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The Pilgrims of the Rhine

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Chapter XXII.

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE DOUBLE LIFE.—TREVYLYAN'S FATE.—SORROW THE PARENT OF FAME.—
NIEDERLAHNSTEIN.—DREAMS.

THERE are two lives to each of us,—gliding on at the same time scarcely connected with each other!—the life of our actions—the life of our minds; the external and the inward history; the movements of the frame—the deep and ever restless workings of the heart! They who have loved know that there is a diary of the affections, which we might keep for years without having occasion even to touch upon the exterior surface of life, our busy occupations—the mechanical progress of our existence;—yet by the last are we judged, the first is never known. History reveals men's deeds, men's outward characters, but *not themselves*. There is a secret self that hath its own life “rounded by a dream” unpenetrated, unguessed. What passed within Trevelyman, hour after hour, as he watched over the declining health of the only being in the world whom his proud heart had been ever destined to love! His real record of the time was marked by every cloud upon Gertrude's brow, every smile of her countenance, every, the faintest, alteration

in her disease: yet, to the outward seeming, all this vast current of varying eventful emotion lay dark and un conjectured. He filled up, with wonted regularity, the colourings of existence, and smiled and moved as other men. For still, in the heroism with which devotion conquers self, he sought only to cheer and gladden the young heart on which he had embarked his all;—and he kept the dark tempest of his anguish for the solitude of night.

That was a peculiar doom which Fate had reserved for him; and casting him, in after years, on the great sea of public strife, it seemed as if she were resolved to tear from his heart all yearnings for the land. For him there was to be no green and sequestered spot in the valley of household peace. His bark was to know no haven, and his soul not even the desire of rest. For action is that Lethe in which we alone forget our former dreams, and the mind that, too stern not to wrestle with its emotions, seeks to conquer regret, must leave itself no leisure to look behind. Who knows what benefits to the world may have sprung from the sorrows of the benefactor? As the harvest that gladdens mankind in the suns of autumn was called forth by the rains of spring, so the griefs of youth may make the fame of maturity.

Gertrude, charmed by the beauties of the river, desired to continue the voyage to Mayence. The rich Trevelyman persuaded the physician who had attended her, to accompany them, and they once more pursued their way along the banks of the feudal Rhine. For what the Tiber is to the

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TOWER OF SIEDELAMSTEIN.

classic, the Rhine is to the chivalric, age. The steep rock and the grey dismantled tower, the massive and rude picturesque of the feudal days, constitute the great features of the scene; and you might almost fancy, as you glide along, that you are sailing back adown the River of Time, and the monuments of the pomp and power of old, rising, one after one, upon its shores!

Vane and Du — e, the physician, at the farther end of the vessel, conversed upon stones and strata, in that singular pedantry of science which strips nature to a skeleton, and prowls among the dead bones of the world, unconscious of its living beauty.

They left Gertrude and Trevelyman to themselves, and "bending o'er the vessel's laving side," they indulged in silence the melancholy with which each was imbued. For Gertrude began to waken, though doubtingly and at intervals, to a sense of the short span that was granted to her life; and over the loveliness around her there floated that sad and ineffable interest which springs from the presentiment of our own death. They passed the rich island of Oberwerth, and Hoheim, famous for its ruby grape, and saw, from his mountain bed, the Lahn bear his tribute of fruits and corn into the treasury of the Rhine. Proudly rose THE TOWER OF NIEDERLAHNSTEIN, and deeply lay its shadow along the stream. It was late noon; the cattle had sought the shade from the slanting sun, and, far beyond, the holy castle of Marksburg raised its battlements above mountains covered with the vine. On the water two boats had been

drawn alongside each other; and from one, now moving to the land, the splash of oars broke the general stillness of the tide. Fast by an old tower the fishermen were busied in their craft, but the sound of their voices did not reach the ear. It was life, but a silent life; suited to the tranquillity of noon.

"There is something in travel," said Gertrude, "which constantly, even amidst the most retired spots, impresses us with the exuberance of life. We come to these quiet nooks and find a race whose existence we never dreamed of. In their humble path they know the same passions and tread the same career as ourselves. The mountains shut them out from the great world, but their village is a world in itself. And they know and need no more of the turbulent scenes of remote cities, than our own planet reckons of the inhabitants of the distant stars. What then is death, but the forgetfulness of some few hearts added to the general unconsciousness of our existence that pervades the universe? The bubble breaks in the vast desert of the air without a sound."

"Why talk of death?" said Trevelyman, with a writhing smile; "these sunny scenes should not call forth such melancholy images."

"Melancholy," repeated Gertrude, mechanically. "Yes, death is indeed melancholy when we are loved!"

They stayed a short time at Niederlahnstein, for Vane was anxious to examine the minerals that the Lahn brings into the Rhine; and the sun was waning towards its close

as they renewed their voyage. As they sailed slowly on, Gertrude said, "How like a dream is this sentiment of existence, when, without labour or motion, every change of scene is brought before us; and if I am with you, dearest, I do not feel it less resembling a dream, for I have dreamt of you lately more than ever. And dreams have become a part of my life itself."

"Speaking of dreams," said Trevylyan, as they pursued that mysterious subject; "I once during my former residence in Germany fell in with a singular enthusiast, who had taught himself what he termed, 'A System of Dreaming.' When he first spoke to me upon it, I asked him to explain what he meant, which he did somewhat in the following words."

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