



CHILDREN OF THE WILDS.

INSTANCES of children having been left by accident or by unnatural parents to perish in solitary places, are unhappily to be met with in various eras of social history. Sometimes the infants thus exposed have, by some extraordinary means, been preserved, and have lived in a savage condition till found by chance and brought within the pale of civilisation. It has occasionally happened that beasts usually remarkable for ferocity have nurtured them until strong enough to subsist upon roots, berries, and other fruits. Children found under such circumstances have always been regarded with interest. Though painful to the last degree to behold a human being possessing all the characteristics of a wild beast, yet it has been pleasing and instructive to watch the gradual development of their faculties, and the growth of their moral sentiments. It is our purpose in this tract to record some of the most prominent of these cases, detailing the more interesting at length. Many accounts of wild children—for example, that of Valentine and Orson—are doubtless fabulous: it has been our care, however, to select such as are well authenticated.

There is no instance on record which excited more curiosity, especially in England, than that of a child who was known as

PETER THE WILD BOY.

At the beginning of the last century, a great sensation was created by the accidental finding of a wild boy in a German

forest, to whom the above name was afterwards given. The earliest account of him is to be found in a letter from the Hanoverian correspondent of the *St James's Evening Post*, published December 14, 1725. "The intendant of the house of correction at Zell," says the writer, "has brought a boy to Hanover, supposed to be about fifteen years of age, who was found some time ago in a wood near Hamelin, some twenty miles hence. He was walking on his hands and feet, climbing up trees like a squirrel, and feeding upon grass and moss of trees." The young savage was brought to George I., who was at that time residing in Hanover. The king was at dinner, and some food was offered the youth, which he rejected. His majesty then ordered him such meat as he liked best; and raw food having been brought, he devoured it with a relish. As he was unable to speak, it was impossible to learn how he was first abandoned in the woods, and by what means he existed. Great care was taken of the boy by order of the king; but, despite the vigilance of those who had charge of him, he escaped in less than a month to the woods. Every species of restraint had been evidently irksome to him, and he availed himself of the first opportunity of freedom that occurred. The woods in the neighbourhood of Hanover were diligently searched, and at length he was discovered hiding in a tree. The boldest of his pursuers were unable to reach him, for as fast as they attempted to climb, he pushed them down, so great was his strength. As a last resource, they sawed down the tree; luckily, it fell without hurting its occupant, and he was once more captured.

Early in the following year (1726) George I. returned to England, and Peter was brought over also. His appearance in London excited intense curiosity. The public papers teemed with notices of his conduct and appearance. On arriving at the palace, a suit of blue clothes was prepared for him; but he seemed very uneasy at wearing apparel of any sort, and it was only restraint that would induce him to wear it. Various colours and descriptions of costume were meantime provided, and at length his taste appeared to be gratified by a strange dress, thus described by a correspondent to an Edinburgh newspaper, April 12, 1726:—"The wild youth is dressed in green, lined with red, and has scarlet stockings." By the same account, we find that he had been taught to abandon the use of his hands in walking, and to move about in an erect posture. "He walks upright," says the same authority, "and has begun to sit for his picture." On his first arrival, no inducements could persuade him to lie in a bed, and he would only sleep in a corner of a room.

When in presence of the court, Peter always took most notice of the king, and of the princess his daughter. The scene was so novel to him, and he so strange an object to those who saw him, that many ludicrous scenes took place, which are humorously

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related by Dean Swift in his amusing account "of the wonderful wild man that was nursed in the woods of Germany by a wild beast, hunted, and taken in toils; how he behaved himself like a dumb creature, and is a Christian like one of us, being called Peter; and how he was brought to court all in green, to the great astonishment of the quality and gentry, 1726." From the droll character of the dean, he may be suspected of having overdrawn his account of the wild boy; but we have carefully compared it with the current newspapers of the time, and find that in the main particulars he is correct.

It appears that, after residing many months within the pale of civilisation, the boy was unable to articulate words. He expressed pleasure by neighing like a horse, and imitated other animal sounds. The king placed him under the tuition of the celebrated physician of that day, Dr Arbuthnot, by whose instructions, it was hoped, the boy would, after a time, be enabled to express himself in words. On the 5th July 1726 he was baptised, at the doctor's house in Burlington Gardens, by the name of "Peter."

All attempts to teach this boy to speak were unavailing; and it was several years before his habits were at all conformable to civilised society. Finding this impracticable, the king caused a contract to be made with a farmer in Hertfordshire, with whom he was sent to reside, and who put him to school; but without any visible improvement. Instead of eating the food provided at the farm table, he preferred raw vegetables, particularly cabbage leaves; though he was not long in acquiring a taste for wine and spirits. His habits were far from steady: he was constantly running away from home, and cost his protector some trouble in reclaiming him. On one of these excursions, he was arrested on suspicion of being a spy from the Scottish Pretender, whose army was then invading England. As he was unable to speak, the people supposed him obstinate, and threatened him with punishment for his contumacy; but a lady who had seen him in London acquainted them with the character of their prisoner, and directed them where to send him. In these excursions he used to live on raw herbage, berries, and young tender roots of trees. He took great delight in climbing trees, and in being in the open air when the weather was fine; but in winter, seldom stirred from before the fire.

After twelve years' residence in Hertfordshire, Peter was removed to the care of another farmer in Norfolk, where he resided during the rest of his life. In the beginning of June 1782, Lord Monboddo, the author of "Ancient Metaphysics," visited the half-reclaimed "boy," for by that title he was designated even in his old age. He then resided at a farmhouse called Broadway, within about a mile of Berkhamstead. The pension which George I. had granted was continued by his successors, George II. and George III. "He is," says his lordship, "low of stature, not exceeding five feet three inches; and though he must now be

about seventy years of age, he has a fresh healthy look. He wears his beard. His face is not at all ugly or disagreeable; and he has a look that may be called sensible or sagacious for a savage. About twenty years ago he used to elope, and once, as I was told, he wandered as far as Norfolk; but of late he has become quite tame, and either keeps the house, or saunters about the farm. He was never mischievous, but had that gentleness of manners which is characteristic of our nature, at least till we become carnivorous, and hunters or warriors."

Peter had always been remarkable for his personal strength; and even in his old age, the stoutest young countrymen were afraid to contend with him in athletic exercises. To the last, his passion for finery continued; and anything smooth or shining in the dress of a visitor instantly attracted his attention. "He is," remarked a correspondent of Lord Monboddo, "very fond of fire, and often brings in fuel, which he would heap up as high as the fireplace would contain it, were he not prevented by his master. He will sit in the chimney corner, even in summer, while they are brewing with a very large fire, sufficient to make another person faint who sits there long. He will often amuse himself by setting five or six chairs before the fire, and seating himself on each of them by turns, as the love of variety prompts him to change his place. He is extremely good-tempered, excepting in cold and gloomy weather; for he is very sensible of the change of the atmosphere. He is not easily provoked; but when made angry by any person, he would run after him, making a strange noise, with his teeth fixed into the back of his hand. I could not find that he ever did any violence in the house, excepting when he first came over, he would sometimes tear his bedclothes, to which it was long before he was reconciled. He has never, at least since his present master has known him, shown any attention to women, and I am informed that he never did. Of the people who are about him, he is particularly attached to his master. He will often go out into the field with him and his men, and seems pleased to be employed in anything that can assist them; but he must always have some person to direct his actions, as you may judge from the following circumstance. Peter was one day engaged with his master in filling a dung-cart: the latter had occasion to go into the house, and left Peter to finish the work, which he soon accomplished. But as Peter must be employed, he saw no reason why he should not be as usefully occupied in emptying the cart as he had before been in filling it. On his master's return, he found the cart nearly emptied again, and learned a lesson by it which he never afterwards neglected."

Nothing further can be gleaned respecting "Peter the wild boy," except that he did not long survive the visits of Lord Monboddo and his friend. He died at Broadway farm in February 1786, at the supposed age of seventy-three.

More interesting than the history of Peter the wild boy, is that of

MADemoiselle LeBlanc.

One evening in the autumn of 1731, the villagers of Soigny, near Châlons, in the north-east of France, were engaged in a little festival, or *ducasse*, when their merriment was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a wild animal in human form. Its hair was long, and floated over its shoulders. The rest of the form was black, and nearly naked, and in the hand was wielded a short thick club. The terrified peasants mistook it for an evil spirit, and, not daring to attack it themselves, let loose a huge dog, having a collar surrounded with iron spikes, which they kept for the protection of the village against marauders. The strange figure, so far from flying, stood at bay, and awaited the attack of its assailant without a sign of fear. The dog, furiously set on by the peasants, made a sudden spring at the intruder's throat; but one violent and dexterously-dealt blow from the cudgel laid the beast dead on the spot. The wild creature then turned, crossed the fields at a rapid pace, and, darting into the forest whence it had at first emerged, climbed a tree with the activity of a squirrel. The villagers were too frightened to follow it, and all traces of the alarming visitor were lost for several days.

Meanwhile the proprietor, or *seigneur*, of the estate of which Soigny formed a part, having heard of the adventure, caused search to be made in every part of the wood; but without effect. In about a week, however, one of his servants perceived in the orchard of the chateau during the night a strange-looking figure mounted on a well-laden apple tree. The domestic, having more courage than the villagers, approached the tree stealthily; but ere he could reach it, the creature sprang into another, and passing from branch to branch, and from tree to tree, at length escaped from the orchard, and fled to the summit of a high tree in a neighbouring grove. The servant awoke his master, who instantly arose, ordered up all his household, and sent one to the village to desire the assistance of some of the peasants. They all assembled at the foot of the tree, determined to prevent the escape of this singular being, who made every effort to conceal itself amidst the foliage, though without being able wholly to escape observation.

The villagers at once recognised it as the "evil spirit" who had killed their dog, while the Seigneur de Soigny was able to distinguish that the creature resembled a young girl, and explained, to quiet the fears of the peasants, that she was in all probability some unhappy maniac who had escaped from confinement, and whom thirst (for the weather was oppressively warm) had driven from her haunts in the forests.

They continued to watch all that night and part of the follow-

ing day, when Madame de Soigny proposed that a pail of water should be placed at the foot of the tree, and that the people should retire, so as to induce the maniac to descend. The stratagem succeeded. After some hesitation the creature came down, and eagerly approached the pail to drink, which she did like a horse—plunging her face into the water. The bystanders immediately rushed forward to secure her; but did not without much difficulty. Both her fingers and toes were armed with long and sharp nails, and she used them with great address and perseverance against her assailants: but after some trouble, they captured and conveyed her to the chateau.

She was taken into the kitchen. It happened that the cook was preparing some fowls for the spit; and on seeing them, the girl broke away from her captors, seized, and, though raw, devoured them with avidity. It was evident, from the quantity she ate and the eagerness with which she swallowed it, that she had not tasted food for a long time. Her appetite once satisfied, she looked around, and without betraying any lively signs of curiosity at the surrounding objects, evinced by her actions and countenance that they were quite strange to her. She appeared to be from twelve to thirteen years of age, and the blackness of her skin arose partly from constant exposure, and partly from dirt. She uttered no articulate sounds, but occasionally made a loud and unpleasant noise with her throat.

Monsieur de Soigny and his wife were for some time at a loss to know what to do with their extraordinary guest. During the rest of the day, she manifested the utmost impatience at the restraint she was placed under, and showed every desire to escape to the forest. At night, she refused to eat the food which was offered her, because, probably, it had been cooked; and could not by any inducement be persuaded to lie on a bed. All attempts to clothe her were equally useless.

By dint of management, however, and constant attention from Madame de Soigny and her household, the young wild girl became gradually reconciled to her new state. Her repugnance to clothing and to dressed food was gradually overcome, and after the lapse of a month, it was found practicable to allow her to range about the chateau unattended; for her desire to escape appeared to have left her. In a little time longer, it was thought advisable to take her out of doors; for the sudden and complete change in her mode of life was injuring her health. This was rather a hazardous experiment, and her host took care to be well attended while accompanying her. The moment she got into the fields, she set off, running with a speed which was truly astonishing, and not one of the party could keep up with her on foot; but De Soigny being on horseback, managed to keep her within sight. After a time, she came to the brink of a small lake. Here she stopped, and, divesting herself of her clothes, plunged into the water. Her host began to dread she had endeavoured

to escape from him by self-destruction; but on arriving at the pond, he was gratified to find her swimming about with the greatest ease and dexterity. Soon, however, his fears were again awakened, for she dived and remained under water so long, that he gave her up for lost. He was in the act of preparing himself for an attempt to save her, when to his relief she again appeared on the surface, gracefully shaking the water from her long hair. As she approached the shore, something was perceived in her mouth which glistened in the sun; and on coming out of the water, De Soigny was astonished to find that, during her long dive, she had employed herself in catching a fish, which she devoured on the shore. Having resumed her apparel, she returned home peaceably with the domestics, whom they met on their way back.

It was long before the girl could be taught to make articulate sounds, which was the more singular, as there was scarcely any of the noises peculiar to a forest which she could not imitate. She occasionally amused her new companions by copying the cries of wild animals and of birds so exactly, that there was no difficulty in recognising the beast or bird she was imitating. The song of the nightingale, however, was beyond her powers, for she never attempted to imitate that. From all these facts, it was concluded that she was not, as at first conjectured, an escaped maniac, but some unfortunate being who had been abandoned in infancy, and had managed to subsist in the woods in a perfect state of nature.

Great pains were taken to teach her to speak, and after much perseverance, they were crowned with success. It was noticed that, as she improved in speaking, the feelings and ideas belonging to her early habits left her; and it was unfortunate that, in proportion as her ability to communicate her early history increased, new feelings and new mental resources impaired her memory of her old way of life. Still some of the most important facts connected with her former existence she retained; the most striking and interesting of them being the one which led to her capture.

All that she could remember, when able to speak well enough to be understood, was, that she had lived in the woods as long as her memory could trace, with, up to a very recent period, a companion about her own age, supposed to have been a sister. Of her parents, her recollections were extremely indistinct. The idea she communicated regarding them was something like this:—That they lived near the sea-shore, and collected sea-weed for manure. In the winter, she and her companion covered themselves with the skin of some animal they had previously slain for food; but in the summer, they had no other covering than a girdle. To this she suspended the only weapon she ever possessed—the short strong cudgel with which she so promptly slew the village watch-dog. In speaking of this cudgel, she invariably applied to it the word which signifies a wild boar's snout

(*boutoir*), to which in shape it had some remote resemblance. It was to her an important weapon, for with it she killed such wild animals as afforded her sustenance. One remarkable but not very pleasing trait in her past history was her fondness for blood, and particularly that of hares. Whenever she caught a hare, she did not kill it at once, but opening a vein with her sharp nails, sucked the blood and threw away the carcass. This fondness for hares' blood did not wholly leave her in after life.

Of her companion she remembered nothing except her death. They were swimming together, as near as could be understood, in the river Marne (which gives the name to the department in which the wood of Soigny is situated), when a shot from the gun of a sportsman—who perhaps mistook them for water-fowl—passed close to them. They instantly dived, and having swam for some distance under water, escaped into a part of the forest which was supposed to have been near to some village. Here they happened to find something (whether a chaplet or string of beads, could not be sufficiently made out), which each wished to possess. In the struggle that ensued, the sister inflicted a sharp blow on the wild girl's arm, which was returned on the head with a stroke from the "*boutoir*," with so much violence, that she became, in the words of the narrator, "all red." This excited her sorrow, and she ran off to seek some remedy. It was difficult to make out the nature of the intended remedy; still it was clear that some curative means was known to the young savage; but whether gum, obtained from a tree, or the skin of a frog bound to the wound with strips of bark, could not, from the confused nature of the recital, be ascertained. Be that as it may, on her return to the spot where she had left her sister weltering in blood, she could nowhere find her. Her grief was now redoubled, and she sought every part of the wood in vain; nor did she relax her search till coming suddenly upon the villagers at Soigny, whither she had wandered in the hope of quenching her thirst. The rest of her story is known. Her companion was never heard of more; and it was thought that she must have been dragged away by a wolf to his den, and there devoured. The accident happened, as near as could be computed, about three days before the capture of the survivor near the chateau.

In a very few months the fame of Monsieur de Soigny's strange inmate spread to Châlons, and thence to Paris. De Choiseul, bishop of that diocese, went expressly to Soigny to see her, and inquire into every particular concerning her. The result was, that he caused her to be removed into a convent. It must be owned that the inhabitants of the chateau were not displeased at the change. The wild girl, despite her improvement, cost them much fear and anxiety. Her temper was ungovernable, and easily roused, especially when within sight of or when spoken to by any of the male species, for whom she from the

first entertained a decided aversion. This was the chief reason for the bishop recommending her to be transferred to a convent, where none of the male sex would cross her path to vex her.

Once within the walls of her new abode, the wild girl was immediately baptised, but by what Christian name, we have not been able to ascertain, the only title given to her from that period having been *Mademoiselle Leblanc*. The secluded nature of the place had no effect in taming her wild temper, so that low diet and frequent bleedings were resorted to. This treatment not only had a most prejudicial effect upon her health, but renewed her desire to return to the woods. Indeed, it was remarked that the more she was subjected to privation and restraint, the more forcibly her savage propensities returned. On one occasion, she showed that her thirst for living animals had not wholly left her. A young lady, of a very blooming and sanguine complexion, who resided at Châlons, had a great curiosity to see her, and was seated at dinner when she was introduced. There happened to be a chicken at table, and *Mademoiselle Leblanc's* eyes appearing wild and excited, the young lady offered her a wing; but the girl refused it, and trembling with excitement, said with savage simplicity, "No, no, it is not that; it is you I want." As she said these words, she appeared so very much inclined to seize the young lady, that her attendant removed her by force.

During the confinement of the wild girl in the convent, the queen of Poland passed through Châlons on her way from Paris, on purpose to see her. Her majesty had the bad taste to order a sort of exhibition, in which the girl performed all her savage tricks: she was made to howl as she was wont in the forest, and a live hare was actually brought her to suck to death. This exhibition had nearly terminated fatally, on account of her invincible dislike to men. One of the queen's officers was silly enough to make some jesting approach to her. In an instant she seized him by the throat, and would assuredly have strangled him, but for the interference of the bystanders.

After having remained some years in the convent, she became an object of such great curiosity to the Parisians, that *M. de la Condamaine*, the celebrated member of the Academy of Sciences, was commissioned to make a journey to Châlons to inquire into the particulars of the wild girl's life. On seeing her, and hearing her story, he determined to remove her to Paris for the purpose of placing her in some religious house in that city. On arriving, however, it was found that her health was so severely impaired, that the discipline of a monastic institution would be far from beneficial. *Condamaine*, therefore, having succeeded in raising by subscription a fund for her support, provided an asylum for her near Paris, and proper persons to attend her. Towards the latter portion of her existence, few traces of the savage state in which she was found in *Soigny* remained; at all events, if any existed, the ill health in which she spent the latter days of her

life prevented her from manifesting them. She died at Paris in the year 1780, forty-nine years after her capture by Monsieur de Soigny, and in about the sixty-second year of her age.

VICTOR, THE SAVAGE OF AVEYRON.

Towards the end of the year 1798, a child who appeared to be about eleven or twelve years of age, and who had several times before been seen in the woods of Caune, in France, seeking acorns and roots, on which he subsisted, was caught by three sportsmen, who seized him at the moment he was climbing a tree to avoid them. They carried him to a neighbouring village, where he was placed under the care of an old woman, from whom he, however, found means to escape before the end of the week, and fled to the mountains, where he wandered about during the winter, which was uncommonly severe, without any clothing but a ragged shirt. At night he retired to solitary places, but in the day approached nearer the houses and villages. He thus passed a roving life, till at length he voluntarily took refuge in a house in the canton of St Sernin. After being kept there two or three days, he was sent to the hospital of St Afrique, whence he was removed to Rhodéz, where he remained several months. During his abode in these different places, he always seemed to be wild, impatient of restraint, and capricious, and constantly intent on getting away.

How he was originally abandoned, no one ever discovered; but, from certain scars on various parts of his body, he was thought to have escaped from the terrors of the Revolution, during which so many cruelties were perpetrated. From the testimony of the country people who lived near the woods in which he was found, he must have passed in absolute solitude seven years out of the twelve, which was supposed to be his age when caught in the woods of Caune. When he was first taken into society he lived on acorns, potatoes, and raw chestnuts, eating husks and all. In spite of the utmost vigilance, he was frequently near escaping, and at first exhibited great unwillingness to lie in a bed. His eyes were without steadiness and expression, wandering from one object to another; and his voice was imperfect, for he could utter only a guttural and monotonous sound. He seemed to be alike indifferent to the smell of the most delicious perfumes and the most fetid exhalations; and his sense of feeling was limited to those mechanical functions occasioned by the dread of objects that might be in his way.

But despite all these disadvantages, the young savage was by no means destitute of intelligence. During an intercourse of six weeks with society, he had learned to prepare his food with a great degree of care and attention. M. Bonaterre informs us that, during his stay at Rhodéz, his employment was shelling

kidney-beans, and that greater discernment could not have been shown by a person the most accustomed to the employment. As soon as the pods were brought him, he fetched a kettle, and arranged his materials in the middle of the apartment in the most commodious manner possible, placing the kettle on his right hand, and the beans on his left. The shells he opened, one after the other, with admirable dexterity, putting the good grains into the kettle, and throwing away the bad; and if any grain happened to escape him, he took it up and placed it with the others. He formed a separate heap of the empty shells; and when his work was finished, he filled the kettle with water, and placed it on the fire, on which he threw the empty husks, to increase the heat.

In the year 1799 he was removed to Paris, and placed in the deaf and dumb institution, under the care of Madame Guerin and the superintendence of M. Itard, physician to the asylum. Beneficial results, from M. Itard's judicious treatment in exciting the dormant faculties of the strange patient, showed themselves in three months' time. The touch by that time appeared sensible to the impression of all bodies, whether warm or cold, smooth or rough, soft or hard. The sense of smell was improved in a similar way; and the least irritation now excited sneezing. From the horror with which he was seized the first time this happened, it was presumed that it was a thing altogether new to him. The sense of taste was improved in a still greater degree. The articles of food on which he subsisted for some time after his arrival in Paris were excessively disgusting: he dragged them about his room, and ate them out of his hand, besmeared with filth. So great was the change which had taken place in this respect, that he now threw away the contents of his plate if any particle of dust or dirt had fallen upon it; and after he had broken his walnuts with his foot, he cleaned them in the most careful manner.

His new habits, and the tenderness that was shown him, at length began to inspire the youth with a fondness for his new situation. He likewise conceived a lively attachment for his governess, which he would sometimes testify in the most affectionate manner. He could never leave her without evident uneasiness, nor meet her again without expressing his satisfaction. Once after he had slipped from her in the streets, on again seeing her he burst into tears. For several hours he appeared much dejected, and Madame Guerin having then gently reproached him, his eyes again overflowed with tears. As in all similar cases, the endeavours to excite the faculty of speech were almost futile, and never advanced him beyond the capability of uttering a few exclamations and unimportant words. Neither did his sense of hearing improve much.

Some traits this boy exhibited were amusing. "When fatigued," says a contemporary account, "with the length of the visits of

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inquisitive strangers, he dismisses them with more frankness than politeness, presenting to each, but without an air of contempt, their cane, gloves, and hat, then pushing them gently towards the door, which he shuts after them with great violence. This kind of language Victor understands, when employed by others, with the same facility as he uses it himself; and his readiness in this respect is truly astonishing, for it requires no previous instruction to make him comprehend the meaning of signs which he has never seen before."

So far as we can learn, Victor remained in the same institution, but whether he be there now, or indeed is still alive we have not been able to ascertain.

CASPAR HAUSER.

Of all the cases of abandoned children, none ever created a greater sensation than that of a youth who was left at the gate of the city of Nuremberg, in Germany, so recently as 1828.

On the Whit-Monday, which happened in that year on the 26th May, a citizen who lived at Unschlitt Place, near the little frequented Haller gate of Nuremberg, was loitering before his door between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, when he remarked at a little distance a young man in a peasant's dress. He was standing in the singular posture of a person endeavouring to move forward, without being fully able either to stand upright or to govern the movement of his legs. On approaching, this singular stranger held out a letter directed to the captain of the 4th squadron of the 6th regiment of Bavarian light horse. As this person lived near to the new gate, the citizen assisted the crippled youth to his house. On the door being opened, and the servant inquiring the applicant's business, it was evident that he did not comprehend the inquiry. His own language was little else than unintelligible sounds, mixed with tears and moans; but, with difficulty, the following words were made out:—"Reuta wahn, wie mei votta wahn is"—("I will be a rider or trooper, as my father was.") He was taken for a kind of savage; and as the captain was from home, he was conducted to the stable, where he stretched himself on the straw, and soon fell into a profound sleep. Upon the return of the captain, it was with great difficulty that he could be awakened. When fully conscious, he gazed intently on the officer's glittering uniform, which he seemed to regard with childish satisfaction, and instantly groaned out, "Reuta," &c. The captain then read the letter, which was from an unknown hand, wishing that the youth should be received into the captain's troop of light horse. It was written in German; but enclosed was a memorandum in Latin, which the writer of the letter declared he had received when the boy, then a baby, was left at his house on the 7th of October 1812. The memorandum ran thus:—"The child is already

baptised. You must give him a surname yourself. You must educate the child. His father was one of the light horse. When he is seventeen years old, send him to Nuremberg to the 6th regiment of light horse, for there his father also was. I ask for his education until he is seventeen years old. He was born on the 30th April 1812. I am a poor girl, and cannot support him. His father is dead."

Neither of the epistle nor the enclosure could the captain make anything, and consequently handed his extraordinary visitor over to the police, which was done by about eight o'clock in the evening. When in the guard-room, in which were several inferior magistrates and police soldiers, he betrayed neither fear, confusion, nor astonishment. He continually cried, and pointed to his tottering feet; and this, joined to his childish demeanour, excited the pity of the officials. A soldier brought him a piece of meat and some beer, but he rejected them with abhorrence, partaking simply of bread and water, which he appeared to do with a relish. The usual official questions of, What is your name? Whence came you? Produce your passport? were put to the youth in vain. The magistrates began to suspect that he was playing a part, and this suspicion was soon greatly confirmed. A bystander proposed trying if he could write; and pen, ink, and paper, were placed before him, which appeared to give him pleasure. He took the pen in his hand, by no means awkwardly, and, to the astonishment of the spectators, began to write! He slowly and legibly traced the words "Kaspar Hauser." All was doubt and uncertainty. It was doubtful whether he ought to be treated as an idiot or an impostor. However, for the present he was removed to the place appropriated to rogues and vagabonds—a tower near the guard-house. During this short way he sank down, groaning at almost every step. Walking seemed to be not only painful, but a motion with which he was quite unacquainted. Soon after entering the small apartment allotted to him, he lay down on a straw-bed and slept soundly.

A close scrutiny of this strange being's attire increased the astonishment. It consisted of a peasant's jacket over a coarse shirt, a groom's pantaloons, and a white handkerchief marked K. H. The contents of his pockets created the greatest surprise. They consisted of coloured rags, a key, a paper of gold sand, a small horn rosary, and several religious tracts. An examination of his person presented new grounds for surprise. The soles of his feet were as soft as the palms of his hands; but were covered all over with blisters, which fully accounted for the pain which walking seemed to give him. His gait was that of a child learning to walk in leading-strings; indeed he could not walk at all without assistance. To account for this, his knees were attentively examined, when it was found that the joint, instead of being a protuberance when the leg was straightened, formed a sort of hole or depression; while at the back, his hams so nearly

touched the ground, that a common playing card could scarcely be thrust between.

After a time, Caspar was no longer kept in the tower, but was admitted amongst the family of the prison keeper, Hiltel, of whose children he seemed very fond. About a fortnight after his arrival, he was visited by a young college professor, Daumer, who eventually, with the concurrence of the city authorities, took Caspar to his own home to educate him. The professor soon discovered that his mental powers only required attention to become cultivated. He soon was able to speak intelligibly; and the first use to which he put his new accomplishment, was to make a deposition before the burgomaster of Nuremberg. Not to cause him embarrassment, however, Mr Binder, the burgomaster, abandoned legal forms, and had Caspar to his house, so as to get him to converse freely, and without restriction, concerning his previous history. From these conversations he drew up a document, of which we give an abridgment. Caspar declared that he knew not who he was, nor where his home is. As long as he can recollect, he had constantly lived in a sort of hole, which he sometimes called a cage, where he always sat upon the ground, with his back supported in an erect posture (this was fully corroborated by the state of his knees). The only human being he had ever seen, up to the time of his arrival in Nuremberg, was "the man," as he said, "with whom I have always been;" whose face he had never seen. He knew no difference between day and night; but whenever he awoke from sleep, he found a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water beside him. Shortly before his removal, "the man" placed a small table over his feet, and spreading something white upon it (paper), he put a kind of stick between his fingers (proved to have been a lead pencil), and guided his hand in making black marks, which pleased him very much. The man came every day to guide his hand; and by imitating the marks thus made, after the man was gone, Caspar learned, it would seem, to write his name. As to speaking, all he was ever taught to say was "Reuta," &c. Finally, the man came one day, placed his hands over Caspar's shoulders, and carried him on his back out of his prison, and made him try to walk; but "it became night"—that is, he fainted with the effort; and at last he brought him to the gate of Nuremberg.

This extraordinary account increased the mystery. The story of Caspar spread not only over Germany, but throughout Europe. Many thought him an impostor. He was examined by the faculty, by law officers, and by every competent person who imagined they could find a clue to the mystery. Meanwhile he continued under the tutorship of Professor Daumer, and made very great improvement; though his new state of existence was extremely distasteful to him, and he longed to go back to "the man with whom he had always been." He suffered from headache. The operation of his senses, from their extreme acuteness,

gave him pain rather than pleasure. He soon learned to talk like a child, for his memory was very good. As an instance of it, Dr Osterhausen, an eminent physician, gave him a nosegay, naming the different flowers: several days afterwards, other flowers were brought him, and all of the same kind as those which composed the former nosegay he named correctly. At an early stage of instruction, he exhibited a great love of order, and was extremely obedient. In short, he in less than a year became nearly reconciled to his new position, and was allowed to go about with little restraint.

On Saturday, 17th October, Caspar was the subject of an extraordinary and nearly fatal event. He was accustomed, daily between eleven and twelve, to leave Professor Daumer's house to attend a ciphering class; but on the above day, not feeling well, he was desired to remain at home, while his host went out to take a walk. A little after twelve, Daumer's sister was sweeping the house, when she observed on the stairs several spots of blood and bloody footsteps. These marks she traced along the passage to a closet, and there, to her horror, beheld a large quantity of clotted blood. She instantly called her mother. In great alarm, they sought Caspar in his chamber, but he was not to be found either there or in any other part of the house. The marks of blood being more carefully traced, were found to lead to a cellar door. This was opened, and after a time Caspar was found within, to all appearance dead, with a large wound across his forehead. The servant-maid and the son of the landlord had now joined them, and Caspar was removed to his chamber. He appeared to breathe, and presently gave a deep groan, saying with difficulty, "Man! man!—mother tell professor—closet;" he could say no more, for he was seized with a strong ague; after which he lay senseless for forty-eight hours. In his delirium, he murmured at various times, "Man came!—don't kill me—I love all men—do no one anything. Man, I love you too—don't kill—why man kill?" He was assiduously attended by the medical officer of the city jurisdiction, and under his hands gradually recovered. When strong enough, the judicial authorities caused him to be examined as to his misfortune. From his deposition,* it appears that, while in the closet, to which he had occasion to retire, he heard footsteps softly treading the passage, and presently the head of a person masked appeared. In an instant he received a severe blow on the forehead, which felled him to the ground: he fainted, and did not completely recover his senses till found in the cellar. How he got there, he was unable to remember correctly, but thought that he must have been left for dead; and, coming to a sort of half consciousness, had crawled thither,

* It may be well to observe, that all the depositions respecting this extraordinary case are still preserved in the police court of Nuremberg.

partly from fright, and partly from having mistaken his way to Mrs Daumer's chamber.

This new circumstance redoubled public curiosity respecting Hauser. Some deep and diabolical mystery hung over him. It was evident that those who sent him to Nuremberg had been disappointed in his not becoming at once absorbed in the ranks of the army, and were afraid lest the attention of the public which he had excited would lead to the discovery of his origin. To prevent this, his murder must have been planned and attempted. These machinations were, however, on this occasion frustrated, for the wound was not so serious as to prevent his complete recovery. He resumed his studies, and pursued them with so much success, that he was not to be known in company from any other young man who had been brought up under ordinary circumstances. His temper was good, and his manners gentle and amiable.

While with Professor Daumer, he became an object of great interest to Earl Stanhope, who wished to have the entire charge and expense of his future education. With this view, Caspar was removed by that nobleman to Anspach, and put under the care of an able schoolmaster. After a time, he was found competent to undertake an official situation, and he received the appointment of clerk in the registrar's office of the Court of Appeal. It was Lord Stanhope's plan to accustom him, whilst filling this situation, to the ordinary business of life; with the view of bringing him eventually to England, and of adopting him as his foster-son. But unhappily these benevolent intentions were frustrated, for the same mystery which shrouded his birth hung over his death. On the 17th of December 1833, Caspar Hauser, while returning from his official duties at mid-day, was accosted in the streets by a person who promised to impart to him the secret of his origin, if he would meet him in the park of Anspach Castle. Without informing his protectors of this circumstance, Hauser imprudently kept the appointment. The stranger was at his post; he took Caspar aside, and, without speaking a word, plunged a dagger into his breast, and instantly disappeared. Hauser had just time to reach the residence of his new tutor, into whose apartment he rushed, and had just breath enough to utter two or three indistinct words, when he immediately fainted. The police were instantly sent for; but before its officers could return, Caspar Hauser expired. Every expedient which the police could invent was adopted to discover the murderer, but without success. The secret, which it cost so much crime to preserve, has not yet been divulged.

This history is so strange and mysterious, that its authenticity would be open to many doubts, but for the unquestionable respectability of our informant, and the notoriety of the facts at the time.