

VIII.

BETHLEHEM.

Ros. O Jupiter! how weary are my spirits!

Touch. I care not for my spirits, if my legs were not weary.

As You Like It.

HAVING finished with the western approach to the White Mountains, I was now at liberty to retrace my route up the Ammonoosuc Valley, which so abounds in picturesque details—farms, hamlets, herds, groups of pines, maples, torrents, roads feeling their way up the heights—to that anomaly of mountain towns, Bethlehem. Thanks to the locomotive, the journey is short. The villages of Bath, Lisbon, Littleton, are successively entered; the same flurry gives a momentary activity to each station, the same faces crowd the platforms, and the same curiosity is exhibited by the passengers, whose excitement receives an increase with every halt of the laboring train.

Bethlehem is ranged high up, along the side of a mountain, like the best china in a cupboard. The crest of Mount Agassiz¹ rises behind it. Beneath the village the ground descends, rather abruptly, to the Ammonoosuc, which winds, through matted woods, its way out of the mountains. There are none of those eye-catching gleams of water which so agreeably diversify these interminable miles of forest and mountain land.

It is only by ascending the slopes of Mount Agassiz that we can secure a stand-point fairly showing the commanding position of Bethlehem, or where its immediate surroundings may be viewed all at once. It is so situated, with respect to the curvature of this mountain, that at one end of the village they do not know what is going on at the other. One

¹ In the valley of the Aar, at the head of the Aar glacier, in Switzerland, is a peak named for Agassiz, who thus has two enduring monuments, one in his native, the other in his adopted land. The eminent Swiss scientist spent much time among the White Mountains.

end revels in the wide panorama of the west, the other holds the unsurpassed view of the great peaks to the east.

Bethlehem has risen, almost by magic, at the point where the old highway up the Ammonoosuc is intersected by that coming from Plymouth, the Pemigewasset Valley, and the Profile House. In time a small roadside hamlet naturally clustered about this spot. Dr. Timothy Dwight, the pioneer traveller for health and pleasure among these mountains, passed through here in 1803. Speaking of the appearance of Bethlehem, he says: "There is nothing which merits notice, except the patience, enterprise, and hardihood of the settlers which have induced them to stay upon so forbidding a spot; a magnificent prospect of the White Mountains; and a splendid collection of other mountains in their neighborhood, particularly on the south-west." It was then reached by only one wretched road, which passed the Ammonoosuc by a dangerous ford. The few scattered habitations were mere log-cabins, rough and rude. The few planting-fields were still covered with dead trees, stark and forbidding, which the settlers, unable to fell with the axe, killed by girdling, as the Indians did.

From this historical picture of Bethlehem in the past, we turn to the Bethlehem of to-day. It is turning from the post-rider to the locomotive. Not a single feature is recognizable except the splendid prospect of the White Mountains, and the magnificent collection of other mountains, which call forth the same admiration to-day. Fortunate geographical position, salubrity, fine scenery—these, and these alone, are the legitimate cause of what may be termed the rise and progress of Bethlehem. All that the original settlers seem to have accomplished is to clear away the forests which intercepted, and to make the road conducting to the view.

It is the position of Bethlehem with respect to the recognized points or objects of interest that gives to it a certain strategic advantage. For example, it is admirably situated for excursions north, south, east, or west. It is ten miles to the Profile, twelve to the Fabyan, seventeen to the Crawford, fifteen to the Waumbek, and eighteen to the base of Mount Washington. One can breakfast at Bethlehem, dine on Mount Washington, and be back for tea; and he can repeat the experience with respect to the other points named as often as inclination may prompt. Moreover, the great elevation exempts Bethlehem from the malaria and heat of the valleys. The air is dry, pure, and invigorating, rendering

it the paradise of those invalids who suffer from periodical attacks of hay-fever. Lastly, it is new, or comparatively new, and possesses the charm of novelty—not the least consideration to the thousands who are in pursuit of that and that only.

Bethlehem Street is the legitimate successor of the old road. This is a name *sui generis* which seems hardly appropriate here, although it is so commonly applied to the principal thoroughfares of our inland New England villages. It has a spick-and-span look, as if sprung up like a bed of mushrooms in a night. And so, in fact, it has; for Bethlehem as a summer resort dates only a few years back its sudden rise from comparative obscurity into the full blaze of popular fame and favor. The guide-book of fifteen years ago speaks of the *one* small but comfortable hotel, kept by the Hon. J. G. Sinclair. In fact, very little account was made of it by travellers, except to remark the magnificent view of the White Mountains on the east, or of the Franconia Mountains on the south, as they passed over the then prescribed tour from North Conway to Plymouth, or *vice versa*.

But this newness, which you at first resent, besides introducing here and there some few attempts at architectural adornment, contrasts very agreeably with the ill-built, rambling, and slip-shod appearance of the older village-centres. They are invariably most picturesque from a distance. But here there is an evident effort to render the place itself attractive by making it beautiful. Good taste generally prevails. I suspect, however, that the era of good taste, beginning with the incoming of a more refined and intelligent class of travellers, communicated its spirit to two or three enterprising and sagacious men,¹ who saw in what Nature had done an incentive for their own efforts. We walk here in a broad, well-built thoroughfare, skirted on both sides with hotels, boarding-houses, and modern cottages, in which three or four thousand sojourners annually take refuge. All this has grown from the "one small hotel" of a dozen years ago. Shade-trees and grass-plots beautify the way-side. An immense horizon is visible from these houses, and even the hottest summer days are rendered endurable by the light airs produced and set in motion by the oppressive heats of the valley. The sultriest season is, therefore, no bar to out-of-door exercise for persons of average health,

¹ Such, for example, as the Hon. J. G. Sinclair, Isaac Cruft, Esq., and ex-Governor Howard of Rhode Island.

rendering walks, rambles, or drives subject only to the will or caprice of the pleasure-seeker. But in the evening all these houses are emptied of their occupants. The whole village is out-of-doors, enjoying the coolness or the panorama with all the zest unconstrained gratification always brings. The multitudes of well-dressed promenaders surprise every newcomer, who immediately thinks of Saratoga or Newport, and their social characteristics. Bethlehem, he thinks, must be the ideal of those who would carry city or, at least, suburban life among the mountains; who do not care a fig for solitude, but prefer to find their pleasures still connected with their home life. They are seeing life and seeing nature at the same time.

Sauntering along the street from the Sinclair House, a strikingly large and beautiful prospect opens as we come to the Bellevue. Here the road, making its exit from the village, descends to the Ammonoosuc. The valley broadens and deepens, exposing to view all the town of Littleton, picturesquely scattered about the distant hill-sides. Its white houses resemble a bank of daisies. The hills take an easy attitude of rest. Six hundred feet below us the bottom of the valley exhibits its rich savannas, interspersed with cottages and groves. Above its deep hollow the Green Mountains glimmer in the far west. "Ah!" you say, "we will stop here."

Let us now again, leaving the Sinclair House behind, ascend the road to the Profile. It is not so much travelled as it was before the locomotive, in his coat-of-mail, sounded his loud trumpet at the gates of Franconia. A mile takes us to the brow of the hill. We hardly know which way to look first. Two noble and comprehensive views present themselves. To the left Mount Agassiz rears his commanding peak. In front of us, across a valley, is the great, deeply-cloven Franconia Notch. Lafayette is superb here. Now the large, compact mass of Moosehillock looms on the extreme right, together with all those striking objects lately studied or observed from the village of Franconia, which so quietly reposes beneath us. But this landscape properly belongs to the environs of Bethlehem, and never is it so incomparably grand as when the summits are fitfully revealed, battling fiercely with storm-clouds. Every phase of the conflict is watched with eager attention. Seeing all this passion above, it calls up a smile to look down at the unbroken and unconscious tranquillity of the valley.

Facing now in the direction of Bethlehem, the eye roves over the



MOUNT LAFAYETTE, FROM BETHLEHEM.

broad basin of the Ammonoosuc for many miles up and down. The hills of Littleton, Whitefield, Dalton, Carroll, and Jefferson bend away from the opposite side; and over the last the toothed Percy Peaks¹ rise blue and clear

¹ The twin Percy Peaks, which we saw in the north, rise in the south-east corner of Stratford. Their name was probably derived from the township now called Stark, and formerly Percy. The township was named by Governor Wentworth in honor of Hugh, Earl of North-

at the point where the waters of the Connecticut and the Androscoggin, approaching each other, conduct the Grand Trunk Railway out of the mountains. The west is packed with the high summits of the Green Mountain chain. The great White Mountains are concealed, as yet, by the swell of the mountain down whose side the road conducts to the village. "This," you exclaim, "this is the spot where we will pitch our tents!" But there is no public-house here, and we are reluctantly forced to descend. In proportion as we go down, this seemingly limitless panorama suffers a partial eclipse. The landscape changes from the high-wrought epic to the grand pastoral, if such a distinction may be applied to differing forms of mountain scenery. This approach is, without doubt, the most striking introduction to Bethlehem. It is curiously instructive, too, as regards the relative merits of successive elevations, each higher than the other, as proper view-points.

A third ramble is altogether indispensable before we can say that we know Bethlehem of the Hills. The direction is now to the east, by the road to the Crawford House, or Fabyan's, or the Twin. We continue along the high plateau, in the shade of sugar-maples or Lombardy poplars, to the eastern skirt of the village, the houses getting more and more unfrequent, until we come upon the edge of the slope to the Ammonoosuc, where the road to Whitefield, Lancaster, and Jefferson, leaving the main thoroughfare, drops quietly down into Bethlehem Hollow. No envious hill now obstructs the truly "magnificent view." Through the open valley the lordly mountains again inthrall us with the might of an overpowering majesty.

This locality has taken the name of the great hotel erected here by Isaac Cruft, whose hand is visible everywhere in Bethlehem. The Maplewood, as it is called, easily maintains at its own end the prestige of Bethlehem for rapid growth. When I first visited the place, in 1875, I found a modest roadside hostelry accommodating sixty guests; five years later a mammoth structure, in which six hundred could be accommodated, had risen, like Aladdin's palace, on the same spot. Instead of our little musical entertainment, our mock-trial, our quiet rubber of whist, of an evening, there were readings, lectures, balls, masquerades, theatricals, *musicales*, for every day of the week.

umberland, who figured in the early days of the American Revolution. The adjoining township of Northumberland is also commemorative of the same princely house.

But Bethlehem is emphatically the place of sunsets. In this respect no other mountain resort can pretend to equal it. From no other village are so many mountains visible at once; at no other has the landscape such length and breadth for giving full effect to these truly wonderful displays. More because the sublimity of the scene deserves a permanent chronicle than from any confidence in my own ability to reproduce it, I attempt in black and white to describe one of unparalleled intensity of color, one that may never be repeated, certainly never excelled, while the sun, the heavens, and the mountains shall last.

A cold drizzle having set in on the day of my arrival, the mountains were invisible when I rose in the morning. I looked, but they were no longer there. I was much vexed at the prospect of being storm-bound, or of making under compulsion a sojourn I had beforehand resolved to make at my own good will and pleasure. So strongly is the spirit of resistance developed in us. After a critical investigation of the weather, it crossed my mind like an intuition that something extraordinary was preparing behind the enormous masses of clouds clinging like wet draperies to the skirts of the mountains, forming an impenetrable curtain, now and then slowly lifted by the fresh north wind, now suddenly distended or collapsing like huge sails, but noiselessly and mysteriously as the ghostly canvas of the *Flying Dutchman*.

Toward the middle of the afternoon, the wind having freshened, the lower clouds broke apart here and there—just enough to reveal to us that ever-new picture of the White Mountains, beautifully robed in fresh snow, above the darker line of forest; but so thoroughly were the high summits blended with the dull silver-gray of upper sky that the true line of separation defied the keenest scrutiny to detect it. This produced a curious optical illusion. Extended sumptuously along the crest-line, rivalling the snow itself, a bank of white clouds rendered the deception perfect, since just above them began that heavy and dull expanse which overspread and darkened the whole heavens, thus imperfectly delineating a second line of summits mounting to a prodigious height. They seemed miles upon miles high.

Up stretched this gigantic and shadowy phantasm of towers, domes, and peaks, illimitably, as if mountains and heavens were indeed come together in eternal alliance. At the same time the finger dipped in water could trace a more conclusive outline on glass than the eye could find here. The summits, a little luminous, emitted a cold, spectral glare. It

gave you a chill to look at them. No sky, no earth, no deep gorges, no stark precipices—no anything except that dead wall, so sepulchral in its gray gloom that equally mind and imagination failed to find one familiar outline or contour. The true peaks seemed clouds, and the clouds peaks. But this phantasm was only the prologue.

At the hour of sunset all the lower clouds had disappeared. The upper heavens now wore that deep grape-purple impervious to light or warmth, and producing the effect of a vast dome hung with black. The storm replaced the azure tint of the sky with the most sombre color in its laboratory. The light visibly waned. The icy peaks still reflected a boreal glitter. But in the west these funereal draperies fell a little short of touching the edge of the horizon—a bare hand's-breadth—leaving a crevice filled with golden light, pure and limpid as water, clear and vivid as winnowed sunshine. The sun's eye would soon be applied to this peep-hole. A feverish impatience seized us. We could see the people at their doors and in the street standing silent and expectant, with their faces turned to the heavens. From a station near Cruft's Ledge we watched intently for the moment when this splendid light, concentrated in one level sheet, should fall upon the great mountains.

In a few seconds a yellow spot of piercing brilliancy appeared in this narrow band of light. One look at it was blinding; a second would have paralyzed the optic nerve. Mechanically we put up our hands to shut it out. Imagine a stream of molten iron—hissing-hot and throwing off fiery spray—gushing from the side of a furnace! Even, that can give but a feeble idea of the unspeakable intensity of this last sun-ray. It blazed. It flooded us with a suffocating effulgence. Suppose now this cataract of liquid flame suddenly illuminating the pitchy darkness of a cavern in the bowels of the earth. The effect was electrifying. Confined between the upper and nether expanse—dull earth and brooding sky—rendered tenfold more dazzling by the blackness above, beneath, the sun poured upon the great mountains one magnificent torrent of radiance. In an instant the broad-land was deluged with the supreme glories of that morning when the awful voice of God uttered the sublime command,

“Let there be light, and there was light.”

An electric shock awoke the torpid earth, transfigured the mountains. On swept the mighty wave, shedding light, and warmth, and splendor

where a moment before all was dark, cold, and spiritless. Like Ajax before Troy, the giant hills braced on their dazzling armor. Like Achilles's shield, they threw back the brightness of the sun. Every tree stood sharply out. Every cavern disclosed its inmost secrets. Twigs glittered diamonds, leaves emitted golden rays. All was ravishingly beautiful.

This superb exhibition continued while one might count a hundred. Then all the lower mountains took on that ineffable purple that baffles description. Starr King, Cherry Mountain, were resplendent. As if the livid and thick-clustered clouds above had been trodden by invisible feet, these peaks seemed drenched with the juice of the wine-press. The high summits, buried in snow and cloud, were yet coldly impassive, but presently, little by little, the light crept up and up. Now it seized the topmost pinnacles. Heavens, what a sight! Ineffable glory seemed quenched in the sublime terrors of that moment. On our right the Twin and Franconia mountains glowed, from base to summit, like coals of fire. The lower forests were wrapped in flame. Then all the snowy line of peaks, from Adams to Clinton, turned blood-red. No pale rose or carnation tints, as in those enrapturing summer sunsets so often witnessed here. The stupendous and flaming mountains of hell seemed risen before us, clothed with immortal terrors. We stood rooted to the spot, like men who saw the judgment-day dawning, the solid earth consuming, before their doubting eyes. Everlasting, unquenchable fires seemed encompassing us about. Nothing more weird, more unearthly, or more infernal was ever seen. Even the country-people, stolid and indifferent as they usually are, regarded it with mingled stupefaction and dismay.

The drama approached its climax. Before we were aware, the valley grew dark. But still, the granite peaks of Lafayette, and of that admirable pyramid, Mount Garfield, which even the greater mountain cannot reduce to impotence, glowed like iron drawn from the fire. Their incandescent points, thrust upward into the black gulf of the heavens, towered above the blacker gulfs below unspeakably. By degrees the scorching heat cooled. The great Franconia spires successively paled. But long after they seemed reduced to ashes, the red flame still lingered upon the snows of Mount Washington. At last that, too, faded out. Life was extinct. The great summit took on a wan and livid hue. Night kindly spread her mantle over the lifeless form of the mountain, which still disclosed its larger outlines rigid, majestic, even in death.

Twilight succeeded—twilight steeped in silence and coolness, in the thousand odors exhaled by the teeming earth. One by one the birds hushed their noisy twitter. Overcome by their own perfumes, flowers shut their dewy petals and drooped their tender little heads. The river seemed a drowsy voice rising from the depths of the forest, complaining that it alone should toil on while all else reposed. With night comes the feeling of immensity. With sleep the conviction that we are nothing, and that the order of nature disturbs itself in nothing for us. If we awake, well; if not, well again. What if we should never wake? One such splendid pageant as I have attempted to describe instinctively quenches human pride. It is true, a sunset is in itself nothing, but it compels you to admit that the world moves for itself, not for you. Believe it not a gorgeous display in which you, the critical spectator, assist, but the signal that the day ends and the night cometh. A spectacle that can arouse the emotions of joy, fear, hope, suspense—nothing? Perhaps. God knows.

There are very pleasant walks, affording fine views of all the highest mountains, around the eastern slope or to the summit of the mountain rising at the back of the hotel. The bare but grassy crest of this mountain, one of my favorite haunts, enabled me to reconnoitre my route in advance up the valley, and to look over into the yet unvisited region of Jefferson, or back again, at the environs of Franconia. The glory that pours down upon these hills, the vales they infold, the wild streams, the craggy mountain spurs, the soft, velvety clearings that turn their dimpled cheeks to be kissed by the sunshine, may all be seen and fully enjoyed from this spot.

The heights behind us are well-wooded on the summits, but below this belt of woodland extends a broad band of sunny clearings checkered with fields of waving grain. These fields are among the highest cultivated lands in New England. Long tillage was necessary to reduce this refractory soil to subjection. Farther down, toward the railway-station, the pastures are so encumbered with stones that a sheep would turn from them in dismay. To mow among these stones a man would have to go down on his knees.

There is a beautiful orchard of sugar-maples down the road to the Hollow; but it always makes me sad to see these trees standing with their naked sides pierced and bleeding from gaping wounds.

At the corner of this road my attention was arrested by a sign-board

planted in front of an unpainted cottage, behind which rose a clump of magnificent birches. I walked over to see what it could mean. The sign-board bore the name "Sir Isaac Newton Gay," in large black letters. Here was a spur to curiosity! A knight, or at least a baronet, living in humble seclusion, yet parading his quality thus in the face of the world! Going to the gate, my perplexity increased upon seeing the grass-plot in front of the dwelling literally covered with broken glass, lamp-chimneys, bits of colored china, bottles of every imaginable shape and size stuck upright upon sticks, interspersed with lumps of white quartz. Some cabalistic meaning, doubtless, attached to the display. This brilliant rubbish sparkled in the sun, filling the enclosure with the cheap glitter of a pawnbroker's shop-window. The thing so far announced a little eccentricity, at least, so I made bold to push my investigation still farther, and was rewarded by finding, piled against the trunk of a tree, at the back of the house, a heap of skulls of animals as high as my head. The recluse's intent was now plain. Here was a lesson that he who ran might read. The rubbish in the front yard illustrated the pomp, glitter, and emptiness of life; the monument of skulls its true estate, divested of all false show or pretence. Without doubt this was a philosopher worthy of his name.

I was admitted by a singular-looking being, with dry, straight, lank hair, weak features, watery eyes, and a shuffling gait. Some accident having partially closed one eye, gave him a look of preternatural wisdom. He was ready to give an opinion on any subject under the sun, no matter how difficult or abstruse, as soon as broached, and stroked his scanty beard while doing so with evident self-complacency. I had a moment to see that the walls were papered with old handbills of county fairs, travelling shows, and the like, the floor covered with patches of carpet as various as Joseph's coat, when my man began a formula similar to what the Bearded Lady drawls out or the Tattooed Man recites through his nose to gaping rustics at a country muster, at ten cents a head. He told where he was born, how old he was, and how long he had lived in Bethlehem. At the proper moment I put my hand in my pocket and took out a dime, which he thankfully accepted, and dropped inside a broken coffee-pot.

"Sir," I observed, "seeing you are American-born, I infer your title must have been conferred by some foreign potentate?"

"No; that is my name."

"But," I pursued, "has it not an unrepugnant sound in a country where titles are regarded with distrust, not to say aversion?"

"I tell you it is my name," with some heat; "I was named for the great *Sir* Isaac Newton."

"Your pardon, Sir Isaac. May I ask if you inherit the genius of your distinguished namesake?"

"Well, yes, to some extent I do; I philosophize a good deal. I read a good many books folks leaves here, besides what newspapers I can pick up; but you see it costs a lifetime to get knowledge."

Jaques, the misanthrope, wandering in the Forest of Arden, was not more astonished at Touchstone's philosophy than I at this answer. "Very true," I assented. "What is your philosophy of life?"

He tapped his forehead with his forefinger, but it was only too evident the apartment was untenanted. He remained a moment or two as if in deep thought, and then began,

"Well, I'm eighty-six years of age, come next July."

My flesh began to creep: he was beginning, for the third time, his eternal formula. The hermit, fumbling a red handkerchief, resumed,

"I can say I've never wanted for necessaries, and don't propose to give myself any trouble about it." And then he expatiated on the folly of fretfulness.

The Hermit of Bethlehem, as he is called, but who opens his door wide for the world to enter, is a very ordinary sort of hermit indeed. Still, his very feebleness of intellect, his vanity even, should be a shield instead of a target for those who, like myself, are lured by the unmeaning trumpery at his door, which has no other significance in the world than a childish passion for objects that glitter in the sun.

The constituents of hotel life do not belong to any locality: they are universal. It is curious to see here people who have spent half their lives in India, or China, or Australia moving about among the untravelled with the well-bred ease and adaptation to circumstances that newly-fledged tourists can neither understand nor imitate. It is very droll, too, that people who have lived ten years in the same street, at home, without knowing each other, meet here for the first time.

I beg to introduce another acquaintance picked up by the roadside while walking from the Twin Mountain House to Bethlehem. Had I been driving, the incident would still have waited for a narrator.

Climbing the hill-side at a snail's pace was a peddler's cart, drawn by

a scrubby little white horse, and bearing a new broom for an ensign, which seemed to symbolize that this petty trader meant to sweep the road clean of its loose cash. The sides of the cart were gayly decorated with pans, basins, dippers by the dozen, and bristled with knickknacks for barter or ready money, from a gridiron to a door-mat. The movement of the vehicle over the stony road kept up a lively clatter, which announced its coming from afar. There being, for the moment, no house in sight, the proprietor was engaged in picking raspberries by the roadside.

The peddler—well, he was little, and stubby too, like his horse, for whom he had dismounted to lighten the pull up-hill. The animal seemed to know his business, for he stopped short as often as he came to a water-bar, blew a cloud from his nostrils, champed his bit, and distended his sides so alarmingly with a long, deep respiration, that the patched-up harness seemed in danger of bursting. He then glanced over his shoulder toward his master, shook his head deprecatingly, and, with a deep sigh, moved on.

The little merchant of small wares and great had on a rusty felt hat, rakishly set on one side of his bullet head, and a faded olive-green coat, rather short in the skirts, to conceal two patches in his trousers. The latter were tucked into a pair of dusty boots very much turned up at the toes. His face was a good deal sunburnt, and his hair, eyebrows, and mustache were the color of the road—sandy. Except a pair of scissors, the points of which protruded from his left-hand vest-pocket, I perceived no weapon offensive or defensive about him. He was a very innocent-looking peddler indeed.

As I was passing him he held out a handful of ripe fruit. The hand was disfigured with an ugly cicatrice: it was rather dirty. He accompanied the offer with an invitation to “hop on” his cart and ride. This double civility emanated from a gentleman and a peddler.

The walk from Crawford’s to Bethlehem is rather fatiguing; but I said, as in duty bound, “No” (I said it because the thought of riding through Bethlehem Street on the top of a peddler’s cart appeared ridiculous in my eyes—with shame I confess it), “thank you; your horse already has all he can pull, and I have only a mile or two farther to go.”

The peddler then fell into step with me, taking a long, even stride that brought back old recollections. I said,

"You have been a soldier."

"How know you dat?"

"By your gait—you do not walk, you march: by that sabre-cut on your right hand."

"Ha! you goot eyes haf; but it a payonet vas."

Believing I saw a veteran of our great civil war, I asked, with undisguised interest,

"Where did you serve? Where were you wounded?"

"Von year und half in war mit Danemark, von year und half mit Oustria, und two mit Vrance."

I looked at him again. What! That undersized, insignificant appearing little chap, whom I could easily have pitched into the ditch, he a soldier of Sadowa, of Metz, of Paris. Bah!

"So, the wars over, you emigrated to America?"

"Right away. Ven I get home from Baris I tell Linda, my vife, 'Look here, Linda: I been soldier six year. Now I plenty fighting got. Dere's two hunder thaler in the knapsack. Shut your mouth tight, open your eye close, and we get out of dis double-quig.' She say 'Where I go?' und I tell her the U-nited States, by hell, befor anoder var come. She begin to cry, I begin to schwear, und we settle it right away."

I asked if he minded telling how he came by the wound in his hand. This is what he told me in his broken English:

When Marshal Bazaine made his last desperate effort to shake off the deadly gripe the Prussians had fastened upon Metz, a battalion of *tirailleurs* suddenly surrounded an advanced post established by the Germans in the suburbs. The morning was foggy, and the surprise complete. The picket had hardly the time to run to their arms before they were driven back pell-mell on the reserve, amid a shower of balls. The reserve took refuge in a stone building surrounded by a thick hedge, maintaining an irregular fire from the windows. One of the last to cross the court-yard, with the French at his heels, was our German. Before he could gain the friendly shelter of the house he stumbled and fell headlong, his gun flying through the air as he came to the ground, so that he was not only prostrate but disarmed.

Half-stunned, he scrambled to his knees just as his nearest pursuer made a savage lunge with his sabre-bayonet. The Prussian instinctively grasped it. While trying thus to parry the deadly thrust, the keen

weapon pierced his hand, and he was a second time borne to the earth, or, rather, pinned to it by his adversary's bayonet.

"*Rendez-vous Allemand, cochon!*" screamed the Frenchman, bestriding the little Prussian with a look of mortal hatred.

"*Je ne fous combrends,*" replied the wounded man, drawing a revolver with his free hand and shooting his enemy dead. "I couldn't help it, I was so mad," finished the ex-soldier, running to serve two of his customers, who stood waiting for him at a gate by the roadside. I left him exhibiting ribbons, edgings, confectionery—heaven knows what!—with all the volubility of an experienced shopman.