

leading the infant Jesus by the hand, who invited him  
with a friendly voice to come and eat with him,  
in return for the fine apples and other delicious things  
with which Herman had so often presented him.  
Herman Joseph thankfully accepted the invitation,  
and whilst he sat at the costly table, attended by Cle-  
mentine of exceeding beauty, enjoying the heavenly  
repast, he swore and the vision also vanished. — But  
he felt himself wonderfully strengthened and comple-  
tely changed in his inward nature. His studies now  
proceeded as usual, and he was generally beloved and  
respected.

### RICHMUTH OF ADUCHT.

Herman Joseph continued long to live in the Abbey  
of Steinfeld, where he died, and where his tomb con-  
tinues to be shown to this day. —  
In the church of St. Mary at Godesburg, at the east  
of the southern aisle, is a stone relating to Herman  
Joseph, who was afterwards canonized, representing

In 1571, there lived at Cologne a rich Burgomaster  
named Aducht, whose spouse Richmuth fell sick and  
died. They had been long married and their union had  
been as happy as is possible in this world. Richmuth  
was still young; she had been beautiful; and during  
her malady, her husband had remained day and night  
by her bedside. During the latter period of her illness,  
her sufferings were less acute; but her fainting fits  
became more frequent and longer until the moment of  
her death.

Every one knows that Cologne is a town which, for  
piety, may be compared to Rome herself; for this

reason, she was called in the middle ages, *Roma Germanica*, *civitas sancta* (German Rome, the holy city). Seeing her so pious in the first centuries of our era, one might suppose she was endeavouring to make it to be forgotten that she had given birth to Agrippina the ill-renowned mother of Nero. For many years she appeared only peopled with monks and clergymen; but afterwards students and that multitude of unfortunate beings who live on public charity increased the number of her inhabitants. The most common noise at Cologne, indeed the one which drowned all the others, was the sound of bells. There were as many churches and convents within her walls as there are days in the year.

The principal church is the cathedral of St. Peter, one of the finest monuments of German architecture, though the edifice, such as the artist had designed it, has never been completed. The interior is divided by four rows of massive and lofty pillars, and is somewhat longer than that of the Strasburg cathedral. The principal altar is formed of a single block of black marble of Namur, on the Meuse, which was transported by the Rhine as far as Cologne. In the sacristy the faithful are shown an ivory wand which is said to have belonged to the apostle St. Peter. In one of the chapels is a magnificent sarcophagus of gilt silver, where are deposited the relics of the three kings\*. Through an opening made in the tomb, one can see three skulls: two are white, those of Gaspar and Balthazar, and the middle one, that of Melchior,

\* Now in the Cathedral.

is black. It will easily be conceived that these precious relics, sanctified by the veneration of several centuries, have a powerful effect on the imagination of the persons who behold them.

It was in this church that took place, with much pomp, the obsequies of Richmuth of Aducht, she was even interred here. According to the custom of that age, when death inspired feelings of piety and confidence, rather than of terror, her body was dressed in white silk and covered with flowers. A crown was placed on her head and her thin and livid fingers were adorned with precious rings.

She was put into a coffin lined with looking glasses, and laid in a little chapel, built in a vault under the choir. Several of her ancestors had preceded her thither. She had often visited their tombs, which she never could contemplate without a pious shudder. During divine service, she had more than once looked, through the apertures covered with glass, at their corpses darkened by time, which contrasted very strongly with their white skulls set in gold and jewels; and which made the difference more striking between what is perishable and what is lasting in nature.

The custom of embalming the dead had been for some time discontinued; there was beginning to be a want of room, and after Richmuth's interment, it was decided that there should be no other persons buried in the vault. She lay in her coffin in the rich costume we have described.

The gallant Aducht, her spouse, had followed her

to her last home, giving evident proofs of his profound grief. The enormous bell, weighing ten tons, placed in the steeple of the cathedral, had made the great city resound with its funereal knoll. The devout monks had chanted a *requiem*, without forgetting numerous tapers and incense offered to God. Now, pale and lifeless, she reposed in her coffin, and the immense clock, which is only wound up once a year, and which points out the hours of the day and the course of the stars, was the sole object that moved under the solitary and silent vault. The monotonous noise of its pendulum resounded above the mute tombs and the images of saints discoloured by time.

It was on an evening of the month of november, the weather being wet and gloomy, that Peter Bolf, sexton at the church of St. Peter, returned home after this splendid funeral. The poor devil had been married three years; he had one child, and his wife was on the point of being brought to bed of a second. He was very sad at heart when he set out to return to his miserable hovel, which was cold and damp, situated on the banks of the river, and exposed to the piercing winds of autumn. He was about to go directly to his wife; but little Mary, who was playing in the room with her doll, ran to meet him: — “Papa, said she to him, do not enter! the stork is arrived; it has brought me a little brother, it has bit mamma’s foot, and she is lying very sick in bed.”

Soon after his sister in law presented to him his new born son, a fine healthy infant. His wife, however, was

not well, and her state rendered disbursements necessary which far exceeded the means of the poor sexton. In his distress, he ran to Isaac, the jew, who, a short time before, had advanced him a small sum; but Bolf had nothing to leave him as a pledge; all his hopes were founded on the mercy of Isaac, and, on that, much reliance could not be placed. Bolf knocked at the usurer's door. The jew patiently listened to his ardent supplications, often interrupted by tears; but when the unfortunate man had done, he replied to him with the utmost composure, that he could not advance money on a child just born, and that tears and groans were a kind of security that would satisfy nobody. Bolf went out in a state of consternation and despair. He had more than once applied to rich prelates and obtained assistance from them, but it was now too late to go to them. The obscurity was complete, the wind high, and the snow falling in great flakes on the square of the cathedral. The miserable Bolf was so deeply affected by his misfortune, that he mistook his way on this place, that he had so often crossed, and found himself, unawares, under the porch of the church, exactly opposite the principal entrance. The clock was then striking a quarter before twelve. Suddenly a thought, rapid as lightning, crossed his mind. He saw his little Mary, his sick wife, his newly born child pressing with his lips a bosom dried by want; then the grand lady, dead Richmuth, reposing in her coffin, her fingers loaded with precious stones. "Of what use is all this gold to her?" thought he. "Is it a sin to rob the

dead to feed the living ?” Tormented by these ideas, he went home after having changed his mind a hundred times. The sight of his wife, ill and in want of every thing, put an end to his hesitation. He lit his dark lantern, put the bunch of keys in his pocket, and went out. On his way, the earth seemed to him to be trembling under his feet ; but the thought that he was more unhappy at home, sustained and urged him. He consoled himself at the sight of the bad weather, which aided him, in some degree, by forcing every body else to stay within doors. He stopped some time before the entrance, at last taking courage, he put the key in the old lock, turned it, and found himself alone in the church, the door of which he left half open.

Were we to state that he was not trembling as he entered at an unsteady pace the nave of the church, we should deny the sanctity of God and the religious sentiments that are never entirely banished from the heart of man. If the sight of a temple inspires every pious man with respectful fear, what must not he have felt, at that hour of the night, who came to trouble its silence and solitude with the intention of committing an odious sacrilege ? The hand in which he held the lantern was agitated by so violent a convulsive movement, that he was more than once afraid the light would go out and leave him in profound darkness.

At certain moments, he thought he felt some one pulling his clothes to hold him back, and his disordered vision made him fancy that the two guardian angels, sculptured on either side of the pulpit, were

flapping their wings to prevent his advance. At this solemn hour, a thousand marvellous tales recurred to his memory. He remembered the lugubrious story of the seminarist, who had boasted that he would not be afraid at midnight to go into the vaults of a church, and who was, as a proof of the performance of his promise, to stick a knife into the wood of a coffin. For a long time, those with whom he had laid the wager waited for him in vain; then one was bold enough to go down and look for him the next morning, when the unfortunate man was found dead! The fact was, he had stuck his knife through his cassock, and when he wanted to withdraw, he thought himself withheld by an avenging hand, and terror killed him! All this was not calculated to reassure Bolf. However, he endeavoured to get over his fright. — “All these tales are imaginary,” said he to himself; “the noise I fancy I hear, is that of my blood which is boiling in my veins. Have I not come here a hundred times without any thing happening to me?” — He forgot to add, that it was the first time he came with a culpable intention. All his efforts to inspire himself with courage were nevertheless useless.

Each time that he passed before the painting of the grand altar and the light of his lantern was reflected on the figures, their countenances seemed to him to become more severe and their eyes to assume a threatening expression. He was particularly struck by a picture which represented the martyrdom of St. Peter: the head of the victim was leaning on the earth, his

feet were in the air, the saint was fastened to a cross, blood was streaming from his face, and his eyes were full of ardent devotion, whilst the silvery locks of his hair swept the dust. It was impossible to behold a more imposing and touching sight.

At this moment, Bolf thought he heard the pendulum of the great clock moving quicker and more noisily. He drew back a few steps.—“Oh! my God,” thought he, “what an abominable sinner I am!—The glorious St. Peter suffered with resignation this painful martyrdom for his master Jesus Christ, and I betray him!” Suddenly, Bolf heard without, the cock crowing, and recollected that formerly Peter had denied the saviour three times before the cock had crowed.—“He was a man also,” said he to himself, “and yet he had not, like me, either a little Jane, or a little Mary to feed, he had not a new-born child ready to die of hunger on the breast of its mother.”—This idea revived his courage. He passed quickly before the grand altar, opened the door of the choir, and descending the staircase, he arrived in the long and narrow corridor of the vault, which had on either side a long line of coffins disposed in perfect order. He opened Richmuth’s chapel and found himself before the corpse. She was pale and livid. Bolf fancied he smelt under these thick vaults, the fetid odour of a body in a state of putrefaction. The spangles interwoven in her hair, and the rings that adorned her fingers acquired new brilliancy from the reflections of the light of the lantern. Bolf put his hand to the coffin to raise the lid, but he stopped,



struck with terror. The face of the dead body appeared to him to grow animated.—“If I had time,” said he to himself, “I should prefer to carry off some mummy! there are persons who transport, without remorse, mummies from Egypt. Successive ages have proscribed the rights of the dead and abrogated the respect due to corpses.” —“But,” thought he again, “the bodies lying there are those of Christians and brothers! The Egyptians always professed the greatest veneration for tombs; it is their enemies who break and plunder them.”

Notwithstanding the horror he was a prey to, in this sinister place, he recovered his strength and courage; Richmuth's coffin seemed to him the easiest to open; he tried with pincers, but met with more difficulties than he had expected. The apertures covered with glass were too small, and there was besides wire work inside of them. He was compelled to cut the wood outside. The noise he made, rendered him more sensible than any thing else of the sacrilege he was committing. Before, it was only the ornaments of the church that terrified him, now he trembled for his safety, and he would no doubt have abandoned his intention, had not the lock suddenly yielded to his efforts the moment he touched the spring. He boldly cast a look behind him, as if to ascertain if any one was observing him; perceiving nothing, he fell on his knees:—“Holy defunct,” said he, “pardon me! These ornaments are useless to thee; one of these jewels that adorn thy fingers is enough to give life and happiness to a whole family.” He thought the deceased looked at him with more benevolence. —

With the audacity of despair, he seized her hand to pull off one of the rings; but who can describe his terror, when he felt the icy fingers of the deceased clasp his wrist and hold him fast? By a vigorous effort he freed himself from her grasp, and, forgetting his lantern, fled with all speed. Fear finds its way in the dark. He crossed, with the swiftness of a hare, the cloisters, the choir, and would probably have got out without accident if, in his precipitation, he had not forgot the great stone of the devil in the middle of the church. If we are to believe tradition, this stone was thrown by the devil across the vault; one thing is certain, that it fell from the roof, and that, even at this day, the hole is shown which it made in the vault.

The unfortunate Bolf fell against this stone, just as the clock was striking twelve. The violence of this fall left him for some time stretched insensible upon the flags like a corpse. When he came to himself, fear gave him new wings, he went out of the church, ran across the square and went instantly to the burgo-master's. He thought only of his crime, and saw no other means of escaping the vengeance of the defunct than by a complete avowal.

He was obliged to knock a long time before the door was opened. All the servants were fast asleep; Aducht alone was up; he was sitting on the sofa, on which his beloved Richmuth had more than once reclined beside him. Her portrait was opposite him, he was gazing at it, and tears were trickling down his cheeks. The violent knocking of Bolf at last awa-

kened him from his melancholy reverie ; he opened the window and enquired who was at the door.

— “ It is I, worthy burgomaster, ” replied the sexton.

— “ Who is that I ? ”

— “ Peter Bolf, sexton of the church of St. Peter. I have something most important to tell you. ”

The burgomaster took a candle, went hastily down stairs and opened the door himself.

— “ What have you to communicate to me ? ” demanded he with a serious air.

Bolf fell on his knees before the magistrate and related all the details of his adventure. Aducht heard him with wonder. His anger was mingled with a sort of pity. He ordered Bolf not to speak to any body concerning what he had just related to him under pain of the severest punishment.

He resolved to go himself with Bolf into the vaults to examine the theatre of this extraordinary scene.

“ You might as well propose to me to go to the gallows, ” said the terrified sexton, “ as to commit a second time such a sacrilege and again to disturb the repose of the dead. ”

Aducht was burning with an ardent desire to enter the church. A ray of hope had penetrated into his heart. On the other hand, however, Bolf's fright made a lively impression on him. This man, paler than the corpses he had just visited, trembling from head to foot, drew so moving a picture of his distress, which his wife's accouchement had aggravated, that the bur-

gomaster sought to tranquilize him. He gave him several crowns to defray his most pressing wants, and dismissed him, repeating his commands about secrecy.

When he was gone, Aducht called an old servant, in whom he placed great confidence.

“ Art thou afraid of the dead, John ? ” said he.

“ No, Sir, ” laconically answered the servant ; “ they are less dangerous than the living. ”

“ Art thou bold enough to enter the cathedral at night ? ”

“ If my duty prescribes it, yes ! otherwise, no ! One must not make a joke of the respect due to the dead. ”

“ Dost thou believe in ghosts, John ? ”

“ Yes, Mr Burgomaster. ”

“ Art thou afraid of them ? ”

“ No, I confide in God, he protects me, and his Almighty power saves me. ”

“ Wilt thou come with me into the cathedral ? I have just had a miraculous dream. It appeared to me that my beloved wife was calling me from the top of the church steeple. ”

“ No doubt, ” said the valet, “ that fool Peter Bolf has been here and has disturbed your brain with his absurd fantasies ; the poor sexton sees ghosts every where. ”

“ Light thy lantern, John. Hold thy tongue, and follow me, I command thee. ”

“ Since you order it, Mr Burgomaster, I must obey, for you are my master and the first magistrate of the town. ”

Without further observations, John lit his lantern and followed Aducht.

The Burgomaster rapidly entered the church; but John, whose duty it was to precede him and give him light, stopped often to remonstrate with his master, so that the latter did not advance nearly so quick as he desired.

At the entrance shone the golden sticks placed above the door, to which one is added every year, to mark the length of each Elector's reign. "That's a good institution," said John, "we poor sinners have only to count these sticks to know how many years the Elector has governed us." Then as he passed near the magnificent sepulchres of brass and alabaster, John requested his master to explain to him the inscriptions. In short, he acted like a stranger who wished to profit by the opportunity to examine everything remarkable the church contained, though his whole life had been spent at Cologne and he had visited the cathedral more than a hundred times.

Aducht, who knew that all remonstrances would be useless, patiently supported the eccentricity of his old servant and merely answered his questions with as much brevity as possible. In this manner they arrived before the grand altar; but there, John suddenly stopped and the burgomaster could not prevail on him to advance.— "Make haste," cried Aducht, who was beginning to lose patience, and whose heart beat violently. "May all the angels of paradise assist us!" murmured John between his chattering teeth, while

with trembling hand he sought his beads. "What's the matter?" cried Aducht. "Look, Sir, who is that sitting on yon stone?"—"Where?"—"God forgive me, there is my lady! She is muffled in a long black cloak, she is there near the altar, drinking out of a silver cup." — John approached his lantern to the apparition. She was indeed sitting there, enveloped in a long robe of a dark colour, her thin and emaciated arm like that of a skeleton, was raising the silver cup to her lips. Even Aducht's courage began to be shaken. — "Richmuth," cried he. "In the name of our Saviour, I conjure thee, is it thou or thy spirit?" "Ah!" replied a feeble voice, "you buried me alive. I was going to faint; but a few drops of this wine have revived me. Take me home, dear Aducht! I am not dead, I am only weak; if thou dost not take pity on me, I shall die." — Aducht, trembling with emotion, rushed to the altar, and caught up his wife in his arms, who was restored to life in this miraculous manner.

After Bolf's flight, Richmuth had, in fact, awaked from her lethargy, and passed some terrible moments. Before she exactly knew where she was, she threw down the lantern left by the sexton by moving her trembling arms, and had again found herself in the dark. She then groped around her, but instead of finding warm sheets, she felt herself clothed in silk. She next touched her head and discovered the gilt ornaments with which it was adorned. She knew not what to think of this, for the obscurity was complete. After again examining every object that surrounded her she became

at last aware that she was reposing in a narrow coffin.

The gloomy clouds that veiled the sky now grew lighter and gave passage to the pale rays of the moon, which entered the vault through the narrow apertures and showed to the affrighted Richmuth where she was, who rose and wandered about the cloister uttering cries of distress. The appalling thought of having been buried alive occurred to her, — above all the fear of dying of hunger and of passing her last hours in the midst of all these corpses, raised her despair to the highest pitch. Bolf, in his fright, had shut the door; she knew that her cries could not be heard. The windows were too high for her to be able to reach them—and, besides, they opened upon a spot where no one ever passed. In all probability the tombs would not be visited for many days, and, in the interval, she feared lest she should die. She looked with horror upon the long row of leaden coffins, and the walls blackened by the smoke of funereal torches.

The only alleviation that her situation afforded her was that of recording the history of her sufferings on the planks of her coffin, by means of a long nail. The cold of the tombs in the mean time, chilled her frame—she sought for something in which she might wrap herself up,—at last she found the pall which covered her bier. She envelopped herself with it and its warmth gave her new strength. The moon now shed a vivid light and she knelt down before the window and prayed.

“Holy mother of God,” said she, “I can not at this moment prostrate myself before thy blessed

image. — But thy face is as mild and brilliant as that of the moon. I fancy it is thou, who thus benevolently lookest down upon me from heaven! Holy Mary, save me!”

Having finished this heartfelt prayer, Reichmuth rose, approached the door, and collected all her strength to open it. Conceive her joy on perceiving that it was only half closed! She then rushed into the church, but could not advance beyond the grand altar. A deathlike coldness palsied her limbs and she was afraid of fainting. Recollecting, however, as it were by heavenly inspiration, that the priests were in the habit of placing behind the altar the wine used in the celebration of the holy mysteries, she went thither, raised the cover of the silver vase, and found in it enough of the generous liquor to revive her exhausted strength.

No one perhaps ever partook of the holy communion with more fervour and piety than she did at that moment, for new life flowed through her veins. It was at this moment her husband discovered her. As to him, the terror which this apparition first inspired him with, was of short duration — he soon recovered himself and, joyfully bearing his beloved wife in his arms, adopted the fittest measures to conduct her home and to conceal the true cause of her resuscitation. Great was his joy, on the morrow, when the physician declared that all danger was over. It was impossible, therefore, for him to remain angry with poor Bolf, whose crime produced such happy consequences. Bolf, however, was



more severe in judging himself; he resigned his functions, being unwilling again to enter the church as sexton.

Richmuth and Aducht took care of him and his wife and stood godfather and godmother to his child. What happiness they felt, when, a fortnight afterwards, the pretty child was baptised. The cathedral was splendidly adorned for this ceremony; the organ resounded through the vaults, green branches decorated the pillars and the sacred pile was filled with inhabitants of the town. The two spouses returned thanks to providence, and resolved not to abandon their young protégé, whose birth had saved Richmuth. Thus it was that a sad burial ceremony was superseded by the joyful solemnity of a baptism. Aducht, on that day, did not spare his old Rhenish wine; he caused several casks to be carried to the market place, and had them broached that the people might partake of his joy.