A Midsummer Night's Dream.

BY MAX NORDAU.

Authorized Translation by Mary J. Safford.

PART I.

THE Herr von Jagerfeld, a rich manufacturer who had recently been elevated to the rank of baron in the Bavarian nobility, was celebrating a double festival: his silver wedding and the completion of his castle, Frazenruhe, which he had built outside the gates of Marktbreit, on the slope of one of the hills, which, as the last western spur of the Steigerwald, roll in a gradual descent to the bank of the Main. The castle was a magnificent edifice, in the Renaissance style—of course. Red sandstone and white marble had been used, with a beautiful effect of color, for the facade, which made a lavish display of pilasters with foliage and vine work, niches containing statues, and bay windows with beautiful wrought iron railings. The castle stood in the midst of a lovely park filled with trees a century old which extended up to the summit of the hill and down to the river.

The master of the castle liked a lavish style. He had invited to his housewarming numerous guests, to whom, in the spacious apartments planned for this purpose, he could offer a really royal hospitality, at once magnificent and refined. They were chiefly landowners from the province of the Main, rich merchants and manufacturers from Frankfort, and acquaintances from places still more remote, who had flocked here with their wives and grown children, so that from early morning the mansion had been filled with joyous life.

The entire company assembled for the first time at the banquet which took place in the evening. The large dining-hall, wainscoted with polished marble in the style of the Italian palaces, whose painted ceiling was supported by fluted columns, was lighted by a superb chandelier with hundreds of wax candles, and contained a long table very richly set. Silver ornaments exquisitely adorned the center and the ends. The china, the array of glasses of all shapes which stood beside each plate, bore the initial of the master of the house, without any heraldic addition which might recall the recent elevation of rank, a graceful bit of coquetry on the part of a man who had been successful in life, but who was no upstart. At every plate was also placed a bouquet, in a holder representing a crystal lily with a silver cup. The company harmonized with the luxurious environment. The married ladies attracted the eye by their elegant toilettes and rich jewels, the young girls—among whom were several of bewitching beauty and freshness—in simpler costumes, with flowers in their hair, by their natural charms. Even among the monotonous black dress coats of the men, an eye which took pleasure in color found some degree of satisfaction in the gay uniform of several Bavarian and Russian officers.

The hostess, still a pretty woman, with her wealth of fair hair and her clear complexion, ever whose delicate transparency the years had passed with scarcely a trace, had at her right an elderly general with numerous orders, who, being a great eater and a very poor conversationalist, feasted his eyes alternately on his plate and on the pretty faces, whispering to his neighbor remarks about the viands and the feminine guests, whose artless simplicity—they consisted chiefly of a noun and a laudatory adjective—showed a profoundly satisfied and comfortable mood. At her left sat a highly esteemed friend of the family, Dr. Bergmann, a young physician, a tutor in the Wurzburg university, who, during the past three years, had twice had the opportunity of saving Frau Von Jagersfeld and her eldest daughter, in cases of severe illness, from threatening death, and to whom the whole family therefore felt unbounded gratitude. Bergmann was a handsome man, still under 30, whose grave manner made him appear somewhat older. A thoughtful brow, an absolutely straight nose, large gray eyes, which on first meeting them looked cold and penetrating, lips somewhat large, yet well modeled, dark beard, and a luxuriant head of hair which was permitted to wave, stand up, or lie flat at will, were the individual features which collectively formed a remarkably interesting head. His manner showed a peculiar mingling of modesty, nay, timidity, and vigorous self-reliance. It was evident that he was unaccustomed to the drawing-room and large companies, and felt at ease only beside a sick-bed. He was rather awkward in aimless chatter, but, on the other hand, firm and clear in professional conversation. A mere boy in the presence of a talkative, pretty girl, but a hero and a conqueror when with a suffering, anxious human being, beseeching his aid. His left-hand neighbor, the wife of a Frankfort banker, who chatted rapidly about the architecture of the dining-hall and the Wagner performances at Bayreuth, received monosyllabic, hesitating replies, while he talked eloquently and animatedly to the lady on his right, the hostess upon the influence of modern nervousness upon social forms.

He paid little heed to the guests, and had only glanced at them carelessly two or three times, bowing to acquaintances, and hastily obtaining a general impression of the strangers. At each of these surveys his eyes had remained fixed upon a lady who sat directly opposite to him, and whose beauty was remarkable, peculiar and fascinating. So far as her figure could be seen, while seated, it appeared slight and delicate, without fragility, girlishly immature, yet not lean in form. The small head, supported by a slender, snow-white neck, was a marvel of grace and elegance, instantly recalling the bust of Clytia in the British museum. One involuntarily looked for the sunflower from whose calyx it really ought to bloom. The brow was narrow and dazzling fair, the nose uncommonly delicate, slightly arched at the root, with [illegible] nostrils, so delicate that one might believe them transparent; the mouth not very small, but exquisitely shaped, with thin lips, curving obstinately, which curled sometimes sternly, sometimes scornfully, sometimes bitterly, but could also smile with infinite sweetness and charm; the chin round and statuesque, the cheeks neither plump nor hollow, with a delightful play of tender lights and soft, almost imperceptible shadows over their bright surfaces. But the most remarkable characteristics of this head were the large blue eyes, deep as the sea, beneath long lashes and nobly-formed brows, and the luxuriant, almost golden-red hair, whose silken wreath of naturally waving locks rested above the brow in the bands, like the gleaming wings of some bright-hued tropical bird, while the light of the candles, shining on the braids, struck out strange, satiny metallic reflections, and a powdery, glimmering sparkle, as though the hair was dusted with gold or ruby powder. Her sole ornaments were a diamond star in the hair and an antique gold circlet on one of her bare arms. The white dress, trimmed on one side of the bosom to the opposite side of the waist with a garland of artificial flowers, looked simple, yet very elegant. The eye of the most critical woman could find no fault in the harmony of the toilette, the coldest man could not avert his gaze from the head which constantly called forth the two comparisons to a Greek cameo, or a nixie, comparisons which the beautiful woman was compelled to hear so often that they seemed unbearably commonplace.

The young lieutenant—a count—who sat at her left hand, was probably whispering something of the sort into her little ear, for her face assumed a repellently cold, bored expression, and her eyes were fixed dreamily on vacancy, many times farther away than the earth from the sun, from her gallant neighbor, the table, and the hall.

HER FACE ASSUMED A REPELLENTLY COLD EXPRESSION.

But Bergmann's gaze must have followed her all this distance, for it suddenly met hers, and the tall, grave fellow flushed under her pensive glance. The hostess looked at him just at this moment, and saw the blood mount into his cheeks.

"What is the matter?" she could not refrain from whispering.

He blushed a second time, even more deeply.

But Frau von Jagerfeld had followed his eye, and now said, smiling: "Ah, your opposite neighbor!"

"Who is the lady?" Bergmann asked, with some little embarrassment.

"Doctor," replied Frau von Jagerfeld, this time smiling, "take care. Many wings have already been scorched by her."

"Don't fear, madame. I can endure flames somewhat better than a moth."

"Come, come, a suspicious reflection of fire is already discovered on your cheeks."

A shadow of annoyance flitted across Bergmann's face. His hostess laid her hand quickly on his arm, saying:

"Don't be vexed by a little jest, my dear friend. I will tell you who the beautiful woman is. She is a German-American, and her name is Mrs. Ada Burgess. Young and charming, as you see, the poor woman is unhappy. Her father is the owner of a gold mine somewhere in Nebraska, and was reputed a very wealthy man; at least he lived in extremely handsome style in St. Louis, and his daughter, who was considered the handsomest girl in the west, from the time of her entrance into society was the reigning belle of every ball and entertainment. Mr. Burgess, who seems to have been a handsome and elegant man, was her most devoted suitor and appeared to be madly in love with her. Ada did not remain insensible to the persistent homage, and Burgess bore away the victory over numerous rivals. But it now appears that he has a base soul and his main object was the dowry. There, however, he was disappointed. Gold mines, evidently, are not always productive, at least Ada's father was ruined by his, and Ada did not receive a penny. Then the comedy of love played by Burgess ended. At first he treated her indifferently, then harshly, and soon matters became so bad that she was obliged to seek refuge from her husband's abuse in her parents' house. Her nerves had been so shaken by the horrible scenes which she experienced, that your American colleagues recommended a long residence in Europe for the restoration of her health. She came here, and for several months has lived in Frankfort, where the best society struggles for her. You can imagine that a young and beautiful woman entirely alone, whose husband is invisible, does not remain unassailed. Besides, there is the American independence and confidence of manner which is often mistaken for emancipation, and by which a man easily feels encouraged—in short, serious attention has been paid to her, and she has seemed to accept it. Then suddenly there came a repulse and a rupture, which has already resulted in injury to several somewhat delicately strung masculine hearts. Moreover she is very uneven in her manner. Often gay, even reckless, devising pranks like a spoiled boy, then suddenly reserved, distant and stern. True, she is always intellectual, so that I know many a man who is uncomfortable in her society, to say nothing of women."

Frau Von Jagerfeld had spoken eagerly in a low tone, with frequent interruptions when courtesy compelled her to listen to the numerous toasts which were chiefly proposed to her and to the master of the house. Mrs. Burgess could not long fail to notice that the two persons opposite were talking about her, and she smilingly shook her finger across the table at her friend.

"Poor woman," murmured Bergmann, "so bitter an experience at the threshold of life—But why does she endure her fate? It is so easy to be set free in America."

"I don't know. Perhaps on account of her children."

"Ah—she has children?"

"Two; and it is strange and touching to see how she rears them. Often she treats them like dolls, and amuses herself for hours by dressing and undressing them, dragging them around the room, and then suddenly dropping them in some sofa corner, head down and feet up. Then again, she talks gravely and tenderly to the little creatures, and tries to instill good principles—it is too comical. But she is a delightful creature, oh, a delightful creature—"

The banquet was over, honor was done to the last toast from brimming champagne glasses, and the guests went to the drawing-room. Several minutes elapsed before the gentlemen had escorted the ladies to their chairs and the arrangement appointed according to rank and precedence, which had governed the seats assigned at the table, had yielded to free gathering in groups. Mrs. Burgess had dismissed her lieutenant with a somewhat curt bow, and took her place before a beautiful little Menzel, which she examined a long time. Frau von Jagerfeld and Bergmann released themselves almost at the same moment, the former from her old general, the latter from his banker's wife, and again found themselves side by side.

"Do you want me to introduce you to Ada?" she asked, quickly.

He bowed silently, and offered his arm. On reaching Ada, she lightly touched her on the shoulder, white as mother-of-pearl, with her fan, and when the lady, somewhat surprised, turned, Frau von Jagerfeld smiling pleasantly, said: "My dear child, let me present to you our best friend, Dr. Bergmann. I must devote myself to the rest of my guests, and, unfortunately, have not time to tell you all the good I think of him. But you will discover all that is necessary for yourself. You know, my dear, that you are the two most interesting people here. It is fitting for you to be together." With these words she rustled away to address a few kindly words to the architect of the castle who was surrounded by a numerous group.

Bergmann stood before Mrs. Burgess, gazing at her gravely and intently. The more at ease of the two, she sat down on a sofa, and with a gesture of the hand, invited him to take the armchair in front of it.

"Frau von Jagerfeld has talked of you a great deal, and very enthusiastically," she said, in a musical, somewhat deep, resonant voice, which thrilled his every nerve like the sound of bells, and as he bowed, she added, smiling mischievously: "And of me to you; I watched you at the table."

"Yes," he answered, "and enthusiastically, also."

"She is a kind friend, I know." A brief pause followed, which she abruptly interrupted. "You are a physician.

"I LIKE PHYSICIANS, AND YET I FEAR THEM."

and in spite of your youth, a famous one—modesty is unnecessary. It is strange—I like physicians, and yet I fear them."

"Why?"

"Yes, why? I like them because they are usually earnest, talented men, who have experienced much, know much, and from whom new and remarkable things can always be learned. I fear them because they have no illusions."

"Perhaps that is not always correct."

"Oh, pardon me; how is a physician to preserve any illusions, when he knows human beings thoroughly, sees that an emotion depends upon the nerve of a tooth, a mood upon the degree of moisture contained in the air, and a character upon the healthy or diseased stomach. You leave your illusions upon your dissecting tables."

"What you say might be true if illusions and experiences came from the same source. But they do not."

"I don't fully understand. Explain yourself."

"What you call illusions are ideal images and aspirations, which originate in the sphere of our impulses and feelings, not in our sensible reasoning. But the impulses and feelings are more elementary and more deeply rooted, thought comes later and remains more on the surface. We inherit our illusions from the countless generations that have preceded us, our experiences we draw from our individual lives. An individual experience cannot outweigh the illusions of a thousand ancestors, who form a part of our organism. But, pardon me, I have caught myself in the midst of a tutor's lecture—you see that impulse is stronger than prudence."

"Do you ask pardon for that? What you say is so interesting. I suppose you have a very bad opinion of women, since you do not think them capable of understanding you?"

"I do not generalize. Whatever opinion I might have of women, I should not apply it to you."

"You understand how to pay compliments admirably. You are not commonplace."

He made no reply, but gazed at her with so earnest a look, expressive of such unconscious admiration and worship that she flushed, and with a nervous flutter of her fan arose. Bergmann rose also, bowed and made a movement to retire. Ada opened her eyes in surprise, and involuntarily a word escaped her lips: "Wie—"

"I thought I was wearying you."

She held out her finger-tips, which he pressed so warmly that she hastily withdrew her hand. Going to one of the three large windows in the drawing-room, she opened it and stepped out upon the broad, projecting balcony, which on the second story extended along the whole front of the castle. Leaning against the balustrade, both silently watched for a moment the scene before them. The July night was warm, and the air was stirless. Not a cloud appeared on the blackish-blue sky, the stars were sparkling brightly, and among them, almost at the zenith, sailed the full moon. At their feet lay the park, from which rose faint odors of unknown wild flowers and the more pungent fragrance of dewy grass and leafage. Directly in front of the building extended a lawn, with beds of flowers, on which the moonlight poured a sort of filmy, glimmering mist, which gave the green grass and the bright hues of the flower-beds a light, silvery veil. Beyond the lawn, on all sides, towered the trees of the park, intersected by broad paths, through which the moonbeams flowed like a gleaming white stream between steep black banks. At the end of the central avenue appeared the Main, flowing in a broad, calm stream, with here and there a noisy, troubled spot in the midst of its peacefully-gliding waves, where a rock or a sand-bar interrupted the mirror-like expanse, and caused a rushing, foam sprinkled whirlpool. Beyond the river, amid the light, floating night-mists were dimly seen the houses of a little village, in whose window-panes a moonbeam often flashed, and at the left of the park rose the indistinct masses of the city of Marktbreit, whose steep, narrow streets were filled with shadows, while above the steeples and higher roofs the moon-rays rippled, bringing them out in bright relief against the dark picture.

PART II.

THE spell of this moonlight night mounted to the heads of the two silent watchers on the balcony like an intoxicating draught, and sent cold chills down their spines. Almost without being aware what he was doing, Bergmann offered Ada his arm, which she accepted, leaning against him with a gentle, clinging movement of her whole figure. There they stood, letting their dreamy eyes wander over the woods, the river and the city. They would have forgotten the castle and the entertainment had not the subdued notes of the dance music reached them from the ball-room, whose windows opened upon the balcony on the opposite side of the facade, filling the night with low harmonies which were continued in the vibrations of their own nerves.

At this moment the clock in the Marktbreit steeple struck 12, directly after the sound of a night watchman's horn was heard, and a wailing voice, rising in the sleeping streets of the city, called a few unintelligible words.

"What was that?" Ada whispered.

"The night watchman, according to the custom of the country, called the hour with a verse," replied Bergmann. A few minutes later the call was repeated, this time nearer, and so distinctly that it could be understood. The night watchman, with mournful emphasis, sang:

"Twelve strokes Time's finger do teach thee,
Man, think of thy mortality."

"Life in your Germany is like a fairy tale," said Ada, after repeating the verse to herself; "everything is so dreamy, so pervaded with poetry."

"Then stay in our Germany, stay with us," he pleaded, softly, his voice expressing far more than his words.

She shook her little head sorrowfully. "I came five years too late."

"Do not say that," replied Bergmann, pressing the bare arm which rested on his closely to his side. "How old are you now?"

It did not occur to her to smile at the question or to answer it, according to the ordinary custom of women, with an affected reply. She said, instead, as simply as a child:

"Twenty-three."

"And at twenty-three would it be too late to seek and strive for happiness in life? When sorrow has been experienced so young, it can surely be regarded as a childish disease, and there is nothing to be done except to forget it as quickly as possible."

Ada gazed fixedly into vacancy, saying, as if lost in thought:

"No, no. That is not so. There are injuries which are incurable. The mother of two children is old at twenty-three. Since she can no longer offer a man the full happiness of love, she has no right to expect it from him."

He was about to answer, but with a hasty movement she placed her slender finger on her lip, saying:

"Hush! Not another word on this subject. Look"—and her hand pointed down to the park.

From a bow window in the castle a powerful apparatus was sending a broad stream of electric light into the darkness. It often changed and moved, being thrown now here, then there. In its course it illumined the tops of the trees with a faint, livid phosphorescence, interwove the shrubbery with fantastic gliding spots of light, and gave the turf, wherever it was visible, the appearance of a strip of a glittering glacier. In the distance, where the light was lost in the dense groups of trees, it produced the illusion of indistinct shapes gleaming out there for a moment and then vanishing. It seemed as if one could see something mysterious moving or standing, perhaps a human form, wrapped in floating robes, perhaps a white marble statue hidden behind the foliage, perhaps a mist, gathering and scattering. Night moths and bats, fluttering across the bar of light out of the darkness into the darkness, shone brightly during the brief period of their passage, then suddenly vanished again like moss blown through a flame. The electric light seemed to make a road through the park, spread a silver carpet over it, and invite the two who watched its course to walk along this shining road to the distance where the shadowy white shapes hovered in the shrubbery, appearing and disappearing.

The temptation was irresistible.

"Let us go down," said Ada, and a few minutes later, with a light mantilla over her shoulders, she was walking by his side over the creaking gravel of the avenue and then over the noiseless side paths.

How blissful is the wandering of a handsome young couple, with glowing hearts in their breasts, through a moonlit, fragrant summer night! Their feet do not feel the earth on which they tread, but seem to be floating on clouds. Nothing is left of the world save these two and the night which maternally conceals them—he and she, naught else, like Adam and Eve, when they were the only human dwellers in Paradise.

A damp branch of the bushes often brushed Ada's shoulders like an affectionate, caressing hand, as she slowly passed along. Now and then a bird

THE FULL MAGIC OF THE MOMENT HELD THEM BOTH IN ITS THRALL.

whose nest was in the underbrush, disturbed in its sleep, fluttered up before them, and, stupid with slumber, flew to a neighboring bough. Ada sometimes plucked a flower, or cautiously touched with her finger one of the little glow worms, which in great numbers edged the path with their greenish light. They went down to the Main and back again to the park fence, facing Marktbreit. Just as they reached it the clock struck one, and the night watchman blew his horn, and again solemnly intoned his old-fashioned melody:

"One thing, Lord God of truth, we want:
A happy death to us all grant."

The full magic of the moment held them both in its thrall. Bergmann passionately clasped Ada's head between his hands, and pressed a long, ardent kiss on her golden hair and her white brow. Drawing a long breath, she submitted, not shrinking back until his burning lips sought hers. Their hearts beat audibly as they continued their walk, and long pauses interrupted their faltering speech.

What did they say to each other? Why repeat it? One who has never had such conversations will not understand them, and one who has experienced them only needs to be reminded of them. They are always the same. Memories of childhood, rapture and extravagance, words of enthusiastic love, words which create the slight tremor of the skin like a cool breeze on the caress of toying fingers. So they walked a long, long time in the dark park, without heeding the flight of time, far from the world and unutterably happy.

"I am tired, Karl," Ada said at last, and leaned her head on his shoulder.

They were near a low, grassy bank, a few paces from the central avenue, and almost under the balcony of the castle, but completely concealed by the dense shadow of the over-arching trees. Karl spread his shawl over the bank and the ground, placed Ada on it, and reclined at her feet, resting his head in her lap. The balcony and the windows and lights of the drawing-room could all be seen from this spot. The window still stood open, the notes of a piano were heard, and a voice began the song:

"From out my tears will bloom
Full many a flow'ret fair."

A pretty, but somewhat cold, female voice, with no special tenderness and feeling. Yet the combined poesy of Heine and Schumann triumphed gloriously over the inadequacy of the execution. The wonderful, choral-like melody soared like the flight of a swan over the rapt pair, and completely dissolved their souls in melody and love:

"Before thy windows shall ring
The song of the nightingale,"

sang the woman's voice above, and the accompanying piano completed the air with an organ-like closing accord.

"Before thy windows shall ring
The song of the nightingale."

Karl softly repeated, in his beautiful baritone, thrilling with an approaching tempest of passion, his arms clasped Ada's waist, and he gazed up at her with wild, flaming eyes. She bent down to him and her lips met his, which nearly scorched them. Leaning back, and gently pushing his head away, she whispered:

"Don't repeat verses by Heine; say something which is yours, and is composed for me."

"That I will, Ada," he cried, and, kneeling before her, clasping her in a close embrace and devouring her face

A MOMENT LATER HER WHITE FIGURE HAD VANISHED.

with rapturous eyes, his whole being wrought up to the highest pitch of emotion, he said in a rapid improvisation, bursting from the inmost depths of his soul:

"In the shadowy hour when ghosts do flit,
Thou art to me a beauteous dream;
To thy lips I cling, yet while I love,
My happiness scarce real doth seem."

"Thy mouth and thy fair hands do I kiss,
I kiss thine eyes and thy silken hair,
And should our lives end at this hour,
Still we should die a happy pair."

Her eyes were half closed, and her bosom heaved.

After a short pause, he continued slowly in a tremulous voice:

"Oh, God, that I should find thee here,
Only to cause my woe,
For thou wilt vanish from my gaze,
Ere the first cock doth crow."

"No, no," she murmured, almost inaudibly, sinking into his arms, which clasped her wildly and ardently, pressing her to his heart, while his lips showered kisses upon her and a sudden ecstasy began to cloud her senses.

Then, just at that moment, the clock in the Marktbreit church steeple struck two, the blast of the horn followed, and the mysterious voice rose in the invisible city and sang, this time close at hand and seemingly with significant emphasis:

"Two paths are to each mortal shown;
Lord, guide me in the narrow one."

As if stung by a serpent, Ada started up, wrenched herself by a sudden movement from Karl's clasping arms, and hastened away as though pursued by all the fiends of hell. A moment later, her white figure had vanished in the castle and Karl found himself alone before the grassy bank; he might have believed it a dream if the mantilla had not still lain there exhaling Ada's favorite perfume, a faint fragrance of carnations.

With heavy, dulled brain, aching limbs, and a strange sense of pain in his heart, Karl staggered back to the castle and to his room. For a long time sleep fled from him. A thousand scenes hovered in a confused throng before his fancy, blending into a witch-dance in whose mazes his own brain seemed to whirl also, until the giddiness became intolerable. He saw Ada in various transformations — now seated opposite to him at the table—then in the drawing-room — anon clasped in his arms—sometimes brightly illuminated as the queen of the ball-room—sometimes a faint, dark vision against the sombre background of the woodland—he inhaled her favorite perfume, felt the touch of her arms and her lips—he heard her voice and the melancholy music of the night watchman and the notes of the dancing tune from the ballroom, and amid these exciting delusions of the senses a restless, dream-haunted slumber at last overtook him.

It was almost noon when he awoke. At first his head felt confused and empty, but gradually he collected his thoughts, and now the experiences of the previous night again stood clearly before his eyes. He suddenly recalled all his feelings during the walk through the woods, and, while dressing with the utmost haste, he exultingly repeated in a low tone again and again: "I love her! And she returns my love! And we will never part."

His first thought was to seek Ada. The mantilla, which he must return, afforded the pretext. After several inquiries he found her apartments, which were next to those occupied by the mistress of the house. Ada's maid opened the door and looked at him in surprise when he gave her the package and asked if he could see Mrs. Burgess.

"She has a headache, and probably won't be up to-day," was the curt answer, with which the door was closed in his face. This was a disappointment, and he felt very unhappy and forsaken. Yet he endeavored to combat these feelings and mingled with the other guests. At noon he exchanged a hurried greeting with Frau Von Jagerfeld, who looked at him intently, but said nothing when he avoided her glance. In the afternoon he walked to Marktbreit and through the neighboring villages on the neighboring hills, but the longing of his heart soon drove him back to the castle, where for hours he paced patiently up and down the pillared hall upon which most of the rooms occupied by the visitors opened. In the evening the guests again assembled at a banquet. Bergmann hoped that Ada would be present, and he was not disappointed. The summons to the meal had been given for the third time, nearly all the other members of the house party were in the drawing-room when Ada's door at last opened. Karl rushed forward and held out his hand to her. She started, paused an instant on the threshold, then hurried past him without turning her head, and swiftly vanished.

Karl stood as if he were turned to stone, gazing after her retreating figure; then forgetting the banquet and everything else, he hastened to his room and wrote Ada a letter, in which he repeated all the expressions of love lavished upon her during the preceding night, and begged for an explanation of her recent conduct. This missive he gave to Ada's maid, with the urgent request to deliver it to her mistress that very evening before she retired. Then he went out to try to conquer his agitation by a walk in the park, and when he thought that he had regained his composure, he returned to the drawing-room to see and to talk with Ada. The meal was over, gaiety reigned throughout the various groups, and a storm of reproaches for his absence from the table assailed him on all sides. But he looked in vain for Ada. She had retired immediately after dinner.

So she was now reading his letter! Perhaps now she was answering him! His heart throbbed wildly at this thought. He would gladly have made another attempt to see Ada in her own apartments, but he felt that he owed her due reserve, and determined to have patience until the next day.

When, on the following morning, he came out of his bed chamber into the ante-room, he instantly saw on the table a sealed package which bore his address. He tore the wrapper with trembling hands and found within his own letter and a gilt-edged book. It was an English copy of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream." On the first page in a woman's delicate chirography were the words: "A Midsummer Night's Dream. July 3, 188— Ada." That was all. From the servant who appeared at his ring, Bergmann learned that the package had been left by Mrs. Burgess' maid early that morning. Mrs. Burgess had been gone half an hour.

THE END.

Well Represented.

Doctor—Well, I consider the medical profession very badly treated. See how few monuments there are to famous doctors or surgeons.

She—Oh, doctor! Look at our cemetery! —Fun.

ENGLISH PLUCK.

The Story of a Young Lad of Long Ago Who Faced an Angry Lord.

In St. Nicholas John Bennett has a story of life in England centuries ago entitled "His Father's Price." Several lads have thrown clods of clay at a proud baron, who captures one of them. This scene follows:

The "fellow" they had clodded was Sir Richard Scroope, the lawyer lord of Bolton Manor. The lad turned sick, but did not flinch a hair. It is a strange English way, that, of taking one's dose and making no to do.

Sir Richard's garb was dull in tone, but rich in stuff. His cloak and hood were fringed with miniver, although the day was warm. His ray cloth surcoat was wine color and blue. The closely girdled gaberdine beneath it was of fine watchet blue, with a broad band of shimmering cloth of gold. His strong white hands were bare, but his legs were covered with double thonged cockers of russet cordovan from ankle to midthigh. His spurs were heavily gilded and he wore a short double edged Sheffield dagger.

"Art thou one of those who did this unto me?" he asked in a stern, hard voice.

"Aye," replied the boy huskily.

"Who set ye on to do this thing?"

"No one, sire."

"No lies to me, knave! Who set ye on?"

"I have na lied," the boy's voice quivered.

"Why did ye do it, then?"

The lad made no reply. He was wondering if the rest had got away safe; wondering that he was still alive, and if it were not all a dream that the lord baron was asking him why.

"Dost hear me, knave?" said Sir Richard.

"Yea, sire."

"Then why dost thou not answer?"

"For marvel that I may, sire," replied the boy.

A queer look came into Sir Richard's stern eyes at that, and he looked even more shrewdly than before at the upturned sunburned face, honestly fearful, yet unafraid. "Then why did ye do this cowardly thing? Speak, knave! My time is shorter than my temper with thee!"

At the word "cowardly" the lad flushed.

"For sport, sire," he replied.

"For sport!" cried Sir Richard sternly. "This?" and as he spoke he pointed meaningly to his swollen forehead.

"That was your end of the game, sire, not ours," said the boy stoutly, and with a certain sense of humor.

The dark eyes gleamed queerly again.

"Ye knew not who I was perchance?"

"Not then, sire, but now right well, my lord baron."

"If thou hadst known me, thou wouldst never have thrown!"

"Aye, but I would, with a right good will," answered the boy doggedly, "but I would not now for a gold rose noble!" As he spoke he threw back his head.

"How now?" said the baron sharply. "Why not?"

"Because ye bore yourself as a right lord baron should!" cried the boy, looking up frankly, though choking a little as he spoke.

A grim smile twitched at the corners of the baron's iron mouth on that blunt reply, and a sparkle of satisfaction lighted his haughty eyes. Little used to such fair, plain speech from either young or old, the boy's pluck struck his fancy. "What is thy name?" he asked.

"Walter, sire."

"Doubtless, but whose son art thou?"

The boy looked up with a glance of sharp distrust and did not reply. Sir Richard's mouth set hard again.

"Answer me, thou frowsy rogue! What is thy father's name?"

The boy's lips whitened, but he did not speak.

"It were better for thee to answer me," warned the knight, gathering his bridle as he spoke.

The boy's heart sank and his face grew pale.

"My father has na clodded thee," he replied huskily. "The fault is mine, not his."

Sir Richard's eyes were full of queer looks that day, but never more than then. "Thou stubborn knave!" quoth he shortly. "Thy father fathered thee—that is enough. Here, stand thou at my stirrup leather."

The boy obeyed trembling.

"Lay hold," said he. The boy laid hold upon the leather.

"Now follow where I ride, upon thy life."

And so they fared to Bolton castle.

WHOPPERS TOLD IN ATHENS.

The Jokes of American Athletes Published There as Interesting Facts.

That the personalities of the contestants in the recent international athletic events in the stadium near Athens attracted most earnest attention is evident from the reports in Greek newspapers that have reached here. One of these, The City, in the issues of March 31 and April 7, has many short paragraphs that a bank president in this city who is proficient in modern Greek has translated literally. The writer apparently was not well informed of track customs in this country, and he evidently passed some hours in collecting information from the barbarians, the quality of the facts obtained being proportioned to the sense of humor in the contestant questioned. Of the custom of picking up a contestant and carrying him to his quarters the writer says:

"The feet of one of the American runners are most strange. They have bunions, small and large, and all the muscles stand out most tremendously. After a run two lift him up and carry him to the dressing room because he cannot walk."

The writer next chronicles this as evidence of Connolly's reliance on supernatural aid:

"The American athletes, and especially Connolly, pray before beginning the game. He covers his face with his hands and recites some American invocations."

Credit is given to the mechanical qualities of chewing gum in this way:

"The American runners have the foot of a hare, and when about to run they murmur something and then enter the contest. Two of them continually chew pitch. This strengthens the lungs."

The climax, however, was reached in this:

"One of the Americans being asked whether he had done much running replied, 'I have come from America to England on foot four times.'"

The college cries elicited this comment:

"The shouts of the Americans are most extraordinary and unintelligible. Every province and university has its own war-cry. Even the Greeks imitated this strange custom. When the peasant Louis from the village of Marousi was announced as victor of the Marathon race, this shout was raised: 'Ma, ma, me! Rou, rou, rou! Si, si, si! Hellas! Zeta!'"

The Greek reporter adds:

"A German photographer who takes pictures especially of athletic events says that though the Americans are winners the Greeks are nevertheless graceful."—New York Sun.