

**LIGHTS AND SHADOWS
OF GERMAN LIFE; IN
TWO VOLUMES; VOL. I**

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Lights and Shadows of German Life; In Two Volumes; Vol. I by M. M. Montgomery

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M. M. MONTGOMERY

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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

ABRAHAM LANSING.

OF

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GERMAN LIFE.

M. M. Montgomery

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.

1838.

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THESE VOLUMES

ARE GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY OFFERED TO

JOANNA BAILLIE

AND

HER SISTER,

IN MEMORY OF THE PLEASANT HOURS

SPENT AT THEIR FIRESIDE, BY

M. M. M.

THE
MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF A MAN
OF PEACE.

SUNDAY, the 6th of October, 1806, was the 39th anniversary of my birth. I resided at Berlin, where my learning and poverty had promoted me to a small but lofty garret, in a retired part of the city, where lodgings were little in request, and consequently cheap.

I was awakened by the ringing of the church bells; and a cold shudder came over me at the thought that one more revolution of the earth would bring with it my fortieth birth-day.

In his nineteenth year, the youth is ambitious of the honours of the twentieth, because he feels himself sufficiently qualified for many things for which our law deems him unripe. At nine-and-twenty he reflects, with some painful sensations, that the thirtieth must close the frivolous career of pleasure. But woe to him who, ten years later, sees the approach of forty; sans place, sans hope, sans wife, "sans every thing."

This was my lamentable plight—but not through my own fault. I now resolved, never, as long as I should be condemned to "single blessedness," to acknowledge more or less than thirty-nine. With this resolution I jumped out of bed, and took my Sunday

sult from its peg in the press which contained all my worldly goods; and while dressing, I poured forth the bitterness of my soul, in audible murmurs, at my untoward fate. "On the brink of forty," said I, "and still alone!—Still a poor cureless clergyman, without a prospect of preferment!—not even able to obtain an appointment as village schoolmaster! What is then the use of all my learning—my thirty years' industry—and a blameless life? Here I am a solitary man, without relatives or patrons! Day after day I trudge wearily from street to street, teaching Latin and Greek to unwilling urchins, for the scanty stipend which barely suffices to feed and clothe me. How often am I without pupils! How often is my pen my only resource! The labours of my muse are still worse remunerated than my lessons. 'Tis true, the editors for whom I write treat me with urbanity, and even sometimes invite me to dinner—they give me praise, but grudge me money!—Bright dreams of my youth! Flattering prognostications of my admiring parents! why have ye deceived me!—and thou—good, kind, Frederica!—thou, who hast been faithful to me in vain! Thy fate is like the Alpine flower,—to bloom and fade unseen!"

At this thought the tears burst from my eyes. I abandoned myself to sorrow, and sobbed like a child. Frederica had been engaged to me nine years. Pious, gentle, and enduring, she had been thrown upon the wide world as poor and friendless as myself: and I was the only being in it to whom she could look for comfort. Her father, the President Kellerman, had died suddenly, leaving more debts than property; and his widow lived in a little town near the Polish frontier upon the scanty pittance which Frederica could save out of her salary, as companion to a superannuated baroness at Berlin. Though my spirits were naturally buoyant, and though I had much less to complain of than Frederica;—for, at least, I was my own master—and had plenty of leisure which I could employ as I

pleased—whilst she, poor girl, was compelled to submit, from morning till night, to the tyrannical whims of her old baroness, in consideration of the salary which enabled her to maintain an infirm parent;—yet I should sometimes have sunk into despondency, but for the support I derived from the example of her cheerful, patient, and high-minded resignation.

This melancholy train of thought continued till it was broken by the postman knocking at my door, with a thick letter, for which he demanded five groschen—a heavy draft on my meagre finances.

I threw myself into my straw arm-chair to indulge myself, as was my custom, for a quarter of an hour in examining the seal and superscription, and guessing at the writer.

There is a pleasure in thus playing at bo-peep with some hope, to be fulfilled or destroyed by the letter in your hand. It was now a question with me whether I should open the letter or lay it aside till the morrow—for I particularly dislike bad news on my birthday—it is an ill omen for the ensuing year. Misfortune renders a man superstitious.—I consulted the buttons of my coat—“Yes—no—yes—no.” The oracle was unfavourable—but curiosity, in the borrowed garb of heroism, bade me defy my fate.

Away went the seal—and as I read, my eyes became dim with tears. I threw down the letter to recover myself, and then read on to the end. “Eternal providence!—oh Frederica!” I sank on my knees—whilst, for the first time in my life, tears of unmixed joy trickled down my cheeks.

My correspondent was an opulent merchant in Francfort, in whose family I had formerly resided as tutor, and by whom I had long believed myself forgotten. He informed me, with many expressions of kindness, that I had been nominated pastor of the parish of Heilbach, in the territory of a mediatised prince of the empire, with a salary of seven hundred florins, at his recommendation: and there was also a probability of

my being appointed tutor to his serene highness's children, should I be found competent to the office. In order to ascertain this point, the prince desired a conference with me at Magdeburg, where he should be, in his way from Francfort, on the 19th of October. My Mæcenas farther described his illustrious friend as kind, liberal and enlightened.

Thus then, at length, had I reached the highest pinnacle of my wishes!—I thrust the precious document into my pocket, snatched up my hat, and flew to Frederica. Luckily she was alone. My appearance alarmed her. I was flushed—breathless—unable to speak; I could only weep and clasp her to my breast. She gently led me to a chair, and tenderly inquired what had happened to agitate me so violently? “Dear Frederica,” I replied, “my heart is injured to suffering—I can smile at sorrow and disappointment, but joy is a stranger, for whose approach I am unprepared. I shame to be thus overpowered—but my philosophy bends under the unaccustomed burthen.”

“Joy!—Doctor!”—exclaimed Frederica (be it known that I had graduated at the University of Halle, as *Magister bonarum Artium*: but, with the modesty of my German brethren, I preferred the title of Doctor of Moral Philosophy to that of Master of all the Liberal arts.)

“Do you remember, Frederica, when in the garden of Sans Souci we first confessed our mutual love? It is now nine years ago—and the vows of constancy and virtue, which then bound us to one another, are yet unbroken. “Wilt thou,” continued I with a low timid accent, “wilt thou follow me now, Frederica, to a lovely country, and to a rural dwelling, which shall be our own for life?—Wilt thou share my happiness as thou hast cheered my adversity?—See here—I am pastor of Heilbach!”

She read the letter. Delight radiated from her beautiful countenance as she proceeded. I never saw her look so handsome. She slowly folded up the let-

ter with trembling hands, wiped away the tears which hung on her long silken lashes, and, raising her eyes to mine, said,—“Where thou goest, I go, dear Ferdinand!”—It was the first time that any one had addressed me by my Christian name since my good mother’s death, and the sound went straight to my heart. She disengaged herself from my arms, and kneeling down, bowed her face upon the chair in an attitude of devotion.

“The matter stands thus,” said I. “I am determined not to go near my parish till I am married, for I wish to enter immediately on the duties of my office, which would be impossible, were I obliged to attend to my household arrangements—these, you must take upon yourself, Frederica. My friend describes the house as commodious, and the garden productive—so that we shall have room for your mother, and enough to live with comfort, even should I not obtain the situation of tutor.”

It was agreed that Frederica should give warning to the baroness, and that I should bid adieu to my scholars and relinquish my garret.

I took the necessary measures for publishing the banns. Congratulations and little presents flowed in on all sides; I was soon richer than I had been for many years. One of my friends, whose children I instructed, offered me the use of his cabriolet to go to Magdeburg, which I thankfully accepted, and provided myself with the necessary passports. The times were disturbed—wars, and rumours of wars resounded on all sides. The king with his army was already opposed to Napoleon in Thuringia; still we remained tranquil and unconcerned at Berlin. Nobody could, for a moment, doubt that the French would be driven beyond the Rhine in the course of a fortnight. Under this persuasion, I had thought it a good speculation to prepare five and twenty triumphal odes in honour of victories, of which the names only were wanting. I flattered myself that they would procure me a large