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## THE WOMEN OF WEINSBERG.

(From the German.)

The army of King Conrad, the Hohenstaufen, lay  
Before the gates of Weinsberg for many a weary  
day :

The citizens were conquer'd, yet their arms they laid  
not down,

But still defended to the last their noble native town.

But hunger overcame them—no more they held their  
ground :

In vain they sought for mercy—no mercy then they  
found :

Quoth Conrad, " Many soldiers brave have here been  
slain by you ;

If once you open wide your gates my sword shall  
pierce you through !"

The women then petitioned : " If what thou say'st  
must be,

Oh ! let us leave the town unharmed, for innocent  
are we."

When Conrad heard their pleading cry his anger did  
depart,

And pity for their helplessness o'erflowed his manly  
heart.

" The women may depart," he said, " and each may  
take from here

As much as she can carry of the things she counts  
most dear ;

So they their choicest treasures unharmed shall bear  
away—

To this King Conrad signs his name and sets his seal  
this day.

When the early, early morning was dawning fair and  
bright,

The Hohenstaufen's army saw a strange and wondrous  
sight: —

The city-gates were opened wide, and forth from  
every street

Came crowds of starving women with slow and tott'r-  
ing feet.

But when they saw their burdens the soldiers all  
looked black,

For each one bore her husband right bravely on her  
back.

" Down with their choicest treasures !" was now the  
angry cry,

" These women have outwitted us, and they shall  
surely die !"

But when King Conrad saw them, a loud, loud laugh  
laughed he :

" Right well the Weinsberg women have now out-  
witted me !

I cannot break my promise, for well I understand  
That a Monarch's word is sacred in the German

Fatherland."

Thus Conrad kept his promise, as the ancient legends  
tell :

In the year eleven-hundred-and-forty it befell ;  
So in those distant ages men had learn'd the lesson

grand,  
That a Monarch's word is sacred in the German  
Fatherland.

—Verses Grave and Gay. By Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.