

in some such way as Hugh Miller has done in "My Schools and Schoolmasters," I shall have to linger about the cottage I know not how long; for feeling, as I have said, how much is done by the time the boyhood is over and the youth begins—if such a distinction can be made—I can see now how

many things must have been intimately at work beside that sweet, good home, and what was there. Manners and customs, traditions, stories, religion, superstition, scene, and incident, all had their place in the lad's life, and must have their place in the man's story—if it is ever told.

G5738

LEGEND OF THE CASTLE OF NUREMBERG.

(From the German.)

BY MRS. E. E. EVANS.

AMONGST the many legends and historical traditions attached to the old castle of Nuremberg, is a curious story of an event which took place about the middle of the thirteenth century. The castle was at that time governed by Count Frederic III. of Hohenzollern, who lived there in princely state with his wife, the Countess Elizabeth, and their six children. It was a happy family. The wedded pair loved each other tenderly, and took pride in the strength and bravery of their sons and the modest beauty of their daughters. Their retainers were faithful, the citizens of the already famous city of Nuremberg held them in honor, the land was no longer disturbed by war, and through the vigilance and courage of the Nurembergers the once dreaded invasions of banded robbers had been brought to an end.

Thus peaceful and prosperous was the existence of this noble family in the year 1264. At that period, John, the elder son, was eighteen and his brother Sigmund sixteen years old. They were skilled in every knightly accomplishment, and had already won distinction by their exertions in certain fierce encounters with the robbers.

In the autumn of that year the villages in the vicinity of Nuremberg

suffered terribly from the ravages of wolves, until, in desperation, the inhabitants assembled in force and drove them out of their haunts, killing meantime as many as possible. Those that escaped, to the number of several hundred, retreated to the mountains, and from thence made frequent descents upon the scattered farms in the valleys, so that scarcely a day elapsed without some person having been destroyed.

The most horrible event of this kind occurred three days before Michaelmas, in the forests of St. Sebald and St. Lawrence (so named from the two cathedrals of Nuremberg) lived a class of peasants who made it their sole business to raise bees and collect honey, which was in great demand, as foreign sugars had not yet begun to be imported. To such an extent was the pursuit carried, that the great forest tract was spoken of in the legal instruments of that period as "the imperial bee-garden," and the bee-farmers were allowed to pay their government taxes in honey. For some reason, the magistrate having charge of such matters issued an order for the tax to be paid three days before Michaelmas, instead of on the day itself, when it would really become due; and in obedience to the command, a certain bee-farmer, living on the northern

border of St. Sebald's forest, went with his wife to Nuremberg, distant about seven miles, each carrying a large wooden tub of honey bound by a strap across their shoulders.

As their cottage stood in a solitary place, they could not leave their family in the care of any neighbor; but they expected to return in six hours at furthest, and so went away without misgiving, having repeatedly charged their eldest child, Wolfgang, a bright boy eight years old, to watch over his brother of four and his little sister of two years, and on no account to go outside of the house—promising, if he should prove faithful, to reward him with a present of some gingerbread, for which it seems Nuremberg was even at that early day, as now, celebrated.

The three children remained happily together till about five o'clock in the afternoon, when Wolfgang saw from the window a little friend, the son of a neighboring bee-farmer, approaching the house, and was soon coaxed by this playfellow to come out on the green before the door. His brother soon followed, and the little girl, not liking to be left alone, started in pursuit. Suddenly two wolves appeared. The visitor climbed quickly up a large linden tree which stood before the house and called loudly to Wolfgang to follow him. But the brave boy, more anxious for his brother and sister than himself, caught the little girl in his right arm, seized Rudolf with his left hand, and hastened with them to the cottage door. Just as he was about to cross the threshold, one wolf fastened upon his shoulder, threw him down, and immediately buried its sharp teeth in his vitals. The other wolf tore to pieces the little Rudolf, who till his last breath called out incessantly: "Father! mother! oh, God!" After that both the destroyers fell upon the sister, who had broken out into frightened crying, which was soon silenced in death.

At this moment the parents of the murdered children came in sight of their desolated home. A sorrowful presentiment had caused them to hasten their steps, so that they had accomplished the last few miles in half the time usually required; but the first glance assured them that they were too late, and their cries of grief were so harrowing that the wolves ran away in fear.

As if it were impossible that the still smoking bones lying before them could be the remains of their beloved children, the father and mother went raving into the house, and called with despairing voices: "Children, come! come, children! here are your ginger-cakes!" With what joy did they rush to the door when they heard a child's voice in reply! But it was the lamenting voice of the neighbor's boy, now descending from the tree, who explained to the distracted parents the horrible circumstances of the death of their darlings. After many moments of speechless agony, the woman broke the deathly stillness by saying to her husband, with the calmness of insanity: "Come, Henry, let us go to Nuremberg and take our children away from the magistrate, and if he refuses to give them to us, we will carry off his children and throw them to the wolves!" "Alas! why did he demand the honey-tax this year before it was due!" sighed the heart-broken father; saying which, he, without knowing what he did, threw the dear remains into the tub which still hung upon his back, and involuntarily tottered after his wife toward Nuremberg.

As soon as they reached the city, the miserable pair rushed to the magistrate's house, demanding imperiously of the guard at the door: "Where is the bailiff with the children?" The man replied insolently: "At the castle with the Count. What do you want of him at this late hour?" The woman flew to the castle, and sprang up the brilliantly-lighted staircase into

the noble hall, where the Count and a company of his favorite friends, among whom was the magistrate, were celebrating the eighteenth birthday of his elder son, John.

A tender and thoughtful mood had taken possession of all minds; for just before the watchman upon the tower had announced, with a blast of his trumpet, the beginning of the last hour before midnight, the eventful moment when, eighteen years before, the Countess, wavering between life and death, had given successful birth to her first child. It was then that the bereaved mother darted amidst the group of boys and girls playing in the hall, snatched up one child after another, and cried out, as she sought in vain for the familiar little faces: "Emma, Rudolf, Wolfgang—where are you, then?" Every one asked: "Who is she?" "Whom does she seek?" But she paid no attention to their questions, and the dreadful tragedy was first guessed from the words of the bee-farmer, who now came into the hall, threw the bloody bones upon the floor, and said: "There, my noble lords, take your last tax from me, a poor unhappy father!"

This event made a deep impression upon the family and their guests. The two young noblemen, moved by the purest sympathy, declared their intention to summon the whole community to go out in a body and free the poor farmers from the frightful plague of wolves. Before the company broke up, a wolf-hunt was agreed upon for the next day; and, before sunrise, the young counts rode away at the head of thirty experienced huntsmen and more than a hundred vigorous servants, who led between twenty and thirty fierce hunting-dogs in leash.

The precaution had been taken to close all the forest paths; and by sunset eighteen wolves, besides six boars, five deer, and ten foxes, were killed. The hunt raged fiercest around the cottage of the unfortunate bee-farmer.

He had himself conducted Count John to the spot, and at the sight of his children's toys, lying scattered around the door, had burst into loud lamentations. The cheeks of the Count also were moistened with manly tears; and with his eyes raised to heaven, he swore not to rest until he had succeeded in extirpating all dangerous wild beasts from the forest. Just then he saw two wolves, maddened by hunger, licking the spot which had yesterday been wet with the children's blood. Without horse or spear, for he had left both by the linden tree beyond the wolves, he rushed with the speed of an arrow upon the beasts, and with a single stroke of his drawn sword cut off the head of one of them. The other sprang upon him, and had already fastened its eager jaws in the side of the brave youth, when one of his dogs, which had followed him slowly, flew at the throat of the wolf, so that, occupied with its own danger, it could not give the deadly bite. With a desperate effort, the monster flung off the faithful dog, and then sprang upon the Count in a rage; but as quickly was John's sharp sword buried in the beast's entrails.

One may imagine the horror of Sigmund when, the sudden noise having called him out of the house, he comprehended his brother's recent peril; and his joy when, on carefully examining the wounded side, he found it merely scratched and only slightly bloody.

The news of the success of the expedition soon reached the city, and the Council began at once to make preparations for a worthy reception of the victors. Toward eight o'clock in the evening, the hunters passed within the walls through the *Thiergaertner* gate. At the head of the procession rode the bee-farmer upon a snow-white horse from the castle stables, and with bow and quiver shrouded in crape. Behind him fifty servants bore the slaughtered beasts upon poles on their shoulders; while

fifty more walked on both sides with blazing torches in their hands. Next rode the young knights, John and Sigmund, upon two black horses; and behind them, three abreast, came thirty noble archers. Lastly, by command of the Council, twenty-five armorers in glittering armor, and carrying torches, brought up the rear.

When the procession had reached St. Sebald's Church, the chief magistrate and two lords of the Council thanked the brave young men in the name of the inhabitants for deliverance from trouble and danger, and invited them to supper in the great saloon of the City Hall, which had been duly adorned for the feast. As the huntsmen entered the saloon they were met by the daughters of the noblest houses of Nuremberg, who placed upon the head of each a garland of flowers, to the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums. Around the table were already seated the parents of both the crowners and the crowned, and at the head were the Count and Countess. One can easily imagine the joyful astonishment of the young men. Feasting and dancing continued till midnight, and before the company separated a second wolf-hunt was arranged for the next day—Michaelmas.

By five o'clock the next morning the two young knights were ready to repair to the rendezvous of their hunter friends, when the Countess Elizabeth came into their chamber with troubled looks and eyes red with weeping, and besought them, by their filial love, to remain that day at home and not go even outside of the castle. This request of their beloved mother greatly surprised her sons. They declared that only extraordinary reasons could justify them in breaking their promise to join the hunt, and wished to know whether such reasons existed.

"A thousand reasons," answered the Countess, "and yet all based upon a single dream."

"I thought so, dear mother," inter-

rupted John; "I feared that the knowledge of the wound in my side would bring you bad dreams, and therefore I wished to keep it secret."

But the Countess solemnly replied: "No, my son, so clearly and circumstantially did no soul ever dream through merely human causes. I saw your dead bodies, torn with many wounds, carried up the hill to the castle. I tremble when I think of that sight!"

The two sons pressed their mother's hands with affectionate warmth, and assured her that, in obedient respect to the anxiety of a good mother, they would keep out of danger, so far as might be consistent with honor.

"Do you see, mother," continued Sigmund in a cheerful tone, "your dream has already fulfilled its purpose, and you would not be willing to bear the disgrace of having your sons break their word and become a derision to their companions through oversolicitude concerning the images of a dream!"

After a moment of speechless sorrow, the mother fell hastily upon the necks of her sons, covered their faces with kisses and tears, and cried, with a loud voice, "Farewell, my children! God protect you,—I can do nothing more!" and hastened out of the room. But, while still upon the threshold, she called back to them, with apparent cheerfulness, "Remember, be prudent; and, above all things, do not forget to take the two dogs with you."

With imploring voice, John answered: "Pray excuse us from taking the dogs; it is agreed upon that they shall be left at home. They spoiled our sport several times yesterday, and excepting the service which one of them rendered me, and which greater vigilance on my part will henceforth make unnecessary, they were of no advantage. On that account, I left them yesterday at the tower in the suburbs."

But the Countess said: "I command you, as your mother, to take

the two faithful hounds, which have twice saved your lives."

The youths, though greatly vexed, replied: "We will obey you."

After she had left them, they went thoughtfully down the castle stairs, mounted their horses in silence, bade two servants go before and release Drusus and Nero, their two watchdogs, and then rode slowly down the castle hill and over the river Pegnitz to the tower. On arriving there, they ordered the servants to go on with the dogs toward the gate, and charged them, with unwonted earnestness, to be very careful. While the keeper of the tower addressed a few necessary words to John, Sigmund rode to the window, took from the sill a piece of chalk, and wrote over the door: "In obedience to our dear mother, we came here against our will to-day, Michaelmas, 1264.—Sigmund." And John, at his brother's request, though laughing all the while at the singular fancy, signed his name, "John," underneath.

As the young knights rode away from the tower, following their servants along the road, they heard suddenly, at some distance, a frightful scream; and in a few moments more than a hundred men had gathered in a crowd. The young men hurried on at a quick trot, and learned with horror, at the German House, that their dogs had torn to pieces the child of a scythe-smith in the neighborhood. It appeared that when the servants had reached the spot, they met the child, whom his mother, in her anxiety to protect him from the cold morning air, had covered with a wolf-skin. The little boy had been to buy dainties in a shop where his mother had often fed him with sweets, in spite of the anxious protestations of the father. He had just emptied his pockets, when the servants, with the two fierce dogs, passed by the German House. Scarcely had the dogs sighted the wolf-skin upon the child, when, with one strong bound, they freed themselves from the servants'

hands, and rushed with their sharp teeth upon the unfortunate little one, whom they had mistaken for a wolf.

As John and Sigmund passed through the crowd standing around the dead body, they met the careless servants, who now held the dogs in leash; and springing from their horses, they drew their swords and with one blow killed both the animals—which, in their irrational zeal, had believed that they had done their duty, and had come whining joyfully around their enraged masters.

They then took the rope from the dogs' necks, tied the hands of the thoughtless servants behind their backs, and sent them to the castle prison, under the charge of a body of smiths armed with axes and hammers.

Afterwards, John knelt down beside the mother, who had fallen on the ground by her murdered child, took her hand, and, weeping himself, tried to comfort her.

While the eyes of nearly all the by-standers testified to their sympathetic emotion, a meddlesome peasant (whose neglected crops had once been trampled down by the Count's pack of hounds) pressed his way amidst the throng and cried out: "Did I not tell you so? Behold the wolves which killed the bee-farmer's children!"

These words, envenomed with the poison of hell, fell fruitfully upon the black soil of ignoble minds. The earlier awakened discontent increased; curses filled the air; and before the infamous beginnings could be checked, murderous hands laid John dead at the feet of the despairing mother.

Sigmund, who had thrown himself upon his brother, in the vain hope to shield him from his fate, was snatched away by a compassionate peasant, and placed upon his horse, when he instinctively rode away from the scene of danger; but he was speedily brought back, and after a few moments' delay was murdered by his pursuers.

Then the bloody weapons fell from

the hands of the desperate scythe-smiths, and all at once words of remorse and mutual reproach arose—loudest, indeed, from the lips of the wretched man who, through his hellish speech, had kindled the fire of tumult. Dismayed at what they had done, the people lifted up the dead bodies, laid them upon litters, and, with hypocritical lamentations, turned toward the castle, followed by a great many inhabitants of the inner city, who, through curiosity or a desire to be of some use, had hastened to the scene of horror.

As yet, not the slightest knowledge of the terrible event had penetrated to the noble family whom it most concerned. Even while the mournful procession was approaching, Count Frederic sat at breakfast, making merry over the dream which his wife had related to him; and she, unable to regard the subject in the light of a jest, walked, with the young Countess Hedwig, of Nassau, toward one of the bow-windows to conceal her tears from her incredulous husband. Suddenly she cried out: "Oh, heavens, what do I see! A great crowd of men are filling the market-place! This throng, these movements, mean nothing good. They are coming nearer—they are weeping! Do you not see, Hedwig, the many handkerchiefs? They are coming, with loud cries, up the castle hill! Frederic! Hedwig! Oh, my dream!"

The Count, startled by the cry of his wife, hastened to her help. But he stood still, as though turned to stone, as he saw from the window the crowd approaching, bearing two litters and leading Sigmund's horse. Hedwig turned fearfully pale. At last Count Frederic broke the dreadful silence.

"Come, Elizabeth; come, Hedwig," he said, with a trembling voice, "let us go and see what we have loved so well; in death, also, they are dear to us!"

Involuntarily, Elizabeth and Hedwig leaned upon his arms and tottered

down the stairs to meet the procession which had just entered the court.

The bearers set down their burdens and threw back the pall. Then, first, the father exclaimed, in heart-broken tones, "*It is they!*" and, in despair, the mother repeated, "*It is they!*" Many of the spectators, those who had known the young Counts intimately, and others, strangers, whose hearts were tender in the presence of affliction, shared, sobbing, the grief of the unfortunate parents. At last a young man, son of a wealthy merchant, in whose breast compassion and the love of justice held equal sway, called out to the by-standers around the litters: "The blood of these worthy youths shall be avenged seven-fold upon the murderers!" Upon this arose a fearful curse against the guilty ones, and more than a thousand avengers of blood started for the suburbs to execute their stern purpose without delay.

As soon as the Count had aroused himself from his stupor of sorrow sufficiently to comprehend the cruel design of the departing crowd, he hastened after them at full speed, placed himself in their way upon the Pegnitz bridge, and implored them not to add to his regrets by further bloodshed. He could only restrain them, however, by solemnly promising that he himself would immediately undertake the righteous punishment of the criminals. "But, noble Count, even to-day!" cried the leader; "otherwise we will yet hold a night trial." Frederic, shuddering at these ominous words, promised this also; and commanded, upon the spot, that a summons should be sent to the neighboring towns requiring five hundred armed knights to join him by a forced march.

The generous Count gave this order purposely in a loud voice, rightly suspecting that the murderers were within hearing; and they, profiting by his clemency, fled in all haste to Donauworth,—thus sparing the bereaved father the painful necessity of expiating

the blood of his sons by that of more than a hundred heads of families.

Nor did he revenge himself by the spoliation of their possessions, but pacified public sentiment by laying upon each man a yearly tax of seven farthings, from which charge of blood-money the city of Nuremberg was released by Duke Frederic V., in the year 1386.

The memory of this horrible tragedy haunted continually the after lives of the unhappy parents. Elizabeth died in 1272; and Frederic mourned in gloomy dejection, until, in 1273, the election of his uncle Rudolph of Hapsburg to the throne of the German Empire drew him into political life, and the sacred interests of his native land filled the heart which excessive affliction had rendered dead to domestic happiness.

The ashes of John and Sigmund are said to lie in St. James's Church, Nu-

remberg, under the altar in the chapel to the right of the main entrance; and so late as the beginning of the present century, there was to be found in the court of the ancient "Moonlight Inn," a fresco painted in three compartments, illustrating the events narrated above. The centre picture showed the two youths as they rode to the hunt, with their followers; that on the right hand, the dog which tore the smith's child; and that upon the left, the murder of one of the brothers.

But the "Moonlight Inn" of old times has been replaced by a modern hotel bearing the same name, but containing no relic of ancient fresco; the altar in St. James's Church is bare of any inscription to the lamented youths supposed to have been buried beneath, and only in the old castle does the tradition still find a local habitation for its pathetic incidents, which are "too strange not to be true."

SAPPHO.

BY EDGAR FAWCETT.

WILD-EYED at dawn she crouches on the cliff;
Her lyre amid the myrtles flung; dank hair
Blown from the pallor of a face that yearns
With infinite despair.

Slow scarlet heightens in the pearly east;
Foam blushes on the coiling billow's rim;
Sunward along the roseate waters, now,
Fleet sea-birds waver dim.

Leucadia sparkles to arisen day,
A lyre among its myrtles gleaming clear,
Haunted with echoes of a farewell song
Far centuries must hear.

Beautiful Hope, that diest as Sappho died,—
Wofully falling to as chill a wave;
Forever to my dark heart may there float
A death-song from thy grave!