

Whilst the young man was telling his history, he was attentively watched by one of the company. This man seemed to drink in every word that was being uttered. No sooner had the speaker ended, but he suddenly cried out in a loud voice: "Yes, certainly, you are Schroeder; I know the history you have been relating. I was one of the number who searched so anxiously for you. And now I also notice that you resemble your father very much." He thereupon rose, and gave his newly found acquaintance a hearty handshake.

Of course the whole camp took a great interest in this matter, and the strange history that had been related became the general topic of conversation.

Naturally the young man wished to know every particular about his parents, and this was cheerfully supplied by his deeply interested friend. Amongst other things he informed him that his father is now living in an adjoining district.

By the first post the following lines were sent to the parents: "Your child, lost to you for so many years, has been found!" Then followed a full explanation.

Needless to say, the overjoyed parents could scarcely find words to express their emotions. A letter from the father, overflowing with rejoicings, came to hand, containing the request that a fortnight's leave be obtained from the Commander of the Forces, and that his friend should accompany the son home.

The required leave of absence was at once, and

readily obtained, and arrangements were made that the young man and his friend should meet the father of the former on a certain day in the town of the district where he had taken up his residence.

Great was the joy in that household on the day that the long-lost child was expected. However anxious the mother was to see her son, she resolved to remain at home, and prepare a feast in honour of the great and interesting event. A good number of the neighbours were invited to partake of the repast.

On the appointed day the expectant father met his son, whom he had given up as dead. He fell on his neck, kissed him, and wept for joy.

"My Karel, my Karel," the delighted parent cried out, "do I see you again in this world?"

So that there should be no mistake, he minutely examined one of the young man's ears, as there must be a mark that could not be defaced. And surely, there it was! The striking likeness to the father in the son, moreover was a still better proof of identity.

After the first mutual emotions had subsided, the three friends sat down to a light meal.

The young man received warning from his parent not to partake too heartily, "for," he said: "mother is keeping a splendid spread ready for you, and she would feel disappointed if you could not do ample justice to it."

Half an hour later Karel took his father into his bedroom, and showed him his valuable Martini-Henri rifle, a weapon much prized. How it came

about, remains a mystery to this day ; but, suddenly the charge exploded, lodging the bullet in the forehead of the unfortunate young man, who fell dead at the feet of his agonised parent. The feelings of the sorrowful man on his homeward journey, what it cost him to convey the dismal tidings to his wife, and how a feast of joy was turned into a funeral repast, words fail to describe.

But the parents afterwards said, that however hard it had been to meet this new trial, it was not as heavy as the first, when the child was lost. Now they had the satisfaction at least of knowing that their son is dead, and that he had been decently buried.

* * *

Dear reader, how deeply mysterious are the ways of God! Why did our Heavenly Father allow it that this long-lost son should die just after meeting his father, and even before his mother could have the joy of embracing him? Who can answer questions such as these?

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