

Heidi

At last, as one struck, John woke up, and came back to the consciousness of why he was sitting in a chair instead of lying in his bed. He now got up with a great show of courage and said, "Come, Sebastian, we must go outside and see what is going on; you need not be afraid, just follow me."

Whereupon, he opened the door wide and stepped into the hall. Just as he did so, a sudden gust of air blew through the open front door and put out the light which John held in his hand. He started back, almost overturning Sebastian, whom he clutched and pulled back into the room, and then shutting the door quickly he turned the key as far as he could make it go.

Then he pulled out his matches and lighted his candle again. Sebastian, in the suddenness of the affair, did not know exactly what had happened, for he had not seen the open door or felt the breeze behind John's broad figure. But now, as he saw the latter in the light, he gave a cry of alarm, for John was trembling all over and as white as a ghost.

"What's the matter? What did you see, outside?" asked Sebastian sympathetically.

"The door partly open," gasped John, "and a white figure standing at the top of the steps - there it stood, and then all in a minute it disappeared." Sebastian felt his blood run cold. The two sat down close to one another and did not dare move again till the morning broke and the streets began to be alive again.

Then they left the room together, shut the front door, and went upstairs to tell Fraulein Rottenmeier of their experience. She was quite ready to receive them, for she had not been able to sleep at all in the anxiety of waiting to hear their report. They had no sooner given her details of the night's experience than she sat down and wrote straight off to Herr Sesemann, who had never received such a letter before in his life.

