

the Wood was very welcome to him, and when he con- sidered all the circumstances, he felt himself inclined to place the greatest confidence in her counsels. When the first stars twinkled in the heavens, he carried the hen to the cross, where his grand-father had fallen and had been buried. At the hour of mid- night he returned to the spot and found to his astonish- ment a deep and lucid pond, with a dress- trunk and by the bright sunlight he saw his grand- father's sword, which had been laid by his side in the grave, floating in it. He was caused to look for the magic hen but she had disappeared. Towards morning the Burgundians approached in three columns and prepared to storm the battlement, but the trench, made by the hen, deflected their guns and they were driven back with great slaughter. In the mean time Ianna made a deep impression on the heart of the knight of Windeck, nor was she in-

NOTBURGA.

More than a thousand years ago an Emperor held his brilliant court upon the Hornberg. In those days this now desolate spot resounded with mirth and revelry; even the still hours of night were frequently disturbed by the noisy roistings of the court.—But Notburga, the Emperor's only daughter, shared none of these amuse- ments, as they were ill suited to her refined mind and alarmed her piety by their close resemblance to heathen customs. Oppressed as was her breast by the most painful apprehensions, it was not possible for her to enjoy even the most innocent pas- times. Her Otho had gone to the wars and a year had

elapsed since any tidings of his fate had reached her.

When the Emperor remarked his once blooming daughter gradually fading away in all the budding beauty of early youth, he decided in his own mind, that the cause of her declining health could only be the result of some romantic attachment. He therefore called her to him one day and tenderly embracing her addressed her in these words. "Burga, my child, I can no longer bear to see thy silent tears! Let thy cheerfulness and gaiety return. See, I have chosen for thee a fitting consort, the young pagan Prince. Dry up thy tears therefore and let thy heart rejoice. Be prepared, my dear flower, in three days the bridegroom will be here."

This communication filled poor Notburga's soul with secret apprehensions, for she dared not open her heart, and confess the truth to her impetuous and stern father. When the night came, she stood at her casement and gazed upon the moon-illuminated clouds and upon the glittering waves of the Neckar, and then turned her eyes towards the gloomy woods which flanked the far distant mountains. Tears bedewed her cheeks and trickling thence descended on the ramparts. "My Otho, Oh, my Otho," she cried "has some foreign maiden's beauty driven thy Notburga's image from thy recollection? Has thy heart become colder in the land where the sun diffuses greater warmth? Oh, holy Virgin—" continued she, "perhaps he has fallen by the sword of the enemy and already sleeps beneath the green turf? Oh, that I was reposing by his side in the

cold grave ! Alas ! why should I remain alone in the world in which my heart is a stranger ? See how the roses of my youth are faded. Do they think that with my cheeks pale as the lily I can joyfully take my place amidst the guests as a bride, when the chosen of my heart is far away ! Oh that I had now but one faithful soul to lead me to a wilderness, where I might die far removed from the haunts of men, or live in remembrance of thee alone."

Her faithful old servant, Caspar heard her lamentation and pitied her affliction. He called to her therefore from his window below and promised to conduct her over the woody mountain to the secluded chapel of St. Michael, where this pious old man had passed the greater part of his life. "Then," said he "we will consult with him how you may avert this hateful marriage with the pagan Prince."

Thankfully did the distressed Notburga follow her aged guide. They had already passed unseen through the gates of the castle and were near the forest when they heard the sound of hoofs behind them. Uncertain as to whether they were pursued, Notburga looked anxiously round, but her fears were changed into an agreeable surprise when she saw the white stag, which Otho had caught and tamed while yet a fawn.

Bounding joyfully towards her, its countenance illumined with almost human intelligence, it seemed to proffer its services. Notburga sprung on the affectionate animal, which her beloved Otho had sometimes assisted her to mount in former times.

The stag no sooner felt her weight than it proceeded at a rapid pace down the mountain and disappeared with her among the trees of the woody declivity.

Before the trembling Caspar was sufficiently recovered from his astonishment, to think of hastening after or of calling to her, he suddenly saw the stag bound with his fair burden into the Neckar and swim to the opposite side. For awhile he saw Notburga's snowy arm beckoning to him in the moonlight, but she soon disappeared concealed by the dark foliage and the shade of night.

When her absence was made known to the Emperor and he found that none of his servants could give him any information respecting her, he dispatched messengers in all directions to search the banks of the Neckar, whilst he himself mounted his horse and rode out with his retainers to seek her in all the castles and cottages in the neighbourhood. But his search was vain.

The day after her flight, as old Caspar stood at his little window sorrowfully looking through the small round panes, Notburga's stag made its appearance and gazed at him in a supplicating manner. "Ah! couldst thou but speak!" said Caspar as he hastened to cut it a morsel of bread.

But the stag, instead of thankfully nibbling the food as was its custom, bent its head and stretched its antlers towards the trusty old servant. "Ah must I fix it upon them" said he, and he attached the bread to

its horns. The animal then struck its foot against the ground, as if in token of satisfaction and, having gratefully regarded him for a moment, sprang like an arrow from a bow towards the Neckar. On the following day Caspar again stood at his window and the stag returned and again presented his horns, to which a large oak leaf was affixed by an embroidered band which Caspar's wife knew to be Notburga's garter. On examining the leaf the following words were found to be scratched upon it in almost imperceptible characters: "Notburga thanks him who, thro' God's grace, sent her manna in the wilderness."

The tears chased each other down the aged cheeks of Caspar and Else as they deciphered these words. "I was not wrong," exclaimed the former, "the noble beast carried her the bread."

"Can it be possible, O merciful Saviour!" exclaimed Else, "that the tender maiden should have no other nourishment than our dry bread?" Whereupon she hastened to the buttery, fetched some of the best provisions and having fastened them in a cloth, affixed it to the stag's horns, who lost no time in bounding towards the Neckar. The generous animal continued his duties as messenger and purveyor to his lovely mistress with great regularity, and whenever he appeared the old people always furnished him with the best viands they could procure, in return for which he sometimes brought them back a few grateful words, written as formerly upon an oak leaf.

The spring was past and the cuckoo and nightin-

gale were silent, when Notburga's father returned home but without being able to discover any traces of his daughter. At length the visits of the white stag to the castle attracted his attention and as he once saw it standing near the window, while Caspar was loading it with a small basket of ripe summer apples gathered from Notburga's favourite tree; he suddenly approached and demanded an explanation of this strange proceeding.

The Emperor no sooner heard the miraculous story than he called for his swiftest steed, and bidding his train attend him he pursued the stag with all possible speed. He and his whole party drove their spurs into their horses flanks, and plunged after the stag into the rapid stream of the Neckar, which it had no sooner traversed than it disappeared among the underwood on the other side. The Emperor having reached the opposite bank sprang from his horse and followed the animal's track. But his progress was suddenly arrested, for, to his extreme amazement, he saw the stag incline its antlers towards a narrow crevice in the huge rock, whence a white arm instantly protruded itself and untied the basket.

“That must be my daughter's lily arm!” exclaimed the agitated parent. “To none else can such perfect symmetry belong.” Saying this he darted forward, and before Notburga could withdraw he seized her hand and retained it in his iron grasp. But when the nimble stag sprung on one side and the Emperor saw the pale countenance of his daughter, his heart

softened and he thus mildly addressed her. “Notburga, beloved child of my heart, return with me again to my castle. All shall be forgotten and thou shalt be mistress there as before.”

But Notburga answered: “The Lord has taken to himself all that could constitute my happiness in this world. I have therefore dedicated the rest of my short life to Heaven. Here must I henceforth remain to serve my God.” And notwithstanding her father’s earnest entreaties she calmly but firmly repeated the same words.

This excited the Emperor’s choler to such a degree that he attempted to drag her out of the cave by force, but she placed her other hand upon the simple cross, which she had herself fashioned of pliant willow branches. Enraged at her resistance he pulled with increased violence — until at last, horrible to relate! the maiden’s arm separated from her body and remained in his hands. Both he and all his followers were struck with horror at this sight. Blanched with terror and amazement the whole party turned their backs and fled, nor was there one that dared again approach the cave, where the unfortunate Notburga lay bleeding and helpless upon the rock-strewed earth.

But the Lord took compassion upon her and sent a snake, which brought her a bundle of medicinal herbs wherewith to heal the wounds. Inspired and aided by heaven she applied these to the parts and quickly recovered.

From that time forth she was venerated as a saint by all the neighbouring country and whenever a penitent sinner came to the hermit of St. Michaels chapel, the pious monk sent them on a pilgrimage to the blessed Notburga, who forthwith prayed for them and they never failed to return home light hearted and consoled.

At length, at the close of a fine Autumn, as the leaves began to fall from the trees and the variegated tints of the mountains announced the approach of winter, Notburga fell ill and the hand of death smote her. Then it was that heavenly music was heard in the air, and the cherubim descended from heaven on their resplendent wings and bore away the soul of the maiden to a resting place of eternal bliss. But ere her spirit utterly departed she raised her eyes towards the clouds and with a sigh joyfully exclaimed: "Life of my life, I see thou art already there and dost summon me to join thee. I come—I come."—Her beatified soul then quitted its earthly prison and ascended to the abode of never dying happiness. In the mean time the angels wrapped her mortal remains in rich garments and set a royal diadem upon her head. They then placed the coffin on a new carriage, to which they harnessed two milk white oxen, which had never borne the yoke. And when the people collected from the neighbouring valleys to escort the holy relics to their place of rest, the angels of God accompanied the procession, filling the air with a chorus of heavenly music.

Of a sudden, however, the oxen became restive

and refused to advance. This was looked upon as a sign from the Heaven, so the body was lifted from the car and committed to the earth upon the spot where they stood. There the Emperor erected a church and caused a monument to be placed in it to the memory of his sainted child. Notburga's stag was never seen again.

LANDES-
UND STADT-
BIBLIOTHEK
DUSSELDORF