for an unfledged eyas! I who remember when, near seventy years ago, the grandfather of the wild Wolf of Rolandspitze broke loose over the land, stormed the old palace of the Emperor Arnulf at Regensburg, and carried off gold plate, pictures—'

'Yes? tell me'

‘Ah, you like to hear about pictures: too much, I think: and the Graf grows jealous—deadly jealous—of all your fine Kram and Putz, and the love you pay them! Say little, see much: that’s my motto: I follow a point with my eye, as the needle said to the tailor. And let old Wilhelm, who has heard more marriage-bells mayhap, ay, and funeral-knells, than you, give you this hint—’

‘But the Wolf! you mean the robber-baron of this region?’

‘The same; he of the Felsenburg on the yon side of Lech; his grandfather sacked Regensburg Palace, seizing much treasure, all which his vile Lanzknechte trundled home—’

‘Do you remember anything in particular?’

‘Remember, ay; old Wilhelm’s memory is as clear to-day. . . . The varlets took everything: the Blessed Sacrament chalices from the altar of the Doppel-kapelle, and, if you *must* know, there was *one* famous picture, spoken of at the time, called the Madonna in der Rosenlaube—’

A luted note escaped her.

‘And has he it now, the Wolf?’

‘They do say it was hung up in the shrine of his chapel of St. Gereon.’

‘Wilhelm! it was a work of your own Meister Stephan, a disciple of Wilhelm von Cöln! Dürer has written me concerning him. But to recover it?’

‘Recover—what? you judge ill of the fangs of Roland of Roland spitze, if you think—’

‘Leave me now. Return later in your Nestor dress—the picture, you see, grows. And prepare me instantly a messenger for Ratisbon to call back the Count.’

The apartment, circular in shape, terminated a long series of darksome corridors from the central Ritter-saal. High up, two Gothic slits in the Cyclopean walls let in a parti-coloured gloom. Within, *lychnoi* and cressets perpetuated a dim Feast of Lanterns; making vague the majesty of a Zeus Herkeios in the centre; painted French watches; an Isis of Egypt; an open letter, and a drawing in red chalk, from Raphael, on a table of ebony arabesqued with walrus tusk; chryselephantine panels of Byzantium; a deep-blue mackaw from the South Seas, and two small golden serpents, deadly, black-freckled, of Hindostan, in a glazed Doric temple, love-offerings of Venice, the great merchantman, sent in adoration of the exotic beauty-queen of the Schwangau; enamelled pyxes of Limoges, pietas in wax, enoptra (mirrors), tapestries—a whole incrustation, dubious, sheeny, of all that fine Kram and Putz of which old Wilhelm had spoken.

That very night, while the messenger was still on the road to Ratisbon, Caspar broke through the hangings of the doorway, rosy with ardour.

‘Ah, *Herzchen, Herzchen*—to see you again!’

By the deep low couch where she lay in a *peplos* of Genoa velvet he fell upon a knee, full of the consciousness of her sex, all-gone anew at the vaguely-lit contrast between the china whiteness of skin, and the thick convolving lips, fierce scarlet, of Rossetti’s apocalypses. He bent to kiss her with a reverent, chivalric slowness, she motionless.

‘And I have lorded it over the best Ortenburg, and Agalolfinger, and Hapsburg of them all—and you are to be Countess of Halsenheim!’

‘Did you not meet my messenger?’

‘Not I: is aught amiss?’

‘Nothing; only I sent to you—’

‘Tell me, tell me, *Schätzchen*—ah, the boy—when he comes’—laying close siege to her ear—‘shall be Graf von Halsenheim, with a ninepearled coronet to his head!’

‘The wolf of Roland-spitze, is he *strong*?’

‘Strong, ay, with a pack of three hundred *faitour* jackals of Schwartz-reiters in his black hold. But why?’

‘Does he not fear you?’

‘Not he! not yet! though, by the bones of the Eleven Virgins, the wolf may yet know the meeting of the hound’s teeth on his quarters—’

‘But he loves gold?’

‘Loves it, and takes it on the Duke’s high-road. But why, *Liebling*, why—’

‘Did you know that he has Stephan’s Madonna in his chapel?’

He let slip from him like cold snow the naked thick arm which he had been kneading with caresses. He stood erect.

‘Pictures again—and *already!*’

‘Hence I sent for you,’ she answered, with eyes opening slowly wide, ‘it is, or should be, a great work: Albrecht Dürer writes me—’

‘Tell me not of this Dürer — a low-born Bürger *Schelm*, drubbed, they say, by his own *wife*—’

‘Base woman. No law of man could make such union good.’

‘Pah! do you not know that the dauber is son to a goldsmith of Ungarn!’

‘He is a son of the gods.’

‘There is but one God, Deianira, and’—crossing with low head—‘Jesu Christ whom He hath sent.’

Her eyes smiled and closed.

‘This hunting after beauty, beauty,’ he continued, calming, ‘is not good, *Liebling*. Best make sure that God and his blessed saints look not upon it as sinful with holy eye askance. What then is this divine “beauty” that you speak so of? By’r Lady, I see it in none of these gimcracks of yours! Give it up, *Zuckerkorn!* God’s creatures for beauty, say I; look, if you want to see it, all lustrous, grand, in yonder mirror—’

‘But I was not made by man for man’s eyes.’

‘You were made, I swear it, by God for *my* eyes.’

‘And if you find me perfect, it is,—perhaps,—your eyes that are imperfect. The chance toppling of stones *may* form a hut, you know; but chance never built a temple to the Endless. The Greek women placed a statue of Hyacinthus in their sleeping-rooms, that their offspring might catch something of its wonder. Nature, you see, is nearly everywhere rude, crude, and waits for the rearranging touch of *our* hand. Glance only at that’—she pointed to the Zeus—no man of flesh ever looked so; you certainly never saw one such. Not by the imitation of nature was *that* shape born to life; but by four-winged imagination, yoked to the divine instinct of loveliness, and riding in pæan triumph, scornful almost of nature. The Assyrians copied nature, and you know—’

‘Nay, nay, I am no schoolman in these matters. You want, it seems, this Wolf of the Spitze hunted, and the smudge torn from his claws; well, by St. Hubert, hunted he shall be, and torn it shall be—by power of gold—or secret nightfall—or open storm—’

He had succumbed again to her side. She, inclining to him, bore a dead kiss to red pyre in his beard.

A page entered with a packet. An adventurer Italian, Count della Torre de Tasso (now great Thurn und Taxis) had lately set up a riding-post throughout the Empire. His courier had reached thus far from Nürnberg.

The packet flew open. First there was Brunehild, princess of the Visigoths, mortal bane of ten princes of the Merovingians, carved in hone-stone, and initialed ‘A.D.’; the furrows of eighty

years of crime; the blood-dabbled grey hairs tied to a horse's tail; the indignant hoofs spurning to broken death their guilty incubus; the triumph-smile of young Clothair near. Next, a letter in Latin, flourished at the end with a couplet from Ovid; and next, a curling folio of canvas, washed with a head. She held it open with her two extended arms.

'This then is he!'

Caspar had leant over to look.

'The burger-son of Nürnberg?'

'Dürer.'

'Well, he has a goodly, pleasant face enough. But methinks the fellow presumes, *Herzchen*. A bonfire of these child's toys, if you wish to pleasure me! And a letter interdicting—'

'Nay, the *next* letter,' she said, smiling an arch *câlinerie*, 'will be a boast that I have the Stephan Madonna of the Rose-bower—safe!'

The Dürer-head, stretched on a framing, took rank by the couch. The light of a fierce, fond criticism beat upon it, and Caspar, entering unawares, was witness how, sitting on the edge, she searched the pale azure eyes with intent forgetfulness, so that he touched her before she knew. And he frowned to see the swell of sudden pink which leapt to her throat.

And the next day when, fulminant with rage, he broke into the room, Dürer had vanished, and he noticed it: but his mind was of such sort as to bear the stress of only one disquiet at a time, and he said nothing of the daub. In his hand he flourished a document; a torrent of invective came from him.

'The blasphemous *Frevler!* His weasand for it, as I am true knight and Christian gentleman! See, *Herzchen*, see, this he has sent me—he—*he*— the meanest *Mittel-frei*, self-styled Graf and Wolf! His great-grandfather—stamping to and fro—'dugged the trench round his five-acre farm with his own hands. And this to *me!* His life for it—I will worry, worry, worry the poisonous rat from his stench-hole, by the Holy Mother of God! Self-styled Count! Slitting throats at noon-tide! claiming right to coin money in his own vile lair, like an *Adeliger!* taking of tolls! tribute from the villages! Walpurgis-tax—Michælmastax—hearth-shilling—Frohn-arbeit—levied all upon other men's bauers—and his own grandfather a lubber-lipped *Land-sasse!* Deems himself *rechts-fähig*, by—! Ha, Sir Count!'—with robust emphasis of foot—'thy weasand for it, then! I did but write, *Herzchen*, making stipulation for the stolen Madonna you wot of in return for honest Schwangau money rendered. He replies by a threat to harry me—harry *me*—'

Her eyes were wide.

'But you *will* obtain the Madonna?'

'Ah, that will I, and within the sennight!'

'By strategy and surprise, then—not by open assault.'

'How so?'

'For the sake of your own safety; and partly lest the man, having warning, destroy the work.'

She made her arms a lulling charm, and slowly cooled his judgment to the temper of hers. Long after a windy night-fall, a picked body of cavaliers crept through the dripping woods of the heights above Füssen, taking their secret way to the Felsenburg.

The enterprise was as hardy as could be. Caspar only realised the steepness of the danger he had dared when he stood once more within his own good castle-gate. It was then breaking day. Helmeted still, visor down, glistening in wetted armour-plates, he winged his feet with the good news towards the bed-chamber of Deianira. As often, she had passed a sleepless night; her bed was unruffled. Thence with eager outlook he hurried to the apartment where the *lychnoi*, in a sleepy twilight inviolate as yet of the crude day, laved the empty couch of the Greek. An angry

‘wetter!’ broke from him. In a corridor he came upon Wilhelm of the Horneck, always a shaker before the cock, a heap of age, built upon his staff.

‘How, now, Wilhelm? The Gräfin!’

‘Not in her chamber, and not in her Kunst-kammer?’

‘In neither, man, by my faith.’

The old fellow, sudden and quick in jealousy for his over-lord’s dignity, looked bilious, suspecting truth.

‘Follow me,’ he said, ‘old Wilhelm’s eyes—old Wilhelm’s wits—’twas always so—the dagger to cut every knot—from the time when your grandfather, Otto, took to too fluent rouses of Hochheimer grape—’

‘Come, come, old man, less of lip and more of limb!’

Wilhelm led the way up the steep, unequal steps of a turret, along a dark passage, and pointed. Caspar stood before the open door of an extremely small room cut from the wall. Within, on a low table—almost an altar—of pierced bone, burned a right flank of three long vestas, stuck on pricket-candlesticks; a left flank of three; and, somewhat retired from them, a centre of three; and beyond them, hanging to the wall, a washed head; and before them, priestess of this shrine, the breast-banded back-view of Deianira, the gorgeous grace of her samite *peplos*, she erect, with perked head, searching, searching the pale azure eyes. She had not heard the clinking approach of Caspar’s armour.

A harsh ‘Ha!’ broke from him.

She started into pink confusion, and then, instantly calm again, ‘Ah, you have brought it then, the Madonna!’

The rattle of his metal broke an awful silence as he turned and marched to her apartment, she clinging expectant to his side. A not very large parcel, placed by a halberdier, lay in wrappings on the floor.

‘Help, help me!’ she cried, eagerness trembling in her fingers as she undid it; and then, ‘but, oh! see there! fie! you have defaced it,’ and now, after a moment’s breathless inquisition, ‘but—it is not—beautiful—not supremely; it lacks—not scrupulousness—certainly not that—but the—*This* is not Art, thought,—it is Nature, impulse! I am sorry I gave you the pains.’

Caspar stood tapping the frown of his resentment to ultimate smoothness beneath the tip of his steel boot, till she, remembering that he needed reconquest, set herself leisurely to the work. His *bonderie* lasted till mid-day, and then he was hers again.

Falconry, and the dear delights of woodcraft in the forest near, filled his mornings; and once, when the Madonna had been relegated to forgotten obscurity, she rose to meet him as he entered the door of the art-room, plumed, horn by horn, holding still the spear and straight short sticker, faintly streaked with dry blood of the boar.

‘Tell me, have you had good venery this morning?’

She lavished on him the whole Ææan incantation of her loveliness, languishment of kisses, listening with quite disproportionate interest to details of the chase, the halloo, conduct of pack and prickers, the bringing to bay, the dimensions of the quarry. Then suddenly:

‘Tell me, where is—Arras?’

‘Arras? In Frankland, surely. But what now?’

‘They make tapestry there?’

‘Ay.’

‘And you have heard of Raphael? You *must*, I think,—in Welschland?’

‘Well, well, *Herzchen*.’

‘Raphael, you know, highest of all—he has lately executed, so Pietro Perugino writes me, ten great works, altogether immortal, on *cartone*, at the invitation of your Pope, and these have been sent to Arras and the factory there to be woven into fabric. You see now the full connection? You see? And I hear that now their purpose is served, little account is made of them, and they lie dust-grown, neglected; to be purchased, therefore—think of it!—perhaps for little, by a wily bargainer, crafty to hide his eagerness of acquisition. Ah, and you will go! You will go!’

‘Now, by St.—’

The name of the saint fainted on his lips, as a wind at the caress of a pearl-shelled grotto of roses, and down a steep incline, topped by angry impatience, and based by growling complaisance, slid Caspar; so that after not many days, accompanied by a very few pikes, he rode his moody way over the plain of the Schwangau. The sentinels on the turrets saw the little band swallowed by a glade of the forest, as they wound slowly forward on their long journey to Frankreich.

It was shortly after this that Albrecht Dürer—most dreamy-wandering of *bürger*-sons—his whole life a pious *Wanderjahr*—arrived.

Passing near on foot, he hoped for the minute-measured privilege of some talk with the exalted lady who had been pleased to approve him. Old Wilhelm of the Horneck himself, with no overflow of courtesy—eyeing yellowly, with rheumy eye, the dusty hose, and belted *wamms*, and short cloak, all of rather worn brown stuff—led him from the base-court, up to the Saal, and so along the corridors. A satchel, hanging diagonally, contained *butter-brod*, and two pieces of chalk. Deianira, just emerging from the hangings of her sanctuary, saw, and knew; and uttered a bated cry.

Dürer, too, knew, and his heart, failing, sank; regretting his rashness. More blushes than a girl’s covered him. A sudden noon-day sun could not have dazzled and winded him more.

Some little time before this, while on his Italian trip he had written to a friend: ‘In Italy I am a gentleman; in Germany a parasite.’ Add to this that the genius was, by nature, shyer than a kid.

She greeted and led him to the chamber with a heart-simple old majesty, beyond anything he saw in the high dames who sailed athwart his eyesight in his humble Hofmaler attendance at the court of Maximilian and (afterwards) of Charles. Climaxes of crimson rushed every moment across his face. She sitting over against him. Andromache in his eyes, Helen, Artemis’ self; and she said unexpectedly this:

‘Well! you have come in lucky time: within—shall I say three weeks?—Raphael’s Sistine cartoons *will be here!* Ten of them—a banquet of wine. And I know you will not think of going without seeing them!’

He could evoke nothing but a murmur of thanks.

Airy German magi, Novalises, idealists, will not hear of Time; for if the *condamné* actually finds a night eternity, and the Monk Felix one hundred years a second—whose shot brings down the volatile truth? Both, or rather neither, they say; for the thing computed is in each case reflexive of the computer merely, externally inane. Albrecht and Deianira, with their quick brains, might well have realised some such thought, had they compared the pace of these weeks of waiting with others past and to come. But crowded speculations of a different sort were insistent upon their attention.

At first, it was all decked words, picked turns of phrase, some of the open bashfulness remaining on the one side, the secret diffidence on the other; a continuous torrent of mere opinions; the world-old dogmatism of the artist, self-sure, but with claws now tucked-in;

Deianira's theories quite different from his, yet seeming almost to coincide, by means of trimmed, only half-expressed convictions, on this hand and that.

Everything was gazed into; Stephan produced. 'What curious work! so minute; but—' and she stopped.

'He is my favourite of the Cöln school,' said Durer; 'his limpid piety seems so to illumine all he did. Wynrich I place on a much lower grade: you never saw his Sancta Veronica in the Munich Pinacothek? No? Rather an inanity. And yet the old Cöln *tempera* was so excellent that he ought—'

'You place a *very* high value on medium, do you not?'

'Well, as a workman, a fairly high value, perhaps. You, I daresay, do not——'

'Not *so* high, maybe.'

'But this of Stephen is fine—ah, delicate, virgin. He painted the Dombild, too, in the Cathedral, but that, you would see, is much immaturer; here he is at his perfectest—the chastity of detail—of the crown, of the cherubs in the medallion—but you, doubtless, do not—'

'The Greek writers, painters, sculptors'—evading direct reply—'placed, I think, little value in details by themselves, except in so far as they conduced to the intended effect of the whole as a whole.'

This was a point of view new to Dürer. He blushed. And timidly:

'You think they were right?'

'They *may* have been wrong,' she said, and smiled.

Thus to begin. But the rapid days brought rapid realisation of the equality of all infinite things, and so a full resumption of self-reverence, and so greater freedom of thought and speech; the words falling out now less knit, foreknown—and more, ever more, of them, torrents laughing with light and feeling. No more careful retraction of claws, but roughish play, the free fraternity of two natural, high-strung people, conscious of themselves and of each other. Dürer had been everywhere, looking at things through the crystal simplicity of a devout, open intellect; lowliest pilgrim to Venice, to the Flemish cities: a lynx in the castle of Barbarossa at Gelnhausen, and among the ruins of the great old Charlemagne palaces at Aachen and Engelheim. The *quattrocentisti* had hewn their work, and ended; and out of that strength was coming, had come, sweetness as of ambrosia; Botticelli, the Holbeins, Buonarroti, all breathed the same new air; the Van Eycks had been painting in their wonderful new oil-varnish medium at Binges. All this movement, art-life, the delicate young monk-mind had felt, cutting clean the rein of aspiration, dreaming dreams, high but pure. Raphael had sent him two life-studies in chalk. He poured into the ear of Deianira fairy tales of art-history, gleams, hints, half cabalistic in their effect; secret treasures stored in monasteries grey as the dawn of German things; suspected gems in the vaults of the church of the Augustines at Nürnberg, and in the cloisters of St. Catherine at Augsburg; old Abbots—Alfred and Arinam of Bayern; Gosbert and Absolom of Triers—mixing in their *tempera* occult substances, dying with their selfish arcana; the splendid art of the Hohenstaufens; the rich gold-ground honey-medium work of the thirteenth century; the perfect *impasto* of John van Eyck; *protégés* of the old Emperors at Prague; the Maastricht school; subtle distinctions between Rhine-men and Westphalia-men, Dutch and Flemish; Israel von Meckenen; and the beauties of Wurmsur and Veit Stoss, and the only three-quarter beauties of Martin Schoen; a whole snow-flake cataclysm of wanton words.

'Do you know,' he asked, 'what di Cosimo mixed in his colours for the Death of Procris? Only guess!'

‘And what does it matter *what* he mixed?’ she answered, freely pouting now, a long-legged Aphrodite playing angry at baby-tricks of little Eros.

They parted lingeringly late in the night, and lay dreamlessly dreaming of the next day’s bacchanal of reason, the word-orgy, and dancing rivulet of fancies.

For him she threw off something of the anchorite quiescence, and there were days when they took long walks together over the plain, and so into the shade of the forest; Albrecht’s temper, naked to all influences of nature, softening at the great old trees, and deep glens, and dank, religious gloom; she maintaining the Greek coldness, feeling nothing. And long-drawn floats on the lake filled the halt twilight. A steep flight of stone steps at the back of the castle, mossy underfoot, over-arched every-way with a wide wilderness of bindweeds, led at this point down the hillside, and so plumped into the See. By this way they reached the high-prowed little shallop, itself a swan, moored to the platform.

Albrecht sometimes flung from a zither an old psalm-air or dainty-tripping Minne-lied to the drugged breezes and wavelets of the See. Not yet had Jacob Stainer gone through the forest with little tapping steel-hammer, and found that ever the oldest tree had in it the mellowest Memnon-music: Mittenwald and the violins were therefore future; but every peasant of Bavaria, even then, was a maker and twanger of the zithers whose universal twitter filled the land with sounds.

‘Look!’ cried Deianira, ‘see—see how the presence of a man’s hand reforms the callous landscape!’

It was the 23rd of June. Here and there, on the heights round Schwangau, cones of flame, smoke-plumed, burned upward to the deepening sky.

‘*Sonnenwandfeuer*,’ said Albrecht, ‘lit by the bauers. It is the Eve of St. John.’

‘St. John!—why, it is the celebration of a solar myth—this, you know, is the summer solstice—the myth which underlies the story of Œdipus.’

‘Hardly, I think. We light the fires because St. John—’

‘And yet—they lack—arrangement. A supreme artist might so place them in reference to each other as actually to lift the scene into ideality. Chance does nothing.’

This *banne camaraderie* fructified into intimacy. Albrecht put a modest hand into the wallet of his brown cloak, and drew out the MS. of his little book, not yet completed, *De Symmetriâ Partium*; she envisaging him, sitting on the couch-edge, elbows meeting draped knees, chin joisted on fisted hands. And he read—Monk-Latin, with acolyte intonation—and she, with sure scalpel of inward criticism, listened, searching, searching his face. Now, the figures of Dürer in the ‘Trinity with Heavenly Host’ and the ‘Christian Martyrs,’ painted by himself, as well as his still surviving two heads, are beautiful indeed, but probably not true of his face, for his gift was never the presentation of a superlative degree of human ‘prettiness.’ The painter had, in fact, the spiritual face of a stripling seraph; such a face, that, had he been Italian, had his life passed in Florence and not Nürnberg, he must have been Raphael and not Dürer. A crinkled head of long, gossamer, auburn hair was the pensive playmate of every breath; and blushing maidenhood, and the innocent eyes of old recluses, and the kiss-compelling lips of Byron, transfigured him to the meek beauty of Leonardo da Vinci’s John at the Last Supper.

And in fond repayment of the *Symmetriâ Partium*, Deianira produced from an alcove her own work of the last three years: a triptych with the rape of Persephone; old Wilhelm as Nestor; and, large on chestnut panel, a return of a *sennerinn* on Rosenkranz Sunday from Almen-leben on the heights; the bell-cow decked with edelweiss and rhododendron; the crowned *sennerinn* on its back; the train of meek kine, calved; the gratulatory length of village-street full of the laughter poured from every gossiping doorway; the bashful lover, broad-faced, in felt steeple-hat,

presenting to Gretel the necessary nosegay—reward of all her lonesome ward of love. And she had only seen it once, crossing the Alp to Schwangau, years before. Albrecht, without a word, self-abased, looked at it, she smiling at his blank face. What spurred his wonderment was the lifefulness—he well knew the scene—and then, far above all, the unlikeness to any life anywhere. Never Bavarian peasant, or peasant or man in the world, owned such meaning traits, look so strange and high. Here, then was contact with a new school, perpetuated by one disciple, grandest of all, the school of Apelles, and old Rhodian masters of the Doric Hexapolis. It was shortly after this revelation that Dürer wrote to his friend Melanchthon that sentence so full of pathetic meekness: ‘*admirator sum minime meorum, ut olim; et saepe gemo meas tabulas intuens, et de infirmitate meâ cogitans.*’

And now change was manifest in the spirit of their intercourse; a third distinct phase, like the evolved presentments of a planet’s face—so natural, self-unconscious. The penumbra of a profound melancholy fell upon these souls—penumbra, because though poignant, it was not painful, but, on the contrary, full of luxury. Without shadow of apparent cause, they walked continually on the borders of the misty-dripping lake of tears, by the twilight banks of a spectral river of sighs. The art-talk dropped utterly; and, in its place, talk of life; and especially of death; and all mournful things. Albrecht had secretly wondered whither had vanished the present of his washed head: but exploring alone one day, he saw the square of deeper darkness on the wall of the little cell; entered, knew, looked at the nine extinguished tapers on the low altar-table; and frowned down a tingling tumult of ecstasy and pang which rushed through all his frame. Soon subsequent to this the doleful mood grew on.

‘Pirene,’ said Deianira, ‘wept and wept, so *bitterly* wept, that she melted into a fountain.’

‘And Kriemhild,’ said Albrecht, ‘when she heard of the death of Siegfried, so *bitterly* laughed, that the ringing rafters made the house to tremble.’

Here was intensity for intensity; deep calling to deep. Deianira had been no dyspeptic worm in painted Hoch-deutsche MSS., new-printed books. They droned of old German women; Thusnelda, the magnificent; Rumetrude, misty-weird; Carolus and his paladins in the romaunts; tragic bignesses of Niebelungen-lied; the true heart of Bertha; lily-chastity of Theodelinda; all the ah and pain of woe-worn Tannhäuser of the Hörselloch. They fell into comparisons between Ajax and Amadis; asked which was the pitifulest, Hercules Furens or Orlando, not yet ‘Furioso.’

‘Read to me,’ he said.

‘What?’

‘Something *sad*.’

She filled the night with a reading-from-the-scroll of the long lamentation and wringing of hands of Euripides’ *Trojan Women*.

At home with Plato and Aristotle, less familiar with the Tragedies, he caught perhaps not half; but the half filmed his eyes with a constant moisture. As the slow, variegated words, each a perfect round messenger from her, wafted clean and light like bubbles from a pipe, floated about him—rhythmic chorus, and pomp of sententious rthesis¹—he then first realised the Greek language, and all the fresh joy and wonder it is. And as all modes of beauty are akin—beauty of form to beauty of sound to beauty of odour—these need but approximation under right conditions to blend into harmonies, and so produce the ultimate delight. Albrecht, listening, drank an exhalation from her of mingled frangipane and ambergris, and roamed from the Paphian face of sea-foam white, to the braided bosom, to the fine linen *zonè*, to the broken billow of draperies at her feet, to the dainty arrangement of sandal-straps; and again back to the dead-

¹ The very number of lines determined for wise reasons.

white face. A rare exaltation—verging on tears—like the rarest flame of interstellar ethers—ached through his physic man.

The invitation had been that he should stay to see the Raphael cartoons. Looking now, each saw in the other's eyes that this must not be.

He slung his satchel, containing the chalk-sticks and the *butter-brod* crusted now to stone, upon his back.

The setting sun was the very genius of gold on the waters of the Schwansee. Languid undulations curved into purple and saffron and crimson before the breasts of the swans, and the beaked prore of the shallop. From the terraced garden which sloped to the edge of the See on the castle side, an oppression of violet-beds and roses pervaded the whole spirit of nature. Yet not a breath ran upon the water. All was a conflagration; the bordering tree-tops burned unconsumed; yellow streaks stretched quite up to the zenith; the sun and his immediate train stepped down incarnadine to *couchée* and purple bed, pumped and appanaged like dormituriert old queens of Assyria, drunk with blood and wine.

Their most commonplace words were uttered in a tone of profoundest sadness.

'Helen,' said Dürer, splashing one of the birds, 'had for father—a swan. Her mother Eurotian Leda. I seem to see a perfect fitness in the myth.'

'The poets,' she answered, looking never at him, 'would have pawned their hope of Elysium for power to give a higher impression of her beauty; and as of her beauty, so of the pain, the tragedy of her.'

'The pain, the tragedy! So it is, then, and must be, with beauty! Calvary is witness.'

'Cursed be it, I say; and the hunger of it!'

She hid from him the sudden passion of her face.

The sun set; the mist and melancholy of a *morne* twilight grew deepening down upon the lake. A flight of crows, the sad fate of a nightingale in a grove near, the flap of a swan, were evidence of the silence. They heard distinctly a change of sentries at the turret-portal next the see.

'You return to Nürnberg?'

'Not yet. I am a wanderer, you know, a confirmed wanderer.'

'Rest is best.'

'For myself I look for one rest henceforth—the rest that remaineth to the people of God.'

'I meant what you mean.'

'A roam among the alp-heights, perhaps—some sketching—'

'You will be still near me then.'

'Near you? Ah yes! still near you.'

The mournful mood of Gethsemane was in them; the old torrent of words ran low.

Moving red lights gleamed through the barred window-slits of the donjon. It was night. A faint breeze arose, and wooed to truancy hairs of Deianira's filleted, uncovered head, and was heavy at a perfume it met around her, and died at the sweet tumult it won from the old gilt Æolian *phorminx*, seven-stringed, which lay since the previous night in the shallop. She took it, and the insistence of the plectrum won from her a softly-sung hymn of Andromache.

Hector, the harmer
Moan'd at the night of thee;
Myrmidon armour
Paled at the light of thee.
(Your lutes of lotus wood
Libyan wail for him!
Your lutes with wax conglued

Sweetness exhale for him!)
Ploughman of blessings!
Whelp-son his lingering,
Tears his expressings,
Harps knew his fingering!
Zeu! who through Ancient Night
Urgest thy travelling,
Yet metest ever right
Doom of thy ravelling;
Red has the flame of noon,
Rushed to obscurity—
Rash let the crapèd moon
Rend up her durity!

‘Ah! that was a chillier wind.’

The moon, which had uttered a scared face, drew quickly the grey curtains of the night and disappeared.

‘It grows cold for you; you must go now within the Schloss.’

‘It is lonely there.’

‘Is it lonely?’

‘And I am not cold. Touch my hand.’ At his touch she shivered. A single drizzle-spray fell upon each of them.

‘Still I must go,’ he said.

A sob!

‘We may meet again.’

‘You will never come again.’

‘Time and tide happeneth to us all, you know.’

‘But—you will never come again.’

They had reached the platform of the bowered stair. He stepped from the shallop and stood with her. The mizzle had become clearly sensible. The moon had utterly vanished.

Her hand was in his. He stooped and kissed it—on back, in palm—ready to be mad as she. Luckily, her face was quite turned from him.

‘God—’ he said.

From her working lips came no sound. Her bosom rowed like two oarsmen struggling for life from the suck of the whirlpool.

He was gone. She stood and watched him to the other side of the lake, and the embankment there. He made fast the boat. A curtain of masonry ran here parallel to the See to defend the castle-back. Before he reached it the mist had swallowed him. As he finally disappeared from her, she buried her face in the voluming folds of her left arm, and the thin, low wail of a little child welled from her. Slowly she ascended the stairs.

The end would have been different, had Dürer, like Deianira, been all artist; but the Nürnberg painter was first of all saint, and artist after.

But there was evil news at the Schloss of Schwangau in those very days. The old nose of Wilhelm perked high, sniffing danger on the wind. Bauers and yeomen from round Füssen and Eschach, leaving their farms, came crying to the Burg-vogt for protection. Sathan himself was loose. At Hopfen a whole street had burned, the church of St. Magnus been pillaged. Two villages flamed together. Roland of Rolandspitze, biding his time, collecting his forces, had not forgotten his Madonna.

He was a species of Swabian Epplein von Gailingen, a Sud-deutscher Wild Boar of Ardennes.

On the third day Caspar arrived—almost by stealth—with his little band of men-at-arms. He had heard tidings of trouble on the way. His blood was up.

Flushed with enthusiasms, high passions, he came to where the wool stood bundled before her on the distaff. ‘Ah . . . ah . . . ah!’ was all he could say, as he did, and did again, perfervid violence to her lips; she enduring with pensive patience. ‘But you look not *so* well, *täubchen*—not so well—a look of care—to be expected now, perhaps—and I have brought the smudges—aha! that pleases it then? Ah. . . ah . . . sugary ecstasy that thou art!—three of them—yes, *only* three—the other seven lay buried in some hole—the factory is a monstrous place, you must know—and they showed me there scant courtesy, by’r Lady; but three, by much entreaty, and a threat or two thrown in, I did get—these being easily unearthed—for a few gulden. Ha! and here they come.’

Two waiting-men bore-in a long narrow box, opened; the cartoons had been cut into strips. Deianira rose, and adjusted them on the floor: Stephen stoned; Paul in prison at Philippi; the light at noon-day ‘above the brightness of the sun.’ For a minute, over each, the impeccable energy of her scrutiny worked intensely; then, without fail, she knew the truth of form, composition, drapery, effect. Coming to him, she rewarded him with a cold kiss. And coldly she said:

‘Thank you—they are very lovely.’

Even he could see it, and went away wondering at her inertness, the death of her enthusiasm.

But action, action was the word—no dallying over daubs! ‘Come, man, news, news!’ he cried to Wilhelm, towing the three-goer into a small room. Wilhelm, who was directness itself where the talk touched upon the old trade of war, was minute on the defences of the castle, ammunition, provisions, his own share in everything, the ravages of the Wolf. Only a few hours before a Wappen-herald had arrived at the gate, demanding the return of the Maria, loud with threats of siege.

‘His strength, man?’

‘Over three hundred, they say.’

‘And ours?’

‘A hundred and twenty, beside a flock of bauers.’

‘And gold in our coffers?’

‘Scarcity of that till harvest.’

‘Ha! and where is now my cousin of Swabia?’

‘At Augsburg they say.’

‘Good! a despatch to him instantly, requisitioning succours, and the same to every friendly burggraf of the region. The ripped bowels of this *Verräther*, Wilhelm! And other news?’

‘Nothing—only—’ the old man halted, half loving his suzerain’s quiet mind, and half the solace of the oily tongue.

‘Well, Wilhelm, well—’

‘Nothing—a visitor to the castle—the painter of Nürnberg—’

‘Now, by—’

‘For more than two weeks—’

‘Ha!’

‘Two weeks,’ the conciseness melting before a fervour of doddering communicativeness, ‘and never by my goodwill, either—’tis not till now that Wilhelm of Horneck has waited to see the back of a noble house broken by some strolling troubadour or runaway bauer’s pup with fair face. You may have heard of Trautmandorfs wife and the mummer nigh a century gone. And did ye ever know old Wilhelm to predict you false? With right jealous eye, I tell you, I looked upon

the long intimacies of speech—and wantonness of glides on the lake—by night—with worrying of—harps and zithers—’

‘Enough, Herr of Horneck, enough—’ Caspar had drawn back a foot, and was frowning into the old man’s soul.

‘Worrying of harps—and confluence of bent heads over Kram and Putz—and now that he is gone, the rekindling of the tapers before the painter-head—put your trust in old Wilhelm’s eyes for seeing!—nine of them—burning continually, like the fires which they used to say the prince-bishop of Bruchsal plished near the tombs of the Emperors in the crypts of Spires Cathedral—and the door of the cell kept locked, and a daily double-visit paid to the head—’

‘Enough, man, I say—’

‘But, for that matter, ’tis a left-handed wedlock—you are not bound. Well I remember the case—’

‘Traitor! Silence!’ His roar was the lion’s; the old man cowered, silent; Caspar walked away.

It was then late in the day. That very night a fresh troop of bauers fled into the castle, with tidings of added woes. At dawn the plain before Hohenschwangau was dotted grey, well beyond artillery range, with the leaguering tents of Roland.

And there was brisk work before long. The *Burgh-wache*, though insufficient to make even the proper show of strength, had no lack of fire, through hope of speedy help, and confidence in Caspar’s generalship. He was in every place, a strong, ubiquitous spirit of disposition, inspiration. Two parallel bastioned curtains defended the front and sides of the donjon; before each of these a fosse and drawbridge; and before the outermost drawbridge an out-work barbican. Upon this last the chief besieging party, under Roland himself and his brother Fritz, centred their efforts with scaling-ladders, petards and grenadoes, potent enginery; and upon this detachment Caspar in person, from a bastion of the first curtain, directed a saker and culverin hail-rain. But before nightfall the out-work had fallen to the reverberating *hochs!*’ of the brigands.

Early the next day the storm reopened. The enemy, with manifold advance and retreat, now attempted the bastions of the first escarpment. Still no sign of Swabian support. A sigh for sleep, only for sleep, arose among Caspar’s men. During the night a strain in the relief of sentinels had made itself felt, so meagre the garrison. Caspar himself had mounted guard.

In the afternoon, passing by Deianira’s room, tired, he entered, pining for her. Hardly since his coming back had he seen her. Freely now, from his heart, he forgave her the entertainment of the *bürger-son*, knowing well her child’s love for pictures and *suchlike*. Here in these recesses the volleying of howitzer and mortar, saker and falconet, whizz of arrows, smiting of pikes, was only buzzingly audible. She lay on the couch at full length, beautifully asleep, or only on the borderland of wakefulness. In this dim state, hearing the ghost of his footstep, she stretched out her arms, both of them, at full length before her, inviting to the luxury of her embrace; and he, smiling ineffably, trusting, gentle, came to her, bending himself down, happy at the sweet, voluntary friendship of her arms about his neck. She, in her half-sleep, murmured:

‘Albrecht, Albrecht, thou art come . . .’

Caspar stumbled backward with that pale, distorted rigidity of face seen in the agonised brave fellows on the bastions when a sudden arrow entered their hearts. He reeled like a dying man from the chamber.

Deianira, vaguely conscious of disturbance, slowly opened her eyes, and was alone.

But in little time Wilhelm of Horneck came dashing into the room, youth in every third projected leg, and before her fell prone to his old knees, with outstretched clasped hands, a world of prayer in his eyes.

‘O Gräfin—save the Count—you only can—for the love of God! Gräfin! There may be yet time—he thinks to make a sally—stark mad, raving! And the men, seeing certain death, refuse to follow him. Some devil, some furious devil, rides him. Save him! Only some fifty against three hundred! Gräfin! his eyes are two rolling suns of flame; and help must come to-night—tomorrow—for very certain, if he would only wait—’

She, surprised, rose. Outside they met men rushing hither and thither with wild looks. One said:

‘They are gone—just passed the inner Fallbrücke. God help them!’

The desire to see overcame her, and, mounting the steps of a turret, she took a seat on a planchette within the boldly-projecting machicolation near the battlements, looking through an aperture. Here she was alone, the donjon being as yet safe from shot. The small band—multifariously armed, hellebardiers, brigandined archers, carabiniers, Caspar at their head—were then issuing from the outer bridge. Just now there had come a lull to the storm; the enemy were in lager. The sun was low, hidden behind a crag of Säuling. The castle party moved down a gentle slope.

A flourish of trumpets, a shout, arose—two—triumphant on one side, death-challenging on the other. Quickly before the lager-tents sprang a crop of dragon’s teeth; midway they met.

Deianira’s eyes rested only upon Caspar. A certain unusual tingling feeling, vaguely working, was struggling into form within her—akin to admiration. To the minute when the fight began her face was calm. Then she saw him in the thick of things, firm, Actè-bluff when thunder-bolts are abroad, and breakers break upon its rock. The first dawn of a smile rose orient upon her lips. A small body of men—the very pick of the castle—surrounded now every-way by the enemy—formed his immediate *entourage*; the rest, blocked, sustained the shock of the brigands. Every minute a life ended—two to one on the side of the besiegers, who did double-battle with the dogged despair of Caspar’s men. He, it was clear, was bent upon some object away from him; his sword the very tooth of pestilence in his hand, his helmet-plume floating above all heads, certain token of coming death. The dawn spread to Deianira’s eyes; an eager lustre grew gradually radiant in them. And soon the end of Caspar’s quest was evident—the Wolf himself, distinguished by his raucous shouts of cheer, huge battle-axe, suit of fluted armour. The brool of Caspar’s roar rang challenging out; they were near now. Roland, a towering bulk, nothing loth, rabid with the taste of blood, struck spur to charger; casting axe, drawing sword. They dashed together. The warring *Lanzknechte* made way, and left large field: it was a recoil of the wave from the basalt, like the scampering of chaff from flails. The two men fought alone. Deianira drew a deeper breath.

It was at this precise moment that the sun, sinking hitherto behind a fork of the Säuling, burned forth a perfect red circle in the inter-space between the riven rock. Its beams, falling upon Caspar panoplied in plated steel mail, made him rich, splendid; a luminous molten glory of cuirass and gorget, arm-piece and helmet and greaves; it welded him to his bossed and prancing war-horse, and turned them, him and it, into a homogeneous Centaur of fluent and refulgent gold.

‘O!—but it is beautiful!’ The effect was so sudden. It took her breath away. Her hands clasped, rigidly. A swelling wave of feeling flowed in her. Beautiful! And why? This, as usual, was the first question of her analytical mind. As she faintly heard the ringing outcries raised from the clattered metal of the warriors, saw the swift avenging flash of Caspar’s blade, she knew quickly

why. It was in the nature of a revelation to her. The doer, then, was great as the maker? Conduct as art? Marathon lovely as the Parthenon? The Crusades as Aphrodite? Caspar as Raphael? Was it *so*, then? And if not, how came this sight so to lift her bosom with the beauty-sense—with love perhaps? It was more than a revelation—it was a regenesis, the birth of a little child, as natural, as definite, as the conversion of Lydia. Not since their meeting-day to this hour had Caspar appealed unconquerably to the predominant in her—her abandonment to beauty. Now he loomed in quite another light: he was immense—he was thrilling! With an æsthetic inquisitiveness, she peered at the illumined interchange of tierce and quart, shrewd thrust, ponderous hew: the two men were nicely parallel in skill, virulence; Caspar not quite so tall, his war-horse larger. Only to look at him, facing so great danger, at so great odds, with so great manfulness, was joy! And now the thought rose biting within her that this all was for *her* sake; of all the pillaged Madonna of Stephan was the inception; and his boy-like sincerity of affection, his minute love for her, races on her errands over Europe, all seemed precious and different, now. She would design, in the fulness of her gratitude, a highly-finished pattern, and send it to Milan to be gold-embossed in arabesque on a suit of plated armour for him, great son of Peleus that he was! She would make her arms a constant ensorcelment about him! But now, sudden fears took hold upon her:—if he never returned? Of this she had not thought. She turned a bitter face from the sight of his cleft helm. But immediately afterwards Caspar, executing a *demi-volte* on his charger, hewed with his whole momentum, and Roland the Wolf toppled with centrifugal brains from his saddle.

Deianira stood up, most tall, laughing, with clapping hands.

Seeing the fall of his brother, Fritz with a body of cavaliers galloped towards the Count. But the *restes* of Caspar's band, some twenty men, closed round him. They effected, still fighting, a slow retreat, till the ordnance of the bastions covered them. They reached in safety the castle-gate.

Deianira with haughty, crimson face—proud of him—of herself, that she was his, he hers—had descended the steps of the turret. As she passed along the corridor, she came to the shrine of the Dürer-head; stopped, thinking; then took from her bosom a key, unlocked the door, and entered. For a long time she stood, searching the painter's face; his innocent, azure eyes. Then, slowly, she extinguished the tapers,—all except one; which she held uplifted in her hand

She waited presently for him on the couch of her own sanctum, devising garlands of gratulation with which to crown him. He came, striding rapidly, his face bloody, passing through to another part, almost forgetful of her in the flush and heat of the moment. And she held out wide arms to him. He started into fury:—just so—just so—she had looked *before!* The action goaded him to a memory *so* bitter, that he stamped, with the one roar:

'Woman!'

Caspar's stamp was like the tramp of a shod bull. The flooring shook. A box of tarsia-work slid with clatter from an inclined plane to the ground; an enamelled *chasse*; a little hung marble temple fell to fragments; and among the fragments writhed the black-speckled gold of two small serpents, presents from Venice, the great merchantman. He saw and did not crush them with his foot. Raging, he dashed from the room.

But, already, in the corridor, he stopped. Such was the depth and power of his love for her. There was something fatherly in it—she so much younger than he! And this time, at least, she had wished to embrace *him*—*this* time she did not dream. The thought somewhat relaxed the tension of his wrath. What had maddened him above all was the shame of it—to his father's house—to his own son that was to be. A goldsmith of Ungarn's cub! But still, he would return to

her—later on. Only first, the daubed head! The swift smoking-out—as of a pest—of that and every other memory of the bürger from the castle; and then he would see.

With masterful stalk he ascended to the alcove. A sensation of pleasure suffused him when he found it in darkness. He groped on the table; struck light to one of the tapers; raised it to apply the flame to the canvas; and—*started so*, that his armour rattled.

The picture was already consumed.

He could see the burned edges within the frame where the fire had died.

In a flash the whole truth illumined him—the whole brave story of her struggle—self-conquest—sacrifice. He threw down the light, and ran—rapidly ran—toward her room, remembering now, with sudden vividness, the Doric temple of marble. As he fell in, she lay stretched on the couch, with closed eyes, the purple gloom of the *lychnoi* on her face, an arm over-hanging the edge. On the back of her hand, peering near, he discerned a minute *piqûre*. . . .

High in a tower of the donjon sat Caspar of Schwangau. The chamber was a small oval one, ponderously hung with old figured tapestry; and it was hot and bright with a multitude of burning wax tapers; and its air was heavy with the breath of flowers. Flowers were everywhere—rose, and narciss, and lily, and jasmine—sprays of yew, and bitter rosemary, and rue—piled on the floor, heaped high against the tapestry, covering the bed where the body lay. He was alone, and it was late in the night. The door was twice locked. He felt no pain—only a dull, nightmare speculation rode him. A slow, endless inquiry as to Beauty, and the nature of it, infinitely repeating itself in a numbed brain. What was it, what was it, at all? He propped the frown of his brow on his hand, thinking it out. It was an oppressive word to him merely. *She* knew, but slept. On her waking he would exact from her minute exegesis. Only in some far-away, lotus-choked region of his consciousness did he know her verily dead. Her face was not stern to him—still soft, and white. Her hair underspread her wide to the knees. His anxiety now was that she should look her very loveliest on the bed—he knew that to be a care to her. Twice he had taken from her black head a garland of yellow roses, which he had discarded for another of white, and then for one of red; and then he had yielded to endless doubts, and replaced the yellow. And why roses at all? Why not violets? lilac? Choice of all lay round him; and one or other, to the ideal eye, was beautifullest, best—but which? She, in her heart, knew exactly. On her waking he would learn without fail. The unnoticed hours of the night passed over him. He sat in shirt and hose, bootless, thinking it out. Every now and again he would rise to readjust something on the quiet bed. Chance, she often said, ‘does nothing’—one must create Beauty by wise, directed energy of soul. He unstrapped her sandals, deeming her bare feet fittest; and in a few minutes was bent upon replacing them, but stopped, deciding again that it was best so. He rearranged fifty times the folds of her violet robe. Then the room grew so hot that mechanically he opened a narrow casement. A fulgor of watching constellations brooded steadily over the hushed morning hour. The window looked sheer upon the lake. A swan chased his flapping mate over the ruffled surface, with noises. Water and death—wherein lies their intimacy? This was a new question for him. There *is* a relation. The funeral-train which winds by the sea-shore is ever the saddest of funerals. But how so? Could it be that she—those artist folk—had shrewdness to know the reading of riddles so quaint and dubious? For him it was wholly a hopeless matter.

Wearied to death with the day’s battles, he fell to a nodding sleep on a chair.

But with earliest dawn he sprang, the senility quite gone, raving at all things, himself most, and the foul murder he had done. He ran in disorder to the base-court, distraught of eye, stuttering and spluttering through a frantic clarion. Sixty men volunteered to follow him on a fresh sally,

remembering the partial success of the day before, thinking his rashness knightly, rather than the demented rage of whom the god destroys. Caspar dissipating a random fury was among the first to fall, done to death by the sword of Fritz. When Swabian help before dawn of the next day at last arrived, the castle was a smoking desolation.

Fritz made a point of saving from the wreck his Madonna of Stephan, which later on somehow found its way to the Cathedral at Cologne. The Raphael cartoons flamed with the rest. It was so that Hohenschwangau was anticipatory of South Kensington; and thus did Albrecht Dürer's washed head, and its burning, become the undoing of a house.

About thirty years later a small new castle seems to have been built near the old site on the heights of the Schwanstein by some other branch of the Swabian ducal family. This was purchased by the late King Maximilian of Bavaria for a sum, I have heard, of about one hundred and fifty forms (fifteen pounds). It was then demolished, and a little yellow so-called 'Schloss' erected in its place. The modern building is decorated throughout with paintings representing the life-turmoil of famed Lohengrin, the Swan-Knight. When the editor passed by it, it was used as the occasional *Residenz* of the sombre and mysterious Ludwig, and his queenmother. And to some such end it may still serve.