THE COLD HEART

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PART FIRST.

WHOEVER journeys through Swabia should, on no account, neglect to pay a visit to the Black Forest; not so much to see the forest itself, although such countless numbers of vast pines are not to be found in all countries, as to study the inhabitants, between whom and the people in the neighborhood there exists a striking difference.

They are of larger stature than the generality of men, with broad shoulders and strong limbs, and seem as if the invigorating air, which at morning blows through the pine trees, had imparted to them from their youth up a freer breath, a clearer eye, and a ruder courage, than to the inhabitants of the valleys and the plains.

And not only in height and bearing, but in their habits and manners also, they differ strikingly from the people outside.

The residents in the Black Forest dress themselves with much taste; the men allow the beard, which nature has planted on the chin, to grow to its full length, and their black doublets, huge, loose trousers, red stockings, and pointed hats encircled by a wide flapping brim, give them a peculiar but dignified appearance.

Their occupation is principally glass-making; but they also manufacture watches, and carry them over half the world.

On the opposite side of the forest dwell a branch of the same people, whose mode of life has given them habits and customs differing from those of their glass-making brethren.

They deal with their forest; they fell and hew the pine trees, and float them down the Magold to the Neckar, from the Neckar to the Rhine, till the people of the Black Forest and their huge rafts are known as far as Holland.

They halt at all the cities on the streams down which they pass, and wait till men come to buy their timbers and boards; and their strongest and longest timbers they sell to the mynheers to build ships with.

These men are accustomed to a wild and wandering existence; their chief enjoyment is to descend their rivers on their rafts, their sole regret to return again to shore.

Their dress differs much from that of the glass-blowers in the other part of the forest.

Their doublets are of dark-colored linen, with suspenders of green material, the width of the hand, crossing on their breasts, and their trousers are of black leather, from whose pockets project brass foot-rules.

But their chief pride is in their boots, which are longer than those worn anywhere else in the world, for their wide legs reach high above the knee, and the wearers can walk for hours dry-shod through three feet of water.

Till within a recent period the dwellers of the forest firmly believed in wood-demons, and only very lately has this degrading superstition been at all diminished in strength.

It is a singular fact, moreover, that these demons, who are reputed to dwell in the Black Forest, wear the same distinctive garments as the human inhabitants.

Thus, it is said that the Glass Manikin, a benevolent spirit about four feet in height, never appears but in a peaked hat with a wide brim, a doublet, trousers, and red stockings.

Hollander Michael, on the other hand, who resides on the other side of the forest, is described as a huge, broad-shouldered fellow, in the dress of a woodman; and several persons who have seen him have solemnly declared that their purses were not deep enough to buy the calves whose skins would be required to make his boots.

"They would take in a common man up to his neck," they asserted, and never would confess to the least exaggeration in their statement.

A young native of the Black Forest was in the habit of describing, not long ago, a strange adventure with these wood-demons, which I will now tell you.

There was a certain widow, Mistress Barbara Munk, who lived in the Black Forest, whose husband had been a charcoal-burner; and, after his death, she had brought up her son, a lad of sixteen years, to the same business.

Young Peter Munk, a sharp-witted youth, was for a time satisfied with his lot, for during his father's life he had never looked at the matter otherwise than as sitting the whole week near the roaring kiln, or going down to the city, black and dirty, to sell the coal.

But a charcoal-burner has much leisure for reflection; and when Peter sat at his kiln, the waving trees overhead, the profound silence of the forest, moved his heart to unwonted tears and longings.

Something, he knew not what, inspired him with a mixed feeling of despondency and anger.

At last, however, he discovered the cause of these emotions: it was his station in life.

"A dirty, lonely charcoal-burner!" he said to himself.

"It is a miserable life.

How respectable are glass-blowers, watch-makers, musicians! But when Peter Munk makes his appearance, washed and dressed, in his father's best doublet with silver buttons, and his brand-new red stockings, and any one comes behind him and says, 'Who can this slim lad be?' and secretly admires his stockings and his graceful walk, when he passes me and looks in my face, he is sure to say, 'Bah, it's only Peter Munk, the charcoal-burner!'" The woodmen on the other side of the forest were also objects of his envy.

When these wood-giants came over, in their handsome dresses, and carrying on their person, in chains, buckles and buttons, half a hundred weight of silver, when they stood looking on at the dance with straddled legs and grinning faces, with their Dutch oaths, and their Cologne pipes a yard in length, like distinguished mynheers, Peter would hold them up to his imagination as perfect pictures of happy men.

And when these fortunate beings thrust their hands into their pockets, and, pulling out handfuls of great dollars, squandered instead of a paltry sixpence, like Peter, six florins here and ten there, Peter's strength of mind gave way, and he would sneak home miserable to his hut.

For many a holiday he had seen one or another of these "wood-masters" play away more money in five minutes than poor Peter could hope to earn in a year.

There were three of these men especially of whom he could not determine which to admire the most.

One of them was a thick, stout man, with a red face, who passed for the richest person in the neighborhood.

They called him Fat Ezekiel.

He made two journeys every year to Amsterdam, and had the good fortune to sell his timber invariably so much dearer than his rivals that, while the others came home on foot, he always travelled sumptuously on wheels.

The second was the longest and leanest man in the whole forest, and was called "Long Slurker."

His extreme impudence was the object of Peter's especial envy; for, though he contradicted the most respectable people, though he took up more room at the tavern than four of the stoutest men, for he either sat with both elbows on the table, or stretched out his long, thin legs on the bench he was occupying, yet none ventured to oppose his selfishness, as he was reputed to be possessed of untold gold.

The third was a young, handsome man and the best dancer in the whole country, and was called by his companions, for that reason, "King Dance."

He had been a poor lad in former times, and had served his apprenticeship with a master-woodman; but all of a sudden he had become immensely rich, and some people said he had found a pot of gold under an old pine-tree; others, that he had fished up with his spear from the Rhine, not far from Bingen, a chest of gold pieces; but, however that may have been, he had suddenly grown very wealthy, and was treated like a prince by young and old.

Peter Munk's thoughts often reverted to these three men, as he sat alone in the forest.

To be sure, all three had one great defect, which made them hated by all the people, and this was their excessive avarice in dealing with debtors and poor men, for generally the people of the Black Forest are kind-hearted and generous.

But everybody knows how it is in these matters; if they were hated for their avarice, they were honored for their wealth; for who like them could throw away his money as if it fell into his pockets from the trees? "I cannot stand this much longer," said Peter, one day, sorrowfully; for the day before had been a holiday, and everybody had met at the tavern; "if luck doesn't come to me soon, I shall do something I shall be sorry for.

If I were only now as rich and distinguished as Fat Ezekiel, or as bold and influential as Long Slurker, or could toss dollars to the musicians like King Dance! Where can that fellow have got his money?" He went over in his mind every method of earning a fortune he could think of; but none suited him.

At last occurred to his mind the traditions he had heard, of people who had been made rich years ago by "Hollander Michael" and the "Glass Manikin."

While his father was alive, a good many poor men had been to visit him, and they had talked of little else but men of wealth, and how they had got their money.

In many of these stories the glass manikin had played an important part; and, as Peter sat pondering, he could almost remember the verse of poetry which must be spoken at the great pine in the middle of the forest to make the manikin appear.

It began thus, he was sure:

"Treasurer in the forest green,
Who so many hundred years hast seen,
Thine is the land where the pine-trees stand, -"

But, rub up his memory as he pleased, he could not call to mind another line.

He deliberated whether he should inquire of some old man what the rest of the verse was; but a dislike to betray his thoughts repressed his impulse, and, besides, he decided

that the tradition of the glass manikin could not be widely known, and very few persons must be acquainted with the poetry, for rich men were not numerous in the forest; and why had not his father and the other poor men tried their fortune? He once led his mother to speak of the demon, but she merely told him what he knew already, and could only remember the first line of the stanza; though at length she recollected, "that the manikin showed himself only to people who had been born between eleven and two on Sunday.

Peter himself might pass very well as far as that went, if he could only recollect the verses, for he had been born on that day at twelve o'clock."

When the charcoal-burner heard this, he was almost beside himself with a desire to attempt the adventure.

It appeared to him amply sufficient to know a part of the poetry, and to have been born on Sunday, to induce the glass manikin to show himself at once.

So one day, when he had sold his charcoal, and lighted a new kiln, he put on his father's best doublet and red stockings, donned his Sunday hat, and, grasping in his hand his blackthorn stick, took leave of his mother.

"I must go to the city on business," said he.

"We draw for the conscription before long, and I must remind the bailiff once more that you are a widow, and I your only son."

His mother praised him for his thoughtfulness; but no sooner was he out of her sight than he betook himself straight to the old pine-tree.

It stood on the top of the highest elevation in the Black Forest, and not a single village, not even a cottage, stood within a radius of two leagues around, for the superstitious inhabitants believed the neighborhood unsafe.

Lofty and valuable as were the trees, men cut wood in this locality with great reluctance; for often had the wood-cutters, when working in the neighborhood, had their axes fly from the handle and sink into their foot, or the trees had fallen unexpectedly, and wounded or killed the men at work about their roots.

Besides, the finest trees could only have been used for firewood, for the raftsmen never admitted a tree from this dangerous group among their other timber, from respect for the tradition that both man and timber would surely be unlucky if one of these pine-trees was with them afloat; and hence it came, that in the pine group here the trees stood so lofty and crowded, that even at mid-day it seemed almost night.

Peter Munk's heart was in a fearful state of agitation; for he heard no voice, no footstep but his own, and even the birds seemed to avoid this scene of gloom.

The charcoal-burner had now reached the highest point of the pine grove, and took his stand before a tree of prodigious girth, which a Dutch shipwright would have given many hundred florins for as it stood.

"Here," thought he, "must the treasurer surely dwell," and, removing his large hat and making a humble reverence to the tree, he cleared his throat, and said, in a trembling voice: "I wish you a pleasant evening, Mr. Glass-blower!" No answer came, and everything was silent as before.

"Perhaps I must repeat the verses," thought he; and he muttered, in a low tone:

"Treasurer in the forest green,
Who so many hundred years hast seen,
Thine is the land where the pine-trees stand, -"

As he said these words, he saw, to his intense alarm, a little singular apparition, peering out from behind the vast tree.

He saw the glass manikin precisely as he had heard him described; the little black doublet, the red stockings, the tiny hat, all, even to the pale, shrewd, handsome face of which he had heard so much, he now believed he had this instant caught a glimpse of.

But, unluckily, rapidly as the manikin had peeped out, he had darted back again as rapidly.

"Mr. Glass-blower," cried Peter, after a pause, "be reasonable, if you please, and don't take me for a fool.

Mr. Glass-blower, if you think I didn't see you, you are very much mistaken; for I distinctly saw you peep out from behind that tree."

Still no answer, though he thought occasionally he could distinguish a faint giggle behind the trunk.

At last his impatience overcame the terror which had hitherto restrained him.

"Wait, you little chap!" cried he; "I'll catch you in a twinkling!" and he sprang, with one bound, behind the tree; but no treasurer could he find in the green thicket, and he saw nothing but an active little squirrel darting up the trunk.

Peter Munk shook his head.

He saw that he had succeeded perfectly with the exorcism to a certain point, and that perhaps a single rhyme only was wanted to enable him to entice the manikin wholly out.

He rubbed his ear; he scratched his pate; but all in vain.

The squirrel took its seat on the lowest branch, and seemed to be laughing at him.

It dressed its fur, whisked its pretty tail, and looked at Peter with its cunning eyes, so that at last the lad began to be

afraid to be alone with the creature; for now it seemed to him the squirrel had a man's head, and wore a three-cornered hat; now again it had on its hind legs red stockings and black shoes.

In short, the merry little animal alarmed Peter a good deal, for he could not but think there was a great deal of mystery about it.

Peter left the place much more rapidly than he had come to it.

The gloomy shades of the pine forest seemed to increase in depth, the trees to stand more compactly together, and he began to be so much terrified that he retreated on the full run; and not till he heard in the distance the barking of a dog, and saw the smoke of a cottage through the trees, did he become more easy and relieved in mind.

But as he drew nearer, and could distinguish the costume of the people in the hut, he found that in his excitement he had taken a wrong direction, and, instead of the glass-blowers, had come among the raftsmen.

The occupants of the hut he saw were wood-cutters; they were an aged man, his son, the proprietor of the house, and several well-grown grand-children.

They received Peter, who begged lodging for the night, with great hospitality, making no inquiry into his name or residence, gave him plenty of cider to drink, and, in the evening, sat before him a roasted heathcock, the choicest delicacy of the Black Forest.

After supper the mistress of the house and her daughters seated themselves with their distaffs round a large torch supplied by the children with the finest resin; the grandfather, the guest, and the husband, sat smoking and looking at the women; and the boys busied themselves in making wooden spoons and forks.

Outside, the storm howled and roared through the pines; the crash of falling trees was heard at frequent intervals, and the whole forest seemed to be breaking over their heads.

The fearless boys wanted to run out into the wood to witness the terrible scene, but their grandfather checked them with a stern look and word.

"I recommend no one," said he, "to leave the house tonight, for by Heaven he will never come back.

Hollander Michael is felling a raft tonight."

The boys looked at him in amazement; they had heard before of Hollander Michael, but they begged their grandfather to tell them, once for all, his whole history.

Peter Munk, also, who had heard indistinct rumors of Hollander Michael on the other side of the forest, chimed in with their entreaties, and inquired of the old man who and where he was.

"He is the lord of this forest," answered the graybeard; "and that at your age you have never yet heard about him shows that you do not live nearer than the pine grove on the hill yonder, and probably a good way further.

I will tell you what little I know of Hollander Michael and the various traditions concerning him.

A century ago, so my grandfather used to say, there were no more respectable, honorable people in the whole world than the dwellers in the Black Forest.

Now, since money has grown to be so plenty, men have become dishonest and wicked.

The young fellows dance and revel on Sundays, and swear enough to make your blood run cold.

It was very different formerly; and, if Hollander Michael were to look into that window this moment, I would say, as I have often said before, that he is solely to blame for all this corruption.

There lived a hundred years ago a rich timber-master hereabouts, who had many servants.

He traded far down the Rhine; and, being a pious man, his business prospered.

One evening a man came to his door whose equal he had never seen before.

His dress was that of the lads of the Black Forest, but he was a head taller than any one else, and no man could have believed that such a giant existed.

The stranger begged for employment with the wood-cutters, and the wood-master, seeing his great strength and how much work he could do, settled the amount of wages he should pay him, and the bargain was struck.

Such a workman the master had never before had in his employ.

At felling trees he was equal to three men; and when six were dragging at one end of a log, he carried the other without apparent exertion.

After felling timber for six months he went to his master.

"I have hewed wood long enough," said he, "and would like to see where my trees go.

What do you say to letting me take down your rafts one of these days."

The wood-master answered: "I will not stand in your way, Michael, if you wish to see a little of the world.

To be sure, I need for tree-felling strong, able-bodied men like you; but still, your dexterity won't be wasted with my rafts; so, if you wish to go, I agree for once."

So the thing was settled.

The raft which he was to manage had eight sections, the last one composed of the largest ship-timbers.

But what happened? The evening before he was to start Michael brought down to the river eight beams, far longer and bigger than any ever seen before, and yet carried so easily on his shoulder that all who saw him were aghast.

Where he had felled them, nobody knows to this day.

The wood-master's heart laughed for joy on seeing them, for he saw at a glance what a monstrous price they would fetch; and Michael said : "These are for me to travel on; I should never get along on those wretched little joists there."

His master, in the height of his gratitude, gave him a handsome pair of river-boots; but he threw them aside, and produced a, pair of unheard-of dimensions; my grandfather used to say that they weighed a hundred pounds, and stood at least five feet high.

The raft set off; and if Michael had hitherto astonished the wood-cutters, he now filled the raftsmen with utter amazement, for, instead of the raft's floating slowly down the stream, as people had expected from the vast size of the timber, no sooner had it reached the Neckar than it flew along like an arrow.

At every bend in the Neckar, where the raftsmen usually had great trouble in keeping the raft in the middle and preventing it from striking on the gravel or sand, Michael invariably sprang into the water and with one shove pushed the timber right or left, so that it slipped by without danger; and when he came to a straight part of the river, he ran forward on to the front division and, thrusting his huge weaver's beam into the gravel, with one mighty push would send the raft along so that shores and trees and villages seemed to be all racing in the contrary direction.

In this way, in half the time they usually required, they reached the city of Cologne, where they were wont to dispose of their timber; but here Michael said: "You are fine merchants, are you not, and understand your business! Do you suppose the people of Cologne use all the timber which comes from the Black Forest? No, they buy it of you for half its value, and sell it in Holland again at double price.

Let us sell the small timbers here, and go ourselves with the larger ones to Holland.

Whatever we get beyond the usual price is our own profit."

Thus spoke the crafty Michael, and the others assented at once, some because they were anxious to visit Holland, and others for the sake of the expected profit.

One only of the gang was honest, and warned them against exposing their master's property to danger, or cheating him out of the higher price; but the others would not listen, and forgot his words, though Hollander Michael did not.

They descended the Rhine with the raft, under Michael's guidance, and soon arrived at Rotterdam.

Here they obtained fourfold the usual price for their goods, and Michael's huge timbers especially fetched a monstrous sum of money.

Seeing so much gold within their reach, the Black Foresters lost all self-control.

Michael divided the purchase-money, one-fourth to his master and three to the raftsmen, and they squandered and gambled it away in all sorts of debauchery, frequenting the low pot-houses and taverns with sailors and other dissipated people; while the brave man who had attempted to dissuade them from their purpose was sold, it is thought, by Michael to the devil, for he was never seen again.

From this time Holland was a paradise to the lads of the Black Forest, and Hollander Michael their king.

Their masters heard nothing of the proceeding for a long time; and money, swearing, bad manners, drunkenness, and gambling, came insensibly from Holland to these once happy regions.

When the story came out at last, Hollander Michael was nowhere to be found.

But dead he certainly is not; for these hundred years past he has been playing his pranks in this forest, and they say he has helped a great many persons to grow rich, but - at the price of their poor souls, and I say no more of that.

But this much is certain, that on just such stormy nights as this he tears down the largest pines in the pine grove yonder where no one works; and my father saw him once snap off one, four feet in diameter, like a reed.

These he gives to those men who turn aside from virtue and follow him.

At midnight they carry them down to the river, and he steers them down to Holland.

But if I were King of Holland I would have him blown from the cannon's mouth, for every ship will surely sink which has in her one of Hollander Michael's timbers.

This is why we hear of so many shipwrecks; for what else should make a handsome, strong ship, as big as a church, sink to the bottom of the ocean? I tell you, just so often as Hollander Michael fells a pine in the Black Forest, one of his old timbers springs out from the bottom of some ship; the water of course pours in, and the vessel is lost with crew and cargo.

This is the story of Hollander Michael; and true it is that every evil in these woods must be ascribed to him.

O, he can make a man rich!" added the old grandfather mysteriously; "but not for worlds would I take anything from him.

I wouldn't be in the skin of Fat Ezekiel or Long Slurker for all the Indies! King Dance has sold himself to him, too, or I am much mistaken."

The storm had gone down while the old man was speaking; the girls, trembling with fear, lighted their lamps and went away to bed, and the men laid a bag of leaves on the stove-bench as a pillow for Peter Munk, and bade him good-night.

Peter had never had such fearful dreams as on this night.

Now, he imagined that he saw the gigantic Hollander Michael tear open the cottage window, and hold in with his prodigiously long arm a purse full of gold pieces, which he shook together with a sweet metallic ring; now, on the other hand, he thought he saw the little, good-natured glass manikin riding round the room on a huge green bottle, and he thought he could again distinguish the faint giggle he had heard in the pine-grove.

Soon his left ear caught a murmur:

"In Holland is gold,
In sums untold,
At a low price sold,
Gold, gold."

Then he heard, in his right ear, the song of the treasurer in the leafy pine forest, and a soft voice whispered: "Stupid coal-burner, stupid Peter Munk, cannot find a word to rhyme with "stand", and yet was born at noon on Sunday! Rhyme, stupid Peter, rhyme!"

He groaned and grunted in his sleep, trying to find a rhyme, but as he had never made one in his life, all the efforts of his dream were fruitless.

Waking with the earliest beams of morning, his memory still retained the marvels of the previous night, and, sitting near the table with folded arms, he pondered over the whispered words which still lingered in his ear.

"Rhyme, stupid Peter, rhyme," said he to himself, knocking at his forehead with his finger; but no rhyme came.

As he was sitting staring at the floor and thinking of a rhyme for "stand", three lads passed the house in the direction of the wood, and one of them sang:

"On the mountain I did stand,
And I gazed across the dell,
And I saw her wave her hand
In eternal farewell."

It went into Peter's ear like a flash of lightning, and starting up hastily, in fear lest he had heard incorrectly, he rushed from the house and seized the singer roughly by the arm.

"Halt, friend!" he cried, "what was your rhyme to "stand"? Do me the favor to repeat what you sang just now."

"What business is it of yours, man?" answered the youth, "I will sing just what I please; and let go my arm this moment, or -" "You must and shall tell me what you were singing!" shouted Peter, almost crazy with anxiety, and tightening his grasp; whereupon, the two others, without an instant's delay, seized him in their powerful grip, and handled him so roughly that he was forced by mere pain to release the sleeve of the third, and sank exhausted on his knees.

"There!" said they, laughing, "you've got your gruel; and remember, you fool, never to attack people of our sort again on the high road."

"Alas! I shall be sure to remember," answered Peter, with a deep sigh.

"But if you beat me for it, please tell me distinctly what you were singing."

At this they all laughed again, and poked fun at him to their heart's content; but the singer repeated his song at last, and, laughing and singing, the three merry companions went on their way.

"Aha! hand," said battered Peter, rising painfully from the ground.

"Stand and hand - of course! Now, glass manikin, we will have a word or two together."

He entered the hut, and, taking his hat and staff, bade good-by to the occupants of the cottage, and set off on his return to the pine grove.

Slowly and thoughtfully he trudged along, for he had to compose a line for his verse; at last, however, after he had come within the borders of the grove, and the pines grew tall and thick, he succeeded in his essay at poetical composition, and, in his delight, gave a high leap into the air.

At this moment a man of gigantic height, dressed like a raftsman, and with a staff like a ship's mast in his hand, stepped forth from behind the pines.

Peter Munk almost dropped on his knees when he saw this figure approaching; for he felt it could be no other than Hollander Michael.

The spectre preserved a profound silence, and Peter gazed at him with eyes of terror.

He stood at least a head taller than the tallest man Peter had ever seen; his face was neither old nor young, but full of furrows and wrinkles; he wore a doublet of dark linen cloth, and the huge boots drawn up over his leather breeches Peter recognized at once as those described by tradition.

"Peter Munk, what brings you to the pine grove?" asked the forest king at length in a deep and threatening voice.

"Good-morning, Mr. Countryman," answered Peter, seeking to conceal his fear, but trembling violently; "I was only going home through this pine grove."

" Peter Munk," said the giant, turning on him a penetrating glance, "your road goes not through this grove."

"No, sir, not exactly," replied Peter, "but the day is warm, and I thought it would be cooler here."

"No lies, charcoal-burner!" shouted Hollander Michael, in a voice of thunder, "or I will strike you dead with this staff! Think you I did not see you begging of the manikin?" he added more softly.

"Pooh, pooh, Peter! that was a stupid business, and you were lucky in not remembering the poetry.

He is a niggard, that little wretch, and never gives much, and those who receive from him are never happy.

Peter, you are a poor simpleton, and I pity you from my soul; such a high-spirited, handsome lad, who could do so much in the great world, and yet only a charcoal-burner! Only able to bring out sixpence, when other men shake out big dollars from their pockets! It's a wretched life!"

"So it is, sir; you are right; it is a wretched life indeed!"

"Well, well," continued the frightful Michael; "you will not be the first brave lad I have helped out of his difficulties.

Say, Peter, how many hundred dollars do you want for your first instalment?" Saying this, he rattled the gold in his big pockets, and a sound came to Peter's ears like that he had heard in his dream.

But his heart throbbed with terror at these words of the spectre, for Hollander Michael did not look like one who gave money for charity's sake alone.

The old man's mysterious remarks about rich men recurred to his memory, and, filled with an inexpressible alarm, he cried: "Much obliged, sir! but I wish to have nothing to do with you; I know you of old," and ran, as he had never run before.

The demon came after him with prodigious strides, muttering in a hollow and menacing voice: "You will regret this, Peter.

It is written on your forehead, I can read it in your eyes, that you will not escape me.

Do not run so fast; listen to one sensible word, Peter, before you cross my boundary."

Hearing these words, and seeing before him at no great distance a narrow trench, Peter redoubled his efforts to reach the limits, Michael pursuing him with threats and curses.

The young man leaped across the trench with a desperate spring, just as he saw the spectre raise his staff to deal a fatal blow upon his head.

He crossed the trench without mishap, and the staff splintered in the air as if it had struck an invisible wall, and a long fragment fell at Peter's feet.

He picked the piece up triumphantly to throw it back at Hollander Michael; but the moment he did so he felt the stick move in his hand, and he saw to his horror that he held in his grasp a monstrous serpent, which was already ascending his arm with dripping tongue and gleaming eyes, to assail his throat.

He relaxed his hold, but the reptile had wound itself round his arm, and its darting head drew nearer and nearer to his face.

Suddenly a gigantic heathcock flew down, and, seizing the serpent's head in his beak, flew with the reptile into the air; while Hollander Michael, who had seen the whole affair from the further side of the trench, howled, yelled and raved, as the snake was carried off by a superior power.

Peter went his way, trembling and exhausted; the path grew steeper, the scene became more savage, and he soon found himself at the huge pine.

He made, as he had done the day before, a low reverence to the invisible manikin, and said:

"Treasurer in the forest green,
Who so many hundred years hast seen,
Thine is the land where the pine-trees stand,
And Sabbath-born children bless thy hand."

"You haven't exactly hit it, charcoal Peter; but since it is you, let it pass," said a soft, melodious voice close by.

He looked round amazed, and under a handsome pine he saw sitting a little man, in a black doublet and red stockings, with a huge hat on his head.

He had a pleasant, kindly face, and a long beard as fine as cobweb.

He was smoking a pipe of blue glass, and, as Peter drew nearer, he saw to his astonishment that the clothes, shoes and hat of the pigmy were also made of colored glass; but it was as flexible as if it were still hot, for it adapted itself like cloth to every motion of his body.

"You have met that scoundrel, Hollander Michael," said the dwarf, coughing oddly between every word.

"He has served you a shameful trick; but I have taken away his magic staff, and he will never get it again."

"Yes, my lord treasurer," replied Peter, with a low bow, "it was an anxious moment.

You are the honorable heathcock, no doubt, who killed the snake.

Accept my sincerest thanks.
I came to obtain your advice and aid.
My affairs are in a very bad condition, indeed, sir.
A charcoal-burner can never do much, and I thought that, as I was young, I might make something better of myself: especially when I see other men who have gone ahead so far in a very short time, like Ezekiel, for instance, and King Dance, who have money as plenty as grass in summer."
"Peter," said the pigmy, solemnly, blowing the smoke from the bowl of his pipe; "Peter, say nothing to me of those men.
What does it profit them to seem happy here for a few years, if they are all the more miserable afterwards? You must not despise your trade; your father and your grandfather were respectable men, and carried on the same business, Peter Munk! I earnestly hope it is no love of idleness which brings you to me."
Peter was startled by the little man's solemnity, and blushed scarlet.
"No," said he; "I well know, my lord treasurer, that idleness is the root of all evil; but you will not think the worse of me if I confess that a different position from what I occupy would please me better.
A charcoal-burner is looked on as contemptible all the world over, and the glass-blowers and raftsmen and watch-makers are much more respectable."
"Pride often cometh before a fall," answered the little gentleman of the pine grove, more kindly.
"You men are strange beings! Few of you are contented with the lot in which you are born and bred.
If you were a glass-blower, you would wish to be a wood-master; if a wood-master, you would long for the place of the forester, or the bailiff.
But, so be it; if you promise to work diligently, Peter, I will help you to a better lot.
I am accustomed to grant to every Sabbath-born child, who knows how to find me, three wishes.
The first two are absolute; but the third, if it is a foolish one, I am at liberty to refuse.
So, state what you want.
But, Peter, let it be something useful and good."
"Huzza! O! you are an excellent manikin, and properly called treasurer, for treasures are at home in your house! Let me see.
If I may wish whatever I please, sir, let the first be that I may dance better than King Dance himself, and have always as much money in my pocket as Fat Ezekiel."
"You fool!" said the dwarf, angrily.
"What a miserable wish is this, to dance well, and have money to squander! Are you not ashamed, stupid Peter, to cheat yourself of your good fortune in this way? What advantage is it to you and your poor mother, that you can dance? What benefit is all your money, which, according to your wish, is only for the tavern, and remains there like that of the worthless King Dance? I give you one more free wish; but mind your wish more sensibly."
Peter scratched his ears, and said, after some delay: "Well, I wish for the finest and richest glass-house in the Black Forest, and money to carry it on."
"Nothing else?" asked the dwarf, anxiously; "Peter, nothing else?"
"Well, sir, you might add a horse, and a little carriage -"
"O, you stupid charcoal-burner!" cried the pigmy, in a rage, throwing his glass pipe against a pine, where it broke into a thousand pieces.
"Horses! carriages! Sense, I tell you, good common sense you ought to have wished for, and not horses and carriages! Come, don't be so downcast; it is not so disgraceful, after all.
Your second wish was not so very absurd.
A good glass-house keeps master and man; but if you had taken prudence and common sense with it, the horse and carriage would have come of themselves."
"But, lord treasurer," said Peter, "I have still one wish left.
I can wish for common sense, if you think it so necessary."
"No, no.
You will get into many a difficulty, Peter, where you will be happy to think that you have a wish on hand.
Here," said the manikin, drawing a little purse from his pocket, "here are two thousand florins, and enough for you, too; and never come here again to ask for money.
If you do, I shall hang you up on the highest pine in the forest.
I have always done so since I lived in this wood.
Old Winkfritz, who owned the great glass-house in the lower forest, died three days ago.
Go there tomorrow morning early, and make a fair offer for the property as it stands.
Live honestly, be industrious, and I will visit you occasionally to assist you with advice, since you failed to ask for common sense.
But - I say it earnestly - your first wish was bad.
Beware of going to the tavern, Peter.
It never benefited anybody yet!" While he spoke, the little man had pulled out a fresh pipe of glass, and, stuffing it with dry rosin, thrust it into his tiny, toothless mouth.
Then drawing forth a huge burning-glass, he stepped into the sunshine and lighted his pipe.

When everything was ready, he held out his hand graciously to Peter, and, giving him some good counsel as they went along, smoked and blew faster and faster, till he vanished at length in a cloud of smoke, which, slowly curling, floated away among the pines.

When Peter reached home, he found his mother in great anxiety on his account; for, from his staying away so long, the good lady was persuaded that her son had been drawn for a soldier.

He made his appearance, however, joyous and cheerful, and told her at great length how he had met a good friend in the forest, who had advanced him some money to aid him in commencing a different business.

Although his mother had lived in charcoal thirty years, and had become as much accustomed to smutty-faced people as a miller's wife is to the mealy visage of her husband, she was foolish enough, as soon as her Peter entered on a more brilliant career, to despise her former condition, and used to say: "Ay, ay, as the mother of a glass-house owner, I am of a different sort from neighbors Gretchen and Betty; and in future I mean to sit in church in the front seats, where the rich folks go."

Her son soon struck a bargain with the heirs of the glass-maker.

He hired all the workmen he could find, and went to work making glass night and day.

At first the business delighted him.

He would go leisurely down to the glass-house with a consequential strut, his hands deep in his trousers' pockets, and his eyes staring insolently in all directions, and there make a variety of sententious and absurd remarks, to the intense amusement of his workmen, and the total destruction of their respect.

His greatest pleasure consisted in watching the operation of glass-blowing; and he often took hold himself and formed odd figures from the plastic mass.

But the business rapidly grew tedious, and his visits to the factory soon occupied but one hour in the day; soon after, one in two days; and at last he fell into the easy habit of coming only once a week, leaving his workmen in the interval to do precisely as they pleased.

All this was the necessary consequence of his devotion to the tavern.

The Sunday after his return from the pine grove he repaired to the pot-house, and who should spring on to the dancing-floor, as he entered, but King Dance himself, while Fat Ezekiel sat behind his tankard, dicing for dollars.

Peter felt hastily in his pockets, to see if the glass manikin had kept his promise; and, see! they were crammed to bursting with silver and gold! His legs, too, were jerking and quivering, as if they yearned to be dancing, and, as soon as the first dance was ended, he placed himself with his partner opposite King Dance.

When the latter jumped three feet into the air, Peter jumped four; and when his rival made the most rare and delicate figurings, Peter so played and twisted his feet that the spectators went nearly crazy with admiration.

But when it was known in the dancing-room that Peter had purchased a glass-house, when people saw that as often as he came near the musicians he threw them a crown, there was no end to their astonishment.

Some believed he had found a treasure in the woods; others thought he must have received a legacy; but all honored him immensely, and looked upon him as a perfect gentleman, only because he had plenty of money.

Though he gambled away twenty florins during the evening, yet his money still jingled in his pocket, as if there were at least a hundred dollars there.

When Peter perceived how important he had grown, he lost all self-restraint from joy and pride.

He threw about his money with open hands, and shared it lavishly among the poor, remembering how heavily poverty had once weighed upon himself.

The arts of King Dance were now cast into the shade by the supernatural skill of his new competitor, and Peter received the name of Emperor Dance.

The most desperate gamblers never bet so much on Sundays as he; nor, on the other hand, did they lose so much.

Still, the more he lost, the more he seemed to have.

This resulted from the form of his wish to the glass manikin.

He had wished for just as much money in his pocket as Fat Ezekiel had, and he it was to whom he lost his gold.

So, when he lost twenty or thirty guilders on one bet, he had them back in his pocket as soon as Ezekiel had bagged his gains.

Very soon he had gone further in gluttony and gambling than the vilest debauchees in the Black Forest; and people now oftener called him Gambling Peter than Emperor Dance; for he played now almost every week-day.

Hence his glass-house gradually fell into complete disorder, by reason of Peter's utter want of sense.

He made all the glass he could possibly manufacture; but he had not bought, with the house, the secret of selling it to the best advantage.

He was at a loss at last how to dispose of the vast quantity

on hand, and sold it finally piecemeal to travelling merchants for half its value, solely for means to pay his workmen.

One evening he was going home from the tavern, and thinking with dismay, spite of the wine he had drunk, of the ruin of his property.

Noticing suddenly that someone was walking near him, he looked round, and saw the glass manikin.

He boiled over directly with anger and fury, and, assuming a haughty tone, swore that the pigmy was responsible for all his misfortunes.

"What can I do now with a horse and carriage?" he cried.

"What good do I get from my glass-house and all my glass? When I was a miserable charcoal-burner, I lived happier and freer from care than I do now.

I expect every day the bailiff will come and seize my goods for my debts."

"So!" answered the manikin, "I am to blame if you are unlucky? Is this your gratitude for my benevolence? Who taught you to make such foolish wishes? You chose to be a glass-blower, and didn't know where to sell your glass!

Did I not tell you you should have wished more prudently? Common sense, Peter; you wanted common sense."

"What good is there in common sense?" cried Peter.

"I have as much of it as anybody else, as I'll show you, you manikin!" and with these words he seized the dwarf by the collar, shouting: "Have I got you now, treasurer? Ha! ha! I'll make my third wish now, and you shall grant it to me, whether or no! I will have, this instant, two hundred thousand hard dollars, and a house, and - O, horror!" he cried, shaking his hand in agony; for the manikin had suddenly changed into liquid glass, and burned his hand like jets of fire.

Nothing was to be seen of the pigmy.

His swollen hand reminded him, for many days, of his folly and ingratitude.

But he stifled the voice of conscience, and said to himself, "Well, if they sell up my glass-house, and everything else, at any rate they can't take Fat Ezekiel.

As long as he has money on Sundays, I shall never want."

Yes, Peter.

But suppose he has none? And one day so it happened in the most striking manner.

One Sunday Peter drove up to the tavern at full speed, and the people inside thrust their heads out of the window to see him, one saying: "Here comes Gambling Peter!" and another, "Ay, Emperor Dance, the rich glass-maker!" while a third shook his head, saying softly: "His riches are all very well; but people say all sorts of things of his debts; and I heard somebody say in the city that the bailiff was intending to attach his property before long."

Peter saluted the people at the window with politeness, and, descending from his carriage, called out: "Good-evening, landlord.

Has Fat Ezekiel come yet?" He heard a deep voice answer: "Ay, ay, Peter, come in.

Your place is kept for you, and we are at it already."

Peter Munk entered the tavern on this invitation; and, feeling in his pockets, knew at once that Ezekiel must be well supplied with funds, for his own pockets were crammed to overflowing.

He sat down with the others at the table, and won and lost alternately, till the more respectable people went home; then they played by lamplight, till at length two of the gamblers left their seats, saying, "Well, we have had enough for tonight, and it is time to go home to our wives and children."

But Gambling Peter insisted on Ezekiel's remaining; and the latter, after many refusals, finally cried: "Well, let me count my money first, and then we'll shake dice for five guilders a throw; less than that is child's play."

He drew out his purse and counted the contents - five hundred guilders in cash, and Peter knew at once of course how much he himself had, without counting.

But, if Ezekiel had won before, he lost every stake now, and swore fearfully at his ill luck.

If he threw doublets, Peter threw triplets immediately after, and generally something better.

At last Ezekiel laid his last five guilders on the table, and said with an oath: "Here's at you again, Peter; but if I lose this we can still go on, for you must lend me some of your winnings; a decent fellow must help his friend."

"As much as you want, though you borrow a hundred," said Peter, delighted at his luck; and Fat Ezekiel shook the dice and threw fifteen.

"Triplets! Good!" he cried; "beat that if you can."

Peter threw eighteen, and a well-known voice behind him said, "That is the last!" He looked round, and the gigantic Hollander Michael stood behind his chair.

In his terror he let the money which he had just won, fall to the ground.

But Fat Ezekiel saw nothing, and requested Gambling Peter to lend him ten guilders.

Peter thrust his hand into his pocket, in a half-dreaming state; but no money was there.

He felt in his other pocket; still the same.

He turned his coat inside out, but not a farthing fell.

And now for the first time he remembered his first wish,

which was that he might always have as much money as Fat Ezekiel.

Every guilder had vanished.

As he continued to feel for his money, Ezekiel and the landlord looked at him in amazement.

They could not believe that he had none left; but at last, after feeling in his pockets themselves, they became furious, and swore that Gambling Peter must be a wicked magician, and had wished all his winnings away to his own house.

Peter denied it manfully, but appearances were against him.

Ezekiel declared he would tell the frightful story to every person in the Black Forest, and the landlord vowed he would go to the city the first thing in the morning and denounce Peter Munk as a wizard, and he would live, he added, to see the rascal burned at the stake.

At last they both fell upon him in a fury, and, tearing his coat from his back, threw him out of the door.

Not a star was shining in heaven as Peter slunk sadly homewards; but he could perceive a dark figure striding by his side, which said at length: "It is all up with you, Peter; all your splendor is gone now, and I could have told you it would be so when you refused to listen to my offers, and ran away to that stupid glass dwarf.

See what a man gets by despising my advice.

But try your chance with me once, for I feel compassion for your bad luck.

No one ever repented coming to me; and, if you are not afraid, I can be spoken with all day tomorrow at the pine-grove, whenever you call me."

Peter knew very well who the speaker was; but his presence filled him with terror, and he ran home without making any answer.

PART SECOND.

THE following Monday, when Peter went to his glass-house, he found there not only his workmen, but several unwelcome strangers, namely, the bailiff and three constables.

The bailiff bade Peter good-morning, and, having inquired how he slept the night before, drew from his pocket a long document containing a list of his creditors.

"Can you pay, or not?" demanded he with a stern look.

"And cut it short, too, for I've not much time to throw away, and I've been here three good hours already."

The despondent Peter confessed that his means were exhausted, and surrendered all his property, house, yard, sheds, stalls, wagons, and horses, to be appraised by the bailiff; and while the latter was going about with the constables, examining and appraising, the thought crossed his mind that the pine grove was not far off, and, as the dwarf had done him no good, he had better pay a visit to the giant.

He ran to the pine grove as fast as if the constables were at his heels; and, though it seemed to him, as he passed the place where he had first spoken to the glass manikin, that an invisible hand held him back, he tore himself loose, and ran on to the ditch which he had noticed in former times: and scarcely had he shouted breathlessly, "Hollander Michael! Hollander Michael!" when the gigantic raftsman stood before him, staff in hand.

"So you have come already?" said he, laughing.

"They have been skinning you, no doubt, and want to sell you to your creditors.

Well, well, be easy; your whole trouble comes, as I told you it would, from that contemptible glass manikin, the hypocrite! If a man means to benefit another, he should do it handsomely, and not like that stingy curmudgeon.

But come," continued he, turning into the wood, "follow me to my house, and we'll see then whether we can come to terms."

"Come to terms!" thought Peter.

"What can he want of me that I can come to terms about? What can I do for him? What does he mean, I wonder? " They first ascended a steep foot-path, and came suddenly to the edge of a deep, retired defile.

Hollander Michael sprang down the cliff with a leap, as if it were an easy flight of stairs; and Peter nearly fainted from terror when his guide, as soon as he reached the ground, grew in stature to the size of a church-steeple, and, extending an arm towards the charcoal-burner as long as a weaver's beam, with a hand at the end of it as wide as a tavern table, shouted in a voice like a deep funeral bell: "Get into my hand and hold fast by my fingers, and you will not fall."

With fear and trembling Peter did as he was commanded, and, seating himself in the giant's hand, clasped his arms firmly round the thumb.

Their way descended far and deep into the bowels of the earth, but, to Peter's astonishment, seemed to grow no darker; on the contrary, the light of day grew so much brighter in the valley that he was compelled at last to shut his eyes.

Hollander Michael, as his walk continued, had gradually diminished in size, and, when he at length halted before a cottage of the kind occupied by the richer inhabitants of the Black Forest, had resumed his former more moderate dimensions.

The hut into which Peter was led differed in nothing from the huts of other people except in its utter solitude.

The wooden house-clock, the huge fireplace, the broad benches, and the articles on the shelves, were precisely the same as everywhere else.

Michael pointed him to a seat behind a large table, and, leaving the room, soon returned with a pitcher of wine and glasses.

Pouring out a full tumbler for each, Michael began the conversation, and told of the pleasures of the world, of foreign countries, of beautiful cities and rivers, till Peter began to feel a strong desire to visit these places, and said as much to his host.

"If your whole body were running over with courage for bold undertakings, Peter, a couple of throbs of your foolish, useless heart would make you tremble.

Why should a sensible fellow like you trouble himself about dishonor or misfortune? Did you feel it in your head when they called you lately scoundrel and rogue? Did it make your stomach ache when the bailiff came to pitch you out of your glass-house? Tell me, Peter, my boy, what part of you felt these annoyances?" "My heart," said Peter, pressing his hand to his throbbing breast.

"You have thrown away - no offence, Peter - a great many hundred florins on dirty beggars and such vermin, and what good has it done you? They blessed you, to be sure, and wished you health; but did you ever find yourself better for that? For half the money you have wasted on beggars you might have kept a physician in your pay.

As if a blessing were of any use when a man is thrust out of doors! Bah! And what was it, Peter, drove you to feel in your pockets whenever a beggar pulled off his greasy hat to you? Your heart, Peter, always your heart! Not your eyes, nor your tongue, nor your arms, nor your legs, but your heart! You took everything too much to heart, as the saying is."

"But how can a man help it, sir? I give myself all the trouble in the world to keep my heart down, but it beats and pains me all the same."

"By yourself, of course," said his host, laughing, "you can do nothing to prevent it.

But give me the troublesome thing, and you will see at once how comfortable you will be."

"Give you my heart!" cried Peter in terror.

"I should die on the spot."

"Of course you would, if one of your rascally surgeons were to take it out of your body; you would die, no doubt.

But it's a very different affair with me.

Come and see for yourself."

Rising from his seat he opened a door and led Peter into another room.

Peter's heart contracted painfully as he crossed the threshold, for the sight which met his eye was strange and startling.

Glass vessels filled with a transparent liquid, and each containing a human heart, were ranged on wooden shelves round the room, and on each vessel was pasted a ticket with a name written on it, which Peter read with great surprise.

Here was the heart of the bailiff of F., of Fat Ezekiel, of King Dance, of the head forester; there six hearts of usurers, eight of recruiting-officers, three of money-brokers.

In short, it was a museum of the most respectable hearts within a radius of twenty leagues.

"Look," said Hollander Michael; "all these have thrown aside the cares and anxieties of life.

None of these hearts ever beat with sorrow and suffering, and their former owners never cease to congratulate themselves that they have expelled the uneasy guest from their houses."

"But what do they carry in their breasts in their place?" inquired Peter, giddy at the dreadful sight.

"This," replied the giant, taking from his pocket a heart of marble.

"Indeed!" answered Peter, unable to repress a shudder.

"A marble heart! But, Hollander Michael, it must feel very cold in a man's bosom."

"Of course," said the spectre; "very agreeably so, however.

Where is the advantage of a warm heart? The warmth is no benefit in winter, for a glass of brandy and a good fire are a great deal better; and in summer, when everything is so sultry and hot, you have no idea how cooling such a heart as this is! Besides, as I said before, you will never feel pain nor fear; and silly compassion and such ridiculous emotions will never annoy you again."

"And this is all you can give me?" asked Peter, discontentedly.

"I was expecting money, and you offer me only a marble heart!"

"Nay, a hundred thousand florins I thought would be enough for you at first.

If you manage it well, you will soon get to be a millionaire."

"A hundred thousand!" cried the poor charcoal-burner joyfully.

"Aha! my heart beats so violently I see we shall soon understand one another.

Very well, Michael, give me the stone and the money, and you may have all the uneasiness for yourself."

"I thought you were a sensible lad," said the Hollander, laughing kindly.

"Come, let's take a drink or two, and I'll count out the money."

They sat down to their wine again, and continued to drink till Peter sank into a deep sleep.

He was awakened at last by the merry sounds of a post-horn, and to his surprise found himself sitting in a handsome coach, and travelling on a broad and level road; and, bending out of the window, he saw the Black Forest lying behind him in the blue horizon.

At first he could not believe that it was he sitting in this fine carriage.

His clothes were certainly not those which he had worn yesterday; but his memory of what had taken place was so vivid that he abandoned his reflections and exclaimed: "I am Peter the charcoal-burner, and no one else; that's certain."

He was much surprised to find that he felt no emotions of regret at leaving for the first time his birthplace in the quiet forest where he had passed so many years of his life.

Even when he thought of his mother, now sitting helpless and miserable in her hut, he was wholly unable to squeeze out a tear, or even heave a sigh.

Everything was a matter of indifference to him.

"Ah, to be sure," said he, "tears and sighs, home-sickness and sorrow, all come from the heart, and, thanks to Hollander Michael, mine is stony and cold!" He laid his hand on his bosom, and his heart was silent and motionless.

"If he has kept his word with the hundred thousand as well as he has with the heart, I have no complaints to make," said he, hunting about in the carriage.

He found articles of dress of all kinds in abundance, but no money.

At last he hit upon a pocket in which he found many thousand dollars in gold, and drafts upon bankers in every large city on the continent.

"I've found all I wanted," he thought; and, throwing himself comfortably in the corner of the coach, resigned himself to meditation on his European tour.

He travelled about the world two years, looking at the houses from his carriage-windows, or the hotel-signs when he came to a halt, and inspecting the wonders of the various cities through which he passed.

But nothing gave him pleasure.

Pictures, palaces, music, dancing, all fatigued him.

His stony heart sympathized with nothing, and his eyes and ears were dead to all that was beautiful.

Nothing remained but the pleasures of eating, drinking, and sleep; and thus he lived, while travelling without an object through the world, eating to give himself amusement, and sleeping to cheat himself of life.

Now and then he seemed to remember that he had led a happier life, when he was a poor laborer and obliged to toil to earn his daily bread.

In those days every lovely landscape, every bit of music or dancing, had given him pleasure, and he would please himself for hours in thinking of the simple meal which his mother was to bring him at the kiln.

Recalling to his memory these pleasant times, it struck him as strange that though in those days the smallest matter threw him into fits of laughter, he now found it difficult to summon up a smile.

When others laughed, he feigned to join with them, but his heart felt no merriment.

He found himself untroubled by anxiety, but contented felt that he was not.

Not home-sickness nor sorrow, but ennui, drove him at last to turn his course towards home.

As he crossed the country from Strasburg, and saw the dark forest of his childhood; as he caught sight for the first time after so long an interval of the manly forms and jovial faces of its inhabitants; as his ear heard the strong, deep, melodious music of his home, - he felt for his heart, wondering why he did not rejoice or weep.

But his heart was of marble, and he felt the folly of his hopes.

Stones are dead, and do not laugh or cry.

His first visit was to Hollander Michael, who received him with his former friendliness.

"Michael," said Peter to the giant, "I have travelled the world over, and seen all there is to be seen, but everything has been vanity, and I have suffered intolerable weariness.

The thing of stone I carry in my breast excluded me from many pleasures.

I am never angry, never sad, and never pleased; and I am as though I were but half alive.

Can you not infuse a little life into my stony heart? Or rather, Michael, give me back my own.

I had been used to it for five-and-twenty years, and, if it did sometimes play me a treacherous trick, after all it was joyous and alive."

The spectre laughed a bitter, cruel laugh.

"When you are dead, Peter," he answered, "you shall have it without fail.

You shall then receive again your soft, throbbing heart, and be capable of feeling the ensuing joy - or misery.

It can never again be yours on earth! But, Peter, you say you have travelled, and yet, live as you pleased, have never tasted pleasure.

Establish yourself here in this forest, build you a house, marry, and invest your wealth in trade.

You only need occupation.

You felt ennui merely from idleness, and now ascribe all your unhappiness to this harmless heart."

Peter saw that Michael was right, as far as concerned idleness, and resolved to devote himself day and night to the accumulation of money.

Michael gave him another hundred thousand florins, and once more dismissed him, persuaded that the giant was his devoted friend.

The rumor soon spread through the forest that Charcoal Peter, or Gambling Peter, had come home richer than before; and the result was the same as it has ever been since the beginning of the world.

As long as he was in poverty they pitched him out of the house into the sun; now, when he made his first appearance at the tavern on a Sunday afternoon, people shook his hand, admired his horse, inquired about his travels, and when he sat down, as he did at once, to play for hard dollars with Fat Ezekiel, the respect he inspired was as high as ever.

His business now was no longer glass-making, but dealing in timber, though this was merely a cloak for other avocations.

His principal business was lending money.

Half the forest came gradually in his debt, for he lent money only at ten per cent. interest, or sold corn at thrice its value to the poor.

He stood now hand-in-glove with the bailiff, and if a debtor failed to pay Mr. Peter Munk on the exact day, that official would instantly ride over with his myrmidons, distrain house and land, sell it forthwith, and drive father, mother and child into the forest.

At first this severity occasioned Peter some trouble, for the ejected tenants besieged his house in crowds, the men begging for forbearance, the women seeking to soften his stony heart, and the little children crying for a piece of bread.

But this cat's-music, as he called it, ceased entirely as soon as he procured a couple of trained bull-dogs; for no sooner did he whistle for his hounds than the beggars fled shrieking into the wood.

His chief inconvenience was occasioned by "the old woman."

This person was no other than Mrs. Munk, Peter's mother, who had been reduced by the sale of her house and land to the utmost poverty and wretchedness, and for whom her son, with all his wealth, had not seen fit to make inquiry.

The good old lady, weak, feeble and shattered, came sometimes to Peter's house.

She no longer ventured to go in, for he had once driven her out with great violence; but it occasioned her much unhappiness to be compelled to depend on the kindness of other men, when her own son had it in his power to make her old age comfortable.

But the icy heart was never softened at the sight of the pale, familiar face, the imploring glance, and the trembling, outstretched hand.

When she knocked at his door of a Sunday evening, he would draw a kreutzer from his pocket with a growl, wrap it in paper, and send it out to her by a servant.

He heard her trembling voice thanking him and wishing him prosperity; he heard her feeble cough as she crept from his door; but he thought no more of the matter, except to regret that he had again thrown away a kreutzer for nothing.

At last Peter began to think of getting married.

He knew that every father in the Black Forest would gladly have him for a son-in-law, but he was fastidious in his choice, for he wished in this, as in everything else, to be praised for his sagacity and judgment.

He rode, therefore, from one end of the forest to the other, making careful search for a suitable helpmeet; but none of the beauties of the Black Forest seemed to him handsome enough.

At last, after hunting in vain through all the dance-taverns for a beauty to his mind, he heard that the handsomest and most virtuous girl in the whole region about was the daughter of a certain poor wood-cutter.

She lived quietly and apart, managing industriously her father's house, and never appearing at dancing-rooms or Whitsuntide festivities.

When Peter heard of this flower of the forest he determined to win her, and rode over to the cottage.

The father of the beautiful Elizabeth received the distinguished stranger with much surprise, which increased when he learned that it was the rich Mr. Munk, and that he wished to become his son-in-law.

His hesitation was brief, for he thought to himself that all his poverty and care would now be at an end, and he assented without asking his daughter; and the good child was so obedient that she became Madam Munk without resistance.

But things were far otherwise with the poor creature than she had pictured to herself before her marriage.

She had believed she understood the management of a household, but she found too late that she could never do anything to her husband's satisfaction.

She felt compassion for the poor, and, as her husband was rich, thought there could be no sin in giving a poor beggar-woman an occasional penny, or an old mendicant a glass of schnapps; but, seeing her doing this one day, Peter said to her in an angry voice: "Why do you waste my property on beggars and thieves? Did you bring so much into my house that you can afford to throw it away like dirt? Your father's beggary never warmed me a supper yet, and you throw my money about like a queen! Do so again, madam, and you shall feel the weight of my hand!" The beautiful Elizabeth wept bitterly in her chamber over her husband's cruelty, and often longed to be at home in her father's miserable hut, rather than live with the rich, stingy, hard-hearted Peter.

Alas! had she known that his heart was of marble, and that he could never love any human being, she would have ceased to wonder.

Henceforth, whenever she sat at the door, and a passing beggar pulled off his hat and craved a little aid, she would shut her eyes to prevent her seeing the sufferer, and clench her hand for fear of thrusting it into her pocket and taking out a piece of money.

The consequence of this naturally was, that Elizabeth grew to be the talk of the whole forest, and people declared that she was even stingier than Peter himself.

One day she was sitting before the door spinning, and humming a little song, for she felt in good spirits, as the weather was fine and Peter had ridden out to his fields, when a little, old man came down the road, carrying on his shoulders a heavy sack, and coughing so pitifully that she could hear him a long way off.

Elizabeth looked at him compassionately, and thought in her tender heart how wrong it was that so old and small a man should be compelled to carry so heavy a load.

Meanwhile the little man coughed and staggered along, and, when opposite Elizabeth, almost broke down under his burthen.

"Alas! madam, have the goodness to give me a draught of cold water," said he; "I can go no further, and am almost fainting."

"But you should not carry such heavy loads in your old age, poor man," said Elizabeth.

"Yes; but I am obliged to do these jobs from poverty," replied he.

"Ah, so rich a lady as you has no idea how heavily poverty presses, and how refreshing is a draught of cool water in such sultry heat as this!" Elizabeth ran into the house, and, taking a pitcher from the shelf, filled it with water; but, standing a few paces distant, and seeing how sadly the little man sat on his sack, her heart overflowed with compassion, and, remembering that her husband was out from home, she set down the pitcher of water, and, filling a cup with wine, cut a large slice of rye bread, and brought both to the old mendicant.

"A glass of wine will do you more good than water, as you are so old," said she; "drink it slowly, and eat this bread with it."

The little fellow looked at her with surprise, and, with big tears standing in his eyes, drank the wine and said: "I have lived many years, but I have seen few people so compassionate, and who know so well how to use their wealth, as you, Madam Elizabeth.

You will be happy hereafter, for so good a heart does not go unrewarded."

"No; and she shall receive her reward on the spot," cried an angry voice, and Peter stood before her, his face crimson with rage.

"So you give my best wine to beggars, do you? and my own cup you lend to such rascals as this! I'll pay you!" She fell at his feet, entreating him for mercy; but his stony heart knew no compassion.

He reversed the whip which he held in his hand, and struck her so heavily on her beautiful brow, with its ebony handle, that she sank lifeless into the old man's arms.

Seeing this, a sort of selfish regret seized him for a moment, and he bent down to see if she still retained a spark of life, when the old man said, in a well-known voice: "Give yourself no trouble, Peter.

She was the fairest flower in the Black Forest, but you have crushed her under foot, and she will never bloom again."

Peter's cheeks blanched in a moment.

"So it is you, Mr. Treasurer? Well, what is done is done, and it was sure to come at last.

I hope, sir, you will not denounce me to the officers as a murderer."

"Villain!" answered the glass manikin.

"What pleasure should I have in bringing your perishable body to the gallows? No human judge have you to fear, but another and more dreadful arbiter, for you have lost your soul to the Prince of Evil."

"And if I have lost my soul," yelled Peter, "you and your treacherous gifts are the only ones to blame.

You, malicious demon, have led me into ruin; you have

driven me to seek assistance from another, and on your shoulders lies the whole responsibility."

Scarcely had he said this, when the glass manikin began to dilate and expand; his eyes became as large as soup-plates, and his mouth like a lighted furnace, with flames issuing from it.

Peter threw himself on his knees, and his marble heart could not prevent his limbs from trembling like aspen-leaves.

The wood-demon seized him by the neck with vulture claws, and, twisting him as a whirlwind twists a leaf, threw him on the ground with such force that his ribs cracked.

"Worm!" cried the spectre in a voice of thunder, "I could crush you if I chose, for you have blasphemed against this forest's lord; but for this murdered woman's sake, who gave me to eat and drink, I grant you a respite of a week.

Mend your ways in this time, or I will rend you in pieces, and send your soul to punishment in its sins!" Late in the evening some strangers passing by found rich Peter Munk lying senseless in the road.

They turned him over to discover if he still breathed, and for some time could not find a spark of life.

Finally, one of the men went into the house, and, bringing out water, sprinkled it in his face.

Peter drew a deep breath, groaned heavily, and, opening his eyes, gazed about bewildered for some time, and then asked for Elizabeth; but no one had seen her.

Thanking the strangers for their assistance, he crept into the house, and sought in every direction for his wife; but, finding her nowhere, the idea gradually became conviction in his mind that what he had hoped was but a frightful dream was dread and terrible reality.

In his loneliness, strange reflections occupied his thoughts.

Fear he could not feel, for his heart was stone; but, thinking on his wife's death, his mind reverted to his own decease, and how heavily laden he must leave this world, - laden with the tears of the poor, with their thousand curses which had never changed his will, with the misery of the sufferers on whom he had set his dogs, with the silent despair of his own mother, with the blood of the saintly Elizabeth; and if he could not justify himself to the old man, her father, were he to come and ask him, "Where is my daughter and your wife?" how could he stand before the face of One, to whom belonged all woods, all seas, all mountains, and all human souls? His dreams at night were restless, and incessantly a sweet voice awoke him, calling, "Peter, seek a warmer heart!" - a voice he knew to be Elizabeth's.

The next day he repaired to the tavern to dissipate his melancholy thoughts, and there found, as usual, Fat Ezekiel.

He sat down by his side, and the two friends talked of various subjects, - of the fine weather, the war, the heavy taxes, and what not, and at length of sudden death.

Peter asked Ezekiel what he thought of death, and if he had ever reflected on his life hereafter.

Ezekiel answered, that the body was buried under ground, and the soul departed at once to heaven or to hell.

"And is the heart buried also?" inquired Peter earnestly.

"Of course, the heart also."

"But if one has no heart?" continued Peter.

Ezekiel looked at him with terror in his face.

"What do you mean? Are you mocking me? Think you I have no heart?"

"O, heart enough, and as hard as a stone!" replied Peter.

Ezekiel looked astounded, and, gazing nervously round to see that no one overheard, whispered: "How do you know that? Or perhaps yours too has ceased to feel?"

"Mine too has ceased to feel, at least in my own bosom," answered Peter.

"But tell me, since you now know all, how will it fare with our hearts hereafter?"

"Why should that trouble you, neighbor?" said Ezekiel, laughing.

"You are well enough off during your lifetime, at any rate. It is the greatest comfort of our cold hearts that such notions give us no uneasiness."

"True enough, but we think of them, nevertheless; and, though I cannot now feel fear, yet I remember distinctly how terribly afraid of hell I felt when I was a little, innocent child."

"Well - we shan't go there just yet, I hope," said Ezekiel.

"I once asked a schoolmaster about it, and he told me that after death hearts were always weighed, to judge how grievously they had sinned.

The light ones rise, the heavy sink; and I'm thinking ours, Peter, will show a decent weight."

"They will indeed," answered Peter; "and it often makes me uneasy to find how unmoved and indifferent my heart remains when I think of these matters."

The next night he heard five or six times the same familiar voice whisper in his ear: "Peter, seek a warmer heart!" He felt no remorse for her death, but when he told his servants that their mistress had gone on a journey, he thought to himself: "What journey can she be travelling now?" Six days he spent in this way, and night after

night he heard the voice, and day after day recalled the spectre and his frightful menace.

On the seventh morning he sprang from his bed, exclaiming: "Yes, I will try to obtain a warmer heart, for this insensible stone within makes my life only a burthen and fatigue."

He put his Sunday suit hastily on, and, mounting his horse, rode to the pine grove.

He dismounted at a place where the trees grew close and thick, and, fastening his horse to a branch, ran with hasty steps to the big pine, and recited his verse:

"Treasurer in the forest green,
Who so many hundred years hast seen,
Thine is the land where the pine-trees stand,
And Sabbath-born children bless thy hand."

The glass manikin instantly appeared, but a stern and angry expression had displaced his former kindly glance.

He wore a doublet of black glass, with a long crape fluttering from his hat, and Peter well knew for whom he mourned.

"What would you have of me?" he asked in a gloomy voice.

"I have one wish left, Sir Treasurer," answered Peter, with downcast eyes.

"Can hearts of marble wish?" said the dwarf.

"You have now all your wicked mind can desire, and shall have no more."

"But you promised me three wishes, and one is still unused," urged Munk.

"If it is foolish, I can refuse it," said the spectre; "speak; what is it you would ask?"

" Take from my breast this block of stone, and give me back my living heart," said Peter.

"Was it I who made the exchange?" said the manikin.

"Am I Hollander Michael, to give away riches and marble hearts? You must seek your heart from him."

"Alas, he never gives back!" sobbed Peter.

"Bad as you are, I feel for your unhappiness," said the glass manikin after a moment's thought.

"As your wish is not foolish, I will not refuse my aid.

Listen.

You can never recover your heart by force, but you can by guile, and perhaps without much difficulty, for Michael has ever been stupid Michael, although he thinks himself extremely shrewd.

Go to him, and do as I direct."

Then, telling him what course to follow to attain his object, he gave him a small cross of finest glass, and said: "As long as you live he can do you no injury; and he will let you pass unopposed, if you hold this out towards him, and pray to God.

When you have obtained what you go for, come back at once to this place."

Peter took the crucifix, and, imprinting every word on his memory, went on to Hollander Michael's abode.

He called his name three times, and the giant stood before him.

"So you have killed your wife?" he said, with a horrid laugh.

"You were perfectly right to do so, for she squandered your property on beggars.

But you must leave the country for a while, for it will lead to trouble when people find she does not come back.

You want money I suppose, and have come to get it?"

"You have guessed it," said Peter, "and a good deal this time, for it's a long road to America."

Michael led him to his cottage; and opening a coffer, in which lay heaps of gold, took out many rolls of the precious metal.

While he was counting it down on the table, Peter said: "You are a tricky fellow, Michael, with your lies about my carrying a stone in my breast and yourself having my real heart."

"And is it not so?" said Michael, amazed.

"Do you feel your heart still? Is it not cold, like ice? Do you feel fear, or sorrow? Do you ever repent a sin?"

"You have merely deadened my heart a little, but I have it in my bosom yet, and so has Ezekiel, who told me you had cheated us.

You have no power to take a man's heart so neatly and safely out of his body.

You would have to use magic to do such a thing."

"But I assure you," cried Michael, offended, "that Ezekiel, and all the rich people about here who have had dealings with me, have just such marble hearts as yours, and their true hearts are all stowed away here in my chamber."

"Pooh, Michael, how easily the lies run off your tongue!" laughed Peter.

"Tell that story to the marines! Do you suppose I haven't seen tricks of this sort by the dozen during my travels? These hearts in your chamber are all made of wax.

You are a rich dog, I admit, but you are no wizard."

The giant tore open the chamber door, foaming with anger.

"Come in and read these tickets, and that one yonder.

See! that is 'Peter Munk's heart!' Do you see how it beats? Can wax do that, think you?"

"Pooh, pooh; nothing but wax," answered Peter.

"That doesn't beat like a real heart, and I have my own still here in my breast.

You are no wizard, that's certain."
"I will prove it to you!" cried the giant in a rage.
"You shall feel for yourself that it is your own heart."
With that, he tore open Peter's doublet, and, taking the stone from his breast, held it up before his eyes.
Then he took down the true heart, and, breathing upon it, set it carefully in Peter's side, - and instantly the young man felt it beating under his ribs, and found himself capable of enjoying the sensation.
"How does it feel now?" inquired Michael with a laugh.
"Upon my honor, Michael, you were right," answered Peter, privately drawing the crucifix from his pocket.
"I never believed it was possible!"
"Very likely.
You see now I do know a trifle of magic, I suppose.
But come, let me put the stone back in its place."
"Softly, Mr. Michael," cried Peter, taking a step backwards, and holding out the crucifix.
"Men catch mice with bacon, and this time you are the cheated one."
And he began to say a prayer, as the glass manikin had directed him.
Hollander Michael grew smaller and smaller, and fell to the ground writhing like a snake, groaning and moaning, and all the hearts on the shelves began to throb and beat till it sounded like the shop of a clock-maker.
Peter feared, however, that his courage would not hold out, and dreaded the power of the demon; and, running out of the room and out of the house, he clambered down the cliff pursued by dreadful terror: for he heard Michael gather himself up, and stamp and rage and hurl frightful curses after his flying victim.
Having crossed the boundary, he ran swiftly to the pine grove.
A fearful tempest was raging round him, and the lightning shattered the trees on every side, but he reached the glass manikin's abode without injury.
His heart was beating joyously, but only because it beat at all, for he now looked back upon his past life with the same horror with which he had gazed on the tempest splintering the noble trees.
He thought of his wife Elizabeth, that beautiful, saintly woman, whom he had murdered through avarice, and he looked upon himself as an outcast from mankind.
He reached the dwelling of the glass manikin, weeping convulsively.
The treasurer was sitting under a pine tree, smoking a little pipe, and his expression was softer than before.
"Why do you weep, charcoal-burner?" he asked.
"Have you failed to obtain your heart? Lies the marble still in your bosom?"
"Alas! sir," sighed Peter, "as long as I carried a marble heart I never wept, and my eyes were as dry as the ground in July.
But my old heart is almost breaking at the remembrance of my crimes.
I have driven my debtors to despair, I have set my dogs on the poor and sick, and you have not forgotten how my whip fell on that beautiful forehead!"
"Peter, you have been a great sinner!" said the dwarf.
"Money and idleness have been your ruin, till your heart changed to stone, and you could feel no longer joy or sorrow, remorse or compassion.
But repentance atones for sin; and, were I sure that you felt remorse for your past life, it is still in my power to do you a great good."
"I wish nothing more," answered Peter, and his head sank sadly on his breast.
"Hope has fled.
I can never be happy again.
What can I do, alone in the world? My mother will never pardon the wrongs I have done to her; and perhaps, monster that I am, I have already brought her with sorrow to the grave! And Elizabeth! my dear wife! Alas, Treasurer, rather strike me dead on the spot and bring my wretched life to an instant close!"
"Well," answered the dwarf, "if you are resolved upon it, let it be so.
I have my axe ready in my hand."
He took his pipe quietly from his mouth, extinguished it, and thrust it into his pocket.
Then, rising slowly from his seat, he disappeared behind the trees.
Peter sat weeping on the grass; his life was worthless in his sight, and he waited patiently for his death-blow.
In a few moments he heard soft footsteps behind him, and thought to himself, "He is coming now."
"Look behind you, Peter Munk!" cried the dwarf.
He wiped the tears from his eyes and turned his head.
There stood his mother and Elizabeth, looking at him tenderly.
He sprang up in a frenzy of delight.
"You are not dead, then, Elizabeth! And you here, too, mother! Have you forgiven me?"
"They are willing to forgive you," answered the glass manikin, "because you feel sincere remorse.
Return now to your father's cottage, and become a charcoal-burner as before.
If you are honest and manly you will honor your occupation, and your neighbors will respect and love

you more than if you possessed ten tons of gold."

With this admonition the glass manikin bade them farewell.

The three blessed and praised him, and slowly returned home.

The handsome house of rich Peter Munk was standing no longer; the lightning had struck it and destroyed it with all his treasures.

But his father's hut stood at no great distance, and thither they turned their steps, unconcerned at the great losses they had so recently sustained.

But great was their amazement when they reached the hut.

It had been changed into a handsome farmer's cottage, and all its interior arrangements, though simple, were tasteful and good.

"The good glass manikin has done this!" cried Peter.

"How charming!" said Elizabeth.

"This is much more like home than that great house of ours with its crowd of servants."

Henceforth Peter Munk was a busy and active man.

Contented with what he had, he applied himself industriously to his business; and thus it came about that he grew prosperous through his own exertions and activity, and was respected and admired throughout the forest.

He ceased to quarrel with the beautiful Elizabeth, treated his mother with affection and reverence, and gave freely to the needy who knocked at his door.

After the lapse of a year and a day Elizabeth gave birth to a handsome boy, and Peter went to the pine grove and recited the verses.

But no glass manikin answered to his summons.

"My Lord Treasurer," he shouted, "listen to me a moment.

I only wish to ask you to be god-father to my little son."

No answer came back, but a puff of wind sighed through the pine-trees, and cast a few pine-cones down into the grass.

"I will take these cones as a keepsake, since you refuse to answer to my call," cried Peter, and, putting them in his pocket, went back to his cottage.

But when he drew off his Sunday doublet, and his mother turned out the pockets to put the coat safely away in the press, four large rolls of money fell out, and, on opening them, their eyes were dazzled by the shine of countless, good, new, handsome ducats, with not a false one among them.

And this was the present of the manikin to his little god-child.

Henceforth they lived calmly and at peace; and Peter frequently said in after years, when his head was white and his limbs feeble: "It is far better to be contented with little, than to possess money and goods and a cold heart."

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