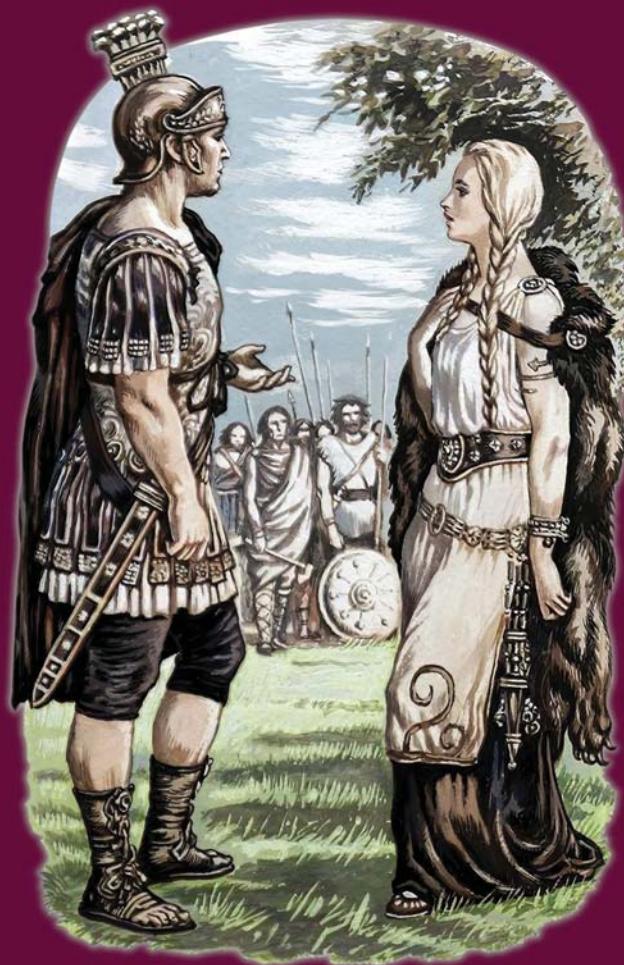


PIPARA



GUIDO VON LIST

BERSERKER

BOOKS



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First Adventure

How Pipara Was Abducted

It was more than sixteen hundred years ago. The midsummer sun stood glowing in the cloudless blue sky above the undulating hills, which exuded that peculiar scent that the sun's heat distills from the golden grain as it ripens toward the sickle. Red poppies shone out from the golden seeds, as if they were peeking lovingly at the blue sky, yet dreamlike and silent, as if in Sleeping Beauty's enchanted hedge. Above the wide fields of grain rose a mighty castle hill with defiant towers, and next to it a lower hill, also crowned with ramparts and towers; but between these two rampart-covered hills, behind high walls well protected by stakes and wattle, stretched Eburodunum, the city of the powerful King Attal, ruler of the Marcomanni and Quadi, a lively royal city.*) Promising coolness, dark, forested rocky mountains rise above the low hills in the blue

*) Eburodunum is today's Brno. The high castle is today's Spielberg, and the cathedral on the neighboring hill is today's St. Peter's Cathedral. Both were temple sites; the former was dedicated to Wotan, the latter to Donar. The Germanic tribes fortified their temple complexes and used them as castles in times of danger. Otherwise, they were uninhabited; only the priestesses lived in the sacred sanctuary.

distance, and between their rocky ridges, a keen eye can easily spot the mountain passes that open up the interior of the country. Like a faithful guardian before the king's hall of execution, Eburodunum was situated in front of these mountain passes. A sultry calm before the storm lay over the valley, no beating of wings, no birdsong interrupted it, not even a breeze stirred, even the dust lay as if weary on the Amber Road. A troop of horsemen rode along this road toward nearby Eburodunum. Exhausted and covered in sweat, the horses dragged themselves along, unable to maintain even a short trot; a cloud of dust rolled heavily behind them, as if it too were weary. A golden snake had glided toward the procession of riders, but then darted nimbly aside into a field of grain; its mark, however, remained in the dust of the road like a sacred rune. The leader of the horsemen saw this, stopped his horse, and turned back. He was a German, but those who followed him were Romans. Several other Germans brought up the rear.

The Germanic chieftain bowed his head meaningfully and said: "Hail, Romans! The greeting of the snake queen is not given to everyone, great destiny: proclaim this! For our happiness and yours, you are fulfilling your duty to the king! Only now am I pleased to be your escort!" The Roman gave a short, gruff reply, then they rode on in silence for a long time. The heat of midsummer parched their

throats and made them reluctant to waste words, unless there was a large jug of drinkable liquid within arm's reach. But the snake mark would not leave the Marcomanni rider's mind. He who is greeted by the snake queen herself has great things to do, but the man leading the Romans did not look like one from whom such things could be expected. There was one riding behind the last few who seemed to be more important than a servant, but sometimes the eye deceives; and yet! The Marcomanni turned again to the Roman: "Tell me, Roman, what business brings you to the king at Eburodunum? You could have saved yourself the ride just to deliver the letter the emperor wrote!" But the man asked replied gruffly: "Quadi, if you want to know." But the other interrupted: "Don't always say Quadi, Roman! You should know and remember that we Germans, who keep a horse between our legs, are called Marchmen or Marcomanni;*) But those who walk on foot and carry spears are the Quadi! We are the lords and they are the people! Remember that! Now then, what is your business in Eburodunum?" The Roman cast a mocking glance at the bear-skinned nobleman and replied sharply: "So you're a Marchman; is that supposed to be a patrician? Listen! In the last war, we never had time to have our beards shaven, and that is why we are

*) From March, mare, horse; not from Marc-Grenze.

riding to your king, so that he may lend us his barber and have a bath prepared for us, with everything that goes with it!” The Marcomanni were not particularly pleased with this answer, for they had noticed two things that made them wary. First, it was clear to them that the Roman did not want to tell them anything, and second, they had noticed that the rider in the retinue had come forward to listen to the conversation, which was not the custom of retinue servants. A peculiar smile played beneath the broad blond beard of the German, and a mischievous, scornful glance flashed from his blue eyes toward the Roman as he began: “There you are, Roman, well advised; we Germans wield very sharp razors; we also know how to prepare baths and how to bleed people very well! I think this summer has given you enough examples of that. And your great victory before Ravenna...” “Silence, you blasphemer! Why did you run away from there?” With these angry words, the horseman from the train of the Marcomanni interrupted the speech, clenching his fist in anger. “When the Aare speak, the ravens are silent,” said the German, adding: “Ride back to the baggage train; you see the eagle painted on my shield as a sign that I belong to the royal family; I have the right to speak only to your leader!” The rider remained silent, but a look of hatred flashed at the Marcomanni. In response, the Roman riding in front said, “Marcomanni, we are all Romans, and

everyone can speak as he sees fit; make no mistake about that."

Many more unfriendly words flew back and forth between the two, but since the contents of their canteens were empty or spoiled by the heat, they soon fell silent, clearly proving what a reliable peacemaker thirst is. Snorting and panting, the horses stopped in front of the ramparts of Eburodunum, behind which the closed gates were hidden. Then a Marcomannic herald sounded his army horn. The gatekeeper responded in kind. Then the man leaned over the wickerwork of the breastwork and asked, "Who seeks entry into King Attal's castle and city of Eburodunum? What are the Romans doing in this land? Speak!" "I'll tell you, black-mouthing man, when I have the third horn in my body! Open up!" cried the Marcomanni horseman impatiently to the gatekeeper. But he growled back: "Three spears, and not three horns, shall feast on your entrails; what are you Romans doing in this country?" "Since when is it the custom at King Attal's court to gas the guest? Do you not see the eagle on my shield? Are you, croaking Gaul, so unfamiliar with Hanold, the burgrave of Stilifrieda? Defend yourself against my wrath!" "Let someone else answer that!" replied the man at the rampart. "Wait for the king's decision!" The gatekeeper had disappeared; only Hanold waited patiently, and so did the horsemen. Soon a new horn

call sounded from the rampart. It was the king himself, whom Marcomanni knew well by his horn call. “Greetings, cousin Hanold! What brings you here to give us Romans? They belong to the wolves, along with the one who leads them! What is their purpose?” “Messages and letters from the Emperor of Rome! But cousin king, my tongue is parched. If you want to ask me more, at least send me some jugs of mead!” The king laughed and gave orders to open the gate. In front of the courtyard, under the broad lime tree, the new arrivals were welcomed, then a bath was prepared for them. Dudar, the steward, was given the task of finding accommodation for the Roman guests; this was not as easy as it sounded. But he soon figured out what to do. The two most distinguished guests were to be given the seven fine chambers in the secluded, beehive-like round tower that still stood from the old castle, for the new buildings were square and mostly made of tree trunks. The retinue was to be accommodated as best as possible with the castle servants in the large dormitories.

But now, after this distribution of the Romans had been planned, the steward set about furnishing the round chamber comfortably. The walls were hung with red-colored cloths, the floor was covered with wolf skins, while fragrant hay was piled high in two places and covered with selected bearskins, promising to provide the most magnificent beds for

the weary riders. The steward led the two Roman leaders, refreshed from their bath, into this hall, but they demanded that Dumar send them the man who called himself Titus. This was done. King Attal sat under the large lime tree in the castle, next to him his cousin, Count Hanold. Each held a huge drinking horn in his hands. In front of the king stood a jug with a heavy contents on the wide table; otherwise, the two were alone. They held secret counsel. “What does the Roman want?” asked the king. “When the wolf becomes hungry, he steals a calf or already has one.” “It's true!” laughed Hanold. “They seek your alliance, cousin king, against the Gothic ruler Ostrogotha, or they want to recruit more people to strengthen their legions. At least that would make sense to me.” He said this and emptied his horn, as a wise man does when there is no cellar master at hand; for he had not yet taken it from his mouth when he reached for the jug handle, so as not to miss the refill. The king had also thoughtfully emptied his mead horn to refresh his thoughts, then wiped the mead from his blond beard and continued: “You did try, cousin, during the ride here, to discover their secret? You are surely well versed in bird hunting, and that includes snares, traps, and glue sticks.” “Of course! But much is still unclear to me. See for yourself, cousin king, as I too want to investigate; the good bird catcher only pulls the string when he is sure of his catch.” “That

means," said Attal thoughtfully, 'that the Romans will say one thing and mean another; lies and deceit are the way of the Romans and will remain so as long as they exist.' 'Well, they say that if you see the wolf first, before he sees you, then there is no danger.' That was what the man from Stilifrieda had said, leaning back against the large jug like a besieger of a city who was serious about his plan.

Then he saw a lovely sight, which made him forget the jug that was barely half empty. In the castle's small orchard, where the guest could see through the branches of the lime tree hanging down like other bushes, without being seen himself, two lovely maidens were walking, apparently engaged in serious conversation. What they said was out of earshot, and Hanold did not even think of eavesdropping, for the sight made him forget to listen and drink. The two girls were his little Pipara, the child of King Attal, and her playmate Walburgis. How beautifully the two girls had blossomed! Pipara with her rich golden hair, which fluttered around her royal figure like a cloak and almost touched the ground. The golden-haired girl was tall and proud like a fir tree on a rocky ridge, whose branches are entwined with the gold of the brightest morning mist, and her gentle fairy-blue eyes were as unfathomably deep as the blue of the sky; and yet she was as sweet and gentle as Fraya, the lovely one herself in the soft glow of the shimmering moon. Walburgis was also tall and

slender, blue-eyed and blonde-haired, and yet what a different picture of a girl! She lacked Pipara's enchanting charm, the proud calmness of the fir tree; she was reminiscent of the poplar, just as nestling, just as supple, just as rustling. So the two girls stood there, so alike and yet so different, bound together by the bond of selfless friendship between childhood playmates, which only loosens when the deeper, more serious, but sweeter love for a man takes hold of the virgin's heart. Hanold had forgotten the jug, for the thought had crossed his mind that it was now time to give his castle Stilfrieda to the castle mistress; Pipara, his little goat, would have suited him well. To savor this pleasant thought, he immediately took a long drink and stroked his broad blond beard, which concealed a friendly smile. But this did not last long, for the face of the burgrave of Stilfrieda grew noticeably longer. "That was because he had overheard some conversations that made him eager to learn more. And today, when there are guests in the castle, so drearily gloomy?" Walburgis had called out, adding cheerfully, "Flutes and violins will call us to dance, singers will play the harp and sing, the Romans will dance with us, and your cousin Count Hanold." But Pipara turned away unwillingly and said angrily, "Don't talk to me about that!" "He is to be your husband and you his lady of the castle at Stilfrieda! I have always heard it said so, or is it not so?" "Yes, it

is the truth," replied the king's daughter angrily, "but I will never be his bride! What can I hope for from him who has been in the castle for several hours now, and is so spellbound by the jug of wine that he forgets to greet me?" Walburgis wanted to answer. Count Hanold wanted to hurry to his beloved to make up for what he had missed, silently grateful for the involuntarily overheard hint.

Then something happened that not only prevented Walburgis and Hanold from doing what they wanted, but also left the two girls and the chance observer speechless with amazement. Two of the Romans had been pacing back and forth in front of the little tree garden, talking; they were the leader of the Romans and the horseman whom Hanold had rebuked today, the same man who called himself Titus. They had stopped, surprised by the sight of the two girls, and Titus seemed completely enchanted by Pipara. There was nothing strange about this, but it was clear to see that Titus was the one in command and the other was the one who obeyed his orders without question. Soon the two were standing in the little tree garden and paying homage to the girls, Titus addressing Pipara without further ado and leaving Walburgis to the other. Here, too, Hanold could easily see which of the two Romans must be the more distinguished. This made Hanold thoughtful; a feeling stirred in his heart that resembled jealousy, like one raven to another. Then

they came closer and Hanold overheard this conversation: "And you say, royal maiden, you will not tell me whether you return my love? This heart burns and glows only for you, a short sweet yes and you will follow me over the mountains to my sunny Italy, where the wine glows in the vines and oranges and figs ripen, where the gods dwell among men in the evergreen garden!" "What you say, stranger," replied Pipara, still influenced by astonishment, "you can only say because you do not know our customs. You are indeed my father's guest, but you may only speak to me when my father, the king, gives his permission; go and return when my father is present." But the Roman boldly wrapped his arm around Pipara, kissed her heartily, and said to the blushing girl, "When two people love each other, they don't ask their fathers for permission." But Pipara stamped her foot in anger and cried, "Begone, insolent stranger, or I will punish you with these fists!" But the Roman held the king's daughter even tighter and cried, "Golden-haired Aphrodite! I am strong enough to hold you in my hands and claim you as my own against the whole world! I demand nothing improper of you, whom I wish to take as my wife!" His deep black eyes burned, and the girl's eyes, which were now less resistant than before, burned in return. "You are mistaken, Roman!" said Pipara with dignity. "The daughter of the Marcomannic king may perhaps fall in love with

you, she may perhaps even become your wife, but there are few who could say that they have taken King Attal's child as their spouse!" "And if I were one of those few, my golden-haired royal child? Only for one of those few could Venus Urania have clothed you, my sweet, in this golden royal mantle." With these words, he knelt before the astonished girl and kissed her golden locks with noble decorum. "But you, Roman, can never be one of those few! Did you not ride here as a servant?" Pipara had said this with shy amazement and added: "Your noble character is evident and distinguishes you even from the one who appears to be your master, but why the deception?" "That, my good, dear Pipara, you shall know immediately!" With these words, the Roman rose from the ground and embraced the girl to whisper his secret in her ear. A hearty kiss sealed the revelation, without Pipara offering any further resistance.

The two left the place in secret whispers, without Count Hanold overhearing who this Roman was who had ridden up in the retinue and called himself Titus. But although it might have been very important to him, the border count against Carnuntum, very keen to lift the veil that concealed the true nature of the enigmatic Titus, the other mysteries now weighed more heavily in the balance of his actions, and seemed very likely to destroy his hopes of one day seeing Pipara reign as countess of

Stilifrieda. He muttered something to himself that sounded like a threat, but since he was in a great hurry to reach for the handle, it was to be assumed that his threatening murmur was probably only intended for the forgotten jug. King Attal had not noticed any of this. Leaning against the trunk of the castle lime tree, his arms folded on his lap, Eburodunum's commander sat with his head bowed, sleeping and snoring as comfortably and contentedly as any dormouse could. Count Hanold was pleased with what he saw. He crept out into the courtyard and ordered the horses to be bridled, which had recovered well after standing for several hours in warm manure. Hanold ordered the horses to be taken to the watering place and made all the arrangements for a long and arduous ride. When asked about the reason for his haste, he replied that he had to reach Stilifrieda that very day, and everyone understood. The count had long since returned to his seat beside the king and the jug, which was slowly but steadily emptying. A horsefly must have been bothering the king more than usual, because Attal began to stir and wave his hands at the winged little enemy as if he were wearing a helmet and armor. The sleepy king muttered: "Feindiô! Roman dogs, nine feet high on the gallows!" "I know one who is called Titus; but grant him twelve feet!" Count Hanold had said this, then slapped his royal cousin on the thigh with the flat of his hand to

encourage him, and stood up like one who is about to take his leave. The king cursed, for his thigh burned so badly that he did not know whether to rub the sleep from his eyes or his sore thigh first. Yawning, he said, “Are you already riding, cousin Hanold? Stay until tomorrow and hear what the Roman wants. I feel as if the dream warned me of someone named Titus.” “That may be, cousin King. But I must go. Fog is rising from the Wuotanthal, and bad weather is approaching; when it starts, it could be good. I would like to be sitting on my peaceful throne already. Farewell.” “And farewell, my friend!” said the king, looking into the jug. He drank what was left in the jug, then Hanold and his men took their leave and trotted merrily out of the gate. With the empty jug, the king walked toward the courtyard. The two girls stood together in the little tree garden. Attal gave them a friendly wave, then stepped into the pantry to ask the steward to fill his jug with wine. Once again, Lord Attal sat under the lime tree in the company of his jug and several warriors, seeking their advice on what the Romans would say or not, and what to answer to this or that question, assuming that this and no other question would be asked.

Thus a considerable amount of time passed. Twilight shadows fell over the land, even though it was not yet sunset. The sun had still been shining brightly, the shadows had grown smaller, but now the sun's

glare had faded. A leaden gray twilight enveloped the trees and bushes, and the distant mountains had become invisible. Above them, however, stood heavy storm clouds, black as the thundercloud itself, with whitish glowing edges and an eerie, restless flickering in the background. “When a storm is approaching, no sensible person stays outside, except in the shelter of the hall, which is enchanted against the forces of evil weather!” With that, the king rose from his seat and hurried to the castle, followed by his men with the beloved jug. But they did not reach the shelter of the roof in time. Large drops of rain fell, and the storm was already there with howling and roaring. The first flash of lightning flashed, followed by thunder that crashed loudly. Now a storm broke out like one rarely seen. “The man from Stilfrieda would be better off here than in the saddle,” said the king, taking a drink and putting on a comfortable expression that showed how grateful he was to fate that it was not he who was now sitting in the saddle. King Attal had guessed correctly that his better Hanold was not yet in Stilfrieda, but he would never have dreamed that he was lying in the bushes behind the next hill, letting himself get rained on, when he could have been much more comfortable in Eburodunum.

The time had come when Lady Hildebirga had finished her preparations in the kitchen and was ready to receive the guests in the king's great hall.

The royal couple sat on cushions in the wide high seat, adorned with the king's regalia and wearing their crowns. To the right of the king sat Gebhold, his firstborn, and Willahar, his second-born; both were younger than Pipara. These sat to the left of Queen Hildebirga. On both sides of the high seat were the couches prepared for the Roman guests, while the benches along the walls were occupied by the men of the king's court. The queen's maidens sat apart, as was customary among the Germanic tribes, for only the Gauls mixed the sexes at the table. But Dumar, the steward, had also festively decorated the hall. In front of it, torches and torches burned in iron candlesticks along the walls. Today he had hung deer antlers in chains from the hall ceiling and placed wax candles at their ends. He looked around confidently and revelled in the approving expressions of the royal couple, with whom he marvelled at what his clever advice and skilful deed had achieved. Then the guests entered the hall. The king's marshal introduced them: "Sublime king and ruler of the Marcomanni and Quadi! The two emperors of Rome, Licinius Valerianus, father, and Gallienus, son, send you a letter and a message through their legate Severius Silvanus and his select retinue; they await here to convey the emperor's greetings to you and to present their business!" With that, the leader of the Roman horsemen, the same man who had spoken with Hanold about the snake

bite, stepped before the king's throne and, after bowing deeply, presented the letter from the two emperors of Rome to the king. The king welcomed his guests, had them shown to their seats, and told them that, according to ancient custom, they should first be refreshed with food and drink before delivering their message. Then, after they had eaten the king's bread and drunk his wine, they would be under the protection of the sacred right of hospitality, and no matter how hostile their intentions might be, they would be assured of safe passage back to the Danube.

Now the covered tables were carried into the hall and the meal began. The otherwise spoiled Romans did this with great honor. But Lady Hildebirga was also an excellent housekeeper, and just as her husband wielded his sceptre powerfully in the kingdom, she ruled the household with confidence with her sceptres, the spindle and the cooking spoon. She stood in the kitchen herself, so even a spoiled Roman palate was quite satisfied with the otherwise despised barbarian cuisine. Only the barbaric barley brew, which the Germanic tribes called beer, did not appeal to them; their more noble drink, mead, was not much better. Severius therefore asked as a favor to be allowed to entertain the king in his hall today with a gift from his emperor, namely the fine wine from Cäcuba. The wine was brought. Severius also offered the king, queen, and

their three children a silver goblet each as an imperial gift. The first cups were passed around and emptied to the prosperity of the friendship that had been initiated between the Marcomanni and Quadi kings and the emperors of Rome. The promise to supply the king with such noble wine on a regular basis greatly increased his willingness to make a pact with the envoys, even though he did not yet know what they would demand, for the Cäcuber was exceedingly pleasing to Lord Attal. Lady Hildebirga also found that the Cäcuber was somewhat more pleasing to the palate than the home-brewed mead; the former king of beverages had quickly lost the prestige it had enjoyed unchallenged until that moment. The Romans were very pleased with this victory for their wine and seemed in no hurry to reveal the purpose of their mission; they clearly wanted to create a favorable atmosphere first.

Outside, however, the storm raged on. Through the open wind holes, one could see a sea of light from the flashing lightning, and the furious rumbling of thunder drowned out the voices. The whistling of the storm also howled inside. But the Yule log glowed in the hearth, solstice coals lay on top of the thatched roof of the hall, and a stately sixty-point stag's antlers hung proudly from the ridge of the hall, so that one could be sure of being safe from a thunderbolt. Finally, the men went to consult, and the women, led by the queen, left the hall after the

tables had been carried out. Servants went back and forth, busy refilling the empty drinking horns and cups of their drinking companions. In a long speech, Severius had explained how the Alemanni had behaved ungratefully toward the ever magnanimous Rome, how the Goths had raised armies in Dacia, and how even the old friends of the Romans, the Marcomanni and Quadi of the Danube, had allowed themselves to be carried away into crossing this ancient border river. Even the Jazyges would again fall upon peaceful Rome with a lust for plunder. The king had reminded the eulogist of peace that the Danube Germans had never been friends of Rome during their nearly three hundred years of neighborliness, but the Roman would not accept this, insisting on the three hundred years of friendship. Then he launched into what he wanted: Rome needed soldiers, Rome needed allies, Rome needed peace; in short, Rome had many desires. King Attal had now agreed to recruit volunteers, but the conditions under which he would recognize Rome's Danube border and, as Rome's ally, separate and fight the Goths, Alemanni, and possibly also the Jazyges had not yet been determined, when loud, confused shouting could be heard from the courtyard, which seemed to be approaching the hall.

For a while, all was quiet; everyone listened toward the gulf. There were still flashes of lightning, but the thunder rolled less violently; the storm had lost its

strength. Then, with loud cries of grief, the queen rushed toward the gulf, followed by the maidens with loud screams: "Our Pipa has been stolen, kidnapped!" This paralyzed everyone; Titus the Roman turned pale. The king struggled to regain his composure; the wailing queen clung to his neck. "King and host!" cried Titus the Roman, beside himself with grief, "do with us as friends, tell us how and where we can help you search for your child, and you shall prove our friendship." But these words only seemed to inflame the king's rage. "Roman, give me back my child!" he cried in a torrent of anger, and when he was assured that no Roman knew of Pipara's disappearance, indeed could know. Attal turned pale to the lips, and a tremor seized his proud body. But he fought down his fierce resentment, forced himself to appear calm, and then said with great dignity: "Romans, you are my guests and as such are safe; no hair on your heads will be touched, but you will remain my prisoners until Pipara is returned to me. Bind them and bring them one by one to the dungeon!" Before the Romans had fully understood what the king had ordered, they were bound almost without resistance and led one by one through the courtyard, blindfolded, into the king's chamber. There the steward took charge of them, tied them all together with a long rope, then opened a trapdoor in the floor, revealing a dark passage leading downwards. Waving a torch, he

stepped inside and dragged the Romans behind him by the rope. After the last one had entered, the king closed the trapdoor and threw the bearskin over it to conceal it.

Outside in the courtyard, horses whinnied, dogs barked, and men and hunters shouted in confusion; amid the noise, the sobbing and wailing of the women could be heard. Searches were to be conducted in all directions that very night in order to rescue the kidnapped girl as quickly as possible. The king himself was already in the saddle and gave precise directions as to which route he would take to receive news immediately if others were more fortunate than he himself. So they set out into the night on the eerie hunt for the king's daughter, with hounds, dogs, and all the hunting gear. Silent as a funeral procession, the hunting party moved out of the gate, no cheerful horn calls or hunting cries accompanying the hunters. The full moon looked down on the land through torn clouds.

Second Adventure

How Emperor Valerianus Fought Against Ingenuus

Things looked terrible enough in Pannonia, as indeed they did throughout the Roman Empire, even though just a few years earlier this Roman Empire had celebrated its thousandth anniversary with great pomp and ceremony. Powerless sat the lord of the world, as the Roman emperors so liked to call themselves, in the midst of a fermenting empire that even then seemed doomed to its fate. Surrounded by provinces that belonged to Rome only in name and whose ties to the empire were becoming increasingly loose because they were falling more and more into the hands of the border peoples, who had to be entrusted with guarding the borders, surrounded by cruel military leaders and officials who took every opportunity to throw the imperial purple around their shoulders, the emperor of Rome, who still called himself “semper Augustus,” resembled a helmsman on a rudderless wreck.

It was before Mursia*) that Emperor Licinius Valerianus had pitched his camp. The Roman army consisted of legions melted together, poorly trained

*) Mursia on the Dravus fluvius Drau; capital of Slavonia.

and hastily supplemented by gladiators lined up in rows and volunteers of all languages of the ancient world. In front of the camp lay the auxiliary troops, or as they are otherwise called, the auxiliary peoples. They were a very dubious help, much like a wolf that must be fed if it is not to devour the one from whom it expects its food. Thus Emperor Valerian lay before Mursia, which he wanted to besiege, but was almost as besieged in his camp by his auxiliary peoples. His son, Caesar Gallienus, who had routed the Alemanni before Ravenna and thus saved Rome from siege, if not from something far worse, was on his way to bring his father the urgent help he needed at Mursia. In front of one of the tents near the imperial tent, several legates and prefects lay on colorful camp blankets, engaged in serious conversation; they were holding council without meaning to, for in serious situations in life, every unintentional conversation becomes a consultation as if by itself. “If Ingenuus knew that we ourselves were here today, as the besieged instead of the besiegers, he would have more confidence in his Caesar's purple; a sortie, and we are destroyed, and there is no one left who does not recognize him as emperor.” “You are greatly mistaken, Regillianus!” cried the legate Annius Corniculus. “You forget, Prefect, that at the moment when a usurper triumphs over the legitimate head of state, a hundred others beside him have the same desire, for

what is respected in the lawful emperor, what makes him Caesar Augustus, the aura of majesty, is lacking in the upstart; stripped of divinity, he is a man, like any other, and the next best says: I too am Caesar!" "That is right, Legate! Ingenuus must fall," said another. "Not only fall, let him suffer the punishment of a traitor to his country!" replied Annus. Then a centurion came and summoned those gathered here before the emperor, in whose tent the council was being held.

There sat Caesar Valerianus in his rich field chair, before him on a small tripod table a fruit bowl with a carafe of wine and the necessary cup. At a sign from the aged Caesar, the army commanders distributed themselves among the field chairs and awaited the emperor's communication. These were more than disheartening. It was known to all that Mursia's prefect Ingenuus had been proclaimed by the Moesian legion and had then assumed the purple and the title of Caesar, as well as the fact that he had thrown himself into the castle of Mursia with the Moesian legion, against the will of the citizens, who remained loyal to the Caesars Valerian and Gallienus, hoping for help from them. But new was the news that the Goths were raiding Thrace and Macedonia, and had even made forays into the provinces of Achaia and Lesser Asia with sad results. There was also the alarming news that the Parthian king Sapor had invaded Mesopotamia and that the

proconsul of Asia, Odenatus in Tadmor,*) was, by all appearances, acting in concert with the Parthian king. Seduced by his domineering wife Zenobia, he was now allowing himself to be honored as a king, as if neither Rome nor the Parthian war existed. Even Gaul, always prone to rebellion, was in full revolt; Rome had only the mutual jealousy of its commanders and army leaders there to thank for the fact that no one had yet proclaimed himself emperor, because no one would grant the purple of Caesar to another. Meanwhile, the Alemannian prince Chlod was raiding Gaul with impunity, destroying Divodurum**) and Moguntiacum,*** and individual bands had even penetrated as far as Hispania and Africa. After this devastating report had been submitted to the emperor, he continued: "And so I have decided, in agreement with Caesar Gallienus, to recruit further Germanic auxiliary troops. Germania produces enough men to supplement our armies, for every German who is slain in our service is a gain for Rome, because he is torn from those armies that hang like a threatening storm cloud over Rome, heralding ruin, plunder, and destruction. With the largest army possible,

*) Today, as a ruined city, called Palmyra.

**) Metz.

***) Mainz.

backed by the confederate king Attal, we will overthrow Ingenuus, then drive the Goths and the Jazyges out of the East, while part of the army subdues Gaul. This task falls to Caesar Gallienus. I have reserved for myself the punishment of the arrogant Sassanid Sapor, triumphing over him in Rome, and also having a word with the insolent Odenatus at Tadmor. With the victory at Ravenna, a new era of glory can begin for the thousand-year-old, eternal Rome.”

Much was now said back and forth, when a centurion rushed into the tent and reported that a messenger had arrived from the army of Caesar Gallienus. “You mean to say, centurion,” said the emperor with dignified calm, “that a messenger has arrived from Caesar Gallienus.” “Sublime Caesar!” replied the centurion, “it is, as I said, the messenger sent from Caesar's army, and not from Caesar himself. May he appear before you, divine one? He has urgent news to report; so he says.” Then the aged emperor began to turn pale; trembling, he seized the golden cup to take a strengthening drink. But much of its contents spilled from the cup before it reached the emperor's lips. “By Jupiter on the Capitoline, what new fate is to be heard? Rome, Rome!” cried the emperor, emptying the cup, then stroking his bald head with the flat of his hand. But he soon regained his composure; calm and firm, as if nothing had happened, he summoned the

messenger. The latter entered and greeted Caesar as usual. “Who sent you?” “The legate Aureolus, my emperor!” “Why not Caesar Gallienus?” “Where is he?” “The godlike one has disappeared, no one knows where.” “Don't worry about that, exalted emperor!” cried Regillianus with a barely concealed mocking smile. “Don't worry, there is a barmaid not far from the imperial camp who keeps pretty slave girls. That's where you should look for the young Caesar, and that's where you'll find him!” “May Jupiter Ultor*) reward you for those words!” cried Annius Corniculus, rising angrily. “Do not forget, Regillianus, that you are speaking to your emperor; do not forget that the one you speak of became the savior of Rome from Ravenna!” “Do you know the danger in which the exalted one finds himself, into which he has thrown himself for the good of Rome?” But the emperor motioned Annius to be silent, and with the same silent gesture urged Regillianus to continue. He went on, not without casting a triumphant glance at Annius: “You yourself know well, most exalted of all Caesars, what your divine son, Caesar Gallienus Augustus, is like. While Rome trembled before its enemies, he, forgetting his princely rank, had caroused in taverns and brothels, among pimps and musicians, and had been the bosom friend of circus performers, mimes, and

*) Ultor the avenger; that is, Jupiter. The Romans also knew a Mars Ultor.

gladiators! He caroused with dancers, singers, and actresses, dined with them himself, and it is well known that he only goes out to the sound of flutes and returns home to the sound of organs. It is also well known that..." "Yes, it is well known that when Rome trembled and a certain Regillianus had fled cowardly, the emperor Gallienus saved the empire through his glorious victory at Ravenna. Yes, Regillianus, that is well known, it is well known to us all!" Annius had cried out with a trembling voice and eyes flaming with anger. But again the emperor waved, and Regillianus continued to tell how Caesar Gallienus was always thinking of amorous adventures and had often saved his life by the skin of his teeth, but had brought irreparable shame upon the state. "It had always been quite indifferent to him whether he had embraced a slave girl in a cowshed, another while mowing hay, or a patrician's daughter during a feast. But he did not dishonor them, for how could a scion of the gods, most exalted one, dishonor a woman, even if she were a princess? No! You have dishonored him, for..." "Will you remain silent?" Annius raged, but once again the emperor commanded silence without saying a word. Then Caesar said to Regillianus with devastating coldness: "Take a handful of legionaries, Regillianus, and guard the posts in front of the camp. But do not forget to adorn yourself with the insignia of a manipulus first." Regillianus was destroyed; the

emperor waved him away proudly. The fallen man left the emperor's tent with unsteady steps. The others in the tent were also shaken and silent; but the emperor took a fruit from the fruit bowl, looked at it for a long time, then ate it with devout reverence, as if he had not the slightest sympathy for the fallen man or for the messenger's report, which had not yet been delivered. But this was a well-calculated deception. The aged emperor used such moments to collect himself and observe his surroundings, while he himself carefully avoided betraying what was moving him through his expressions. Only the most violent excitement could move him to express his feelings, as before when the messenger reported on Gallienus' army. After enjoying the fig, like one for whom nothing surpasses such a delicacy, he motioned to the messenger to give his report.

He now recounted how the army had marched from Ravenna via Aquileia to Emona*) in order to branch off from there to Mursia. "But this was prevented by the assembled troops. Therefore, Caesar Gallienus advanced to the Danube, increasing and training the army on this march. Thus they advanced to Carnuntum, where Emperor Gallienus expected new reinforcements from the Quadi country. Indeed, many reinforcements arrived. With these, he

*) Today Laibach, capital of Carniola.

inquired about their homeland over wine and then sent a stately embassy to King Attal. The day after the departure of this embassy, the emperor held another solemn council in the Hibernum Castrum at Carnuntum, gave a splendid banquet, and then returned with a large retinue to the camp in front of the Marcus Aurelian colony. He went into his tent. The next day, when the emperor did not appear, two of his most trusted guards, Bonitus and Celsus, ventured into the imperial tent and found it empty. The legate Aureolus, for we had no camp prefect, since the emperor himself performed that duty, immediately investigated without success. No news has yet been received from the embassy. Legate Aureolus, recognized by the other legates as camp prefect for the time being, requests your orders, glorious Caesar.” The messenger had finished his report. Seemingly calm, the emperor raised the cup to his lips; quietly his hand trembled. Then he said in a calm but hoarse, almost toneless voice: “Prefect Annius Corniculus.” The man who was called was stunned with amazement, but stammered embarrassedly: “Most exalted one! My rank is that of a military tribune...” But Valerianus said calmly: “Prefect Annius Corniculus, travel immediately to the camp before Carnuntum. Confirm the legate Aureolus as camp prefect, and search for your friend, my son. No other orders are necessary; act for the good of the state, be a Roman! Farewell!”

The deposed prefect Regillianus had rushed to his tent and thrown himself onto his bed, foaming with rage. He had thought that the old lion's teeth had fallen out, forgetting his claws. He, the prefect Regillianus, was now to be a manipulus! What mockery! Why not just an ordinary legionary? The emperor had left him this low rank for no other reason than to let him see the height of his fall. He still wore the insignia of his former dignity, and none of his close associates knew that this dignity had been taken from him. He called one of his centurions and ordered him to assemble the legion. The centurion hesitated to obey, so Regillianus called another. He and several centurions entered Regillianus' tent. "You can all become legates and prefects," Regillianus said to them. "The emperor is besieged by the auxiliary troops, but he wants to play the besieger himself. Caesar Gallienus has been murdered. If we grant the auxiliary troops their wishes, then Caesar Valerianus was Caesar! We will storm Mursia and leave the nest to be plundered by the auxiliary troops; Ingenuus will be captured and -" "You are imperator!" cried one of the centurions. "Your name alone says that you should rule Rome: Rex – regis – regi – Regillianus! Yes, Imperator Regillianus!" "I thank you, Prefect Patroclus!" said Regillianus proudly; "from now on I shall be called: Caesar Regillianus Illyricus semper Augustus!" "Hail to you, Caesar Regillianus Illyricus semper Augustus,

Hail, Hail!' cried the others. The legion was already lined up and at that moment advanced from the camp toward the auxiliary troops in front of it. Valerian's situation was desperate; one usurper was in Mursia, another in front of the camp. But Emperor Valerian had not lost his composure even through this event. Through reliable messengers, he had informed the citizens of Mursia of the danger in which the city was hanging and urged them to take up arms against Ingenuus; he would then stand ready with his legions to defend them.

Such were the conditions in the camp of Emperor Valerian. The newly appointed prefect of Illyricum, Annius Corniculus, had arrived at the camp of Caesar Gallienus near Carnuntum with letters of authority from Caesar Valerianus. The situation remained unchanged. Even Aureolus, who had now felt like an independent camp prefect for a few days, had initially viewed the imperial representative with suspicion, for the thought had already crossed his mind to seize the highest power in a swift coup. But he hid this desire deep within himself, for he did not yet believe that the right moment had come. He also soon realized that he had nothing to fear from Prefect Annius; the care he took to uncover Caesar Gallienus' trail made him seem harmless. Annius had not yet finished his investigations when a traveling party arrived at the camp. Escorted by armed horsemen, three imperial carriages entered

the camp through the Porta Decumana; the leader of the horsemen ordered the sentry to summon the camp prefect immediately to the carriage of the emperor's niece, Domina Galliena. Aureolus and Annius hurried to the carriage; Domina Galliena was waiting impatiently. The two prefects interrupted the prescribed ceremonial greetings with which they were to receive the niece of Emperor Valerianus, the betrothed of Emperor Gallienus, were quickly cut short by the young Domina with the words: "Tell me, gentlemen, what news is there of Caesar Gallienus, my fiancé?" The young Domina had blurted this out hastily, while tears streamed from her eyes. Now it is a noble deed to comfort a beautiful woman, but if she is also a princess, then this praiseworthy act becomes a merit. The two prefects therefore did their best to comfort Domina Galliena. But all exhortations to leave the camp and set up court in the Hibernum Castrum, the government palace of Carnuntum, were in vain.

With the stubbornness of a woman, Galliena took possession of the emperor's tent in order to conduct her search for him from there. The wagons were quickly unloaded, and the few slave girls who had been brought along furnished Gallienus' tent for the princess. This was very undesirable to both prefects. Aureolus found his plans for independence thwarted, while Annius feared that the lovers' haste might jeopardize his plans to rescue the emperor,

especially if this haste gave way to zeal. However, neither of them showed their displeasure, but each professed how happy he was to have the princess in his vicinity. But it would not have pleased either of them that the princess was anything other than what she appeared to be, namely a woman frightened for the man she loved. Only the desire to shine on the golden throne of the Roman Caesar made her fear for the life of her fiancé, and that was why she had rushed to the emperor's tent, solely to save her own dignity as an empress. It was this dignity that she trembled for, this dignity for which she risked everything and would have given everything to secure its possession. But the Roman woman, well trained in all the arts of disguise, knew how to hide these intentions cunningly and even completely deceive the two prefects. Annius had spied on the Germanic mercenaries with whom the emperor had been drinking wine and questioned them about their conversations. Galliena had also learned of this and demanded to hear them as well. In front of the tent, a rich throne-like chair had been set up, raised on a precious Parthian carpet. On both sides, on tripods, were metal incense burners stained green, which emitted fragrant blue wisps of smoke; there were also small tripod tables with refreshments. Thus, a place worthy of the imperial domina was created, from which she ruled the camp like an empress. She sat in rich imperial regalia with

dignified grace in the cushions, while the prefect Annius stood to her right and Aureolus, the camp prefect, to her left. Behind her seat were the banners and standards of the legions.

The warrior Kadolz was summoned before the princess. He was a huge, strong man, wrapped in bearskins, with a mighty shield and the ever-present heavy spear. He bowed his knee before Galliena. “Who are you, man?” asked the domina. “As you can see, princess, a German. The emperor took me and many of my friends, whom I had brought to him, into military service, and he shall not regret having my Framea here”—he raised his mighty spear proudly—“as his friend... I have seen more than one man writhing on this good spear.” “The emperor thinks highly of you, German,” said Galliena, “I was told that he honored you by drinking with you; what was your advice when he asked you for it?” “Princess! That is the truth; the emperor honored me, but he never asked me for advice! You have been misinformed.” “So the emperor discussed something else with you, Quadi,” said Galliena, “and I would like to know what.” “Princess,” replied Kadolz, “it is not worthy of a swordsman to repeat what another confided to him over wine; it would be even more unworthy if I were to repeat what my commander, whose man I am, said to me over wine.” The villain looked suspiciously into the princess’s eyes, but she did not lose her patience and continued in a kind

tone: “I recognize you as a villain! But I will show you that I also trust you; I too want to discuss something with you over wine, but I also want to know that you are as faithful to me as you are to the emperor. Bring me a golden cup full of wine!” Cora, the chief of the princess's slave girls, brought the requested cup, which Galliena took and drank to the Quadi after saying these words: “Kadolz, this drink is for you, you man of your word!” After they had drunk heartily, she handed the cup to the Quadi with the words: “You may keep the cup as your own, it shall remind you of this hour!” But the Quadi refused and said, “Princess, I can serve only one lord, I can be the word-keeper of only one lord. Keep the cup!” But with unwavering patience, Galliena continued, “My good Kadolz, you misunderstand me! Take the cup and drink the cup of loyalty! Wife, in the service of the emperor, who is threatened by grave misfortune, I will follow your advice and accept your help. I will trust your loyalty to Gallienus, your warlord, and reveal to you the secret of his misfortune. Then you shall help me with advice and action, and you will gain immortal glory!” The barbarian was defeated; he hastily grabbed the cup, raised it high and cried: “If that is so, then I drink to you, princess, and you shall find a man more loyal than Kadolz the barbarian! Ask me anything you want to know, and what I know and think and say is yours!”

With that, he put the cup to his lips, emptied it in one gulp, and then stored it in his furs on his chest. Aureolus had listened to the conversation with indifference, but not so Annius, who feared that Galliena might learn things from the Quadi that would arouse her jealousy, thereby making the emperor's rescue more difficult, if not entirely impossible. He sensed danger and was powerless to counter it. "Listen, villain! Your commander, Emperor Gallienus, is away. We are worried about him, for we do not know where he has gone; nor do we know where he is now or whether he is well. Yes, we already fear that his life is in danger, or that he may no longer be among the living. It is imperative to bring him swift help, and that is why I have summoned you to keep your oath of allegiance to your emperor and to assist him in his hour of need. Therefore, I remind you of your manly loyalty." Galliena was agitated. Her eyes were fixed impatiently on the giant figure of the Quadi; she wanted to read the answer in his expression before he spoke. But the Quadi remained calm, in contrast to before, when he had clearly shown astonishment and concern in his expression. Smiling, he said: "Sublime princess! Do not worry, no harm has come to the emperor, I know that for certain! Soon he will be back here in front of his tent drinking the wonderful wine with which you delighted me!" Now it was the Romans who were astonished and exerted

its characteristic magical spell. Galliena seemed to have forgotten her dignity; with her body bent forward, her eyes wide and her mouth open, she stared at the Quadi; her right hand still rested carelessly on the back of the throne, but her left hand was stretched forward and grasped at the air. She hastily uttered the words: “The emperor has entrusted this to you, speak, where is he?” But with unshakeable calm, the Quadi said: “The emperor has not entrusted this to me; he knows how to conceal his plans. You, princess, have shown me the emperor's trail, and now I know through you where Caesar Gallienus is, as I guess, since I showed him the way. But I also know that you cannot be his friend, so take back the cup!” But Galliena refused and cried, “No, keep it! The time will come when you will see that I am truly the emperor's friend! But tell me, you faithful servant, what the emperor intends to do, if you know! You see me, his bride, here in despair, you see me begging you, man, to give me peace from my worries about my dearly beloved! Tell me what to do to gain certainty!”

The villain stood indecisively leaning on his spear, holding the cup in his hand, which seemed to burn him like an ill-gotten possession. Galliena had jumped up and hurried down the steps of the throne. She stood before the German, laid her right hand gently on his shoulder, and looked imploringly with tear-filled eyes into the blue eyes of the

indecisive man. His chest heaved heavily, and one could see from the giant's face what a difficult struggle he was fighting. He avoided Galliena's gaze for a long time, but finally their eyes met and remained fixed on each other; a blush spread across the German's face and ran into his rich blond beard and hair. "By the clash of spears and shields!" cried Kadolz, "never yet have I been afraid in the roaring forest, but your tears, princess, have defeated me; your eyes, I believe, do not lie to me! Caesar Gallienus is staying in Eburodunum, in the palace of King Attal!" How frightened Galliena recoiled: "How terrible!" she cried, "and you only tell me this now? What can we do to save him?" But the villain laughed: "Now, princess, I truly believe that you are the emperor's friend! He is in no danger, but a guest at the court of the barbarian king. The right of hospitality is sacred to the Germans, and the emperor did not go there as an enemy, but as a friend. Be calm, princess, he will soon return here happy and cheerful." "Did I not say so!" rejoiced Annus, forgetting all court etiquette. "Did I not say so? The incomparable one has put himself in danger in the service of the state!" Galliena cried, wringing her hands. "Yes, in danger! You, Prefect, spoke the right words. In disguise, unrecognized, Gallienus joined the embassy, that is clear, for otherwise the camp would know of his journey. Nor is it customary for an emperor to travel to a neighboring

king without an imperial retinue. Moreover, the embassy has disappeared, for otherwise a message from it would have arrived, if not the embassy itself!"

That made sense, and even the Quadi was taken aback. Had the Romans provoked the wrath of the Quadi king? If so, there was cause for concern. That was what the German had thought. A pause of silence followed. Then Galliena stepped up to Kadolz. Once again she laid her delicate, soft hand on the giant's yearning shoulder, sending a wave of heat through him, and once again she raised her tear-filled eyes to his. But he no longer avoided the princess's gaze, instead lowering his eyes deeply and passionately into her soul. Then the princess sighed, lowered her long black eyelashes, and whispered as if from an anxious heart: "Kadolz, I want to ride to King Attal. Be my guide! Will you, good Kadolz?" Again he struggled, but not for long, then he said: "Princess! I alone will ride, even if I have no horse, one will be found, but you must stay here! You must not put yourself in danger, even if the emperor were in danger, you would only increase it. Stay here and wait for me." "I cannot," whispered Galliena, and sank sobbing into the bosom of her nurse Menophila. She was a dignified matron, Greek by birth, and the confidante of her former nursing child. "Child of my heart," she said, "calm yourself, the barbarian gave good advice! Now go into the

tent and rest; you have lifted the veil of secrecy, now let the men worry.” Galliena seemed to give in, but she approached the German again and asked, “So you think, Kadolz, you can reassure me about Caesar's fate?” Then she lifted her silken eyelashes. A fiery glance, like a flash of lightning, shot from those fiery eyes to the heart of the German, then the long black eyelashes again veiled the burning, longing glow. “Stay nearby, I still need your advice,” whispered the princess to him, and then hurried into the tent after a hasty farewell.

Annius now approached the German and invited him to continue pursuing the trail they had found in his tent, with a full cup. The two had not yet emptied too many cups, nor had they really warmed up to the wine, although they had already decided on a joint ride to Eburodunum, when one of Galliena's slaves appeared in Annius' tent with instructions to escort the Quadi to the princess. Galliena awaited the barbarian in the tent of Gallienus, half-undressed; accompanied by his nurse, he entered. She withdrew and let the heavy curtains fall, so that no ray of daylight penetrated the room. A precious lamp hung from the ceiling of the tent, covered with rose-colored silk. Rose-colored light flooded the room. Incense burners gave off all the fragrances of India, scents that the simple man of nature had never inhaled before, which stunned and confused him. But in the cushions, the

intimidated Kadolz saw the grieving Galliena resting, dissolved in tears; he recognized her, and yet he did not recognize her. Was this really the princess? Where had her proud dignity so quickly vanished? Had she discarded it along with her rich jewelry and gold-embroidered purple robes? Suddenly she raised her eyes to the man standing apart, full and glowing and sparkling like the desert sun. The villain trembled to his core. "Kadolz, is it you who has come to bring me comfort in my pain?" cried Galliena, rising as if frightened by the intruder. Her eyes burned with southern heat. Her right hand flew to her forehead, where blue-black curls coiled up, and like unleashed snakes, the curls rolled down over her dazzling shoulders. The folds of her light robe came loose, revealing unimagined beauty to the half-stunned Kadolz. But Galliena quickly covered herself as if she were frightened, rose hastily, hurried toward Kadolz, took him by the hand, and led him to the resting place she had taken for herself. The stunned man allowed himself to be led without resistance. "My dear Kadolz!" began Galliena, sinking down beside the German and letting her eyes burn with passion as she looked at him. "My dear Kadolz, what do you intend to do?" And as she spoke, she played with the claws of the bearskin on his chest and wrapped her full white arm around the sunburnt neck of the Quadi in a playful game. His mind became dizzy. "What do I

intend to do, "I, Mistress?" He said no more, a burning kiss burned on his lips. Two soft arms entwined him, then he was offered a golden cup, and he thirstily drank the intoxicating drink and sank back into the pillows, covered with kisses. He had lost consciousness.

When he awoke, he lay in the grass in a corner of the camp; his mind was confused, his head was burning. With great effort, he rose and dragged himself through the camp. He passed the imperial tent, and a dark memory dawned on him, as if something had happened there, but he could not remember what. He dragged himself on. Then Annius came toward him: "Hail, Kadolz! Mount up, we're going to ride!" But, still in a dream, he said: "Yes, ride! Don't cry! Spear and shield! Don't cry!" Then he raised his arms as if to embrace Annius and staggered toward him. Annius stepped back, and the madman fell to the ground, where he remained lying and fell back into a deep sleep. Annius smiled bitterly; he knew where and how the madman had been made so senselessly drunk. He was to lose all memory of the place, the time, and the event! And that was Gallienus' bride, who shed tears not for her missing fiancé, but only for the endangered purple! He had the German brought to his tent to be guarded and nursed back to health.

Meanwhile, much had changed before Mursia. The three parties regarded each other with mistrust; Regillianus, with the rebellious auxiliary troops outside the camp, saw himself without a chance. He dared not take decisive steps against Mursia or Valerian. His hesitation made his soldiers despondent, for they feared the wrath and punishment of Caesar Valerianus, to whom they had so recklessly broken their allegiance. Their pay was also withheld, and empty promises instead of hard cash were a sorry sight. Even in Mursia itself, due to the tight siege, famine had broken out; the emperor's best ally, for it spared him from fire and sword. The citizens finally gathered together; the starving legionaries of the Moesian legion also joined them and discussed what to do. Those in the legion who were guilty of crimes were still reluctant to surrender to the emperor, but it was agreed to send a delegation to him with a request for mercy for the legion if it would return to duty. After much pleading, the emperor granted the petitioners what was now most welcome to him. On the same day, loud noises rang out from the tightly enclosed city; this was the sign of an uprising against Ingenuus. The emperor then advanced toward Mursia, whose gates opened. The citizens rushed out with their municipal officials to beg the emperor to take possession of the city. When Ingenuus saw that he was completely abandoned, he drew his voluntary

death at the hands of the executioner and stabbed himself in the heart. The soldiers threw his still twitching corpse over the city wall into the ditch to be eaten by wolves, ravens, and vultures. Mursia rejoiced, for the emperor immediately supplied it with food; the Musian legion was also taken back into favor.

Regillianus stood trapped between Mursia and the imperial camp. Fear and despair prevented him from forming a plan; perhaps he could still have been pardoned, but he could not bring himself to decide. His legates and prefects rushed up to him and demanded that he act, for he had brought ruin upon them. But, helpless and desperate, he uttered only curses and lamentations. Then his prefect Patroclus stepped forward, reproached him for his shameful deeds, and concluded with the words: "You are not worthy of an honest soldier's death, not even of the ceremony of execution; your death shall be that of a mangy dog!" With that, he raised his fist and struck the usurper down. This happened in full view of the legion. Like a pack of wild beasts, the soldiers rushed upon the fallen man and hacked his body to pieces until it was unrecognizable. They threw him where the mutilated corpse of Ingenuus lay. During this appeal, the emperor had surrounded the legion of Regillianus and forced them to surrender their weapons and standards. A terrible judgment was passed upon them. Unarmed, they had to march

under the yoke gallows, then all their leaders, from the centurion upwards, were beheaded, while the prefect Patroclus was stripped naked, hung up, and whipped until he gave up his spirit. Every tenth man of the crew was beheaded, and the rest were distributed among other legions; the standards and vexilla were burned, for the legion had ceased to exist. Caesar Valerianus now moved into the Hibernum Castrum Mursias, where he awaited further news of Caesar's fate from Gallienus. The troops themselves, however, had little leisure, for the emperor drilled them incessantly to prepare them for the attack on the Goths.

Third Adventure

How King Attal Went in Search of His Daughter

King Attal raced through the forest in a hasty pursuit. The storm still whimpered around the rocky cliffs, the forest groaned anxiously in the rushing impact of the wind, and the clouds raced by, swirling as if in a mad, undulating flight. Only the moon stood and let the wild cries of the cloud people pass by, like a powerful spirit watching the confused turmoil of the world, like one who wants to say: "Why the hurry? You will not reach the grave any sooner!" Thus the king and his men arrived at his castle in Blansegge*) at dawn. His army's horns blared angrily before the walls. Then there was a commotion inside. The hateful dogs and bear-biters gave voice, then a tumult could be heard as numerous people armed themselves to split the skulls of the uninvited guests. "What, you landlubbers, disturbing the king's peace?!" cried a threatening bass voice from behind the wall. "Draw back, if you value your necks and heads, hands and hair!" "Open up, burgrave! Attal demands entry, your king!" "What, by the gracious Siegas, are you seeking here at this unusual hour?" cried the

*) Today Blansko near Brno.

burgrave in alarm, adding: “Has the Roman broken into the country?” The barrier opened to let the leader of the men in. The dogs ran around the king, thinking it was a joyful hunt, but he paid no attention to the animals’ expressions of joy. “Call Voland the blacksmith!” cried the king, “and take care of the horses, they still have many a good ride to make today.” The horses were unsaddled, their bellies were placed in the stable manure and firmly tied up inside, which was supposed to be good for laminitis and lameness.

After a while, Guntahar the burgrave returned to the king with an embarrassed smile and blurted out: “Voland the blacksmith sends word that it is not the time for him to obey your command; if you want anything from him, you have as far to go to the smithy as he has to come to you. He knows what you want and can advise you.” “I could be angry with the Gaul if I didn’t know how to respect him. He is an experienced man and can do more than drink!” The king had said this and hurried to the smithy. There, the forge was glowing red. Naked journeymen, clothed only in aprons of leather, worked the bellows. A sturdy man in similar attire, with a flame-red, shaggy beard and hair, and bushy eyebrows that had grown together, clattered about the blacksmith’s tools and paid no attention to the king’s entrance, as if no one had come. The king did not speak a word, for he knew what the “master of

all masters," as Voland the blacksmith called himself, wanted, and such work had to be begun and completed without being spoken of. Therefore, the king was not surprised to find the forge red-hot; he had ridden to Blansegge because of the blacksmith's magic.

Now Voland had taken a horse's thigh and stuck it in the forge and heated it and hammered it and cooled it and heated it again and hammered it again, so that pieces of charred flesh flew around and a fiery mist filled the smithy. He also heated goat horns and pretended to weld them to the horse's shank. As he did so, he muttered spells, and it seemed as if he were conversing with someone invisible to the king and whose speech was inaudible to him. Master Attal saw even more such adventurous deeds, for although he was well aware that his blacksmith Voland, the "master of all masters," was practicing powerful magic, he nevertheless began to feel quite uneasy. The blacksmith became more and more agitated; he spoke hastily in incomprehensible words, as if he were in a fierce dispute with that invisible being. He continued to glow, forge, and cool things that were as suited to the anvil as a Viking boat is to hunting rabbits. Finally, all these mysterious objects were reduced to black dust, which the grim man now scattered onto a red-hot iron plate, quickly placing a second one on top. The hammer blows rang out. He

himself held the plates in tongs and made the heavy blows with the small hammer. The two large hammers of the journeymen fell in regular rhythm. Sparks flew and words of anger and battle cries, such as are customary in combat and the horror of battle, were forged into the iron by the blacksmith. Thus it was formed into a red-hot rod, which was again broken into four pieces and a horseshoe was forged from each of the pieces. Soon they were finished.

Then the king's horse was brought forward and the horseshoes were put on. But none of them fit as usual; each was turned in a different direction. This was done with many gruesome and incomprehensible words. Now the remaining horses were led to the smithy and doused with cooling water; but the smith offered the king a horn from the second bucket of cooling water. Disgust was written on the king's face when the smith, with a stern and commanding expression, silently ordered him to empty the horn. Shaking with horror, the ruler of men put the horn to his lips and emptied it with the determination of one who drinks from a poisoned cup. But the drink tasted less horrible than might have been expected; it was lukewarm and reminiscent of a strongly spiced mead. The king's followers had to drink the rest of the questionable liquid until the last drop. They too emptied the horns offered to them amid the incantations and magic spells of the blacksmith. After this, Voland

threw the two cooling buckets into the forge, along with many other things, then gathered the ashes in a small leather bag without a pin and tied it to the king's stallion's throat strap. When this was done, the blacksmith helped the king into the saddle and had to knot and buckle various things on the bridle. Finally, he was finished and said, "Go, King! Ride after your daughter and you will find her. If your future son-in-law has kidnapped her, you will find them both, but if he has not, you will find only her corpse." The king turned to ask a question, but the blacksmith said curtly and gruffly, "If you have not asked, you will not hear the answer. Leave the sorcerer unasked and unthanked; he is forbidden to say, advise, or do anything more. Ride where your swift horse runs; towering cliffs, wooded heights, and fish-filled rivers will hasten your journey!" With that, the blacksmith hurried back to his forge without a word, slamming the door behind him. Day had already broken when the king rode out of Blansegge. Where to? He did not know. He let his horse run; the others followed. Soon the forest had swallowed up the procession of riders.

In the castle at Eborudunum, it had not become quiet that day. By torchlight, the Romans' horses and pack animals were brought out of the stables, saddled, and loaded with all the prisoners' belongings, then driven up to the sanatorium on the Spielberg. There they were to remain hidden as long

as their riders were held captive above. This happened at the same time as the captured Romans were led by ropes around their necks through the underground passage toward an uncertain and desolate future. At first, the eerie passage had sloped downward. With their eyes bound and uncertain steps, the Romans followed the tunnel into the earth's interior. A musty air and dungeon chill surrounded them; shivers shook their bones. There the passage was level, then it rose again at a steady incline. Wavering, they followed the direction of the rope to which they were tied. Soon they realized that the passage must be narrow and not very high, for when they bumped their shoulders against the wall and tried to move to the other side, one step was enough to reach the opposite wall. They continued to climb steeply upward, but the passage still had no end. "Keep to the right, wall, girl-stealers!" "It would be a pity if one of you fell into the well, for he would be missing from the sacrifice at the next festival of the gods." Fearfully, the bound men pressed themselves against the right wall. Then they heard loud footsteps, as if a plank bridge had been laid across an abyss. Those who dared to step onto the bridge noticed how the beams vibrated under their feet. A damp chill enveloped their shivering limbs. Then they reached solid ground again and breathed a sigh of relief, as if they had already overcome the danger.

This terrifying journey through the tunnel dug into the earth lasted for several hundred steps. Then three heavy blows echoed through the terrible darkness; someone must have reached a door and knocked, demanding entry. A few anxious moments passed without the door being opened or any other response being given. Then there were three double blows, which also rolled unheard, as it seemed, through the interior of the earth. They faded away, and nothing could be heard but the anxious, gasping breath of the prisoners. After a long pause, three blows thundered three times through the underground chambers. These nine blows could no longer be fist blows; only a club could produce such thunder. Then a woman's voice was heard behind the beams, asking: "Who dares enter Helia's realm at this unusual hour? Who has crossed the thunder bridge of the black well of death? Who wants to enter through the gate from which no one will ever walk out again?" Then Dudar, the steward, replied: "Men from Rome! They are under serious suspicion of having stolen Pipara, the golden-haired girl. They are here by the king's command, and nothing is lacking them except their freedom until their guilt or innocence is proven. Keep them safe, but free from bonds and provided with princely food! If their innocence is proven, they shall return through the golden gate and drink the drink of life from Lady Hulda's fountain of youth. Open up, Albruna, by

the king's command!" Then the bolts creaked and the hinges screeched of a gate whose roar announced that it might be a rare event when it opened. Behind those who entered, the gate closed again with a crash, and the eerie journey began anew. But now they no longer went uphill; instead, the passages they walked through were now winding in many directions.

Finally, after they had passed many doors behind them, a larger hall seemed to surround them. They were told to wait, and the rope was taken from them. Then each of the Romans was led individually into a special chamber and locked in, after his bonds had been removed and the blindfolds taken off. There they found everything they could wish for, a soft bed, wine, and excellent food, and each of the chambers was well lit. None knew anything about his companions, none knew whether it was day or night, none could measure the time, for deep, unchanging night lay over all. Even that enigmatic Roman who called himself Titus lay on soft cushions in a niche, such as those that served as beds in his underground chamber. Another niche held a large tankard full of mead. A lamp lit the room. He tossed and turned desperately on his bed. Captured! Far from all help from his own people, captured! Captured, when the most precious thing on earth, the most precious thing that the mocking gods had given him, perhaps to snatch it away from him

forever in the hour of his discovery, was in such dire need of his help! What a terrible mistake to treat him as an enemy, he who could see half the world in motion, searching for the stolen one! Raging, he struck the deaf rock in which his dungeon was dug with his fist, the powerful blow hurt him, but the rock made no sound, as if mocking the powerless. “Father!” cried the prisoner in the raging pain of the abandoned, “Father! You await my arrival before Mursia, and here I lie helpless! And no one will believe that I, the emperor, had to go along to supervise those who are supposed to be the pillars of the state! I did not dare to let them go alone, for instead of an alliance of friendship, treason would have been plotted, like that of Ingenuus or Odanarus! Father, into what danger does the danger of your son Gallienus plunge you!” And again the unfortunate man rolled desperately in his pillows. Then he sprang up and hurried through the narrow room with hasty steps. In the hour of danger, thoughts race.

Caesar Gallienus stood there laughing scornfully. Yes, he who called himself Titus was himself Caesar Gallienus, Emperor of Rome. Scornful laughter echoed through the narrow room, making him tremble at the sound. “Thundering Zeus!” laughed the emperor in grim rage. “You Capitoline thunderer! This time it was not Hermes but Momus who did your bidding.” And again the emperor

laughed shrill and harshly. “Yes, it was Momus. Galliena, lovely bride, how you will lament that you will not become empress! Yes, you will lament, but only for the purple, not for me! If your Gallienus disappears, you will be the first to give your love to a prefect, a centurion, if need be, a gladiator, in order to incite him to reach for the purple with his bloodstained hand! A small, very small murder, and Caesar Valerianus will have lived, he will have died!” And again he laughed shrill and wild. Then he paced up and down the room once more. “Father, father!” he cried in a soft voice, and tears stood in his eyes. “And now, just now, when a brief blissful dream has shown me a woman who alone is worthy to adorn the throne of the Caesars, now, just now, I must dwell in Tartarus! And you, golden-haired one, when the goddesses, the Graces, protect you, when you return safely to your father’s home, will you still remember me? Will you confirm the words of Tacitus, which he spoke to the German woman?” Sobbing loudly, he sank back into the pillows of his bed. Confused images, sometimes inspiring hope, sometimes fear, swirled around his soul. Then he reached for the tankard and emptied it in one gulp. His senses became confused and a leaden sleep descended upon him, snatching the unfortunate man from reality.

King Attal was a good rider. He had unshakeable faith in the magic of the “master of all masters,” and

whoever has such faith in the success of an undertaking will also bring it to a prosperous conclusion, whether that faith is called trust in God, self-confidence, or belief in magic. So the king of Blansegge rode out and headed toward the sun. The sky was clear blue, the shadows on the rock walls were violet, from which the dark blue forest trees nodded down. Then a pack of wolves came running toward the king. "Hail, Master Isegrimm!" Attal cried joyfully; "I will reward your good start by granting you and your Eippe peace today! The approach of a defensible animal in the morning before a daring deed is a sign of good luck! Hail, my friends, keep your horses close!" They continued on their way toward the sun, along a rugged, narrow, winding valley. Then one of the hunters found the tracks of a mare: "Look, my lord and king, someone rode here a short time ago! The horse's hoofprints are clearly visible in the rain-soaked ground; if he had ridden there before the weather, the rain would have washed them away!" "He cannot have meant any good," said the king; "only hunters ride in the Deden Valley*), for there is no road running through it, and I am the lord of the hunt here. Let us go!" They continued along the trail. The path became difficult for the horses; they trotted slowly up the scree slopes. Then, bending around a rocky

*) Still called that today; further up, the dry valley opens into this valley, and between the two lies the Macocha sinkhole.

outcrop, a rider became visible within calling distance.

It was Hanold, the burgrave of Stilifrieda. His horse was exhausted and showed signs of having had a difficult ride. But what the king had hoped to see behind the rider, Pipara, did not appear. This disappointment weighed heavily on his mind. He grabbed his military horn and blew it with a furious cry. Only then did Hanold notice the king behind him; violently frightened, he turned his horse around and urged it on in a desperate rush; but the tired animal stumbled and fell. Hanold was quickly surrounded. "Give me my child, you shameless boy!" cried the king. But Hanold laughed and said, "Better, king! I am betrothed to her, and so I thought I would keep her safe from the Roman suitors. She is in good hands; when the Romans have left the country, I shall have her to marry. Until then, cousin king, farewell!" Without bothering about his horse, Hanold made a sideways leap, quickly jumped over some rocky steps, and was thus safe from pursuit by the horsemen. The pursuers were quickly thrown from their saddles. With the exception of the horse guards, the king led the whole retinue up the rocks in pursuit of the fugitive. "Give me my child, and I will grant you freedom and oblivion!" gasped the king. But the fugitive laughed and called back mockingly: "You can look for her yourself, your Pipara! She is safe here nearby. She

cannot escape, and you cannot find her; I have secured my freedom myself. Farewell, until we meet again at the wedding!" And again he was ahead; panting and cursing, the hunters and the distraught father followed him. Wild cries rose up, surrounded by dark pine greenery; many a hunting cry had already echoed here, but probably never for nobler game than today; it is not every day that a burgrave is hunted.

The summit had been reached; there in front, between the pines, stood the powerful figure of the burgrave, his blond beard and flowing hair playing in the wind, waving cheerfully to his pursuers. Then there was a subterranean thunder, the mountains shook, the pines at the summit next to Hanold struck each other like reeds moved by the wind; Hanold staggered like a drunkard, then let out a bloodcurdling scream, and then a thick cloud of dust enveloped the mountain. Thunderous crashes made the earth tremble, rocks collapsed, others split apart like trees split by lightning, a whimpering and groaning ran through the forest, then it was quiet again, quiet as after a fierce battle. The witnesses to the gruesome event stood petrified with horror, unable to utter a word or make a move. But there, where Hanold had stood, where only a moment ago the wooded mountain peak had arched, there now yawned a chasm of terrifying depth. Gradually, the wind had blown away the dust. The horrified king

was now able to see the spot where the earth had swallowed his cousin Hanold.

Slowly and cautiously, the men approached the edge of the gorge.*¹) It looked terrifying enough. A terrible chasm had opened up, gaping like the primordial abyss Ginnungagap. Torn rock faces formed a funnel of immeasurable depth, with overhanging rocks lining the edge above. From the torn rock walls of this gray abyss, various cave passages stared out, having lost their connection to each other due to the landslide. The king had only seen something similar once before, somewhere on a military campaign, where a ruined Roman castle stood. Part of the building had been destroyed, and the half-standing ruins looked as empty as the interrupted cave passages here. The more Attal looked down, the more terrible the horror that seized him; no matter how much he looked around, there was no sign of his cousin Hanold. Here and there, wedged between the rocky debris, stood a mangled tree, its roots pointing skyward. But deep down, nothing was visible except dust-filled rubble. In wild pain, the king threw himself to the ground at the edge of the ravine and cried out like a madman: “Hanold, Hanold, give me back my child!” But Hanold gave

¹) Today called Macocha. This sinkhole is about 500 feet deep, 180 feet wide, and about 300 feet long. The bottom can only be reached by rappelling down, otherwise it is completely inaccessible.

no answer; once the earth has swallowed someone, it never lets them go.

Then one of the men approached the king, shook him on the shoulder and said with rough good humor: "Men! The one down there has forgotten to answer, but it is good that he told us that the king's child is hidden somewhere here. Let us ride in pursuit, and we will find the dungeon where the maiden is hidden. Come, king, hurry, hurry, before the horses lose their strength." That was good huntsman's advice. The king rose from the ground, and soon they were all back on horseback. Slowly, the sad hunting party made its way down the "Deden Thal" valley, while a messenger was sent to the burgrave Guntahar in Blansegge to fetch capable tracking dogs and other help. Incidentally, the trail was easy to follow. At the end of the valley, however, the trail became unclear, so it was decided to wait there for the dogs. Soon they were there. To the king's great relief, Voland the blacksmith had joined the party uninvited. He also checked the trail, but then said harshly: "Blast and blue fire! I'm no hunter, but I can see that Hanold didn't ride into the valley, but out of it. Just ride toward the sun, and you will find the kidnapped woman." Once again, the travelers rode uphill through the Deden Valley, with the king, the blacksmith, and the burgrave of Blansegge at the head of the procession. They had reached the spot where Hanold had fallen with his

horse, and there the trail seemed to disappear. But the blacksmith rode on and took the lead from there. The valley became increasingly wild; the trees stopped growing, and only rocky crags, rock debris, burnt moss, and sparse grass covered the ground. “This is the ‘Dürre Thal’*), said the blacksmith, “many a cave opens up there, and only there can you search for your golden-haired child, master Attal.” The king was satisfied. The stallions laboriously worked their way up through the desolate rocks. The riders dismounted to lead the mares by the bridle. At last they reached the top. Then the gruesome abyss that had swallowed up Count Hanold and his secret yawned again before the travelers.

A shiver seized those passing by. “Here we come to the holy meadow of the most holy Ostara,”**) said the king, “I will make a vow to the wise women there, perhaps they know how to heal my father's heart.” “You'd better leave that alone, King!” cried the blacksmith in a growling tone. “You know very well that I hate this quacking brood as much as I hate unboiled water. Bliss and blue fire, what am I to do with those who cower at the slightest spell like sheep that smell the wolf! And yet I will ask them! You, Voland, may search for her in your own way; I

*) Still called so today, like the “Hohle Stein” mentioned later, which is still called “Holstein” today.

**) Today: Ostrow.

also find it hard to believe that the Norns would have taken a special liking to you.” “By hammer and anvil, believe it!” said Voland. “I have been here too often in Eisenstein to fetch scrap iron; I therefore have more opportunity than you, master King, to observe the holy way of life of the Heilsräthinnen. Their holiness is only outward, like their dress; they act as if they were goddesses, and their magic is as weak as mole's milk! I know them well, and they know it, and so they are fond of me, like the fox is fond of the bear-biter!” The king had little desire to follow the conversation. He also watched closely the tracks of the horses, which were now more clearly visible here. They led straight to the place of healing. The blacksmith rode sullenly and silently at the king's side. A small round tower, surrounded by a low wall leaning against the right side of the valley, was the modest sanctuary of the lovely spring goddess Ostara. The king blew his army horn three times when he stopped his horse in front of the sanctuary in the Osterau*). But no answer came. Three double blasts now sounded from the horn, but these too had the same result. Voland's eyes flashed, but he remained silent, though his fist clenched menacingly, and it was not small. Master Attal sounded the horn three times; these blasts did not sound gentle. Then a trapdoor opened at the top of the beehive-like round tower, and an ancient

*) A prehistoric mine, still called that today.

woman became visible. She wore a white robe and a wreath of mistletoe on the white cloth that covered her head like a veil.

After she had lifted herself halfway out of the opening and sat down on the dome, she called out in a trembling, croaking voice: "What do you want, King, from Albruna?" "I will endow your place of refuge with rich gifts, venerable one, if you give me good advice." "And not with deceitful words, you old hag!" cried the blacksmith; "You know me, so be warned, great-grandmother of lies!" This provoked the old woman, but also angered the king and his men. Therefore the commander of the men was angry: "You wicked rogue, I advise you not to insult the noble Albruna with your evil words!" The men also grumbled. But Albruna screamed angrily: "Yes, I know you, you coarsest of all blacksmiths, I know you! What are you looking for here in this sacred sanctuary, at the holy White Water of Ostara? Get away, you man of Loki, the bound god, whose evil counsel and wicked sorcery have filled the world with demons! Leave the sanctuary of the goddess, which you only desecrate!" She paused, panting, and Voland was about to hurl new words of strife when the commander of the men commanded peace. With a malicious glance at Albruna, he obeyed the king's command. The king asked Albruna about Pipara, as if inquiring about the circumstances surrounding her abduction by the Count of

Stilifrieda, whom the earth had swallowed up. Albruna had listened to master Attal's report with dignity in her bearing and expression, but Voland's sharp eye had noticed how the old priestess trembled and tried with difficulty to hide her anxious confusion behind dark-sounding words. "She knows more than she is willing to say! By Father Wieland! King, you are a Koting^{*)} and have the right to enter any place of healing. Go in and see if she is telling the truth! The hoofprints lead this far; Hanold's stallion grazed here!" "Far be it from me to enter a place of healing!" said the king. "If Albruna did not see my child, no power on earth will give her back to me. But the vow remains unfulfilled!"

The king said this in a sad voice, through which something like defiance shone through; Voland's words had not been entirely without effect. With an unfriendly greeting, the king turned his horse and therefore could not see the poisonous, evil glance that Albruna shot at the blacksmith, which he rendered harmless with a magic spell. At that time, people still believed in the "evil eye" or the "evil glance." The "coarsest of all blacksmiths" took aim at them. He stuck out his tongue at Albruna, who was so ill-disposed toward him, with his mouth open because he knew that the red color would

^{*)} Koting Descendant of a family of gods. All German royal families trace their family tree back to Wuotan as their progenitor.

prevent any magic from working; he also performed another magic ritual to make the first counter-spell more powerful: he opened his right hand like a fan, placed his thumb on his nose, and held his little finger toward the high priestess of Ostara's sanctuary, who was trembling with rage. Then he turned his horse, kicked it in the flanks, and trotted after the king. They rode further along the valley through dense forest. Here, too, the horse's hoofprints led the way. And strangely, the same tracks met up again, so that Hanold must have ridden back and forth through the valley. The horses were already tired, but the king would hear nothing of rest or a raft.

“The ugly hag knows about your child, king! Or I'll dye my beard green!” cried the blacksmith at last. “I only half believe that she's not holding Pipara down there in some hole. She is only afraid of your anger and does not yet know how to lie her way out of it! Oh, I know this saint! She knows.” “Let us ride on,” said the king; “after all, we can ask her a second question. You are hostile towards her, which is why her actions arouse your suspicion.” They rode on. “There stands Frau Hulda's stone, also called the Hollenstein,” said the blacksmith, “the Whitewater*) springs from the Holy Mountain. Also in it the Norns dwell, but I consider them less shameful

*) A stream, today called “Bielawoda.”

than Albruna of Osterau." The blacksmith had said this, but the horses' hooves led them past Frau Hollens Burg, in a wide arc. "Look, men!" cried the blacksmith. 'The girl-thief had taken great care not to be seen by the good women of Hollenstein; why else would he have taken the detour?' The king gave no answer and rode on, his eyes fixed on the trail. They rode in a wide arc around Frau Hulda's temple and followed the trail through the forest uphill to the left. Now it circled around a mountain again and led back to the valley, where another sanctuary of Frau Perahta stood, with an ancient, sacred well that foretold the future. The dome tower was already glimmering red from the valley as the trail continued along the mountainside and finally disappeared in front of a rock barrier that rose up from the forest. "Blast and blue fire! King, we are here!" cried the blacksmith excitedly. "There, there, the horse trampled around this tree where it was tied. And there, king, what is that? Is that not Weibertand?" He picked up a string of amber beads from the ground, but the beads rolled into the grass. The string was broken. The hunters gathered the beads and gave them to the king. The king recognized the jewelry as his daughter's.

Fearful, they searched further. Scattered amber beads and herbs strewn by the trailing robe led to a cave. "Bring dry brushwood and throw it on a pile," ordered the blacksmith. While this was being done,

he took a short, four-sided iron rod from his bag and two small blacksmith's hammers. He struck one of them into the ground like an anvil and began to hammer the iron rod in a peculiar manner; after a few blows, it was red-hot.*) He quickly stuck it into the brushwood and blew on it with powerful breath; it was not long before a small flame flickered out of the brushwood. This was fanned into a flame and a mighty fire was kindled to keep the torchlight in the cave from dying out. Tree branches were set alight and used to enter the cave, with the king leading the way. Illuminated by the reddish glow of the fire, the room expanded eerily. The distorted shadows of the torchbearers flitted eerily across the jagged vaults and walls, as if the shadows of darkness, disturbed in their repose, were flitting menacingly around the cheeky intruders. Startled nocturnal creatures, owls and bats fluttered around the intruders with frightened cries, but soon they settled back into their hiding places, reassured after the disturbers had advanced deeper and deeper into the cave, into depths where even these nocturnal creatures no longer lived.

Then the king bent down and picked up a gold armring from the rubble; he showed it to the

*) A well-known piece of blacksmithing that was once considered magic. The arquebusiers of the 17th century had such sticks at hand in case the fuses were spoiled. But not everyone knew how to strike the stick until it glowed.

blacksmith: "Do you know what this is? We have reached our goal! How wrong you were to Ostaras Albruna!" "I, the master of all masters, never err, king! The woman is more evil than the nine-headed great-grandmother of the frost giant! But go on, where is the bearer of the ring? She did not follow Hanold willingly; the ring is broken." Then the cave passage came to an end, for a sudden chasm opened up, leading vertically down into the depths. The king cried out in despair, calling his child's name into the abyss. Hanold's last words seemed to him to come from the depths of the earth like ghostly whispers: "You may search for her, your Pipara! She is safe here nearby. She cannot escape, and you cannot find her!" This could only mean one thing: here, where the amber pearls and gold ring had been found, yawned the eerie chasm. Whoever was down there could certainly never escape. Again and again the king called his child, but there was no answer; only a thousand echoes rang back, like the howling of a huge beast whose throat was the cave itself. Then the blacksmith tied all the horse's reins together and, brandishing a torch, let himself down into the depths; the king followed. They wandered around the passages for a long time, but could find no third sign. Finally, discouraged, they gave up their search and returned to their companions.

Sad and silent, they sat around the fire in front of the cave. The horses grazed nearby. Then the bear-

biters gave a loud cry; the dog boys could only keep them on their leashes with difficulty. Attal and his companions listened without saying a word; nothing could be heard but the suppressed growling of the dogs, the rustling of the treetops, and the hoarse cry of a golden eagle high above. Then, with eerie calm, a strange procession moved through the forest. It was three maidens, followed by a black dog. The three maidens did not walk side by side, but one behind the other. The first was dressed in white, and her dress was trimmed with blue; the second wore a white dress trimmed with red, while the third, who followed at a distance, wore a black robe with a black veil. Without making a sound, without paying any attention to the growling of the bear-biters, a mighty black dog followed these solemn maidens. Everyone looked with reverence at the approaching saints; even the blacksmith had no words of shame in store this time. Then the king remembered the vows he had made at the holy site of Osterau. "Greetings and good hunting! You sad hunters, give us food and drink; weary and sunburnt, we need refreshment!" said the Norn with the blue-hemmed robes. The king replied: "Wise, murmuring Hechsa! What little we have is yours; bread and cheese and mead. But why, wise one, do you call us sad hunters?" "Is not the hunter sad, his heart wounded, because he has lost the trail of the noble stag?" That was the Hechsa's counter-question. Attal rose and

spread his cloak to prepare a seat for the three Norns, who sat down silently and silently enjoyed what was offered them.

When they were satisfied, they slowly rose from their seats and departed in the same order in which they had come. The first stopped before King Attal as she passed and said: "Hechsa thanks you for the refreshment and hospitality, may you find your daughter!" The second also stopped before the king and said, "Thanks be from Truda for refreshment and hospitality, that Pipara will show you your daughter's husband today!" Now the black one stopped with the words, "Thanks be from Wala for refreshment and hospitality, that Pipara will one day overcome her courage to take her own life in the hour of greatest need!" Then the king stepped before the three and said, "Take the king's thanks for your favorable advice! My blacksmith Voland shall forge you a brewing kettle from sacred ore, so large that all three of you, together with the dog, can stand inside it. Wherever you wish to set up this kettle on my grounds, there it may be; I grant you as much forest as the sound of this basin can be heard when the blacksmith's hammers awaken it with their roar." That was a royal vow. The blue-eyed witch was overjoyed, then she said to the king: "As the sun's bright rays break free from the clouds, so will your torments end, and you will soon find Pipara!" Just as joyfully moved, Truda said: "As far as the bright

eastern moon scatters flowers on the grass, so far shall your proud son-in-law be commanded by all peoples!" Then came the third, the evil Norn, and cried: "Virtue and vice bear their fruit; blessings are blessed and curses are cursed!" With that, the three sisters departed, followed by the black dog. The travelers sat silently around the fire, waiting expectantly. For a long time, nothing happened. The blacksmith had risen to look after the horses when he happened upon a little hare, which behaved very appropriately and stood up on its hind legs as if there were no female hare to be seen for a thousand miles. A quick grab by Voland and poor Master Lampe was wriggling in the air, for the master of all masters had caught him by the ears and pulled him out of the weeds. "Wait, Lampe, you shall take my regards to the old bark beetle down in the Osterau!" And with that, he tied the poor hare's legs together and put it in his spacious bag.

A cry of joy rang out from all his traveling companions, as if only one voice had called. Pipara stepped out of the cave and rushed with flying golden hair to her father's breast. The two held each other for a long time; with tears of joy on his eyelashes, the father caressed his found child. All their worries, hardships, and fatigue were forgotten; Attal had his Pipa back, and he could once again caress her golden hair. Even the bear-biters pushed their way forward and rubbed their thick heads

affectionately against the king's daughter, who caressed them joyfully. Even the blacksmith, although his behavior did not resemble that of a soft-hearted maiden, was moved, for they were all devoted to the golden-haired child with all their hearts. And yet he grumbled at the girl he had found: "Blast and blue fire! Girl, what are you doing? You let us ride night and day, you let us forge magic and slander women, you let us crawl through crevices and sleep, and then you come out safe and sound, as if you had only been playing with us! It would have been better to do otherwise, I think, girl!" But Pipara knew well how to interpret the blacksmith's words, so she said with a friendly smile: "It is no lie, master of all masters, that the ride I took was not a pleasant one; you can well imagine that I carved many commemorative runes into Cousin Hanold's skin with these nails; they will remind him of his boyish prank for a long time to come!" "And you don't know that nothing will remind him of it anymore, because he has become a quiet man?" said the king, and told her of the gruesome end of the kidnapper. This shook Pipara, but not as much as if Hanold, the boy of her memory, had died. Many questions still swirled back and forth, and as is often the case when two or more people want to share different experiences at the same time, no one got around to telling their story.

The king urged them to ride home, for Lady Hildebirga, like the captured Romans, was certainly waiting eagerly for the riders to return. So the now cheerful companions rode through the forest to the sound of loud horns; Pipara on the horse of the lost burgrave. With a loud "Hail!" the procession of riders rushed up to the red beehive tower of Osterau. Then the king halted and sounded the horns as before. "Hoiho, venerable Albruna! Here I have the stolen woman; what was your evasive advice before? I will remember that!" The king called out to the aged high priestess, but she replied with quarrelsome words: "It would have been better if Pipara had been swallowed up by Hanold from the mountain than to follow the Roman to Italy; it would have been better if she had been torn to pieces by bears in a cave!" "Take this for your words, you wicked priestess! In anger I depart from Tir and your sanctuary!" Without a greeting or a backward glance, the king trotted away. But the blacksmith had taken the hare out of his bag, quickly untied its bonds, and with a whizzing swing threw the struggling master Lampe at the quarrelsome woman's head. It got caught in her veil, tore the mistletoe wreath from her head, and threw her clothes into irreparable disarray. The old woman screamed loudly, but the little hare was not so foolish as to let itself be caught a second time; it had gently slid down from the dome tower into the thicket, from where it hastily fled with long

strides toward the nearby forest. “The coarsest of all blacksmiths” had hurled this insult at the hated woman: “This is for you, Häsin, from the blacksmith of Blansegg; the son shall kiss the mother!” This was more than a mere insult, and stunned and ashamed, Albruna disappeared from the tower. She was defeated. But only the “master of all masters” could dare such a thing, he who was in league with the evil advisor of the gods, the deceitful Loki, the fire spirit whom even the gods feared. They continued at a brisk trot until the forest thinned out and the towers and farmsteads of Eburodunum beckoned in the rays of the setting sun, promising rest to the weary travelers.

Fourth Adventure

How Galliena's Messengers Raised Themselves Up to the Quadi

As a storm approaches, when the first gusts of wind swirl through the fir trees, when the first, still distant flashes of lightning flit beneath the heavy storm clouds and then slowly the thunder follows, as if it were still sleepy and had to be shaken awake, then everything with wings flutters fearfully to its nest, every creature in the forest flees and seeks a safe hiding place; even man, who so gladly calls himself the lord of creation, forgets his pretensions to dominion and becomes not unlike the creatures that crawl and fly, for he too, the domineering one, flees to a safe hiding place. Between the camp of Emperor Gallienus and the splendid colony of Carnuntum was a particularly pleasant spot, which Galliena chose to publicly display her grief for the missing Emperor Gallienus, accompanied by her nurse Menophila and her favorite slave Cora. The Roman princess knew very well what she was doing; nor was it hidden from her what magic women's tears exert on the bearded world, provided that the shedder of tears is young and pretty; for otherwise the effort of offering consolation is not worthwhile. Mourning was of little use in the camp, for only the few

dignitaries of the army frequented it; nor was it any better in the Hibernum Castrum of Carnuntum, for there custom demanded that one shut oneself in a chamber, which would have been pointless, as is clear to see. However, the particularly pleasant little place that the unfortunate imperial bride chose as her Tusculum of mourning was accessible to all; anyone who wanted to see it could see the beautiful princess weeping there and hear her lamenting her fiancé, who was believed to be dead.

This particularly pleasant spot was the Quadrivium Silvanum of Carnuntum. It was a very unusual temple building. Built over a crossroads, its circular hall opened in all four directions through a mighty portal, so that two roads crossed in this temple, and horsemen and carriages, armies and wagon trains passed beneath it. Between the four gateways were niches with marble statues of the Silvan deities, and in front of these were resting places where one could mourn comfortably in the cool shade. The black mourning garments also stood out very favorably against the white marble walls and marble seats. Domina Galliena sat there today, weeping just as she had done here yesterday and the day before. Then the villain Kadolz came striding heavily from the camp. He had lain for several days with a confused head in the tent of Annus, who had him well cared for, for he intended to use him as a guide to the land of the Quadi. Pouring cold water over his head

several times a day in sufficient quantities and repeating this treatment for several days without interruption is said to be very good for dispelling headaches. Today, good Kadolz was already feeling quite well. He walked around the camp and happened to come upon the purple tent of the absent emperor. He stood there, looking up at the golden buttons on the gables and at the golden cords that held the purple draperies, and he did not know quite what he wanted. He had a kind of memory that something had happened in front of and inside this tent in which he had been involved, so to speak. He rubbed his forehead, then scratched behind his right ear, then thoughtfully took his chin in his right hand and propped his right elbow with his left hand; but the memory would not quite come to him. It was still as if his head were fermenting, like over in the rocky ravines of Hohenräthien, where the evil spirits brew up storms. But when he ran his left hand over the elbow of his right arm, he felt something hard in his game bag; he pulled it out. It was a golden cup. He admired the precious object for a long time and thought deeply about where he had captured it. But he could not remember who it was he had struck down in order to obtain this prize. For to call a golden cup his own and not to have killed the one who had previously possessed it was out of the ordinary. And yet, had he not encountered something unusual? A large throne, a

beautiful woman, and then a rose-colored light! He put the cup back, rubbed himself, ran past the tent, and still knew nothing. He stuck his forehead forward, then back again, and as he ran around like an old bear-biter snapping at flies for amusement without catching any, he heard two legionaries talking about the disappeared Caesar and the grieving Galliena.

He trotted on for a little while longer, then; Gallienus? Galliena? Quadrivium, he stopped. Silvanum?! Now he opened his mouth wide, his eyes no less, for a ray of light had fallen on his clouded memory. Everything he had experienced now stood clear and distinct before his mind, except for the tiny detail of how he had come to have such a terrible headache. But he did not dwell on it and trotted cheerfully toward the Quadrivium Silvanum. Manly duty drove him to see if his shield-bearer's bride needed his comfort. "Princess, here comes the wild 'savage'!" whispered Menophila, the nurse. But Galliena shrugged her shoulders pityingly and said, "He is not to be feared; the potion has done its work; whoever has the juice of Atropa in his body loses his memory!" With that, she leaned back carelessly, as if the pain had overcome her. That was how the savage found her. He stared at her in amazement for a long time; her black robe made him thoughtful. "Princess! What is this black dress? You look like Helia, the goddess of death herself! It

frightens me, and yet I know fear very well!” Galliena looked coldly and indifferently at the Quadi, then turned her head wearily toward her nurse: “Ask the man what he wants, Mena, I do not know him!” “You hear it, good man,” said Mena, rising and pushing the astonished man away “You hear it yourself, the princess does not know you. Go on your way and leave her to her grief!” “The princess is mistaken, good woman.” “Listen, you bear-skinner!” cried Mena, enraged. “Listen first and hear that I am no woman, but an imperial slave!” She thought that this would command the German's respect for her. “That matters not,” replied Kadolz calmly, “I may be a free villain, but I am not proud enough to let you feel that.” Turning to the princess, he spoke confidentially, placing his right hand on her shoulder: “Princess, stop your weeping, be cheerful again, as you were in the tent. You know that my arm and my heart belong to you! Don't cry, princess! I will be back with you soon, for today we will ride to find the emperor!” Mena had recovered from her stupor and angrily called out to the German: “And if you don't hurry away, you will feel who I am.” But Kadolz paid no attention to her, turning instead to the princess and saying, “And no answer, Galliena, my lovely Fraya, no...” He could say no more.

The princess stood before him, burning with anger, and silently waved the intruder away with an

imperious gesture. It worked. A faint inkling of what all this meant arose in Kadolz's mind. A deep blush covered his face; it was shame at the realization of his deed. But his heart also felt bitterness. He was infinitely sad. Tears stood in his eyes as he said: "And yet, Princess, my arm and my good spear belong to you, but you shall have your pledge, I will never drink from it again." With that, he reached into his game bag and, averting his gaze, handed the cup to the princess. She said: "If you do not want it, you can give it to my dear Mena as atonement for the insult." A flush rose again on the Quadi's face, but his blue eyes flashed with anger. Furious, he threw the cup on the ground and stamped on it, crushing and crumpling it as if it were made of thin lead and not of strong gold. Then he picked up the precious metal and threw it contemptuously into the slave girl's lap, crying: "I grant you the gold, slave girl, but the cup from which the goddess-like princess drank with me, that cup I would grant only to Galliena alone! The gold may be valuable to you, but it is worthless to me because of your words, princess! Yet my loyalty to my wife remains unbroken! May the gods protect you, farewell, Galliena!" The villain cast a wistful glance at the princess, then strode proudly and defiantly away. Astonished and not without sympathy, Galliena watched him depart. Such defiance she had never encountered before, she who had grown up among slaves. She felt something like

respect for the departing man and would have liked to call him back. Mena hastily hid the gold and lamented only the destruction of the cup. She remained unmoved by the insult she had suffered; she was, after all, a slave!

On the same day, two Romans and the villain Kadolz, together with the necessary pack horses and a retinue of slaves, rode across the Danube bridge at Carnuntum. One of the Romans was the prefect Annius, the other the centurion Gemellus. Their first destination was Stilifrieda, where they asked for lodging for the night. However, they were not taken in by the town, nor in the count's castle, but in a burgrave's farmstead. The burgrave welcomed them as guests in his hall*), took their swords from them with his own hands, and offered them a welcome drink, the ancient sacred sign of Germanic hospitality. After the tables in the hall had been cleared and the mead horns were being passed around, the host began: "I am delighted, fellow drinkers, that I am able to give you good news. I myself have only just arrived, for I accompanied our Count Hanold and several neighbors, your friends,

*) The hall in the old noble courtyards corresponded to the threshing floor of our farmers. Along the walls ran the drinking benches, and opposite the door (the gulf) was the high seat of the master of the house. The tables were brought in before the meal and taken out again after the meal to make room for games, conversation, and dancing.

to Eburodunum, to the court of King Attal. Count Hanold, a cousin of the king, stayed behind because of his own business, but we arrived here shortly before you after a hard ride. Your friends are well; you will meet them safely tomorrow in King Attal's castle." This pleased Annus, but he did not understand it. That Rome's envoys had only passed through here today was inexplicable; where they had spent the rest of their time was unclear. So he inquired further. Ruothart, the landlord, also informed him about this. Rome's envoys had traveled far and wide throughout the country, visiting Attal's neighboring kings and concluding treaties with them, and a large group of spearmen and the necessary horsemen were gathering in all these places. All of them were in good spirits, looking forward to the long journey in pursuit of the lovely woman and the treasure. Two of Ruothart's sons were themselves among those gathering in Stilifrieda, and both were well mounted. "Two of your sons? You are a wealthy man, why are you letting them go to a foreign land?" Gemellus had asked. "My firstborn son is staying here, he is my heir; but the others have no possessions except the little they inherited from their mother. If they stayed here, they would be servants to their eldest brother. If they leave, they will gain military glory and spoils of war and may then be richer than I am. We know freemen here who have little of the good things of

life, but whose younger brothers are kings!” Then Annius understood the words of Caesar Valerianus, who had said that every German who was killed in the service of Rome reduced the number of those who posed a constant threat to the state and the city of Rome. And indeed, the Roman wars abroad and the rebellions at home consumed hundreds of thousands of Germans who faced each other in armies and strangled each other for foreign interests.

The next day they rode on cheerfully. The sun had not yet reached its highest point when they stopped in front of Eburodunum. Kadolz, who had transformed himself from a Quadi into a Marcomanni, both in dress and armament, naturally also carried the hifhorn that distinguished the Marcomanni horsemen, especially when he appeared as a leader. Therefore, he rode boldly up to Eburodunum's rampart and sounded the call with the army horn, as a true and rightful king's son could hardly have done better. The answer rang out from the rampart, then the gatekeeper leaned over the willow-woven breastwork and called: “Whose people are you, and what is your occupation? What brings you here? Tell me!” “We are messengers sent by the Roman emperor Valerian to King Attal, with a letter and a message! Open up!” This was shouted in a proud tone by the Quadian Marcomanni, who was extremely pleased with himself. Riding is more comfortable than walking, he had thought, and it is

also more noble. But the Wallwart's reply was not to his liking, for he shouted down: "King Attal has ridden out, and your companions with him; you may find them at Meliodunum*)." This was a ruse on Wallwart's part, for he knew well that the Romans had been captured and that the king was searching for Pipara and had not yet returned. He was afraid to let the Romans into the city under such circumstances. The ruse was completely successful. It seemed understandable that Rome's envoys would have moved on after delivering their message, for what else would they be doing in little Eburodunum? So they continued on their way toward the sunrise in high spirits.

In Eburodunum, however, the appearance of the Romans had caused an eerie atmosphere. People believed that the capture of the embassy would have dire consequences and that it had been carried out too hastily. They eagerly awaited the return of the king. Lady Hildebirga sat in the kitchen with red-rimmed eyes and paid no attention to anything that concerned her, so the maids had a good day. "Call Walburgis!" ordered the queen, for she wanted to ask her again and again what she herself did not know. But Walburgis was nowhere to be found. This caused a commotion. Dudar came and suggested to the queen that she seek advice from the wise women

*) Today Olmus.

of Spielberg. The suggestion was accepted. Lady Hildebirga climbed the Spielberg, or as it was actually called, the Spindelberg; Spiel and Spindel meant the same thing. To her, the runic-savvy, knowledgeable wife of a king and Kotings, the gate opened that was closed to other mortals. The queen was led into the interior of Wuotan's healing place by the three beautiful young women, Hechsa, Truda, and Wala, who were dressed exactly like the three maidens who had met the king in front of the cave in the forest. The three walked through winding hollow paths with Lady Hildebirga, whose retinue remained outside. Finally, they stood before a round tower. Like all of its kind, it had the shape of a large beehive and stood on a conical hill that towered far above the surrounding ramparts, as did the square pyramid in front of it. This was Wuotan's bed, namely the altar of the god-king. However, such domed towers were not built, but woven from willow, covered inside and out with clay, plastered and painted with red, shiny paint.

The queen was led into the round chamber of this tower. Hechsa and Truda remained with Lady Hildebirga, but Wala, veiled in black, descended through a shaft leading into the depths of the mountain. She soon returned with the high priestess, Albruna, who was crowned with mistletoe. The queen told her of her grief in a sobbing voice and asked for advice. The "wise woman" shook her

head thoughtfully, then stepped forward to the small hearth-like altar that stood in the middle of the round chamber. Albruna looked into the cauldron that hung on chains above the altar fire and dipped a small mistletoe branch into it, with which she sprinkled herself and the queen, whereupon the latter motioned for her to follow. All this was done in silence. Descending through the shaft, the two women soon reached an underground passage, whose twists and turns they followed silently. Here and there, lamps burned in small niches, which gave off less light than they did make the triple night that weighed on these rooms all the more palpable. They reached a strange circular hall. Thick columns without bases or capitals ran all around, as if they had been left standing in the rock when the dike digger had dug the hall into the rock. A blue dome arched over the columns, and a circular walkway ran behind them. In the middle of the hall stood a round altar. A bluish, flickering flame burned on it. Albruna threw various herbs into this fire, then took a spindle, a sieve, and a pair of scissors, muttered spells, fastened the three magical objects together, and then let them spin in a circle. Children still do something similar today with wooden plates or coins; they call it plate rubbing. Beforehand, Albruna had scattered sticks on the floor, each of which was marked with a rune and designated one of the Romans who were in her custody. The sieve

spun round and round, but ran outside the circle formed by the sticks without touching any of them, then it tipped over. The spindle and scissors came loose and fell out of the sieve.

Albruna shook her head and began the spell again, but this time it was no better. She threw new ingredients into the flame and spoke more powerful spells, but even the third time it did not work any better. "Queen," began the old woman, "this is a bad sign! We are holding innocent prisoners. The girl thief is not in Eburodunum!" "Alberatherin, I believe that," replied the queen, 'but the man who stole my daughter is here with us, and I will not let him go!' 'Not even him, woman?' said Albruna firmly. 'Who else could it be, then? Where is he now?' That was a question that was easy to ask but difficult to answer. But the wise woman was not willing to jeopardize her reputation and her infallibility by asking further such daring questions, so she said: "Woman, the guides of fate say: Pipara will be found. She will not be lost. Let that be enough for you." Now the fortune teller remained silent, leading the queen back through the corridors to the tower hall. But the prophecy was infallible, for spoken without emphasis, it meant nothing, and whatever might happen, it could be interpreted in accordance with the event. It could then always mean either "Pipara will be found, she will not be lost," or "Pipara will not be found, she will be lost."

Walburgis had shed many tears for her playmate, for she knew that the Romans were innocent. She was well aware of Titus's sudden love for Pipara and suspected that her friend was not at all averse to the fiery-eyed and fiery-tongued Southerner. Yes, she believed she had guessed that Titus was more than he seemed, although at first she was not averse to thinking that he was exaggerating somewhat. Such things had happened before. But she made up her own mind and kept her eyes and ears open.

Then she heard Wallwart lying to the Romans outside the gate. Her plan was quickly made. As she was, she hurried to a part of the rampart that was little noticed, swung herself nimbly over the wattle fence, and slid down the steep slope of the red-burnt wall. She reached the bottom unharmed. Now she hurried forward as fast as she could to get out of sight of Eburodunum's guards. Thus she wandered toward the sunrise. After a long journey, she came to a farmstead that belonged to her mother's brother. She circled the property in a wide arc, pretending to come from the other side and heading toward Eburodunum. She entered and presented herself as very tired. After the customary greetings, there were many questions about where she had come from and where she was going. But a cunning maiden knows very well how to deceive even the wisest uncles and the most astute aunts about what she wants to hide from them. So did the cunning Walburgis. She had

naturally lost her way when she was on a pilgrimage to the place of salvation in Osterau with her father, old Babo, and her brother, Totilo, the boy. A bear had attacked her, her horse had shied and bolted. Somewhere, it had fallen and now lay with broken legs. After much wandering, she was now tired and sunburned. They believed her and offered her refreshment and rest, and her uncle wanted to accompany her to Eburodunum. But she thanked him and asked only for a horse; she wanted to send it back that same day. The grumpy old man was satisfied. Soon Walburgis was in the saddle and trotted happily toward Eburodunum. Her uncle and aunt discussed the event at length, and the aunt did not fail to reproach her landlord for his comfortable nature, for letting his sister's child ride all alone. He grumbled a little and went out into the yard.

When Walburgis was far enough away from the farmstead, she turned off the road, rode around the property in a wide arc, and then galloped after the Romans. They were already far ahead. They had already reached the gates of Meliodunum when Kadolz sounded his horn and delivered his message. But the gatekeeper was a rough fellow. He shouted, "Get away, little rider, those in Eburodunum will know why they turned you away from the gate; That's how I see it too. Tie your horse to a dry branch and go and stay at the elm tree! Hoihô, we know very well that King Attal is staying in

Eburodunum! Get lost, little horseman!” Kadolz trembled with rage. “Come down, you Gaul, if you dare! I will lead you to the elm tree and assign you a high position with this innkeeper, which will suit you if you are accustomed to a sore throat! Come down, you Neidhart!” Thus flew the quarrelsome words back and forth. These led to threats, finally to stone throwing, and from there it was not far to a clash of weapons. A solid field stone had struck Wallwart on the head; it had not been thrown deliberately, but Wallwart had decided to throw something at Kadolz's head in return. So he grabbed his throwing spear and shouted: “You hungry, wandering scoundrel! You unruly lout! Just wait, I'll teach you to be rude!” With that, he raised his spear. But Kadolz had once again grabbed a sturdy pebble and struck Wallwart's fist with it, forcing him to drop his weapon from the burning pain. Kadolz followed the throw with this taunt: “I've met more polite gatekeepers; let's see who's more polite, you or me, you rascal!” But Wallwart had had enough. He blew his horn furiously and shouted: “Enemy! Enemy!” Then there was movement behind the willow-woven breastworks. Spears glinted in the reddish rays of the sun and battle cries rang out.

Finally, a well-armed man stepped forward and raised himself above the breastwork. “Who are you men who are fighting with taunts?” This was asked by the man who was obviously the lord of the place.

But Kadolz was furious, and it is rarely a good idea to approach a raging man with friendly words. “What are you asking so foolishly? Since when is it customary to greet messengers of the Emperor of Rome with a hail of stones? Who are you? Tell us!” “You can guess!” cried the man from the rampart. “You are arsonists, not envoys! The emperor of Rome has nothing to do with me, I am not the king!” “We are looking for him here; he is in your castle! Therefore, I demand entry! Defend yourself, you nameless man!” This made the burgrave angry; he raised his spear threateningly: “If no other bolt helps, let this one be pushed forward to keep troublesome travelers away!” “Then shoot, you scoundrel!” cried Kadolz furiously. The burgrave shot. The shaft whistled toward the Quadi. But he parried with his horse, caught the flying spear in midair, spun it around his head, and sent it whirring back toward the count. The Quadi shouted mockingly toward the rampart: “Thanks a lot, you guest-killer! I’ll give you back your gift! Get a spear yourself!” An angry uproar rang out from the rampart. But the burgrave had also intercepted the rushing spear and sent it back. Groaning, the centurion Gemellus sank from his horse. The burgrave’s spear trembled in his chest.

But those on the rampart had not yet seen, nor had those in front of the rampart brought aid to the man who had been struck down, when a maiden came

galloping up, waving a white handkerchief from afar. Now she came up, almost breathless from the snorting horse: "Give peace! What you are fighting for is futile!" The man on the rampart cried in astonishment: "Walburgis, what is this? Since when have you been riding as a battle maiden?" But she replied: "I have come too late, Burgrave Skaramunt! These are good men, give them peace and care for them well! Woe to those who have killed!" She quickly jumped down from her horse and pushed the men away from the wounded man. "Make way, men, Walburgis knows many herbs that can staunch the blood." But as soon as she saw the centurion, she cried out: "No herb can save him, he is dead! How I mourn those who loved him!" The others stood around the dead man, shaken. Then the men from Meliodunum came with a stretcher and loaded the dead guest onto their shoulders to carry him to the city. Skaramunt, the burgrave, had also come out. But he shied away from the dead man. The wounds of a slain man bleed anew when his murderer stands before him; Skaramunt wanted to spare the dead man that. But the burgrave reached out his hand to Kadolz, shook it, and said, "You are a brave warrior; let us keep the peace and be friends!" He shook the outstretched hand and replied: "May God reward you for your manly words. I too recognize you as a mighty warrior! But we can only make friends when I know that your king is a friend of my shield-

bearer! For know that I am a man of the Emperor of Rome, Gallienus, and have also sworn allegiance to his bride, Princess Galliena. If you are the emperor's friend, then be mine too; if you are his enemy, then be mine too, as I am yours!" The men shook hands, then the burgrave went to Walburgis to speak with her. Annus stood admiringly beside Kadolz. "Listen, Kadolz!" he said, "I cannot comprehend how you two can be friends, you who, only a few moments ago, would have found no greater pleasure than to kill each other!" "Does that amaze you, Roman? Is it different with you? We Germans believe that if we are enemies, we should strive to defeat each other, but we only respect the brave! We value nothing higher than heroic courage in battle. If we find a brave man and the fight is over, then those who were enemies before honor each other, for they now know how to respect themselves. You see, Roman, that this fills you with astonishment, and that is what amazes me!"

Behind those who had entered, the gates of Meliodunum had closed. Between the camp of Emperor Gallienus and the splendid colony of Carnuntum was a particularly pleasant spot that Domina Galliena had chosen to publicly display her grief for the missing Emperor Gallienus. This particularly pleasant spot was the Quadrivium Silvanum. All of Carnuntum already knew that the beautiful Galliena was mourning her fiancé, who

was believed to be dead, dressed in black. She wore black, not widow's garb, because she was not yet a widow and because widow's garb would have been too unbecoming. The Quadrivium Silvanium soon became fashionable, so to speak, thanks to the regular visits of the beautiful princess. The genteel world went there to stroll; the dominas, of course, in black robes, the patricians and knights in their state regalia, the Stüssers carefully dressed up, but all to see the beautiful princess. But Carnuntum was a trading town, and speculation outweighed pleasure. This was the opposite of Rome. What would not have been possible there could happen here. Merchants came and shyly offered their wares to the mourners, and the mourners bought. Word spread quickly. Naturally, more merchants soon followed. For in all ages, one inventor has been followed by hundreds of imitators; this is deeply rooted in the theory of evolution.

So it came to pass on a beautiful autumn day that an honest merchant came to the Quadrivium Silvanium before the mourning Domina. He acted very sympathetically, wore a foreign black costume, a spartan black fur cap, and said he was a Parthian and had precious stones for sale, worthy of adorning the throne of the sun god. The honest Parthian was called Merapis. "My good Parthian, what use are your jewels to us, who have stripped ourselves of all adornment and pomp?" sighed the princess. "Go

and sell them to those who walk the path of life through roses!" "By my father's beard! Most gracious princess! I honor your pain, I admire your pain, I worship your pain, but I cannot understand your heart, that it renounces the splendor and joys of the world. Behold, most exalted of the Dominas, behold this splendor! This amethyst as large as an eagle's egg, and this aquamarine! How fine! Or the emerald so large that your treasure chest, Princess, does not have one half as large. And these pearls! Only blessed India has such treasures! Who should have them but you, the empress of all queens, you, the most beautiful among the beautiful!" Even the honest Parthian had not returned home from the Quadrivium Silvanium without having done good business. The princess had let him speak with the most benevolent kindness, had chosen the most beautiful stones with noble regret, and had paid the man an enormous sum.

Within a few days, the ladies of Carnuntum idolized Galliena and strove to mourn as nobly as she did, although they themselves did not know what for. But the Roman fashion cared little about such trivial matters. The men idolized her no less, for what could be more touching than this charming Niobe? The Stuſer raised her to Olympus and courted each other, for to play the role of comforter to the grieving grace was the highest goal of their highest desires. But the merchants and traders of

Carnuntum praised themselves most highly, for she was a princess who knew how to pay! Thus Galliena had become the *genius loci*, and seemingly without intention. Only the soldiers did not yet know quite what to think of the mourning woman. In any case, they respected her wealth, and that was enough for them to reckon with her. Galliena had feared the approach of a storm and, with feminine cunning, had sought to ward it off and secure a place of refuge. When a storm is approaching, when the first gusts of wind swirl through the fir trees, when the first distant flashes of lightning flit beneath the heavy storm clouds and are then slowly followed by thunder, as if it were still asleep and had to be shaken awake, then everything that has wings flutters fearfully to its nest, every creature in the forest flees and seeks a safe hiding place; even man, who so gladly calls himself the lord of creation, forgets his pretensions to lordship and becomes not unlike the creatures that crawl and fly, for he too, the power-hungry one, flees to a safe hiding place.

Fifth Adventure

How Pipara Came Home and Freed the Prisoners

“As far as the bright eastern moon scatters flowers on the grass, so far shall your noble son-in-law proudly command all peoples.” These words of Truda had long rung in King Attal's ears, while Albruna's curse did not particularly weigh on King Attal's mind. Even in those long-gone days, the friendly greeting of cheerful young girls meant more than the nagging of an old, grumpy, and spiteful woman. The proud son-in-law made King Attal thoughtful. Even then, marrying a daughter into a family of equal standing was not the least of a father's worries, whether the father was a king or a freeman. The concern remained the same despite the different circumstances. When the father of a king's daughter was promised a son-in-law by women who were supposed to know better, a man who had been tormented by all the peoples, he was no less eager to meet this proud son-in-law than the father of a peasant girl who had learned from equally reliable sources that his rich son-in-law probably owned more than a hundred cows. Undoubtedly, the Heilsräthinnen were more favorably disposed before Pipara's marriage cave than the high priestess of Ostara, which again seemed to deviate from the

rule, since older ladies of both sexes devote themselves with preference to the establishment of marriage alliances. However, the most hated enemy of Voland, the master of all masters, had not expressed her words so decisively, nor had she been able to phrase them so pleasantly, which was to blame for the fact that they remained empty words. The proud son-in-law, who was to rule over all peoples, had already taken root in his father Attal's soul as firmly as an oak tree and shone like the proudest summer solstice sun, so that the glow of the reddish setting sun, the giver of all light and warmth, was completely lost to Pipara's ecstatic father, so much so that he did not even notice how the women of Eburodunum were crowding at the rampart to watch the homecomers.

They were visibly dissatisfied that they did not see the shameful girl kidnapper bound and gagged in the procession; their only consolation was that the villain's skull had been split in two on this happy occasion. They rode into the courtyard. Lady Hildebirga lifted her daughter from the horse and held her long and tenderly, for a mother's love for her daughter is different from a father's love. It is softer, fuller, more tender, more devoted than that of the father, though no less deep; both are alike, both are different, as are man and woman in general. At last, Lady Hildebirga had seen and kissed her daughter to her heart's content, and gradually their

surroundings began to emerge from the sea of events and take shape again. Pipara looked around. The hall was lit; the king's good companions were also sitting in their places, but the Romans were missing. "Where is Titus?" she asked quickly. The good queen was astonished and shook her motherly head with wide eyes; master Attal also felt the proud son-in-law's oath weigh heavily on his mind when he asked who this Titus was. He remembered the words Hanold had spoken shortly before sinking; he also remembered Albrune's angry words. This memory did not particularly edify him. Pipara was no less astonished that neither her father nor her mother knew Titus. She explained herself in more detail. Then it occurred to the king that he must not only release the Romans immediately, but also make amends for his wrongdoing. This made him angry. It is not a particularly joyful task to admit wrongdoing and apologize. Such an undertaking is even more difficult for a king, which is only natural. But Pipara reassured her father and promised to settle the matter in such a way that he would be spared the unpleasant discussions. "And Titus is so kind and good, dear father, that he will certainly not be angry with you!"

At these final words of Pipara's speech, the king and queen bowed their troubled heads even more thoughtfully, until finally the king said gruffly: "Now be quiet, you little know-it-all! Know that it is

the legate Severius Silvanus with whom I have to negotiate, not Titus, who is one of his last followers!” But Pipara smiled superiorly, threw her arm around her father’s neck, and whispered softly in his ear: “You must not believe that, father; Titus is the most important person, even more than the legate Severius Silvanus, for he is the emperor Gallienus himself. But you must not let on that you know this!” “The proud son-in-law who commands all peoples!” The king’s whole body trembled, but he sent him into the dungeon himself, now robbed him of speech and movement. With his mouth open, he stared at his little daughter and may have realized that a bushel full of locusts was easier to guard than a maiden of marriageable age. “Old man! Why are you staring like that? Can you see the moon calf?” asked Lady Hildebirga, half worried, half angry; she added with a sigh: “Yes, it’s always the same. Now you’re sorry. If only you had asked me...” But master Attal had not seen the moon calf, nor had he heard mistress Hildebirga’s sighing words, but had come to a decision of his own. He jumped up hastily and ordered his wife and daughter to follow him immediately to Spindelberg. Dudar, the steward, was to see to it that the horses and the property of the Roman guests were returned to their free disposal. The queen wanted to continue the thread of her sighing speech, but the king whispered a few explanatory words in her ear, which had a magical

effect on mistress Hildebirgen's mind. Whereas the royal spouses had previously displayed highly thoughtful expressions, these were now followed by equally highly satisfied ones, which were only clouded by a faintly admonishing, anxious look. The three set off immediately for Spielberg. But Pipara had not thought of the faithful Walburgis at all. When love for a man enters the heart of a girl, then it forgets the games of youth, its siblings, leaves its father and mother, for it knows only one sun, and this one sun, this one god, is the man it loves. But woe to the man who disregards this divine gift, who does not know how to nurture this heavenly blossom of love! Twice woe to the man who does not know how to find her! Three times, three times woe to him who, for the sake of vile mammon, passes by this love and marries the woman as a necessary evil for her dowry.

Gallienus lay in his pillows, brooding gloomily; his pain was at its height. Gentle sorrow had cast a soothing veil over his thoughts, only the glimmer of hope for Pipara's love shone before his heart like the Pharos to the night sailor. The mighty oak bolt rattled before the door, then it sprang open. Gallienus was accustomed to this, so he did not even look up. But when two soft arms wrapped themselves around his neck and a gentle veil of golden silk fell over his eyes, and burning kisses sealed his words, he could have shouted for joy, for

he knew that it was Pipara who was dear to his heart. "My poor Gallienus, how they have played with you!" said Pipara caressingly. "You had to miss your freedom for me!" "But how glad I am to have suffered a little for you, dear Pipara! Only here did I learn how dear you are to me. And yet, how terrible was my imprisonment, I who wanted to help you, I who was rendered powerless!" The emperor said this, resting his eyes joyfully on the golden-haired girl's head. Then he continued: "And you? What did you think? Was I also your only thought? Or did you let yourself be kidnapped willingly?" Pipara's blue eyes flashed, and she quickly said: "Then I would certainly not be here on your bed to free you yourself! I have never felt for any man what I felt when I saw and heard you in the little arbor garden. I was to be betrothed to my cousin Hanold, and he was horrified when he heard of the relationship between you and me. But now he is dead, and even if he were not, I would take no other man but you! I too trembled and quaked at the thought of losing you; I too fought with my wild cousin to the blood for my freedom, but he was stronger than I. He lifted me onto his horse and rode away. I kicked, I bit, I struck, I kicked with my feet, but he only laughed and acted as if I were a stubborn, capricious child. So we came deep into the forest. The villain approached a place of healing, lied to the woman in charge, an old, ugly, malicious woman, told her the

most abominable things about you, and asked her to shoot me for her! The old woman refused to take me in, for fear of my father's wrath, but her advice was malicious. She pointed to a cave in the mountains that was to shelter me, which was so constructed that escape was impossible. The villain let me down there on a rope after I had defended myself desperately but unsuccessfully. I was here in the darkness for a long time; I could not measure the time. Then I sat down and wept and thought of you and hoped for rescue from you, and cried again and again, no and no and no, when the evil words came to me that Hanold had said to me about you and that he had exchanged with Albruna about you!"

"Poor, poor Pipa! And I lay here helpless and abandoned, unable to help you, for many days!" The emperor had said this warmly and kissed Pipara's golden hair and stroked her hands, looking tenderly into her little face with glowing eyes. But the king's child smiled mischievously, threatened with her finger and said: "Galli, Galli! Lying was among the other fine things they say about Tir! Only yesterday you came here, and it is not yet as late as it was yesterday when I was kidnapped and locked up here. But now you are free, so follow me! But I beg you, do not hold it against my good father, who was mistaken in his anguish and wild pain! Surely, Galli, you do not seek revenge? Promise me and follow me!" With that, Pipara sprang from the emperor's

bed, where she had been sitting, and wanted to pull him up too. But Gallienus gently drew her to his side and said, while bright glances from his dark, fiery eyes swept over her: "I will not follow you yet, beloved!" "Why, Galli, are you angry? It is no lie that you have hardly spent a day or night here; it is a mistake, and for my sake you will surely—" "Be silent, sweet girl, it is forgiven and forgotten, even if I had lain here for a year. I have you back again and call you mine and me yours! But I will not follow you yet! Tell me more..." He gently laid his arms around her neck and looked passionately into her eyes. His breath came in gasps and his voice trembled softly as he urged her: "Tell me more, my only beloved!" Leaving her hands resting in his, Pipara began: "Yes, it was in the cave. It was dark; I didn't dare take a step. Hanold promised to fetch fire and also to provide food and drink. I too believed that days had already passed and thought I would die of hunger. Then I was frightened and delighted by the distant glow of torches. Three ghostly women floated toward me, or so I thought. But they were the three healers from a neighboring sanctuary, whose earthen dwelling was connected to the cave that was my prison by a series of passages. The good maidens came to my rescue. They took me to other rooms and promised to keep watch so that I could escape Hanold's pursuit. Then they met my father, and so I am back here with you, my

beloved! Now come, and follow me!” Pipara wanted to jump up again, but Gallienus pulled her passionately to his chest. Pipara pressed a fervent kiss on his lips, then turned away from his passionate embrace. With a wistful, sad look at Pipara, the emperor sank back into the cushions. He thought he saw a mocking smile playing around the lips of his beloved. That hurt him, even though the pain only inflamed his passion even more. “Come, my beloved, come to freedom! Your comrades have been waiting for you for a long time, as have my parents; come!”

In the round hall with the altar in the middle, the same place where Albruna had consulted the sieve with the queen about the girl-thief, the now freed prisoners met; they greeted each other with joyful faces. The king extended his hand over the blue altar flame to the legate Severius Silvanus and made a solemn oath, in which he told him that he did not wish to revile Rome or any of them, but had only been forced to protect them from the fury of the people, and many more words to that effect. The legate, who had cast a questioning glance at Titus, was satisfied with this explanation, and so the drink of reconciliation was drunk. The king and queen had noticed very well how Severius, before answering, had looked at Gallienus and only made his declaration of reconciliation after repeated signals from him. They sat again in the hall, as on the first

day of the guests' arrival, but much earlier than usual, the queen withdrew with Pipara and the maidens. This touched Gallienus' heart; he too soon sought his bed with the other Romans. He had not yet revealed himself to the king, so he sat at the lower end of the table among the Romans and did not come into contact with Pipara.

The next day there was great excitement at the royal court. Where is Walburgis? This question flew from mouth to mouth. Old Babo came to the king and queen, wringing his hands, and demanded his child. He could think of nothing else but that the Romans had kidnapped his child, since the king's daughter had been taken from them. No protest helped to calm the worried Babo, and his accusations against the Romans became increasingly vehement. King Attal was in a difficult position, for he too could not counter Babo's assertions with any facts. Then Wallwart's horn sounded. Everyone rushed to the rampart to escape the wailing Babo, who staggered after them. But how astonished were they all when they saw several horsemen, with the burgrave Skaramunt and Walburgis on horseback at their head, waiting to be let in. Without further ado, they were admitted. In the hall, Skaramunt reported what had happened before Meliodunum and how Walburgis had shown herself to be a heroine. There was no longer any reason to remain in Eburodunum. Preparations were made to depart and

celebrate the cremation of the fallen Roman's body. Amidst this turmoil, however, Gallienus seized an opportunity to surprise Pipara in her boudoir. She was both delighted and frightened. Ever since that kiss in the underground lair of the Spielberg, she had harbored a fear of Gallienus in her heart. Once again, he had embraced her and kissed her wildly; the girl sensed that this was no longer the tender love of her fiancé.

Gallienus' forehead glowed, his voice sounded hoarse, broken, trembling: "Soon, sweet Pipa, I must leave! I must not reveal myself! Shall I ride away without comfort?" "Shall I remain here without comfort?" said Pipara, trembling and blushing. Then she added, sobbing: "You are, Gallienus, my home, my father, my mother, my everything! I hope and trust in you, but I am a German! Only he who calls me by my married name has the right to embrace me!" And she wept again. "And I will greet you by your married name, my dear! But remember, I am emperor! Will you become my second wife?" The blush had faded from Pipara's face, replaced by the pallor of death; she stared at the Roman with a fixed gaze, petrified: "Gallienus! I am a Germanic princess! Such a one to be the first, the only one..." She did not finish the sentence. "Are you ashamed to have a wife, then?" A feverish chill shook her to the bone; she was seized by a fit of crying. "Pipa, sweet Pipa!" cried the frightened man. "Pipa, not far from

Rome, under shady palm trees, by cheerfully babbling fountains, there stands a magnificent palace, which I will give to you; there you will be queen, you will be empress, my empress, but no Roman must know of this, for they would murder you!" "Go, go, coward!" cried Pipara, beside herself. "Sweet, good Pipa!" begged the Roman, kneeling before the king's daughter and covering her hands with kisses. Tears glistened in his eyes. "If you do not have the courage to declare me your wife openly and defend me as such, then you do not love me. Therefore, go! Take this with you on your way: German women love only one man, but they also demand that this one man have no other woman beside them. We only know of marriages between a man and a woman; we do not know of second wives. We call such women concubines and despise them. And if the father of the gods, Wotan himself, were to come and demand of me what you have demanded, I would tell him that a Germanic king's child is too good for his concubine. Therefore, go!"

She stood proudly before him, her hand raised imperiously in the direction of the opening. The emperor was still kneeling. "And if I tell your father that I, the emperor Gallienus, am asking for your hand, when I stand before my people, and say that this German woman is your Empress Augusta, and when Juno Pronuba unites us before Hymen's altar, and when I shield and cover you with my body,

when I promise you all this, what answer will your heart give?" Again he had taken her hand. With tears in his eyes, he looked up at her. Her bosom heaved stormily; she tried to hold back her tears and pull her hand out of the emperor's. With her other hand she resisted; she had no words. Then he sprang up and embraced her trembling form. "Pipa, no answer?" He had cried this in the utmost pain, with a voice that wounded Pipara's soul like a dagger thrust. "I heard too many horrible things from you—I couldn't count them, I didn't want to believe them, but now I have to believe them, whether I want to or not. Otherwise you would have spoken to me differently!" Convulsive sobs interrupted these words, which Pipara uttered only in gasps. "And if all this were true, Pipa, don't you believe in the power of love? Do you not believe that the love which gives me the courage and strength to defy the prejudice of the whole world, that this same love does not have the power to show you to me as my goddess and to cleanse me of all that clung to me before I knew you?" Gallienus had spoken these words with ravishing fervor and used every art to appease a wounded, loving woman's heart. A stream of hot tears, a flood of gentle reproaches, entreaties, and explanations had lightened Pipara's heart, and Gallienus had yielded in every respect. Thus the heavy clouds began to gradually disperse in the bright spring sky of love, Pipara's eyes smiled again

through her tears, and a hot, heartfelt, long-glowing kiss reunited the separated lovers.

Outside in the courtyard, the horses were already pawing at the ground, saddled and ready to ride to Meliodunum. The Romans and Germans sat ready for departure in the great hall of the king's court. The king and queen sat under their crowns on the high throne. Pipara now joined them, only Titus was missing. Then he entered. A murmur of astonishment ran through the ranks of the Germans, of terror through the Romans. But they immediately jumped up from their seats and bowed their knees before the newcomer; the king's men did the same. Attal also jumped up and hurried toward his guest to welcome him with a handshake and a kiss of peace. No longer dressed in simple garb like Titus, but in a purple cloak and a crown of rays, he had entered, Caesar Gallienus, semper Augustus, the Emperor of Rome. He had quickly rushed to Pipara, wrapped his purple cloak around the blushing woman, kissed her on the lips in front of everyone, and cried out: "Thus do I, Caesar Gallienus Augustus, woo your daughter, King Attal! Give her to me as my wife, and I will make her Empress of Rome! From now on, there shall be peace between Rome and Germania, and both shall be as man and woman, as Gallienus and Pipara!" Loud cheers resounded through the hall, only the Romans remained silent, dismayed and ashamed. Has Rome

sunk so far that a barbarian woman could be elevated to *Domina Augusta*? The Romans cast threatening glances at the radiantly happy Pipara, who was too happy to notice the storm clouds gathering. King Attal, however, had thoughtfully emptied his horn of mead, handed the empty horn to the cupbearer to exchange it for a full one, then solemnly twisted his mead-moistened beard into two locks and spoke to the emperor in a benevolent tone: “Your word, Caesar Gallienus, has found my approval. Welcome as my son-in-law! Now hear my royal word, after my father’s has been spoken: My sword and that of my people shall be yours. Peace shall be granted to the Romans on the Danube as long as you and your heirs sit on the throne of the Caesars; for Rome I will keep watch on the Danube. This was my royal word, now let us hear your imperial word. You shall determine the bride price.”

Severius Silvanus quickly jumped up, rushed to his emperor, and wanted to whisper something in his ear, but the emperor stood up proudly and gave the intrusive man a commanding look that was clearer than words forced the furious legate back to his seat. Two other Romans, Venerianus, a legionary tribune, and Palphurnius Sura, the emperor’s secret secretary, whispered excitedly to each other. The former cast scornful, poisonous glances at the emperor and his bride. Standing proudly erect, returning all these expressions of defiant hatred with contemptuous

glances, the emperor stood, inch for inch an imperator. "Pour me a freshly filled horn, but let it foam from the fiery spring of Massikas! The emperor of Rome will give an answer to the king of the Marcomanni and Quadi!" Then one of the Romans jumped up and ran away; soon he returned with two ivory drinking horns. They were richly carved and lined with gold on the inside. Dark golden yellow Massika, the pearl of ancient wines of Caesar's Rome, sparkled and foamed from them. The Germans had never seen such drinking horns before. The emperor handed one horn to the king, and as he raised the other, he spoke these words: "The drink from the fiery source of native vines is yours, king of the Marchmen and Quadi, yours, father of Pipara, yours, father-in-law of the emperor of Rome! What you have said shall be done; you are the guardian of Rome's Danube. That was your royal word; now hear my imperial word! I will give you a whole kingdom, for only such a thing is worthy of your golden-haired child! The land to the north of my province of Valeria shall be yours! Yours, as far as it is bounded by the Danube, the Drava, and the Leitha. Only the colonies, the municipalities, and the castles shall remain with Rome. You may settle this land with the second-born of your people; your second-born Wiltahar may be your viceroy there. In return, you shall defend the Danube line against the Goths and Jazyges for Rome, renounce your alliance

with the Alemanni and all other peoples hostile to Rome! This, King Attal, is my imperial word! May this drink seal the treaty as indissoluble!” After these words, he raised the horn to his mouth with his left hand, while extending his right hand to the Quadi king to shake. “So shall it be and no other way!” cried the latter, striking the emperor's outstretched right hand with a firm handshake and, raising his horn to his mouth with his left hand, emptying it at the same time as the emperor. Then both threw their drinking horns aside, embraced each other, and a long kiss of friendship sealed the treaty anew. To make it even stronger, King Attal took off his sword and handed it to his imperial friend with the words: “You shall carry this, future son-in-law, so that you may know that my sword and my swordsmen are yours from now on!” Caesar Gallienus took the sword. He too removed his sword and handed it to the king, saying: “And so, King of the Quadi, you shall henceforth faithfully wield the sword of the Emperor of Rome. You are ours, we are yours, and all the enemies of the world shall be powerless against our alliance.”

The treaty was concluded. Rome voluntarily offered what the Quadi had so often asked for peacefully, but in vain, what they had asked for even more often, with varying degrees of success, namely land for settlement by its surplus population. The Germans welcomed this imperial word with

jubilation, only the Romans sat dejected; they sensed that this treaty tasted like a lost battle. Unnoticed by the loudly cheering Germans, the Romans whispered among themselves about the incident. “Unheard-of insult!” said Palphurnius Sura quietly. “The wench, barely worthy of slavery, is to become Augusta! Any dancer from Hiberia, any singer from Achaea would be more worthy! She is too low even to be a concubine! But Empress, Caesar, Augusta, Goddess!” Palphurnius whispered this to Venerianus, trembling with passionate rage. The more moderate one replied with a shrug: “Let the emperor have his way, the treaty is good and favorable for Rome today! And the empress?” A capricious smile, like a dismissive wave of the hand, accompanied these words. “And the empress? She can die when the time comes. I do not fear that the emperor means his word in earnest, and I fear even less that he will keep it. He will enjoy her, and we can grant him that, but then the Adriatic has enough water to quench the golden child's thirst for Tartarus. Then Domina Galliena will come to the throne in good time!” “Unless one of her lovers from the gladiatorial school thrusts his sword a few inches too deep between the ribs of the unfaithful man!” Palphurnius said maliciously. “At least Caesar Valerianus has not yet given his vote,” said another. “He will give it! Be wise, commititones!” was the reply of the cunning Venerianus.

Kadolz and Annus had remained behind at Meliodunum to pay their last respects to the shot Gemellus. The cunning Walburgis had concealed from them that those they were seeking had been captured and had only told the burgrave what she knew, what she hoped and feared. In order to atone for Gemellus' death, he had a pyre erected at his own expense on Wuotansbette in the stronghold,*) so that Gemellus' ashes would be buried in a sacred place and his memory would never fade. To appease his spirit, he had asked Annus to arrange everything that was required for the cremation according to Roman custom. So everything was prepared. The body of the slain man was laid on a bier made of oak and fir branches in the market square of the stronghold, dressed in his armor; the various decorations of honor lay on his chest. Thus were the bodies who had been killed in Meliodunum found by Caesar, the king, and their retinue. Annus was astonished to see his imperial friend in full regalia, but he was seized with irremediable terror when he learned why this had happened. What kind of woman must this be who was able to bind Gallienus, who was able to move Gallienus to offer such unwise resistance to the entire empire, to the company of Rome? To offer resistance at a time

*) Today the Basiliusberg in Olmüß. During recent excavations, slag was found there that came from a funeral pyre. This slag enclosed a charred bone and a coin of the Emperor Gallienus.

when the entire state seemed to be falling apart. Annius also consoled himself with the hope that it was a passing passion and that Galliena's medicine chest would soon bring about a change in the situation. Kadolz had already tried a potion from it. Now that Gallienus was traveling as Caesar Augustus, two horsemen carried the fasces before him; the small procession also arranged itself more ceremoniously, which was then given the proper splendor by the stately royal retinue.

Thus the troop of horsemen appeared before the dead centurion Gemellus. The emperor himself delivered the funeral oration from his horse, then took the customary fare for Charon and placed it in the corpse's mouth. It was a silver coin of Gallienus. The spoils and ancestors of the deceased were also taken care of. The horsemen and slaves of Annius had to present these letters, even though they lacked the necessary face masks. Thus, several venerable senators and other dignitaries preceded the corpse, representing the ancestors of the deceased as they came to collect their youngest family member from the underworld. Then came his slaves, carrying his spoils and trophies. Since these were not at hand, Annius provided ample substitutes to honor the deceased all the more. It is well known that praise and blame are quick to exceed the bounds of truth. The good Gemellus, although somewhat presumptuous, as befitting his rank as centurion,

when it came to recounting his heroic deeds, would perhaps have blushed with shame had he witnessed his own funeral and seen his spoils, that is, the pieces of booty carried on his bier. They would have been worthy of Alexander. There were at least a dozen city names carried on poles like standards, all of which he had conquered, then a myriad of kings' names or names of famous heroes whom he was said to have defeated in battle. Many of those mentioned here may have been as dead as the ancestors whose names and titles were invented for the sake of pomp. Behind the bier walked the emperor and all the others. The emperor lit the pyre on Wuotan's bed with his own hands. Soon the funeral pyre blazed up. The glowing flames consumed the mortal remains of the slain man. Finally, the funeral pyre collapsed and fell into the pit over which it had been artfully piled. Glowing embers and individual logs still flickering filled the pit; acrid fumes and suffocating smoke swirled upward, twisting into columns of smoke. Then the pit was filled in and Wuotan's bed leveled again. The dead Roman had received the most distinguished burial that Germanic soil could offer him; he had been buried in the funeral pyre of the king of the gods himself. Numerous sacrifices continued to glow above his grave for centuries to come, until victorious Christianity banished the aging god-king, so that he now races through the air, himself mortally

wounded, as the “wild hunter.” They had returned to Etarodunum to march from there to Carnuntum to join the army, after the day had been set for the auxiliary troops to join the army. Annius had taken it upon himself to convey to Emperor Valerian the news of the events in Eburodunum and the imminent arrival of the army before Mursia.

So the day of farewell between Gallienus and Pipara had come. Parting was difficult for both of them, but Pipara heroically held back her tears. The bride of a king of kings must be as courageous as he; lamentation befits only maidens and servant women. High courage is the prerogative of queens. Gallienus kissed his bride once more and then quickly mounted his horse. King Attal, accompanied by eleven of his most distinguished warriors, escorted his future son-in-law to the boundary stone of Eburodunum's district. There the leaders shook hands and parted; Attal rode home with his twelve men. Preparations were made for the journey to take possession of the new kingdom. Never had a military expedition been more joyful than this one. A new kingdom had been conquered without a hero's armor being stained with blood. “Hail! To a joyful military expedition!”

Sixth Adventure

How Caesar Gallienus Returned to the Army

Caesar Gallienus Augustus had returned to the camp at Carnuntum. He was not particularly pleased when he learned how his absence had been misinterpreted; but he became downright angry when he learned how Domina Galliena had mourned him. The reunion of the two betrothed was therefore strictly in accordance with the old ceremony, after which the Caesar respectfully escorted his betrothed bride to Carnuntum and assigned her lodgings in the Hibernum Castrum. Then he wrote her a letter full of praise for her devotion and loyalty to him, but urged her most earnestly not to stay in a military camp in future, as such behavior would seriously jeopardize the good reputation of an unmarried young Domina. Gallienus had taken care to ensure that copies of this letter were distributed in Carnuntum. The wicked world laughed, Galliena seethed with rage. But since she could not and must not vent this rage on her fiancé, she found a welcome target for her thirst for revenge in the merchant guild of Carnuntum. The ungrateful men would pay for siding with her mockers. She wanted to take revenge on them; Caesar Gallienus was to lend her his arm to make

himself hated by the Carnunts. Therefore, she did not let the emperor notice how she resented his scorn, but sought every opportunity to approach him, never exceeding the bounds of court ceremony and thus forcing him to do her will.

She thus succeeded in having the emperor grant the Carnunts several arena games to celebrate his happy return. These were prepared in great haste. When the preparations were in full swing, Galliena complained to the emperor that she had been badly cheated by the Carnuntum merchants. She demanded that the cheaters be punished. This was very troublesome for the emperor. He could not dismiss the complaint, because Galliena was complaining as a Roman citizen and justice had to be done, because as Caesar Augustus he was the supreme guardian of Roman law. However, he gave the aediles of Carnuntum a hint; they let many an honorable man slip through the wide-open meshes of Roman law, but some had been too bold in their dealings with the grieving woman. The fraud was too obvious, and so five were convicted. Among these five, the honest Parthian Merapis was first in rank. He had thought it advantageous to sell worthless glass stones as genuine gems to the empress of all queens, the most beautiful of all women. The curule aedile, who was legally responsible for organizing public games, greedily seized these five men condemned to death, for he

needed bestiarii for the lions. Thus, the five cunning merchants were delivered to him by law. This spoiled the Carnunts' enjoyment. Are those who pay taxes supposed to fight in the arena? What purpose would slaves or prisoners of war serve? No one is safe anymore if such speculations were permitted for the arena! Gallienus was in great embarrassment. He could not show mercy, but neither could he confirm the harsh judgment. That was a nasty trick his Galliena had played on him. He pondered a way out for a long time, but in vain. But Gallienus was not so easily defeated; he soon found a way out.

The days of the games had arrived. All of Carnuntum was flocking to the arena; but the spectators had the uncomfortable feeling that the citizens of Carnuntum were about to enter the arena, not completely defeated. With imperial pomp, Caesar made his way to the arena; beside him sat the proud Galliena, adorned with jewels, in the state carriage. She was friendlier today than ever before. The people greeted the emperor with stormy cheers, for they were being entertained at his expense with wine, meat, and bread for the duration of the games. *Panem et Circenses!* Bread and circuses! That was the slogan of the day, as it was the great magic formula of Roman statecraft. But as much as the people cheered, the bourgeoisie remained silent, and Gallienus did not seem to notice. "My emperor and cousin!" said Galliena to

the emperor, while a malicious, searching glance swept over him. “My imperial fiancé! Is it not sad to see how justice is despised, and how the exalted guardian of the law is hated because he upholds it? Do you see the glances of the citizens of Carnuntum? A few days ago, these same people cheered you as a god, and now they would murder you with their hateful glances!” “Such is the custom of the world, illustrious princess!” said the emperor calmly. “This is how it is with every just judge; neither of the two parties whose dispute he settles is satisfied; both submit to the judgment, but remain unreconciled. The law has never satisfied me; but I will search for the reason why the two disputants remain unreconciled after the arbitration! Then I will try to reconcile them instead of judging them!” “How noble my future husband is—just think!” said the princess with a slight hint of mockery, playing with her fan. Gallienus did not seem to notice this mockery either. With the most obliging smile, he said to the princess: “For a Caesar Augustus, dear cousin, there is no greater happiness than to learn, without being asked, that his predestined wife also considers serious questions of government! What a stroke of luck for the happy husband of the future!”

Perhaps Galliena would have continued this little veiled verbal battle, had not the carriage stopped just in front of the portico of the arena. The Praetorians took up their positions; the people cheered. The

sedan chair bearers approached to carry the emperor and the princess to the podium. Then the imperial sedan chair floated past a grated container in which were those condemned to death in the arena. In front of it stood onlookers and those who wanted to beg for mercy for the condemned. That moment, the moment when the imperial sedan chair was carried past, was the last ray of hope for the condemned. If they were denied imperial mercy, they had nothing more to hope for in this life. A heart-rending wail now rang out. The unfortunate men shook the iron bars and cried for mercy. From outside came the howling of the reveling crowd, mingled with the roar of wild beasts, which had been driven to a frenzy by several days of hunger. It took the nerves of a Roman to pass by here unmoved. There stood the Parthian Merapis with a face contorted with fear. He screamed and howled, but the others screamed and howled too, both those in the cage and their relatives outside it. None of the words could be heard, and yet everyone understood this terrible cry of fear; it meant only one word: "Mercy!" Galliena wept; she raised her hands in supplication and knelt before the emperor as the litter was carried past the cage. Gallienus remained cold, but he could not suppress a scornful smile. He knew only too well that Galliena's plea was made so conspicuous in order to blame him, the emperor, alone for the death of the condemned citizens of

Carnuntum, to expose him to the hatred of the colony. But Gallienus had smiled scornfully, not embarrassedly. Galliena did not yet know the reason for this smile, so she misunderstood it and thought little of it, for she still believed that her ruse had succeeded.

The games were in full swing. The chariot races were over; the Blues had won. An eerie babble of voices filled the stands, for the bets that had been placed were now being settled. The gladiatorial combats in various forms had also come to an end. Here and there the sand was red with blood. The shouting of the bettors had died down. Silence fell. Gallienus sat on his throne with the oppressive splendor of Caesar Augustus. His expression was icy cold. This must be what the relentless ruler of fate looks like up there on Mount Olympus, bound to carry out his decisions. Then the iron gates on one side opened, and four of the five condemned Carnuntum merchants, whipped by arena slaves, entered the blood-soaked sand. They wore the clothes they had worn in Carnuntum. This caused a murmur of discontent. The merchants' guild saw this as an insult to them. And if they had been dressed in slave garb or thrown naked to the lions, that too would have been criticized. The good people of Carnuntum knew only too well that the four down there were no better or worse than most of those sitting up there in the privileged rows, who felt quite

uneasy at this warning example. It is not easy for the legislator to draw a clear line between lawful acquisition and reprehensible or criminal self-interest motivated by greed and avarice.

This time, the condemned were made to wait longer than usual for the beasts. Unable to move, the pitiful creatures stood in the terrible pen. No one stirred, no one uttered a sound; terror had rendered them numb. A deathly silence would have hung over the arena had it not been for the howling of the prey, which shook the air. Trembling, pale, with clenched fists, the citizens of Carnuntum sat waiting for the terrible spectacle, which they had not dared to watch from afar. Then the trumpets blared. A cry of despair ran through the room; everyone knew this trumpet fanfare very well. Those who had been trembling and screaming at this signal now applauded, as if they themselves were standing in the arena. Then the gates on the other side of the arena opened and four capons ran in, squawking.*⁾ The four condemned men had collapsed in terror, but the arena slaves forced them to fight the capons. Then an imperial herald appeared in the arena. After calling for silence with his trumpet, he spoke: "These four criminals were fraudsters. They were sentenced to death in the arena. So decrees the

^{*)} Historically accurate. Trebellio Pollio, History of the Emperors.

judge. But like shall be repaid with like, and punished with like. They are fraudsters, therefore they shall be defrauded. They expected to fight lions and instead had to fight capons to their shame!" The herald left the room. Arena slaves came and whipped the pardoned men out of the arena with scourges. Like a stone statue, like Jupiter Serapis mocking everything, the emperor sat on his throne; his expression was nothing but a grim frown. Domina Galliena turned pale and trembled with rage. Her fan shattered at her feet. The Carnuntines were still silent, calm. The destructive mockery prevented them from feeling the incomparable comedy of the scene, for despite everything, the pardoned men were still condemned. But at least they felt relieved; no Carnuntine citizen's blood had yet soaked the sand.

But the fifth of the five? He now staggered in. What was that? He was carrying weapons? A hunting spear and a long, pointed sword? Since when did those condemned to death receive weapons? Then the other gate opened, and a tame ox stepped piously and good-naturedly into the arena. The circle of spectators could no longer contain themselves. Roaring laughter echoed through the rows, and the poor bullfighter was met with scorn and ridicule, especially when it became apparent that the ox was his draft animal and very familiar with his former master. He too was forced to fight. The citizens of

Carnuntum forgot the shame that had been inflicted on them and cheered every time the bullfighter attacked the ox and missed. The pseudo-arena beast did not take this badly and seemed to consider it all a game, for presumably his master had once wielded the whip more skillfully than he now wielded the spear. After the tenth failed thrust, arena slaves stepped between the combatants and separated them amid loud laughter. The man could hardly interpret the laughter; he was so confused and frightened that he did not know what was happening. Then the same herald came and placed a golden crown on the astonished bestiarius;*) then he said: "This crown is sent to you by our exalted Caesar. Not hitting an ox ten times is an unattainable, crown-worthy art that only a deceiver can achieve! Go home in peace, you too have been deceived, like the others!" Leaning on his lance, the mocked crown bearer staggered out of the arena. Now a storm of applause broke out. Busy tongues spread the rumor among the people that the emperor wanted to show mercy, without postponing the judgment.

The full hatred of Carnuntum now fell upon the princess. Galliena was defeated. The next day, brooding evil, she traveled to Rome. The auxiliary troops had gathered and joined Caesar Gallienus' army. He had supplemented the legions with the fit,

*) Historical. Trebellio Pollio, History of the Caesars.

forming so-called auxiliary cohorts from the less fit, one of which he handed over to Kadolz to lead. The emperor had come to appreciate Kadolz's merits, which is why he also appointed the Quadic Marcomanni as centurions. It is understandable that Kadolz did not dismount from his horse. "These are evil deeds, and their consequences will be evil!" Caesar Valerianus had said to his son Caesar Gallienus when the two embraced again after a long separation. The voice of the aged emperor sounded benevolent and mild when he spoke these words to his son, as if he wanted to avoid hurting him. With conviction in his gestures and tone of voice, the son replied: "Best of all fathers! Let me beg you to believe me that my actions are planned for the good of the empire! How difficult it was for Rome to defeat the Alemanni before Ravenna; gold, not iron, won the victory there. But the Alemanni and the Quadi are one people under different names. Their kings, however, belong to the tribe of the Saxons and call themselves Marcomanni, which means 'the horsemen,' for the Marcomanni form the nobility, while the others are the people. I learned this when I traveled unrecognized through Germania. There I saw that the kings were acting together against Rome, and that is why war is raging against Rome between Hiberia and the Pontus Euxinus.*") Rome,

*) Between Spain and the Black Sea.

or at least its European provinces as far as Ravenna, would be untenable if I had not succeeded in concluding an alliance with King Attal. He stands like a wedge between the Alemanni and the Goths. I knew how to make excellent use of his jealousy of King Ostrogotha. The strip of Pannonia that I ceded to him is no loss to Rome, since the castles and roads are secure. He will settle the flat land, fine. After some time, when Rome is strong enough again, the Quadi king in Pannonia will become a proconsul, that is all. But today the Danube is secure for us, and thus Rome is saved from ruin, from plunder, from destruction! Father, I hope you too will recognize that this is an important victory for the state, for Rome is saved and the Danube is secure. But even more important is the fact that the power of the Germans has been broken.”

Caesar Gallienus was silent; the aged Valerianus weighed his words thoughtfully, then spoke warmly, taking his son's hand and raising his eyes to those of Gallienus, who calmly met his father's gaze: “My only beloved son! You have accomplished great things, indeed you have saved the empire from ruin, but instead of idolizing you and building triumphal arches for you, they will throw you off the Tarpeian Rock because you intend to choose a barbarian woman as your wife! Do not do this, my son, do not betray the vanity of Rome so deeply, sacrifice this ill-fated love to your fatherland, and grateful Rome will

erect a golden statue for you on the Esquiline Hill, greater than the Pharos of Alexandria!” But deep sorrow spoke from the son's eyes, which had not avoided his father's. With a trembling voice, Gallienus then said: “Father, have you never loved?” “How could you then be, my son?” “And yet you can not only think this terrible thought, but also utter it, utter it to me, your son?” “My duty as a father commands me to warn you! Remember that Rome was suckled by she-wolves, and it is the nature of wolves to tear their benefactors to pieces! Remember that you are emperor and that your posthumous fame must be sacred to you!” “Without Pipara's love, I would be a shadow, but with her I am a god!” “Well, my son!” replied his father mildly, “I am defeated; in my heart I feel with you... It was difficult for me to speak to you thus. Let the dice of fate roll!” Father and son lay in each other's arms for a long time.

The army was reviewed. It was a proud force that Gallienus had created. He had trained them well in the long marches he had trained them well and provided them with good provisions, so that the troops were perfectly ready for battle. Venerianus was entrusted with the command of part of the army, which he was to lead against the Goths and Jazyges in order to liberate Macedonia, Achaia, and, if possible, the Asian provinces opposite from the enemies. Venerianus had placed his hand on the

shoulder of the secret secretary Palphurnius and whispered in his ear: "If you always criticize the emperor, you will always remain a literarius. You must be clever, my friend, and you will become procurator!" The legate Aureolus received the second third of the army with orders to lead it across the Brennus to Mediolanum, occupy the Alpine passes, and thus maintain watch against the Alemanni. The last third remained under the command of the two emperors, as a flying corps, so to speak.

On that same day, Caesar Gallienus lay on a lectus in a chamber of the Hibernum Castrum Mursias. Palphurnius Sura, the emperor's literarius, sat at a table covered with writing implements. "Exalted Caesar," said the secretary, looking up from the table, "the letters are written to the tribune Claudius in Ticinum.*)" "Follow this letter to the legate Aureolus. He is leading part of the army to Mediolanum**) and may give this letter to Claudius as his superior." The secret clerk folded the letter and wrote on the outside: "Caesar Gallienus Augustus to the tribune Claudius in Mediolanum through the legate Aureolus." Then he took another letter. This was sent by the imperial couriers. This was a state institution similar to our postal service, which was organized solely for government use.

*) Today Pavia.

**) Today Milan.

It was addressed to Cassius Latinus Posthumus, the prefect of the Gentis Germanorum in Trivirorum*). Several more similar letters followed. Finally, the last one came to the front. "This one is written to Princess Galliena, your majesty," said Palphurnius, and wanted to seal it quickly. "Let me read it myself, Sura," ordered the emperor; Palphurnius had to obey. He handed the letter to Gallienus. The emperor read it through and tore it up. "Sit down and write what I tell you." Palphurnius took a fresh sheet of parchment, sharpened his pen, and waited for the emperor's dictation. Gallienus ran his fingers through his thick black curls, which glistened with gold powder, and began his dictation: "Caesar Gallienus semper Augustus to his dear little Domina Galliena! Heartwarming and sincere Greetings first! You will still remember, dearest little one, what we spoke of in the carriage as we drove to Carnuntum after the arena. At that time, I recognized your talent for government affairs and learned to admire it. This gift from the heavens must not be lost to the state. Therefore, I beg you, my dear friend, to embark for Africa immediately upon receipt of this letter and take up residence there in the imperial colony of Sicca Veneria in the land of Numidia, where Celsus, the proconsul of Africa, is in charge of the government, until further notice. It was no easy task

*) Trier. Prefect of the Gentis Germanorum Commander of the Germanic Foreign Legion. (Auxiliary troops.)

for me to choose a place of residence that perfectly suits your fine qualities. I am happy to have found it for you and am certain that you will thank me for my care. The Temple of Venus there is famous for its pleasant groves and even more so for its priestesses of Venus. After your experiences in Carnuntum and your edifying reflections in the quadrivial-silvan temple there, the Numidian service to Venus will certainly offer you, sweet little one, the desired change. Farewell!” Palphurnius had written. “Now give me the letter, most faithful of all secret scribes,” said the emperor, rising carelessly from his couch. Gallienus read the letter again with obvious satisfaction. Then he folded it himself, sealed it with his own hand, and tucked the letter into the fold of his robe after writing on it with his own hand: “Caesar Gallienus semper Augustus to Domina Galliena through his most trusted bodyguard Bonitus.”

Gallienus left the chamber to send Bonitus as a courier to Domina Galliena in Rome. Palphurnius, however, drew a faun-like face and said to himself: “This shall be a message for my friend Sabellus in Rome. I am eager to know what effect my last letter to the *Acta Diurna* had on our future empress. One must be clever, said Venerianus, so that Sabellus does not know that the letter came from me. One must be clever. Palphurnius, you too must be clever!”

Seventh Adventure

How Galliena Learned of the Message in Rome.

“Idle words, wasted sighs, my friend, in our times!” said a man with a large retinue of slaves to his friend walking beside him. He too had an equally large retinue of slaves behind him. The purple hem of the stately folds of their togas testified to their consular rank. “No Caesar had ever dared such a thing, my friend Marcus Claudius Tacitus!” replied the other consul. “To elevate a bear-skinner to the rank of Augusta and thus insult our daughters! Jupiter Ultor and Mars Ultor are not powerful enough to avenge such an insult!” “Your words are strong, friend!” The senator Tacitus had said this to the legion prefect Lucius Aelianus. “Yes, friend Tacitus, my words are strong, and with every right. Of course, Cornelius Tacitus is not my great-grandfather, and I therefore have no regard for “Germania,” that accursed book. If it were not necessary for you, Tacitus, you too would have many a sharp word to answer for in the armoury!” “Aelianus, how unwise! What do I care about a book that happened to be written by my great-grandfather a hundred and fifty-seven years ago! What do I care about the deliberate misapplication of his words!” “But a mad emperor takes offense at his words; he elevates a barbarian

peasant girl to empress, to Caesar, to Augusta! Rome, rage with fury!"

Silently, they continued along the Via Nomentana toward the Roman Forum. They stopped at the golden milestone, the center of the world. The blue Italian sky arched its crystal dome over them. The evening sun glowed on the temples and imperial palaces of the Palatine Hill to their left; to their right, the sharp outlines of the Capitol stood out in the dark purple shadows. The Gemonian staircase lay in gloomy twilight. "Here at the golden Groma, I will say it once again, my friend Tacitus, that in the thousand years since Rome has sat in judgment here on this square over all kings and peoples, over the whole world, it has never been so reviled as it is now. And now I ask you, here at the center of the world, whether you agree with me that the traitor to Rome should be thrown from the Gemonian staircase, he who dares to lead that barbarian whore into the halls of the gods on the Palatine Hill and introduce her as empress!" "And yet, my friend Aelianus," said Tacitus with dignified calm to his vehemently agitated friend, 'the emperor has great merits: think of Ravenna!' But the other, bursting with rage, blurted out: "And if he had remained victorious, and if the Alemanni had stormed Rome, and if the Alemanni had plundered Rome, and if they had burned it down, yes, if Gallienus had married a plebeian woman, yes, even the filthiest proletarian

woman, who stinks of garlic and mortar, Rome would have borne this misfortune with dignity, Rome would have forgiven its emperor; the marriage to the German woman, the purchase of a bride with an entire province! That is too terrible...! Jupiter Ultor, where are your crushing thunderbolts?" Tacitus was unable to calm his friend.

Then another distinguished Roman approached the two from the direction of the Arch of Severus. He was a man barely thirty years old, who, without greeting them, "Salute, fellow soldiers!" he called out cheerfully; "are you dining at Martianus's tonight? You will be offered something rare there; little Merita and the charming Chloe and many other singers and dancers are invited. Martianus is not as stingy as Caesar Gallienus, who only lets his guests bathe with old women while he keeps the pretty ones for himself. You should be there!" "I intend to be there," replied Tacitus, not a little pleased to see the unpleasant conversation with Aelianus interrupted. But he remained silent; he was too angry. "And you are silent, honorable confrater?" the young Roman turned to Aelianus, "Have you perhaps swallowed a spider?" "Leave it, Cecropius! It's worse than swallowing ten spiders." But Cecropius, as the newcomer was called, pretended to go along with the bad mood of his fellow symposium-goer and said with mischievous seriousness: "Yes, now I know what's weighing on

your mind! It is the Temple of Saturn that has done this to you, because you feel sorry for his children, whom he eats. Yes, yes, only this Saturn is actually called Roma, and his children are the state treasury, which is guarded there in the Temple of Saturn!" "By Mars Ultor! Leave me alone!" cried Aelianus morosely, while Tacitus smiled quietly at Cecropius's biting wit. He was acting like a wise man. "Keep measure in all things," was his motto. But Cecropius continued with indestructible eloquence: "Well, friend and drinking companion, if that is not what has so greatly angered you, then only the fate of Literarius Sabellus, whom they have just thrown into the Carcer Mamertinum, can have so greatly shaken you. Do you know, that is the same magnificent chamber that the Senate of Rome once assigned to the African king Jugurtha, who is said to have exclaimed when he was lowered there: 'By Hercules, what a cool bath!' Is this it, Commilitone?" Then both friends became attentive and cried out as if with one voice: "What are you saying, Cecropius? The author of the *Acta Diurna**) in prison? Why?" "He is said to have lied," said the man questioned with a subtle smile. "By the three-

*) The *Acta Diurna* was a written newspaper which, to a certain extent, replaced what we now call journalism for the Romans. It was written simultaneously by many slaves according to dictation. Its content corresponded to that of our newspapers today in a certain sense, as it widely reported the

headed Hecate!" cried Aelianus, "he has written the truth, for if he had been sent to the Carcer of Mamertinus at the first lie, he would have been there since countless consulates, and we would no longer know what the *Acta Diurna* look like. What was it?" Cecropius replied with a subtle smile and whispered these words: "Come with me, fellow soldiers, to Martianus. I have saved a page of the *Acta Diurna* from being burned, and I will read it to you and others who wish to hear it. Perhaps it will cool your anger somewhat, Aelianus; it is very well written. Poor Sabellus!"

Senator Tacitus and the legion prefect Aelianus sent their retinues home and each ordered a lantern bearer to go at midnight to the palace of the wealthy Martianus on the Via Flaminia, next to the Mausoleum of Augustus. But Cecropius laughed and said that these poor wretches would sleep better at home, for after sunrise no one would need a lantern, but perhaps a sedan chair. And Martianus had plenty of those for his friends. So sedan chairs and lantern bearers were ordered, to be on the safe side and to make a good impression. The three

gossip of the capital. Communal events, scandalous trials, senate decisions, imperial decrees, events in the imperial family and other famous families, births, deaths, marriages, honors, then fires, accidents, provincial news, and curiosities. The *Acta Diurna* did not engage in actual politics; that was reserved for literature.

friends now walked through the passageway built by Emperor Trajan, who had the ridge connecting the Quirinal Hill with the Capitol excavated and the wall of Servius Tullius demolished in order to connect the old town with the new part of the city on the Campus Martius. There they walked past Trajan's Column, across Trajan's Forum, along the Via Flamina, past the Column of Antoninus, past marble-shimmering palaces, until they reached that of the wealthy Martianus. It was a mighty building with a portico supported by columns and decorated with many magnificent marble statues. In the atrium, the wealthy Martianus sat on an ivory bisellium, waiting for his guests. He went to Senator Tacitus with lively joy to greet him. Distinguished guests are welcomed with loud cries of joy to show how familiar one is with the famous man. The legion prefect was greeted no less loudly. Cecropius, on the other hand, had to content himself with a very benevolent, condescending greeting. He was young, distinguished, but not rich, yet of a pleasant disposition and with not insignificant prospects for the future. Reason enough to treat him as a friend, albeit with all due caution. Cecropius thought it best to pretend not to notice this cooler friendliness. The other guests also belonged to high society, namely the patriciate or at least the knightly class. In total, including the host, there were nine guests at the table. Only a small, intimate banquet was to be held,

for the number nine was the favorite number of the wealthy Martianus, because of the Muses, as he said. In addition to these eight guests, numerous famous singers and dancers had also appeared, to whom the host did not apply his numbering system, presumably because one could never have too much beauty before one's eyes.

After a general, perfunctory greeting, Cecropius took Martianus aside and whispered to him that he had important news that was not for everyone's ears. So the four withdrew to the library. The other guests were told that an important preliminary meeting for the Senate was taking place. There sat the four friends. Cecropius took a papyrus scroll from his pocket and read: "Unbelievable things are to be reported about the crowned Caesar near Ravenna. Instead of destroying the enemies of the fatherland, or at least pursuing them, he went to Pannonia to Caesar Valerianus, who had marched against the rebellious Ingenuus. But Caesar Gallienus was idling there in taverns and cookshops, becoming a bosom friend of pimps and wine merchants, gladiators and circus drivers. He had so far abandoned his Roman identity that on his journey to Achaea in Athens he had even been accepted as a citizen of the city, then initiated into the mysteries in order to become an archon. Yes, he even intended to have himself admitted to the Areopagus itself..." "Unheard of!" cried Aelianus. "I cannot condemn that," said

Senator Tacitus calmly. “Although I do not find much to praise in this deed, I am nevertheless grateful for the victory at Ravenna. The condition of the army may not have allowed him to pursue the barbarians. The Goths and Scythians also threaten in the east; I find it reasonable that he wants to secure the favor of Achaia. But to blame him for what all emperors have done, what we all do, is malicious. Sabellus deserves his dungeon.” “Granted, Senator! But listen further! You know the rule of rhetoric, which requires a well-founded introduction; we have not yet gone beyond that!” Martianus had said this and motioned to Cecropius to continue reading; “It is well known how much care Gallienus takes in everything that has nothing to do with government. No well-meaning Roman is unaware of how he had his table set with fortresses of rare fruits, and that at times of the year when these fruits do not usually grow. It is his ambition to have melons in winter, grapes in spring, and must throughout the year, while the enemies of the empire gnaw at the borders like mice.” “That is the merit of the imperial gardener, not the shame of Gallienus; Lucullus was praised for this and even more!” The senator said this almost unwillingly. “His robes are made of gold, his goblets are made of gold and studded with precious stones, he powders his hair with gold dust and appears in public in the provinces wearing a crown of rays...” “That is less of a crime than

Sabellus' donkey ears; he deserved the Carcer.” “...and in a purple cloak, whose agraffe sparkles with precious stones. All this has been done to the shame of Rome, for what emperor ever wore a garment other than the toga, what Caesar ever wore a headdress other than the laurel wreath? He also wore purple shoes studded with gold stripes and a tunic with long sleeves of purple fabric. His armor, even his boots, are studded with jewels. That he bathes six or seven times a day in summer and three times a day in winter is less reprehensible.” “Such accusations are ridiculous, and if I had had Sabellus, instead of throwing him into prison, I would have had him thoroughly whipped and donkey ears sewn onto his own; he would have had to wear them during the dictation of his *Acta Diurna!*” The honest Tacitus had let himself be carried away by his zeal, and yet he was anything but a friend of Gallienus. Martianus and Aelianus, however, told Cecropius to continue reading.

For quite some time, similar accusations piled up, vividly reminiscent of those foul-smelling projectiles still thrown by Chinese pirates today. Finally, however, came the main blow, which had only been prepared by what had gone before. Cecropius therefore read more slowly and with malicious emphasis. “But to extend the misfortune of the empire to the utmost, this deluded emperor has fallen so deeply in love with a slave and concubine of

the Germanic chieftain Attal that he has surrendered the entire provinces of Pannonia and Noricum, together with Valeria, for the possession of this unclean, foul-smelling cattle maid. What was won and defended with the blood of our fathers in a struggle lasting nearly three hundred years, the possession of rich lands, flourishing colonies and municipalities, the route to the German Ocean and the Suevic Sea, has been given away for the embrace of a barbarian cowherd. Thus the exalted name of Caesar is defiled, the illustrious name of Augustus is defiled; thus all Rome is deeply insulted, and all Roman virgins and women are defiled by this imperial outrage. Only hecatombs upon hecatombs can appease the goddesses Roma and Venus, and human blood must also flow as atonement. Jupiter Ultor and Mars Ultor, you two gods of vengeance, hear this accusation against the emperor of Rome!"

Cecropius paused. "Well? What do you noble gentlemen say to that? But wait, there are more minor reports; it says here: 'A letter from Sabaria says that Caesar Gallienus' bride is the most unworthy creature ever to be touched by the sun. Until now, she has only ever lived in cattle stalls, where the dung heap was her usual bed, on which she embraced anyone who was willing. She is said to have no idea whatsoever about footwear and clothing, for apart from a few tattered skins, which serve as a covering for her filth, she has no other

possessions, except for their ugliness, which is surpassed only by their presumptuous insolence. This is what the future Empress of Rome looks like today! And down there, friends, is a message from Carnuntum: ‘The future Empress is said to have taken her first bath a few days ago; an attempt to cut her fingernails and toenails is said to have failed because the nails are completely ingrown. People speak of sorcery, as it is otherwise impossible to believe. And there...’ “No, that is enough!” cried Tacitus, “that is more than malice! Sabellus deserves his fate, for the lie is too clumsy! A man of such princely education, a man who is himself a poet, a man who is famous for the beauty of his slaves, a man who is a Gallienus, such a man cannot love such a hideous woman as Sabellus would have us believe! The matter is true, but Caesar's wife must be beautiful and must also possess special qualities, otherwise she would not have been able to provoke an emperor of Rome into such an insult to his people!” “That is my word, Senator Tacitus!” With that, the senator rose noisily from the lectus on which he had been sitting. Martianus did not want to let the disagreement develop into a quarrel, so he also rose with the words: “Our highly esteemed friend may be right; the monstrosity of what has happened is thus at most explained, but not excused!” Cecropius wanted to continue, but with a skillful turn of his body, Martianus had gained

control of him and led him out of the door with amiable kindness. The others followed.

It was pleasantly cool in the rich Martianus' triclinium, for the wines were excellent. Martianus had also taken care to banish deadly boredom from his symposium, and had therefore summoned famous dancers and singers, celebrated beauties of Rome, at whose feet the entire distinguished male population of the world's capital lay. The rich Martianus could certainly afford it. Even if these "divas" or "graces," as the host graciously called them, did not claim the consideration that custom imposed on men toward women, some form had to be maintained, at least at the beginning. That is why no proper "Graeco more bibere," i.e., no formal drinking party, had been organized today, although it was only the name that was avoided, for in truth it was a genuine and proper symposium, only without its peculiar ceremonial. The divas appeared in rich Greek costumes, which were very popular because of the numerous liberties they allowed. Nor were they in the least shy. They reclined with unforced grace on cushions around the banquet table and were distributed so that each of the guests had one of the graces as a neighbor on his right and left. Charming slave girls had placed laurels around the guests' foreheads and kept refilling the circulating goblets. Little Merita had just sung a song. Loud applause and cheerful laughter showed that she had flattered

the taste of the guests of the wealthy Martianus and that the words of the song had certainly not been taken from one of Virgil's idylls.

And yet, there was a stormy atmosphere in the triclinium. The cheerfulness that usually surged against these marble walls, that usually swirled around these alabaster columns, did not want to flow today. Brooding over the topic that had been raised by the reading of the *Acta Diurna*, but then abruptly cut off, Aelianus lay in the cushions of the dining bed, for here it was not to be discussed. The legion prefect, usually merry and eager for kisses, drank his cup almost listlessly and was sullen toward the female drinking companions encouraging him on either side. Even Tacitus, renowned as a worshipper of Bacchus and Venus, fared no better. Normally, he forgot Rome, the emperor, the senate, and the Quirites in the effervescent excitement of the symposium, but today they weighed more heavily on his mind. He too lay wordless before his cup, in which the delicious caecubum, which had already counted more than forty consulates, was bubbling. But then the senator almost collapsed. Little Merita, his companion on his left, tired of his sullen indifference, which she was not used to from him set his laurel straight playfully and remarked with a sly smile: "You are one of the venerable fathers of the Senate, so tell me, are you not also pleased about the emperor's marriage?" "Pleased,

little fool? But why?" Tacitus raised the goblet to hide his astonished expression behind it. "Why?" laughed the little girl and turned on her bed so that her head came to rest under the senator's face and she had to look up at him with her fiery, shining coal-black eyes. "Why? Well, I'm happy because now I too can become empress! All you need is to be young and beautiful! How wonderful!" "Yes, you are young and beautiful, Merita," said the senator, "but how could you become empress?" "How? It's a special thing! Your proud dominas grow old; we don't. We are like picked flowers that quickly wither, while they are like potted plants that still live after they have bloomed. When one of us becomes empress and the emperor no longer loves her, well, then he orders her to die, and another takes her place; or is it not so?" With that, Merita played with the purple hem of the senator's toga and playfully wrapped her arm around Tacitus' neck.

But he also had a companion on his right, and she did not want to be neglected either. She rested her brown-curled head on her right hand, while her left played with the senator's thick, short-curled hair, which was already beginning to turn gray. Smiling, she said: "At least you know, cheerful Tacitus, how this little fool sees things; she always thinks she will become empress, and yet she is blind to the main thing." "You are both fools!" laughed the senator, "but the events are too serious to..." "I am not

joking, venerable cheerful one! You know I am a Thessalian and the future is open to me.” “I know,” joked Tacitus, emptying his cup; “You are all sorceresses, like Medea, you pull the moon down to earth and force it to turn a wheel. It is a vain and futile game!” “Well, and if I am not to become empress, do you think you will be?” cried Merita with apparent cheerfulness, while a challenging glance swept over the Thessalian woman, who smiled superiorly at this glance. “Don’t quarrel, children, and be merry; sing me a song, perhaps then my cup will be filled again, like the Greek spring at Helicon.” But Clythia, the Thessalian, seemed not to have heard Tacitus’ words, for she replied calmly to Merita’s question: “You and I, neither of us will be empresses, even though two emperors of the future are our drinking companions today!” “Two emperors!” cried the senator, his voice trembling with astonishment; “two emperors here in this triclinium?” “Two emperors! One true and one false; the false will come before the true, but neither will have a long reign; the true, however, will gain a good reputation.” That was Clythia’s answer. “And who are the two, Thessalian Pythia?” Tacitus pressed, but Clythia wrapped her arms around his neck, her glowing breath playing around his forehead, and whispering, the words crept into his ear: “Remember the words of the Thessalian woman, she cannot say more, but the gods can give you a sign to recognize

and distinguish the two.” “A sign, and today?” asked the senator excitedly, and “What kind of sign?” he wanted to ask, but the Greek woman had wrapped herself around him and pressed a hot kiss on his lips. “That is the seal; now be silent, venerable, beloved one!” But the other symposiasts also felt the pressure, so Cecropius suggested choosing an arbiter convivii to hold an “a summo bibere.” The suggestion was accepted, and Aelianus was elected “Rex” or “Arbiter Convivii.” “The signs are beginning, keep your eyes open, dearest!” whispered Clythia into the astonished senator’s ear, while Merita, singing a little song, cheered the new king of the drinking table.

Martianus had arranged for Aelianus to be elected Rex. His aim was to encourage the taciturn Aelianus to be more cheerful and to dispel the gloomy thoughts of the others. Aelianus took this honor as seriously as if he had received orders from the emperor to become procurator at the head of a provincial government. “And so I will be your king and leader, dear comrades! Come, let us gather in a circle and drink to the highest!” Already the round song resounded through the portico at the command of Rex Aureolus. Anacreontic verses were sung, accompanied by flutes, harps, and zithers. A group of dancers, lightly robed, had leaped into the hall to set the right tone for the symposium with a Bacchanalian dance. “Evoe! To Bacchus, the drink,

to Bacchus, the breaker of sorrows, Evoe!” the revelers cheered in a circle. The Bacchantes danced merrily around the banquet table. Then one of the Bacchantes stumbled and fell in front of the table, landing on Tacitus. He jumped up to help the girl and lost his wreath of roses in the process. But the Bacchante quickly jumped up and pressed the wreath onto the senator's curls, from which it had slipped; she also wanted to adorn herself again with the wreath that had fallen from her head. Then she was startled, for she had mixed up the wreaths. But even the drinking companions did not notice this mix-up. “Bacchus! Long live Bacchus, down with the king!” rang out around him, and before Tacitus knew what had happened, he had a thyrsus in his hands and was seized by his merry comrades and carried ahead of the Bacchus procession into the peristyle, where the others followed jubilantly. “Do you know the sign?” Clythia whispered to the senator as he was carried away from her side.

Rex Aelianus, so shamefully abandoned, remained alone in the triclinium in front of his cup, which he now drank thoughtfully. Martianus arrived, dismayed, fearing that his guest might misinterpret what had happened. But the prefect was convinced that such behavior was merely the result of exuberant revelry and followed the procession into the peristyle. There it was refreshingly cool. In the dark night sky, Diana's silver hunting dogs shone,

and the goddess's forehead ornament glowed down with a mild light onto the gardens of the spacious peristyle. Colorful lamps illuminated the room with changing light, here brightly illuminating a group, there not penetrating the shadows that darkened the pergola surrounding the peristyle behind myrtle and laurel bushes or a group of slender cypresses. There the flutes and zithers continued to sound, along with the cheers of the Bacchantes and the revelers who had become Bacchantes. Delicious wines flowed in streams, and Bacchus sat enthroned in the midst of the exuberant crowd. The Bacchantes, clothed only in panther skins, made the already half-drunk revelers unable to bear the restraints of a symposium, or even those of mutual restraint. Even Tacitus-Bacchus, in the general frenzy of the senses, had forgotten to think about Clythia's prophetic words and lay panting on the Thessalian woman's breast.

“Rome is a pestilential muddy ground where the plants of wild desires spring up in abundance, where swarms of secret braggarts, vain courtiers, gluttons, flatterers, bandits, inheritance hunters, and false friends roam about; only those who love wealth, are enchanted by gold, and measure happiness only by purple, power, and influence; only those who have never tasted true freedom, never seen the truth, but have grown up among flatterers and slaves; furthermore, those who have devoted their entire

being to the service of lust, who are friends of debauched feasts, wine, and love, and who find their pleasure in vain tricks and deceitful lies, and finally, those who are only delighted by trills and lewd songs: for such people, Rome is the right place to live.*)" High above this swampy Rome, on one of the seven hills, on the Palatine, stood the golden imperial palaces, witnesses to so many heroic deeds and so many accursed, unspeakable vices. Even in these splendid rooms, the news of Caesar's choice of bride had deeply stirred the minds of the people. Domina Galliena lay on a richly gilded couch. She was accompanied by several distinguished ladies, who sat on chairs with colourfully embroidered cushions around Domina, or chatted in groups between the gleaming columns of the high chamber. Some pretty slave girls flitted among the guests with refreshments, while others played various musical instruments. Menophila, the nurse, and Cora, the princess's favorite slave, sat apart, watching and waiting for Galliena's signal. "You are too excited, princess!" said Lygda, the wife of Senator Sabinillus. "You should rest after your journey." "I can only rest when the fish in the Adriatic Sea marry this barbarian whore!" She shot angry glances across the hall; the ladies tried in vain to persuade Galliena to

*) This most damning judgment in a single sentence is expressed by Lucian of Samosata in his "Nigrinus" about Caesar's Rome.

withdraw. But Galliena had only been in Rome for a few hours and was eager to explore the mood of the capital. Before the sower sows the seed, he must fertilize and plow, lest the seed be ruined. But before he plows, he must not forget to test the soil to see whether plowing is worthwhile. So the princess asked, and the ladies told her what they knew; naturally in a manner that corresponded to the mood of the angry mistress. Today, the certainly rare case occurred that the ladies of the princess spoke without restraint what they felt, for misplaced vanity had made them all blindly raging enemies of the Germanic king's daughter.

A slave girl had rushed in and whispered something to Cora. She bowed before her mistress. A questioning glance from the princess made her hurry away: "Mistress and goddess of the imperial house! At this unusual hour, several matrons, honorable wives of Roman citizens, have appeared here in the golden house and beg for the grace of being heard by you." "Let them come!" said the princess. A crowd of women of different ages entered. Three were simple citizens' wives who had come here to represent the people of Rome. They entered timidly, almost crushed by the princely pomp that surrounded them. They stood there huddled together like a flock of sheep, one hiding behind the other, making shy gestures. Then the domina addressed them: "Greetings, women of the Quirites!

What brings you to me?" But no answer followed; courage had deserted those who had entered. Those who, only an hour ago, had spoken and shouted so boldly, now could now hardly think what they had intended to say. "Well, good matrons," began the princess, "you cannot all speak, but let one of you name herself, and I will help her to present her request to me. Which of you will be the spokeswoman?" The women cried out, "Celia, Celia shall speak!" "Well then, Celia, step forward and tell your fellow citizens what you want." She stepped forward. She was an ugly old woman, who looked as if she was usually very eloquent and more accustomed to reviling than to praising. But now she remained silent, even though she stood before the princess. She was probably still frightened by the fact that her companions had withdrawn, like the chorus in a theater behind the actor. "Speak, good woman, if I can help, it shall be done. Are you hungry? Help shall be given!" "You know that, high goddess! The Quirites are always hungry, but we do not come to the Palatine because of hunger; Andres led us here, goddess!" "Say it, and I will help you, if I can; but make it brief." "Goddess, you must know this, and that is why we ask you whether it is true that the emperor is marrying the slave of a barbarian farmer, who has no shirt on her back and does not know what a tunic is. That is what we want to know, and that is why we ask you, goddess." "You have not

been lied to, good women; but do not ask me, who am bent with grief! Do not ask me about the shame brought upon Roman women by my own fiancé! Does the sacred flame still burn in the temple of Vesta? I would not be surprised if it had gone out! Let me mourn, good women! Mourn, not for the unfaithfulness of my fiancé toward me, but for the unfaithfulness of the emperor toward you! How you, virtuous women of Rome, have been insulted and dishonored! And yet it befits us not to use violence against him, for he is the emperor, the god of the world! I would never ask you, guardians of Roman womanhood, to drag the rejected woman from her carriage as she enters Rome and tear her to pieces. I would never advise you to do such a thing, for she is Caesar's bride and will be Augusta! Listen, the peasant girl, the barbarian cowherd, will become Domina Augusta! Yes, your empress! The foul-smelling bear-skinner will become the first and most distinguished woman in the world, your mistress! Good, virtuous women of Rome, do you not tremble with rage? And yet, yes! She will become the deified wife of your deified Caesar! I will not ask you to give her, the wicked woman, the death blow! I will not beg Zeus Ultor to crush her, for I am the unfortunate cousin of the deluded man!"

Sighs and tears choked the voice of the good actress in princess' clothing. Intimidated, but angry, the Quirite women stood before the weeping princess.

They had never seen a princess in tears before, and this princess was so good! Hesitant, trembling with restrained anger, yet as if she wanted to comfort her, Celia said: “That cannot be true, goddess! All of Rome is beside itself, and we women are too, that such an unwashed thing should become the first Roman woman. We are honest Roman women, simple matrons, and so we thought it would be better if you, goddess, became Caesar's wife and our empress.” At this, the princess turned pale and clutched her heart with her right hand. “Juno Pronuba has decreed otherwise, contrary to all the oracles; it befits us humans to submit to the will of the gods. Therefore, good women, go in peace to your flocks, of which you are the priestesses, and let fate take its course.” “No, goddess, we will not!” cried Celia, growing bolder, and waved her hand. “We will not!” cried the chorus of women. This gave the spokeswoman more courage; she stepped closer to the princess and cried, “No, again! The auspices have made you empress, and the auspices shall not be disobeyed. That would bring disaster. You must become Caesar!” “Go, good women, go! If that is what the auspices demand, then it will happen sooner or later, for the gods rule over men. Go each to her flock, and let each of you take a golden coin of Gallienus with you as a souvenir. But go, I can say no more to you.”

The Quiritines left the columned hall, more agitated than when they had entered; they still did not know what they wanted, but Galliena's evil seed had not fallen on barren ground. The golden Gallienus coins formed the fertilizer. Galliena lay for a long time in the Lectus, brooding gloomily. Then a soft hand rested on her head as if to comfort her. She raised her eyelashes: "Good Lygda, you wake me from my dreams." "Sublime princess! Think no more of the unfaithful one!" That was what the senator's wife had said, thinking she was offering comfort. But Galliena sprang up like a viper; Lygda recoiled, almost frightened. Galliena's eyes flashed menacingly and she raged: "Who speaks of a faithless man? What do I care about his love or mine? He may kiss the whore as often as he likes, but she shall not rob me of my purple! Oh, if I had friends, I would not have to fear this peasant slave!" Her eyes flashed again like the eyes of a tiger. Lygda staggered back, turning pale. Galliena had greeted her coolly with a nod and rushed out of the hall. In a small chamber, the princess had consulted with Menophila, her former nurse. Galliena was also a child of her time and therefore superstitious. Nor did she mean it seriously when she said that she only wanted the purple. She could not bear the thought of having to take second place to the barbarian. So she decided to do what her nurse advised her to do. Gallienus was to languish at her feet, begging for her

love, and then? Then? Then she would kick him away with her foot!

Night had fallen. The half moon stood high among the shining stars. A cool breeze blew in from the countryside and swept through the streets of golden Rome, which had been heated by the sun's heat during the day. Two female figures, wrapped in gray hooded cloaks, scurried along the Via Flaminia, past the Mausoleum of Augustus, out of shining Rome. A good distance beyond the Porta Flaminia, the two women continued on their way, silent among the silent yet eloquent tombs. The white marble temples, obelisks, pyramids, and gravestones stood out eerily against the dark leafy background. Shivering, the two pilgrims wrapped themselves more tightly in their cloaks and quickened their steps. Now a narrow side path led to the right between pine trees toward a small hill. The trees stood closer together. Then a reddish glow became visible in the branches; it came from the open door of a small cottage. The two women wanted to enter, but one of them seemed to falter; she pressed her left hand against her chest and covered her forehead with her right, as if she did not know what to do. "My dear child, be brave! It will soon be midnight, and then it will be too late! Come, come, my dearest!" And with that, Mena took the princess' hand and pulled her into the little house. Reluctantly, yet without resistance, she followed her

guide. A small room surrounded her. All around, various frightening objects stared down at the newcomers from the sooty walls: dried snakes, newts, lizards, animal heads, and skulls. In between were bunches of herbs, knives, logs, and pots full of crawling insects. An owl sat with glowing eyes in one corner, and in another, a huge black cat; a raven and a magpie sat fast asleep on the crossbeam of the vaulted ceiling. In the middle of the room stood a huge hearth; above its flames hung a steaming cauldron on chains. The two women stood silently and fearfully at the entrance. Bathed in the flickering red light, the magical equipment in the witch's kitchen seemed to be constantly turning and transforming; even the pine trunks in front of the door resembled fire snakes lurking in the bushes, ready to strike. "Who disturbs the magical work of Thessalian Clynicos at this midnight hour?!" These words now struck the ears of the two women; an old woman in black robes and fluttering silver hair, in which snakes were writhing, stood before them. She had appeared suddenly, no one had seen her coming. They stood frozen in terror, unable to utter a word, facing the hideous creature. She raised her bony arm, which held a black staff, as if threatening the princess, and cried in a shrill voice: "Nec Babylonios tentaris numeros!*)" This completely intimidated the women; how did the sorceress know their

*) Not Babylonian magic numbers!

thoughts? Galliena tried to speak. But her tongue failed her.

Again the terrible woman raised her magic wand and screamed: “Cypris, mistress of the sharpest arrows, wove the colorful bird Jynx indissolubly onto the four-spoked wheel, brought the mad bird down from heaven first to mankind, and taught the wise Asonidas supplicatory magic spells so that he might take away the divine Medea's fear of her parents and whirl her longing heart, inflamed with love, with Peithos' whip!” But the terrible woman continued to draw circles and signs in the air with her staff against those standing on the threshold. They were completely confused; they did not understand the meaning, hardly even the words of the magic spells. Now the old woman withdrew to the magic kitchen and motioned to the two to follow her. She drew a parchment scroll from the black staff, which was densely covered with foreign, illegible writing, and waved it around her head. Walking backwards, she circled the hearth; the two women followed her silently and trembling on this circuit. Then the sorceress began again: “This scroll of Clynicos, which has drawn the man across the seas, even to your chamber, to draw your beloved, with the power of gold shining through it, from flaming amethysts with healing light, be a precious gift to you, Cypris!” With that, she threw the scroll into the steaming cauldron and, having already instructed Galliena,

her nurse, threw a handful of golden Galliens and then a second handful of violet-colored amethysts into the cauldron. The sorceress trembled all over with greed to soon lift the rich treasure that was now boiling in the magic cauldron. Now followed incantations and gruesome spells in great numbers, so that pale fear gripped the hearts of the women. At last the spell was complete. The sorceress handed the princess an amulet of unremarkable appearance. It was kneaded from red wax and was said to possess unsurpassed virtues and powers. Then the old woman said to the princess in a solemn tone: "Remember Clynicos' spell! Remember the spell that brought the man across the seas to your chamber, the power that drew your beloved to you! Remember the spell with a gentle, generous hand!"

Galliena and her guide hurriedly left the richly gifted sorceress. Midnight was long past. The moon was low. Over the gray, dusky Sabine mountains lay that faint amber scent, the first harbinger of dawn. Silently and shivering with cold, the two women hurried through the gloomy rows of graves toward the Porta Flaminia. In the faint, uncertain light of dawn, the Mausoleum of Augustus stood before their hasty gaze as the mighty gates of a marble palace opened. With wild cries and drunken jeers, a crowd of night owls mixed with unclothed Bacchantes rolled out of the gate. The two women had noticed the mob too late; there was no longer

any hope of hiding. “Venus and Bacchus are kind to us! He is leading us to two Vestal Virgins! Salvete, beautiful ladies, there is still room for you both in our procession!” One of the crowd shouted and pushed his way toward the two night wanderers with unsteady steps. The laurel hung disheveled in his tangled locks, soiled, displaced, torn, his robe fluttering around his half-covered body. In drunken rage, he tore the hood from Mena's head. “Let me kiss you, little dove, come to Cecropius' heart!” he cried, but Mena pushed him away. Others came to his aid, and the two were in danger of coming to a bad end if Senator Tacitus had not intervened at the right moment with all his dignity and insisted that the two dominas be allowed to go on their way unmolested. Nevertheless, he feared that they would be able to harm them, so he offered his litter to the ladies to calm them down. The Bacchantes surrounded the sedan chair with drunken clamor as Tacitus asked with a wine-laden tongue where the slaves were to carry it. “To the Palatine, Galliena is my name!” This had a sobering effect on the good senator. “Back, Bacchantes! Make way for Galliena, the princess!” This cry brought the drunken men to their senses. They staggered aside, and the sedan chair set off for the imperial palaces. The gate opened, and Tacitus left the princess there after a respectful greeting. But Bonitus was already waiting for the princess in the imperial palace. He handed

her the letter and escorted her to the carriage, which took Galliena to Ostia without delay. There, a ship was already waiting to take her on to Africa. Tacitus had no idea that this would be his last encounter with Galliena. The sun rose in glowing splendor over golden Rome, and the imperial palaces shone down from the Palatine Hill, unchanged.

Eighth Adventure

How a Germanic Princess Became a Roman Domina

After a few days, the two emperors had reached Sabaria*) with their impressive army. King Attal's army was already there, for as had been agreed, the surrender of the kingdom was to take place here. A mighty wagon fort had been erected, and blonde women's and children's heads peered out curiously from under the white wagon covers. The men lay on bearskins, drinking, gambling, and sleeping. It was a camp of peaceful emigrants who had set out with their wives and children, their household goods and farming implements to settle in the newly acquired land and cultivate its soil; they had come to live there permanently as farmers, not as nomads, to graze their livestock and then leave it a desert again. Nevertheless, the camp had a warlike appearance, although it was not considered necessary to post guards. In the middle of the large circle of carts stood King Attal's army tent. In front of it, Attal's royal staff stood in the grass, with the king's hat placed on top as a symbol of his newly established rule. Opposite the king's camp, the imperial army

*) Today Steinamanger in Hungary. Still called Sabaria in the Hungarian idiom.

set up camp, threw up ramparts, and posted guards, as had been Roman military custom for a thousand years. King Attal rode out with his two sons and a stately retinue to meet the two emperors in front of their camp and was received with dignity.

When the Roman camp had been inspected, Attal was taken to the table by imperial chamberlains. The meal was over. Only the two emperors and their royal guest remained on the couches. Rich golden fruit bowls stood on the table, and slaves served wine in golden cups. “And where is your child, my guest, whom you call Pipara?” Caesar Valerianus asked the king of the Marcomanni, rising slightly from his bed to bring a goblet full of sparkling caecubus more comfortably to his mouth. “O Emperor of Rome!” replied the Marcomanni, stretching himself comfortably on the purple cushions, “it is not the custom among us Germans to bring our wives and daughters into battle. Moreover, my queen and my child have much to do, for Pipara must not go to Rome to be your son's wife. Custom and tradition also demand that the groom fetch the bride from her father's house. This is also what Pipara expects.” “I advise you not to make her wait, she may become impatient, for Caesar Gallienus will neither fetch Pipara nor marry her, for he is Emperor of Rome.” The aged emperor had spoken these words calmly and thoughtfully. He drank very calmly from the golden cup, set it down again thoughtfully, and,

after careful selection, took a juicy apricot from the fruit bowl. He carefully broke it in two and sipped its sweet juice with a devotion as if he had said nothing more remarkable than that water flows in the Danube. But this was only a mask, for he was keenly observing the expressions and gestures of his son and his guest, whom he had misled with deceptive words for the very purpose of observing them.

Caesar Gallienus had turned pale. King Attal, however, blushed to the brow; the veins of anger swelled blue. This did not escape the aged emperor. Without interrupting his game with the fruit, he said with frightening calm: "Royal guest, be calm, listen and advise me." The first apricot was eaten; the second came next. It took a long time to find the right one. The emperor broke this one in two as well, sipped the juice from one half, and ate it with the relish of a gourmet, while he regarded the other half with those strangely tender glances that are peculiar to those who practice eating as an art. Suddenly he seemed to remember the speech he had apparently forgotten completely. He took a careful sip and said: "Yes, listen and advise me, King of the Marcomanni. The word of my son Gallienus is as sacred to me as my own imperial word; it must not be broken, therefore it must be fulfilled. But the emperor of Rome cannot marry a barbarian woman; that is the law and it must be fulfilled. Two

commandments stand in opposition to each other. Therefore, show me, my host, that you are wise! King Attal, what is your advice?" The game with the fruits began anew. Attal's anger had not abated. "If the law of which you speak, Emperor of Rome, is valid, then your son and co-emperor should have left my daughter unkissed, for we also have a law that cuts out the tongue of those who break their word and seduce girls, and drives a wooden stake through their hearts from behind. This law is also valid, Emperor of Rome! Now advise me how to begin not to apply this law."

Attal mastered his anger with difficulty, while Valerianus continued his game and replied with a long speech, as if he were dealing with the most insignificant matter: "You see, King of the Marcomanni, the case is difficult and must be considered carefully. You want to do as the great Alexander did, who cut King Gordias' knot with his sword. But that is not always the act of a wise man who values hospitality. I will try to untie the knot without a sword, because I avoid wounds where I can, and because we should remain friends. So drink, my king and friend, let your brow be smoothed, and rejoice in our friendship!" Attal raised his cup and touched the emperor's, but his dark expression showed that neither resentment nor mistrust had given way. Valerianus, however, regarded a slice of pineapple with such covetous

glances as if he had never eaten one before. While turning it around in his hands, he called one of the table slaves and ordered Palphurnius Sura to bring writing implements so that he could write a letter immediately. An eerie silence reigned at the imperial table. Only Valerianus seemed not to notice this, for he was deeply absorbed in studying the pineapple. Sura entered and wrote what the emperor dictated: “Licinius Valerianus semper Augustus to Pipara, daughter of the king of the Marcomanni and Quadi. First, my fatherly greetings. My son Gallienus, who is Emperor of Rome, has told me much about your good qualities, which are said to be so immeasurable that he has found them worthy of being called his own, in that he wishes to raise you, Pipara, to be his wife. But this is not possible.” Palphurnius, who had written thus far without looking up, could not resist casting a meaningful glance at Caesar Gallienus, and when he perceived his consternation and the angry expression on the face of the Quadi chief, his triumph was complete. Gallienus noticed this expression and promised himself that he would punish Sura for it.

Caesar Valerianus seemed not to notice any of this and paid the greatest attention to the fruit bowl in front of him. After a deliberately long pause, he continued his dictation: “For this reason, we, namely your beloved Gallienus, your father Attal, and I, your advocate, held a council favorable to you and

found that the barbarian Pipara could never become Empress of Rome.” Sura smiled again. Valerianus continued dictating: “And so I, your protector, have decided to elevate you to Roman citizenship, and your name shall henceforth be Cornelia Salonina. As a gift of your new name, I bestow upon you my ancestral estate of Salona*) and accept you into my family through adoption. The Roman patrician Domina Cornelia Salonina is now herself a worthy wife for an emperor of Rome. The bearer of this letter to you, my daughter Cornelia, will bring you a million sesterces in minted Gallienus gold coins, along with my other paternal gifts. He will escort you to your estate in Salona, from where your imperial bridegroom will fetch you to Rome.” The dictation was over, but the emperor was still preoccupied with the fruit, as if it were the most important matter of state. Gallienus sank to his father's breast with a heart full of gratitude, but his father gently pushed him away. He should not crush the incomparable slices of melon he was about to put in his mouth, his father had said, but King Attal jumped up and swore eternal loyalty to the emperor with Gallienus' sword drawn. Then he pulled a gold ring from his finger and cut it in two with his sword. He kept one half and gave the other to the emperor, saying: “Emperor of Rome! You must take this half of the ring as a token of what I am now telling you.

*) Today Spalato in Dalmatia.

How and when and where you need me, send me this half ring, and I will come, unless I am dead; but if I am already in Valhalla, then Gebhold, my firstborn, will redeem this pledge in my place!" With the same equanimity, the emperor accepted this "sign*) of his promise of loyalty" and said only: "Learn from my behavior how anger is the worst advisor of mankind, especially of kings."

It was on the following day that the two emperors visited King Attal's camp. Accompanied by lictors and praetorians, with impressive imperial pomp, the two emperors entered the German camp. King Attal received his guests at the entrance to the wagon fort, surrounded by his warriors, unmounted but in Germanic clothing and armor. He carried two swords; his broad German battle sword on his left, but the Gallic sword on his right, according to Roman custom, where a dagger would normally hang. After the two emperors had descended from the state carriage, the king led them, followed by his two sons, to the king's tent. There stood the sign of possession of the land, still unknown to the Romans. The king now led his imperial guests to it. "Emperor of Rome!" said the king, "There you see how I have taken possession of the land granted to me. Since you have given it to me peacefully, here

*) and if he does not find it at home, he shall turn over a stone in front of his house as a sign (symbol) that he has been there...

stands my official staff*); but if it had fallen to me as the spoils of victory, then instead of my office, Etab's staff would stand here, and he would wear my hat, helmet, and shield. Although I am a commander in battle and a brave warrior, I consider it wiser to spare the blood of the people and settle disputes through peaceful treaties. I therefore prefer this peaceful sign to the more glorious sign of battle, because I do not lose any of my good swordsmen and the land is not left devastated. Therefore, if it pleases you, exalted emperors, confirm my peaceful possession here, and in the same place I and my sons will renew our oath of allegiance to you.”

The emperors agreed, and so the king beckoned his twelve most distinguished warriors, and besides them Totilo the Younger. He carried a pole sixteen feet long and a three-legged stool. The two Caesars looked on in amazement at this strange deed. With the pole, a square was measured out, sixteen feet long and just as wide, whereupon Totilo with a shovel from outside, so that only the square remained covered with turf, but the grass was removed several steps around it. This was the task of the remaining soldiers. Soon the square of turf rose about a foot above the level ground around it. When this was done, each of the sixteen, the king first, Totilo the boy last, took a handful of ashes, a piece

*) Scepter.

of charcoal, and a bone from the last sacrificial fire and threw them into a pit dug in the middle of the square of turf. Then Attal took the horse's head from the sacrificial pyre and laid it on the pile of ashes and coals that had been placed in the pit, taking care that the horse's head faced Eburodunum so that the homeland would not be forgotten. After this, Totilo filled the pit again and carefully covered it with pieces of turf. All this was done in silence, or as the German says, “unbeschrien” (unspoken). Now first the king, then each of his sons carried a mighty stone and placed them firmly and securely in the loosened ground so that they formed the corners of a triangle. On these “three stones” they now raised the three-legged chair. Totilo then placed the measuring rod back on one edge and each of the sixteen placed his left foot on it to prove that the measurements were correct; they did the same with the other three sides of the square.

Now Attal stepped forward with the other fifteen before the two emperors and invited them to take their places on the throne. They did so. Jeht, the boy, called out to the people present that the king's throne should be prepared, which was greeted with a thunderous “Hail!” Attal and his two sons drew their swords and bent their knees. “We therefore swear allegiance to you, both emperors, and ask you to confirm once again the gift of the land to us, as a sign for future generations.” “The land is yours and

your sons', under the sovereignty of Rome. Therefore, we accept your son Willahar as our son in arms, and from now on he shall be called Willaharius Valerianus Gallienus, and he shall rule this kingdom as your viceroy." While these imperial words were being spoken, the king and his two sons lowered their swords to the ground, each to one of the three stones, up to the pommels, as if they wanted to fix the imperial words to the ground for all eternity. The twelve warriors did exactly the same with their swords; they stuck them into the corners and edges of the square so that there was one sword in each corner and two in each edge. Only the hilts protruded above the grass. The one of the sixteen swords that was not yet stuck in the ground, and which Totilo, the boy, was carrying, he handed over to the king. The king gave it to the emperor with the request that he give it to his weapon bearer Willaharius as an eternal sign of this memorable event. It was now handed over to him, whereupon the emperors left the throne. Willaharius now sat down on it with his sword drawn, and Totilo, the boy, cried three times: "I demand the dead and the living to appear before this free king's throne for judgment." With that, the transfer of the country was complete. Totilo, the boy who had now become the vassal of the free king's throne, took the three-legged chair, the measuring rod, and the sword into

his custody. The people called the place "Fifties" and still call it "Stone-by-the-Meadow" to this day.

Where there is a bride in the house, restless days begin, and the fathers of the house do well to keep as far away from the women as possible, especially the bride's mother. Father Attal had thought much the same and had therefore hastened to lead his emigrants south of the Danube. He only felt at ease once he had stuck his staff in the grass outside Sabaria, placed his fine broad hat over it, and taken a cool and copious drink in memory of his former life. "Let the others at home see how they can do right by mistress Hildebirga while I am here doing my daily work of settling the land. Others deserve a chance too!" That was what the king had thought at the time, and he had nodded kindly to that region of the sky behind whose veil Eburodunum lay hidden, but then he had spoken to the servant: "Fill my horn so that a mosquito thirstily perched on the rim need not stoop to drink. A drop is necessary when one is so far from one's beloved wife!" And again the king nodded to that region of the sky, raised the horn reverently as if to drink to his distant wife, then drank it thoughtfully and called out: "One more!" The message from Emperor Valerian to Pipara had considerably shortened King Attal's absence from court, as it would have been impolite not to join this mission. He said that he was very much looking forward to seeing his home again, but

he thought otherwise, as is sometimes the case. In the women's quarters at Eburodunum, however, things were lively enough. Lady Hildebirga had known how to make the most of her lord and husband's departure. She had made it clear to him at the outset that the route via Carnuntum*) was much more pleasant than the one via Bregetium**) or even the one via Acircum***), which Attal had also recognized.

Several days later, mistress Hildebirga happened to remember hearing that the glories of the whole world were being offered for sale in the forum of Carnuntum. This was very convenient, as the purchases for Pipara's wedding could be combined very well with the departure of her dear husband. Attal had also understood this and sent several sumpters****) from the Forum Carnuntorum to Eburodunum with heavily laden packs. In the middle of the women's hall, several of the drinking tables from the great royal hall had been pushed together, on which mistress Hildebirga was now busy with scissors and sewing. There lay the purple fabric for royal garments, longed for a lifetime; it

*) Petronell and Deutsch-Altenburg.

**) D-Szöny.

***) Alt-Ofen.

****) Pack horses, pack mules.

was a heavy silk brocade with foreign animals woven into ornate tendrils. There lay a precious gold brocade and next to it gold braid that shimmered. There were also other colored, lighter silk and cloth fabrics; there was plenty to do. Master Attal had also said that mistress Hildebirga should not forget that he also needed a king's cloak and a state robe, the cloak to be cut from the purple fabric and the state robe from the gold fabric. It should not be too tight, so he had taken enough fabric so that there would be enough left over for his wife and child. Now mistress Hildebirga had what she wanted, the fabrics were there, more beautiful, more abundant, more lustrous than she had dreamed, but now the state garments had to be cut from them, and that was harder than cracking nuts. For several days, mistress Hildebirga walked around the women's quarters pensively, like a hen about to lay eggs. Then she grumbled about her thoughtless husband, who could have sent her some knowledgeable slave girl from Carnuntum. Finally, there was nothing left to do but ask Pipara for advice on what to do. This was a difficult decision for Lady Hildebirga, for women who are convinced that they are wise do not like to ask questions; everyone understands this without complaint. Finally, the difficult step was taken, but without success; this annoyed the queen greatly. When Pipara suggested asking Walburgis, the queen was angry: "Foolish child! What does the whole

kingdom need to know that its queen does not know what to do with these magnificent fabrics?" So it remained for a while. Then the canvas was taken out to cut and sew other things, and everything went like clockwork, for mistress Hildebirga was very skilled and did not need to crack nuts first, but could set others to crack them for her.

One fine morning, Pipara found her mother cheerful and happy, as she had not seen her for a long time; this made her happier than usual. But she could not coax the secret of her happiness out of mistress Hildebirga. The latter called the house steward and held a secret council with him. He smiled slyly and called across the courtyard: "Luzi, Luzi, you are to come to the queen!" This was very unpleasant for Luzi, but he hurried as if he were in a race for ten pounds of gold. When Luzi was alone with his strict mistress, he felt a little uneasy, for the high-born woman often had strange wishes; today was one of those days. "Luzi," began the queen, "the steward just reminded me that you held high office in the Roman Empire, that you were even the cousin of the emperor's sister. In any case, you are a clever man. Now tell me, how do the noble women of Rome, the empresses and princesses, make their garments? If you can tell me, you will receive twenty-five pieces of gold, but if you cannot tell me, the housekeeper will give you twenty-five lashes. Now speak and show that you are a wise man!" The

queen remained silent. Luzi, however, was very frightened and instinctively grabbed the part of his body that was to be affected by this task, without there being any causal connection between this and the queen's wish. With a sharp, "Well, are you going to do it?" the queen roused the frightened Luzi from his thoughtful mood. "My good queen," began the man meekly, "you ask a great deal of me. Consider the long years I have spent away from Rome, consider the further years of war that have brought me only iron and blood kept me from returning, consider, wisest of women, the long years I have spent here as a prisoner, and your wisdom will tell you that my memory will be of little use to you." "I have considered that, which is why I have set a price of twenty-five full gold pieces. Think about it, or the steward will help you think; the bench is already there, along with a fresh, juicy hazel stick. So, think about it, good Luzi. Every blow makes you one gold coin poorer." Luzi was afraid and anxious, and yet the choice was so easy: twenty-five gold pieces! How they shone! "How does the queen know if I am telling the truth? But I know that the housekeeper will not be mocked; he has a hand like lead..." "Shall I call your friend Dudar, Luzi?" the queen asked meaningfully. Luzi had gathered his courage. He had once heard that one must lie well in order for flax to grow long, and he thought he would do a meritorious deed by telling the queen something

about the garments of the Roman princesses and empresses.

So Luzi began to tell how the women's dresses shone as if they were made of spun gold, and how they glowed even at night, so that they could be seen from afar in the dark, even without a lantern; then they wore amber and other precious stones of all colors as large as pebbles around their necks and arms, and also in their hair, and finally shoes made of pure gold. That was something, but it was not quite enough for the good queen; she wanted to know more. What? She hardly knew herself, for very vague ideas were floating in her mind. But she began to believe in Luzi's knowledge; he had spoken of golden fabrics, and she had some of those. She became friendlier. The clever boy noticed this and now knew how to get the twenty-five gold foxes; they now seemed certain to him. He cast a superior glance at the eerie bench and the even more eerie, juicy hazel stick. He became bolder and lied through his teeth as if he were planting flax. The queen was delighted, for she always saw herself in these descriptions of splendor and glory, and yet she still did not know how all these magnificent garments were to be cut and sewn from the splendid fabrics she possessed in order to achieve such splendid garments. But Luzi wanted to stun her so that she would not ask a question that could tear his web of lies apart in one fell swoop. Who knows how long

Luzi's lectures on the dress code of Roman ladies would have continued if an incident had not occurred that Luzi had not taken into account and which also threw his bold plan into disarray. He was just in the middle of describing a magnificent dress belonging to his cousin, the celebrated Domina Galliena, which she had worn when she was a guest of the famous Zenobia, the wife of the praetor Odenatus in Tadmor, when she arrived beaming with joy, dragging Gallienus with her.

The greeting was a warm one; Luzi wanted to take this opportunity to modestly withdraw. But today was the queen's day of kindness; Luzi's information was invaluable, so he should be rewarded. Therefore, Lady Hildebirga graciously pointed to Luzi and said in a tone of utmost kindness to Gallienus: "My imperial son! I too wish to give you pleasure. You know the vicissitudes of fortune to which the brave are subject. Here before you stands the cousin of your illustrious father, the noble Proconsul Lucius Sempronius. He was taken prisoner in one of the last wars. I grant him his freedom; he may return home with you!" Luzi did not know what was happening to him; his eyes were spinning. But Gallienus fared no better; his eyes were also spinning. At first he was speechless with astonishment, but then he became angry at the liar's insolence. He raged: "That is a lying mouth, the like of which has never ended on the cross! Speak,

scoundrel, who are you? Tell me willingly, or the scorpions shall whip the answer out of your back!” The sun does not rise twice in one day. Luzi knew that. He cast a painful, renouncing glance at the gold coins sparkling on the table, and a wistful glance at the hazel stick; for it had been gentle with the scorpions of the Romans. Only the truth could secure him a milder punishment, he knew that. So he told them in a tearful tone that he had been a gladiator, had been enlisted in some cohort, had been taken prisoner, and after many vicissitudes had come to this royal court as a serf, where he had thought it best to lie about his high rank in order to mitigate his service. He had not wanted to harm anyone and had otherwise served faithfully and honestly.

Gallienus' anger had evaporated, and Pipara laughed, but the queen was still resentful, though she too was inclined to be lenient, mindful of Luzi's important information. So she said: “The queen's word is final. You are free, and the twenty-five gold pieces are yours. But you shall not escape punishment. Come with me to the courtyard.” Luzi followed the queen contritely, who had taken the twenty-five pieces of gold. He still knew little about whether he would be able to rejoice in this mercy, for such mercy often tasted bitterly of despair. They had entered the courtyard. Then Lady Hildebirga came with a clay basin and ordered Luzi to fill it to

the brim with water. Trembling, he obeyed. Soon curious onlookers gathered to see what was going on; at first shyly, but then boldly and in droves, when they realized that Lady Hildebirgen was pleased to have many spectators. Luzi stood trembling with the basin full of water before his stern mistress, awaiting further orders. "Place it in the middle of the courtyard and follow me." He put down the basin and followed the queen into the kitchen. There she grabbed a huge wooden spoon, gave Luzi a handful of flour, and ordered him to pour it into the water and stir it with the spoon to make a porridge, but to be careful not to spill any. Luzi obeyed this command punctually. He stirred the flour porridge with all his might, but trembling and fearful, for everything was still unclear to him. However, his actions were a source of amusement for the court servants, and Luzi heard more mockery and laughter than he would have liked, for servants are a malicious lot. Lady Hildebirga let him stir until sweat stood on his forehead, then she ordered him to stop. Now she went to the porridge herself, threw the twenty-five gold pieces into it, stirred it vigorously, and said: "Freedom is yours, take this last blow, for the free man is immune to the stick!" After these words, she gave Luzi a slap on the cheek as a sign of his future freedom. This was painful, for it was to be the last! But what terrible things were yet to come? He trembled all over. "There are twenty-

five gold pieces in this basin. I will not decide whether you deserve them or not; that is for the hands of fate to do. Take them out of this flour porridge with your mouth. As many as you fish out before sunset are yours. Whatever is left after sunset is yours; but only on condition that anyone who wants to may fish, but only with their mouth." It was a mild punishment, but nevertheless a very humiliating one, intended to mock him.

The queen had Gallienus and Pipara brought before her, the court servants and other curious onlookers formed a circle, and the game began. Luzi knelt before the basin, braced himself with both arms on the floor, and, after taking a deep breath, plunged his head into the porridge. The vessel was deep and wide, so that he had to submerge his entire head in order to touch the bottom. All around was silent, for curiosity and a certain excitement still held back the laughter. But when Luzi lifted his head out of the basin to catch his breath, a storm broke out, such laughter as the royal court had not heard in a long time. Luzi raised his head, but it was no longer Luzi. The sticky mass had covered his mouth, nose, eyes, and ears with a layer that stretched in long threads to the basin and now prevented him from breathing. He hastily grabbed his mouth to get some air, but he was already coughing violently and jumped up. He soon recovered, but he couldn't see and groped around in the courtyard for a long time until he

found the basin again. Of course, the first catch had been unsuccessful, but the spectators had had their fun and Luzi didn't need to worry about being mocked. Silence fell again as Luzi dived under for the second time; this second dive also yielded no gold coin, but Luzi was a quick learner; he now knew how to start so that he would not suffer from breathlessness again. This went on several times until he finally lifted a gold coin triumphantly into the air, then a second and so on. Before evening came, he had counted all twenty-five gold coins in his pocket. After washing himself clean, he laughed at those who thought they could still catch fish after the sun had set. Now he knew how true the saying was: he who laughs last laughs best.

Gallienus had ridden ahead of the others to bring the good news to his Pipara as quickly as possible; two days later, the stately procession of envoys arrived, led by none other than King Attal himself, accompanied by eleven of his most powerful warriors. Meanwhile, a joyful banquet was held in the castle at Eburodunum to celebrate the royal daughter's elevation to the rank of imperial princess and bride of the emperor. Lady Hildebirga was also in high spirits, for Caesar Gallienus had given her several female slaves as gifts, whose duty it was to help Pipara fit the magnificent garments they had brought with them and teach them how to wear them. This was very convenient for Lady Hildebirga,

for she too wanted to wear one of these garments. While the queen unpacked the chests and bales with the slave girls of the future empress and sorted and examined their contents, Gallienus and Pipara sat together in a smaller room of the castle, chatting amiably, for what are jewelry, clothes, and gifts to a loving bride when the one around whom all her thoughts, feelings, and love revolve is not there, especially when the beloved can only rarely be present. Beautiful Pipara sat on Gallienus' lap and rested her head on his broad chest while he ran his fingers through her long golden hair. "Good Pipa!" the emperor began in a tender tone after a long pause. "Now it is getting serious; you are now one of the most distinguished dominas in Rome and will soon be the highest woman in the world, namely the Empress of Rome. To me, you are the most charming girl just as you are, but we have different customs than you Germans, and the Roman people, whom you will soon rule, have the right to demand that their empress be the supreme guardian of their customs. Isn't that right, sweet Pipa? You will do me the pleasure of quickly adopting Roman customs, so that you will be a proud noble Roman woman, not only in dress but also in character? Domina Cornelia Salonina! How beautiful that name sounds! And after our marriage, it will be: Domina Cornelia Salonina Augusta! But to me you will always remain my sweet, dear Pipa!" Pipa looked questioningly at

Gallienus with her large eyes; she and her mother had not thought of that yet. But she soon understood that different clothes also meant different behavior, just as Gallienus and his companions behaved differently from her father and his followers. She promised to be a diligent student.

Gallienus then decided that the time had come to present his bride with her ten slave girls and show her the splendors that had been laid out in the women's hall. There were precious garments to be seen, the richest embroidery of the Orient in gold and pearls, sparkling necklaces and bracelets, then fans and similar small items that had always been indispensable to the attire of distinguished women. But there were also other household items such as linen and the like. What was even more striking than all this dazzling splendor, however, was the immensity of such objects, which did not actually belong to the clothing itself, but merely served as accessories for adornment. The crown of these implements, which were completely unknown to the women of Eburodunum, were three enormous man-high mirrors, which stood on the floor and were connected by joints in such a way that they could be opened and closed like a book. The viewer therefore saw his reflection three times simultaneously in the finely silvered, brightly polished mirrors made of cast metal plates. It was something that had never been seen before, but the queen and her daughter

immediately recognized its inestimable value. Gallienus stood aside and reveled in the delight of his bride, who stood in front of the three mirrors and marveled at seeing herself three times at once. The game in front of the mirror lasted quite a while. Suddenly, the slave girls entered. With a curtsy and their arms crossed over their breasts and their heads bowed, they greeted their new mistress. Only a moment before, Pipara had behaved like a child in front of the mirrors, but now she approached the girls with dignity, standing proudly upright, her movements calm and measured, without being stiff. Above her proud self-confidence, which she displayed openly, there was an unfading charm, that enchanting charm which is the preserve of privileged people and which cannot be learned or taught. With a few friendly words, she welcomed her servants and promised to be a kind mistress if they never forgot their duties. With that, she motioned for them to rise and accepted the kiss on the hand from each of them, as if she had been accustomed to doing so since childhood.

If Gallienus had previously been amazed at the unfeigned joy of the child of nature when she saw herself in the mirror, he now felt unexpected joy himself. But now it was mixed with astonishment when he saw how dignified Pipara received the slave girls. Under some pretext, the emperor removed her from the room and hurried to Pipara, expressing his

joyful astonishment with embraces and caresses: "My dear, sweet Pipa! You could not have offered me more happiness! Only now do I guess what sweet secret this little red mouth, like a cherry-red seal, conceals from me. I must open it to read the pearl writing that the guides of fate have hidden behind it!" And he embraced the girl so passionately that she let him see her pearly teeth, which had been hidden behind the cherry-red seal, as she laughed happily. "Is it such a great art to behave elegantly?" laughed Pipara, proud of her fiancé's praise. "I know who you are, and I know that I will be like you, for as your wife, I am you yourself. That was clear to me. I observed how you behaved, and I did the same; that is the whole magic! What is still missing will not be much more difficult to learn and get used to." After many teasing words of love, Gallienus withdrew, and the slave girls began to transform the German woman Pipara into the domina Cornelia Salonina, even dressing her in the same manner. mistress Hildebirga sat there as a silent spectator, for the proud, dazzling splendor that now surrounded her daughter had a paralyzing effect on her.

Then the shapeless bandages fell from Pipara's legs, the disfiguring leather strips that made her feet appear so misshapen and clumsy. Bright red silk stockings embroidered with gold replaced the leather strips, and golden clasps replaced the bandages.

These stockings were very peculiar in their design, for like the thumb of a glove, the big toe had its own separate compartment to make room for the sandal strap. Now it was the turn of the sandals. These were magnificent pieces of craftsmanship. Made of dark red leather, they were so richly decorated with gold plates that they sparkled, and the soft soles! How the dark straps stood out against the bright red stockings! Lady Hildebirga was swimming in pride and delight. Now came the rest of the undergarments. The stola was placed over the shirt; it was a kind of tunic, wide, made of the finest white wool and reaching down to the floor. Over this came the second stole of white silk, with a wide border at the bottom heavily embroidered with gold and pearls. Now the hands of the slaves had their work cut out for them, for the folds had to be arranged artfully before the bands were wrapped around the body like a sash. Of course, both stoles were cut very narrowly above the hips, while they became excessively wide towards the bottom; above the hips, the slender figure while the visible part of the stole had to fall richly.* For this purpose, lead grains were sewn into the hem of the lower stole, while the

*) Since Roman women did not yet know "corsets de Paris," i.e., bodices, they wrapped themselves around the waist up to below the breasts, creating a kind of surrogate for the bodice. We will not reveal any other secrets of their attire; there are many very piquant ones!

upper stole had gold drops hanging from the embroidery to achieve the same effect. It took a long time before the chief slave girl was satisfied with the folds.

Pipara breathed a sigh of relief, thinking that her dress was finished, but that was not the case. With a smile, she resigned herself to being adorned further. Now it was time for the actual tunic. It was shorter than the two stoles, reaching only halfway down the calf so as not to cover the embroidery on the stoles. While the two stoles did not cover the arms, neck, or bust, but were held in place at the shoulders by narrow bands, the tunic was closed more tightly at the top. At the armpits, the tunic was fastened with rich, jewel-encrusted clasps called fibulae. The sleeves were unusual. On the outside of the arm, from the bottom to the armpit, they were studded at regular intervals with small, sparkling fibulae, between which the fine white skin color of Pipara shone through. A precious belt was now placed around the young domina's tunic, which now had to cover the upper body again in an artful fold, while rich folds had to flow down from the belt. This tunic was made of dark green silk brocade with woven gold ornaments. A rich border formed the bottom edge, from which heavy gold drops dangled like fringes to force the heavy fabric into pleasing folds. The outfit was completed by a dark garnet-red palla. This was a large, square piece of cloth worn in

rich folds, similar to a men's toga. A clasp of rare value held this garment fast at the young domina's left shoulder. Her hair was left unchanged, only a rich diadem gracefully encircled the open waves of gold flowing down. The imperial jewelry completed the attire.

But Pipara, tormented by her splendor, was not yet allowed to rest, for Fabula, the first of the slave girls, now had to instruct her mistress on how to behave in this clothing when standing, walking, sitting, and lying down, namely how to wear the palla and throw it into folds so that this awkward garment would appear only halfway graceful. This was the Roman national costume, which the future empress was to restore to prominence in the face of the increasingly popular Greek and Oriental women's costumes. However, this was not enough; as is well known, government measures in matters of fashion rarely bear fruit. Pipara now practiced in front of the mirrors how to drape her palla, tried to walk, sit, and lie down. This was not as easy as it looked, because there were many tricks to learn, but soon she was doing quite well. It was also difficult for the German woman to wean herself off her long strides, because the heavy folds of the stoles and tunics swayed unattractively with each long step, detracting from her dignity. "Poor child!" said mistress Hildebirga. "How difficult it will be for you with such heavy garments in the kitchen and

housekeeping! Always walking slowly, always having to worry about arranging the folds nicely and then keeping an eye on the goose on the spit to make sure it doesn't burn..." "Forgive me, exalted queen!" said Fabula modestly but firmly, assuming the dignity of a master of ceremonies. "Forgive me, noble lady; at the imperial court in Rome, customs are different. The noble Augusta, the divine wife of Augustus, is never allowed to enter the kitchen or lift her hands to work. Other duties await her. Her primary concern is to show, in her clothing and her demeanor, that she is so close to the gods; work, whether in the kitchen, in the house, or even the pleasant task of spinning, is forbidden to her." "So just be beautiful!" That was what the queen had thought, but she did not say it, for she knew well that there was no contradiction. But it did not occur to her, the excellent housekeeper, how a household could be run where the housewife was not allowed to serve her dear husband the goose she had roasted herself. She shook her head at this incomprehensible idea and remained silent.

But it was not only the art of folding paper that the young domina had to learn in order to gain recognition as such at the imperial court. An important skill for a consummate lady was also the graceful handling of a fan. Pipara's natural grace was her best teacher in this as well, and she soon became friends with the fan. The most difficult thing,

however, was the language, for as Empress of Rome, she also had to learn to understand and speak it. Fabula was her teacher in this as well. Thus adorned and equipped with the first rules of Roman etiquette, she stepped into the chamber where Gallienus was waiting for her. He had jumped up and stood there enraptured. With measured, graceful steps, Pipara approached the emperor, bowed in the middle of the path, then stepped up to him, bent her right knee before him, kissed his hand, and spoke to him in his mother tongue: "Good fortune and salvation to you, Gallienus Caesar semper Augustus, from Pipara, your fiancée, through the grace of your exalted father Licinius Valerianus semper Augustus, Domina Cornelia Salonina! Happiness and salvation to you!" She did not understand these words at first, for Fabula had translated what she wanted to say into Roman and taught her the words by heart, they nevertheless exerted a powerful spell on Gallienus; for they were the first Latin words he had heard from the mouth of his bride.

With overwhelming passion, he lifted the girl up and drew her to his breast in a stormy embrace. "Pipara, dear Pipa, how did you bring about this miracle of metamorphosis? Now I believe every word of what Ovid tells in his fifteen books of Metamorphoses!" And again he embraced the overjoyed girl, but there was no answer. He therefore

repeated what he had said, but Pipara laughed mischievously and her eyes sparkled like the sunniest sky over sunny Italy: "If you want an answer, my dear, let Fabula come; she will translate your words for me. But don't worry, I will soon learn to understand and speak them." Only now did Gallienus understand. But he was still delighted that Pipara had learned the words to greet him as a Roman in her new guise. He could not admire her beautiful figure enough and was full of praise for how quickly Pipa had become accustomed to her new clothes. "But now you must give me pleasure too, you must grant me a request," Pipara flattered him, looking up at him with such cheerful, pleading eyes that he begged her to tell him her wish so that he would not lose any time in fulfilling it. Then she nestled her slender form against his powerful body, laid her head on his chest, and said: "I will follow you to distant lands, my only one. I will leave everything behind for you, even my name. There is only one thing I will take with me, and this one thing I will first commend to your favor." "And what is this one thing, my love?" asked the emperor, her golden curls playing through his fingers. "It is my playmate, my dear Walburgis. She is a free and noble-born woman and my friend. She should not be despised in Rome, never be considered a slave or servant, for she follows me of her own free will. It was she who dispelled the clouds from my mind

when anxious worries surrounded me; she shall be the one who will steel me against fate when the fight against enemies in my new homeland proves too difficult for me; she shall be the one in whose faithful heart I can then cry out my pain, for to you, my beloved, my eyes shall always smile cheerfully and happily."

This request was not to Gallienus' liking, but he did not let it show, instead replying: "Your request is granted. Walburgis shall be elevated to Roman citizenship along with you, and you shall have the power to do this whenever and wherever you wish, and to marry her off as you see fit. But I also have a request." "Speak, speak, beloved, before I thank you for your favor." "You spoke presciently of enemies, of tears! What bride thinks of such things?! And if she does, what bride announces in advance that she will not allow the man she loves, who is to be her husband, to share in what weighs heavily on her heart? What bride takes away from her bridegroom the sweet pleasure of one day being able to comfort and soothe her?" "I did not mean to offend you, my dear!" cried Pipara, moved, and looked up at Gallienus. But the laughing blue of her eyes had given way to a veil of tears. "I did not mean to offend you, my dear! But you will often not understand me, for we German women are of a different kind than Roman women must be, because you also have different customs. I can accept these

customs outwardly, I can become a Roman woman, but inside I remain unchanged!" She fell silent; once again she raised her veiled eyes to him in silent supplication. The look had touched his heart deeply; he was unclear what her words meant. Then he remembered what Tacitus had once written about the nature of German women. How the German attributed a certain sanctity, even prophetic gifts, to women; how he respected women's advice and listened to their opinions. Yes, the Germanic people revered Albrunen and Veleden, as well as other women, and not out of flattery or idolatry. He now believed he understood Tacitus' words and thought he understood Pipara.

The great banquet that King Attal had ordered his nobles to prepare in order to celebrate the betrothal of his daughter was to take place in a few days. It weighed heavily on the queen's mind that she would be inferior to her daughter in outward appearance. "You have dreamed something very impossible, woman," the king had said when Lady Hildebirga had told him of her desire for stoles, tunics, and palliums, along with mirrors, fans, and accessories. But Lady Hildebirga was not one of those who sulked or cried, for she was a wise woman, and only foolish women did such things. "You are king and ruler of men, Attal!" she had said, and left him in a friendly mood. The next day, the queen summoned master Attal to her chambers, looking very

mysterious. He was sitting outside in the courtyard, trimming arrows for the hunt, so he was not particularly pleased to be called away from this enjoyable task. “You shall admire your royal robe, which our Pipa had sewn for you by her most distinguished maids. You will make a fine figure in it, like the King of Persia! King Ostrogoth would be green with envy if he saw it!” King Attal smiled like someone who was secretly delighted but had his reasons for not letting it show. Lady Hildebirga helped him put on his new clothes. He shook his head when he saw the bright red leggings, but he put them on anyway. Then he tied the red leather soles to his feet with red leather straps, remarking that he had nothing against them, but that no one would have put Roman sandals on his feet. Now Lady Hildebirga solemnly unveiled the gold brocade tunic, which was long and wide enough to be worn over the coat of mail. Next came the belt and purple cloak, as well as the gold-trimmed purple hat. Finally, when the king had put on the hat, Lady Hildebirga placed a golden crown with points on the top of it. The goldsmiths had forged it outside Blansegge in the Moon Forest, and Pipara had donated the precious metal from her store of gold.

All this pleased the king, and he was very happy when he stepped in front of Pipara’s mirror and could admire himself three times at once. He had never seen himself so beautiful. “Now wait a

moment, dearest, I must show you something!" cried the queen, and she hurried away. The king did not mind waiting, for he too enjoyed admiring himself undisturbed in his own splendor, which he had never seen before. In the women's hall, Pipara's maids had already been waiting for mistress Hildebirga to dress her as quickly as possible in their new splendid garments. The queen also had bright red silk stockings embroidered with gold, with dark red soles and bands. Instead of the stole, she kept her traditional German petticoat, but used it in various ways to imitate stoles and tunics. She wore several of these, made of linen and longer than usual, reaching halfway down her calves. Over these linen petticoats she wore one made of white wool and over that a white silk one, also richly embroidered with gold and pearls. Over this silk skirt came the actual dress, which was fastened with a belt. This dress was of the usual length, reaching to the knee, so as not to cover the silk embroidery of the skirt. It was made of gold brocade. Instead of the palla, the form of the local cloak was retained; this was, of course, a purple cloak with gold braiding. Hildebirga had also used the bindings, which no reasonable person would blame her for. The outfit was completed by a gold bonnet with a small golden crown on the top, from which a delicate veil flowed down, and a rich golden brooch, which held the cloak together at the front. Thus the queen appeared

before her lord and husband. He was quite astonished when he saw his dear wife; was that not the local costume, only more richly decorated, as he had allowed? But Lady Hildebirga had read this answer in his expression, so she took her dear lord by the hand and led him to the mirror. The king was unable to suppress an ambiguous smile, and he shook his crowned head thoughtfully, but said nothing. Yes, Lady Hildebirga was a clever woman! She had known exactly why she had not cried, why she had not sulked when the king told her that she had dreamed something very impossible.

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