世界经典文学名著原版库

PRINCE OTTO

《奥托王子》

北京师联教育科学研究所　编

学苑音像出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

世界经典文学名著原版库/北京师联教育科学研究所编. —北京:学苑音像出版社,2005.3

ISBN 7-88050-270-X

Ⅰ.**世…** Ⅱ.**北…** Ⅲ.**世界文学—文学—名著:英文** Ⅳ.I299-3

中国版本图书馆 CIP **数据核字(**2005**)第** 187966 **号**

世界经典文学名著原版库
北京师联教育科学研究所　编

出　版:学苑音像出版社

印　刷:北京密云红光印刷厂

开　本:850mmx1168mm　1/16

印　张:2800

字　数:43,000 **千字**

版　次:2005 **年** 4 **月第** 1 **版**

印　数:1-5,000

书　号:ISBN 7-88050-270-X

定　价:5800.00 **元(全** 290 **册)**

PRINCE OTTO - A ROMANCE

TO NELLY VAN DE GRIFT

(*MRS. ADULFO SANCHEZ, OF MONTEREY*)

AT last, after so many years, I have the pleasure of re-introducing you to `Prince Otto,' whom you will remember a very little fellow, no bigger in fact than a few sheets of memoranda written for me by your kind hand. The sight of his name will carry you back to an old wooden house embowered in creepers; a house that was far gone in the respectable stages of antiquity and seemed indissoluble from the green garden in which it stood, and that yet was a sea-traveller in its younger days, and had come round the Horn piecemeal in the belly of a ship, and might have heard the seamen stamping and shouting and the note of the boatswain's whistle. It will recall to you the nondescript inhabitants now so widely scattered:-- the two horses, the dog, and the four cats, some of them still looking in your face as you read these lines;-- the poor lady, so unfortunately married to an author;-- the China boy, by this time, perhaps, baiting his line by the banks of a river in the Flowery Land;-- and in particular the Scot who was then sick apparently unto death, and whom you did so much to cheer and keep in good behaviour.

You may remember that he was full of ambitions and designs: so soon as he had his health again completely, you may remember the fortune he was to earn, the journeys he was to go upon, the delights he was to enjoy and confer, and (among other matters) the masterpiece he was to make of `Prince Otto'!

Well, we will not give in that we are finally beaten. We read together in those days the story of Braddock, and how, as he was carried dying from the scene of his defeat, he promised himself to do better another time: a story that will always touch a brave heart, and a dying speech worthy of a more fortunate commander. I try to be of Braddock's mind. I still mean to get my health again; I still purpose, by hook or crook, this book or the next, to launch a masterpiece; and I still intend -- somehow, some time or other -- to see your face and to hold your hand.

Meanwhile, this little paper traveller goes forth instead, crosses the great seas and the long plains and the dark mountains, and comes at last to your door in Monterey, charged with tender greetings. Pray you, take him in. He comes from a house where (even as in your own) there are gathered together some of the waifs of our company at

Oakland: a house -- for all its outlandish Gaelic name and distant station -- where you are well-beloved.

R. L. S. Skerryvore, Bournemouth.

BOOK I -- PRINCE ERRANT

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH THE PRINCE DEPARTS ON AN ADVENTURE

You shall seek in vain upon the map of Europe for the bygone state of Grünewald. An independent principality, an infinitesimal member of the German Empire, she played, for several centuries, her part in the discord of Europe; and, at last, in the ripeness of time and at the spiriting of several bald diplomatists, vanished like a morning ghost. Less fortunate than Poland, she left not a regret behind her; and the very memory of her boundaries has faded.

It was a patch of hilly country covered with thick wood. Many streams took their beginning in the glens of Grünewald, turning mills for the inhabitants. There was one town, Mittwalden, and many brown, wooden hamlets, climbing roof above roof, along the steep bottom of dells, and communicating by covered bridges over the larger of the torrents. The hum of watermills, the splash of running water, the clean odour of pine sawdust, the sound and smell of the pleasant wind among the innumerable army of the mountain pines, the dropping fire of huntsmen, the dull stroke of the wood- axe, intolerable roads, fresh trout for supper in the clean bare chamber of an inn, and the song of birds and the music of the village-bells -- these were the recollections of the Grünewald tourist.

North and east the foothills of Grünewald sank with varying profile into a vast plain. On these sides many small states bordered with the principality, Gerolstein, an extinct grand duchy, among the number. On the south it marched with the comparatively powerful kingdom of Seaboard Bohemia, celebrated for its flowers and mountain bears, and inhabited by a people of singular simplicity and tenderness of heart. Several intermarriages had, in the course of centuries, united the crowned families of Grünewald and Maritime Bohemia; and the last Prince of Grünewald, whose history I purpose to relate, drew his descent through Perdita, the only daughter of King Florizel the First of Bohemia. That these intermarriages had in some degree mitigated the rough, manly stock of the first Grünewalds, was an opinion widely held within the borders of the principality. The charcoal burner, the mountain sawyer, the wielder of the broad axe among the congregated pines of Grünewald, proud of their hard hands, proud of their shrewd ignorance and almost savage lore, looked with an unfeigned contempt on the soft character and manners of the sovereign race.

The precise year of grace in which this tale begins shall be left to the conjecture of the reader. But for the season of the year (which, in such a story, is the more important of the two) it was already so far forward in the spring, that when mountain people heard horns echoing all day about the north-west corner of the principality, they told themselves that Prince Otto and his hunt were up and out for the last time till the return of autumn.

At this point the borders of Grünewald descend somewhat steeply, here and there breaking into crags; and this shaggy and trackless country stands in a bold contrast to the cultivated plain below. It was traversed at that period by two roads alone; one, the imperial highway, bound to Brandenau in Gerolstein, descended the slope obliquely and by the easiest gradients. The other ran like a fillet across the very forehead of the hills, dipping into savage gorges, and wetted by the spray of tiny waterfalls. Once it passed beside a certain tower or castle, built sheer upon the margin of a formidable cliff, and commanding a vast prospect of the skirts of Grünewald and the busy plains of Gerolstein. The Felsenburg (so this tower was called) served now as a prison, now as a hunting-seat; and for all it stood so lonesome to the naked eye, with the aid of a good glass the burghers of Brandenau could count its windows from the lime-tree terrace where they walked at night.

In the wedge of forest hillside enclosed between the roads, the horns continued all day long to scatter tumult; and at length, as the sun began to draw near to the horizon of the plain, a rousing triumph announced the slaughter of the quarry. The first and second huntsman had drawn somewhat aside, and from the summit of a knoll gazed down before them on the drooping shoulders of the hill and across the expanse of plain. They covered their eyes, for the sun was in their faces. The glory of its going down was somewhat pale. Through the confused tracery of many thousands of naked

poplars, the smoke of so many houses, and the evening steam ascending from the fields, the sails of a windmill on a gentle eminence moved very conspicuously, like a donkey's ears. And hard by, like an open gash, the imperial high-road ran straight sunward, an artery of travel.

There is one of nature's spiritual ditties, that has not yet been set to words or human music: `The Invitation to the Road'; an air continually sounding in the ears of gipsies, and to whose inspiration our nomadic fathers journeyed all their days. The hour, the season, and the scene, all were in delicate accordance. The air was full of birds of passage, steering westward and northward over Grünewald, an army of specks to the up-looking eye. And below, the great practicable road was bound for the same quarter.

But to the two horsemen on the knoll this spiritual ditty was unheard. They were, indeed, in some concern of mind, scanning every fold of the subjacent forest, and betraying both anger and dismay in their impatient gestures.

`I do not see him, Kuno,' said the first huntsman, `nowhere -- not a trace, not a hair of the mare's tail! No, sir, he's off; broke cover and got away. Why, for twopence I would hunt him with the dogs!'

`Mayhap, he's gone home,' said Kuno, but without conviction.

`Home!' sneered the other. `I give him twelve days to get home. No, it's begun again; it's as it was three years ago, before he married; a disgrace! Hereditary prince, hereditary fool! There goes the government over the borders on a grey mare. What's that? No, nothing -- no, I tell you, on my word, I set more store by a good gelding or an English dog. That for your Otto!'

`He's not my Otto,' growled Kuno.

`Then I don't know whose he is,' was the retort.

`You would put your hand in the fire for him to-morrow,' said Kuno, facing round.

`Me!' cried the huntsman. `I would see him hanged! I'm a Grünewald patriot -- enrolled, and have my medal, too; and I would help a prince! I'm for liberty and Gondremark.'

`Well, it's all one,' said Kuno. `If anybody said what you said, you would have his blood, and you know it.'

`You have him on the brain,' retorted his companion. `There he goes!' he cried, the

next moment.

And sure enough, about a mile down the mountain, a rider on a white horse was seen to flit rapidly across a heathy open and vanish among the trees on the farther side.

`In ten minutes he'll be over the border into Gerolstein,' said Kuno. `It's past cure.'

`Well, if he founders that mare, I'll never forgive him,' added the other, gathering his reins.

And as they turned down from the knoll to rejoin their comrades, the sun dipped and disappeared, and the woods fell instantly into the gravity and greyness of the early night.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH THE PRINCE PLAYS HAROUN-AL-RASCHID

THE night fell upon the Prince while he was threading green tracks in the lower valleys of the wood; and though the stars came out overhead and displayed the interminable order of the pine-tree pyramids, regular and dark like cypresses, their light was of small service to a traveller in such lonely paths, and from thenceforth he rode at random. The austere face of nature, the uncertain issue of his course, the open sky and the free air, delighted him like wine; and the hoarse chafing of a river on his left sounded in his ears agreeably.

It was past eight at night before his toil was rewarded and he issued at last out of the forest on the firm white high-road. It lay downhill before him, with a sweeping eastward trend, faintly bright between the thickets; and Otto paused and gazed upon it. So it ran, league after league, still joining others, to the farthest ends of Europe, there skirting the sea-surge, here gleaming in the lights of cities; and the innumerable army of tramps and travellers moved upon it in all lands as by a common impulse, and were now in all places drawing near to the inn door and the night's rest. The pictures

swarmed and vanished in his brain; a surge of temptation, a beat of all his blood, went over him, to set spur to the mare and to go on into the unknown for ever. And then it passed away; hunger and fatigue, and that habit of middling actions which we call common sense, resumed their empire; and in that changed mood his eye lighted upon two bright windows on his left hand, between the road and river.

He turned off by a by-road, and in a few minutes he was knocking with his whip on the door of a large farmhouse, and a chorus of dogs from the farmyard were making angry answer. A very tall, old, white-headed man came, shading a candle, at the summons. He had been of great strength in his time, and of a handsome countenance; but now he was fallen away, his teeth were quite gone, and his voice when he spoke was broken and falsetto.

`You will pardon me,' said Otto. `I am a traveller and have entirely lost my way.'

`Sir,' said the old man, in a very stately, shaky manner, `you are at the River Farm, and I am Killian Gottesheim, at your disposal. We are here, sir, at about an equal distance from Mittwalden in Grünewald and Brandenau in Gerolstein: six leagues to either, and the road excellent; but there is not a wine bush, not a carter's alehouse, anywhere between. You will have to accept my hospitality for the night; rough hospitality, to which I make you freely welcome; for, sir,' he added with a bow, `it is God who sends the guest.'

`Amen. And I most heartily thank you,' replied Otto, bowing in his turn.

`Fritz,' said the old man, turning towards the interior, `lead round this gentleman's horse; and you, sir, condescend to enter.'

Otto entered a chamber occupying the greater part of the ground- floor of the building. It had probably once been divided; for the farther end was raised by a long step above the nearer, and the blazing fire and the white supper-table seemed to stand upon a dais. All around were dark, brass-mounted cabinets and cupboards; dark shelves carrying ancient country crockery; guns and antlers and broadside ballads on the wall; a tall old clock with roses on the dial; and down in one corner the comfortable promise of a wine barrel. It was homely, elegant, and quaint.

A powerful youth hurried out to attend on the grey mare; and when Mr. Killian Gottesheim had presented him to his daughter Ottilia, Otto followed to the stable as became, not perhaps the Prince, but the good horseman. When he returned, a smoking omelette and some slices of home-cured ham were waiting him; these were followed by a ragout and a cheese; and it was not until his guest had entirely satisfied his hunger, and the whole party drew about the fire over the wine jug, that Killian

Gottesheim's elaborate courtesy permitted him to address a question to the Prince.

`You have perhaps ridden far, sir?' he inquired.

`I have, as you say, ridden far,' replied Otto; `and, as you have seen, I was prepared to do justice to your daughters cookery.'

`Possibly, sir, from the direction of Brandenau?' continued Killian.

`Precisely: and I should have slept to-night, had I not wandered, in Mittwalden,' answered the Prince, weaving in a patch of truth, according to the habit of all liars.

`Business leads you to Mittwalden?' was the next question.

`Mere curiosity,' said Otto. `I have never yet visited the principality of Grünewald.'

`A pleasant state, sir,' piped the old man, nodding, `a very pleasant state, and a fine race, both pines and people. We reckon ourselves part Grünewalders here, lying so near the borders; and the river there is all good Grünewald water, every drop of it. Yes, sir, a fine state. A man of Grünewald now will swing me an axe over his head that many a man of Gerolstein could hardly lift; and the pines, why, deary me, there must be more pines in that little state, sir, than people in this whole big world. `Tis twenty years now since I crossed the marshes, for we grow home-keepers in old age; but I mind it as if it was yesterday. Up and down, the road keeps right on from here to Mittwalden; and nothing all the way but the good green pine-trees, big and little, and water-power! water-power at every step, sir. We once sold a bit of forest, up there beside the high-road; and the sight of minted money that we got for it has set me ciphering ever since what all the pines in Grünewald would amount to.'

`I suppose you see nothing of the Prince?' inquired Otto.

`No,' said the young man, speaking for the first time, `nor want to.'

`Why so? is he so much disliked?' asked Otto.

`Not what you might call disliked,' replied the old gentleman, `but despised, sir.'

`Indeed,' said the Prince, somewhat faintly.

`Yes, sir, despised,' nodded Killian, filling a long pipe, `and, to my way of thinking, justly despised. Here is a man with great opportunities, and what does he do with them? He hunts, and he dresses very prettily -- which is a thing to be ashamed of in a

man -- and he acts plays; and if he does aught else, the news of it has not come here.'

`Yet these are all innocent,' said Otto. `What would you have him do -- make war?'

`No, sir,' replied the old man. `But here it is; I have been fifty years upon this River Farm, and wrought in it, day in, day out; I have ploughed and sowed and reaped, and risen early, and waked late; and this is the upshot: that all these years it has supported me and my family; and been the best friend that ever I had, set aside my wife; and now, when my time comes, I leave it a better farm than when I found it. So it is, if a man works hearty in the order of nature, he gets bread and he receives comfort, and whatever he touches breeds. And it humbly appears to me, if that Prince was to labour on his throne, as I have laboured and wrought in my farm, he would find both an increase and a blessing.'

`I believe with you, sir,' Otto said; `and yet the parallel is inexact. For the farmer's life is natural and simple; but the prince's is both artificial and complicated. It is easy to do right in the one, and exceedingly difficult not to do wrong in the other. If your crop is blighted, you can take off your bonnet and say, "God's will be done"; but if the prince meets with a reverse, he may have to blame himself for the attempt. And perhaps, if all the kings in Europe were to confine themselves to innocent amusement, the subjects would be the better off.'

`Ay,' said the young man Fritz, `you are in the right of it there. That was a true word spoken. And I see you are like me, a good patriot and an enemy to princes.'

Otto was somewhat abashed at this deduction, and he made haste to change his ground. `But,' said he, `you surprise me by what you say of this Prince Otto. I have heard him, I must own, more favourably painted. I was told he was, in his heart, a good fellow, and the enemy of no one but himself.'

`And so he is, sir,' said the girl, `a very handsome, pleasant prince; and we know some who would shed their blood for him.'

`O! Kuno!' said Fritz. `An ignoramus!'

`Ay, Kuno, to be sure,' quavered the old farmer. `Well, since this gentleman is a stranger to these parts, and curious about the Prince, I do believe that story might divert him. This Kuno, you must know, sir, is one of the hunt servants, and a most ignorant, intemperate man: a right Grünewalder, as we say in Gerolstein. We know him well, in this house; for he has come as far as here after his stray dogs; and I make all welcome, sir, without account of state or nation. And, indeed, between Gerolstein and Grünewald the peace has held so long that the roads stand open like my door; and

a man will make no more of the frontier than the very birds themselves.'

`Ay,' said Otto, `it has been a long peace -- a peace of centuries.'

`Centuries, as you say,' returned Killian; `the more the pity that it should not be for ever. Well, sir, this Kuno was one day in fault, and Otto, who has a quick temper, up with his whip and thrashed him, they do say, soundly. Kuno took it as best he could, but at last he broke out, and dared the Prince to throw his whip away and wrestle like a man; for we are all great at wrestling in these parts, and it's so that we generally settle our disputes. Well, sir, the Prince did so; and, being a weakly creature, found the tables turned; for the man whom he had just been thrashing like a negro slave, lifted him with a back grip and threw him heels overhead.'

`He broke his bridle-arm,' cried Fritz -- `and some say his nose. Serve him right, say I! Man to man, which is the better at that?'

`And then?' asked Otto.

`O, then Kuno carried him home; and they were the best of friends from that day forth. I don't say it's a discreditable story, you observe,' continued Mr. Gottesheim; `but it's droll, and that's the fact. A man should think before he strikes; for, as my nephew says, man to man was the old valuation.'

`Now, if you were to ask me,' said Otto, `I should perhaps surprise you. I think it was the Prince that conquered.'

`And, sir, you would be right,' replied Killian seriously. `In the eyes of God, I do not question but you would be right; but men, sir, look at these things differently, and they laugh.'

`They made a song of it,' observed Fritz. `How does it go? Ta-tum- ta-ra ...'

`Well,' interrupted Otto, who had no great anxiety to hear the song, `the Prince is young; he may yet mend.'

`Not so young, by your leave,' cried Fritz. `A man of forty.'

`Thirty-six,' corrected Mr. Gottesheim.

`O,' cried Ottilia, in obvious disillusion, `a man of middle age! And they said he was so handsome when he was young!'

`And bald, too,' added Fritz.

Otto passed his hand among his locks. At that moment he was far from happy, and even the tedious evenings at Mittwalden Palace began to smile upon him by comparison.

`O, six-and-thirty!' he protested. `A man is not yet old at six- and-thirty. I am that age myself.'

`I should have taken you for more, sir,' piped the old farmer. `But if that be so, you are of an age with Master Ottekin, as people call him; and, I would wager a crown, have done more service in your time. Though it seems young by comparison with men of a great age like me, yet it's some way through life for all that; and the mere fools and fiddlers are beginning to grow weary and to look old. Yes, sir, by six-and-thirty, if a man be a follower of God's laws, he should have made himself a home and a good name to live by; he should have got a wife and a blessing on his marriage; and his works, as the Word says, should begin to follow him.'

`Ah, well, the Prince is married,' cried Fritz, with a coarse burst of laughter.

`That seems to entertain you, sir,' said Otto.

`Ay,' said the young boor. `Did you not know that? I thought all Europe knew it!' And he added a pantomime of a nature to explain his accusation to the dullest.

`Ah, sir,' said Mr. Gottesheim, `it is very plain that you are not from hereabouts! But the truth is, that the whole princely family and Court are rips and rascals, not one to mend another. They live, sir, in idleness and -- what most commonly follows it -- corruption. The Princess has a lover -- a Baron, as he calls himself, from East Prussia; and the Prince is so little of a man, sir, that he holds the candle. Nor is that the worst of it, for this foreigner and his paramour are suffered to transact the State affairs, while the Prince takes the salary and leaves all things to go to wrack. There will follow upon this some manifest judgment which, though I am old, I may survive to see.'

`Good man, you are in the wrong about Gondremark,' said Fritz, showing a greatly increased animation; `but for all the rest, you speak the God's truth like a good patriot. As for the Prince, if he would take and strangle his wife, I would forgive him yet.'

`Nay, Fritz,' said the old man, `that would be to add iniquity to evil. For you perceive, sir,' he continued, once more addressing himself to the unfortunate Prince, `this Otto has himself to thank for these disorders. He has his young wife and his principality,

and he has sworn to cherish both.'

`Sworn at the altar!' echoed Fritz. `But put your faith in princes!'

`Well, sir, he leaves them both to an adventurer from East Prussia,' pursued the farmer: `leaves the girl to be seduced and to go on from bad to worse, till her name's become a tap-room by-word, and she not yet twenty; leaves the country to be overtaxed, and bullied with armaments, and jockied into war -- `

`War!' cried Otto.

`So they say, sir; those that watch their ongoings, say to war,' asseverated Killian. `Well, sir, that is very sad; it is a sad thing for this poor, wicked girl to go down to hell with people's curses; it's a sad thing for a tight little happy country to be misconducted; but whoever may complain, I humbly conceive, sir, that this Otto cannot. What he has worked for, that he has got; and may God have pity on his soul, for a great and a silly sinner's!'

`He has broke his oath; then he is a perjurer. He takes the money and leaves the work; why, then plainly he's a thief. A cuckold he was before, and a fool by birth. Better me that!' cried Fritz, and snapped his fingers.

`And now, sir, you will see a little,' continued the farmer, `why we think so poorly of this Prince Otto. There's such a thing as a man being pious and honest in the private way; and there is such a thing, sir, as a public virtue; but when a man has neither, the Lord lighten him! Even this Gondremark, that Fritz here thinks so much of -- `

`Ay,' interrupted Fritz, `Gondremark's the man for me. I would we had his like in Gerolstein.'

`He is a bad man,' said the old farmer, shaking his head; `and there was never good begun by the breach of God's commandments. But so far I will go with you; he is a man that works for what he has.'

`I tell you he's the hope of Grünewald,' cried Fritz. `He doesn't suit some of your high-and-dry, old, ancient ideas; but he's a downright modern man -- a man of the new lights and the progress of the age. He does some things wrong; so they all do; but he has the people's interests next his heart; and you mark me -- you, sir, who are a Liberal, and the enemy of all their governments, you please to mark my words -- the day will come in Grünewald, when they take out that yellow-headed skulk of a Prince and that dough-faced Messalina of a Princess, march `em back foremost over the borders, and proclaim the Baron Gondremark first President. I've heard them say it in

a speech. I was at a meeting once at Brandenau, and the Mittwalden delegates spoke up for fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand, all brigaded, and each man with a medal round his neck to rally by. That's all Gondremark.'

`Ay, sir, you see what it leads to; wild talk to-day, and wilder doings to-morrow,' said the old man. `For there is one thing certain: that this Gondremark has one foot in the Court backstairs, and the other in the Masons' lodges. He gives himself out, sir, for what nowadays they call a patriot: a man from East Prussia!'

`Give himself out!' cried Fritz. `He is! He is to lay by his title as soon as the Republic is declared; I heard it in a speech.'

`Lay by Baron to take up President?' returned Killian. `King Log, King Stork. But you'll live longer than I, and you will see the fruits of it.'

`Father,' whispered Ottilia, pulling at the speaker's coat, `surely the gentleman is ill.'

`I beg your pardon,' cried the farmer, rewaking to hospitable thoughts; `can I offer you anything?'

`I thank you. I am very weary,' answered Otto. `I have presumed upon my strength. If you would show me to a bed, I should be grateful.'

`Ottilia, a candle!' said the old man. `Indeed, sir, you look paley. A little cordial water? No? Then follow me, I beseech you, and I will bring you to the stranger's bed. You are not the first by many who has slept well below my roof,' continued the old gentleman, mounting the stairs before his guest; `for good food, honest wine, a grateful conscience, and a little pleasant chat before a man retires, are worth all the possets and apothecary's drugs. See, sir,' and here he opened a door and ushered Otto into a little white-washed sleeping-room, `here you are in port. It is small, but it is airy, and the sheets are clean and kept in lavender. The window, too, looks out above the river, and there's no music like a little river's. It plays the same tune (and that's the favourite) over and over again, and yet does not weary of it like men fiddlers. It takes the mind out of doors: and though we should be grateful for good houses, there is, after all, no house like God's out-of-doors. And lastly, sir, it quiets a man down like saying his prayers. So here, sir, I take my kind leave of you until to-morrow; and it is my prayerful wish that you may slumber like a prince.'

And the old man, with the twentieth courteous inclination, left his guest alone.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH THE PRINCE COMFORTS AGE AND BEAUTY AND DELIVERS A LECTURE ON DISCRETION IN LOVE

THE Prince was early abroad: in the time of the first chorus of birds, of the pure and quiet air, of the slanting sunlight and the mile-long shadows. To one who had passed a miserable night, the freshness of that hour was tonic and reviving; to steal a march upon his slumbering fellows, to be the Adam of the coming day, composed and fortified his spirits; and the Prince, breathing deep and pausing as he went, walked in the wet fields beside his shadow, and was glad.

A trellised path led down into the valley of the brook, and he turned to follow it. The stream was a break-neck, boiling Highland river. Hard by the farm, it leaped a little precipice in a thick grey-mare's tail of twisted filaments, and then lay and worked and bubbled in a lynn. Into the middle of this quaking pool a rock protruded, shelving to a cape; and thither Otto scrambled and sat down to ponder.

Soon the sun struck through the screen of branches and thin early leaves that made a hanging bower above the fall; and the golden lights and flitting shadows fell upon and marbled the surface of that so seething pot; and rays plunged deep among the turning waters; and a spark, as bright as a diamond, lit upon the swaying eddy. It began to grow warm where Otto lingered, warm and heady; the lights swam, weaving their maze across the shaken pool; on the impending rock, reflections danced like butterflies; and the air was fanned by the waterfall as by a swinging curtain.

Otto, who was weary with tossing and beset with horrid phantoms of remorse and jealousy, instantly fell dead in love with that sun- chequered, echoing corner. Holding his feet, he stared out of a drowsy trance, wondering, admiring, musing, losing his way among uncertain thoughts. There is nothing that so apes the external bearing of free will as that unconscious bustle, obscurely following liquid laws, with which a river contends among obstructions. It seems the very play of man and destiny, and as Otto pored on these recurrent changes, he grew, by equal steps, the sleepier and the more profound. Eddy and Prince were alike jostled in their purpose, alike anchored by intangible influences in one corner of the world. Eddy and Prince were alike useless, starkly useless, in the cosmology of men. Eddy and Prince -- Prince and Eddy.

It is probable he had been some while asleep when a voice recalled him from oblivion. `Sir,' it was saying; and looking round, he saw Mr. Killian's daughter, terrified by her boldness and making bashful signals from the shore. She was a plain, honest lass, healthy and happy and good, and with that sort of beauty that comes of happiness and health. But her confusion lent her for the moment an additional charm.

`Good-morning,' said Otto, rising and moving towards her. `I arose early and was in a dream.'

`O, sir!' she cried, `I wish to beg of you to spare my father; for I assure your Highness, if he had known who you was, he would have bitten his tongue out sooner. And Fritz, too -- how he went on! But I had a notion; and this morning I went straight down into the stable, and there was your Highness's crown upon the stirrup-irons! But, O, sir, I made certain you would spare them; for they were as innocent as lambs.'

`My dear,' said Otto, both amused and gratified, `you do not understand. It is I who am in the wrong; for I had no business to conceal my name and lead on these gentleman to speak of me. And it is I who have to beg of you that you will keep my secret and not betray the discourtesy of which I was guilty. As for any fear of me, your friends are safe in Gerolstein; and even in my own territory, you must be well aware I have no power.'

` O, sir,' she said, curtsying, `I would not say that: the huntsmen would all die for you.'

`Happy Prince!' said Otto. `But although you are too courteous to avow the knowledge, you have had many opportunities of learning that I am a vain show. Only last night we heard it very clearly stated. You see the shadow flitting on this hard rock? Prince Otto, I am afraid, is but the moving shadow, and the name of the rock is Gondremark. Ah! if your friends had fallen foul of Gondremark! But happily the younger of the two admires him. And as for the old gentleman your father, he is a wise man and an excellent talker, and I would take a long wager he is honest.'

`O, for honest, your Highness, that he is!' exclaimed the girl. `And Fritz is as honest as he. And as for all they said, it was just talk and nonsense. When countryfolk get gossiping, they go on, I do assure you, for the fun; they don't as much as think of what they say. If you went to the next farm, it's my belief you would hear as much against my father.'

`Nay, nay,' said Otto, `there you go too fast. For all that was said against Prince Otto -- `

`O, it was shameful!' cried the girl.

`Not shameful -- true,' returned Otto. `O, yes -- true. I am all they said of me -- all that and worse.'

`I never!' cried `Ottilia. `Is that how you do? Well, you would never be a soldier. Now if any one accuses me, I get up and give it them. O, I defend myself. I wouldn't take a fault at another person's hands, no, not if I had it on my forehead. And that's what you must do, if you mean to live it out. But, indeed, I never heard such nonsense. I should think you was ashamed of yourself! You're bald, then, I suppose?'

`O no,' said Otto, fairly laughing. `There I acquit myself: not bald!'

`Well, and good?' pursued the girl. `Come now, you know you are good, and I'll make you say so.... Your Highness, I beg your humble pardon. But there's no disrespect intended. And anyhow, you know you are.'

`Why, now, what am I to say?' replied Otto. `You are a cook, and excellently well you do it; I embrace the chance of thanking you for the ragout. Well now, have you not seen good food so bedevilled by unskilful cookery that no one could be brought to eat the pudding? That is me, my dear. I am full of good ingredients, but the dish is worthless. I am -- I give it you in one word -- sugar in the salad.'

`Well, I don't care, you're good,' reiterated Ottilia, a little flushed by having failed to understand.

`I will tell you one thing,' replied Otto: `You are!'

`Ah, well, that's what they all said of you,' moralised the girl; `such a tongue to come round -- such a flattering tongue!'

` O, you forget, I am a man of middle age,' the Prince chuckled.

`Well, to speak to you, I should think you was a boy; and Prince or no Prince, if you came worrying where I was cooking, I would pin a napkin to your tails.... And, O Lord, I declare I hope your Highness will forgive me,' the girl added. `I can't keep it in my mind.'

`No more can I,' cried Otto. `That is just what they complain of!'

They made a loverly-looking couple; only the heavy pouring of that horse-tail of water made them raise their voices above lovers' pitch. But to a jealous onlooker from