Title: Chronicles of the Schonberg-Cotta Family

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Release date: June 15, 2011 [EBook #36433]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Mary Meehan and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

CHRONICLES OF THE SCHÖNBERG-COTTA FAMILY

BY TWO OF THEMSELVES.

NEW YORK:
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY,
PUBLISHERS.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

To those unfamiliar with the history of Luther and his times, the title of this unique work may not sufficiently indicate its character.

The design of the author is to so reproduce the times of the Reformation as to place them more vividly and impressively before the mind of the reader than has been done by ordinary historical narratives.

She does this with such remarkable success, that it is difficult to realize we are not actually hearing Luther and those around him speak. We seem to be personal actors in the stirring scenes of that eventful period.

One branch of the Cotta family were Luther's earliest, and ever after, his most intimate friends. Under the title of "Chronicles" our author makes the members of this family, (which she brings in almost living reality before us), to record their daily experiences as connected with the Reformation age.

This Diary is fictitious, but it is employed with wonderful skill in bringing the reader face to face with the great ideas and facts associated with Luther and men of his times, as they are given to us by accredited history, and is written with a beauty, tenderness and power rarely equalled.

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I.

Elsè's Story.

Friedrich wishes me to write a chronicle of my life. Friedrich is my eldest brother. I am sixteen, and he is seventeen, and I have always been in the habit of doing what he wishes; and therefore, although it seems to me a very strange idea, I do so now. It is easy for Friedrich to write a chronicle, or anything else, because he has thoughts. But I have so few thoughts, I can only write what I see and hear about people and things. And that is certainly very little to write about, because everything goes on so much the same always with us. The people around me are the same I have known since I was a baby, and the things have changed very little; except that the people are more, because there are so many little children in our home now, and the things seem to me to become less, because my father does not grow richer: and there are more to clothe and feed. However, since Fritz wishes it, I will try; especially as ink and paper are the two things which are plentiful among us, because my father is a printer.

Fritz and I have never been separated all our lives until now. Yesterday he went to the University at Erfurt. It was when I was crying at the thought of parting with him that he told me his plan about the chronicle. He is to write one, and I another. He said it would be a help to him, as our twilight talk has been—when always, ever since I can remember, we two have crept away in summer into the garden, under the great pear-tree, and in winter into the deep window of the lumber-room inside my father's printing-room, where the bales of paper are kept, and old books are piled up, among which we used to make ourselves a seat.

It may be a help and comfort to Fritz, but I do not see how it ever can be any to me. He had all the thoughts, and he will have them still. But I—what shall I have for his voice and his dear face, but cold, blank paper, and no thoughts at all! Besides, I am so very busy, being the eldest; and the mother is far from strong, and the father so often wants me to help him at his types, or to read to him while he sets them. However, Fritz wishes it, and I shall do it. I wonder what his chronicle will be like!

But where am I to begin? What is a chronicle? Two of the books in the Bible are called "Chronicles" in Latin—at least Fritz says that is what the other long word[1] means—and the first book begins with "Adam," I know, because I read it one day to my father for his printing. But Fritz certainly cannot mean me to begin so far back as that. Of course I could not remember. I think I had better begin with the oldest person I know, because she is the furthest on the way back to Adam; and that is our grandmother Von Schönberg. She is very old—more than sixty—but her form is so erect, and her dark eyes so piercing, that sometimes she looks almost younger than her daughter, our precious mother, who is often bowed down with ill-health and cares.

Our grandmother's father was of a noble Bohemian family, and that is what links us with the nobles, although my father's family belongs to the burgher class. Fritz and I like to look at the old seal of our grandfather Von Schönberg, with all its quarterings, and to hear the tales of our knightly and soldier ancestors—of crusader and baron. My mother, indeed, tells us this is a mean

pride, and that my father's printing-press is a symbol of a truer nobility than any crest of battle-axe or sword; but our grandmother, I know, thinks it a great condescension for a Schönberg to have married into a burgher family. Fritz feels with my mother, and says the true crusade will be waged by our father's black types far better than by our great-grandfather's lances. But the old warfare was so beautiful, with the prancing horses and the streaming banners! And I cannot help thinking it would have been pleasanter to sit at the window of some grand old castle like the Wartburg, which towers above our town, and wave my hand to Fritz, as he rode, in flashing armour, on his war-horse, down the steep hill side, instead of climbing up on piles of dusty books at our lumber-room window, and watching him, in his humble burgher dress, with his wallet (not too well filled), walk down the street, while no one turned to look. Ah, well! the parting would have been as dreary, and Fritz himself could not be nobler. Only I cannot help seeing that people do honour the bindings and the gilded titles, in spite of all my mother and Fritz can say; and I should like my precious book to have such a binding, that the people who could not read the inside, might yet stop to look at the gold clasps and the jewelled back. To those who can read the inside, perhaps it would not matter. For of all the old barons and crusaders my grandmother tells us of, I know well none ever were or looked nobler than our Fritz. His eyes are not blue, like mine —which are only German Cotta eyes, but dark and flashing. Mine are very good for seeing, sewing, and helping about the printing; but his, I think, would penetrate men's hearts and command them, or survey a battle-field at a glance.

Last week, however, when I said something of the kind to him, he laughed, and said there were better battle-fields than those on which men's bones lay bleaching; and then there came that deep look into his eyes, when he seems to see into a world beyond my reach.

But I began with our grandmother, and here I am thinking about Friedrich again. I am afraid that he will be the beginning and end of my chronicle. Fritz has been nearly all the world to me. I wonder if that is why he is to leave me. The monks say we must not love any one too much; and one day, when we went to see Aunt Agnes, my mother's only sister, who is a nun in the convent of Nimptschen, I remember her saying to me when I had been admiring the flowers in the convent garden, "Little Elsè, will you come and live with us, and be a happy, blessed sister here?"

I said, "*Whose* sister, Aunt Agnes? I am Fritz's sister! May Fritz come too?"

"Fritz could go into the monastry at Eisenach," she said.

"Then I would go with him," I said. "I am Fritz's sister, and I would go nowhere in the world without him."

She looked on me with a cold, grave pity, and murmured, "Poor little one, she is like her mother, the heart learns to idolize early. She has much to unlearn. God's hand is against all idols."

That is many years ago; but I remember as if it were yesterday, how the fair convent garden seemed to me all at once to grow dull and cheerless at her words and her grave looks, and I felt it damp and cold like a church-yard; and the flowers looked like made flowers; and the walls seemed to rise like the walls of a cave, and I scarcely breathed until I was outside again, and had hold of Fritz's hand.

For I am not at all religious. I am afraid I do not even wish to be. All the religious men and women I have ever seen do not seem to me half so sweet as my poor dear mother; nor as kind, clever, and cheerful as my father; nor half as noble and good as Fritz. And the Lives of the Saints puzzle me exceedingly, because it seems to me that if every one were to follow the example of St. Catherine, and even our own St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and disobey their parents, and leave their little children, it would make everything so very wrong and confused. I wonder if any one else ever felt the same, because these are thoughts I have never even told to Fritz; for he *is* religious, and I am afraid it would pain him.

Our grandmother's husband fled from Bohemia on account of religion; but I am afraid it was not the right kind of religion, because no one seems to like to speak about it; and what Fritz and I know about him is only what we have picked up from time to time, and put together for ourselves.

Nearly a hundred years ago, two priests preached in Bohemia, called John Huss and Jerome of Prague. They seem to have been dearly beloved, and to have been thought good men during their life-time; but people must have been mistaken about them, for they were both burnt alive as heretics at Constance in two following years—in 1415 and 1416; which of course proves that they could not have been good men, but exceedingly bad.

However, their friends in Bohemia would not give up believing what they had learned of these men, although they had seen what end it led to. I do not think this was strange, because it is so very difficult to make oneself believe what one ought, as it is, and I do not see that the fear of being burned even would help one to do it; although, certainly, it might keep one silent. But these friends of John Huss were many of them nobles and great men, who were not accustomed to conceal their thoughts, and they would not be silent about what Huss had taught them. What this was, Fritz and I never could find out, because my grandmother, who answers all our other questions, never would tell us a word about this. We are, therefore, afraid it must be something very wicked indeed. And yet, when I asked one day if our grandfather (who, we think, had followed Huss), was a wicked man, her eyes flashed like lightning, and she said vehemently,—

"Better never lived or died!"

This perplexes us, but perhaps we shall understand it, like so many other things, when we are older.

Great troubles followed on the death of Huss. Bohemia was divided into three parties, who fought against each other. Castles were sacked, and noble women and little children were driven into caves and forests. Our forefathers were among the sufferers. In 1458 the conflict reached its height; many were beheaded, hung, burned alive, or tortured. My grandfather was killed as he was escaping, and my grandmother encountered great dangers, and lost all the little property which was left her, in reaching Eisenach, a young widow with two little children, my mother and Aunt Agnes.

Whatever it was that my great grandfather believed wrong, his wife did not seem to share it. She took refuge in the Augustinian Convent, where she lived until my Aunt Agnes took the veil, and my mother was married, when she came to live with us. She is as fond of Fritz as I am, in her way; although she scolds us all in turn, which is perhaps a good thing, because as she says, no one else does. And she has taught me nearly all I know, except the Apostles' Creed and Ten Commandments, which our father taught us, and the Paternoster and Ave Mary which we learned at our mother's knee. Fritz, of course, knows infinitely more than I do. He can say the Cisio Janus (the Church Calendar) through without one mistake, and also the Latin Grammar, I believe; and he has read Latin Books of which I cannot remember the names; and he understands all that the priests read and sing, and can sing himself as well as any of them.

But the legends of the saints, and the multiplication table, and the names of herbs and flowers, and the account of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the pilgrimage to Rome,—all these our grandmother has taught us. She looks so beautiful, our dear old grandmother, as she sits by the stove with her knitting, and talks to Fritz and me, with her lovely white hair and her dark bright eyes, so full of life and youth, they make us think of the fire on the hearth when the snow is on the roof, all warm within, or, as Fritz says,—

"It seems as if her heart lived always in the summer, and the winter of old age could only touch her body."

But I think the summer in which our grandmother's soul lives must be rather a fiery kind of summer, in which there are lightnings as well as sunshine. Fritz thinks we shall know her again at the Resurrection Day by that look in her eyes, only perhaps a little softened. But that seems to me terrible, and very far off; and I do not like to think of it. We often debate which of the saints she is like. I think St. Anna, the mother of Mary, mother of God, but Fritz thinks St. Catherine of Egypt, because she is so like a queen.

Besides all this, I had nearly forgotten to say I know the names of several of the stars, which Fritz taught me. And I can knit and spin, and do point stitch, and embroider a little. I intend to teach it to all the children. There are a great many children in our home and more every year. If there had not been so many, I might have had time to learn more, and also to be more religious; but I cannot see what they would do at home if I were to have a vocation. Perhaps some of the younger ones may be spared to become saints. I wonder if this should turn out to be so, and if I help them, if any one ever found some little humble place in heaven for helping some one else to be religious. Because then there might perhaps be hope for me after all.

Our father is the wisest man in Eisenach. The mother thinks, perhaps, in the world. Of this, however, our grandmother has doubts. She has seen other places besides Eisenach, which is perhaps the reason. He certainly is the wisest man I ever saw. He talks about more things that I cannot understand than any one else I know. He is also a great inventor. He thought of the plan of printing books before any one else, and had almost completed the invention before any press was set up. And he always believed there was another world on the other side of the great sea, long before the Admiral Christopher Columbus discovered America. The only misfortune has been that some one else has always stepped in just before he had completed his inventions, when nothing but some little insignificant detail was wanting to make everything perfect, and carried off all the credit and profit. It is this which has kept us from becoming rich,—this and the children. But the father's temper is so placid and even, nothing ever sours it. And this is what makes us all admire and love him so much, even more than his great abilities. He seems to rejoice in these successes of other people just as much as if he had quite succeeded in making them himself. If the mother laments a little over the fame that might have been his, he smiles and says,—

"Never mind, little mother. It will be all the same a hundred years hence. Let us not grudge any one his reward. The world has the benefit if we have not."

Then if the mother sighs a little over the scanty larder and wardrobe, he replies,—

"Cheer up, little mother, there are more Americas yet to be discovered, and more inventions to be made. In fact," he adds, with that deep far seeing look of his, "something else has just occurred to me, which, when I have brought it to perfection, will throw all the discoveries of this and every other age into the shade."

And he kisses the mother and departs into his printing-room. And the mother looks wonderingly after him, and says,—

"We must not disturb the father, children, with our little cares. He has great things in his mind, which we shall all reap the harvest of some day."

So, she goes to patch some little garment once more, and to try to make one day's dinner expand into enough for two.

What the father's great discovery is at present, Fritz and I do not quite know. But we think it has something to do, either with the planets and the stars, or with that wonderful stone the philosophers have been so long occupied about. In either case, it is sure to make us enormously rich all at once; and, meantime, we may well be content to eke out our living as best we can.

Of the mother I cannot think of anything to say. She is just the mother—our own dear, patient, loving, little mother—unlike every one else in the world; and yet it seems as if there was nothing to say about her by which one could make any one else understand what she is. It seems as if she were to other people (with reverence I say it) just what the blessed Mother of God is to the other saints. St. Catherine has her wheel and her crown, and St. Agnes her lamb and her palm, and St. Ursula her eleven thousand virgins; but Mary, the ever-blessed, has only the Holy Child. She is the blessed woman, the Holy mother, and nothing else. That is just what the mother is. She is the precious little mother, and the best woman in the world, and that is all. I could describe her better by saying what she is not. She never says a harsh word to any one nor of any one. She is never impatient with the father, like our grandmother. She is never impatient with the children, like me. She never complains or scolds. She is never idle. She never looks severe and cross at us, like Aunt Agnes. But I must not compare her with Aunt Agnes, because she herself once reproved me for doing so; she said Aunt Agnes was a religious, a pure, and holy woman, far, far above her sphere or ours; and we might be thankful, if we ever reached heaven, if she let us kiss the hem of her garment.

Yes, Aunt Agnes is a holy woman—a nun; I must be careful what I say of her. She makes long, long prayers, they say,—so long that she has been found in the morning fainting on the cold floor of the convent church. She eats so little that Father Christopher, who is the convent confessor and ours, says he sometimes thinks she must be sustained by angels. But Fritz and I think that, if that is true, the angel's food cannot be very nourishing; for, when we saw her last, through the convent grating, she looked like a shadow in her black robe, or like that dreadful picture of death we saw in the convent chapel. She wears the coarsest sackcloth, and often, they say, sleeps on ashes. One of the nuns told my mother, that one day when she fainted, and they had to unloose her dress, they found scars and stripes, scarcely healed, on her fair neck and arms, which she must have inflicted on herself. They all say she will have a very high place in heaven; but it seems to me, unless there is a very great difference between the highest and lowest places in heaven, it is a great deal of trouble to take. But, then, I am not religious; and it is altogether so exceedingly difficult to me to understand about heaven. Will every one in heaven be always struggling for the high places? Because when every one does that at church on the great festival days, it is not at all pleasant; those who succeed look proud, and those who fail look cross. But, of course, no one will be cross in heaven, nor proud. Then how will the saints feel who do *not* get the highest places? Will they be pleased or disappointed? If they are pleased, what is the use of struggling so much to climb a little higher? And if they are not pleased, would that be saint-like? Because the mother always teaches us to choose the lowest places, and the eldest to give up to the little ones. Will the greatest, then, *not* give up to the little ones in heaven? Of one thing I feel sure: if the mother had a high place in heaven, she would always be stooping down to help some one else up, or making room for others. And then, what *are* the highest places in heaven? At the emperor's court, I know, they are the places nearest him; the seven Electors stand close around the throne. But can it be possible that any would ever feel at ease, and happy, so very near the Almighty? It seems so exceedingly difficult to please Him here, and so very easy to offend Him, that it does seem to me it would be happier to be a little further off, in some little quiet corner near the gate, with a good many of the saints between. The other day, Father Christopher ordered me such a severe penance for dropping a crumb of the sacred Host; although I could not help thinking it was as much the priest's fault as mine. But he said God would be exceedingly displeased; and Fritz told me the priests fast and torment themselves severely sometimes, for only omitting a word in the Mass.

Then the awful picture of the Lord Christ, with the lightnings in his hand! It is very different from the carving of him on the cross. Why did he suffer so? Was it, like Aunt Agnes, to get a higher place in heaven? or, perhaps, to have the right to be severe, as she is with us? Such very strange things seem to offend and to please God, I cannot understand it at all; but that is because I have no vocation for religion. In the convent, the mother says, they grow like God, and so understand him better.

Is Aunt Agnes, then, more like God than our mother? That face, still and pale as death; those cold, severe eyes; that voice, so hollow and monotonous, as if it came from a metal tube or a sepulchre, instead of from a heart! Is it with that look God will meet us, with that kind of voice he will speak to us? Indeed, the Judgment-day is very dreadful to think of; and one must indeed need to live many years in the convent not to be afraid of going to heaven.

Oh, if only our mother were the saint—the kind of good woman that pleased God—instead of Aunt Agnes, how sweet it would be to try and be a saint then; and how sure one would feel that one might hope to reach heaven, and that, if one reached it, one would be happy there!

Aunt Ursula Cotta is another of the women I wish were the right kind of saint. She is my father's first cousin's wife; but we have always called her aunt, because almost all little children who know her do,—she is so fond of children, and so kind to every one. She is not poor like us, although Cousin Conrad Cotta never made any discoveries, or even nearly made any. There is a picture of St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, our sainted Landgravine, in our parish church, which always makes me think of Aunt Ursula. St. Elizabeth is standing at the gate of a beautiful castle, something like our castle of the Wartburg, and around her are kneeling a crowd of very poor people—cripples, and blind, and poor thin mothers, with little hungry-looking children—all stretching out their hands to the lady, who is looking on with such kindly compassionate looks, just like Aunt Ursula; except that St. Elizabeth is very thin and pale, and looks almost as nearly starved as the beggars around her, and Aunt Ursula is rosy and fat, with the pleasantest dimples in her round face. But the look in the eyes is the same—so loving, and true, and earnest, and compassionate. The thinness and pallor are, of course, only just the difference there must be between a saint who fasts, and does so much penance, and keeps herself awake whole nights saying prayers, as St. Elizabeth did, and a prosperous burgher's wife, who eats and sleeps like other people, and is only like the good Landgravine in being so kind to every one.

The other half of the story of the picture, however, would not do for Aunt Ursula. In the apron of the saint, instead of loaves of bread are beautiful clusters of red roses. Our grandmother told us the meaning of this. The good Landgravine's husband did not quite like her giving so much to the poor; because she was so generous she would have left the treasury bare. So she used to give her alms unknown to him. But on this day when she was giving away those loaves to the beggars at the castle gate, he happened suddenly to return, and finding her occupied in this way, he asked her rather severely what she had in her apron. She said "roses!"

"Let me see," said the Landgrave.

And God loved her so much, that to save her from being blamed, he wrought a miracle. When she opened her apron, instead of the loaves she had been distributing, there were beautiful flowers. And this is what the picture represents. I always wanted to know the end of the story. I hope God worked another miracle when the Landgrave went away, and changed the roses back into loaves. I suppose He did, because the starving people look so contented. But our grandmother does not know. Only in this, I do not think Aunt Ursula would have done the same as the Landgravine. I think she would have said boldly if Cousin Cotta had asked her, "I have loaves in my apron, and I am giving them to these poor starving subjects of yours and mine," and never been afraid of what he would say. And then, perhaps, Cousin Cotta—I mean the Landgrave's—heart would have been so touched, that he would have forgiven her, and even praised her, and brought her some more loaves. And then instead of the bread being changed to flowers, the Landgrave's heart would have been changed from stone to flesh, which does seem a better thing. But when I once said this to grandmother, she said it was very wrong to fancy other ends to the legends of the saints, just as if they were fairy tales; that St. Elizabeth really lived in that old castle of the Wartburg, not more than three hundred years ago, and walked through those very streets of Eisenach, and gave alms to the poor here, and went into the hospitals, and dressed the most loathsome wounds that no one else would touch, and spoke tender loving words to wretched outcasts no one else would look at. That seems to me so good and dear of her; but that is not what made her a saint, because Aunt Ursula and our mother do things like that, and our mother has told me again and again that it is Aunt Agnes who is like the saint, and not she.

It is what she suffered, I suppose, that has made them put her in the Calendar; and yet it is not suffering in itself that makes people saints, because I do not believe St. Elizabeth herself suffered more than our mother. It is true she used to leave her husband's side and kneel all night on the cold floor, while he was asleep. But the mother has done the same as that often and often. When any of the little ones has been ill, how often she has walked up and down hour after hour, with the sick child in her arms, soothing and fondling it, and quieting all its fretful cries with unwearying tender patience. Then St. Elizabeth fasted until she was almost a shadow; but how often have I seen our mother quietly distribute all that was nice and good in our frugal meals to my father and the children, scarcely leaving herself a bit, and hiding her plate behind a dish that the father might not see. And Fritz and I often say how wasted and worn she looks; not like the Mother of Mercy as we remember her, but too much like the wan pale Mother of Sorrows with the pierced heart. Then as to pain, have not I seen our mother suffer pain compared with which Aunt Agnes or St. Elizabeth's discipline must be like the prick of a pin.

But yet all that is not the right kind of suffering to make a saint. Our precious mother walks up and down all night not to make herself a saint, but to soothe her sick child. She eats no dinner, not because she chooses to fast, but because we are poor, and bread is dear. She suffers, because God lays suffering upon her, not because she takes it on herself. And all this cannot make her a saint. When I say anything to compassionate or to honour her, she smiles and says,—

"My Elsè, I chose this lower life instead of the high vocation of your Aunt Agnes, and I must take the consequences. We cannot have our portion both in this world and the next."

If the size of our mother's portion in the next world were to be in proportion to its smallness in this, I think she might have plenty to spare; but this I do not venture to say to her.

There is one thing St. Elizabeth did which certainly our mother would never do. She left her little father less children to go into a convent. Perhaps it was this that pleased God and the Lord Jesus Christ so very much, that they took her up to be so high in heaven. If this is the case, it is a great mercy for our father and for us that our mother has not set her heart on being a saint. We sometimes think, however, that perhaps although He cannot make her a saint on account of the rules they have in heaven about it, God may give our mother some little good thing, or some kind word, because of her being so very good to us. *She* says this is no merit, however, because of her loving us so much. If she loved us less, and so found it more a trouble to work for us; or if we were little stranger beggar children she *chose* to be kind to, instead of her own, I suppose God would like it better.

There is one thing, moreover, in St. Elizabeth's history which once brought Fritz and me into great trouble and perplexity. When we were little children and did not understand things as we do now, but thought we ought to try and imitate the saints, and that what was right for them must be right for us, and when our grandmother had been telling us about the holy Landgravine privately selling her jewels, and emptying her husband's treasury to feed the poor, we resolved one day to go and do likewise. We knew a very poor old woman in the next street, with a great many orphan grandchildren, and we planned a long time together before we thought of the way to help her like St. Elizabeth. At length the opportunity came. It was Christmas eve, and for a rarity there were some meat, and apples, and pies in our storeroom. We crept into the room in the twilight, filled my apron with pies, and meat, and cakes, and stole out to our old woman's to give her our booty.

The next morning the larder was found, despoiled of half of what was to have been our Christmas dinner. The children cried, and the mother looked almost as distressed as they did. The father's placid temper for once was roused, and he cursed the cat and the rats, and wished he had completed his new infallible rat trap. Our grandmother said very quietly,—

"Thieves more discriminating than rats or mice have been here. There are no crumbs, and not a thing is out of place. Besides, I never heard of rats or mice eating pie-dishes."

Fritz and I looked at each other, and began to fear that we had done wrong, when little Christopher said—

"I saw Fritz and Elsè carry out the pies last night."

"Elsè! Fritz!" said our father, "what does this mean?"

I would have confessed, but I remembered St. Elizabeth and the roses, and said, with a trembling voice—

"They were not pies you saw, Christopher, but roses."

"Roses," said the mother very gravely, "at Christmas!"

I almost hoped the pies would have reappeared on the shelves. It was the very juncture at which they did in the legend; but they did not. On the contrary, everything seemed to turn against us.

"Fritz," said our father very sternly, "tell the truth, or I shall give you a flogging."

This was a part of the story where St. Elizabeth's example quite failed us. I did not know what she would have done if some one else had been punished for her generosity; but I felt no doubt what I must do.

"O father!" I said, "it is my fault—it was my thought! We took the things to the poor old woman in the next street for her grandchildren."

"Then she is no better than a thief," said our father, "to have taken them. Fritz and Elsè, foolish children, shall have no Christmas dinner for their pains and Elsè shall, moreover, be locked into her own room for telling a story."

I was sitting shivering in my room, wondering how it was that things succeeded so differently with St. Elizabeth and with us, when Aunt Ursula's round pleasant voice sounded up the stairs, and in another minute she was holding me laughing in her arms.

"My poor little Elsè! We must wait a little before we imitate our patron saint; or we must begin at the other end. It would never do, for instance, for me to travel to Rome with eleven thousand young ladies like St. Ursula."

My grandmother had guessed the meaning of our foray, and Aunt Ursula coming in at the time, had heard the narrative, and insisted on sending us another Christmas dinner. Fritz and I secretly believed that St. Elizabeth had a good deal to do with the replacing of our Christmas dinner; but after that, we understood that caution was needed in transferring the holy example of the saints to our own lives, and that at present we must not venture beyond the ten commandments.

Yet to think that St. Elizabeth, a real canonized saint—whose picture is over altars in the churches—whose good deeds are painted on the church windows, and illumined by the sun shining through them—whose bones are laid up in reliquaries, one of which I wear always next

my heart—actually lived and prayed in that dark old castle above us, and walked along these very streets—perhaps even had been seen from this window of Fritz's and my beloved lumber-room.

Only three hundred years ago! If only I had lived three hundred years earlier, or she three hundred years later, I might have seen her and talked to her, and asked her what it was that made her a saint. There are so many questions I should like to have asked her. I would have said, "Dear St. Elizabeth, tell me what it is that makes you a saint? It cannot be your charity, because no one can be more charitable than Aunt Ursula, and she is not a saint; and it cannot be your sufferings, or your patience, or your love, or your denying yourself for the sake of others, because our mother is like you in all that, and she is not a saint. Was it because you left your little children, that God loves you so much? or because you not only did and bore the things God laid on you, as our mother does, but chose out other things for yourself, which you thought harder?" And if she were gentle (as I think she was), and would have listened, I would have asked her, "Holy Landgravine, why are things which were so right and holy in you, wrong for Fritz and me?" And I would also have asked her, "Dear St. Elizabeth, my patroness, what is it in heaven that makes you so happy there?"

But I forgot—she would not have been in heaven at all. She would not even have been made a saint, because it was only after her death, when the sick and crippled were healed by touching her body, that they found out what a saint she had been. Perhaps, even, she would not herself have known she was a saint. And if so, I wonder if it can be possible that our mother is a saint after all, only she does not know it.

Fritz and I are four or five years older than any of the children. Two little sisters died of the plague before any more were born. One was baptized, and died when she was a year old, before she could soil her baptismal robes. Therefore we feel sure she is in paradise. I think of her whenever I look at the cloud of glory around the Blessed Virgin in St. George's Church. Out of the cloud peep a number of happy child-faces—some leaning their round soft cheeks on their pretty dimpled hands, and all looking up with such confidence at the dear mother of God. I suppose the little children in heaven especially belong to her. It must be very happy, then, to have died young.

But of that other little nameless babe who died at the same time none of us ever dare to speak. It was not baptized, and they say the souls of little unbaptized babes hover about for ever in the darkness between heaven and hell. Think of the horror of falling from the loving arms of our mother into the cold and the darkness, to shiver and wail there for ever, and belong to no one. At Eisenach we have a Foundling Hospital, attached to one of the nunneries founded by St. Elizabeth, for such forsaken little ones. If St. Elizabeth could only establish a Foundling somewhere near the gates of paradise, for such little nameless outcast child-souls! But I suppose she is too high in heaven, and too far from the gates to hear the plaintive cries of such abandoned little ones. Or perhaps God, who was so much pleased with her for deserting her own little children, would not allow it. I suppose the saints in heaven who have been mothers, or even elder sisters like me, leave their mother's hearts on earth, and that in paradise they are all monks and nuns like Aunt Agnes and Father Christopher.

Next to that little nameless one came the twin girls Chriemhild (named after our grandmother), and Atlantis, so christened by our father on account of the discovery of the great world beyond the sea which he had so often thought of, and which the great admiral Christopher Columbus accomplished about that time. Then the twin boys Boniface Pollux and Christopher Castor; their names being a compromise between our father, who was struck with some remarkable conjunction of their stars at their birth, and my mother, who thought it only right to counterbalance such Pagan appellations with names written in heaven. Then another boy, who only lived a few weeks; and then the present baby, Thekla, who is the plaything and darling of us all.

These are nearly all the people I know well; except, indeed, Martin Luther, the miner's son, to whom Aunt Ursula Cotta has been so kind. He is dear to us all as one of our own family. He is about the same age as Fritz, who thinks there is no one like him. And he has such a voice, and is so religious, and yet so merry withal; at least at times. It was his voice and his devout ways which first drew Aunt Ursula's attention to him. She had seen him often at the daily prayers at church. He used to sing as a chorister with the boys of the Latin school of the parish of St. George, where Fritz and he studied. The ringing tones of his voice, so clear and true, often attracted Aunt Ursula's attention; and he always seemed so devout. But we knew little about him. He was very poor, and had a pinched, half-starved look when first we noticed him. Often I have seen him on the cold winter evenings singing about the streets for alms, and thankfully receiving a few pieces of broken bread and meat at the doors of the citizens; for he was never a bold and impudent beggar as some of the scholars are. Our acquaintance with him, however, began one day which I remember well. I was at Aunt Ursula's house, which is in George Street, near the church and school. I had watched the choir of boys singing from door to door through the street. No one had given them anything: they looked disappointed and hungry. At last they stopped before the window where Aunt Ursula and I were sitting with her little boy. That clear, high, ringing voice was there again. Aunt Ursula went to the door and called Martin in, and then she went herself to

the kitchen, and after giving him a good meal himself, sent him away with his wallet full, and told him to come again very soon. After that, I suppose she consulted with Cousin Conrad Cotta, and the result was that Martin Luther became an inmate of their house, and has lived among us familiarly since then like one of our own cousins.

He is wonderfully changed since that day. Scarcely any one would have thought then what a joyous nature his is. The only thing in which it seemed then to flow out was in his clear true voice. He was subdued and timid like a creature that had been brought up without love. Especially he used to be shy with young maidens, and seemed afraid to look in a woman's face. I think they must have been very severe with him at home. Indeed, he confessed to Fritz, that he had often as a child been beaten till the blood came for trifling offences, such as taking a nut, and that he was afraid to play in his parents' presence. And yet he would not hear a word reflecting on his parents. He says his mother is the most pious woman in Mansfeld, where his family live, and his father denies himself in every way to maintain and educate his children, especially Martin, who is to be the learned man of the family. His parents are inured to hardships themselves, and believe it to be the best early discipline for boys. Certainly poor Martin had enough of hardship here. But that may be the fault of his mother's relations at Eisenach, who, they hoped, would have been kind to him, but who do not seem to have cared for him at all. At one time he told Fritz he was so pinched and discouraged by the extreme poverty he suffered, that he thought of giving up study in despair, and returning to Mansfeld to work with his father at the smelting furnaces, or in the mines under the mountains. Yet indignant tears start to his eyes if any one ventures to hint that his father might have done more for him. He was a poor digger in the mines, he told Fritz, and often he had seen his mother carrying firewood on her shoulders from the pine-woods near Mansfeld.

But it was in the monastic schools, no doubt, that he learned to be so shy and grave. He had been taught to look on married life as a low and evil thing; and, of course, we all know it cannot be so high and pure as the life in the convent. I remember now his look of wonder when Aunt Ursula, who is not fond of monks, said to him one day, "There is nothing on earth more lovely than the love of husband and wife, when it is in the fear of God."

In the warmth of her bright and sunny heart, his whole nature seemed to open like the flowers in summer. And now there is none in all our circle so popular and sociable as he is. He plays on the lute, and sings as we think no one else can. And our children all love him, he tells them such strange, beautiful stories about enchanted gardens and crusaders, and about his own childhood, among the pine-forests and the mines.

It is from Martin Luther, indeed, that I have heard more than from any one else, except from our grandmother, of the great world beyond Eisenach. He has lived already in three other towns, so that he is quite a traveller, and knows a great deal of the world, although he is not yet twenty. Our father has certainly told us wonderful things about the great islands beyond the seas which the Admiral Columbus discovered, and which will one day, he is sure, be found to be only the other side of the Indies and Tokay and Araby. Already the Spaniards have found gold in those islands, and our father has little doubt that they are the Ophir from which King Solomon's ships brought the gold for the temple. Also, he has told us about the strange lands in the south, in Africa, where the dwarfs live, and the black giants, and the great hairy men who climb the trees and make nests there, and the dreadful men-eaters, and the people who have their heads between their shoulders. But we have not yet met with any one who have seen all those wonders, so that Martin Luther and our grandmother are the greatest travellers Fritz and I are acquainted with.

Martin was born at Eisleben. His mother's is a burgher family. Three of her brothers live here at Eisenach, and here she was married. But his father came of a peasant race. His grandfather had a little farm of his own at Mora, among the Thuringian pine-forests; but Martin's father was the second son; their little property went to the eldest, and he became a miner, went to Eisleben, and then settled at Mansfeld, near the Hartz mountains where the silver and copper lie buried in the earth.

At Mansfeld Martin lived until he was nineteen. I should like to see the place. It must be so strange to watch the great furnaces, where they fuse the copper and smelt the precious silver, gleaming through the pine woods, for they burn all through the night in the clearings of the forest. When Martin was a little boy he may have watched by them with his father, who now has furnaces and a foundry of his own. Then there are the deep pits under the hills, out of which come from time to time troops of grim-looking miners. Martin is fond of the miners; they are such a brave and hardy race, and they have fine bold songs and choruses of their own which he can sing, and wild original pastimes. Chess is a favorite game with them. They are thoughtful too, as men may well be who dive into the secrets of the earth. Martin, when a boy, has often gone into the dark, mysterious pits and winding caverns with them, and seen the veins of precious ore. He has also often seen foreigners of various nations. They come from all parts of the world to Mansfeld for the silver,—from Bavaria and Switzerland, and even from the beautiful Venice, which is a city of palaces, where the streets are canals filled by the blue sea, and instead of waggons they use boats, from which people land on the marble steps of the palaces. All these things Martin has heard described by those who have really seen them, besides what he has seen himself. His father also frequently used to have the schoolmasters and learned men at his house, that his sons might profit by their wise conversation. But I doubt if he can have enjoyed this so much. It must have been difficult to forget the rod with which once he was beaten fourteen times in one morning, so as to feel sufficiently at ease to enjoy their conversation. Old Count Gunther of

Mansfeld thinks much of Martin's father, and often used to send for him to consult him about the mines.

Their house at Mansfeld stood at some distance from the school-house which was on the hill, so that, when he was little, an older boy used to be kind to him, and carry him in his arms to school. I daresay that was in winter, when his little feet were swollen with chilblains, and his poor mother used to go up to the woods to gather faggots for the hearth.

His mother must be a very good and holy woman, but not, I fancy, quite like our mother; rather more like Aunt Agnes. I think I should have been rather afraid of her. Martin says she is very religious. He honours and loves her very much, although she was very strict with him, and once, he told Fritz, beat him, for taking a nut from their stores, until the blood came. She must be a brave, truthful woman, who would not spare herself or others; but I think I should have felt more at home with his father, who used so often to kneel beside Martin's bed at night, and pray God to make him a good and useful man. Martin's father, however, does not seem so fond of the monks and nuns, and is therefore, I suppose, not so religious as his mother is. He does not at all wish Martin to become a priest or a monk, but to be a great lawyer, or doctor, or professor at some university.

Mansfeld, however, is a very holy place. There are many monasteries and nunneries there, and in one of them two of the countesses were nuns. There is also a castle there, and our St. Elizabeth worked miracles there as well as here. The devil also is not idle at Mansfeld. A wicked old witch lived close to Martin's house, and used to frighten and distress his mother much, bewitching the children so that they nearly cried themselves to death. Once even, it is said, the devil himself got up into the pulpit, and preached, of course in disguise. But in all the legends it is the same. The devil never seems so busy as where the saints are, which is another reason why I feel how difficult it would be to be religious.

Martin had a sweet voice, and loved music as a child, and he used often to sing at people's doors as he did here. Once, at Christmas time, he was singing carols from village to village among the woods with other boys, when a peasant came to the door of his hut, where they were singing, and said in a loud gruff voice, "Where are you, boys?" The children were so frightened that they scampered away as fast as they could, and only found out afterwards that the man with a rough voice had a kind heart, and had brought them out some sausages. Poor Martin was used to blows in those days, and had good reason to dread them. It must have been pleasant, however, to hear the boys' voices carolling through the woods about Jesus born at Bethlehem. Voices echo so strangely among the silent pine-forests.

When Martin was thirteen he left Mansfeld and went to Magdeburg, where the Archbishop Ernest lives, the brother of our Elector, who has a beautiful palace, and twelve trumpeters to play to him always when he is at dinner. Magdeburg must be a magnificent city, very nearly, we think, as grand as Rome itself. There is a great cathedral there, and knights and princes and many soldiers, who prance about the streets; and tournaments and splendid festivals. But our Martin heard more than he saw of all this. He and John Reineck of Mansfeld (a boy older than himself, who is one of his greatest friends), went to the school of the Franciscan Cloister, and had to spend their time with the monks, or sing about the streets for bread, or in the church-yard when the Franciscans in their grey robes went there to fulfill their office of burying the dead. But it was not for him, the miner's son, to complain, when, as he says, he used to see a Prince of Anhalt going about the streets in a cowl begging bread, with a sack on his shoulders like a beast of burden, insomuch that he was bowed to the ground. The poor prince, Martin said, had fasted and watched and mortified his flesh until he looked like an image of death, with only skin and bones. Indeed, shortly after he died.

At Magdeburg also, Martin saw the picture of which he has often told us. "A great ship was painted, meant to signify the Church, wherein there was no layman, not even a king or prince. There were none but the pope with his cardinals and bishops in the prow, with the Holy Ghost hovering over them, the priests and monks with their oars at the side; and thus they were sailing on heavenward. The laymen were swimming along in the water around the ship. Some of them were drowning; some were drawing themselves up to the ship by means of ropes, which the monks, moved with pity, and making over their own good works, did cast out to them to keep them from drowning, and to enable them to cleave to the vessel and to go with the others to heaven. There was no pope, nor cardinal, nor bishop, nor priest, nor monk in the water, but laymen only."

It must have been a very dreadful picture, and enough to make any one afraid of not being religious, or else to make one feel how useless it is for any one except the monks and nuns, to try to be religious at all. Because however little merit any one had acquired, some kind monk might still be found to throw a rope out of the ship and help him in; and, however many good works any layman might do, they would be of no avail to help him out of the flood, or even to keep him from drowning, unless he had some friends in a cloister.

I said Martin was merry; and so he is, with the children, or when he is cheered with music or singing. And yet, on the whole, I think he is rather grave, and often he looks very thoughtful, and even melancholy. His merriment does not seem to be so much from carelessness as from earnestness of heart, so that whether he is telling a story to the little ones, or singing a lively song, his whole heart is in it,—in his play as well as in his work.

In his studies Fritz says there is no one at Eisenach who can come near him, whether in reciting,

or writing prose or verse, or translating, or church music.

Master Trebonius, the head of St. George's school, is a very learned man and very polite. He takes off his hat, Fritz says, and bows to his scholars when he enters the school, for he says that "among these boys are future burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates." This must be very different from the masters at Mansfeld. Master Trebonius thinks very much of Martin. I wonder if he and Fritz will be burgomasters or doctors one day.

Martin is certainly very religious for a boy, and so is Fritz. They attend mass very regularly, and confession, and keep the fasts.

From what I have heard Martin say, however, I think he is as much afraid of God and Christ and the dreadful day of wrath and judgment as I am. Indeed I am sure he feels, as every one must, there would be no hope for us were it not for the Blessed Mother of God who may remind her Son how she nursed and cared for him, and move him to have some pity.

But Martin has been at the University of Erfurt nearly two years, and Fritz has now left us to study there with him; and we shall have no more music, and the children no more stories until no one knows when.

These are the people I know. I have nothing else to say except about the things I possess, and the place we live in.

The things are easily described. I have a silver reliquary, with a lock of the hair of St. Elizabeth in it. That is my greatest treasure. I have a black rosary with a large iron cross which Aunt Agnes gave me. I have a missal, and part of a volume of the Nibelungen Lied; and besides my every-day dress, a black taffetas jacket and a crimson stuff petticoat, and two gold ear-rings, and a silver chain for holidays, which Aunt Ursula gave me. Fritz and I between us have also a copy of some old Latin hymns, with woodcuts, printed at Nürnberg. And in the garden I have two rose bushes; and I have a wooden crucifix carved in Rome out of wood which came from Bethlehem, and in a leather purse one gulden my godmother gave me at my christening; and that is all.

The place we live in is Eisenach, and I think it a beautiful place. But never having seen any other town, perhaps I cannot very well judge. There are nine monasteries and nunneries here, many of them founded by St. Elizabeth. And there are I do not know how many priests. In the churches are some beautiful pictures of the sufferings and glory of the saints; and painted windows, and on the altars gorgeous gold and silver plate, and a great many wonderful relics which we go to adore on the great saint's days.

The town is in a valley, and high above the houses rises the hill on which stands the Wartburg, the castle where St. Elizabeth lived. I went inside it once with our father to take some books to the Elector. The rooms were beautifully furnished with carpets and velvet-covered chairs. A lady dressed in silk and jewels, like St. Elizabeth in the pictures, gave me sweetmeats. But the castle seemed to me dark and gloomy. I wondered which was the room in which the proud mother of the Landgrave lived, who was so discourteous to St. Elizabeth when she came a young maiden from her royal home far away in Hungary; and which was the cold wall against which she pressed her burning brow, when she rushed through the castle in despair on hearing suddenly of the death of her husband.

I was glad to escape into the free forest again, for all around the castle, and over all the hills, as far as we can see around Eisenach, it is forest. The tall dark pine woods clothe the hills; but in the valleys the meadows are very green beside the streams. It is better in the valleys among the wild flowers than in that stern old castle, and I did not wonder so much after being there that St. Elizabeth built herself a hut in a lowly valley among the woods, and preferred to live and die there.

It is beautiful in summer in the meadows, at the edge of the pine woods, when the sun brings out the delicious aromatic perfume of the pines, and the birds sing, and the rooks caw. I like it better than the incense in St. George's Church, and almost better than the singing of the choir, and certainly better than the sermons which are so often about the dreadful fires and the judgment-day, or the confessional where they give us such hard penances. The lambs, and the birds, and even the insects, seem so happy, each with its own little bleat, or warble, or coo, or buzz of content.

It almost seems then as if Mary, the dear Mother of God, were governing the world instead of Christ, the Judge, or the Almighty with the thunders. Every creature seems so blithe and so tenderly cared for I cannot help feeling better there than at church. But that is because I have so little religion.

II.

Extracts from Friedrich's Chronicle.

At last I stand on the threshold of the world I have so long desired to enter. Elsè's world is mine no longer; and yet, never until this week did I feel how dear that little home-world is to me. Indeed, Heaven forbid I should have left it finally. I look forward to returning to it again, nevermore, however, as a burden on our parents, but as their stay and support, to set our mother free from the cares which are slowly eating her precious life away, to set our father free to pursue his great projects, and to make our little Elsè as much a lady as any of the noble baronesses our grandmother tells us of. Although, indeed, as it is, when she walks beside me to church on holidays, in her crimson dress, with her round, neat, little figure in the black jacket with the white stomacher, and the silver chains, her fair hair so neatly braided, and her blue eyes so full of sunshine,—who can look better than Elsè? And I can see I am not the only one in Eisenach who thinks so. I would only wish to make all the days holidays for her, and that it should not be necessary when the festival is over for my little sister to lay aside all her finery so carefully in the great chest, and put on her Aschputtel garments again, so that if the fairy prince we used to talk of, were to come, he would scarcely recognise the fair little princess he had seen at church. And yet no fairy prince need be ashamed of our Elsè even in her working, every-day clothes;—he certainly would not be the right one if he were. In the twilight, when the day's work is done, and the children are asleep, and she comes and sits beside me with her knitting in the lumber-room or under the pear tree in the garden, what princess could look fresher or neater than Elsè, with her smooth fair hair braided like a coronet? Who would think that she had been toiling all day, cooking, washing, nursing the children. Except, indeed, because of the healthy colour her active life gives her face, and for that sweet low voice of hers, which I think women learn best by the cradles of little children.

I suppose it is because I have never yet seen any maiden to compare to our Elsè that I have not yet fallen in love. And, nevertheless, it is not of such a face as Elsè's I dream, when dreams come, or even exactly such as my mother's. My mother's eyes are dimmed with many cares; is it not that very worn and faded brow that makes her sacred to me? More sacred than any saintly halo! And Elsè, good, practical little Elsè, she is a dear household fairy; but the face I dream of has another look in it. Elsè's eyes are good, as she says, for seeing and helping; and sweet, indeed, they are for loving—dear, kind, true eyes. But the eyes I dream of have another look, a fire like our grandmother's, as if from a southern sun; dim, dreamy, far-seeing glances, burning into the hearts, like the ladies in the romances, and yet piercing into heaven, like St. Cecilia's when she stands entranced by her organ. She should be a saint, at whose feet I might sit and look through her pure heart into heaven, and yet she should love me wholly, passionately, fearlessly, devotedly, as if her heaven were all in my love. My love! and who am I that I should have such dreams? A poor burgher lad of Eisenach, a penniless student of a week's standing at Erfurt! The eldest son of a large destitute family, who must not dare to think of loving the most perfect maiden, in the world, when I meet her, until I have rescued a father, mother, and six brothers and sisters from the jaws of biting poverty. And even in a dream it seems almost a treachery to put any creature above Elsè. I fancy I see her kind blue eyes filling with reproachful tears. For there is no doubt that in Elsè's heart I have no rival, even in a dream. Poor, loving, little Elsè!

Yes, she must be rescued from the pressure of those daily fretting cares of penury and hope deferred, which have made our mother old so early. If I had been in the father's place, I could never have borne to see winter creeping so soon over the summer of her life. But he does not see it. Or if for a moment her pale face and the grey hairs which begin to come seem to trouble him, he kisses her forehead, and says,

"Little mother, it will soon be over; there is nothing wanting now but the last link to make this last invention perfect, and then—"

And then he goes into his printing-room; but to this day the missing link has never been found. Elsè and our mother, however, always believe it will turn up some day. Our grandmother has doubts. And I have scarcely any hope at all, although, for all the world, I would not breathe this to any one at home. To me that laboratory of my father's, with its furnace, its models, its strange machines, is the most melancholy place in the world. It is like a haunted chamber,—haunted with the helpless, nameless ghosts of infants that have died at their birth,—the ghosts of vain and fruitless projects; like the ruins of a city that some earthquake had destroyed before it was finished, ruined palaces that were never roofed, ruined houses that were never inhabited, ruined churches that were never worshipped in. The saints forbid that my life should be like that! and yet what it is which has made him so unsuccessful, I can never exactly make out. He is no dreamer. He is no idler. He does not sit lazily down with folded arms and imagine his projects. He makes his calculations with the most laborious accuracy; he consults all the learned men and books he has access to. He weighs, and measures, and constructs the neatest models possible. His room is a museum of exquisite models, which seem as if they must answer, and yet never do. The professors, and even the Elector's secretary, who has come more than once to consult him, have told me he is a man of remarkable genius.

What can it be, then, that makes his life such a failure? I cannot think; unless it is that other great inventors and discoverers seem to have made their discoveries and inventions as it were *by the way*, in the course of their every-day life. As a seaman sails on his appointed voyage to some definite port, he notices drift-wood or weeds which must have come from unknown lands beyond the seas. As he sails in his calling from port to port, the thought is always in his mind; everything he hears groups itself naturally around this thought; he observes the winds and currents; he collects information from mariners who have been driven out of their course, in the direction

where he believes this unknown land to lie. And at length he persuades some prince that his belief is no mere dream, and like the great admiral Christopher Columbus, he ventures across the trackless unknown Atlantic and discovers the Western Indies. But before he was a discoverer, he was a mariner.

Or some engraver of woodcuts thinks of applying his carved blocks to letters, and the printing-press is invented. But it is in his calling. He has not gone out of his way to hunt for inventions. He has found them in his path, the path of his daily calling. It seems to me people do not become great, do not become discoverers and inventors by trying to be so, but by determining to do in the very best way what they have to do. Thus improvements suggest themselves, one by one, step by step; each improvement is tested as it is made by practical use, until at length the happy thought comes, not like an elf from the wild forest, but like an angel on the daily path; and the little improvements become the great invention. There is another great advantage, moreover, in this method over our father's. If the invention never comes, at all events we have the improvements, which are worth something. Every one cannot invent the printing-press or discover the New Indies; but every engraver may make his engravings a little better, and every mariner may explore a little further than his predecessors.

Yet it seems almost like treason to write thus of our father. What would Elsè or our mother think, who believe there is nothing but accident or the blindness of mankind between us and greatness? Not that they have learned to think thus from our father. Never in my life did I hear him say a grudging or depreciating word of any of those who have most succeeded where he has failed. He seems to look on all such men as part of a great brotherhood, and to rejoice in another man hitting the point which he missed, just as he would rejoice in himself succeeding in something to-day which he failed in yesterday. It is this nobleness of character which makes me reverence him more than any mere successes could. It is because I fear, that in a life of such disappointments my character would not prove so generous, but that failure would sour my temper and penury degrade my spirit as they never have his, that I have ventured to search for the rocks on which he made shipwreck, in order to avoid them. All men cannot return wrecked, and tattered, and destitute from an unsuccessful voyage, with a heart as hopeful, a temper as generous, a spirit as free from envy and detraction, as if they brought the golden fleece with them. Our father does this again and again; and therefore I trust his argosies are laid up for him as for those who follow the rules of evangelical perfection, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt. I could not. I would never return until I could bring what I had sought, or I should return a miserable man, shipwrecked in heart as well as in fortune. And therefore I must examine my charts, and choose my port and my vessel carefully, before I sail.

All these thoughts came into my mind as I stood on the last height of the forest, from which I could look back on Eisenach, nestling in the valley under the shadow of the Wartburg. May the dear mother of God, St. Elizabeth, and all the saints, defend it evermore!

But there was not much time to linger for a last view of Eisenach. The winter days were short; some snow had fallen in the previous night. The roofs of the houses in Eisenach were white with it, and the carvings of spire and tower seemed inlaid with alabaster. A thin covering lay on the meadows and hill-sides, and light feather-work frosted the pines. I had nearly thirty miles to walk through forest and plain before I reached Erfurt. The day was as bright and the air as light as my heart. The shadows of the pines lay across the frozen snow, over which my feet crunched cheerily. In the clearings, the outline of the black twigs were pencilled dark and clear against the light blue of the winter sky. Every outline was clear, and crisp, and definite, as I resolved my own aims in life should be. I knew my purposes were pure and high, and I felt as if Heaven must prosper me.

But as the day wore on, I began to wonder when the forest would end, until, as the sun sank lower and lower, I feared I must have missed my way; and at last as I climbed a height to make a survey, to my dismay it was too evident I had taken the wrong turning in the snow. Wide reaches of the forest lay all around me, one pine-covered hill folding over another; and only in one distant opening could I get a glimpse of the level land beyond, where I knew Erfurt must lie. The daylight was fast departing; my wallet was empty. I knew there were villages hidden in the valleys here and there; but not a wreath of smoke could I see, nor any sign of man, except here and there faggots piled in some recent clearing. Towards one of these clearings I directed my steps, intending to follow the wood-cutters' track, which I thought would probably lead me to the hut of some charcoal burner, where I might find fire and shelter. Before I reached this spot, however, night had set in. The snow began to fall again, and it seemed too great a risk to leave the broader path to follow any unknown track. I resolved, therefore, to make the best of my circumstances. They were not unendurable. I had a flint and tinder, and gathering some dry wood and twigs, I contrived with some difficulty to light a fire. Cold and hungry I certainly was, but for this I cared little. It was only an extra fast, and it seemed to me quite natural that my journey of life should commence with difficulty and danger. It was always so in legend of the saints, romance, or elfin tale, or when anything great was to be done.

But in the night, as the wind howled through the countless stems of the pines, not with the soft varieties of sound it makes amidst the summer oak-woods, but with a long monotonous wail like a dirge, a tumult awoke in my heart such as I had never known before. I knew these forests were infested by robber-bands, and I could hear in the distance the baying and howling of the wolves; but it was not fear which tossed my thoughts so wildly to and fro, at least not fear of bodily harm. I thought of all the stories of wild huntsmen, of wretched guilty men, hunted by packs of fiends; and the stories which had excited a wild delight in Elsè and me, as our grandmother told them by

the fire at home, now seemed to freeze my soul with horror. For was not I a guilty creature, and were not the devils indeed too really around me?—and what was to prevent their possessing me? Who in all the universe was on my side? Could I look up with confidence to God? He loves only the holy. Or to Christ? He is the judge; and more terrible than any cries of legions of devils will it be to the sinner to hear his voice from the awful snow-white throne of judgment. Then, my sins rose before me—my neglected prayers, penances imperfectly performed, incomplete confessions. Even that morning, had I not been full of proud and ambitious thoughts—even perhaps vainly comparing myself with my good father, and picturing myself as conquering and enjoying all kinds of worldly delights? It was true, it could hardly be a sin to wish to save my family from penury and care; but it was certainly a sin to be ambitious of worldly distinction, as Father Christopher had so often told me. Then, how difficult to separate the two? Where did duty end, and ambition and pride begin? I determined to find a confessor as soon as I reached Erfurt, if ever I reached it. And yet, what could even the wisest confessor do for me in such difficulties? How could I ever be sure that I had not deceived myself in examining my motives, and then deceived him, and thus obtained an absolution on false pretences, which could avail me nothing? And if this might be so with future confessions, why not with all past ones?

The thought was horror to me, and seemed to open a fathomless abyss of misery yawning under my feet. I could no more discover a track out of my miserable perplexities than out of the forest.

For if these apprehensions had any ground, not only the sins I had failed to confess were unpardoned, but the sins I had confessed and obtained absolution for on false grounds. Thus it might be that at that moment my soul stood utterly unsheltered, as my body from the snows, exposed to the wrath of God, the judgment of Christ, and the exulting cruelty of devils.

It seemed as if only one thing could save me, and that could never be had. If I could find an infallible confessor, who could see down into the depth of my heart, and back into every recess of my life, who could unveil me to myself, penetrate all my motives, and assign me the penances I really deserved, I would travel to the end of the world to find him. The severest penances he could assign, after searching the lives of all the holy Eremites and Martyrs, for examples of mortification, it seemed to me would be light indeed, if I could only be sure they were the right penances and would be followed by a true absolution.

But this it was, indeed, impossible I could ever find.

What sure hope then could I ever have of pardon or remission of sins? What voice of priest or monk, the holiest on earth, could ever assure me I had been honest with myself? What absolution could ever give me a right to believe that the baptismal robes, soiled as they told me "before I had left off my infant socks," could once more be made white and clean?

Then, for the first time in my life the thought flashed on me, of the monastic vows, the cloister and the cowl. I knew there was a virtue in the monastic profession which many said was equal to a second baptism. Could it be possible that the end of all my aspirations might after all be the monk's frock? What then would become of father and mother, dear Elsè, and the little ones? The thought of their dear faces seemed for an instant to drive away these gloomy fears, as they say a hearth-fire keeps off the wolves. But then a hollow voice seemed to whisper, "If God is against you, and the saints, and your conscience, what help can you render your family or any one else?" The conflict seemed more than I could bear. It was so impossible to me to make out which suggestions were from the devil and which from God, and which from my own sinful heart; and yet it might be the unpardonable sin to confound them. Wherefore for the rest of the night I tried not to think at all, but paced up and down reciting the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Paternoster, the Ave Maria, the Litanies of the Saints, and all the collects and holy ejaculations I could think of. By degrees this seemed to calm me, especially the Creeds and the Paternoster, whether because these are spells the fiends especially dread, or because there is something so comforting in the mere words, "Our Father," and "the remission of sins," I do not know. Probably for both reasons.

And so the morning dawned, and the low sunbeams slanted up through the red stems of the pines; and I said the Ave Maria, and thought of the sweet mother of God, and was a little cheered.

But all the next day I could not recover from the terrors of that solitary night. A shadow seemed to have fallen on my hopes and projects. How could I tell that all which had seemed most holy to me as an object in life might not be temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and that with all my labouring for my dear ones at home, my sins might not bring on them more troubles than all my successes could avert?

As I left the shadow of the forest, however, my heart seemed to grow lighter. I shall always henceforth feel sure that the wildest legends of the forests may be true, and that the fiends have especial haunts among the solitary woods at night.

It was pleasant to see the towers of Erfurt rising before me on the plain.

I had only one friend at the University; but that is Martin Luther, and he is a host in himself to me. He is already distinguished among the students here; and the professors expect great things of him.

He is especially studying jurisprudence, because his father wishes him to be a great lawyer. This also is to be my profession, and his counsel, always so heartily given, is of the greatest use to me.

His life is, indeed, changed since we first knew him at Eisenach, when Aunt Ursula took compassion on him, a destitute scholar, singing at the doors of the houses in St. George Street for a piece of bread. His father's hard struggles to maintain and raise his family have succeeded at last; he is now the owner of a foundry and some smelting-furnaces, and supports Martin liberally at the university. The icy morning of Martin's struggles seems over, and all is bright before him.

Erfurt is the first University in Germany. Compared with it, as Martin Luther says, the other universities are mere private academies. At present we have from a thousand to thirteen hundred students. Some of our professors have studied the classics in Italy, under the descendents of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Elector Frederic has, indeed, lately founded a new University at Wittemberg, but we at Erfurt have little fear of Wittemberg outstripping our ancient institution.

The Humanists, or disciples of the ancient heathen learning, are in great force here, with Mutianus Rufus at their head. They meet often, especially at his house, and he gives them subjects for Latin versification, such as the praises of poverty. Martin Luther's friend Spalatin joined these assemblies; but he himself does not, at least not as a member. Indeed, strange things are reported of their converse, which make the names of poet and philosopher in which they delight very much suspected in orthodox circles. These ideas Mutianus and his friends are said to have imported with the classical literature from Italy. He has even declared and written in a letter to a friend, that "there is but one God, and one goddess, although under various forms and various names, as Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ; Luna, Ceres, Proserpine, Tellus, Mary." But these things he warns his disciples not to speak of in public. "They must be veiled in silence," he says, "like the Eleusinian mysteries. In the affairs of religion we must make use of the mask of fables and enigmas. Let us by the grace of Jupiter, that is of the best and highest God, despise the lesser gods. When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ and the true God."

Mutianus and his friends also in their intimate circles speak most slightingly of the Church ceremonies, calling the Mass a comedy, and the holy relics ravens' bones;[2] speaking of the service of the altar as so much lost time: and stigmatizing the prayers at the canonical hours as a mere baying of hounds, or the humming, not of busy bees, but of lazy drones.

If you reproached them with such irreverent sayings, they would probably reply that they had only uttered them in an esoteric sense, and meant nothing by them. But when people deem it right thus to mask their truths, and explain away their errors, it is difficult to distinguish which is the mask and which the reality in their estimation. It seems to me also that they make mere intellectual games or exercises out of the most profound and awful questions.

This probably, more than the daring character of their speculations, deters Martin Luther from numbering himself among them. His nature is so reverent in spite of all the courage of his character. I think he would dare or suffer anything for what he believed true; but he cannot bear to have the poorest fragment of what he holds sacred trifled with or played with as a mere feat of intellectual gymnastics.

His chief attention is at present directed, by his father's especial desire, to Roman literature and law, and to the study of the allegories and philosophy of Aristotle. He likes to have to do with what is true and solid; poetry and music are his delight and recreation. But it is in debate he most excels. A few evenings since, he introduced me to a society of students, where questions new and old are debated and it was glorious to see how our Martin carried off the palm; sometimes swooping down on his opponents like an eagle among a flock of small birds, or setting down his great lion's paw and quietly crushing a host of objections, apparently unaware of the mischief he had done, until some feeble wail of the prostrate foe made him sensible of it, and he withdrew with a good-humored apology for having hurt any one's feelings. At other times he withers an unfair argument or a confused statement to a cinder by some lightning-flash of humor or satire. I do not think he is often perplexed by seeing too much of the other side of a disputed question. He holds the one truth he is contending for, and he sees the one point he is aiming at, and at that he charges with a force compounded of the ponderous weight of his will, and the electric velocity of his thoughts, crushing whatever comes in his way, scattering whatever escapes right and left, and never heeding how the scattered forces may reunite and form in his rear. He knows that if he only turns on them, in a moment they will disperse again.

I cannot quite tell how this style of warfare would answer for an advocate, who had to make the best of any cause he is engaged to plead. I cannot fancy Martin Luther quietly collecting the arguments from the worst side, to the end that even the worst side may have fair play; which is, I suppose, often the office of an advocate.

No doubt, however, he will find or make his calling in the world. The professors and learned men have the most brilliant expectations as to his career. And what is rare (they say), he seems as much the favorite of the students as of the professors. His nature is so social; his musical abilities and his wonderful powers of conversation make him popular with all.

And yet, underneath it all, we who know him well can detect at times that tide of thoughtful melancholy, which seems to lie at the bottom of all hearts which have looked deeply into themselves or into life.

He is as attentive as ever to religion, never missing the daily mass. But in our private conversations, I see that his conscience is anything but at ease. Has he passed through conflicts such as mine in the forest on that terrible night? Perhaps through conflicts as much fiercer and

more terrible, as his character is stronger and his mind deeper than mine. But who can tell? What is the use of unfolding perplexities to each other, which it seems no intellect on earth can solve? The inmost recesses of the heart must always, I suppose, be a solitude, like that dark and awful sanctuary within the veil of the old Jewish temple, entered only once a year, and faintly illumined by the light without, through the thick folds of the sacred veil.

If only that solitude were indeed a holy of holies—or, being what it is, if we only need enter it once a year, and not carry about the consciousness of its dark secrets with us everywhere. But, alas! once entered we can never forget it. It is like the chill, dark crypts underneath our churches, where the masses for the dead are celebrated, and where in some monastic churches the embalmed corpses lie shrivelled to mummies, and visible through gratings. Through all the joyous festivals of the holidays above, the consciousness of those dark chambers of death below seems to creep up; like the damps of the vaults through the incense, like the muffled wail of the dirges through the songs of praise.

ERFURT, *April*,
1503.

We are just returned from an expedition which might have proved fatal to Martin Luther. Early in the morning, three days since, we started to walk to Mansfeld on a visit to his family, our hearts as full of hope as the woods were full of song. We were armed with swords; our wallets were full; and spirits light as the air. Our way was to lie through field and forest, and then along the banks of the river Holme, through the Golden Meadow where are so many noble cloisters and imperial palaces.

But we had scarcely been on our way an hour when Martin, by some accident, ran his sword into his foot. To my dismay the blood gushed out in a stream. He had cut into a main artery. I left him under the care of some peasants, and ran back to Erfurt for a physician. When he arrived, however, there was great difficulty in closing the wound with bandages. I longed for Elsè or our mother's skillful fingers. We contrived to carry him back to the city. I sat up to watch with him. But in the middle of the night his wound burst out bleeding afresh. The danger was very great, and Martin himself giving up hope, and believing death was close at hand, committed his soul to the blessed Mother of God. Merciful and pitiful, knowing sorrow, yet raised glorious above all sorrow, with a mother's heart for all, and a mother's claim on Him who is the judge of all, where indeed can we so safely flee for refuge as to Mary? It was edifying to see Martin's devotion to her, and no doubt it was greatly owing to this that at length the remedies succeeded, the bandages closed the wound again, and the blood was stanched.

Many an Ave will I say for this to the sweet Mother of Mercy. Perchance she may also have pity on me. O sweetest Lady, "eternal daughter of the eternal Father, heart of the indivisible Trinity," thou seest my desire to help my own careworn mother; aid me, and have mercy on me, thy sinful child.

ERFURT, *June*, 1503.

Martin Luther has taken his first degree. He is a fervent student, earnest in this as in everything. Cicero and Virgil are his great companions among the Latins. He is now raised quite above the pressing cares of penury, and will probably never taste them more. His father is now a prosperous burgher of Mansfeld, and on the way to become burgomaster. I wish the prospects at my home were as cheering. A few years less of pinching poverty for myself seems to matter little, but the cares of our mother and Elsè weigh on me often heavily. It must be long yet before I can help them effectually, and meantime the bright youth of my little Elsè, and the very life of our toilworn patient mother, will be wearing away.

For myself I can fully enter into what Martin says, "The young should learn especially to endure suffering and want; for such suffering doth them no harm. It doth more harm for one to prosper without toil than it doth to endure suffering." He says also, "It is God's way, of beggars to make men of power, just as he made the world out of nothing. Look upon the courts of kings and princes, upon cities and parishes. You will there find jurists, doctors, councillors, secretaries, and preachers who were commonly poor, and always such as have been students, and have risen and flown so high through the quill that they are become lords."

But the way to wealth through the quill seems long; and lives so precious to me are being worn out meantime, while I climb to the point where I could help them! Sometimes I wish I had chosen the calling of a merchant, men seem to prosper so much more rapidly through trade than through study; and nothing on earth seems to me so well worth working for as to lift the load from their hearts at home. But it is too late. Rolling stones gather no moss. I must go on now in the track I have chosen. Only sometimes again the fear which came over me on that night in the forest. It seems as if heaven were against me, and that it is vain presumption for such as I even to hope to benefit any one.

Partly, no doubt, it is the depression, caused by poor living, which brings these thoughts. Martin Luther said so to me one day when he found me desponding. He said he knew so well what it was. He had suffered so much from penury at Magdeburg, and at Eisenach had even seriously thought of giving up study altogether and returning to his father's calling. He is kind to me and to all who need, but his means do not yet allow him to do more than maintain himself. Or rather, they are not his but his father's, and he feels he has no right to be generous at the expense of his

father's self-denial and toil.

I find life looks different, I must say, after a good meal. But then I cannot get rid of the thought of the few such meals they have at home. Not that Elsè writes gloomily. She never mentions a thing to sadden me. And this week she sent me a gulden, which she said belonged to her alone, and she had vowed never to use unless I would take it. But a student who saw them lately said our mother looked wan and ill. And to increase their difficulties, a month since the father received into the house a little orphan girl, a cousin of our mother's, called Eva von Schönberg. Heaven forbid that I should grudge the orphan her crust, but when it makes a crust less for the mother and the little ones, it is difficult to rejoice in such an act of charity.

ERFURT, *July*, 1503.

I have just obtained a nomination on a foundation, which will, I hope, for the present at least, prevent my being any burden on my family for my own maintenance. The rules are very strict, and they are enforced with many awful vows and oaths which trouble my conscience not a little, because, if the least detail of these rules to which I have sworn is even inadvertently omitted, I involve myself in the guilt of perjury. However, it is a step onward in the way to independence; and a far heavier yoke might well be borne with such an object.

We (the beneficiaries on this foundation) have solemnly vowed to observe the seven canonical hours, never omitting the prayers belonging to each. This insures early rising, which is a good thing for a student. The most difficult to keep is the midnight hour, after a day of hard study; but it is no more than soldiers on duty have continually to go through. We have also to chant the *Miserere* at funerals, and frequently to hear the eulogy of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This last can certainly not be called a hardship, least of all to me who desire ever henceforth to have an especial devotion to Our Lady, to recite daily the Rosary, commemorating the joys of Mary, the Salutation, the journey across the mountains, the birth without pain, the finding of Jesus in the Temple, and the Ascension. It is only the vows which make it rather a bondage. But, indeed, in spite of all, it is a great boon. I can conscientiously write to Elsè now, that I shall not need another penny of their scanty store, and can even, by the next opportunity, return what she sent, which, happily, I have not yet touched.

August, 1503.

Martin Luther is very dangerously ill; many of the professors and students are in great anxiety about him. He has so many friends; and no wonder! He is no cold friend himself, and all expect great honour to the University from his abilities. I scarcely dare to think what his loss would be to me. But this morning an aged priest who visited him inspired us with some hope. As Martin lay, apparently in the last extremity, and himself expecting death, this old priest came to his bed-side, and said gently, but in a firm tone of conviction,—

"Be of good comfort, my brother, you will not die at this time; God will yet make a great man of you, who shall comfort many others. Whom God loveth and proposeth to make a blessing, upon him he early layeth the cross, and in that school, who patiently endure learn much."

The words came with a strange kind of power, and I cannot help thinking that there is a little improvement in the patient since they were uttered. Truly, good words are like food and medicine to body and soul.

ERFURT, *August*,
1503.

Martin Luther is recovered! The Almighty, the Blessed Mother, and all the saints be praised.

The good old priest's words have also brought some especial comfort to me. If it could only be possible that those troubles and cares which have weighed so heavily on Elsè's early life and mine, are not the rod of anger, but the cross laid on those God loveth! But who can tell? For Elsè, at least, I will try to believe this.

The world is wide in these days, with the great New World opened by the Spanish mariners beyond the Atlantic, and the noble Old World opened to students through the sacred fountains of the ancient classics, once more unsealed by the revived study of the ancient languages; and this new discovery of printing, which will, my father thinks, diffuse the newly unsealed fountains of ancient wisdom in countless channels among high and low.

These are glorious times to live in. So much already unfolded to us! And who knows what beyond? For it seems as if the hearts of men everywhere were beating high with expectation; as if, in these days, nothing were too great to anticipate, or too good to believe.

It is well to encounter our dragons at the threshold of life; instead of at the end of the race—at the threshold of death; therefore, I may well be content. In this wide and ever widening world, there must be some career for me and mine. What will it be?

And what will Martin Luther's be? Much is expected from him. Famous every one at the University says he must be. On what field will he win his laurels? Will they be laurels or palms?

When I hear him in the debates of the students, all waiting for his opinions, and applauding his eloquent words, I see the laurel already among his black hair, wreathing his massive, homely

forehead. But when I remember the debate which I know there is within him, the anxious fervency of his devotions, his struggle of conscience, his distress at any omission of duty, and watch the deep melancholy look which there is sometimes in his dark eyes, I think not of the tales of the heroes, but of the legends of the saints, and wonder in what victory over the old dragon he will win his palm.

But the bells are sounding for compline, and I must not miss the sacred hour.

III.

Elsè's Chronicle.

EISENACH, 1504.

I cannot say that things have prospered much with us since Fritz left. The lumber-room itself is changed. The piles of old books are much reduced, because we have been obliged to pawn many of them for food. Some even of the father's beautiful models have had to be sold. It went terribly to his heart. But it paid our debts.

Our grandmother has grown a little querulous at times lately. And I am so tempted to be cross sometimes. The boys eat so much and wear out their clothes so fast. Indeed, I cannot see that poverty makes any of us better, except it be my mother, who needed improvement least of all.

September, 1504.

The father has actually brought a new inmate into the house, a little girl, called Eva von Schönberg, a distant cousin of our mother.

Last week he told us she was coming, very abruptly. I think he was rather afraid of what our grandmother would say, for we all know it is not of the least use to come round her with soft speeches. She always sees what you are aiming at, and with her keen eyes cuts straight through all your circumlocutions, and obliges you to descend direct on your point, with more rapidity than grace.

Accordingly, he said, quite suddenly, one day at dinner,—

"I forgot to tell you, little mother, I have just had a letter from your relations in Bohemia. Your great-uncle is dead. His son, you know, died before him. A little orphan girl is left with no one to take care of her. I have desired them to send her to us. I could do no less. It was an act, not of charity, but of the plainest duty. And besides," he added, apologetically, "in the end it may make our fortunes. There is property somewhere in the family, if we could get it; and this little Eva is the descendant of the eldest branch. Indeed, I do not know but that she may bring many valuable family heirlooms with her."

These last observations he addressed especially to my grandmother, hoping thereby to make it clear to her that the act was one of the deepest worldly wisdom. Then turning to the mother, he concluded,—

"Little mother, thou wilt find a place for the orphan in thy heart, and Heaven will no doubt bless us for it."

"No doubt about the room in my daughter's heart!" murmured our grandmother; "the question, as I read it, is not about hearts, but about larders and wardrobes. And, certainly," she added, not very pleasantly, "there is room enough there for any family jewels the young heiress may bring."

As usual, the mother came to the rescue.

"Dear grandmother," she said, "Heaven, no doubt, will repay us; and besides, you know, we may now venture on a little more expense, since we are out of debt."

"There is no doubt, I suppose," retorted our grandmother, "about Heaven repaying you; but there seems to me a good deal of doubt whether it will be in current coin."

Then, I suppose fearing the effect of so doubtful a sentiment on the children, she added rather querulously, but in a gentler tone,—

"Let the little creature come. Room may be made for her soon in one way or another. The old creep out at the church-yard gate, while the young bound in at the front door."

And in a few days little Eva came; but, unfortunately without the family jewels. But the saints forbid I should grow mercenary or miserly, and grudge the orphan her crust!

And who could help welcoming little Eva? As she lies on my bed asleep, with her golden hair on the pillow, and the long lashes shading her cheek, flushed with sleep and resting on her dimpled white hand, who could wish her away? And when I put out the lamp (as I must very soon) and lie down beside her, she will half awake, just to nestle into my heart, and murmur in her sleep, "Sweet cousin Elsè!" And I shall no more be able to wish her gone than my guardian angel.

Indeed I think she is something like one.

She is not quite ten years old; but being an only child, and always brought up with older people, she has a quiet, considerate way, and a quaint, thoughtful gravity, which sits with a strange charm on her bright, innocent, child-like face.

At first she seemed a little afraid of our children, especially the boys, and crept about everywhere by the side of my mother, to whom she gave her confidence from the beginning. She did not so immediately take to our grandmother, who was not very warm in her reception; but the second evening after her arrival, she deliberately took her little stool up to our grandmother's side, and seating herself at her feet, laid her two little, soft hands on the dear, thin, old hands, and said,—

"You must love me, for I shall love you very much. You are like my great-aunt who died."

And, strange to say, our grandmother seemed quite flattered; and ever since they have been close friends. Indeed she commands us all, and there is not one in the house who does not seem to think her notice a favour. I wonder if Fritz would feel the same!

Our father lets her sit in his printing-room when he is making experiments, which none of us ever dared to do. She perches herself on the window-sill, and watches him as if she understood it all, and he talks to her as if he thought she did.

Then she has a wonderful way of telling the legends of the saints to the children. When our grandmother tells them, I think of the saints as heroes and warriors. When I try to relate the sacred stories to the little ones, I am afraid I make them too much like fairy tales. But when little Eva is speaking about St. Agnes or St. Catherine, her voice becomes soft and deep, like church music; and her face grave and beautiful, like one of the child-angels in the pictures; and her eyes as if they saw into heaven. I wish Fritz could hear her. I think she must be just what the saints were when they were little children, except for that strange, quiet way she has of making every one do what she likes. If our St. Elizabeth had resembled our little Eva in that, I scarcely think the Landgravine-mother would have ventured to have been so cruel to her. Perhaps it is little Eva who is to be the saint among us; and by helping her we may best please God, and be admitted at last to some humble place in heaven.

EISENACH,
December.

It is a great comfort that Fritz writes in such good spirits. He seems full of hope as to his prospects, and already he has obtained a place in some excellent institution, where, he says, he lives like a cardinal, and is quite above wanting assistance from any one. This is very encouraging. Martin Luther, also, is on the way to be quite a great man, Fritz says. It is difficult to imagine this; he looked so much like any one else, and we are all so completely at home with him, and he talks in such a simple, familiar way to us all—not in learned words, or about difficult, abstruse subjects, like the other wise men I know. Certainly it always interests us all to hear him, but one can understand all he says—even I can; so that it is not easy to think of him as a philosopher and a great man. I suppose wise men must be like the saints: one can only see what they are when they are at some distance from us.

What kind of great man will Martin Luther be, I wonder? As great as our burgomaster, or as Master Trebonius? Perhaps even greater than these; as great, even, as the Elector's secretary, who came to see our father about his inventions. But it is a great comfort to think of it, especially on Fritz's account; for I am sure Martin will never forget old friends.

I cannot quite comprehend Eva's religion. It seems to make her happy. I do not think she is afraid of God, or even of confession. She seems to enjoy going to church as if it were a holiday in the woods; and the name of Jesus seems not terrible, but dear to her, as the name of the sweet Mother of God is to me. This is very difficult to understand. I think she is not even very much afraid of the judgment-day; and this is the reason why I think so:—The other night, when we were both awakened by an awful thunder-storm, I hid my face under the clothes, in order not to see the flashes, until I heard the children crying in the next room, and rose of course, to soothe them, because our mother had been very tired that day, and was, I trusted, asleep. When I had sung and talked to the little ones, and sat by them till they were asleep, I returned to our room, trembling in every limb; but I found Eva kneeling by the bed-side, with her crucifix pressed to her bosom, looking as calm and happy as if the lightning flashes had been morning sunbeams.

She rose from her knees when I entered; and when I was once more safely in bed, with my arm around her, and the storm had lulled a little, I said,—

"Eva, are you not afraid of the lightning?"

"I think it might hurt us, Cousin Elsè," she said; "and that was the reason I was praying to God."

"But, Eva," I said, "supposing the thunder should be the archangel's voice! I always think every thunder-storm may be the beginning of the day of wrath—the dreadful judgment-day. What should you do then?"

She was silent a little, and then she said,—

"I think I should take my crucifix and pray, and try to ask the Lord Christ to remember that he died on the cross for us once. I think he would take pity on us if we did. Besides, Cousin Elsè,"

she added, after a pause, "I have a sentence which always comforts me. My father taught it me when I was a very little girl, in the prison, before he died. I could not remember it all, but this part I have never forgotten: '*God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.*' There was more, which I forgot; but that bit I always remembered, because I was my father's only child, and he loved me so dearly. I do not quite know all it means; but I know they are God's words, but I feel sure that it means that God loves us very much, and that he is in some way like my father."

"I know," I replied, "the Creed says, 'God, the Father Almighty;' but I never thought that the Almighty Father meant anything like our own father. I thought it meant only that he is very great, and that we all belong to him, and that we ought to love him. Are you sure, Eva, it means *he loves us*?"

"I believe so, Cousin Elsè," said Eva.

"Perhaps it does mean that he loves *you*, Eva," I answered. "But you are a good child, and always have been, I should think; and we all know that God loves people who are good. That sentence says nothing, you see, about God loving people who are not good. It is because I am never sure that I am doing the things that please him, that I am afraid of God and of the judgment-day."

Eva was silent a minute, and then she said,—

"I wish I could remember the rest of the sentence. Perhaps it might tell."

"Where does that sentence come from, Eva?" I asked. "Perhaps we might find it. Do you think God said it to your father from heaven, in a vision or a dream, as he speaks to the saints?"

"I think not, Cousin Elsè," she replied thoughtfully; "because my father said it was in a book, which he told me where to find, when he was gone. But when I found the book, a priest took it from me, and said it was not a good book for little girls; and I never had it again. So I have only my sentence, Cousin Elsè. I wish it made you happy, as it does me."

I kissed the darling child and wished her good night; but I could not sleep. I wish I could see the book. But perhaps, after all, it is not a right book; because (although Eva does not know it) I heard my grandmother say her father was a Hussite, and died on the scaffold for believing something wrong.

In the morning Eva was awake before me. Her large dark eyes were watching me, and the moment I woke she said,—

"Cousin Elsè, I think the end of that sentence has something to do with the crucifix; because I always think of them together. You know the Lord Jesus Christ is God's only Son, and he died on the cross for us."

And she rose and dressed, and said she would go to matins and say prayers for me, that I might not be afraid in the next thunder-storm.

It must be true, I am sure, that the cross and the blessed Passion were meant to do us some good; but then they can only do good to those who please God, and that is precisely what it is so exceedingly difficult to find out how to do.

I cannot think, however, that Eva can in any way be believing wrong, because she is so religious and so good. She attends most regularly at the confessional, and is always at church at the early mass, and many times besides. Often, also, I find her at her devotions before the crucifix and the picture of the Holy Virgin and Child in our room. She seems really to enjoy being religious, as they say St. Elizabeth did.

As for me, there is so very much to do between the printing, and the house, and our dear mother's ill health, and the baby, and the boys, who tear their clothes in such incomprehensible ways, that I feel more and more how utterly hopeless it is for me ever to be like any of the saints —unless, indeed, it is St. Christopher, whose legend is often a comfort to me, as our grandmother used to tell it to us, which was in this way:—

Offerus was a soldier, a heathen, who lived in the land of Canaan. He had a body twelve ells long. He did not like to obey, but to command. He did not care what harm he did to others, but lived a wild life, attacking and plundering all who came in his way. He only wished for one thing—to sell his services to the Mightiest; and as he heard that the emperor was in those days the head of Christendom, he said, "Lord Emperor, will you have me? To none less will I sell my heart's blood."

The emperor looked at his Samson strength, his giant chest, and his mighty fists, and he said, "If thou wilt serve me for ever, Offerus, I will accept thee."

Immediately the giant answered, "To serve you *for ever* is not so easily promised; but as long as I am your soldier, none in east or west shall trouble you."

Thereupon he went with the emperor through all the land, and the emperor was delighted with him. All the soldiers, in the combat as at the wine-cup, were miserable, helpless creatures compared with Offerus.

Now the emperor had a harper who sang from morning till bed-time; and whenever the emperor was weary with the march this minstrel had to touch his harp-strings. Once, at eventide, they pitched the tents near a forest. The emperor ate and drank lustily; the minstrel sang a merry song. But as, in his song, he spoke of the evil one, the emperor signed the cross on his forehead.

Said Offerus aloud to his comrades, "What is this? What jest is the Prince making now?" Then the emperor said, "Offerus, listen: I did it on account of the wicked fiend, who is said often to haunt this forest with great rage and fury." That seemed marvellous to Offerus, and he said, scornfully, to the emperor, "I have a fancy for wild boars and deer. Let us hunt in this forest." The emperor said softly, "Offerus, no! Let alone the chase in this forest, for in filling thy larder thou mightst harm thy soul." Then Offerus made a wry face, and said, "The grapes are sour; if your highness is afraid of the devil, I will enter the service of this lord, who is mightier than you." Thereupon he coolly demanded his pay, took his departure, with no very ceremonious leave-taking, and strode off cheerily into the thickest depths of the forest.

In a wild clearing of the forest he found the devil's altar, built of black cinders: and on it, in the moonlight gleamed the white skeletons of men and horses. Offerus was in no way terrified, but quietly inspected the skulls and bones; then he called three times in a loud voice on the evil one, and seating himself fell asleep, and soon began to snore. When it was midnight, the earth seemed to crack, and on a coal-black horse he saw a pitch-black rider, who rode at him furiously, and sought to bind him with solemn promises. But Offerus said, "We shall see." Then they went together through the kingdoms of the world, and Offerus found him a better master than the emperor; needed seldom to polish his armour, but had plenty of feasting and fun. However, one day as they went along the high-road, three tall crosses stood before them. Then the Black Prince suddenly had a cold, and said, "Let us creep round by the bye-road." Said Offerus, "Methinks you are afraid of those gallows trees," and, drawing his bow, he shot an arrow into the middle cross. "What bad manners!" said Satan, softly; "do you not know that he who in his form as a servant is the son of Mary, now exercises great power?" "If that is the case," said Offerus, "I came to you fettered by no promise; now I will seek further for the mightiest, whom only I will serve." Then Satan went off with a mocking laugh, and Offerus went on his way asking every traveller he met for the Son of Mary. But, alas! few bear Him in their hearts; and no one could tell the giant where the Lord dwelt, until one evening Offerus found an old pious hermit, who gave him a night's lodging in his cell, and sent him next morning to the Carthusian cloister. There the lord prior listened to Offerus, showed him plainly the path of faith, and told him he must fast and pray, as John the Baptist did of old in the wilderness. But he replied, "Locusts and wild honey, my lord, are quite contrary to my nature, and I do not know any prayers. I should lose my strength altogether, and had rather not go to heaven at all in that way." "Reckless man!" said the prior. "However, you may try another way: give yourself up heartily to achieve some good work." "Ah! let me hear," said Offerus; "I have strength for that." "See, there flows a mighty river, which hinders pilgrims on their way to Rome. It has neither ford nor bridge. Carry the faithful over on thy back." "If I can please the Saviour in that way, willingly will I carry the travellers to and fro," replied the giant. And thereupon he built a hut of reeds, and dwelt thenceforth among the water-rats and beavers on the borders of the river, carrying pilgrims over the river cheerfully, like a camel or an elephant. But if any one offered him ferry-money, he said, "I labour for eternal life." And when now, after many years, Offerus's hair had grown white, one stormy night a plaintive little voice called to him, "Dear, good, tall Offerus, carry me across." Offerus was tired and sleepy, but he thought faithfully of Jesus Christ, and with weary arms seizing the pine trunk which was his staff when the floods swelled high, he waded through the water and nearly reached the opposite bank; but he saw no pilgrim there, so he thought, "I was dreaming," and went back and lay down to sleep again. But scarcely had he fallen asleep when again came the little voice, this time very plaintive and touching, "Offerus, good, dear, great, tall Offerus, carry me across." Patiently the old giant crossed the river again, but neither man nor mouse was to be seen, and he went back and lay down again, and was soon fast asleep; when once more came the little voice, clear and plaintive, and imploring, "Good, dear giant Offerus, carry me across." The third time he seized his pine-stem and went through the cold river. This time he found a tender, fair little boy, with golden hair. In his left hand was the standard of the Lamb; in his right, the globe. He looked at the giant with eyes full of love and trust, and Offerus lifted him up with two fingers; but, when he entered the river, the little child weighed on him like a ton. Heavier and heavier grew the weight, until the water almost reached his chin; great drops of sweat stood on his brow, and he had nearly sunk in the stream with the little one. However, he struggled through, and tottering to the other side, set the child gently down on the bank, and said, "My little lord, prithee, come not this way again, for scarcely have I escaped this time with life." But the fair child baptized Offerus on the spot, and said to him, "Know all thy sins are forgiven; and although thy limbs tottered, fear not, nor marvel, but rejoice; thou hast carried the Saviour of the world! For a token, plant thy pine-trunk, so long dead and leafless, in the earth; to-morrow it shall shoot out green twigs. And henceforth thou shalt be called not Offerus, but Christopher." Then Christopher folded his hands and prayed and said, "I feel my end draws nigh. My limbs tremble; my strength fails; and God has forgiven me all my sins." Thereupon the child vanished in light; and Christopher set his staff into the earth. And so on the morrow, it shot out green leaves and red blossoms like an almond. And three days afterwards the angels carried Christopher to Paradise.

This is the legend which gives me more hope than any other. How sweet it would be, if, when I had tried in some humble way to help one and another on the way to the holy city, when the last burden was borne, and the strength was failing, the holy child should appear to me and say, "Little Elsè, you have done the work I meant you to do—your sins are forgiven;" and then the angels were to come and take me up in their arms, and carry me across the dark river, and my life were to grow young and bloom again in Paradise like St. Christopher's withered staff!

But to watch all the long days of life by the river, and carry the burdens, and not know if we are doing the right thing after all—that is what is so hard!

Sweet, when the river was crossed, to find that in fulfilling some little, humble, every-day duty, one had actually been serving and pleasing the mightiest, the Saviour of the world! But if one could only know it *whilst one was* struggling through the flood, how delightful that would be! How little one would mind the icy water, or the aching shoulders, or the tottering, failing limbs!

EISENACH, *January*, 1505.

Fritz is at home with us again. He looks as much a man now as our father, with his moustache and his sword. How cheerful the sound of his firm step and his deep voice makes the house! When I look at him sometimes, as he tosses the children and catches them in his arms, or as he flings the balls with Christopher and Pollux, or shoots with bow and arrows in the evenings at the city games, my old wish recurs that he had lived in the days when our ancestors dwelt in the castles in Bohemia, and that Fritz had been a knight, to ride at the head of his retainers to battle for some good cause,—against the Turks, for instance, who are now, they say, threatening the empire, and all Christendom. My little world at home is wide indeed, and full enough for me, but this burgher life seems narrow and poor for him. I should like him to have to do with men instead of books. Women can read, and learn, and think, if they have time (although, of course, not as well as men can); I have even heard of women writing books. St. Barbara and St. Catherine understood astronomy, and astrology, and philosophy, and could speak I do not know how many languages. But they could not have gone forth armed with shield and spear like St. George of Cappadocia, to deliver the fettered princess and slay the great African dragon. And I should like Fritz to do what women can*not* do. There is such strength in his light, agile frame, and such power in his dark eyes; although, certainly after all he had written to us about his princely fare at the House at Erfurt, where he is a beneficiary, our mother and I did not expect to have seen his face looking so hollow and thin.

He has brought me back my godmother's gulden. He says he is an independent man, earning his own livelihood, and quite above receiving any such gratuities. However, as I devoted it to Fritz I feel I have a right to spend it on him, which is a great comfort, because I can provide a better table than we can usually afford, during the few days he will stay with us, so that he may never guess how pinched we often are.

I am ashamed of myself, but there is something in this return of Fritz which disappoints me. I have looked forward to it day and night through all these two years with such longing. I thought we should begin again exactly where we left off. I pictured to myself the old daily life with him going on again as of old. I thought of our sitting in the lumber-room, and chatting over all our perplexities, our own and the family's, and pouring our hearts into each other's without reserve or fear, so that it was scarcely like talking at all, but like thinking aloud.

And, now, instead of our being acquainted with every detail of each other's daily life, so that we are aware what we are feeling without speaking about it, there is a whole history of new experience to be narrated step by step, and we do not seem to know where to begin. None of the others can feel this as I do. He is all to the children and our parents that he ever was, and why should I expect more? Indeed, I scarcely know what I did expect, or what I do want. Why should Fritz be more to me than to any one else? It is selfish to wish it, and it is childish to imagine that two years could bring no change. Could I have wished it? Do I not glory in his strength, and in his free and manly bearing! And could I wish a student at the great University of Erfurt, who is soon to be a Bachelor of Arts, to come and sit on the piles of old books in our lumber-room, and to spend his time in gossiping with me? Besides, what have I to say? And yet, this evening, when the twilight-hour came round for the third time since he returned, and he seemed to forget all about it, I could not help feeling troubled, and so took refuge here by myself.

Fritz has been sitting in the family-room for the last hour, with all the children round him, telling them histories of what the students do at Erfurt; of their poetical club, where they meet and recite their own verses, or translations of the ancient books which have been unburied lately, and yet are fresher, he says, than any new ones, and set every one thinking; of the debating meeting, and the great singing parties where hundreds of voices join, making music fuller than any organ, —in both of which Martin Luther seems a leader and a prince; and then of the fights among the students, in which I do not think Martin Luther has joined, but which, certainly, interest Christopher and Pollux more than anything else. The boys were standing on each side of Fritz, listening with wide open eyes; Chriemhild and Atlantis had crept close behind him with their sewing; little Thekla was on his knee, playing with his sword-girdle; and little Eva was perched in her favourite place on the window-sill, in front of him. At first she kept at a distance from him, and said nothing; not, I think, from shyness, for I do not believe that child is afraid of any one or any thing, but from a quaint way she has of observing people, as if she were learning them through like a new language, or, like a sovereign making sure of the character of a new subject before she admits him into her service. The idea of the little creature treating our Fritz in that grand style! But it is of no use resisting it. He has passed through his probation like the rest of us, and is as much flattered as the grandmother, or any of us, at being admitted into her confidence. When I left, Eva, who had been listening for some time with great attention to his student-stories, had herself become the chief speaker, and the whole party were attending with riveted interest while she related to them her favourite Legend of St. Catherine. They had all heard it before, but in some way when Eva tells these histories they always seem new. I suppose it is because she believes them so fervently; it is not as if she were repeating something she had heard, but quietly narrating something she has seen, much as one would imagine an angel might who had been watching unseen while it all happened. And, meantime, her eyes, when she raises

them, with their fringe of long lashes, seem to look at once into your heart and into heaven.

No wonder Fritz forgets the twilight-hour. But it is strange he has never once asked about our chronicle. Of that, however, I am glad, because I would not for the world show him the narrative of our struggles.

Can it be possible I am envious of little Eva—dear, little, loving, orphan Eva? I do rejoice that all the world should love him. Yet, it was so happy to be Fritz's only friend; and why should a little stranger child steal my precious twilight-hour from me?

Well, I suppose Aunt Agnes was right, and I made an idol of Fritz, and God was angry, and I am being punished. But the saints seemed to find a kind of sacred pleasure in their punishments, and I do not; nor do I feel at all the better for them, but the worse—which is another proof how hopeless it is for me to try to be a saint.

EISENACH, *February*.

As I wrote those last words in the deepening twilight, two strong hands were laid very gently on my shoulders, and a voice said—

"Sister Elsè, *why* can you not show me your chronicle?"

I could make no reply.

"You are convicted," rejoined the same voice.

"Do you think I do not know where that gulden came from? Let me see your godmother's purse."

I began to feel the tears choking me; but Fritz did not seem to notice them.

"Elsè," he said, "you may practise your little deceptive arts on all the rest of the family, but they will not do with me. Do you think you will ever persuade me you have grown thin by eating sausages and cakes and wonderful holiday puddings every day of your life? Do you think the hungry delight in the eyes of those boys was occasioned by their every-day, ordinary fare? Do you think," he added, taking my hands in one of his, "I did not see how blue and cold, and covered with chilblains, these little hands were, which piled up the great logs on the hearth when I came in this morning?"

Of course I could do nothing but put my head on his shoulder and cry quietly. It was of no use denying anything. Then he added rapidly, in a low deep voice—

"Do you think I could help seeing our mother at her old devices, pretending she had no appetite, and liked nothing so much as bones and sinews?"

"O Fritz," I sobbed, "I cannot help it. What am I to do?"

"At least," he said, more cheerfully, "promise me, little woman, you will never make a distinguished stranger of your brother again, and endeavour by all kinds of vain and deceitful devices to draw the whole weight of the family cares on your own shoulders."

"Do you think it is a sin I ought to confess, Fritz?" I said; "I did not mean it deceitfully; but I am always making such blunders about right and wrong. What can I do?"

"Does Aunt Ursula know?" he asked rather fiercely.

"No; the mother will not let me tell any one. She thinks they would reflect on our father; and he told her only last week, he has a plan about a new way of smelting lead, which is, I think, to turn it all into silver. That would certainly be a wonderful discovery; and he thinks the Elector would take it up at once, and we should probably have to leave Eisenach and live near the Electoral Court. Perhaps even the Emperor would require us to communicate the secret to him, and then we should have to leave the country altogether; for you know there are great lead-mines in Spain; and if once people could make silver out of lead, it would be much easier and safer than going across the great ocean to procure the native silver from the Indian savages."

Fritz drew a long breath.

"And meantime?" he said.

"Well, meantime," I said, "it is of course, sometimes a little difficult to get on."

He mused a little while, and then he said—

"Little Elsè, I have thought of a plan which may, I think, bring us a few guldens—until the process of transmuting lead into silver is completed."

"Of course," I said, "after that we shall want nothing, but be able to give to those who do want. And oh, Fritz! how well we shall understand how to help people who are poor. Do you think that is why God lets us be so poor ourselves so long, and never seems to hear our prayers?"

"It would be pleasant to think so, Elsè," said Fritz, gravely; "but it is very difficult to understand how to please God, or how to make our prayers reach him at all—at least when we are so often feeling and doing wrong."

It cheered me to see that Fritz does not despair of the great invention succeeding one day. He did

not tell me what his own plan is.

Does Fritz, then, also feel so sinful and so perplexed how to please God? Perhaps a great many people feel the same. It is very strange. If it had only pleased God to make it a little plainer. I wonder if that book Eva lost would tell us anything!

After that evening the barrier between me and Fritz was of course quite gone, and we seemed closer than ever. We had delightful twilight talks in our lumber-room, and I love him more than ever. So that Aunt Agnes would, I suppose, think me more of an idolater than before. But it is very strange that idolatry should seem to do me so much good. I seem to love all the world better for loving Fritz, and to find everything easier to bear, by having him to unburden everything on, so that I had never fewer little sins to confess than during the two weeks Fritz was at home. If God had only made loving brothers and sisters and the people at home the way to please him, instead of not loving them too much, or leaving them all to bury one's self in a cold convent, like Aunt Agnes!

Little Eva actually persuaded Fritz to begin teaching her the Latin grammar! I suppose she wishes to be like her beloved St. Catherine, who was so learned. And she says all the holy books, the prayers and the hymns, are in Latin, so that she thinks it must be a language God particularly loves. She asked me a few days since if they speak Latin in heaven.

Of course I could not tell. I told her I believed the Bible was originally written in two other languages, the languages of the Greeks and the Jews, and that I had heard some one say Adam and Eve spoke the Jews' language in paradise, which I suppose God taught them.

But I have been thinking over it since, and I should not wonder if Eva is right.

Because, unless Latin is the language of the saints and holy angels in heaven, why should God wish the priests to speak it everywhere, and the people to say the Ave and Paternoster in it? We should understand it all so much better in German; but of course if Latin is the language of the blessed saints and angels, that is a reason for it. If we do not always understand, THEY do, which is a great comfort. Only I think it is a very good plan of little Eva's to try and learn Latin; and when I have more time to be religious, perhaps I may try also.

IV.

Extracts from Friedrich's Chronicle.

ERFURT, 1505.

The university seems rather a cold world after the dear old home at Eisenach. But it went to my heart to see how our mother and Elsè struggle, and how worn and thin they look. Happily for them, they have still hope in the great invention, and I would not take it away for the world. But meantime, I must at once do something to help. I can sometimes save some viands from my meals, which are portioned out to us liberally on this foundation, and sell them; and I can occasionally earn a little by copying themes for the richer students, or sermons and postils for the monks. The printing-press has certainly made that means of maintenance more precarious; but printed books are still very dear, and also very large, and the priests are often glad of small copies of fragments of the postils, or orations of the fathers, written off in a small, clear hand, to take with them on their circuits around the villages. There is also writing to be done for the lawyers, so that I do not despair of earning something: and if my studies are retarded a little, it does not so much matter. It is not for me to aspire to great things, unless, indeed, they can be reached by small and patient steps. I have a work to do for the family. My youth must be given to supporting them by the first means I can find. If I succeed, perhaps Christopher or Pollux will have leisure to aim higher than I can; or, perhaps, in middle and later life I myself shall have leisure to pursue the studies of these great old classics, which seem to make the horizon of our thoughts so wide, and the world so glorious and large, and life so deep. It would certainly be a great delight to devote one's self, as Martin Luther is now able to do, to literature and philosophy. His career is opening nobly. This spring he has taken his degree as Master of Arts, and he has been lecturing on Aristotle's physics and logic. He has great power of making dim things clear, and old things fresh. His lectures are crowded. He is also studying law, in order to qualify himself for some office in the State. His parents (judging from his father's letters) seem to centre all their hopes in him; and it is almost the same here at the university. Great things are expected of him; indeed there scarcely seems any career that is not open to him. And he is a man of such heart, as well as intellect, that he seems to make all the university, the professors as well as the students, look on him as a kind of possession of their own. All seem to feel a property in his success. Just as it was with our little circle at Eisenach, so it is with the great circle at the university. He is *our* Master Martin; and in every step of his ascent we ourselves feel a little higher. I wonder, if his fame should indeed spread as we anticipate, if it will be the same one day with all Germany? if the whole land will say exultingly by-and-by—*our* Martin Luther?

Not that he is without enemies; his temper is too hot and his heart too warm for that negative distinction of phlegmatic negative natures.

June, 1505.

Martin Luther came to me a few days since, looking terribly agitated. His friend Alexius has been assassinated, and he takes it exceedingly to heart; not only, I think, because of the loss of one he loved, but because it brings death so terribly near, and awakens again those questionings which I know are in the depths of his heart, as well as of mine, about God, and judgment, and the dark, dread future before us, which we cannot solve, yet cannot escape nor forget.

To-day we met again, and he was full of a book he had discovered in the university library, where he spends most of his leisure hours. It was a Latin Bible, which he had never seen before in his life. He marvelled greatly to see so much more in it than in the Evangelia read in the churches, or in the Collections of Homilies. He was called away to lecture, or, he said, he could have read on for hours. Especially one history seems to have impressed him deeply. It was in the Old Testament. It was the story of the child Samuel and his mother Hannah. "He read it quickly through," he said, "with hearty delight and joy; and because this was all new to him, he began to wish from the bottom of his heart that God would one day bestow on him such a book for his own."

I suppose it is the thought of his own pious mother which makes this history interest him so peculiarly. It is indeed a beautiful history, as he told it me, and makes one almost wish one had been born in the times of the old Hebrew monarchy. It seems as if God listened so graciously and readily then to that poor sorrowful woman's prayers. And if we could only, each of us, hear that voice from heaven, how joyful it would be to reply, like that blessed child, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and then to learn, without possibility of mistake, what God really requires of each of us. I suppose, however, the monks do feel as sure of their vocation as the holy child of old, when they leave home and the world for the service of the Church. It would be a great help if other people had vocations to their various works in life, like the prophet Samuel and (I suppose) the monks, that we might all go on fearlessly, with a firm step, each in his appointed path, and feel sure that we are doing the right thing, instead of perhaps drawing down judgments on those we would die to serve, by our mistakes and sins. It can hardly be intended that all men should be monks and nuns. Would to heaven, therefore, that laymen had also their vocation, instead of this terrible uncertainty and doubt that will shadow the heart at times, that we may have missed our path (as I did that night in the snow-covered forest), and, like Cain, be flying from the presence of God, and gathering on us and ours his curse.

July 12, 1505.

There is a great gloom over the university. The plague is among us. Many are lying dead who, only last week, were full of youth and hope. Numbers of the professors, masters, and students have fled to their homes, or to various villages in the nearest reaches of the Thuringian forest. The churches are thronged at all the services. The priests and monks (those who remain in the infected city) take advantage of the terror the presence of the pestilence excites, to remind people of the more awful terrors of that dreadful day of judgment and wrath which no one will be able to flee. Women, and sometimes men, are borne fainting from the churches, and often fall at once under the infection, and never are seen again. Martin Luther seems much troubled in mind. This epidemic, following so close on the assassination of his friend, seems to overwhelm him. But he does not talk of leaving the city. Perhaps the terrors which weigh most on him are those the preachers recall so vividly to us just now, from which there is no flight by change of place, but only by change of life. During this last week, especially since he was exposed to a violent thunder-storm on the high road near Erfurt, he has seemed strangely altered. A deep gloom is on his face, and he seems to avoid his old friends. I have scarcely spoken to him.

July 14.

To-day, to my great surprise, Martin has invited me and several other of his friends to meet at his rooms on the day after to-morrow, to pass a social evening in singing and feasting. The plague has abated; yet I rather wonder at any one thinking of merry-making yet. They say, however, that a merry heart is the best safe-guard.

July 17.

The secret of Martin Luther's feast is opened now. The whole university is in consternation. He has decided on becoming a monk. Many think it is a sudden impulse, which may yet pass away. I do not. I believe it is the result of the conflict of years, and that he has only yielded, in this act, to convictions which have been recurring to him continually during all his brilliant university career.

Never did he seem more animated than yesterday evening. The hours flew by in eager, cheerful conversation. A weight seemed removed from us. The pestilence was departing; the professors and students were returning. We felt life resuming its old course, and ventured once more to look forward with hope. Many of us had completed our academical course, and were already entering the larger world beyond—the university of life. Some of us had appointments already promised, and most of us had hopes of great things in the future; the less definite the prospects, perhaps the more brilliant. Martin Luther did not hazard any speculations as to his future career; but that surprised none of us. His fortune, we said, was insured already; and many a jesting claim was put in for his future patronage, when he should be a great man.

We had excellent music also, as always at any social gathering where Martin Luther is. His clear,

true voice was listened to with applause in many a well-known song, and echoed in joyous choruses afterward by the whole party. So the evening passed, until the university hour for repose had nearly arrived; when suddenly, in the silence after the last note of the last chorus had died away, he bid us all farewell; for on the morrow, he said, he purposed to enter the Augustinian monastery as a novice! At first, some treated this as a jest; but his look and bearing soon banished that idea. Then all earnestly endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose. Some spoke of the expectations the university had formed of him—others, of the career in the world open to him; but at all this he only smiled. When, however, one of us reminded him of his father, and the disappointment it might cause in his home, I noticed that a change came over his face, and I thought there was a slight quiver on his lip. But all,—friendly remark, calm remonstrance, fervent, affectionate entreaties,—all were unavailing.

"To-day," he said, "you see me; after this you will see me no more."

Thus we separated. But this morning, when some of his nearest friends went to his rooms early, with the faint hope of yet inducing him to listen, while we pressed on him the thousand unanswerable arguments which had occurred to us since we parted from him, his rooms were empty, and he was nowhere to be found. To all our inquiries we received no reply but that Master Martin had gone that morning, before it was light, to the Augustinian cloister.

Thither we followed him, and knocked loudly at the heavy convent gates. After some minutes they were slightly opened, and a sleepy porter appeared.

"Is Martin Luther here?" we asked.

"He is here!" was the reply; not, we thought, without a little triumph in the tone.

"We wish to speak with him," demanded one of us.

"No one is to speak with him," was the grim rejoinder.

"Until when?" we asked.

There was a little whispering inside, and then came the decisive answer, "Not for a month at least."

We would have lingered to parley further, but the heavy nailed doors were closed against us, we heard the massive bolts rattle as they were drawn, and all our assaults with fists or iron staffs on the convent gates, from that moment did not awaken another sound within.

"Dead to the world, indeed!" murmured one at length; "the grave could not be more silent."

Baffled, and hoarse with shouting, we wandered back again to Martin Luther's rooms. The old familiar rooms, where we had so lately spent hours with him in social converse; where I and many of us had spent so many an hour in intimate, affectionate intercourse,—his presence would be there no more; and the unaltered aspect of the mute, inanimate things only made the emptiness and change more painful by the contrast.

And yet, when we began to examine more closely, the aspect of many things was changed. His flute and lute, indeed, lay on the table, just as he had left them on the previous evening. But the books—scholastic, legal, and classical—were piled up carefully in one corner, and directed to the booksellers. In looking over the well-known volumes, I only missed two, Virgil and Plautus; I suppose he took these with him. Whilst we were looking at a parcel neatly rolled up in another place, the old man who kept his rooms in order came in, and said, "That is Master Martin's master's robe, his holiday attire, and his master's ring. They are to be sent to his parents at Mansfeld."

A choking sensation came over me as I thought of the father who had struggled so hard to maintain his son, and had hoped so much from him, receiving that packet. Not from the dead. Worse than from the dead, it seemed to me. Deliberately self-entombed; deliberately with his own hands building up a barrier between him and all who love him best. With the dead, if they are happy, we may hold communion—at least the Creed speaks of the communion of saints; we may pray to them; or, at the worst, we may pray for them. But between the son in the convent and the father at Mansfeld the barrier is not merely one of stone and earth. It is of the impenetrable iron of will and conscience. It would be a *temptation* now for Martin Luther to pour out his heart in affectionate words to father, mother, or friend.

And yet, if he is right,—if the flesh is only to be subdued, if God is only to be pleased, if heaven is only to be won in this way,—it is of little moment indeed what the suffering may be to us or any belonging to us in this fleeting life, down which the grim gates of death which close it, ever cast their long shadow.

May not Martin serve his family better in the cloister than at the emperor's court, for is not the cloister the court of a palace more imperial?—we may say, the very audience-chamber of the King of kings. Besides, if he had a vocation, what curse might not follow despising it? Happy for those whose vocation is so clear that they dare not disobey it; or whose hearts are so pure that they would not if they dared!

July 19.

These two days the university has been in a ferment at the disappearance of Martin Luther. Many

are indignant with him, and more with the monks, who, they say, have taken advantage of a fervent impulse, and drawn him into their net. Some, however, especially those of the school of Mutianus—the Humanists—laugh, and say there are ways through the cloister to the court,—and even to the tiara. But those misunderstand Martin. We who know him are only too sure that he will be a true monk, and that for him there is no gate from the cloister back into the world.

It appears now that he had been meditating this step more than a fortnight.

On the first of this month (July) he was walking on the road between Erfurt and Stotterheim, when a thunder-storm which had been gathering over the Thuringian forest, and weighing with heavy silence on the plague-laden air, suddenly burst over his head. He was alone, and far from shelter. Peal followed peal, succeeded by terrible silences; the forked lightning danced wildly around him, until at length one terrific flash tore up the ground at his feet, and nearly stunned him. He was alone, and far from shelter; he felt his soul equally alone and unsheltered. The thunder seemed to him the angry voice of an irresistible, offended God. The next flash might wither his body to ashes, and smite his soul into the flames it so terribly recalled; and the next thunder-peal which followed might echo like the trumpet of doom over him lying unconscious, deaf, and mute in death. Unconscious and mute as to his body! but who could imagine to what terrible intensity of conscious, everlasting anguish his soul might have awakened; what wailings might echo around his lost spirit, what cries of unavailing entreaty he might be pouring forth? Unavailing then! not, perhaps wholly unavailing now! He fell on his knees,—he prostrated himself on the earth, and cried in his anguish and terror, "Help, beloved St. Anne, and I will straightway become a monk."

The storm rolled slowly away; but the irrevocable words had been spoken, and the peals of thunder, as they rumbled more and more faintly in the distance, echoed on his heart like the dirge of all his worldly life.

He reached Erfurt in safety, and, distrustful of his own steadfastness, breathed nothing of his purpose except to those who would, he thought, sustain him in it. This was no doubt the cause of his absent and estranged looks, and of his avoiding us during that fortnight.

He confided his intention first to Andrew Staffelstein, the rector of the university, who applauded and encouraged him, and took him at once to the new Franciscan cloister. The monks received him with delight, and urged his immediately joining their order. He told them he must first acquaint his father of his purpose, as an act of confidence only due to a parent who had denied himself so much and toiled so hard to maintain his son liberally at the university. But the rector and the monks rejoined that he must not consult with flesh and blood; he must "forsake father and mother, and steal away to the cross of Christ." "Whoso putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back," said they, "is not worthy of the kingdom of God." To remain in the world was peril. To return to it was perdition.

A few religious women to whom the rector mentioned Martin's intentions, confirmed him in them with fervent words of admiration and encouragement.

Did not one of them relent, and take pity on his mother and his father? And yet, I doubt if Martin's mother would have interposed one word of remonstrance between him and the cloister. She is a very religious woman. To offer her son, her pride, to God, would have been offering the dearest part of herself; and women have a strength in self-sacrifice, and a mysterious joy, which I feel no doubt would have carried her through.

With Martin's father it would no doubt have been different. He has not a good opinion of the monks, and he has a very strong sense of paternal and filial duty. He, the shrewd, hard-working, successful peasant, looks on the monks as a company of drones, who, in imagining they are giving up the delights of the world, are often only giving up its duties. He was content to go through any self-denial and toil that Martin, the pride of the whole family, might have scope to develop his abilities. But to have the fruit of all his counsel, and care, and work buried in a convent, will be very bitter to him. It was terrible advice for the rector to give his son. And yet, no doubt, God has the first claim; and to expose Martin to any influence which might have induced him to give up his vocation, would have been perilous indeed. No doubt the conflict in Martin's heart was severe enough as it was. His nature is so affectionate, his sense of filial duty so strong, and his honour and love for his parents so deep. Since the step is taken, Holy Mary aid him not to draw back!

December, 1505.

This morning I saw a sight I never thought to have seen. A monk, in the grey frock and cowl of the Augustinians, was pacing slowly through the streets with a heavy sack on his shoulders. The ground was covered with snow, his feet were bare; but it was no unfrequent sight, and I was idly and half-unconsciously watching him pause at door after door, and humbly receiving any contributions that were offered, stow them away in the convent-sack, when at length he stopped at the door of the house I was in, and then, as his face turned up towards the window where I stood, I caught the eye of Martin Luther!

I hurried to the door with a loaf in my hand, and, before offering it to him, would have embraced him as of old; but he bowed low as he received the bread, until his forehead nearly touched the ground, and, murmuring a Latin "Gratias," would have passed on.

"Martin," I said, "do you not know me?"

"I am on the service of the convent," he said. "It is against the rules to converse or to linger."

It was hard to let him go without another word.

"God and the saints help thee, Brother Martin!" I said.

He half turned, crossed himself, bowed low once more, as a maid-servant threw him some broken meat, said meekly, "God be praised for every gift he bestoweth," and went on his toilsome quest for alms with stooping form and downcast eyes. But how changed his face was! The flush of youth and health quite faded from the thin, hollow cheeks; the fire of wit and fancy all dimmed in the red, sunken eyes! Fire there is indeed in them still, but it seemed to me of the kind that consumes —not that warms and cheers.

They are surely harsh to him at the convent. To send him who was the pride and ornament of the university not six months ago, begging from door to door, at the houses of friends and pupils, with whom he may not even exchange a greeting! Is there no pleasure to the obscure and ignorant monks in thus humbling one who was so lately so far above them? The hands which wield such rods need to be guided by hearts that are very noble or very tender. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that Brother Martin inflicts severer discipline on himself than any that can be laid on him from without. It is no external conflict that has thus worn and bowed him down in less than half a year.

I fear he will impose some severe mortification or himself for having spoken those few words to which I tempted him.

But if it is his vocation, and if it is for heaven, and if he is thereby earning merits to bestow on others, any conflict could no doubt be endured!

July, 1506.

Brother Martin's novitiate has expired, and he has taken the name of Augustine, but we shall scarcely learn to call him by it. Several of us were present a few days since at his taking the final vows in the Augustinian Church. Once more we heard the clear, pleasant voice which most of us had heard, in song and animated conversation, on that farewell evening. It sounded weak and thin, no doubt with fasting. The garb of the novice was laid aside, the monk's frock was put on, and kneeling below the altar steps, with the prior's hands on his bowed head, he took the vow in Latin:—

"I, Brother Martin, do make profession and promise obedience unto Almighty God, unto Mary, ever virgin, and unto thee, my brother, prior of this cloister, in the name and in the stead of the general prior of the order of the Eremites of St. Augustine, the bishop and his regular successors, to live in poverty and chastity after the rule of the said St. Augustine until death."

Then the burning taper, symbol of the lighted and ever-vigilant heart, was placed in his hand. The prior murmured a prayer over him, and instantly from the whole of the monks burst the hymn, "Veni Sancte Spiritus."

He knelt while they were singing; and then the monks led him up the steps into the choir, and welcomed him with the kiss of brotherhood.

Within the screen, within the choir, among the holy brotherhood inside, who minister before the altar! And we, his old friends, left outside in the nave, separated from him for ever by the screen of that irrevocable vow!

For ever! Is it for ever? Will there indeed be such a veil, an impenetrable barrier, between us and him at the judgment-day? And we outside? A barrier impassable for ever then, but not now, not yet.

January, 1507.

I have just returned from another Christmas at home. Things look a little brighter there. This last year, since I took my master's degree, I have been able to help them a little more effectually with the money I receive from my pupils. It was a delight to take our dear, self-denying, loving Elsè a new dress for holidays, although she protested her old crimson petticoat and black jacket were as good as ever. The child Eva has still that deep, calm, earnest look in her eyes, as if she saw into the world of things unseen and eternal, and saw there what filled her heart with joy. I suppose it is that angelic depth of her eyes, in contrast with the guileless, rosy smile of the child-like lips, which gives the strange charm to her face, and makes one think of the pictures of the child-angels.

She can read the Church Latin now easily, and delights especially in the old hymns. When she repeats them in that soft, reverent, childish voice, they seem to me deeper and more sacred than when sung by the fullest choir. Her great favourite is St. Bernard's "Jesu Dulcis Memoria," and his "Salve Caput Cruentatum;" but some verses of the "Dies Iræ" also are very often on her lips. I used to hear her warbling softly about the house, or at her work, with a voice like a happy dove hidden in the depths of some quiet wood,—

"Querens me sedisti lassus,"

Jesu mi dulcissime, Domine cœlorum,

Conditor omnipotens, Rex universorum;
Quis jam actus sufficit mirari gestorum,
Quæ te ferie compulit salus miserorum.

Te de cœlo caritas traxit animarum,
Pro quibus palatium deserens præclarum;
Miseram ingrediens vallum lacrymarum,
Opus durum suscipis, et iter amarum.[3]

The sonorous words of the ancient imperial language sound so sweet and strange, and yet so familiar from the fresh childish voice. Latin seems from her lips no more a dead language. It is as if she had learned it naturally in infancy from listening to the songs of the angels, who watched her in her sleep, or from the lips of a sainted mother bending over her pillow from heaven.

One thing, however, seems to disappoint little Eva. She has a sentence taken from a book her father left her before he died, but which she was never allowed to see afterwards. She is always hoping to find the book in which this sentence was, and has not yet succeeded.

I have little doubt myself that the book was some heretical volume belonging to her father, who was executed for being a Hussite. It is to be hoped, therefore, she will never find it. She did not tell me this herself, probably because Elsè, to whom she mentioned it, discouraged her in such a search. We all feel it is a great blessing to have rescued that innocent heart from the snares of those pernicious heretics, against whom our Saxon nation made such a noble struggle. There are not very many of the Hussites left now in Bohemia. As a national party they are indeed destroyed, since the Calixtines separated from them. There are, however, still a few dragging out a miserable existence among the forests and mountains; and it is reported that these opinions have not yet even been quite crushed in the cities, in spite of the vigorous measures used against them, but that not a few secretly cling to their tenets, although outwardly conforming to the Church. So inveterate is the poison of heresy, and so great the danger from which little Eva has been rescued.

ERFURT, *May 2*,
1507.

To-day once more the seclusion and silence which have enveloped Martin Luther since he entered the cloister have been broken. This day he has been consecrated priest, and has celebrated his first mass. There was a great feast at the Augustinian convent; offerings poured in abundance into the convent treasury, and Martin's father, John Luther, came from Mansfeld to be present at the ceremony. He is reconciled at last to his son (whom for a long time he refused to see); although not, I believe, to his monastic profession. It is certainly no willing sacrifice on the father's part. And no wonder. After toiling for years to place his favourite son in a position where his great abilities might have scope, it must have been hard to see everything thrown away just as success was attained, for what seemed to him a willful, superstitious fancy. And without a word of dutiful consultation to prepare him for the blow!

Having, however, at last made up his mind to forgive his son, he forgave him like a father, and came in pomp with precious gifts to do him honour. He rode to the convent gate with an escort of twenty horsemen, and gave his son a present of twenty florins.

Brother Martin was so cheered by the reconciliation, that at the ordination feast he ventured to try to obtain from his father not only pardon, but sanction and approval. It was of the deepest interest to me to hear his familiar eloquent voice again, pleading for his father's approval. But he failed. In vain he stated in his own fervent words the motives that had led to his vow; in vain did the monks around support and applaud all he said. The old man was not to be moved.

"Dear father," said Martin, "what was the reason of thy objecting to my choice to become a monk? Why wert thou then so displeased, and perhaps art not reconciled yet? It is such a peaceful and godly life to live."

I cannot say that Brother Martin's worn and furrowed face spoke much for the peacefulness of his life; but Master John Luther boldly replied in a voice that all at the table might hear,—

"Didst thou never hear that a son must be obedient to his parents? And, you learned men, did you never read the Scriptures, 'Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother?' God grant that those signs you speak of may not prove to be lying wonders of Satan."

Brother Martin attempted no defence. A look of sharp pain came over his face, as if an arrow had pierced his heart; but he remained quite silent.

Yet he is a priest; he is endued with a power never committed even to the holy angels—to transubstantiate bread into God—to sacrifice for the living and the dead.

He is admitted into the inner circle of the court of heaven.

He is on board that sacred ark which once he saw portrayed at Magdeburg, where priests and monks sail safely amidst a drowning world. And what is more, he himself may, from his safe and sacred vessel, stoop down and rescue perishing men; perhaps confer unspeakable blessings on the soul of that very father whose words so wounded him.

For such ends well may he bear that the arrow should pierce his heart.

Did not a sword pierce thine, O mournful mother of consolations?

And he is certain of his vocation. He does not think as we in the world so often must, "Is God leading me, or the devil? Am I resisting His higher calling in only obeying the humbler call of every-day duty? Am I bringing down blessings on those I love, or curses?"

Brother Martin, without question, has none of these distracting doubts. He may well bear any other anguish which may meet him *in* the ways of God, and *because* he has chosen them. At least he has not to listen to such tales as I have heard lately from a young knight, Ulrich von Hutton, who is studying here at present, and has things to relate of the monks, priests, and bishops in Rome itself which tempt one to think all invisible things a delusion, and all religion a pretence.

V.

Elsè's Chronicle.

EISENACH, *January*, 1510.

We have passed through a terrible time; if, indeed, we are through it!

The plague has been at Eisenach; and, alas! is here still.

Fritz came home to us as usual at Christmas. Just before he left Erfurt the plague had broken out in the University. But he did not know it. When first he came to us he seemed quite well, and was full of spirits; but on the second day he complained of cold and shivering, with pain in the head, which increased towards the evening. His eyes then began to have a fixed, dim look, and he seemed unable to speak or think long connectedly.

I noticed that the mother watched him anxiously that evening; and at its close, feeling his hands feverish, she said very quietly that she should sit up in his room that night. At first he made some resistance, but he seemed too faint to insist on anything; and as he rose to go to bed, he tottered a little, and said he felt giddy, so that my mother drew his arm within hers and supported him to his room.

Still I did not feel anxious; but when Eva and I reached our room, she said, in that quiet, convincing manner which she had even as a child, fixing her large eyes on mine,—

"Cousin Elsè, Fritz is very ill."

"I think not, Eva," I said; "and no one would feel anxious about him as soon as I should. He caught a chill on his way from Erfurt. You know it was late when he arrived, and snowing fast, and he was so pleased to see us, and so eager in conversation that he would not change his things. It is only a slight feverish cold. Besides, our mother's manner was so calm when she wished us good night. I do not think she is anxious. She is only sitting up with him for an hour or two to see that he sleeps."

"Cousin Elsè," replied Eva, "did you not see the mother's lip quiver when she turned to wish us good night?"

"No, Eva," said I; "I was looking at Fritz."

And so we went to bed. But I thought it strange that Eva, a girl of sixteen, should be more anxious than I was, and I his sister. Hope is generally so strong, and fear so weak, before one has seen many fears realized, and many hopes disappointed. Eva, however, had always a way of seeing into the truth of things. I was very tired with the day's work (for I always rise earlier than usual when Fritz is here, to get everything done before he is about), and I must very soon have fallen asleep. It was not midnight when I was roused by the mother's touch upon my arm.

The light of the lamp she held showed me a paleness in her face and an alarm in her eyes which awoke me thoroughly in an instant.

"Elsè," she said, "go into the boys' room and send Christopher for a physician. I cannot leave Fritz. But do not alarm your father!" she added, as she crept again out of the room after lighting our lamp.

I called Christopher, and in five minutes he was dressed and out of the house. When I returned to our room Eva was sitting dressed on the bed. She had not been asleep, I saw. I think she had been praying, for she held the crucifix in her clasped hands, and there were traces of tears on her cheek, although when she raised her eyes to me, they were clear and tearless.

"What is it, Cousin Elsè?" she said. "When I went for a moment to the door of his room he was talking. It was his voice, but with such a strange, wild tone in it. I think he heard my step, although I thought no one would, I stepped so softly, for he called 'Eva, Eva!' but the mother came to the door and silently motioned me away. But *you* may go, Elsè," she added, with a passionate rapidity very unusual with her. "Go and see him."

I went instantly. He was talking very rapidly and vehemently, and in an incoherent way it was difficult to understand. My mother sat quite still, holding his hand. His eyes were not bright as in fever, but dim and fixed. Yet he was in a raging fever. His hand, when I touched it, burned like fire, and his face was flushed crimson. I stood there quite silently beside my mother until the physician came. At first Fritz's eyes followed me; then they seemed watching the door for some one else; but in a few minutes the dull vacancy came over them again, and he seemed conscious of nothing.

At last the physician came. He paused a moment at the door, and held a bag of myrrh before him; then advancing to the bed, he drew aside the clothes and looked at Fritz's arm.

"Too plain!" he exclaimed, starting back as he perceived a black swelling there. "It is the plague!"

My mother followed him to the door.

"Excuse me, madam," he said; "life is precious, and I might carry the infection into the city."

"Can nothing be done?" she said.

"Not much!" he said bluntly; and then, after a moment's hesitation, touched by the distress in her face, he returned to the bed-side. "I have touched him," he murmured, as if apologizing to himself for incurring the risk; "the mischief is done, doubtless, already." And taking out his lancet he bled my brother's arm.

Then, after binding up the arm, he turned to me and said,—

"Get cypress and juniper wood, and burn them in a brazier in this room, with rosin and myrrh. Keep your brother as warm as possible—do not let in a breath of air!" And, he added, as I followed him to the door, "on no account suffer him to sleep for a moment,[4] and let no one come near him but you and your mother."

When I returned to the bed-side, after obeying these directions, Fritz's mind was wandering; and although we could understand little that he said, he was evidently in great distress. He seemed to have comprehended the physician's words, for he frequently repeated, "The plague! the plague! I have brought a curse upon my house!" and then he would wander, strangely calling on Martin Luther and Eva to intercede and obtain pardon for him, as if he were invoking saints in heaven; and occasionally he would repeat fragments of Latin hymns.

It was dreadful to have to keep him awake; to have to rouse him, whenever he showed the least symptom of slumber, to thoughts which so perplexed and troubled his poor brain. But on the second night the mother fainted away, and I had to carry her to her room. Her dear thin frame was no heavy weight to bear. I laid her on the bed in our room, which was the nearest. Eva appeared at the door as I stood beside our mother. Her face was as pale as death. Before I could prevent it, she came up to me, and taking my hands said,—

"Cousin Elsè, only promise me one thing;—if he is to die, let me see him once more."

"I dare not promise anything, Eva," I said; "consider the infection!"

"What will the infection matter to me if he dies?" she said; "I am not afraid to die."

"Think of the father and the children, Eva," I said; "If our mother and I should be seized next, what would they do?"

"Chriemhild will soon be old enough to take care of them," she said very calmly; "promise me, promise me, Elsè, or I will see him at once."

And I promised her, and she threw her arms around me, and kissed me. Then I went back to Fritz, leaving Eva chafing my mother's hands. It was of no avail, I thought, to try to keep her from contagion, now that she had held my hands in hers.

When I came again to Fritz's bed-side he was asleep! Bitterly I reproached myself; but what could I have done? He was asleep—sleeping quietly, with soft, even breathing. I had not courage to awake him; but I knelt down and implored the blessed Virgin and all the saints to have mercy on me and spare him. And they must have heard me; for, in spite of my failure in keeping the physician's orders, Fritz began to recover from that very sleep.

Our grandmother says it was a miracle; "unless," she added, "the doctor was wrong!"

He awoke from that sleep refreshed and calm, but weak as an infant.

It was delightful to meet his eyes when first he awoke, with the look of quiet recognition in them, instead of that wild, fixed stare, or that restless wandering; to look once more into his heart through his eyes. He looked at me a long time with a quiet content, without speaking, and then he said, holding out his hand to me,—

"Elsè, you have been watching long here. You look tired; go and rest."

"It rests me best to look at you," I said, "and see you better."

He seemed too weak to persist, and after taking some food and cooling drinks, he fell asleep again, and so did I; for the next thing I was conscious of was our mother gently placing a pillow underneath my head, which had sunk on the bed where I had been kneeling, watching Fritz. I

was ashamed of being such a bad nurse; but our mother insisted on my going to our room to seek rest and refreshment. And for the next few days we took it in turns to sit beside him, until he began to regain strength. Then we thought he might like to see Eva; but when she came to the door, he eagerly motioned her away, and said,—

"Do not let her venture near me. Think if I were to bring this judgment of God on her!"

Eva turned away, and was out of sight in an instant; but the troubled, perplexed expression came back into my brother's eyes, and the feverish flush into his face, and it was long before he seemed calm again.

I followed Eva. She was sitting with clasped hands in our room.

"Oh, Elsè," she said, "how altered he is! Are you sure he will live, even now?"

I tried to comfort her with the hope which was naturally so much stronger in me, because I had seen him in the depths from which he was now slowly rising again to life. But something in that glimpse of him seemed to weigh on her very life; and as Fritz recovered, Eva seemed to grow paler and weaker, until the same feverish symptoms came over her which he had learned so to dread, and then the terrible tokens, the plague-spots, which could not be doubted, appeared on the fair, soft arms, and Eva was lying with those dim, fixed, pestilence-veiled eyes, and the wandering brain.

For a day we were able to conceal it from Fritz, but no longer.

On the second evening after Eva was stricken, I found him standing by the window of his room, looking into the street. I shall never forget the expression of horror in his eyes as he turned from the window to me.

"Elsè," he said, "how long have those fires been burning in the streets?"

"For a week," I said. "They are fires of cypress-wood and juniper, and myrrh and pine gums. The physicians say they purify the air."

"I know too well what they are," he said. "And, Elsè," he said, "why is Master Bürer's house opposite closed?"

"He has lost two children," I said.

"And why are those other windows closed all down the street?" he rejoined.

"The people have left, brother," I said; "but the doctors hope the worst is over now."

"O just God!" he exclaimed, sinking on a chair and covering his face; "I was flying from thee, and I have brought the curse on my people!"

Then, after a minute's pause, before I could think of any words to comfort him, he looked up, and suddenly demanded,—

"Who are dead in *this* house, Elsè?"

"None, none," I said.

"Who are stricken?" he asked.

"All the children and the father are well," I said, "and the mother."

"Then Eva is stricken!" he exclaimed—"the innocent for the guilty! She will die and be a saint in heaven, and I, who have murdered her, shall live, and shall see her no more, for ever and for ever."

I could not comfort him. The strength of his agony utterly stunned me. I could only burst into tears, so that he had to try to comfort me. But he did not speak; he only took my hands in his kindly, as of old, without saying another word. At length I said—

"It is not you who brought the plague, dear Fritz; it is God who sent it!"

"I know it is God!" he replied, with such an intense bitterness in his tone that I did not attempt another sentence.

That night Eva wandered much as I watched beside her; but her delirium was quite different from that of Fritz. Her spirit seemed floating away on a quiet stream into some happy land we could not see. She spoke of a palace, of a home, of fields of fragrant lilies, of white-robed saints walking among them with harps and songs, and of One who welcomed her. Occasionally, too, she murmured snatches of the same Latin hymns that Fritz had repeated in his delirium, but in a tone so different, so child-like and happy! If ever she appeared troubled, it was when she seemed to miss some one, and be searching here and there for them; but then she often ended with, "Yes, I know they will come; I must wait till they come." And so at last she fell asleep, as if the thought had quieted her.

I could not hinder her sleeping, whatever the physician said; she looked so placid, and had such a happy smile on her lips. Only once, when she had lain thus an hour quite still, while her chest seemed scarcely to heave with her soft, tranquil breathing, I grew alarmed lest she should glide thus from us into the arms of the holy angels; and I whispered softly, "Eva, dear Eva!"

Her lips parted slightly, and she murmured—

"Not yet; wait till *they* can come."

And then she turned her head again on the pillow, and slept on.

She awoke quite collected and calm, and then she said quietly—

"Where is the mother?"

"She is resting, darling Eva."

She gave a little contented smile, and then, in broken words at intervals, she said—

"Now, I should like to see Fritz. You promised I should see him again; and now if I die, I think he would like to see me once more."

I went to fetch my brother. He was pacing up and down his room, with the crucifix clasped to his breast. At first, to my surprise, he seemed very reluctant to come; but when I said how much she wished it, he followed me quite meekly into her room. Eva was resuming her old command over us all. She held out her hand, with a look of such peace and rest on her face.

"Cousin Fritz," she said at intervals, as she had strength, "you have taught me so many things; you have done so much for me! Now I wish you to learn my sentence, that if I go, it may make you happy, as it does me." Then very slowly and distinctly she repeated the words—"'*God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.*' Cousin Fritz," she added, "I do not know the end of the sentence. I have not been able to find it; but you must find it. I am sure it comes from a good book, it makes me love God so much to think of it. Promise me you will find it, if I should die."

He promised, and she was quite satisfied. Her strength seemed exhausted, and in a few moments, with my arms round her as I sat beside her, and with her hand in Fritz's, she fell into a deep, quiet sleep.

I felt from that time she would not die, and I whispered very softly to Fritz—

"She will not die; she will recover, and you will not have killed her; you will have saved her!"

But when I looked into his face, expecting to meet a thankful, happy response, I was appalled by the expression there.

He stood immovable, not venturing to withdraw his hand, but with a rigid, hopeless look in his worn, pale face, which contrasted terribly with the smile of deep repose on the sleeping face on which his eyes were fixed.

And so he remained until she awoke, when his whole countenance changed for an instant to return her smile.

Then he said softly, "God bless you, Eva!" and pressing her hand to his lips, he left the room.

When I saw him again that day, I said—

"Fritz, you have saved Eva's life! She rallied from the time she saw you."

"Yes," he replied, very gently, but with a strange impassiveness in his face; "I think that may be true. I have saved her."

But he did not go in her room again; and the next day, to our surprise and disappointment, he said suddenly that he must leave us.

He said few words of farewell to any of us, and would not see Eva to take leave of her. He said it might disturb her.

But when he kissed me before he went, his hands and his lips were as cold as death. Yet as I watched him go down the street, he did not once turn to wave a last good-bye, as he always used to do; but slowly and steadily he went on till he was out of sight.

I turned back into the house with a very heavy heart; but when I went to tell Eva Fritz was gone, and tried to account for his not coming to take leave of her, because I thought it would give her pain (and it does seem to me rather strange of Fritz), she looked up with her quiet, trustful, contented smile, and said,—

"I am not at all pained, Cousin Elsè. I know Fritz had good reasons for it—some good, kind reasons—because he always has; and we shall see him again as soon as he feels it right to come."

VI.

Friedrich's Story.

St. Sebastian, Erfurt, *January* 20, 1510.

The irrevocable step is taken. I have entered the Augustinian cloister. I write in Martin Luther's cell. Truly I have forsaken father and mother, and all that was dearest to me, to take refuge at the foot of the cross. I have sacrificed everything on earth to my vocation, and yet the conflict is not over. I seem scarcely more certain of my vocation now than while I remained in the world. Doubts buzz around me like wasps, and sting me on every side. The devil, transforming himself into an angel of light, perplexes me with the very words of Scripture. The words of Martin Luther's father recur to me, as if spoken by a divine voice, "Honour thy father and thy mother!" echoes back to me from the chants of the choir, and seems written everywhere on the white walls of my cell.

And, besides the thunder of these words of God, tender voices seem to call me back by every plea of duty, not to abandon them to fight the battle of life alone. Elsè calls me from the old lumber-room, "Fritz' brother! who is to tell me now what to do?" My mother does not call me back; but I seem ever to see her tearful eyes, full of reproach and wonder which she tries to repress, lifted up to heaven for strength; and her worn, pale face, growing more wan every day. In one voice and one face only I seem never to hear or see reproach or recall; and yet, Heaven forgive me, those pure and saintly eyes which seem only to say, "Go on, Cousin Fritz, God will help thee, and I will pray!"—those sweet, trustful, heavenly eyes, draw me back to the world with more power than anything else.

Is it, then, too late? Have I lingered in the world so long that my heart can never more be torn from it? Is this the punishment of my guilty hesitation, that, though I have given my body to the cloister, God will not have my soul, which evermore must hover like a lost spirit about the scenes it was too reluctant to leave? Shall I evermore, when I lift my eyes to heaven, see all that is pure and saintly there embodied for me in a face which it is deadly sin for me to remember?

Yet I have saved her life! If I brought the curse on my people by my sin, was not my obedience accepted? From the hour when, in my room alone, after hearing that Eva was stricken, I prostrated myself before God, and not daring to take His insulted name on my lips, approached him through His martyred saint, and said, "Holy Sebastian, by the arrows which pierced thy heart, ward off the arrows of pestilence from my home, and I will become a monk, and change my own guilty name for thine,"—from that moment did not Eva begin to recover, and from that time were not all my kindred unscathed? "Cadent a latere tuo mille, et decem millia a dextris tuis; ad te autem non approprinquabit." Were not the words literally fulfilled; and while many still fell around us, was one afterwards stricken in my home?

Holy Sebastian, infallible protector against pestilence, by thy firmness when accused, confirm my wavering will; by thy double death, save me from the second death; by the arrows which could not slay thee, thou hast saved us from the arrow that flieth by day; by the cruel blows which sent thy spirit from the circus to paradise, strengthen me against the blows of Satan; by thy body rescued from ignominious sepulture and laid in the catacombs among the martyrs, raise me from the filth of sin; by thy generous pleading for thy fellow sufferers amidst thine own agonies, help me to plead for those who suffer with me; and by all thy sorrows, and merits, and joys, plead—oh plead for me, who henceforth bear thy name!

St. Scholastica, *February* 10.

I have been a month in the monastery. Yesterday my first probation was over, and I was invested with the white garments of the novitiate.

The whole of the brotherhood were assembled in the church, when, kneeling before the prior, he asked me solemnly whether I thought my strength sufficient for the burden I purposed to take on myself.

In a low, grave voice, he reminded me what those burdens are—the rough plain clothing; the abstemious living; the broken rest and long vigils; the toils in the service of the order; the reproach and poverty; the humiliations of the mendicant; and, above all, the renunciation of self-will and individual glory, to be a member of the order, bound to do whatever the superiors command, and to go whithersoever they direct.

"With God for my help," I could venture to say, "of this will I make trial."

Then the prior replied,—

"We receive thee, therefore, on probation for one year; and may God, who has begun a good work in thee, carry it on unto perfection."

The whole brotherhood responded in a deep amen, and then all the voices joined in the hymn,—

"Magna Pater Augustine, preces nostras suscipe,
Et per eas conditori nos placare satage.
Atque rege gregem tuum, summum decus præsulum.

Amatorem paupertatis, te collaudant pauperes;
Assertorem veritatis amant veri judices;
Frangis nobis favos mellis de Scripturis disserens.

Quæ obscura prius erant nobis plana faciens,
Tu de verbis Salvatoris dulcem panem conficis,

Et propinas potum vitæ de psalmorum nectare.

Tu de vita clericorum sanctam scribis regulam,
Quam qui amant et sequunter viam tenent regiam,
Atque tuo sancto ductu redeunt ad patriam.

Regi regum salis, vita, decus et emperium;
Trinitati laus et honor sit per omne sæculum,
Qui concives nos ascribat supernorum civium."[5]

As the sacred words were chanted, they mingled strangely in my mind with the ceremonies of the investiture. My hair was shorn with the clerical tonsure; my secular dress was laid aside; the garments of the novice were thrown on; and I was girded with the girdle of rope, whilst the prior murmured softly to me, that with the new robes I must put on the new man.

Then, as the last notes of the hymn died away, I knelt and bowed low to receive the prior's blessing, invoked in these words:—

"May God who hath converted this young man from the world, and given him a mansion in heaven, grant that his daily walk may be as becometh his calling; and that he may have cause to be thankful for what has this day been done."

Versicles were then chanted responsively by the monks, who, forming in procession, moved towards the choir, where we all prostrated ourselves in silent prayer.

After this they conducted me to the great hall of the cloister, where all the brotherhood bestowed on me the kiss of peace.

Once more I knelt before the prior, who reminded me that he who persevereth to the end shall be saved; and gave me over to the direction of the preceptor, whom the new Vicar-General Staupitz has ordered to be appointed to each novice.

Thus the first great ceremony of my monastic life is over, and it has left me with a feeling of blank and disappointment. It has made no change that I can feel in my heart. It has not removed the world further off from me. It has only raised another impassable barrier between me and all that was dearest to me;—impassable as an ocean without ships, infrangible as the strongest iron, I am determined my *will* shall make it; but to my *heart*, alas! thin as gossamer, since every faintest, wistful tone of love, which echoes from the past, can penetrate it and pierce me with sorrow.

My preceptor is very strict in enforcing the rules order. Trespasses against the rules are divided into four classes,—small, great, greater, and greatest, to each of which is assigned a different degree of penance. Among the smaller are, failing to go to church as soon as the sign is given, forgetting to touch the ground instantly with the hand and to smite the breast if in reading in the choir or in singing the least error is committed; looking about during the service; omitting prostration at the Annunciation or at Christmas; neglecting the benediction in coming in or going out; failing to return books or garments to their proper places; dropping food; spilling drink; forgetting to say grace before eating. Among the great trespasses are: contending, breaking the prescribed silence at fasts, and looking at women, or speaking to them, except in brief replies.

The minute rules are countless. It is difficult at first to learn the various genuflexions, inclinations, and prostrations. The novices are never allowed to converse except in presence of the prior, are forbidden to take any notice of visitors, are enjoined to walk with downcast eyes, to read the Scriptures diligently, to bow low in receiving every gift, and say, "The Lord be praised in his gifts."

How Brother Martin, with his free, bold, daring nature, bore those minute restrictions, I know not. To me there is a kind of dull, deadening relief in them, they distract my thoughts, or prevent my thinking.

Yet it must be true, my obedience will aid my kindred more than all my toil could ever have done whilst disobediently remaining in the world. It is not a selfish seeking of my own salvation and ease which has brought me here, whatever some may think and say, as they did of Martin Luther. I think of that ship in the picture at Magdeburg he so often told me of. Am I not in it,—actually *in* it *now*? and shall I not hereafter, when my strength is recovered from the fatigue of reaching it, hope to lean over and stretch out my arms to them, still struggling in the waves of this bitter world? and save them!

Save them; yes, save their souls! Did not my vow save precious lives? And shall not my fastings, vigils, disciplines, prayers be as effectual for their souls? And, then, hereafter, in heaven, where those dwell who, in virgin purity, have followed the Lamb, shall I not lean over the jasper-battlements and help them from Purgatory up the steep sides of Paradise, and be first at the gate to welcome them in! And then, in Paradise, where love will no longer be in danger of becoming sin, may we not be together for ever and for ever? And then, shall I regret that I abandoned the brief polluted joys of earth for the pure joys of eternity? Shall I lament *then* that I chose, according to my vocation, to suffer apart from them that their souls might be saved, rather than to toil with them for the perishing body?

Then! *then!* I, a saint in the City of God! I, a hesitating, sinful novice in the Augustinian

monastery at Erfurt, who, after resisting for years, have at last yielded up my body to the cloister, but have no more power than ever to yield up my heart to God!

Yet I am *in* the sacred vessel; the rest will surely follow. Do all monks have such a conflict? No doubt the Devil fights hard for every fresh victim he loses. It is, it must be, the Devil who beckons me through those dear faces, who calls me through those familiar voices; for *they* would never call me back. They would hide their pain, and say, "Go to God, if he calls thee; leave us and go to God." Elsè, my mother, all would say that; if their hearts broke in trying to say it!

Had Martin Luther such thoughts in this very cell? If they are from the Evil One, I think he had, for his assaults are strongest against the noblest; and yet I scarcely think he can have had such weak doubts as these which haunt me. He was not one of those who draw back to perdition; nor even of those who, having put their hand to the plough, *look* back, as I, alas! am so continually doing. And what does the Scripture say of such?—"They are not fit for the kingdom of God." No exception, no reserve—monk, priest, saint; if a man *look* back, he is not fit for the kingdom of God. Then what becomes of my hopes of Paradise, or of acquiring merits which may aid others? *Turn back*, draw back, I will *never*, although all the devils were to drive me, or all the world entice me, but *look* back, who can help that? If a look can kill, what can save? Mortification, crucifixion, not for a day, but daily;—I must die daily; I must be *dead*—dead to the world. This cell must to me be as a tomb, where all that was most living in my heart must die and be buried. Was it so to Martin Luther? Is the cloister that to those bands of rosy, comfortable monks, who drink beer from great cans, and feast on the best of the land, and fast on the choicest fish? The Tempter! the Tempter again! Judge not, and ye shall not be judged.

St. Eulalia, Erfurt, *February* 12, 1510.

To-day one of the older monks came to me, seeing me, I suppose, look downcast and sad, and said, "Fear not, Brother Sebastian, the strife is often hard at first; but remember the words of St. Jerome: 'Though thy father should lie before thy door weeping and lamenting, though thy mother should show thee the body that bore thee, and the breasts that nursed thee, see that thou trample them under foot, and go on straightway to Christ.'"

I bowed my head, according to rule, in acknowledgment of his exhortation, and I suppose he thought his words comforted and strengthened me; but Heaven knows the conflict they awakened in my heart when I sat alone to-night in my cell. "Cruel, bitter, wicked words!" my earthly heart would say; my sinful heart, that vigils, scourging, scarcely death itself, I fear, can kill. Surely, at least, the holy father Jerome spoke of heathen fathers and mothers. My mother would not show her anguish to win me back; she would say, "My son, my first-born, God bless thee; I give thee freely up to God." Does she not say so in this letter which I have in her handwriting,—which I have and dare not look at, because of the storm of memories it brings rushing on my heart?

Is there a word of reproach or remonstrance in her letter? If there were, I would read it; it would strengthen me. The saints had that to bear. It is because those holy, tender words echo in my heart, from a voice weak with feeble health, that day by day and hour by hour, my heart goes back to the home at Eisenach, and sees them toiling unaided in the daily struggle for bread, to which I have abandoned them, unsheltered and alone.

Then at times the thought comes, Am I, after all, a dreamer, as I have sometimes ventured to think my father,—neglecting my plain, daily task for some Atlantis? and if my Atlantis is in Paradise instead of beyond the ocean, does that make so much difference?

If Brother Martin were only here, he might understand and help me; but he has now been nearly two years at Wittemberg, where he is, they say, to lecture on theology at the Elector's new university, and to be preacher. The monks seem nearly as proud of him as the University of Erfurt was.

Yet, perhaps, after all, he might *not* understand my perplexities. His nature was so firm and straightforward and strong. He would probably have little sympathy with wavering hearts and troubled consciences like mine.

March 7.—SS. Perpetua and Felicitas.—
Erfurt, Augustinian Cloister.

To-day I have been out on my first quest for alms. It seemed very strange at first to be begging at familiar doors, with the frock and the convent sack on my shoulders; but although I tottered a little at times under the weight as it grew heavy (for the plague and fasting have left me weak), I returned to the cloister feeling better and easier in mind, and more hopeful as to my vocation, than I had done for some days. Perhaps, however, the fresh air had something to do with it, and, after all, it was only a little bodily exultation. But certainly such bodily loads and outward mortifications are not the burdens which weigh the spirit down. There seemed a luxury in the half-scornful looks of some of my former fellow-students, and in the contemptuous tossing to me of scraps of meat by some grudging hands; just as a tight pressure, which, in itself would be pain were we at ease, is relief to severe pain.

Perhaps, also, O holy Perpetua and Felicitas, whose day it is, and especially thou, O holy Perpetua, who, after encouraging thy sons to die for Christ, was martyred thyself, hast pleaded for my forsaken mother and for me, and sendest me this day some ray of hope.

St. Joseph, whom I have chosen to be one of the twenty-one patrons whom I especially honour, hear and aid me to-day. Thou whose glory it was to have no glory, but meekly to aid others to win their higher crowns, give me also some humble place on high; and not to me alone, but to those also whom I have left still struggling in the stormy seas of this perilous world.

Here, in the sacred calm of the cloister, surely at length the heart must grow calm, and cease to beat except with the life of the universal Church,—the feasts in the calendar becoming its events. But when will that be to me?

March 20.

Has Brother Martin attained this repose yet? An aged monk sat with me in my cell yesterday, who told me strange tidings of him, which have given me some kind of bitter comfort.

It seems that the monastic life did not at once bring repose into his heart.

This aged monk was Brother Martin's confessor, and he has also been given to me for mine. In his countenance there is such a peace as I long for;—not a still, death-like peace, as if he had fallen into it after the conflict; but a living, kindly peace, as if he had won it through the conflict, and enjoyed it even while the conflict lasted.

It does not seem to me that Brother Martin's scruples and doubts were exactly like mine. Indeed, my confessor says that in all the years he has exercised his office, he has never found two troubled hearts troubled exactly alike.

I do not know that Brother Martin doubted his vocation, or looked back to the world; but he seems to have suffered agonies of inward torture. His conscience was so quick and tender, that the least sin wounded him as if it had been the grossest crime. He invoked the saints most devoutly—choosing, as I have done from his example, twenty-one saints, and invoking three every day, so as to honour each every week. He read mass every day, and had an especial devotion for the blessed Virgin. He wasted his body with fastings and watching. He never intentionally violated the minutest rule of the order; and yet the more he strove, the more wretched he seemed to be. Like a musician whose ear is cultivated to the highest degree, the slightest discord was torture to him. Can it then be God's intention that the growth of our spiritual life is only growing sensitiveness to pain? Is this true growth?—or is it that monstrous development of one faculty at the expense of others, which is deformity or disease?

The confessor said thoughtfully, when I suggested this—

"The world is out of tune, my son, and the heart is out of tune. The more our souls vibrate truly to the music of heaven, the more, perhaps, they must feel the discords of earth. At least it was so with Brother Martin; until at last, omitting a prostration or a genuflexion would weigh on his conscience like a crime. Once, after missing him for some time, we went to the door of his cell, and knocked. It was barred, and all our knocking drew no response. We broke open the door at last, and found him stretched senseless on the floor. We only succeeded in reviving him by strains of sacred music, chanted by the choristers, whom we brought to his cell. He always dearly loved music, and believed it to have a strange potency against the wiles of the devil."

"He must have suffered grievously," I said. "I suppose it is by such sufferings merit is acquired to aid others."

"He did suffer agonies of mind," replied the old monk. "Often he would walk up and down the cold corridors for nights together."

"Did nothing comfort him?" I asked.

"Yes, my son; some words I once said to him comforted him greatly. Once, when I found him in an agony of despondency in his cell, I said, 'Brother Martin, dost thou believe in "the forgiveness of sins," as saith the Creed?' His face lighted up at once."

"The forgiveness of sins!" I repeated slowly. "Father, I also believe in that. But forgiveness only follows on contrition, confession, and penance. How can I ever be sure that I have been sufficiently contrite, that I have made an honest and complete confession, or that I have performed my penance aright?"

"Ah, my son," said the old man, "these were exactly Brother Martin's perplexities, and I could only point him to the crucified Lord, and remind him again of the forgiveness of sins. All we do is incomplete, and when the blessed Lord says He forgiveth sins, I suppose He means the sins of *sinners*, who sin in their confession as in everything else. My son, He is more compassionate than you think, perhaps than any of us think. At least this is my comfort; and if, when I stand before Him at last, I find I have made a mistake, and thought Him more compassionate than He is, I trust He will pardon me. It can scarcely, I think, grieve Him so much as declaring Him to be a hard master would."

I did not say anything more to the old man. His words so evidently were strength and joy to him, that I could not venture to question them further. To me, also, they have given a gleam of hope. And yet, if the way is not rough and difficult, and if it is not a hard thing to please Almighty God,

why all those severe rules and renunciations—those heavy penances for trifling offences?

Merciful we know He is. But the emperor may be merciful; and yet, if a peasant were to attempt to enter the imperial presence without the prescribed forms, would he not be driven from the palace with curses, at the point of the sword? And what are those rules at the court of heaven?

If perfect purity of heart and life, who can lay claim to that?

If a minute attention to the rules of an order such as this of St. Augustine, who can be sure of having never failed in this? The inattention which caused the neglect would probably let it glide from the memory. And then, what is the worth of confession?

Christ is the Saviour, but only of those who follow him. There *is* forgiveness of sins, but only for those who make adequate confession. I, alas! have not followed him fully. What priest on earth can assure me I have ever confessed fully?

Therefore I see Him merciful, gracious, holy—a Saviour, but seated on a high throne, where I can never be sure petitions of mine will reach him; and, alas! one day to be seated on a great white throne, whence it is too sure his summoning voice will reach me.

Mary, mother of God, Virgin of virgins, mother of divine grace—holy Sebastian and all martyrs—great father Augustine and all holy doctors, intercede for me, that my penances may be accepted as a satisfaction for my sins, and may pacify my Judge.

March 25.—Annunciation of the Holy Virgin.

My preceptor has put into my hands the Bible bound in red morocco which Brother Martin, he says, used to read so much. I am to study it in all the intervals which the study of the fathers, expeditions for begging, the services of the Church, and the menial offices in the house which fall to the share of novices, allow. These are not many. I have never had a Bible in my hands before, and the hours pass quickly indeed in my cell which I can spend in reading it. The preceptor, when he comes to call me for the midnight service, often finds me still reading.

It is very different from what I expected. There is nothing oratorical in it, there are no laboured disquisitions, and no minute rules, at least in the New Testament.

I wish sometimes I had lived in the Old Jewish times, when there was one temple wherein to worship, certain definite feasts to celebrate, certain definite ceremonial rules to keep.

If I could have stood in the Temple courts on that great day of atonement, and seen the victim slain, and watched till the high priest came out from the holy place with his hands lifted up in benediction, I should have known absolutely that God was satisfied, and returned to my home in peace. Yes, to my *home*! there were no monasteries, apparently, in those Jewish times. Family life was God's appointment then, and family affections had his most solemn sanctions.

In the New Testament, on the contrary, I cannot find any of those definite rules. It is all addressed to the heart; and who can make the heart right? I suppose it is the conviction of this which has made the Church since then restore many minute rules and discipline, in imitation of the Jewish ceremonial; for in the Gospels and Epistles I can find no ritual, ceremonial, or definite external rules of any kind.

What advantage, then, has the New Testament over the old? Christ has come. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." This *ought* surely to make a great difference between us and the Jews. But how?

April 9.—St. Gregory of Nyssa.

I have found, in my reading to-day, the end of Eva's sentence—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*."

How simple the words are!—"Believeth;" that would mean, in any other book, "trusteth," "has reliance" in Christ;—simply to confide in him, and then receive his promise not to perish.

But *here*—in this book, in theology—it is necessarily impossible that believing can mean anything so simple as that; because, at that rate, any one who merely came to the Lord Jesus Christ in confiding trust would have everlasting life, without any further conditions; and this is obviously out of the question.

For what can be more simple than to confide in one worthy of confidence? and what can be greater than everlasting life?

And yet we know, from all the teaching of the doctors and fathers of the Church, that nothing is more difficult than obtaining everlasting life; and that, for this reason, monastic orders, pilgrimages, penances, have been multiplied from century to century; for this reason saints have forsaken every earthly joy, and inflicted on themselves every possible torment;—all to obtain everlasting life, which, if this word "believeth" meant here what it would mean anywhere but in theology, would be offered freely to every petitioner.

Wherefore it is clear that "believeth," in the Scriptures, means something entirely different from what it does in any secular book, and must include contrition, confession, penance, satisfaction, mortification of the flesh, and all else necessary to salvation.

Shall I venture to send this end of Eva's sentence to her?

It might mislead her. Dare I for her sake?—dare I still more for my own?

One hour I have sat before this question; and whither has my heart wandered? What confession can retrace the flood of bitter thoughts which have rushed over me in this one hour?

I had watched her grow from childhood into early womanhood; and until these last months, until that week of anguish, I had thought of her as a creature between a child and an angel. I had loved her as a sister who had yet a mystery and a charm about her different from a sister. Only when it seemed that death might separate us did it burst upon me that there was something in my affection for her which made her not one among others, but in some strange sacred sense the only one on earth to me.

And as I recovered came the hopes I must never more recall, which made all life like the woods in spring, and my heart like a full river set free from its ice-fetters, and flowing through the world in a tide of blessing.

I thought of a home which might be, I thought of a sacrament which should transubstantiate all life into a symbol of heaven, a home which was to be peaceful and sacred as a church, because of the meek and pure, and heavenly creature who should minister and reign there.

An then came to me that terrible vision of a city smitten by the pestilence which I had brought, with the recollection of the impulse I had had in the forest at midnight, and more than once since then, to take the monastic vows. I felt I was like Jonah flying from God; yet still I hesitated until she was stricken. And then I yielded. I vowed if she were saved I would become a monk.

Not till she was stricken, whose loss would have made the whole world a blank to me: not till the sacrifice was worthless,—did I make it! And will God accept such a sacrifice as this?

At least Brother Martin had not this to reproach himself with. He did not delay his conversion until his whole being had become possessed by an image no prayers can erase; nay, which prayer and holy meditations on heaven itself, only rivet on the heart, as the purest reflection of heaven memory can recall.

Brother Martin, at least did not trifle with his vocation until too late.

VII.

Elsè's Story.

January 23.

It is too plain now why Fritz would not look back as he went down the street. He thought it would be looking back from the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God, then, is the cloister, and the world, *we* are that!—father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends, home, that is the world! I shall never understand it. For if all my younger brothers say is true, either all the priests and monks are not in the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of God is strangely governed here on earth.

Fritz was helping us all so much. He would have been the stay of our parents' old age. He was the example and admiration of the boys, and the pride and delight of us all; and to *me*! My heart grows so bitter when I write about it, I seem to hate and reproach every one. Every one but Fritz; I cannot, of course, hate him. But why was all that was gentlest and noblest in him made to work towards this last dreadful step?

If our father had only been more successful, Fritz need not have entered on that monastic foundation at Erfurt, which made his conscience so sensitive; if my mother had only not been so religious, and taught us to reverence Aunt Agnes as so much better than herself, he might never have thought of the monastic life; if I had been more religious he might have confided more in me, and I might have induced him to pause, at least, a few years before taking this unalterable step. If Eva had not been so wilful, and insisted on braving the contagion from me, she might never have been stricken, and that vow might not yet, might never have been taken. If God had not caused him so innocently to bring the pestilence among us! But I must not dare to say another word of complaint, or it will become blasphemy. Doubtless it is God who has willed to bring all this misery on us; and to rebel against God is a deadly sin. As Aunt Agnes said, "The Lord is a jealous God," he will not suffer us to make idols. We must love him best, first, alone. We must make a great void in our heart by renouncing all earthly affections, that he may fill it. We must mortify the flesh, that we may live. What, then, is the flesh? I suppose all our natural affections, which the monks call our fleshly lusts. These Fritz has renounced. Then if all our natural affections are to die in us, what is to live in us? The "spiritual life," they say in some of the

sermons, and "the love of God." But are not my natural affections my *heart*; and if I am not to love God with my heart, with the heart with which I love my father and mother, what am I to love him with?

It seems to me, the love of God to us is something quite different from any human being's love to us.

When human beings love us they like to have us with them; they delight to make us happy; they delight in our being happy, whether they make us so or not, if it is a right happiness, a happiness that does us good.

But with God's love it must be quite different. He warns us not on any account to come too near Him. We have to place priests, and saints, and penances between us and Him, and then approach Him with the greatest caution, lest, after all, it should be in the wrong way, and He should be angry. And, instead of delighting in our happiness, He is never so much pleased as when we renounce all the happiness of our life, and make other people wretched in doing so, as Fritz, our own Fritz, has just done.

Therefore, also, no doubt, the love God requires we should feel for Him is something entirely different from the love we give each other. It must, I suppose, be a serious, severe, calm adoration, too sublime to give either joy or sorrow, such as had left its stamp on Aunt Agnes's grave impassive face. I can never, never even attempt to attain to it. Certainly at present I have no time to think of it.

Thank Heaven, thou livest still, mother of mercy! In *thy* face there have been tears, real, bitter, human tears; in *thine* eyes there have been smiles of joy, real, simple, human joy. Thou wilt understand and have pity. Yet oh, couldst not thou, even thou, sweet mother, have reminded him of the mother he has left to battle on alone? thou who art a mother, and didst bend over a cradle, and hadst a little lowly home at Nazareth once?

But I know my own mother would not even herself have uttered a word to keep Fritz back. When first we heard of it, and I entreated her to write and remonstrate, although the tears were streaming from her eyes, she said, "Not a word, Elsè, not a syllable. Shall not I give my son up freely to Him who gave him to me. God might have called him away from earth altogether when he lay smitten with the plague, and shall I grudge him to the cloister? I shall see him again," she added, "once or twice at least. When he is consecrated priest, shall I not have joy then, and see him in his white robes at the altar, and, perhaps, even receive my Creator from his hands!"

"Once or twice!—O mother!" I sobbed, "and in church, amongst hundreds of others! What pleasure will there be in that?"

"Elsè," she said softly, but with a firmness unusual with her, "my child, do not say another word. Once I myself had some faint inclination to the cloister, which, if I had nourished it, might have grown into a vocation. But I saw your father, and I neglected it. And see what troubles my children have to bear! Has there not also been a kind of fatal spell on all your father's inventions? Perhaps God will at last accept from me in my son what I withheld in myself, and will be pacified towards us, and send us better days; and then your father's great invention will be completed yet. But do not say anything of what I told you to him!"

I have never seen our father so troubled about anything.

"Just as he was able to understand my projects!" he said, "and I would have bequeathed them all to him!"

For some days he never touched a model! but now he has crept back to his old follies and his instruments, and tells us there was something in Fritz's horoscope which might have prepared us for this, had he only understood it a little before. However, this discovery, although too late to warn us of the blow, consoles our father, and he has resumed his usual occupations.

Eva looks very pale and fragile, partly, no doubt, from the effects of the pestilence; but when first the rumour reached us, I sought some sympathy from her, and said, "O Eva, how strange it seems, when Fritz always thought of us before himself, to abandon us all thus without one word of warning."

"Cousin Elsè," she said, "Fritz has done now as he always does. He *has* thought of us first, I am as sure of it as if I could hear him say so. He thought he would serve us best by leaving us thus, or he would never have left us."

She understood him best of all, as she so often does. When his letter came to our mother, it gave just the reasons she had often told me she was sure had moved him.

It is difficult to tell what Eva feels, because of that strange inward peace in her which seems always to flow under all her other feelings.

I have not seen her shed any tears at all; and whilst I can scarcely bear to enter our dear old lumber-room, or to do anything I did with him, her great delight seems to be to read every book he liked, and to learn and repeat every hymn she learned with him.

Eva and the mother cling very closely together. She will scarcely let my mother do any household work, but insists on sharing every laborious task which hitherto we have kept her from, because of her slight and delicate frame.

It is true I rise early to save them all the work I can, because they have neither of them half the strength I have, and I enjoy stirring about. Thoughts come so much more bitterly on me when I am sitting still.

But when I am kneading the dough, or pounding the clothes with stones in the stream on washing-days, I feel as I were pounding at all my perplexities; and that makes my hands stronger and my perplexities more shadowy, until even now I find myself often singing as I am wringing the clothes by the stream. It is so pleasant in the winter sunshine, with the brook babbling among the rushes and cresses, and little Thekla prattling by my side, and pretending to help.

But when I have finished my day's work, and come into the house, I find the mother and Eva sitting close side by side; and perhaps Eva is silent and my mother brushes tears away as they fall on her knitting; but when they look up, their faces are calm and peaceful, and then I know they have been talking about Fritz.

EISENACH, *February* 2.

Yesterday afternoon I found Eva translating a Latin hymn he loved, to our mother, and then she sang it through in her sweet clear voice. It was about the dear, dear country in heaven, and Jerusalem the Golden.

In the evening I said to her—

"O Eva, how can you bear to sing the hymns Fritz loved so dearly? I could not sing a line steadily of any song he had cared to hear me sing! And he delighted always so much to listen to you. His voice would echo 'never, never more' to every note I sung, and the songs would all end in sobs."

"But I do not feel separated from Fritz, Cousin Elsè," she said, "and I never shall. Instead of hearing that melancholy chant you think of, 'never, never more' echo from all the hymns he loved, I always seem to hear his voice responding, 'For ever and for evermore.' And I think of the time when we shall sing them together again."

"Do you mean in heaven, Eva?" I said, "that is so very far off, if we ever reach it—"

"Not so very far off, Cousin Elsè," she said. "I often think it is very near. If it were not so, how could the angels be so much with us and yet with God?"

"But life seems so long, now Fritz is gone."

"Not so very long, Cousin Elsè," she said. "I often think it may be very short, and often I pray it may."

"Eva!" I exclaimed, "you surely do not pray that you may die?"

"Why not?" she said, very quietly. "I think if God took us to himself, we might help those we love better there than at Eisenach, or perhaps even in the convent. And it is there we shall meet again, and there are never any partings. My father told me so," she added, "before he died."

Then I understood how Eva mourns for Fritz, and why she does not weep; but I could only say—

"O Eva, do not pray to die. There are all the saints in heaven: and you help us so much more here!"

February 8.

I cannot feel at all reconciled to losing Fritz, nor do I think I ever shall. Like all the other troubles, it was no doubt meant to do me good; but it does me none, I am sure, although of course, that is my fault. What did me good was being happy, as I was when Fritz came back; and that is passed for ever.

My great comfort is our grandmother. The mother and Eva look on everything from such sublime heights; but my grandmother feels more as I do. Often, indeed, she speaks very severely of Fritz, which always does me good, because, of course, I defend him, and then she becomes angry, and says we are an incomprehensible family, and have the strangest ideas of right and wrong, from my father downward, she ever heard of; and then I grow angry, and say my father is the best and wisest man in the Electoral States. Then our grandmother begins to lament over her poor, dear daughter, and the life she has led, and rejoices, in a plaintive voice, that she herself has nearly done with the world altogether; and then I try to comfort her, and say that I am sure there is not much in the world to make any one wish to stay in it; and, having reached this point of despondency, we both cry and embrace each other, and she says I am a poor, good child, and Fritz was always the delight of her heart, which I know very well;—and thus we comfort each other. We have, moreover, solemnly resolved, our grandmother and I, that, whatever comes of it, we will never call Fritz anything but Fritz.

"Brother Sebastian, indeed!" she said, "your mother might as well take a new husband as your brother a new name! Was not she married, and was not he christened in church? Is not Friedrich a good, honest name, which hundreds of your ancestors have borne? And shall we call him instead a heathen foreign name, that none of your kindred were ever known by?"

"Not heathen, grandmother," I ventured to suggest. "You remember telling us of the martyrdom

of St. Sebastian by the heathen emperor?"

"Do you contradict me, child?" she exclaimed.

"Did I not know the whole martyrology before your mother was born? I say it is a heathen name. No blame to the saint if his parents were poor benighted Pagans, and knew no better name to give him; but that our Fritz should adopt it instead of his own is a disgrace. My lips at least are too old to learn such new fashioned nonsense. I shall call him the name I called him at the font and in his cradle, and no other."

Yes, Fritz! Fritz! he is to us, and shall be always. Fritz in our hearts till death!

February 15.

We have just heard that Fritz has finished his first month of probation, and has been invested with the frock of the novice. I hate to think of his thick, dark, waving hair clipped in the circle of the tonsure. But the worst part of it is the effect of his becoming a monk has had on the other boys, Christopher and Pollux.

They, who before this thought Fritz the model of everything good and great, seem repelled from all religion now. I have difficulty even in getting them to church.

Christopher said to me the other day—

"Elsè, why is a man who suddenly deserts his family to become a soldier called a villain, while the man who deserts those who depend on him to become a monk is called a saint?"

It is very unfortunate the boys should come to me with their religious perplexities, because I am so perplexed myself, I have no idea how to answer them. I generally advise them to ask Eva.

This time I could only say, as our grandmother had so often said to me,—

"You must wait till you are older, and then you will understand." But I added, "Of course it is quite different: one leaves his home for God, and the other for the world."

But Christopher is the worst, and he continued,—

"Sister Elsè, I do not like the monks at all. You and Eva and our mother have no idea how wicked many of them are. Reinhardt says he has seen them drunk often, and heard them swear, and that some of them make a jest even of the mass, and that the priests' houses are not fit for any honest maiden to visit, and,—

"Reinhardt is a bad boy," I said, colouring; "and I have often told you I do not want to hear anything he says."

"But I, at all events, shall never become a monk or a priest," retorted Christopher; "I think the merchants are better. Woman cannot understand about these things," he added, loftily, "and it is better they should not; but I know; and I intend to be a merchant or a soldier."

Christopher and Pollux are fifteen, and Fritz is two-and-twenty; but *he* never talked in that lofty way to me about women not understanding!

It did make me indignant to hear Christopher, who is always tearing his clothes, and getting into scrapes, and perplexing us to get him out of them, comparing himself with Fritz, and looking down on his sisters; and I said, "It is only *boys* who talk scornfully of women. Men, true men, honour women."

"The monks do not!" retorted Christopher. "I have heard them say things myself worse than I have ever said about any woman. Only last Sunday, did not Father Boniface say half the mischief in the world had been done by women, from Eve to Helen and Cleopatra?"

"Do not mention our mother Eve with those heathens, Christopher," said our grandmother, coming to my rescue, from her corner by the stove. "Eve is in the Holy Scriptures, and many of these pagans are not fit for people to speak of. Half the saints are women, you know very well. Peasants and traders," she added sublimely, "may talk slightingly of women; but no man can be a true knight who does."

"The monks do!" muttered Christopher doggedly.

"I have nothing to say about the monks," rejoined our grandmother tartly. And accepting this imprudent concession of our grandmother's Christopher retired from the contest.

March 25.

I have just been looking at two letters addressed to Father Johann Braun, one of our Eisenach priests, by Martin Luther. They were addressed to him as "the holy and venerable priest of Christ and of Mary." So much I could understand, and also that he calls himself Brother Martin Luther, not Brother Augustine, a name he assumed on first entering the cloister. Therefore certainly, I may call our Fritz, Brother Friedrich Cotta.

March 29, 1510.

A young man was at Aunt Ursula Cotta's this evening, who told us strange things about the

doings at Annaberg.

Dr. Tetzel has been there two years, selling the papal indulgences to the people; and lately, out of regard, he says, to the great piety of the German people, he has reduced their price.

There was a great deal of discussion about it, which I rather regretted the boys were present to hear. My father said indulgences did not mean forgiveness of sins, but only remission of certain penances which the Church had imposed. But the young man from Annaberg told us that Dr. John Tetzel solemnly assured the people, that since it was impossible for them, on account of their sins, to make satisfaction to God by their works, our Holy Father the Pope, who has the control of all the treasury of merits accumulated by the Church throughout the ages, now graciously sells those merits to any who will buy, and thereby bestows on them forgiveness of sins (even of sins which no other priest can absolve), and a certain entrance into eternal life.

The young man said, also, that the great red cross has been erected in the nave of the principal church, with the crown of thorns, the nails, and spear suspended from it, and that at times it has been granted to the people even to see the blood of the Crucified flow from the cross. Beneath this cross are the banners of the Church, and the papal standard, with the triple crown. Before it is the large, strong iron money chest. On one side stands the pulpit, where Dr. Tetzel preaches daily, and exhorts the people to purchase this inestimable favour while yet there is time, for themselves and their relations in purgatory,—and translates the long parchment mandate of the Lord Pope, with the papal seals hanging from it. On the other side is a table, where sit several priests, with pen, ink, and writing desk, selling the indulgence tickets, and counting the money into boxes. Lately he told us, not only have the prices been reduced, but at the end of the letter affixed to the churches, it is added, "*Pauperibus dentur gratis*."

"Freely to the poor!" That certainly would suit us! And if I had only time to make a pilgrimage to Annaberg, if this is the kind of religion that pleases God, it certainly might be attainable even for me.

If Fritz had only known it before, he need not have made that miserable vow. A journey to Annaberg would have more than answered the purpose.

Only, if the Pope has such inestimable treasures at his disposal, why could he not always give them "freely to the poor," always and everywhere?

But I know it is a sin to question what the Lord Pope does. I might almost as well question what the Lord God Almighty does. For He also, who gave those treasures to the Pope, is He not everywhere, and could He not give them freely to us direct? It is plain these are questions too high for me.

I am not the only one perplexed by those indulgences, however. My mother says it is not the way she was taught, and she had rather keep to the old paths. Eva said, "If I were the Lord Pope, and had such a treasure, I think I could not help instantly leaving my palace and my beautiful Rome, and going over the mountains and over the seas, into every city and every village; every hut in the forests, and every room in the lowest streets, that none might miss the blessing, although I had to walk barefoot, and never saw holy Rome again."

"But then," said our father, "the great church at St. Peter's would never be built. It is on that, you know, the indulgence money is to be spent."

"But Jerusalem the Golden would be built, Uncle Cotta!" said Eva; "and would not that be better?"

"We had better not talk about it, Eva," said the mother. "The holy Jerusalem *is* being built; and I suppose there are many different ways to the same end. Only I like the way I know best."

The boys, I regret to say, had made many irreverent gestures during this conversation about the indulgences, and afterwards I had to speak to them.

"Sister Elsè," said Christopher, "it is quite useless talking to me. I hate the monks, and all belonging to them. And I do not believe a word they say—at least, not because they say it. The boys at school say this Dr. Tetzel is a very bad man and a great liar. Last week Reinhardt told us something he did, which will show you what he is. One day he promised to show the people a feather which the devil plucked out the wing of the archangel Michael. Reinhardt says he supposes the devil gave it to Dr. Tetzel. However that may be, during the night some students in jest found their way to his relic-box, stole the feather, and replaced it by some coals. The next day, when Dr. Tetzel had been preaching fervently for a long time on the wonders of this feather, when he opened the box there was nothing in it but charcoal. But he was not to be disconcerted. He merely said, 'I have taken the wrong box of relics, I perceive; these are some most sacred cinders—the relics of the holy body of St. Laurence, who was roasted on a gridiron.'"

"Schoolboys' stories," said I.

"They are as good as monks' stories, at all events," rejoined Christopher.

I resolved to see if Pollux was as deeply possessed with this irreverent spirit as Christopher, and therefore this morning, when I found him alone, I said, "Pollux, you used to love Fritz so dearly, you would not surely take up thoughts which would pain him so deeply if he knew of it."

"I do love Fritz," Pollux replied, "but I can never think he was right in leaving us all; and I like the

religion of the Creeds and the Ten Commandments better than that of the monks."

Daily, hourly I feel the loss of Fritz. It is not half as much the money he earned; although, of course, that helped us; we can do and struggle on without that. It is the influence he had over the boys. They felt he was before them in the same race and when he remonstrated with them about anything, they listened. But if I blame them, they think it is only a woman's ignorance, or a woman's superstition.—and boys, they say, cannot be like women. And now it is the same with Fritz. He is removed into another sphere, which is not theirs; and if I remind them of what he did or said, they say, "Yes, Fritz thought so; but you know he has become a monk; but we do not intend ever to be monks, and the religion of monks and laymen are different things."

April 2.

The spring is come again. I wonder if it sends the thrill of joy into Fritz's cell at Erfurt that it does into all the forests around us here, and into my heart!

I suppose there are trees near him, and birds—little happy birds—making their nests among them, as they do in our yard, and singing as they work.

But the birds are not monks. Their nests are little homes, and they wander freely whither they will, only brought back by love. Perhaps Fritz does not like to listen to the birds now, because they remind him of home, and of our long spring days in the forest. Perhaps, too, they are part of the world he has renounced; and he must be dead to the world!

April 3.

We have had a long day in the forest, gathering sticks and dry twigs. Every creature seemed so happy there! It was such a holiday to watch the ants roofing their nests with fir twigs, and the birds flying hither and thither with food for their nestlings; and to hear the wood-pigeons, which Fritz always said were like Eva, cooing softly in the depths of the forest.

At mid-day we sat down in a clearing of the forest, to enjoy the meal we had brought with us. A little quiet brook prattled near us, of which we drank, and the delicate young twigs on the topmost boughs of the dark, majestic pines trembled softly, as if for joy, in the breeze.

As we rested, we told each other stories. Pollux began with wild tales of demon hunts, which flew with the baying of demon dogs through these very forests at midnight. Then, as the children began to look fearfully around, and shiver, even at mid-day, while they listened, Christopher delighted them with quaint stories of wolves in sheeps' clothing politely offering themselves to the farmer as shepherds, which, I suspect, were from some dangerous satirical book, but, without the application, were very amusing.

Chriemhild and Atlantis had their stories of Kobolds, who played strange tricks in the cow-stall; and of Rübezahl and the misshapen dwarf gnomes, who guarded the treasures of gold and silver in the glittering caves under the mountains; and of the elves, who danced beside the brooks at twilight.

"And I," said loving little Thekla, "always want to see poor Nix, the water-sprite, who cries by the streams at moonlight, and lets his tears mix with the waters, because he has no soul, and he wants to live for ever. I should like to give him half mine."

We should all of us have been afraid to speak of these creatures, in their own haunts among the pines, if the sun had not been high in the heavens. Even as it was, I began to feel a little uneasy, and I wished to turn the conversation from these elves and sprites, who, many think, are the spirits of the old heathen gods, who linger about their haunts. One reason why people think so is, that they dare not venture within the sound of the church bells; which makes some, again, think they are worse than poor, shadowy, dethroned heathen gods, and had, indeed, better be never mentioned at all. I thought I could not do better than tell the legend of my beloved giant Offerus, who became Christopher and a saint by carrying the holy child across the river.

Thekla wondered if her favourite Nix could be saved in the same way. She longed to see him and tell him about it.

But Eva had still her story to tell, and she related to us her legend of St. Catharine.

"St. Catharine," she said, "was a lady of royal birth, the only child of the king and queen of Egypt. Her parents were heathens, but they died and left her an orphan when she was only fourteen. She was more beautiful than any of the ladies of her court, and richer than any princess in the world; but she did not care for pomp, or dress, or all her precious things. God's golden stars seemed to her more magnificent than all the splendour of her kingdom, and she shut herself up in her palace, and studied philosophy and the stars until she grew wiser than all the wise men of the East.

"But one day the Diet of Egypt met, and resolved that their young queen must be persuaded to marry. They sent a deputation to her in her palace, who asked her, if they could find a prince beautiful beyond any, surpassing all philosophers in wisdom, of noblest mind and richest inheritance, would she marry him? The queen replied, 'He must be so noble that all men shall worship him, so great that I shall never think I have made him king, so rich that none shall ever say I enriched him, so beautiful that the angels of God shall desire to behold him. If ye can find such a prince, he shall be my husband and the lord of my heart.' Now, near the queen's palace

there lived a poor old hermit in a cave, and that very night the holy Mother of God appeared to him, and told him the King who should be lord of the queen's heart was none other than her Son. Then the hermit went to the palace and presented the queen with a picture of the Virgin and Child; and when St. Catharine saw it her heart was so filled with its holy beauty that she forgot her books, her spheres, and the stars; Plato and Socrates became tedious to her as a twice-told tale, and she kept the sacred picture always before her. Then one night she had a dream:—She met on the top of a high mountain a glorious company of angels, clothed in white, with chaplets of white lilies. She fell on her face before them, but they said, 'Stand up, dear sister Catharine, and be right welcome.' Then they led her by the hand to another company of angels more glorious still, clothed in purple with chaplets of red roses. Before these, again, she fell on her face, dazzled with their glory; but they said, 'Stand up, dear sister Catharine; thee hath the King delighted to honour.' Then they led her by the hand to an inner chamber of the palace of heaven, where sat a queen in state; and the angels said to her, 'Our most gracious sovereign Lady, Empress of heaven, and Mother of the King of Blessedness, be pleased that we present unto you this our sister, whose name is in the Book of Life, beseeching you to accept her as your daughter and handmaid.' Then our blessed Lady rose and smiled graciously, and led St. Catharine to her blessed Son; but he turned from her, and said sadly, 'She is not fair enough for Me.' Then St. Catharine awoke, and in her heart all day echoed the words, '*She is not fair enough for Me*;' and she rested not until she became a Christian and was baptized. And then, after some years, the tyrant Maximin put her to cruel tortures, and beheaded her because she was a Christian. But the angels took her body, and laid it in a white marble tomb on the top of Mount Sinai, and the Lord Jesus Christ received her soul, and welcomed her to heaven as his pure and spotless bride; for at last he had made her '*fair enough for him*.' And so she has lived ever since in heaven, and is the sister of the angels."

After Eva's legend we began our work again; and in the evening, as we returned with our faggots, it was pleasant to see the goats creeping on before the long shadows which evening began to throw from the forests across the green valleys.

The hymns which Eva sang as we went, seemed quite in tune with everything else. I did not want to understand the words; everything seemed singing in words I could not help feeling,—

"God is good to us all. He gives twigs to the ants, and grain to the birds, and makes the trees their palaces, and teaches them to sing; and will He not care for you?"

Then the boys were so good! They never gave me a moment's anxiety, not even Christopher, but collected faggots twice as large as ours in half the time, and then finished ours, and then performed all kinds of feats in climbing trees and leaping brooks, and brought home countless treasures for Thekla.

These are the days that always make me feel so much better; even a little religious, and as if I could almost love God! It is only when I come back again into the streets, under the shadow of the nine monasteries, and see the monks and priests in dark robes flitting silently about with downcast eyes, that I remember we are not like the birds or even the ants, for they have never sinned, and that, therefore, God cannot care for us and love us as he seems to do the least of his other creatures, until we have become holy, and worked our way through that great wall of sin which keeps us from him and shadows all our life.

Eva does not feel thus. As we returned she laid her basket down on the threshold of St. George's Church, and crossing herself with holy water, went softly up to the high altar, and there she knelt while the lamp burned before the Holy Sacrament. And when I looked at her face as she rose, it was beaming with joy.

"You are happy, Eva, in the church and in the forest," I said to her as we went home; "you seem at home everywhere."

"Is not God everywhere?" she said; "and has He not loved the world?"

"But our *sins*!" I said.

"Have we not the Saviour?" she said, bowing her head.

"But think how hard people find it to please him," I said. "Think of the pilgrimages, the penances, the indulgences!"

"I do not quite understand all that," she said; "I only quite understand my sentence and the crucifix which tells us the Son of God died for man. That *must* have been for love, and I love him; and all the rest I am content to leave."

"But to-night as I look at her dear child-like face asleep on the pillow, and see how thin the cheek is which those long lashes shade, and how transparent the little hand on which she rests, a cold fear comes over me lest God should even now be making her spirit "fair enough for him," and so too fair for earth and for us."

April 4.

This afternoon I was quite cheered by seeing Christopher and Pollux bending together eagerly over a book, which they had placed before them on the window sill. It reminded me of Fritz, and I went to see what they were reading.

I found, however, to my dismay, it was no church-book or learned Latin school-book; but, on the contrary, a German book full of woodcuts, which shocked me very much. It was called Reinecke Fuchs, and as far as I could understand made a jest of everything. There were foxes with monk's frocks, and even in cardinal's hats, and wolves in cassocks with shaven crowns. Altogether it seemed to me a very profane and perilous book; but when I took it to our father, to my amazement he seemed as much amused with it as the boys, and said there were evils in the world which were better attacked by jests than by sermons.

April, St Mark's Day.

I have just heard a sermon about despising the world, from a great preacher, one of the Dominican friars, who is going through the land to awaken people to religion.

He spoke especially against money, which he called "delusion, and dross, and worthless dust, and a soul-destroying canker." To monks no doubt it may be so; for what could they do with it? But it is not so to me. Yesterday money filled my heart with one of the purest joys I have ever known, and made me thank God as I hardly ever thanked him before.

The time had come round to pay for some of the printing materials, and we did not know where to turn for the sum we needed. Lately I have been employing my leisure hours in embroidering some fine Venetian silk Aunt Ursula gave me; and not having any copies, I had brought in some fresh leaves and flowers from the forest and tried to imitate them, hoping to sell them.

When I had finished, it was thought pretty, and I carried it to the merchant, who took the father's precious models, long ago.

He has always been kind to us since, and has procured us ink and paper at a cheaper rate than others can buy it.

When I showed him my work he seemed surprised, and instead of showing it to his wife, as I had expected, he said smiling,—

"These things are not for poor honest burghers like me. You know my wife might be fined by the sumptuary laws if she aped the nobility by wearing anything so fine as this. I am going to the Wartburg to speak about a commission I have executed for the Elector-Frederick, and if you like I will take you and your embroidery with me."

I felt dismayed at first at such an idea, but I had on the new dress Fritz gave me a year ago, and I resolved to venture.

It was so many years since I had passed through that massive gateway into the great court-yard; and I thought of St. Elizabeth distributing loaves, perhaps, at that very gate, and inwardly entreated her to make the elector or the ladies of his court propitious to me.

I was left standing what seemed to me a long time in an ante-room. Some very gaily-dressed gentlemen and ladies passed me and looked at me rather scornfully. I thought the courtiers were not much improved since the days when they were so rude to St. Elizabeth.

But at last I was summoned into the Elector's presence. I trembled very much, for I thought—If the servants are so haughty, what will the master be? But he smiled on me quite kindly, and said, "My good child, I like this work of thine; and this merchant tells me thou art a dutiful daughter. I will purchase this at once for one of my sisters, and pay thee at once."

I was so surprised and delighted with his kindness that I cannot remember the exact words of what he said afterwards, but the substance of them was that the elector is building a new church at his new university town of Wittemberg which is to have choicer relics than any church in Germany. And I am engaged to embroider altar-cloths and coverings for the reliquaries. And the sum already paid me nearly covers our present debt.

No! whatever that Dominican preacher might say nothing would ever persuade me that these precious guldens, which I took home yesterday evening with a heart brimming over with joy and thankfulness, which made our father clasp his hands in thanksgiving, and our mother's eyes overflow with happy tears, are mere delusion, or dross, or dust.

Is not money what *we* make it? Dust in the miser's chests; canker in the proud man's heart; but golden sunbeams, streams of blessing earned by a child's labour and comforting a parent's heart, or lovingly poured from rich men's hands into poor men's homes.

April 20.

Better days seem dawning at last. Dr. Martin, who preaches now at the elector's new university of Wittemberg, must, we think, have spoken to the elector for us, and our father is appointed to superintend the printing-press especially for Latin books, which is to be set up there.

And sweeter even than this, it must be from Fritz that this boon comes to us. Fritz, dear, unselfish Fritz, is the benefactor of the family after all. It must have been he who asked Dr. Martin Luther to speak for us. There, in his lonely cell at Erfurt, he thinks then of us! And he prays for us. He will never forget us. His new name will not alter his heart. And, perhaps, one day, when the novitiate is over, we may see him again. But to see him as no more our Fritz, but

Brother Sebastian!—his home, the Augustinian cloister!—his mother, the church!—his sisters, all holy women!—would it not be almost worse than not seeing him at all?

We are all to move to Wittemberg in a month, except Pollux, who is to remain with Cousin Conrad Cotta, to learn to be a merchant.

Christopher begins to help about the printing.

There was another thing also in my visit to the Wartburg, which gives me many a gleam of joy when I think of it. If the elector whose presence I so trembled to enter, proved so much more condescending and accessible than his courtiers,—oh, if it could only be possible that we are making some mistake about God, and that He after all may be more gracious and ready to listen to us than His priests, or even than the saints who wait on Him in His palace in heaven!

VIII.

Fritz's Story.

ERFURT, AUGUSTINIAN CONVENT, *April* 1.

I suppose conflict of mind working on a constitution weakened by the plague, brought on the illness from which I am just recovering. It is good to feel strength returning as I do. There is a kind of natural irresistible delight in life, however little we have to live for, especially to one so little prepared to die as I am. As I write, the rooks are cawing in the church-yard elms, disputing and chattering like a set of busy prosaic burghers. But retired from all this noisy public life, two thrushes have built their nest in a thorn just under the window of my cell. And early in the morning they wake me with song. He flies hither and thither as busy as a bee, with food for his mate, as she broods secure among the thick leaves, and then he perches on a twig, and sings as if he had nothing to do but to be happy. All is pleasure to him, no doubt—the work as well as the singing. Happy the creatures for whom it is God's will that they should live according to their nature, and not contrary to it.

Probably in the recovering from illness, when the body is still weak, yet thrilling with reviving strength, the heart is especially tender, and yearns more towards home and former life than it will when strength returns and brings duties. Or, perhaps, this illness recalls the last,—and the loving faces and soft hushed voices that were around me then.

Yet I have nothing to complain of. My aged confessor has scarcely left my bed-side. From the first he brought his bed into my cell, and watched over me like a father.

And his words minister to my heart as much as his hands to my bodily wants.

If my spirit would only take the comfort he offers, as easily as I receive food and medicine from his hands!

He does not attempt to combat my difficulties one by one. He says—

"I am little of a physician. I cannot lay my hand on the seat of disease. But there is One who can." And to Him I know the simple-hearted old man prays for me.

Often he recurs to the declaration in the creed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "It is the command of God," he said to me one day, "that we should believe in the forgiveness of sins; not of David's or Peter's sins, but of *ours*, our own, the very sins that distress our consciences." He also quoted a sermon of St. Bernard's on the annunciation.

"The testimony of the Holy Ghost given in thy heart is this, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

Yes, forgiven to all *penitents*! But who can assure me I am a true penitent?

These words, he told me, comforted Brother Martin, and he wonders they do not comfort me. I suppose Brother Martin had "the testimony of the Holy Ghost in his heart;" but who shall give that to me? to me who resisted the vocation of the Holy Ghost so long; who in my deepest heart obey it so imperfectly still!

Brother Martin was faithful, honest, thorough, single-hearted,—all that God accepts; all that I am not!

The affection and compassion of my aged confessor often, however, comfort me, even when his words have little power. They make me feel a dim hope now and then that the Lord he serves may have something of the same pity in his heart.

ERFURT, *April* 15.

The Vicar-General, Staupitz, has visited our convent. I have confessed to him. He was very gentle with me, and to my surprise proscribed me scarcely any penance, although I endeavored to unveil all to him.

Once he murmured, as if to himself, looking at me with a penetrating compassion, "Yes, there is

no drawing back. But I wish I had known this before." And then he added to me, "Brother, we must not confuse suffering with sin. It is sin to *turn* back. It may be anguish to *look* back and see what we have renounced, but it is not necessarily sin, if we resolutely press forward still. And if sin mingles with the regret, remember we have to do not with a painted, but a real Saviour; and he died not for painted, but for real sins. Sin is never overcome by looking at it, but by looking away from it to Him who bore our sins, yours and mine, on the cross. The heart is never won back to God by thinking we ought to love him, but by learning what he is, all worthy of our love. True repentance begins with the love of God. The Holy Spirit teaches us to know, and, therefore, to love God. Fear not, but read the Scriptures, and pray. He will employ thee in his service yet, and in his favour is life, and in his service is freedom."

This confession gave me great comfort for the time. I felt myself understood, and yet not despaired of. And that evening, after repeating the Hours, I ventured in my own words to pray to God, and found it solemn and sweet.

But since then my old fear has recurred. Did I indeed confess completely even to the Vicar-General? If I had, would not his verdict have been different? Does not the very mildness of his judgment prove that I have once more deceived myself—made a false confession, and, therefore, failed of the absolution! But it is a relief to have his positive command as my superior to study the Holy Scriptures, instead of the scholastic theologians, to whose writings my preceptor had lately been exclusively directing my studies.

April 25.

I have this day, to my surprise, received a command, issuing from the Vicar-General, to prepare to set off on a mission to Rome.

The monk under whose direction I am to journey I do not yet know.

The thought of the new scenes we shall pass through, and the wonderful new world we shall enter on,—new and old,—fills me with an almost childish delight. Since I heard it, my heart and conscience seem to have become strangely lightened, which proves, I fear, how little real earnestness there is in me.

Another thing, however, has comforted me greatly. In the course of my confession I spoke to the Vicar-General about my family, and he has procured for my father an appointment as superintendent of the Latin printing press, at the Elector's new University of Wittemberg.

I trust now that the heavy pressure of pecuniary care which has weighed so long on my mother and Elsè will be relieved. It would have been sweeter to me to have earned this relief for them by my own exertions. But we must not choose the shape or the time in which divine messengers shall appear.

The Vicar-General has, moreover, presented me with a little volume of sermons by a pious Dominican friar, named Tauler. These are wonderfully deep and heart-searching. I find it difficult to reconcile the sublime and enrapt devotion to God which inspires them, with the minute rules of our order, the details of scholastic casuistry, and the precise directions as to the measure of worship and honour, Dulia, Hyperdulia, and Latria to be paid to the various orders of heavenly beings, which make prayer often seem as perplexing to me as the ceremonial of the imperial court would to a peasant of the Thuringian forest.

This Dominican speaks as if we might soar above all these lower things, and lose ourselves in the One Ineffable Source, Ground, Beginning, and End of all Being; the One who is all.

Dearer to me, however, than this, is an old manuscript in our convent library, containing the confessions of the patron of our order himself, the great father Augustine.

Straight from his heart it penetrates into mine, as if spoken to me to-day. Passionate, fervent, struggling, wandering, trembling, adoring heart, I feel its pulses through every line!

And was this the experience of one who is now a saint on the most glorious heights of heaven?

Then the mother! Patient, lowly, noble, saintly Monica; mother, and more than martyr. She rises before me in the likeness of a beloved form I may remember, without sin, even here, even now. St. Monica speaks to me with my mother's voice; and in the narrative of her prayers I seem to gain a deeper insight into what my mother's have been for me.

St. Augustine was happy, to breathe the last words of comfort to herself as he did, to be with her dwelling in one house to the last. This can scarcely be given to me. "That sweet habit of living together" is broken for ever between us; broken by my deliberate act. "For the glory of God!" may God accept it; if not, may he forgive!

That old manuscript is worn with reading. It has lain in the convent library for certainly more than a hundred years. Generation after generation of those who now lie sleeping in the field of God below our windows have turned over those pages. Heart after heart has doubtless come, as I came, to consult the oracle of that deep heart of old times, so nearly shipwrecked, so gloriously saved.

As I read the old thumbed volume, a company of spirits seems to breathe in fellowship around me, and I think how many, strengthened by these words, are perhaps, even now, like him who

penned them, amongst the spirits of the just made perfect.

In the convent library, the dead seem to live again around me. In the cemetery are the relics of the corruptible body. Among these worn volumes I feel the breath of the living spirits of generations passed away.

I must say, however, there is more opportunity for solitary communion with the departed in that library than I could wish. The books are not so much read, certainly, in these days, as the Vicar-General would desire, although the Augustinian has the reputation of being among the more learned orders.

I often question what brought many of these easy comfortable monks here. But many of the faces give no reply to my search. No history seems written on them. The wrinkles seem mere ruts of the wheels of Time, not furrows sown with the seeds of thought,—happy at least if they are not as fissures rent by the convulsions of inward fires.

I suppose many of the brethren became monks just as other men become tailors or shoemakers, and with no further spiritual aim, because their parents planned it so. But I may wrong even the meanest in saying so. The shallowest human heart has depths somewhere, let them be crusted over by ice ever so thick, or veiled by flowers ever so fair.

And I—I and this unknown brother are actually about to journey to Italy, the glorious land of sunshine, and vines, and olives, and ancient cities—the land of Rome, imperial, saintly Rome, where countless martyrs sleep, where St. Augustine and Monica sojourned, where St. Paul and St. Peter preached and suffered,—where the vicar of Christ lives and reigns?

May 1.

The brother with whom I am to make the pilgrimage to Rome, arrived last night. To my inexpressible delight it is none other than Brother Martin—Martin Luther! Professor of Theology in the Elector's new University of Wittemberg. He is much changed again since I saw him last, toiling through the streets of Erfurt with the sack on his shoulder. The hollow, worn look, has disappeared from his face, and the fire has come back to his eyes. Their expression varies, indeed, often from the sparkle of merriment to a grave earnestness, when all their light seems withdrawn inward; but underneath there is that kind of repose I have noticed in the countenance of my aged confessor.

Brother Martin's face has, indeed, a history written on it, and a history, I deem, not yet finished.

HEIDELBERG, *May* 25.

I wondered at the lightness of heart with which I set out on our journey from Erfurt.

The Vicar-General himself accompanied us hither. We travelled partly on horseback, and partly in wheeled carriages.

The conversation turned much on the prospects of the new university, and the importance of finding good professors of the ancient languages for it. Brother Martin himself proposed to make use of his sojourn at Rome, to improve himself in Greek and Hebrew, by studying under the learned Greeks and rabbis there. They counsel me also to do the same.

The business which calls us to Rome is an appeal to the Holy Father, concerning a dispute between some convents of our Order and the Vicar-General.

But they say business is slowly conducted at Rome, and will leave us much time for other occupations besides those which are most on our hearts, namely, paying homage at the tombs of the holy apostles and martyrs.

They speak most respectfully and cordially of the Elector Frederick, who must indeed be a very devout prince. Not many years since, he accomplished a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and took with him the painter Lucas Cranach, to make drawings of the various holy places.

About ten years since, he built a church dedicated to St. Ursula, on the site of the small chapel erected in 1353, over the Holy Thorn from the Crown of Thorns, presented to a former elector by the king of France.

This church is already, they say, through the Elector Frederick's diligence, richer in relics than any church in Europe, except that of Assisi, the birth-place of St. Francis. And the collection is still continually being increased.

They showed me a book printed at Wittemberg a year or two since, entitled "A Description of the Venerable Relics," adorned with one hundred and nineteen woodcuts.

The town itself seems to be still poor and mean compared with Eisenach and Erfurt; and the students, of whom there are now nearly five hundred, are at times very turbulent. There is much beer-drinking among them. In 1507, three years since, the Bishop of Brandenburg laid the whole city under interdict for some insult offered by the students to his suite, and now they are forbidden to wear guns, swords, or knives.

Brother Martin, however, is full of hope as to the good to be done among them. He himself

received the degree of Biblicus (Bible teacher) on the 9th of March last year; and every day he lectures between twelve and one o'clock.

Last summer, for the first time, he was persuaded by the Vicar-General to preach publicly. I heard some conversation between them in reference to this, which afterwards Brother Martin explained to me.

Dr. Staupitz and Brother Martin were sitting last summer in the convent garden at Wittemberg together, under the shade of a pear tree, whilst the Vicar-General endeavoured to prevail on him to preach. He was exceedingly unwilling to make the attempt. "It is no little matter," said he to Dr. Staupitz, "to appear before the people in the place of God." "I had fifteen arguments," he continued in relating it to me, "wherewith I purposed to resist my vocation; but they availed nothing." At the last I said, "Dr. Staupitz, you will be the death of me, for I cannot live under it three months." "Very well," replied Dr. Staupitz, "still go on. Our Lord God hath many great things to accomplish, and he has need of wise men in heaven as well as in earth."

Brother Martin could not further resist, and after making a trial before the brethren in the refectory, at last, with a trembling heart, he mounted the pulpit of the little chapel of the Augustinian cloister.

"When a preacher for the first time enters the pulpit," he concluded, "no one would believe how fearful he is; he sees so many heads before him. When I go into the pulpit, I do not look on any one. I think them only to be so many blocks before me, and I speak out the words of my God."

And yet Dr. Staupitz says his words are like thunder-peals. *Yet!* do I say? Is it not *because*? He feels himself nothing; he feels his message everything; he feels God present. What more could be needed to make a man of his power a great preacher?

With such discourse the journey seemed accomplished quickly indeed. And yet, almost the happiest hours to me were those when we were all silent, and the new scenes passed rapidly before me. It was a great rest to live for a time on what I saw, and cease from thought, and remembrance, and inward questionings altogether. For have I not been commanded this journey by my superiors, so that in accordance with my vow of obedience, my one duty at present is to travel; and therefore what pleasure it chances to bring I must not refuse.

We spent some hours in Nüremberg. The quaint rich carvings of many of the houses were beautiful. There also we saw Albrecht Dürer's paintings, and heard Hans Sachs, the shoemaker and poet, sing his godly German hymns. And as we crossed the Bavarian plains, the friendliness of the simple peasantry made up to us for the sameness of the country.

Near Heidelberg again I fancied myself once more in the Thuringian forest, especially as we rested in the convent of Erbach in the Odenwald. Again the familiar forests and green valleys with their streams were around me. I fear Elsè and the others will miss the beauty of the forest-covered hills around Eisenach, when they remove to Wittemberg, which is situated on a barren, monotonous flat. About this time they will be moving!

Brother Martin has held many disputations on theological and philosophical questions in the University of Heidelberg; but I, being only a novice, have been free to wander whither I would.

This evening it was delightful to stand in the woods of the Elector Palatine's castle, and from among the oaks and delicate birches rustling about me, to look down on the hills of the Odenwald folding over each other. Far up among them I traced the narrow, quiet Neckar, issuing from the silent depths of the forest; while on the other side, below the city, it wound on through the plain to the Rhine, gleaming here and there with the gold of sunset or the cold grey light of the evening. Beyond, far off, I could see the masts of ships on the Rhine.

I scarcely know why, the river made me think of life, of mine and Brother Martin's. Already he has left the shadow of the forests. Who can say what people his life will bless, what sea it will reach, and through what perils? Of this I feel sure, it will matter much to many what its course shall be. For me it is otherwise. My life, as far as earth is concerned, seems closed,—ended; and it can matter little to any, henceforth, through what regions it passes, if only it reaches the ocean at last, and ends, as they say, in the bosom of God. If only we could be sure that God guides the course of our lives as he does that of rivers! And yet, do they not say that some rivers lose themselves in sandwastes, and others trickle meanly to the sea through lands they have desolated into untenantable marshes?

BLACK FOREST, *May* 14, 1510.

Brother Martin and I are now fairly on our pilgrimage alone, walking all day, begging our provisions and our lodgings, which he sometimes repays by performing a mass in the parish church, or by a promise of reciting certain prayers or celebrating masses on the behalf of our benefactors, at Rome.

These are, indeed, precious days. My whole frame seems braced and revived by the early rising, the constant movement in the pure air, the pressing forward to a definite point.

But more, infinitely more than this, my heart seems reviving. I begin to have a hope and see a light which, until now, I scarcely deemed possible.

To encourage me in my perplexities and conflicts, Brother Martin unfolded to me what his own

had been. To the storm of doubt, and fear, and anguish in that great heart of his my troubles seem like a passing spring shower. Yet to me they were tempests which laid my heart waste. And God, Brother Martin believes, does not measure his pity by what our sorrows are in themselves, but what they are to us. Are we not all children, little children, in his sight?

"I did not learn my divinity at once," he said, "but was constrained by my temptations to search deeper and deeper; for no man without trials and temptations can attain a true understanding of the Holy Scriptures. St. Paul had a devil that beat him with fists, and with temptations drove him diligently to study the Holy Scriptures. Temptations hunted me into the Bible, wherein I sedulously read; and thereby, God be praised, at length attained a true understanding of it."

He then related to me what some of these temptations were;—the bitter disappointment it was to him to find that the cowl, and even the vows and the priestly consecration, made no change in his heart; that Satan was as near him in the cloister as outside, and he no stronger to cope with him. He told me of his endeavours to keep every minute rule of the order, and how the slightest deviation weighed on his conscience. It seems to have been like trying to restrain a fire by a fence of willows, or to guide a mountain torrent in artificial windings through a flower-garden, to bind his fervent nature by these vexatious rules.

He was continually becoming absorbed in some thought or study, and forgetting all the rules, and then painfully he would turn back and retrace his steps; sometimes spending weeks in absorbing study, and then remembering he had neglected his canonical hours, and depriving himself of sleep for nights to make up the missing prayers.

He fasted, disciplined himself, humbled himself to perform the meanest offices for the meanest brother; forcibly kept sleep from his eyes wearied with study, and his mind worn out with conflict, until every now and then Nature avenged herself by laying him unconscious on the floor of his cell, or disabling him by a fit of illness.

But all in vain; his temptations seemed to grow stronger, his strength less. Love to God he could not feel at all; but in his secret soul the bitterest questioning of God, who seemed to torment him at once by the law and the gospel. He thought of Christ as the severest judge, because the most righteous; and the very phrase, "the righteousness of God," was torture to him.

Not that this state of distress was continual with him. At times he gloried in his obedience, and felt that he earned rewards from God by performing the sacrifice of the mass, not only for himself, but for others. At times, also, in his circuits, after his consecration, to say mass in the villages around Erfurt, he would feel his spirits lightened by the variety of the scenes he witnessed, and would be greatly amused at the ridiculous mistakes of the village choirs; for instance, their chanting the "Kyrie" to the music of the "Gloria."

Then, at other times, his limbs would totter with terror when he offered the holy sacrifice, at the thought that he, the sacrificing priest, yet the poor, sinful Brother Martin, actually stood before God "without a Mediator."

At his first mass he had difficulty in restraining himself from flying from the altar—so great was his awe and the sense of his unworthiness. Had he done so, he would have been excommunicated.

Again, there were days when he performed the services with some satisfaction, and would conclude with saying, "O Lord Jesus, I come to thee and entreat thee to be pleased with whatsoever I do and suffer in my order; and I pray thee that these burdens and this straitness of my rule and religion may be a full satisfaction for all my sins."

Yet then again, the dread would come that perhaps he had inadvertently omitted some word in the service, such as "enim" or "æternum," or neglected some prescribed genuflexion, or even a signing of the cross; and that thus, instead of offering to God an acceptable sacrifice in the mass, he had committed a grievous sin.

From such terrors of conscience he fled for refuge to some of his twenty-one patron saints, or oftener to Mary, seeking to touch her womanly heart, that she might appease her Son. He hoped that by invoking three saints daily, and by letting his body waste away with fastings and watchings, he should satisfy the law, and shield his conscience against the goad of the driver. But it all availed him nothing. The further he went on in this way, the more he was terrified.

And then he related to me how the light broke upon his heart; slowly, intermittently, indeed; yet it has dawned on him. His day may often be dark and tempestuous; but it is day, and not night.

Dr. Staupitz was the first who brought him any comfort. The Vicar-General received his confession not long after he entered the cloister, and from that time won his confidence, and took the warmest interest in him. Brother Martin frequently wrote to him; and once he used the words, in reference to some neglect of the rules which troubled his conscience, "Oh, my sins, my sins!" Dr. Staupitz replied, "You would be without sin, and yet you have no proper sins. Christ forgives true sins, such as parricide, blasphemy, contempt of God, adultery, and sins like these. These are sins indeed. You must have a register in which stand veritable sins, if Christ is to help you. You would be a painted sinner, and have a painted Christ as a Saviour. You must make up your mind that Christ is a real Saviour, and you a real sinner."

These words brought some light to Brother Martin, but the darkness came back again and again; and tenderly did Dr. Staupitz sympathize with him and rouse him—Dr. Staupitz, and that dear

aged confessor, who ministered also so lovingly to me. Brother Martin's great terror was the thought of the righteousness of God, by which he had been taught to understand his inflexible severity in executing judgment on sinners.

Dr. Staupitz and the confessor explained to him that the righteousness of God is not *against* the sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, but *for* him—not against us to condemn, but for us to justify.

He began to study the Bible with a new zest. He had had the greatest longing to understand rightly the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, but was always stopped by the word "righteousness" in the first chapter and seventeenth verse, where Paul says the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel. "I felt very angry," he said, "at the term, 'righteousness of God;' for, after the manner of all the teachers, I was taught to understand it in a philosophic sense, of that righteousness by which God is just and punisheth the guilty. Though I had lived without reproach, I felt myself to be a great sinner before God, and was of a very quick conscience, and had not confidence in a reconciliation with God to be produced by any work or satisfaction or merit of my own. For this cause I had in me no love of a righteous and angry God, but secretly hated him, and thought within myself, Is it not enough that God has condemned us to everlasting death by Adam's sin, and that we must suffer so much trouble and misery in this life? Over and above the terror and threatening of the law, must he needs increase by the gospel our misery and anguish, and, by the preaching of the same, thunder against us his justice and fierce wrath? My confused conscience ofttimes did cast me into fits of anger, and I sought day and night to make out the meaning of Paul; and at last I came to apprehend it thus: Through the gospel is revealed the righteousness which availeth with God—a righteousness by which God, in his mercy and compassion, justifieth us; as is it written, '*The just shall live by faith.*' Straightway I felt as if I were born anew; it was as if I had found the door of Paradise thrown wide open. Now I saw the Scriptures altogether in a new light—ran through their whole contents as far as my memory would serve, and compared them—and found that this righteousness was the more surely that by which he makes us righteous, because everything agreed thereunto so well. The expression, 'the righteousness of God,' which I so much hated before, became now dear and precious—my darling and most comforting word. That passage of Paul was to me the true door of Paradise."

Brother Martin also told me of the peace the words, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," brought to him, as the aged confessor had previously narrated to me; for, he said, the devil often plucked him back, and, taking the very form of Christ, sought to terrify him again with his sins.

As I listened to him, the conviction came on me that he had indeed drunk of the well-spring of everlasting life, and it seemed almost within my own reach; but I said—

"Brother Martin, your sins were mere transgressions of human rules, but mine are different." And I told him how I had resisted my vocation. He replied—

"The devil gives heaven to people before they sin; but after they sin, brings their consciences into despair. Christ deals quite in the contrary way, for he gives heaven after sins committed, and makes troubled consciences joyful."

Then we fell into a long silence, and from time to time, as I looked at the calm which reigned on his rugged and massive brow, and felt the deep light in his dark eyes, the conviction gathered strength—

"This solid rock on which that tempest-tossed spirit rests is Truth!"

His lips moved now and then, as if in prayer, and his eyes were lifted up from time to time to heaven, as if his thoughts found a home there.

After this silence, he spoke again and said—

"The gospel speaks nothing of our works or of the works of the law, but of the inestimable mercy and love of God towards most wretched and miserable sinners. Our most merciful Father, seeing us overwhelmed and oppressed with the curse of the law, and so to be holden under the same, that we could never be delivered from it by our own power, sent his only Son into the world, and laid upon him the sins of all men, saying, 'Be thou Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David, that adulterer; that sinner that did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief that hanged upon the cross; and briefly, be thou the person that hath committed the sins of all men, and pay and satisfy for them.' For God trifleth not with us, but speaketh earnestly and of great love, that Christ is the Lamb of God who beareth the sins of us all. He is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

I could answer nothing to this, but walked along pondering these words. Neither did he say any more at that time.

The sun was sinking low, and the long shadows of the pine trunks were thrown athwart our green forest-path, so that we were glad to find a charcoal-burner's hut, and to take shelter for the night beside his fires.

But that night I could not sleep; and when all were sleeping around me, I rose and went out into the forest.

Brother Martin is not a man to parade his inmost conflicts before the eyes of others, to call forth their sympathy or their idle wonder. He has suffered too deeply and too recently for that. It is not

lightly that he has unlocked the dungeons and torture-chambers of his past life for me. It is as a fellow-sufferer and a fellow-soldier, to show me how I also may escape and overcome.

It is surely because he is to be a hero and a leader of men that God has caused him to tread these bitter ways alone.

A new meaning dawns on old words for me. There is nothing new in what he says, but it seems new to me, as if God had spoken it first to-day; and all things seem made new in its light.

God, then, is more earnest for me to be saved than I am to be saved!

"He so loved the world, that he gave his Son."

He loved not saints, not penitents, not the religious, not those who love him; but "the *world*," secular men, profane men, hardened rebels, hopeless wanderers and sinners!

He gave not a mere promise, not an angel to teach us, not a world to ransom us, but his Son—his Only-begotten!

So much did God love the world, sinners, me! I believe this; I must believe it; I believe in him who says it. How can I then do otherwise than rejoice?

Two glorious visions rise before me and begin to fill the world and all my heart with joy.

I see the Holiest, the Perfect, the Son made the victim, the lamb, the curse, willingly yielding himself up to death on the cross for me.

I see the Father—inflexible in justice yet delighting in mercy—accepting him, the spotless Lamb whom he had given; raising him from the dead; setting him on his right hand. Just, beyond all my terrified conscience could picture him, he justifies me the sinner.

Hating sin as love must abhor selfishness, and life death, and purity corruption, he loves me—the selfish, the corrupt, the dead in sins. He gives his Son, the Only-begotten, for me; he accepts his Son, the spotless Lamb, for me; he forgives me; he acquits me; he will make me pure.

The thought overpowered me. I knelt among the pines and spoke to Him who hears when we have no words, for words failed me altogether then.

MUNICH, *May* 18.

All the next day and the next that joy lasted. Every twig, and bird, and dew-drop spoke in parables to me; sang to me the parable of the son who had returned from the far country, and as he went towards his father's house prepared his confession; but never finished the journey, for the father met him when he was yet a great way off; and never finished the confession, for the father stopped his self-reproaches with embraces.

And on the father's heart what child could say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants?"

I saw His love shining in every dew-drop on the grassy forest glades; I heard it in the song of every bird; I felt it in every pulse.

I do not know that we spoke much during those days, Brother Martin and I.

I have known something of love; but I have never felt a love that so fills, overwhelms, satisfies, as this love of God. And when first it is "thou and I" between God and the soul, for a time, at least, the heart has little room for other fellowship.

But then came doubts and questionings. Whence came they! Brother Martin said from Satan.

"The devil is a wretched, unhappy spirit," said he, "and he loves to make us wretched."

One thing that began to trouble me was, whether I had the right kind of faith. Old definitions of faith recurred to me, by which faith is said to be nothing unless it is informed with charity and developed into good works, so that when it saith we are justified by faith, the part is taken for the whole—and it means by faith, also hope, charity, all the graces, and all good works.

But Brother Martin declared it meaneth simply believing. He said,—

"Faith is an almighty thing, for it giveth glory to God, which is the highest service that can be given to him. Now, to give glory to God, is to believe in him; to count him true, wise, righteous, merciful, almighty. The chiefest thing God requireth of man is, that he giveth unto him his glory and divinity; that is to say, that he taketh him not for an idol, but for God; who regardeth him, heareth him, showeth mercy unto him, and helpeth him. For faith saith thus, 'I believe thee, O God, when thou speakest.'"

But our great wisdom, he says, is to look away from all these questionings,—from our sins, our works, ourselves, to Christ, who is our righteousness, our Saviour, our all.

Then at times other things perplex me. If faith is so simple, and salvation so free, why all those orders, rules, pilgrimages, penances?

And to these perplexities we can neither of us find any answer. But we must be obedient to the Church. What we cannot understand we must receive and obey. This is a monk's duty, at least.

Then at times another temptation comes on me. "If thou hadst known of this before," a voice says deep in my heart, "thou couldst have served God joyfully in thy home, instead of painfully in the cloister; couldst have helped thy parents and Elsè, and spoken with Eva on these things, which her devout and simple heart has doubtless received already." But, alas! I know too well what tempter ventures to suggest that name to me, and I say, "Whatever might have been, malicious spirit, *now* I am a religious, a devoted man, to whom it is perdition to draw back!"

Yet, in a sense, I seem less separated from my beloved ones during these past days.

There is a brotherhood, there is a family, more permanent than the home at Eisenach, or even the Order of St. Augustine, in which we may be united still. There is a home in which, perhaps, we may yet be one household again.

And meantime, God may have some little useful work for me to do here, which in his presence may make life pass as quickly as this my pilgrimage to Rome in Brother Martin's company.

BENEDICTINE MONASTERY IN LOMBARDY.

God has given us during these last days to see, as I verily believe, some glimpses into Eden. The mountains with snowy summits, like the white steps of His throne; the rivers which flow from them and enrich the land; the crystal seas, like glass mingled with fire, when the reflected snow-peaks burn in the lakes at dawn or sunset; and then this Lombard plain, watered with rivers which make its harvests gleam like gold; this garner of God, where the elms or chestnuts grow among the golden maize, and the vines festoon the trees, so that all the land seems garlanded for a perpetual holy day. We came through the Tyrol by Füssen, and then struck across by the mountains and the lakes to Milan.

Now we are entertained like princes in this rich Benedictine abbey. Its annual income is 36,000 florins. "Of eating and feasting," as brother Martin says, "there is no lack;" for 12,000 florins are consumed on guests, and as large a sum on building. The residue goeth to the convent and the brethren.

They have received us poor German monks with much honour, as a deputation from the great Augustinian Order to the Pope.

The manners of these southern people are very gentle and courteous; but they are lighter in their treatment of sacred things than we could wish.

The splendour of the furniture and dress amazes us; it is difficult to reconcile it with the vows of poverty and renunciation of the world. But I suppose they regard the vow of poverty as binding not on the community, but only on the individual monk. It must, however, at the best, be hard to live a severe and ascetic life amidst such luxuries. Many, no doubt, do not try.

The tables are supplied with the most costly and delicate viands; the walls are tapestried; the dresses are of fine silk; the floors are inlaid with rich marbles.

Poor, poor splendours, as substitutes for the humblest *home*!

BOLOGNA, *June*.

We did not remain long in the Benedictine monastery, for this reason: Brother Martin, I could see, had been much perplexed by their luxurious living; but as a guest, had, I suppose, scarcely felt at liberty to remonstrate, until Friday came, when, to our amazement, the table was covered with meats and fruits, and all kinds of viands, as on any other day, regardless not only of the rules of the Order, but of the common laws of the whole Church.

He would touch none of these dainties; but not content with this silent protest, he boldly said before the whole company, "The Church and the Pope forbid such things!"

We had then an opportunity of seeing into what the smoothness of these Italian manners can change when ruffled.

The whole brotherhood burst into a storm of indignation. Their dark eyes flashed, their white teeth gleamed with scornful and angry laughter, and their voices rose in a tempest of vehement words, many of which were unintelligible to us.

"Intruders," "barbarians," "coarse and ignorant Germans," and other biting epithets, however, we could too well understand.

Brother Martin stood like a rock amidst the torrent, and threatened to make their luxury and disorder known at Rome.

When the assembly broke up, we noticed the brethren gather apart in small groups, and cast scowling glances at us when we chanced to pass near.

That evening the porter of the monastery came to us privately, and warned us that this convent was no longer a safe resting-place for us.

Whether this was a friendly warning, or merely a device of the brethren to get rid of troublesome guests, I know not; but we had no wish to linger, and before the next day dawned we crept in the darkness out of a side gate into a boat, which we found on the river which flows beneath the

walls, and escaped.

It was delightful to-day winding along the side of a hill, near Bologna, for miles, under the flickering shade of trellises covered with vines. But Brother Martin, I thought, looked ill and weary.

BOLOGNA.

Thank God, Brother Martin is reviving again. He has been on the very borders of the grave.

Whether it was the scorching heat through which we have been travelling, or the malaria, which affected us with catarrh one night when we slept with our windows open, or whether the angry monks in the Benedictine Abbey mixed some poison with our food, I know not; but we had scarcely reached this place when he became seriously ill.

As I watched beside him I learned something of the anguish he passed through at our convent at Erfurt. The remembrance of his sins and the terrors of God's judgment rushed on his mind, weakened by suffering. At times he recognized that it was the hand of the evil one which was keeping him down. "The devil," he would say, "is the accuser of the brethren, not Christ. Thou, Lord Jesus, art my forgiving Saviour!" And then he would rise above the floods. Again his mind would bewilder itself with the unfathomable—the origin of evil, the relation of our free will to God's almighty will.

Then I ventured to recall to him the words of Dr. Staupitz he had repeated to me: "Behold the wounds of Jesus Christ, and then thou shall see the counsel of God clearly shining forth. We cannot comprehend God out of Jesus Christ. In Christ you will find what God is, and what he requires. You will find him nowhere else, whether in heaven or on earth."

It was strange to find myself, untried recruit that I am, thus attempting to give refreshment to such a veteran and victor as Brother Martin; but when the strongest are brought into single combats such as these, which must be single, a feeble hand may bring a draught of cold water to revive the hero between the pauses of the fight.

The victory, however, can only be won by the combatant himself; and at length Brother Martin fought his way through once more, and as so often happens, just when the fight seemed hottest. It was with an old weapon he overcame—"*The just shall live by faith.*"

Once more the words which have helped him so often, which so frequently he has repeated on this journey, came with power to his mind. Again he looked to the crucified Saviour; again he believed in him triumphant and ready to forgive on the throne of grace; and again his spirit was in the light.

His strength also soon began to return; and in a few days we are to be in Rome.

ROME.

The pilgrimage is over. The holy city is at length reached.

Across burning plains, under trellised vine-walks on the hill-sides, over wild, craggy mountains, through valleys green with chestnuts, and olives, and thickets of myrtle, and fragrant with lavender and cistus, we walked, until at last the sacred towers and domes burst on our sight, across a reach of the Campagna—the city where St. Paul and St. Peter were martyred—the metropolis of the kingdom of God.

The moment we came in sight of the city Brother Martin prostrated himself on the earth, and, lifting up his hands to heaven, exclaimed—

"Hail, sacred Rome! thrice sacred for the blood of the martyrs here shed."

And now we are within the sacred walls, lodged in the Augustinian monastery, near to the northern gate, through which we entered, called by the Romans the "Porta del Popolo."

Already Brother Martin has celebrated a mass in the convent church.

And to-morrow we may kneel where apostles and martyrs stood!

We may perhaps even see the holy father himself!

Are we indeed nearer heaven here?

It seems to me as I felt God nearer that night in the Black Forest.

There is so much tumult, and movement, and pomp around us in the great city.

When, however, I feel it more familiar and home-like, perhaps it will seem more heaven-like.

IX.

Elsè's Story.

EISENACH, *April*.

The last words I shall write in our dear old lumber-room, Fritz's and mine! I have little to regret in it now, however, that our twilight talks are over for ever. We leave early to-morrow morning for Wittemberg. It is strange to look out into the old street, and think how all will look exactly the same there to-morrow evening,—the monks slowly pacing along in pairs, the boys rushing out of school, as they are now, the maid-servants standing at the doors with the baby in their arms, or wringing their mops,—and we gone. How small a blank people seem to make when they are gone, however large the space they seemed to fill when they were present—except, indeed, to two or three hearts! I see this with Fritz. It seemed to me our little world must fall when he, its chief pillar, was withdrawn. Yet now everything seems to go on the same as before he became a monk, —except, indeed, with the mother and Eva and me.

The mother seems more and more like a shadow gliding in and out among us. Tenderly, indeed, she takes on her all she can of our family cares; but to family joys she seems spiritless and dead. Since she told me of the inclination she thinks she neglected in her youth towards the cloister, I understand her better,—the trembling fear with which she receives any good thing, and the hopeless submission with which she bows to every trouble, as to the blows of a rod always suspended over her, and only occasionally mercifully withheld from striking.

In the loss of Fritz the blow has fallen exactly where she would feel it most keenly. She had, I feel sure, planned another life for him. I see it in the peculiar tenderness of the tie which binds her to Eva. She said to me to-day, as we were packing up some of Fritz's books, "The sacrifice I was too selfish to make myself my son has made for me. O Elsè, my child, give at once, *at once*, whatever God demands of you. What he demands must be given at last; and if only wrung out from us at last, God only knows with what fearful interest the debt may have to be paid."

The words weigh on me like a curse. I cannot help feeling sometimes, as I know she feels always, that the family is under some fatal spell.

But oh, how terrible the thought is that this is the way God exacts retribution!—a creditor, exacting to the last farthing for the most trifling transgression; and if payment is delayed, taking life or limb, or what is dearer, in exchange. I cannot bear to think of it. For if my mother is thus visited for a mistake, for neglecting a doubtful vocation, my pious, sweet mother, what hope is there for me, who scarcely pass a day without having to repent of saying some sharp word to those boys (who certainly are often very provoking), or doing what I ought not, or omitting some religious duty, or at least without envying some one who is richer, or inwardly murmuring at our lot,—even sometimes thinking bitter thoughts of our father and his discoveries!

Our dear father has at last arranged and fitted in all his treasures, and is the only one, except the children, who seems thoroughly pleased at the thought of our emigration. All day he has been packing, and unpacking, and repacking his machines into some specially safe corners of the great wagon which cousin Conrad Cotta has lent us for our journey.

Eva, on the other hand, seems to belong to this world as little as the mother. Not that she looks depressed or hopeless. Her face often perfectly beams with peace; but it seems entirely independent of everything here, and is neither ruffled by the difficulties we encounter, nor enhanced when anything goes a little better. I must confess it rather provokes me, almost as much as the boys do. I have serious fears that one day she will leave us, like Fritz, and take refuge in a convent. And yet I am sure I have not a fault to find with her. I suppose that is exactly what our grandmother and I feel so provoking. Lately she has abandoned all her Latin books for a German book entitled "Theologia Teutsch," or "Theologia Germanica," which Fritz sent us before he left the Erfurt convent on his pilgrimage to Rome. This book seems to make Eva very happy; but as to me, it appears to me more unintelligible than Latin. Although it is quite different from all the other religious books I ever read, it does not suit me any better. Indeed, it seems as if I never should find the kind of religion that would suit me. It all seems so sublime and vague, and so far out of my reach;—only fit for people who have time to climb the heights; whilst my path seems to lie in the valleys, and among the streets, and amidst all kinds of little every-day secular duties and cares, which religion is too lofty to notice.

I can only hope that some day at the end of my life God will graciously give me a little leisure to be religious and to prepare to meet him, or that Eva's and Fritz's prayers and merits will avail for me.

WITTEMBERG, *May*, 1510.

We are beginning to get settled into our new home, which is in the street near the University buildings. Martin Luther, or Brother Martin, has a great name here. They say his lectures are more popular than any one's. And he also frequently preaches in the city church. Our grandmother is not pleased with the change. She calls the town a wretched mud village, and wonders what can have induced the Electors of Saxony to fix their residence and found a university in such a sandy desert as this. She supposes it is very much like the deserts of Arabia.

But Christopher and I think differently. There are several very fine buildings here, beautiful churches, and the University, and the Castle, and the Augustinian Monastery; and we have no doubt that in time the rest of the town will grow up to them. I have heard our grandmother say that babies with features too large for their faces often prove the handsomest people when they grow up to their features. And so, no doubt, it will be with Wittemberg, which is at present

certainly rather like an infant with the eyes and nose of a full-grown man. The mud walls and low cottages with thatched roofs look strangely out of keeping with the new buildings, the Elector's palace and church at the western end, the city church in the centre, and the Augustinian cloister and university at the eastern extremity, near the Elster gate, close to which we live.

It is true that there are no forests of pines, and wild hills, and lovely green valleys here, as around Eisenach. But our grandmother need not call it a wilderness. The white sand-hills on the north are broken with little dells and copses; and on the south, not two hundred rods from the town, across a heath, flows the broad, rapid Elbe.

The great river is a delight to me. It leads one's thoughts back to its quiet sources among the mountains, and onwards to its home in the great sea. We had no great river at Eisenach, which is an advantage on the side of Wittemberg. And then the banks are fringed with low oaks and willows, which bend affectionately over the water, and are delightful to sit amongst on summer evenings.

If I were not a little afraid of the people! The father does not like Eva and me to go out alone. The students are rather wild. This year, however, they have been forbidden by the rector to carry arms, which is some comfort. But the town's people also are warlike and turbulent, and drink a great deal of beer. There are one hundred and seventy breweries in the place, although there are not more than three hundred and fifty houses. Few of the inhabitants send their children to school, although there are five hundred students from all parts of Germany at the university.

Some of the poorer people, who come from the country around to the markets, talk a language I cannot understand. Our grandmother says they are Wends, and that this town is the last place on the borders of the civilized world. Beyond it, she declares, there are nothing but barbarians and Tartars. Indeed, she is not sure whether our neighbors themselves are Christians.

St. Boniface, the great apostle of the Saxons, did not extend his labours further than Saxony; and she says the Teutonic knights who conquered Prussia and the regions beyond us, were only Christian colonists living in the midst of half-heathen savages. To me it is rather a gloomy idea, to think that between Wittemberg and the Turks and Tartars, or even the savages in the Indies beyond, which Christopher Columbus has discovered, there are only a few half-civilized Wends, living in those wretched hamlets which dot the sandy heaths around the town.

But the father says it is a glorious idea, and that, if he were only a little younger, he would organize a land expedition, and traverse the country until he reached the Spaniards and the Portuguese, who sailed to the same point by sea.

"Only to think," he says, "that in a few weeks, or months at the utmost, we might reach Cathay, El Dorado, and even Atlantis itself, where the houses are roofed and paved with gold, and return laden with treasures!" It seems to make him feel even his experiments with the retorts and crucibles in which he is always on the point of transmuting lead into silver, to be tame and slow processes. Since we have been here, he has for the time abandoned his alchemical experiments, and sits for hours with a great map spread before him, calculating in the most accurate and elaborate manner how long it would take to reach the new Spanish discoveries by way of Wendish Prussia. "For," he remarks, "if I am never able to carry out the scheme myself, it may one day immortalize one of my sons, and enrich and ennoble the whole of our family!"

Our journey from Eisenach was one continual fête to the children. For my mother and the baby—now two years old—we made a couch in the wagon, of the family bedding. My grandmother sat erect in a nook among the furniture. Little Thekla was enthroned like a queen on a pile of pillows, where she sat hugging her own especial treasures,—her broken doll, the wooden horse Christopher made for her, a precious store of cones and pebbles from the forest, and a very shaggy disreputable foundling dog which she has adopted, and can by no means be persuaded to part with. She calls the dog Nix, and is sure that he is always asking her with his wistful eyes to teach him to speak, and give him a soul. With these, her household gods, preserved to her, she showed little feeling at parting from the rest of our Eisenach world.

The father was equally absorbed with his treasures, his folios, and models, and instruments, which he jealously guarded.

Eva had but one inseparable treasure, the volume of the "Theologia Germanica," which she has appropriated.

The mother's especial thought was the baby. Chriemhild was overwhelmed with the parting with Pollux, who was left behind with Cousin Conrad Cotta, and Atlantis was so wild with delight at the thought of the new world and the new life, from which she was persuaded all the cares of the old were to be extracted for ever, that, had it not been for Christopher and me, I must say the general interest of the family would have been rather in the background.

For the time there was a truce between Christopher and me concerning "Reinecke Fuchs," and our various differences. All his faculties—which have been so prolific for mischief—seemed suddenly turned into useful channels, like the mischievous elves of the farm and hearth, when they are capriciously bent on doing some poor human being a good turn. He scarcely tried my temper once during the whole journey. Since we reached Wittemberg, however, I cannot say as much. I feel anxious about the companions he has found among the students, and often, often I long that Fritz's religion had led him to remain among us, at least until the boys had grown up.

I had nerved myself beforehand for the leave-taking with the old friends and the old home, but when the moving actually began, there was no time to think of anything but packing in the last things which had been nearly forgotten, and arranging every one in their places. I had not even a moment for a last look at the old house, for at the instant we turned the corner, Thekla and her treasures nearly came to an untimely end by the downfall of one of the father's machines; which so discouraged Thekla, and excited our grandmother, Nix and the baby, that it required considerable soothing to restore every one to equanimity; and, in the meantime, the corner of the street had been turned, and the dear old house was out of sight. I felt a pang, as if I had wronged it, the old home which had sheltered us so many years, and been the silent witness of so many joys, and cares, and sorrows!

We had few adventures during the first day, except that Thekla's peace was often broken by the difficulties in which Nix's self-confident but not very courageous disposition frequently involved him with the cats and dogs in the villages, and their proprietors.

The first evening in the forest was delightful. We encamped in a clearing. Sticks were gathered for a fire, round which we arranged such bedding and furniture as we could unpack, and the children were wild with delight at thus combining serious household work with play, whilst Christopher foddered and tethered the horses.

After our meal we began to tell stories, but our grandmother positively forbade our mentioning the name of any of the forest sprites, or of any evil or questionable creature whatever.

In the night I could not sleep. All was so strange and grand around us, and it did seem to me that there were wailings and sighings and distant moanings among the pines, not quite to be accounted for by the wind. I grew rather uneasy, and at length lifted my head to see if any one else was awake.

Opposite me sat Eva, her face lifted to the stars, her hands clasped, and her lips moving as if in prayer. I felt her like a guardian angel, and instinctively drew nearer to her.

"Eva," I whispered at last, "do you not think there are rather strange and unaccountable noises around us? I wonder if it can be true that strange creatures haunt the forests?"

"I think there are always spirits around us, Cousin Elsè," she replied, "good and evil spirits prowling around us, or ministering to us. I suppose in the solitude we feel them nearer, and perhaps they are."

I was not at all reassured.

"Eva," I said, "I wish you would say some prayers; I feel afraid I may not think of the right ones. But are you really not at all afraid?"

"Why should I be?" she said softly; "God is nearer us always than all the spirits, good or evil,—nearer and greater than all. And he is the Supreme Goodness. I like the solitude, Cousin Elsè, because it seems to lift me above all the creatures to the One who is all and in all. And I like the wild forests," she continued, as if to herself, "because God is the only owner there, and I can feel more unreservedly, that we, and the creatures, and all we most call our own, are His, and only His. In the cities, the houses are called after the names of men, and each street and house is divided into little plots, of each of which some one says, 'It is mine.' But here all is visibly only God's, undivided, common to all. There is but one table, and that is His; the creatures live as free pensioners on His bounty."

"Is it then sin to call anything our own?" I asked.

"My book says it was this selfishness that was the cause of Adam's fall," she replied. "Some say it was because Adam ate the apple that he was lost, or fell; but my book says it was 'because of his claiming something for his own; and because of his saying, I, mine, me, and the like.'"

"That is very difficult to understand." I said, "Am I not to say, *My* mother, *my* father, *my* Fritz? Ought I to love every one the same because all are equally God's? If property is sin, then why is stealing sin? Eva, this religion is quite above and beyond me. It seems to me in this way it would be almost as wrong to give thanks for what we have, as to covet what we have not, because we ought not to think we have anything. It perplexes me extremely."

I lay down again, resolved not to think any more about it. Fritz and I proved once, a long time ago, how useless it is for me, at least, to attempt to get beyond the Ten Commandments. But trying to comprehend what Eva said so bewildered me, that my thoughts soon wandered beyond my control altogether. I heard no more of Eva or the winds, but fell into a sound slumber, and dreamt that Eva and an angel were talking beside me all night in Latin, which I felt I ought to understand, but of course could not.

The next day we had not been long on our journey when, at a narrow part of the road, in a deep valley, a company of horsemen suddenly dashed down from a castle which towered on our right, and barred our further progress with serried lances.

"Do you belong to Erfurt?" asked the leader, turning our horses' heads, and pushing Christopher aside with the butt end of his gun.

"No," said Christopher, "to Eisenach."

"Give way, men," shouted the knight to his followers; "we have no quarrel with Eisenach. This is not what we are waiting for."

The cavaliers made a passage for us, but a young knight who seemed to lead them rode on beside us for a time.

"Did you pass any merchandise on your road?" he asked of Christopher, using the form of address he would have to a peasant.

"We are not likely to pass anything," replied Christopher, not very courteously, "laden as we are."

"What is your lading?" asked the knight.

"All our worldly goods," replied Christopher, curtly.

"What is your name, friend, and where are you bound?"

"Cotta," answered Christopher. "My father is the director of the Elector's printing press at the new University of Wittemberg."

"Cotta!" rejoined the knight more respectfully, "a good burgher name;" and saying this he rode back to the wagon, and saluting our father, surveyed us all with a cool freedom, as if his notice honoured us, until his eye lighted on Eva, who was sitting with her arm round Thekla, soothing the frightened child, and helping her to arrange some violets Christopher had gathered a few minutes before. His voice lowered when he saw her, and he said,—

"This is no burgher maiden, surely? May I ask your name, fair Fraülein?" he said, doffing his hat and addressing Eva.

She made no reply, but continued arranging her flowers, without changing feature or colour, except her lip curled and quivered slightly.

"The Fraülein is absorbed with her bouquet; would that we were nearer our Schloss, that I might offer her flowers more worthy of her handling."

"Are you addressing me?" said Eva at length, raising her large eyes, and fixing them on him with her gravest expression; "I am no Fraülein, I am a burgher maiden; but if I were a queen, any of God's flowers would be fair enough for me. And to a true knight," she added, "a peasant maiden is as sacred as a queen."

No one ever could trifle with that earnest expression of Eva's face. It was his turn to be abashed. His effrontery failed him altogether, and he murmured, "I have merited the rebuke. These flowers are too fair, at least for me. If you would bestow one on me, I would keep it sacredly as a gift of my mother's or as the relics of a saint."

"You can gather them anywhere in the forest," said Eva; but little Thekla filled both her little hands with violets, and gave them to him.

"You may have them all if you like," she said; "Christopher can gather us plenty more."

He took them carefully from the child's hand, and, bowing low, rejoined his men who were in front. He then returned, said a few words to Christopher, and with his troop retired to some distance behind us, and followed us till we were close to Erfurt, when he spurred on to my father's side, and saying rapidly, "You will be safe now, and need no further convoy," once more bowed respectfully to us, and rejoining his men, we soon lost the echo of their horse-hoofs, as they galloped back through the forest.

"What did the knight say to you, Christopher?" I asked, when we dismounted at Erfurt that evening.

"He said that part of the forest was dangerous at present, because of a feud between the knights and the burghers, and if we would allow him, he would be our escort until we came in sight of Erfurt."

"That, at least, was courteous of him," I said.

"Such courtesy as a burgher may expect of a knight," rejoined Christopher, uncompromisingly; "to insult us without provocation, and then, as a favour, exempt us from their own illegal oppressions! But women are always fascinated with what men on horseback do."

"No one is fascinated with any one," I replied. For it always provokes me exceedingly when that boy talks in that way about women. And our grandmother interposed,—"Don't dispute, children; if your grandfather had not been unfortunate, you would have been of the knights' order yourselves, therefore it is not for you to run down the nobles."

"I should never have been a knight," persisted Christopher, "or a priest or a robber." But it was consolatory to my grandmother and me to consider how exalted our position would have been, had it not been for certain little unfortunate hindrances. Our grandmother never admitted my father into the pedigree.

At Leipsic we left the children, while our grandmother, our mother, Eva, and I went on foot to see Aunt Agnes at the convent of Nimptschen, whither she had been transferred, some years before, from Eisenach.

We only saw her through the convent grating. But it seemed to me as if the voice, and manner, and face were entirely unchanged since that last interview when she terrified me as a child by asking me to become a sister, and abandon Fritz.

Only the voice sounded to me even more like a muffled bell used only for funerals, especially when she said, in reference to Fritz's entering the cloister, "Praise to God, and the blessed Virgin, and all the saints. At last, then, He has heard my unworthy prayers; one at least is saved!"

A cold shudder passed over me at her words. Had she then, indeed, all these years been praying that our happiness should be ruined and our home desolated? And had God heard her? Was the fatal spell, which my mother feared was binding us, after all nothing else than Aunt Agnes's terrible prayers?

Her face looked as lifeless as ever, in the folds of white linen which bound it into a regular oval. Her voice was metallic and lifeless; the touch of her hand was impassive and cold as marble when we took leave of her. My mother wept, and said, "Dear Agnes, perhaps we may never meet again on earth."

"Perhaps not," was the reply.

"You will not forget us, sister?" said the mother.

"I never forget you," was the reply, in the same deep, low, firm, irresponsive voice, which seemed as if it had never vibrated to anything more human than an organ playing Gregorian chants.

And the words echo in my heart to this instant, like a knell.

She never forgets us.

Nightly in her vigils, daily in church and cell, she watches over us, and prays God not to let us be too happy.

And God hears her, and grants her prayers. It is too clear He does! Had she not been asking Him to make Fritz a monk? and is not Fritz separated from us for ever?

"How did you like the convent, Eva?" I said to her that night when we were alone.

"It seemed very still and peaceful," she said. "I think one could be very happy there. There would be so much time for prayer. One could perhaps more easily lose self there, and become nearer to God."

"But what do you think of Aunt Agnes?"

"I felt drawn to her. I think she has suffered."

"She seems to be dead alike to joy or suffering," I said.

"But people do not thus die without pain," said Eva very gravely.

Our house at Wittemberg is small. From the upper windows we look over the city walls, across the heath, to the Elbe, which gleams and sparkles between its willows and dwarf oaks. Behind the house is a plot of neglected ground, which Christopher is busy at his leisure hours trenching and spading into an herb-garden. We are to have a few flowers on the borders of the straight walk which intersects it,—daffodils, pansies, roses, and sweet violets and gilliflowers, and wallflowers. At the end of the garden are two apple trees and a pear tree, which had shed their blossoms just before we arrived, in a carpet of pink and white petals. Under the shade of these I carry my embroidery frame, when the house work is finished; and sometimes little Thekla comes and prattles to me, and sometimes Eva reads and sings to me. I cannot help regretting that lately Eva is so absorbed with that "Theologia Germanica." I cannot understand it as well as I do the Latin hymns when once she has translated them to me; for these speak of Jesus the Saviour, who left the heavenly home and sat weary by the way seeking for us; or of Mary his dear mother; and although sometimes they tell of wrath and judgment, at all events I know what it means. But this other book is all to me one dazzling haze, without sun, or moon, or stars, or heaven, or earth, or seas, or anything distinct,—but all a blaze of indistinguishable glory, which is God; the One who is all—a kind of ocean of goodness, in which, in some mysterious way, we ought to be absorbed. But I am not an ocean, or any part of one; and I cannot love an ocean, because it is infinite, or unfathomable, or all-sufficient, or anything else.

My mother's thought of God, as watching lest we should be too happy and love any one more than himself, remembering the mistakes and sins of youth, and delaying to punish them until just the moment when the punishment would be most keenly felt, is dreadful enough. But even that is not to me so bewildering and dreary as this all-absorbing Being in Eva's book. The God my mother dreads has indeed eyes of severest justice, and a frown of wrath against the sinner; but if once one could learn how to please him, the eyes might smile, the frown might pass. It is a countenance; and a heart which might meet ours! But when Eva reads her book to me, I seem to look up into heaven and see nothing but heaven—light, space, infinity, and still on and on, infinity and light; a moral light, indeed—perfection, purity, goodness; but no eyes I can look into, no heart to meet mine—none whom I could speak to, or touch, or see!

This evening we opened our window and looked out across the heath to the Elbe.

The town was quite hushed. The space of sky above us over the plain looked so large and deep.

We seemed to see range after range of stars beyond each other in the clear air. The only sound was the distant, steady rush of the broad river, which gleamed here and there in the starlight.

Eva was looking up with her calm, bright look. "Thine!" she murmured, "all this is Thine; and we are Thine, and Thou art here! How much happier it is to be able to look up and feel there is no barrier of our own poor ownership between us and Him, the Possessor of heaven and earth! How much poorer we should be if we were lords of this land, like the Elector, and if we said, 'All this is mine!' and so saw only I and mine in it all, instead of God and God's!"

"Yes," I said, "if we *ended* in saying I and mine; but I should be very thankful if God gave us a little more out of his abundance, to use for our wants. And yet, how much better things are with us then they were!—the appointment of my father as director of the Elector's printing establishment, instead of a precarious struggle for ourselves; and this embroidery of mine! It seems to me, Eva, sometimes, we might be a happy family yet."

"My book," she replied thoughtfully, "says we shall never be truly satisfied in God, or truly free, unless all things are one to us, and One is all, and something and nothing are alike. I suppose I am not quite truly free, Cousin Elsè, for I cannot like this place quite as much as the old Eisenach home."

I began to feel quite impatient, and I said,—"Nor can I or any of us ever feel any home quite the same again, since Fritz is gone. But as to feeling something and nothing are alike, I never can, and I will never try. One might as well be dead at once."

"Yes," said Eva gravely; "I suppose we shall never comprehend it quite, or be quite satisfied and free, until we die."

We talked no more that night; but I heard her singing one of her favourite hymns:[6]—

In the fount of life perennial the parched heart its thirst would slake,
And the soul, in flesh imprisoned, longs her prison-walls to break,—
Exile, seeking, sighing, yearning in her Fatherland to wake.

When with cares oppressed and sorrows, only groans her grief can tell,
Then she contemplates the glory which she lost when first she fell:
Memory of the vanished good the present evil can but swell.

Who can utter what the pleasures and the peace unbroken are
Where arise the pearly mansions, shedding silvery light afar—
Festive seats and golden roofs, which glitter like the evening star?

Wholly of fair stones most precious are those radiant structures made;
With pure gold, like glass transparent, are those shining streets inlaid;
Nothing that defiles can enter, nothing that can soil or fade.

Stormy winter, burning summer, rage within those regions never;
But perpetual bloom of roses, and unfading spring for ever:
Lilies gleam, the crocus glows, and dropping balms their scents deliver;

Honey pure, and greenest pastures,—this the land of promise is
Liquid odours soft distilling, perfumes breathing on the breeze;
Fruits immortal cluster always on the leafy, fadeless trees.

There no moon shines chill and changing, there no stars with twinkling ray—
For the Lamb of that blest city is at once the sun and day;
Night and time are known no longer,—day shall never fade away.

There the saints, like suns, are radiant,—like the sun at dawn they glow;
Crownèd victors after conflict, all their joys together flow;
And, secure, they count the battles where they fought the prostrate foe.

Every stain of flesh is cleansèd, every strife is left behind;
Spiritual are their bodies,—perfect unity of mind;
Dwelling in deep peace for ever, no offense or grief they find.

Putting off their mortal vesture, in their Source their souls they steep,—
Truth by actual vision learning, on its form their gaze they keep,—
Drinking from the living Fountain draughts of living waters deep.

Time, with all its alternations, enters not those hosts among,—
Glorious, wakeful, blest, no shade of chance or change o'er them is flung;
Sickness cannot touch the deathless, nor old age the ever young.

There their being is eternal,—things that cease have ceased to be.
All corruption there has perished,—there they flourish strong and free;
Thus mortality is swallowed up of life eternally.

Nought from them is hidden,—knowing Him to whom all things are known
All the spirit's deep recesses, sinless, to each other shown,—

Unity of will and purpose, heart and mind for ever one.

Diverse as their varied labours the rewards to each that fall;
But Love, what she loves in others evermore her own doth call:
Thus the several joy of each becomes the common joy of all.

Where the body is, there ever are the eagles gathered;
For the saints and for the angels one most blessed feast is spread,—
Citizens of either country living on the self-same bread.

Ever filled and ever seeking, what they have they still desire;
Hunger there shall fret them never, nor satiety shall tire,—
Still enjoying whilst aspiring, in their joy they still aspire.

There the new song, new forever, those melodious voices sing,—
Ceaseless streams of fullest music through those blessed regions ring!
Crownèd victors ever bringing praises worthy of the King!

Blessed who the King of Heaven in his beauty thus behold,
And, beneath his throne rejoicing, see the universe unfold,—
Sun and moon, and stars and planets, radiant in his light unrolled.

Christ, the Palm of faithful victors! of that city make me free;
When my warfare shall be ended, to its mansions lead thou me;
Grant me, with its happy inmates, sharer of thy gifts to be!

Let thy soldier, still contending, still be with thy strength supplied;
Thou wilt not deny the quiet when the arms are laid aside;
Make me meet with thee for ever in that country to abide!

Passion Week.

Wittemberg has been very full this week. There have been great mystery-plays in the City Church; and in the Electoral Church (*Schloss Kirche*) all the relics have been solemnly exhibited. Crowds of pilgrims have come from all the neighbouring villages, Wendish and Saxon. It has been very unpleasant to go about the streets, so much beer has been consumed; and the students and peasants have had frequent encounters. It is certainly a comfort that there are large indulgences to be obtained by visiting the relics, for the pilgrims seem to need a great deal of indulgence.

The sacred mystery-plays were very magnificent. The Judas was wonderfully hateful,—hunchbacked, and dressed like a rich Jewish miser; and the devils were dreadful enough to terrify the children for a year.

Little Thekla was dressed in white, with gauze wings, and made a lovely angel—and enjoyed it very much. They wanted Eva to represent one of the holy women at the cross, but she would not. Indeed she nearly wept at the thought, and did not seem to like the whole ceremony at all. "It all really happened!" she said; "they really crucified Him! And He is risen, and living in heaven; and I cannot bear to see it performed, like a fable."

The second day there was certainly more jesting and satire than I liked. Christopher said it reminded him of "Reinecke Fuchs."

In the middle of the second day we missed Eva, and when in a few hours I came back to the house to seek her, I found her kneeling by our bed-side, sobbing as if her heart would break. I drew her towards me, but I could not discover that anything at all was the matter, except that the young knight who had stopped us in the forest had bowed very respectfully to her, and had shown her a few dried violets, which he said he should always keep in remembrance of her and her words.

It did not seem to me so unpardonable an offence, and I said so.

"He had no right to keep anything for my sake!" she sobbed. "No one will ever have any right to keep anything for my sake; and if Fritz had been here, he would never have allowed it."

"Little Eva," I said, "what has become of your 'Theologia Teutsch?' Your book says you are to take all things meekly, and be indifferent, I suppose, alike to admiration and reproach."

"Cousin Elsè," said Eva very gravely, rising and standing erect before me with clasped hands, "I have not learned the 'Theologia' through well yet, but I mean to try. The world seems to me very evil, and very sad. And there seems no place in it for an orphan girl like me. There is no rest except in being a wife or a nun. A wife I shall never be, and therefore, dear, dear Elsè," she continued, kneeling down again, and throwing her arms around me, "I have just decided—I will go to the convent where Aunt Agnes is, and be a nun."

I did not attempt to remonstrate; but the next day I told the mother, who said gravely, "She will be happier there, poor child! We must let her go."

But she became pale as death, her lip quivered, and she added,—"Yes, God must have the choicest of all. It is in vain indeed to fight against Him!" Then, fearing she might have wounded me, she kissed me and said,—"Since Fritz left, she has grown so very dear! But how can I

murmur when my loving Elsè is spared to us?"

"Mother," I said, "do you think Aunt Agnes has been praying again for this?"

"Probably!" she replied, with a startled look. "She did look very earnestly at Eva."

"Then, mother," I replied, "I shall write to Aunt Agnes at once, to tell her that she is not to make any such prayers for you or for me. For, as to me, it is entirely useless. And if you were to imitate St. Elizabeth, and leave us, it would break all our hearts, and the family would go to ruin altogether."

"What are you thinking of, Elsè?" replied my mother meekly. "It is too late indeed for me to think of being a saint. I can never hope for anything beyond this, that God in his great mercy may one day pardon me my sins, and receive me as the lowest of his creatures, for the sake of his dear Son who died upon the cross. What could you mean by my imitating St. Elizabeth?"

I felt reassured, and did not pursue the subject, fearing it might suggest what I dreaded to my mother.

WITTEMBERG, *June* 14.

And so Eva and Fritz are gone, the two religious ones of the family. They are gone into their separate convents, to be made saints, and have left us all to struggle in the world without them,—with all that helped us to be less earthly taken from us. It seems to me as if a lovely picture of the Holy Mother had been removed from the dwelling-room since Eva has gone, and instead we had nothing left but family portraits, and paintings of common earthly things; or as if a window opening towards the stars had been covered by a low ceiling. She was always like a little bit of heaven among us.

I miss her in our little room at night. Her prayers seemed to hallow it. I miss her sweet, holy songs at my embroidery; and now I have nothing to turn my thoughts from the arrangements for to-morrow, and the troubles of yesterday, and the perplexities of to-day. I had no idea how I must have been leaning on her. She always seemed so child-like, and so above my petty cares—and in practical things I certainly understood much more; and yet, in some way, whenever I talked anything over with her, it always seemed to take the burden away,—to change cares into duties, and clear my thoughts wonderfully,—just by lightening my heart. It was not that she suggested what to do; but she made me feel things were working for good, not for harm—that God in some way ordered them—and then the right thoughts seemed to come to me naturally.

Our mother, I am afraid, grieves as much as she did for Fritz; but she tries to hide it, lest we should feel her ungrateful for the love of her children.

I have a terrible dread sometimes that Aunt Agnes will get her prayers answered about our precious mother also,—if not in one way, in another. She looks so pale and spiritless.

Christopher has just returned from taking Eva to the convent. He says she shed many tears when he left her; which is a comfort. I could not bear to think that something and nothing were alike to her yet! He told me also one thing, which has made me rather anxious. On the journey, Eva begged him to take care of our father's sight, which, she said, she thought had been failing a little lately. And just before they separated she brought him a little jar of distilled eye-water, which the nuns were skillful in making, and sent it to our father with Sister Ave's love.

Certainly my father has read less lately; and now I think of it, he has asked me once or twice to find things for him, and to help him about his models, in a way he never used to do.

It is strange that Eva, with those deep, earnest, quiet eyes, which seemed to look about so little, always saw before any of us what every one wanted. Darling child! she will remember us, then, and our little cares. And she will have some eye-water to make, which will be much better for her than reading all day in that melancholy "Theologia Teutsch."

But are we to call our Eva, Ave? She gave these lines of the hymn in her own writing to Christopher, to bring to me. She often used to sing it, and has explained the words to me:—

"Ave, maris stella
Dei mater alma
Atque semper virgo
Felix cœli porta.

Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore
Funda nos in pace
Mutans nomen Evæ."

It is not an uncommon name, I know, with nuns.

Well, dearly as I loved the old name, I cannot complain of the change. Sister Ave will be as dear to me as Cousin Eva, only a little bit further off, and nearer heaven.

Her living so near heaven, while she was with us, never seemed to make her further off, but nearer to us all.

Now, however, it cannot, of course, be the same.

Our grandmother remains steadfast to the baptismal name.

"Receiving that Ave from the lips of Gabriel, the blessed Mother transformed the name of our mother Eva! And now our child Eva is on her way to become Saint Ave,—God's angel Ave in heaven!"

June 30.

The young knight we met in the forest has called at our house to-day.

I could scarcely command my voice at first to tell him where our Eva is, because I cannot help partly blaming him for her leaving us at last.

"At Nimptschen!" he said; "then she was noble, after all. None but maidens of noble houses are admitted there."

"Yes," I said, "our mother's family is noble."

"She was too heavenly for this world!" he murmured. "Her face, and something in her words and tones, have haunted me like a holy vision, or a church hymn, ever since I saw her."

I could not feel as indignant with the young knight as Eva did. And he seemed so interested in our father's models, that we could not refuse him permission to come and see us again.

Yes, our Eva was, I suppose, as he says, too religious and too heavenly for this world.

Only, as so many of us have, after all, to live in the world, unless the world is to come to an end altogether, it would be a great blessing if God had made a religion for us poor, secular people, as well as one for the monks and nuns.

X.

Fritz's Story.

Rome, Augustinian Convent.

Holy as this city necessarily must be, consecrated by relics of the church's most holy dead, consecrated by the presence of her living Head, I scarcely think religion is as deep in the hearts of these Italians as of our poor Germans in the cold north.

But I may mistake; feeling of all kinds manifests itself in such different ways with different characters.

Certainly the churches are thronged on all great occasions, and the festas are brilliant. But the people seem rather to regard them as holidays and dramatic entertainments, than as the solemn and sacred festivals we consider them in Saxony. This morning, for instance, I heard two women criticizing a procession in words such as these, as far as the little Italian I have picked up, enabled me to understand them:—

"Ah, Nina mia, the angels are nothing to-day; you should have seen our Lucia last year! Every one said she was heavenly. If the priests do not arrange it better, people will scarcely care to attend. Besides, the music was execrable."

"Ah, the nuns of the Cistercian convent understand how to manage a ceremony. They have ideas! Did you see their Bambino last Christmas? Such lace! and the cradle of tortoise-shell, fit for an emperor, as it should be! And then their robes for the Madonna on her fêtes! Cloth of gold embroidered with pearls and brilliants worth a treasury!"

"Yes," replied the other, lowering her voice, "I have been told the history of those robes. A certain lady who was powerful at the late Holy Father's court, is said to have presented the dress in which she appeared on some state occasion to the nuns, just as she wore it."

"Did she become a penitent, then?"

"A penitent? I do not know; such an act of penitence would purchase indulgences and masses to last at least for some time."

Brother Martin and I do not so much affect these gorgeous processions. These Italians, with their glorious skies and the rich colouring of their beautiful land require more splendour in their religion than our German eyes can easily gaze on undazzled.

It rather perplexed us to see the magnificent caparisons of the horses of the cardinals; and more especially to behold the Holy Father sitting on a fair palfrey, bearing the sacred Host. In Germany, the loftiest earthly dignity prostrates itself low before that Ineffable Presence.

But my mind becomes confused. Heaven forbid that I should call the Vicar of Christ an *earthly*

dignitary! Is he not the representative and oracle of God on earth?

For this reason,—no doubt in painful contradiction to the reverent awe natural to every Christian before the Holy Sacrament,—the Holy Father submits to sitting enthroned in the church, and receiving the body of our Creator through a golden tube presented to him by a kneeling cardinal.

It must be very difficult for him to separate between the office and the person. It is difficult enough for us. But for the human spirit not yet made perfect to receive these religious honours must be overwhelming.

Doubtless, at night, when the holy father humbles himself in solitude before God, his self-abasement is as much deeper than that of ordinary Christians as his exaltation is greater.

I must confess that it is an inexpressible relief to me to retire to the solitude of my cell at night, and pray to Him of whom Brother Martin and I spoke in the Black Forest; to whom the homage of the universe is no burden, because it is not mere prostration before an office, but adoration of a person. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty: heaven and earth are full of thy glory."

Holiness—to which almightiness is but an attribute, Holy One, who hast loved and given thine Holy One for a sinful world, *miserere nobis*!

ROME, *July*.

We have diligently visited all the holy relics, and offered prayers at every altar at which especial indulgences are procured, for ourselves and others.

Brother Martin once said he could almost wish his father and mother (whom he dearly loves) were dead, that he might avail himself of the privileges of this holy city to deliver their souls from purgatory.

He says masses whenever he can. But the Italian priests are often impatient with him because he recites the office so slowly. I heard one of them say, contemptuously, he had accomplished thirty masses while Brother Martin only finished one. And more than once they hurry him forward, saying "Passa! passa!"

There is a strange disappointment in these ceremonies to me, and, I think, often to him. I seem to expect so much more,—not more pomp, of that there is abundance; but when the ceremony itself begins, to which all the pomp of music, and processions of cavaliers, and richly-robed priests, and costly shrines, are mere preliminary accessories, it seems often so poor! The kernel inside all this gorgeous shell seems to the eye of sense like a little poor withered dust.

To the eye of *sense*! Yes, I forget. These are the splendours of *faith*, which faith only can behold.

To-day we gazed on the Veronica,—the holy impression left by our Saviour's face on the cloth St. Veronica presented to him to wipe his brow, bowed under the weight of the cross. We had looked forward to this sight for days; for seven thousand years of indulgence from penance are attached to it.

But when the moment came Brother Martin and I could see nothing but a black board hung with a cloth, before which another white cloth was held. In a few minutes this was withdrawn, and the great moment was over, the glimpse of the sacred thing on which hung the fate of seven thousand years! For some time Brother Martin and I did not speak of it. I feared there had been some imperfection in my looking, which might affect the seven thousand years; but observing his countenance rather downcast, I told my difficulty, and found that he also had seen nothing but a white cloth.

The skulls of St. Peter and St. Paul perplexed us still more, because they had so much the appearance of being carved in wood. But in the crowd we could not approach very close; and doubtless Satan uses devices to blind the eyes even of the faithful.

One relic excited my amazement much—the halter with which Judas hanged himself! It could scarcely be termed a *holy* relic. I wonder who preserved it, when so many other precious things are lost. Scarcely the Apostles; perhaps the scribes, out of malice.

The Romans, I observe, seem to care little for what to us is the kernel and marrow of these ceremonies—the exhibition of the holy relics. They seem more occupied in comparing the pomp of one year, or of one church, with another.

We must not, I suppose, measure the good things done us by our own thoughts and feelings, but simply accept it on the testimony of the Church.

Otherwise I might be tempted to imagine that the relics of pagan Rome do my spirit more good than gazing on the sacred ashes or bones of martyrs or apostles. When I walk over the heaps of shapeless ruin, so many feet beneath which lies buried the grandeur of the old imperial city; or when I wander among the broken arches of the gigantic Coliseum, where the martyrs fought with wild beasts,—great thoughts seem to grow naturally in my mind, and I feel how great truth is, and how little empires are.

I see an empire solid as this Coliseum crumble into ruins as undistinguishable as the dust of those streets, before the word of that once despised Jew of Tarsus, "in bodily presence weak," who was beheaded here. Or, again, in the ancient Pantheon, when the music of Christian chants

rises among the shadowy forms of the old vanquished gods painted on the walls, and the light streams down, not from painted windows in the walls, but from the glowing heavens above, every note of the service echoes like a peal of triumph, and fills my heart with thankfulness.

But my happiest hours here are spent in the church of my patron, St. Sebastian, without the walls, built over the ancient catacombs.

Countless martyrs, they say, rest in peace in these ancient sepulchres. They have not been opened for centuries; but they are believed to wind in subterranean passages far beneath the ancient city. In those dark depths the ancient Church took refuge from persecution: there she laid her martyrs; and there, over their tombs, she chanted hymns of triumph, and held communion with Him for whom they died. In that church I spend hours. I have no wish to descend into those sacred sepulchres, and pry among the graves the resurrection trump will open soon enough. I like to think of the holy dead, lying undisturbed and quiet there; of their spirits in Paradise; of their faith triumphant in the city which massacred them.

No doubt they also had their perplexities, and wondered why the wicked triumph, and sighed to God, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

And yet I cannot help wishing I had lived and died among them, and had not been born in times when we see Satan appear, not in his genuine hideousness, but as an angel of light.

For of the wickedness that prevails in this Christian Rome, alas, who can speak! of the shameless sin, the violence, the pride, the mockery of sacred things!

In the Coliseum, in the Pantheon, in the Church of St. Sebastian, I feel an atom—but an atom in a solid, God-governed world, where truth is mightiest;—insignificant in myself as the little mosses which flutter on these ancient stones; but yet a little moss on a great rock which cannot be shaken—the rock of God's providence and love. In the busy city, I feel tossed hither and thither on a sea which seems to rage and heave at its own wild will, without aim or meaning—a sea of human passion. Among the ruins, I commune with the spirits of our great and holy dead, who live unto God. At the exhibition of the sacred relics, my heart is drawn down to the mere perishable dust, decorated with the miserable pomps of the little men of the day.

And then I return to the convent and reproach myself for censoriousness, and unbelief, and pride, and try to remember that the benefits of these ceremonies and exhibitions are only to be understood by faith, and are not to be judged by inward feeling, or even by their moral results.

The Church, the Holy Father, solemnly declare that pardons and blessings incalculable, to ourselves and others, flow from so many Paternosters and Aves recited at certain altars, or from seeing the Veronica or the other relics. I have performed the acts, and I must at my peril believe in their efficacy.

But Brother Martin and I are often sorely discouraged at the wickedness we see and hear around us. A few days since he was at a feast with several prelates and great men of the Church, and the fashion among them seemed to be to jest at all that is most sacred. Some avowed their disbelief in one portion of the faith, and some in others; but all in a light and laughing way, as if it mattered little to any of them. One present related how they sometimes substituted the words *panis es, et panis manebis* in the mass, instead of the words of consecration, and then amused themselves with watching the people adore what was, after all, no consecrated Host, but a mere piece of bread.

The Romans themselves we have heard declare, that if there be a hell, Rome is built over it. They have a couplet,—

> "Vivere qui sancte vultis, discedite Roma:
> Omnia hic esse licent, non licet esse probum."[7]

O Rome! in sacredness as Jerusalem, in wickedness as Babylon, how bitter is the conflict that breaks forth in the heart at seeing holy places and holy character thus disjoined! How overwhelming the doubts that rush back on the spirit again and again, as to the very existence of holiness or truth in the universe, when we behold the deeds of Satan prevailing in the very metropolis of the kingdom of God!

ROME, *August*.

Mechanically, we continue to go through every detail of the prescribed round of devotions, believing against experience, and hoping against hope.

To-day Brother Martin went to accomplish the ascent of the Santa Scala—the Holy Staircase—which once, they say, formed part of Pilate's house. I had crept up the sacred steps before, and stood watching him as, on his knees, he slowly mounted step after step of the hard stone, worn into hollows, by the knees of penitents and pilgrims. An indulgence for a thousand years—indulgence from penance—is attached to this act of devotion. Patiently he crept half way up the staircase, when, to my amazement, he suddenly stood erect, lifted his face heavenward, and, in another moment, turned and walked slowly down again.

He seemed absorbed in thought, when he rejoined me; and it was not until some time afterwards that he told the meaning of this sudden abandonment of his purpose.

He said that, as he was toiling up, a voice, as if from heaven, seemed to whisper to him the old, well-known words, which had been his battle-cry in so many a victorious combat,—"*The just shall live by faith.*"

He seemed awakened, as if from a nightmare, and restored to himself. He dared not creep up another step; but, rising from his knees, he stood upright, like a man suddenly loosed from bonds and fetters, and, with the firm step of a freeman, he descended the Staircase and walked from the place.

August, 1511.

To-night there has been an assassination. A corpse was found near our convent gates, pierced with many wounds. But no one seems to think much of it. Such things are constantly occurring, they say; and the only interest seems to be as to the nature of the quarrel which led to it.

"A prelate is mixed up with it," the monks whisper: "one of the late Pope's family. It will not be investigated."

But these crimes of passion seem to me comprehensible and excusable, compared with the spirit of levity and mockery which pervades all classes. In such acts of revenge you see human nature in ruins; yet in the ruins you can trace something of the ancient dignity. But in this jesting, scornful spirit, which mocks at sacredness in the service of God, at virtue in woman, and at truth and honour in men, all traces of God's image seem crushed and trodden into shapeless, incoherent dust.

From such thoughts I often take refuge in the Campagna, and feel a refreshment in its desolate spaces, its solitary wastes, its traces of material ruin.

The ruins of empires and of imperial edifices do not depress me. The immortality of the race and of the soul rises grandly in contrast. In the Campagna we see the ruins of Imperial Rome; but in Rome we see the ruin of our race and nature. And what shall console us for that, when the presence of all that Christians most venerate is powerless to arrest it?

Were it not for some memories of a home at Eisenach, on which I dare not dwell too much, it seems at times as if the very thought of purity and truth would fade from my heart.

Rome, *August*.

Brother Martin, during the intervals of the business of his Order, which is slowly winding its way among the intricacies of the Roman courts, is turning his attention to the study of Hebrew, under the Rabbi Elias Levita.

I study also with the Rabbi, and have had the great benefit, moreover, of hearing lectures from the Byzantine Greek professor, Argyropylos.

Two altogether new worlds seem to open to me through these men,—one in the far distances of time, and the other in those of space.

The Rabbi, one of the race which is a by-word and a scorn among us from boyhood, to my surprise seems to glory in his nation and his pedigree, with a pride which looks down on the antiquity of our noblest lineages as mushrooms of a day. I had no conception that underneath the misery and the obsequious demeanour of the Jews such lofty feelings existed. And, yet, what wonder is it! Before Rome was built, Jerusalem was a sacred and royal city; and now that the empire and the people of Rome have passed for centuries, this nation, fallen before their prime, still exists to witness their fall.

I went once to the door of their synagogue, in the Ghetto. There were no shrines in it, no altars, no visible symbols of sacred things, except the roll of the Law, which was reverently taken out of a sacred treasury and read aloud. Yet there seemed something sublime in this symbolizing of the presence of God only by a voice reading the words which, ages ago, He spoke to their prophets in the Holy Land.

"Why have you no altar?" I asked once of one of the Rabbis.

"Our altar can only be raised when our temple is built," was the reply. "Our temple can only rise in the city and on the hill of our God. But," he continued, in a low, bitter tone, "when our altar and temple are restored, it will not be to offer incense to the painted image of a Hebrew maiden."

I have thought of the words often since. But were they not blasphemy? I must not dare recall them.

But those Greeks! they are Christians, and yet not of our communion. As Argyropylos speaks, I understand for the first time that a Church exists in the East, as ancient as the Church of Western Europe, and as extensive, which acknowledges the Holy Trinity and the Creeds, but owns no allegiance to the Holy Father the Pope.

The world is much larger and older than Elsè or I thought at Eisenach. May not God's kingdom be much larger than some think at Rome?

In the presence of monuments which date back to days before Christianity, and of men who speak the language of Moses, and, with slight variations, the language of Homer, our Germany

seems in its infancy indeed. Would to God it were in its infancy, and that a glorious youth and prime may succeed, when these old, decrepit nations are worn out and gone!

Yet Heaven forbid that I should call Rome decrepit—Rome on whose brow rests, not the perishable crown of earthly dominion, but the tiara of the kingdom of God.

September.

The mission which brought Brother Martin hither is nearly accomplished. We shall soon—we may at a day's notice—leave Rome and return to Germany.

And what have we gained by our pilgrimage?

A store of indulgences beyond calculation. And knowledge; eyes opened to see good and evil. Ennobling knowledge! glimpses into rich worlds of human life and thought, which humble the heart in expanding the mind. Bitter knowledge! illusions dispelled, aspirations crushed. We have learned that the heart of Christendom is a moral plague-spot; that spiritual privileges and moral goodness have no kind of connection, because where the former are at the highest perfection, the latter is at the lowest point of degradation.

We have learned that on earth there is no place to which the heart can turn as a sanctuary, if by a sanctuary we mean not merely a refuge from the punishment of sin, but a place in which to grow holy.

In one sense, Rome may, indeed, be called the sanctuary of the world! It seems as if half the criminals in the world had found a refuge here.

When I think of Rome in future as a city of the living, I shall think of assassination, treachery, avarice, a spirit of universal mockery, which seems only the foam over an abyss of universal despair; mockery of all virtue, based on disbelief in all truth.

It is only as a city of the dead that my heart will revert to Rome as a holy place. She has indeed built, and built beautifully, the sepulchres of the prophets.

Those hidden catacombs, where the holy dead rest, far under the streets of the city,—too far for traffickers in sacred bones to disturb them,—among these the imagination can rest, like those beatified ones, in peace.

The spiritual life of Rome seems to be among her dead. Among the living all seems spiritual corruption and death.

May God and the saints have mercy on me if I say what is sinful. Does not the scum necessarily rise to the surface? Do not acts of violence and words of mockery necessarily make more noise in the world than prayers? How do I know how many humble hearts there are in those countless convents there, that secretly offer acceptable incense to God, and keep the perpetual lamp of devotion burning in the sight of God?

How do I know what deeper and better thoughts lie hidden under that veil of levity? Only I often feel that if God had not made me a believer through his word, by the voice of Brother Martin in the Black Forest, Rome might too easily have made me an infidel. And it is certainly true, that to be a Christian at Rome as well as elsewhere, (indeed, more than elsewhere) one must breast the tide, and must walk by faith, and not by sight.

But we have performed the pilgrimage. We have conscientiously visited all the shrines; we have recited as many as possible of the privileged acts of devotion, Paters and Aves, at the privileged shrines.

Great benefits *must* result to us from these things.

But benefits of what kind? Moral? How can that be? When shall I efface from my memory the polluting words and works I have seen and heard at Rome? Spiritual? Scarcely; if by spiritual we are to understand a devout mind, joy in God, and nearness to him. When, since that night in the Black Forest, have I found prayer so difficult, doubts so overwhelming, the thoughts of God and heaven so dim, as at Rome?

The benefits, then, that we have received, must be ecclesiastical—those that the Church promises and dispenses. And what are these ecclesiastical benefits? Pardon? But is it not written that God gives this freely to those who believe on his Son? Peace? But is not that the legacy of the Saviour to all who love him?

What then? Indulgences. Indulgences from what? From the temporal consequences of sin? Too obviously not these. Do the ecclesiastical indulgences save men from disease, and sorrow, and death? Is it, then, from the eternal consequences of sin? Did not the Lamb of God, dying for us on the cross, bear our sins there, and blot them out? What then remains, which the indulgences can deliver from? Penance and purgatory. What then are penance and purgatory? Has penance in itself no curative effect, that we can be healed of our sins by escaping as well as by performing it? Have purgatorial fires no purifying powers, that we can be purified as much by repeating a few words of devotion at certain altars as by centuries of agony in the flames?

All these questions rise before me from time to time, and I find no reply. If I mention them to my confessor, he says,—

"These are temptations of the Devil. You must not listen to them. They are vain and presumptuous questions. There are no keys on earth to open these doors."

Are there any keys on earth to *lock* them again, when once they have been opened?

"You Germans," others of the Italian priests say, "take everything with such desperate seriousness. It is probably owing to your long winters and the heaviness of your northern climate, which must, no doubt, be very depressing to the spirits."

Holy Mary! and these Italians, if life is so light a matter to them, will not they also have one day to take death "with desperate seriousness," and judgment and eternity, although there will be no long winters, I suppose, and no heavy northern climate, to depress the spirits in that other world.

We are going back to Germany at last. Strangely has the world enlarged to me since we came here. We are accredited pilgrims; we have performed every prescribed duty, and availed ourselves of every proffered privilege. And yet it is not because of the regret of quitting the Holy City that our hearts are full of the gravest melancholy as we turn away from Rome.

When I compare the recollections of this Rome with those of a home at Eisenach, I am tempted in my heart to feel as if Germany, and not Rome, were the Holy Place, and our pilgrimage were beginning, instead of ending, as we turn our faces northward!

XI.

Eva's Story.

Cistercian Convent, Nimptschen, 1511.

Life cannot, at the utmost, last very long, although at seventeen we may be tempted to think the way between us and heaven interminable.

For the convent is certainly not heaven; I never expected it would be. It is not nearly so much like heaven, I think, as Aunt Cotta's home; because love seems to me to be the essential joy of heaven, and there is more love in that home than here.

I am not at all disappointed. I did not expect a haven of rest, but only a sphere where I might serve God better, and, at all events, not be a burden on dear Aunt Cotta. For I feel sure Uncle Cotta will become blind; and they have so much difficulty to struggle on, as it is.

And the world is full of dangers for a young orphan girl like me; and I am afraid they might want me to marry some one, which I never could.

I have no doubt God will give me some work to do for him here, and that is all the happiness I look for. Not that I think there are not other kinds of happiness in the world which are not wrong; but they are not for me.

I shall never think it was wrong to love them all at Eisenach as much as I did, and do, whatever the confessor may say. I shall be better all my life, and all the life beyond, I believe, for the love God gave them for me, and me for them, and for having known Cousin Fritz. I wish very much he would write to me; and sometimes I think I will write to him. I feel sure it would do us both good. He always said it did him good to talk and read the dear old Latin hymns with me; and I know they never seemed more real and true than when I sang them to him. But the father confessor says it would be exceedingly perilous for our souls to hold such a correspondence; and he asked me if I did not think more of my cousin than of the hymns when I sang them to him, which, he says, would have been a great sin. I am sure I cannot tell exactly how the thoughts were balanced, or from what source each drop or pleasure flowed. It was all blended together. It was joy to sing the hymns, and it was joy for Fritz to like to hear them; and where one joy overflowed into the other I cannot tell. I believe God gave me both; and I do not see that I need care to divide one from the other. Who cares, when the Elbe is flowing past its willows and oaks at Wittemberg, which part of its waters was dissolved by the sun from the pure snows on the mountains, and which came trickling from some little humble spring on the sandy plains? Both springs and snows came originally from the clouds above; and both, as they flow blended on together, make the grass spring and the leaf-buds swell, and all the world rejoice.

The heart with which we love each other and with which we love God, is it not the same? Only God is all good, and we are all His, therefore we should love Him best. I think I do, or I should be more desolate here than I am, away from all but him.

That is what I understand by my "Theologia Germanica," which Elsè does not like. I begin with my father's legacy—"God so loved the world, that he gave his Son;" and then I think of the crucifix, and of the love of Him who died for us; and, in the light of these, I love to read in my book of Him who is the Supreme Goodness, whose will is our rest, and who is himself the joy of all our joys, and our joy when we have no other joy. The things I do not comprehend in the book, I leave, like so many other things. I am but a poor girl of seventeen, and how can I expect to understand everything? Only I never let the things I do not understand perplex me about those I do.

Therefore, when my confessor told me to examine my heart, and see if there were not wrong and idolatrous thoughts mixed up with my love for them all at Eisenach, I said at once, looking up at him—

"Yes, father, I did not love them half enough, for all their love to me."

I think he must have been satisfied; for although he looked perplexed, he did not ask me any more questions.

I feel very sorry for many of the nuns, especially for the old nuns. They seem to me like children, and yet not child-like. The merest trifles appear to excite or trouble them. They speak of the convent as if it were the world, and of the world as if it were hell. It is a childhood with no hope, no youth and womanhood before it. It reminds me of the stunted oaks we passed on Düben Heath, between Wittemberg and Leipsic, which will never be full-grown, and yet are not saplings.

Then there is one, Sister Beatrice, whom the nuns seem to think very inferior to themselves, because they say she was forced into the convent by her relatives, to prevent her marrying some one they did not like, and could never be induced to take the vows until her lover died,—which, they say, is hardly worthy of the name of a vocation at all.

She does not seem to think so either, but moves about in a subdued, broken-spirited way, as if she felt herself a creature belonging neither to the Church nor to the world.

The other evening she had been on an errand for the prioress through the snow, and returned blue with cold. She had made some mistake in the message, and was ordered at once, with contemptuous words, to her cell, to finish a penance by reciting certain prayers.

I could not help following her. When I found her, she was sitting on a pallet shivering, with the prayer-book before her. I crept into the cell, and, sitting down beside her, began to chafe her poor icy hands.

At first she tried to withdraw them, murmuring that she had a penance to perform; and then her eyes wandered from the book to mine. She gazed wonderingly at me for some moments, and then she burst into tears, and said,—

"Oh, do not do that! It makes me think of the old nursery at home. And my mother is dead; all are dead, and I cannot die."

She let me put my arms round her, however; and, in faint, broken words, the whole history came out.

"I am not here from choice," she said. "I should never have been here if my mother had not died; and I should never have taken the vows if *he* had not died, whatever they had done to me; for we were betrothed, and we had vowed before God we would be true to each other till death. And why is not one vow as good as another? When they told me he was dead, I took the vows,—or, at least, I let them put the veil on me, and said the words as I was told, after the priest; for I did not care what I did. And so I am a nun. I have no wish now to be anything else. But it will do me no good to be a nun, for I loved Eberhard first, and I loved him best; and now that he is dead, I love no one, and have no hope in heaven or earth. I try, indeed, not to think of him, because they say that is sin; but I cannot think of happiness without him, if I try for ever."

I said, "I do not think it is wrong for you to think of him."

Her face brightened for an instant, and then she shook her head, and said,—

"Ah, you are a child; you are an angel. You do not know." And then she began to weep again, but more quietly. "I wish you had seen him; then you would understand better. It was not wrong for me to love him once; and he was so different from every one else—so true and gentle, and so brave."

I listened while she continued to speak of him, and, at last, looking wistfully at me, she said, in a low, timid voice, "I cannot help trusting you." And she drew from inside a fold of her robe a little piece of yellow paper, with a few words written on it, in pale, faded ink, and a lock of brown hair.

"Do you think it is very wrong?" she asked. "I have never told the confessor, because I am not quite sure if it is a sin to keep it; and I am quite sure the sisters would take it from me if they knew. Do you think it is wrong?"

The words were very simple—expressions of unchangeable affection, and a prayer that God would bless her and keep them for each other until better times.

I could not speak, I felt so sorry; and she murmured, nervously taking her poor treasures from my hands, "You do not think it right. But you will not tell? Perhaps one day I shall be better, and be able to give them up; but not yet. I have nothing else."

Then I tried to tell her that she *had* something else;—that God loved her and had pity on her, and that perhaps He was only answering the prayer of her betrothed, and guarding them in His blessed keeping until they should meet in better times. At length she seemed to take comfort; and I knelt down with her, and we said together the prayers she had been commanded to recite.

When I rose, she said thoughtfully, "You seem to pray as if some one in heaven really listened and cared."

"Yes," I said; "God does listen and care."

"Even to me?" she asked; "Even for me? Will he not despise me, like the holy sisterhood?"

"He scorns no one; and they say the lowest are nearest Him, the Highest."

"I can certainly never be anything but the lowest," she said. "It is fit no one here should think much of me, for I have only given the refuse of my life to God. And besides, I had never much power to think; and the little I had seems gone since Eberhard died. I had only a little power to love; and I thought that was dead. But since you came, I begin to think I might yet love a little."

As I left the cell she called me back.

"What shall I do when my thoughts wander, as they always do in the long prayers?" she asked.

"Make shorter prayers, I think, oftener," I said. "I think that would please God as much."

August, 1511.

The months pass on very much the same here; but I do not find them monotonous. I am permitted by the prioress to wait on the sick, and also often to teach the younger novices. This little world grows larger to me every week. It is a world of human hearts,—and what a world there is in every heart!

For instance, Aunt Agnes! I begin now to know her. All the sisterhood look up to her as almost a saint already. But I do not believe she thinks so herself. For many months after I entered the cloister she scarcely seemed to notice me; but last week she brought herself into a low fever by the additional fasts and severities she has been imposing on herself lately.

It was my night to watch in the infirmary when she became ill.

At first she seemed to shrink from receiving anything at my hands.

"Can they not send any one else?" she asked sternly.

"It is appointed to me," I said, "in the order of the sisterhood."

She bowed her head, and made no further opposition to my nursing her. And it was very sweet to me, because in spite of all the settled, grave impassiveness of her countenance, I could not help seeing something there which recalled dear Aunt Cotta.

She spoke to me very little; but I felt her large deep eyes following me as I stirred little concoctions of herbs on the fire, or crept softly about the room. Towards morning she said, "Child, you are tired—come and lie down;" and she pointed to a little bed beside her own.

Peremptory as were the words, there was a tone in them different from the usual metallic firmness in her voice—which froze Elsè's heart—a tremulousness which was almost tender. I could not resist the command, especially as she said she felt much better; and in a few minutes, bad nurse that I was, I fell asleep.

How long I slept I know not, but I was awakened by a slight movement in the room, and looking up, I saw Aunt Agnes's bed empty. In my first moment of bewildered terror I thought of arousing the sisterhood, when I noticed that the door of the infirmary which opened on the gallery of the chapel was slightly ajar. Softly I stole towards it, and there, in the front of the gallery, wrapped in a sheet, knelt Aunt Agnes, looking more than ever like the picture of death which she always recalled to Elsè. Her lips, which were as bloodless as her face, moved with passionate rapidity; her thin hands feebly counted the black beads of her rosary; and her eyes were fixed on a picture of the *Mater Dolorosa* with the seven swords in her heart, over one of the altars. There was no impassiveness in the poor sharp features and trembling lips then. Her whole soul seemed going forth in an agonized appeal to that pierced heart; and I heard her murmur, "In vain! Holy Virgin, plead for me! it has been all in vain. The flesh is no more dead in me than the first day. That child's face and voice stir my heart more than all thy sorrows. This feeble tie of nature has more power in me than all the relationships of the heavenly city. It has been in vain—all, all in vain. I cannot quench the fires of earth in my heart."

I scarcely ventured to interrupt her, but as she bowed her head on her hands, and fell almost prostrate on the floor of the chapel, while her whole frame heaved with repressed sobs, I went forward and gently lifted her, saying, "Sister Agnes, I am responsible for the sick to-night. You must come back."

She did not resist. A shudder passed through her; then the old stony look came back to her face, more rigid then ever, and she suffered me to wrap her up in the bed, and give her a warm drink.

I do not know whether she suspects that I heard her. She is more reserved with me than ever; but to me those resolute, fixed features, and that hard, firm voice, will never more be what they were before.

No wonder that the admiration of the sisterhood has no power to elate Aunt Agnes, and that their wish to elect her sub-prioress had no seduction for her. She is striving in her inmost soul after an ideal, which, could she reach it, what would she be?

As regards all human feeling and earthly life, *dead*!

And just as she hoped this was attained, a voice—a poor, friendly child's voice—falls on her ear, and she finds that what she deemed death was only a dream in an undisturbed slumber, and that the whole work has to begin again.

It is a fearful combat, this concentrating all the powers of life on producing death in life.

Can this be what God means?

Thank God, at least, that my vocation is lower. The humbling work in the infirmary, and the trials of temper in the school of the novices, seem to teach me more, and to make me feel that I *am* nothing and have nothing in myself, more than all my efforts to *feel* nothing.

My "Theologia" says, indeed, that true self-abnegation is freedom; and freedom cannot be attained until we are above the fear of punishment or the hope of reward. Elsè cannot bear this; and when I spoke of it the other day to poor Sister Beatrice, she said it bewildered her poor brain altogether to think of it. But I do not take it in that sense. I think it must mean that love is its own reward; and grieving Him we love, who has so loved us, our worst punishment. And that seems to me quite true.

XII.

Elsè's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *June*, 1512.

Our Eva seems happy at the convent. She has taken the vows, and is now finally Sister Ave. She has also sent us some eye-water for the father. But in spite of all we can do his sight seems failing.

In some way or other I think my father's loss of sight has brought blessing to the family.

Our grandmother, who is very feeble now, and seldom leaves her chair by the stove, has become much more tolerant of his schemes since there is no chance of their being carried out, and listens with remarkable patience to his statements of the wonders he would have achieved had his sight only been continued a few years.

Nor does the father himself seem as much dejected as one would have expected.

When I was comforting him to-day by saying how much less anxious our mother looks, he replied, —

"Yes, my child, the præter pluperfect subjunctive is a more comfortable tense to live in than the future subjunctive, for any length of time."

I looked perplexed, and he explained, "It is easier, when once one has made up one's mind to it, to say, 'Had I had this I might have done that,' than, 'If I can have this I shall do that,'—at least it is easier to the anxious and excitable feminine mind."

"But to you, father?"

"To me it is a consolation at last to be appreciated. Even your grandmother understands at length how great the results would have been if I could only have had eye-sight to perfect that last invention for using steam to draw water."

Our grandmother must certainly have put great restraint on her usually frank expression of opinion, if she has led our father to believe she had any confidence in that last scheme; for, I must confess, that of all our father's inventions and discoveries, the whole family consider this idea about the steam the wildest and most impracticable of all. The secret of perpetual motion might, no doubt, be discovered, and a clock be constructed which would never need winding up, —I see no great difficulty in that. It might be quite possible to transmute lead into gold, or iron into silver, if one could find exactly the right proportions. My father has explained all that to me quite clearly. The elixir which would prolong life indefinitely seems to me a little more difficult; but this notion of pumping up water by means of the steam which issues from boiling water and disperses in an instant, we all agree in thinking quite visionary, and out of the question; so that it is, perhaps, as well our poor father should not have thrown away any more expense or time on it. Besides, we had already had two or three explosions from his experiments; and some of the neighbours were beginning to say very unpleasant things about the black art, and witchcraft; so that on the whole, no doubt, it is all for the best.

I would not, however, for the world, have hinted this to him; therefore I only replied, evasively,—

"Our grandmother has indeed been much gentler and more placid lately."

"It is not only that," he rejoined; "she has an intelligence far superior to that of most women,—she comprehends. And then," he continued, "I am not without hopes that that young nobleman, Ulrich von Gersdorf, who comes here so frequently and asks about Eva, may one day carry out my schemes. He and Chriemhild begin to enter into the idea quite intelligently. Besides, there is

Master Reichenbach, the rich merchant to whom your Aunt Cotta introduced us; he has money enough to carry things out in the best style. He certainly does not promise much, but he is an intelligent listener, and that is a great step. Gottfried Reichenbach is an enlightened man for a merchant, although he is, perhaps, rather slow in comprehension, and a little over-cautious."

"He is not over-cautious in his alms, father," I said; "at least Dr. Martin Luther says so."

"Perhaps not," he said. "On the whole, certainly, the citizens of Wittemberg are very superior to those of Eisenach, who were incredulous and dull to the last degree. It will be a great thing if Reichenbach and Von Gersdorf take up this invention. Reichenbach can introduce it at once among the patrician families of the great cities with whom he is connected, and Von Gersdorf would promote it among his kindred knights. It would not, indeed, be such an advantage to our family as if Pollux and Christopher, or our poor Fritz, had carried it out. But never mind, Elsè, my child, we were children of Adam before we were Cottas. We must think not only of the family, but of the world."

Master Reichenbach, indeed, may take a genuine interest in my father's plans, but I have suspicions of Ulrich von Gersdorf. He seems to me far more interested in Chriemhild's embroidery than in our father's steam-pump; and although he continues to talk of Eva as if he thought her an angel, he certainly sometimes looks at Chriemhild as if he thought her a creature as interesting.

I do not like such transitions; and, besides, his conversation is so very different, in my opinion, from Master Reichenbach's. Ulrich von Gersdorf has no experience of life beyond a boar-hunt, a combat with some rival knights, or a foray on some defenceless merchants. His life has been passed in the castle of an uncle of his in the Thuringian forest; yet I cannot wonder that Chriemhild listens, with a glow of interest on her face, as she sits with her eyes bent on her embroidery, to his stories of ambushes and daring surprises. But to me this life seems rude and lawless. Ulrich's uncle was unmarried; and they had no ladies in the castle except a widowed aunt of Ulrich's, who seems to be as proud as Lucifer, and especially to pride herself on being able to wear pearls and velvet, which no burgher's wife may appear in.

Ulrich's mother died early. I fancy she was gentler and of a truer nobleness. He says the only book they have in the castle is an old illuminated Missal which belonged to her. He has another aunt, Beatrice, who is in the convent at Nimptschen with our Eva. They sent her there to prevent her marrying the son of a family with whom they had a hereditary feud. I begin to feel, as Fritz used to say, that the life of these petty nobles is not nearly so noble as that of the burghers. They seem to know nothing of the world beyond the little district they rule by terror. They have no honest way of maintaining themselves, but live by the hard toil of their poor oppressed peasants, and by the plunder of their enemies.

Herr Reichenbach, on the other hand, is connected with the patrician families in the great city of Nürnberg; and although he does not talk much, he has histories to tell of painters and poets, and great events in the broad field of the world. Ah, I wish he had known Fritz! He likes to hear me talk of him.

And then, moreover, Herr Reichenbach has much to tell me about Brother Martin Luther, who is at the head of the Eremite or Augustine Convent here, and seems to me to be the great man of Wittemberg; at least people appear to like him or dislike him more than any one else here.

October 19, 1512.

This has been a great day at Wittemberg. Friar Martin Luther has been created Doctor of Divinity. Master Reichenbach procured us excellent places, and we saw the degree conferred on him by Dr. Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt.

The great bell of the city churches, which only sounds on great occasions, pealed as if for a Church festival; all the university authorities marched in procession through the streets; and after taking the vow, Friar Martin was solemnly invested with the doctor's robes, hat, and ring—a massive gold ring presented to him by the Elector.

But the part which impressed me most was the oath, which Dr. Luther pronounced most solemnly, so that the words, in his fine clear voice, rang through the silence. He repeated it after Dr. Bodenstein, who is commonly called Carlstadt. The words in Latin, Herr Reichenbach says, were these (he wrote them for me to send to Eva),—

"Juro me veritatem evangelicam viriliter defensurum;" which Herr Reichenbach translated, "*I swear vigorously to defend evangelical truth.*"

This oath is only required at one other university beside Wittemberg—that of Tübingen. Dr. Luther swore it as if he were a knight of olden times, vowing to risk life and limb in some sacred cause. To me, who not could understand the words, his manner was more that of a warrior swearing on his sword, than of a doctor of divinity.

And Master Reichenbach says, "What he has promised he will do!"

Chriemhild laughs at Master Reichenbach, because he has entered his name on the list of university students, in order to attend Dr. Luther's lectures.

"With his grave old face, and his grey hair," she says, "to sit among those noisy student boys!"

But I can see nothing laughable in it. I think it is a sign of something noble, for a man in the prime of life to be content to learn as a little child. And besides, whatever Chriemhild may say, if Herr Reichenbach is a little bald, and has a few grey hairs, it is not on account of age. Grown men, who think and feel, in these stormy times, cannot be expected to have smooth faces and full curly locks, like Ulrich von Gersdorf.

I am sure if I were a man twice as old as he is, there is nothing I should like better than to attend Dr. Luther's lectures. I have heard him preach once in the City Church, and it was quite different from any other sermon I ever heard. He spoke of God and Christ, and heaven and hell, with as much conviction and simplicity as if he had been pleading some cause of human wrong, or relating some great events which happened on earth yesterday, instead of reciting it like a piece of Latin grammar, as so many of the monks do.

I began almost to feel as if I might at last find a religion that would do for me. Even Christopher was attentive. He said Dr. Luther called everything by such plain names, one could not help understanding.

We have seen him once at our house. He was so respectful to our grandmother, and so patient with my father, and he spoke so kindly of Fritz.

Fritz has written to us, and has recommended us to take Dr. Martin Luther for our family confessor. He says he can never repay the good Dr. Luther has done to him. And certainly he writes more brightly and hopefully than he ever has since he left us, although he has, alas! finally taken those dreadful, irrevocable vows.

March, 1513.

Dr. Luther has consented to be our confessor; and thank God I do believe at last I have found the religion which may make me, even me, love God. Dr. Luther says I have entirely misunderstood God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He seemed to understand all I have been longing for and perplexing myself about all my life, with a glance. When I began to falter out my confessions and difficulties to him, he seemed to see them all spread before him, and explained them all to me. He says I have been thinking of God as a severe judge, an exactor, a harsh creditor, when he is a rich Giver, a forgiving Saviour, yea, the very fountain of inexpressible love.

"God's love," he said, "gives in such a way that it flows from a Father's heart, the well-spring of all good. The heart of the giver makes the gift dear and precious; as among ourselves we say of even a trifling gift, 'It comes from a hand we love,' and look not so much at the gift as at the heart."

"If we will only consider him in his works, we shall learn that God is nothing else but pure, unutterable love, greater and more than any one can think. The shameful thing is, that the world does not regard this, nor thank him for it, although every day it sees before it such countless benefits from him; and it deserves for its ingratitude that the sun should not shine another moment longer, nor the grass grow; yet He ceases not, without a moment's interval, to love us, and to do us good. Language must fail me to speak of his spiritual gifts. Here he pours forth for us, not sun and moon, nor heaven and earth, but his own heart, his beloved Son, so that He suffered His blood to be shed, and the most shameful death to be inflicted on Him, for us wretched, wicked, thankless creatures. How, then, can we say anything but that God is an abyss of endless, unfathomable love?"

"The whole Bible," he says, "is full of this,—that we should not doubt, but be absolutely certain, that God is merciful, gracious, patient, faithful, and true; who not only will keep his promises, but already has kept and done abundantly beyond what he promised, since he has given his own Son for our sins on the cross, that all who believe on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Whoever believes and embraces this," he added, "that God has given his only Son to die for us poor sinners, to him it is no longer any doubt, but the most certain truth, that God reconciles us to himself, and is favourable and heartily gracious to us."

"Since the gospel shows us Christ the Son of God, who, according to the will of the Father, has offered himself up for us, and has satisfied for sin, the heart can no more doubt God's goodness and grace,—is no more affrighted, nor flies from God, but sets all its hope in his goodness and mercy."

"The apostles are always exhorting us," he says, "to continue in the love of God,—that is, that each one should entirely conclude in his heart that he is loved by God; and they set before our eyes a certain proof of it, in that God has not spared his Son, but given him for the world, that through His death the world might again have life.

"It is God's honour and glory to give liberally. His nature is all pure love; so that if any one would describe or picture God, he must describe One who is pure love, the divine nature being nothing else than a furnace and glow of such love that it fills heaven and earth.

"Love is an image of God, and not a dead image, nor one painted on paper, but the living essence of the divine nature, which burns full of all goodness.

"He is not harsh, as we are to those who have injured us. We withdraw our hand and close our purse, but he is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

"He sees thee in thy poverty and wretchedness, and knows thou hast nothing to pay. Therefore he freely forgives, and gives thee all."

"It is not to be borne," he said, "that Christian people should say, We cannot know whether God is favourable to us or not. On the contrary, we should learn to say, I know that I believe in Christ, and therefore that God is my gracious Father."

"What is the reason that God gives?" he said, one day. "What moves him to it? Nothing but unutterable love, because he delights to give and to bless. What does he give? Not empires merely, not a world full of silver and gold, not heaven and earth only, but his Son, who is as great as himself,—that is, eternal and incomprehensible; a gift as infinite as the Giver, the very spring and fountain of all grace; yea, the possession and property of all the riches and treasures of God."

Dr. Luther said also, that the best name by which we can think of God is Father. "It is a loving, sweet, deep, heart-touching name; for the name of father is in its nature full of inborn sweetness and comfort. Therefore, also, we must confess ourselves children of God; for by this name we deeply touch our God, since there is not a sweeter sound to the father, than the voice of the child."

All this is wonderful to me. I scarcely dare to open my hand, and take this belief home to my heart.

Is it then, indeed, thus we must think of God? Is he, indeed, as Dr. Luther says, ready to listen to our feeblest cry, ready to forgive us, and to help us?

And if he is indeed like this, and cares what we think of him, how I must have grieved him all these years!

Not a moment longer! I will not distrust Thee a moment longer. See, heavenly Father, I have come back!

Can it, indeed, be possible that God is pleased when we trust him,—pleased when we pray, simply because he loves us?

Can it indeed be true, as Dr. Luther says, that love is our greatest virtue; and that we please God best by being kind to each other, just because that is what is most like him?

I am sure it is true. It is so good, it must be true.

Then it is possible for me, even for me, to love God. How is it possible for me *not* to love him? And it is possible for me, even for me, to be religious, if to be religious is to love God, and to do whatever we can to make those around us happy.

But if this is indeed religion, it is happiness, it is freedom,—it is life!

Why, then, are so many of the religious people I know of a sad countenance, as if they were bond-servants toiling for a hard master?

I must ask Dr. Luther.

April, 1513.

I have asked Dr. Luther, and he says it is because the devil makes a great deal of the religion we see; that he pretends to be Christ, and comes and terrifies people, and scourges them with the remembrance of their sins, and tells them they must not dare to lift up their eyes to heaven, because God is so holy, and they are so sinful. But it is all because he knows that if they *would* lift their eyes to heaven, their terrors would vanish, and they would see Christ there, not as the Judge, and the hard, exacting Creditor, but as the pitiful, loving Saviour.

I find it a great comfort to believe in this way in the devil. Has he not been trying to teach me his religion all my life? And now I have found him out! He has been telling me lies, not about myself (Dr. Luther says he cannot paint us more sinful than we are), but lies about God. It helps me almost as much to hear Dr. Luther speak about the devil as about God—"the malignant, sad spirit," he says, "who loves to make every one sad."

With God's help, I will never believe him again. But Dr. Luther said I shall, often; that he will come again and malign God, and assail my peace in so many ways, that it will be long before I learn to know him.

I shuddered when he told me this; but then he reassured me, by telling me a beautiful story, which, he said, was from the Bible. It was about a Good Shepherd and silly, wandering sheep, and a wolf who sought to devour them. "All the care of the Shepherd," he said, "is in the tenderest way to attract the sheep to keep close to him; and when they wander, he goes and seeks them, takes them on his shoulder, and carries them safe home. All our wisdom," he says, "is to keep always near this Good Shepherd, who is Christ, and to listen to his voice."

I know the Lord Jesus Christ is called the Good Shepherd. I have seen the picture of him carrying the lamb on his shoulder. But until Dr. Luther explained it to me, I thought it meant that he was the Lord and Owner of all the world, who are his flock. But I never thought that he cared for *me* as his sheep, sought me, called me, watched me, even me, day by day.

Other people, no doubt, have understood all this before. And yet, if so, why do not the monks

preach of it? Why should Aunt Agnes serve Him in the convent by penances and self-tormentings, instead of serving Him in the world by being kind and helping all around? Why should our dear, gentle mother, have such sad, self-reproachful thoughts, and feel as if she and our family were under a curse?

Dr. Luther said that Christ was "made a curse for us;" that he, the unspotted and undefiled Lamb of God, bore the curse for us on the cross; and that we, believing in him, are not under the curse, but under the blessing—that we are blessed.

This, then, is what the crucifix and the *Agnus Dei* mean.

Doubtless many around me have understood all this long ago. I am sure, at least, that our Eva understood it.

But what inexpressible joy for me, as I sit at my embroidery in the garden, to look up through the apple-blossoms and the fluttering leaves, and to see God's love there;—to listen to the thrush that has built his nest among them, and feel God's love, who cares for the birds, in every note that swells his little throat;—to look beyond to the bright blue depths of the sky, and feel they are a canopy of blessing—the roof of the house of my Father; that if clouds pass over, it is the unchangeable light they veil; that, even when the day itself passes, I shall see that the night itself only unveils new worlds of light; and to know that if I could unwrap fold after fold of God's universe, I should only unfold more and more blessing, and see deeper and deeper into the love which is at the heart of all!

And then what joy again to turn to my embroidery, and, as my fingers busily ply the needle, to think—

"This is to help my father and mother; this, even this, is a little work of love. And as I sit and stitch, God is pleased with me, and with what I am doing. He gives me this to do, as much as he gives the priests to pray, and Dr. Luther to preach. I am serving Him, and he is near me in my little corner of the world, and is pleased with me—even with me!"

Oh, Fritz and Eva! if you had both known this, need you have left us to go and serve God so far away?

Have I indeed, like St. Christopher, found my bank of the river, where I can serve my Saviour by helping all the pilgrims I can?

Better, better than St. Christopher; for do I not *know the voice* that calls to me—

"Elsè! Elsè! do this for me?"

And now I do not feel at all afraid to grow old, which is a great relief, as I am already six-and-twenty, and the children think me nearly as old as our mother. For what is growing old, if Dr. Martin Luther is indeed right (and I am sure he is), but growing daily nearer God, and His holy, happy home! Dr. Luther says our Saviour called heaven his Father's house.

Not that I wish to leave this world. While God wills we should stay here, and is with us, is it not home-like enough for us?

May, 1513.

This morning I was busy making a favourite pudding of the father's, when I heard Herr Reichenbach's voice at the door. He went into the dwelling room, and soon afterwards Chriemhild, Atlantis, and Thekla, invaded the kitchen.

"Herr Reichenbach wishes to have a consultation," said Chriemhild, "and we are sent away."

I felt anxious for a moment. It seemed like the old Eisenach days; but since we have been at Wittemberg we have never gone into debt; so that, after thinking a little, I was reassured. The children were full of speculations what it would be about. Chriemhild thought it was some affair of state, because she had seen him in close confabulation with Ulrich von Gersdorf as he came up the street, and they had probably been discussing some question about the privileges of the nobles and burghers.

Atlantis believed it had something to do with Dr. Martin Luther, because Herr Reichenbach had presented the mother with a new pamphlet of the Doctor's on entering the room.

Thekla was sure it was at last the opportunity to make use of one of the father's discoveries,—whether the perpetual clock, or the transmutation of metals, or the steam-pump, she could not tell; but she was persuaded that it was something which was to make our fortunes at last, because Herr Reichenbach looked so very much in earnest, and was so very respectful to our father.

They had not much time to discuss their various theories when we heard Herr Reichenbach's step pass hurriedly through the passage, and the door closed hastily after him.

"Do you call that a consultation?" said Chriemhild, scornfully; "he has not been here ten minutes."

The next instant our mother appeared, looking very pale, and with her voice trembling as she said,—

"Elsè, my child, we want you."

"You are to know first, Elsè," said the children. "Well, it is only fair; you are a dear good eldest sister, and will be sure to tell us."

I scarcely knew why, but my fingers did not seem as much under control as usual, and it was some moments before I could put the finishing stroke to my pudding, wash my hands, pull down the white sleeves to my wrists, and join them in the dwelling room, so that my mother reappeared with an impatience very unusual for her, and led me in herself.

"Elsè, darling, come here," said my father. And when he felt my hands in his, he added, "Herr Reichenbach left a message for thee. Other parents often decide these matters for their children, but thy mother and I wish to leave the matter to thee.—Couldst thou be his wife?"

The question took me by surprise, and I could only say,—

"Can it be possible he thinks of me?"

"I see nothing impossible in that, my Elsè," said my father; "but at all events Herr Reichenbach has placed that beyond a doubt. The question now is whether our Elsè can think of him."

I could not say anything.

"Think well before you reject him," said my father; "he is a good and generous man, he desires no portion with thee; he says thou wouldst be a portion for a king; and I must say he is very intelligent and well-informed, and can appreciate scientific inventions as few men in these days can."

"I do not wish him to be dismissed," I faltered.

But my tender-hearted mother said, laying my head on her shoulder,—

"Yet think well, darling, before you accept him. We are not poor now, and we need no stranger's wealth to make us happy. Heaven forbid that our child should sacrifice herself for us. Herr Reichenbach, is, no doubt, a good and wise man, but I know well a young maiden's fancy. He is little, I know—not tall and stalwart, like our Fritz and Christopher; and he is a little bald, and he is not very young, and rather grave and silent, and young girls—"

"But, mother," I said, "I am not a young girl, I am six-and-twenty; and I do not think Herr Reichenbach old, and I never noticed that he was bald, and I am sure to me he is not silent."

"That will do, Elsè," said the grandmother, laughing from her corner by the stove. "Son and daughter, let these two settle it together. They will arrange matters better than we shall for them."

And in the evening Herr Reichenbach came again, and everything was arranged.

"And that is what the consultation was about!" said the children, not without some disappointment. "It seems such an ordinary thing," said Atlantis, "we are so used to seeing Herr Reichenbach. He comes almost every day."

"I do not see that that is any objection," said Chriemhild; "but it seems hardly like being married, only just to cross the street. His house is just opposite."

"But it is a great deal prettier than ours," said Thekla. "I like Herr Reichenbach; no one ever took such an interest in my drawings as he does. He tells me where they are wrong, and shows me how to make them right, as if he really felt it of some consequence; which it is, you know, Elsè, because one day I mean to embroider and help the family, like you. And no one was ever so kind to Nix as he is. He took the dog on his knee the other day, and drew out a splinter which had lamed him, which Nix would not let any one else do but me. Nix is very fond of Herr Reichenbach, and so am I. He is much wiser, I think, than Ulrich, who teases Nix, and pretends never to know my cats from my cows; and I do not see that he is much older; besides, I could not bear our Elsè to live a step further off."

And Thekla climbed up on my lap and kissed me, while Nix stood on his hind legs and barked, evidently thinking it was a great occasion. So that two of the family at least have given their consent.

But none of the family know yet what Herr Reichenbach said to me when we stood for a few minutes by the window, before he left this evening. He said—

"Elsè, it is God who gives me this joy. Ever since the evening when you all arrived at Wittemberg, and I saw you tenderly helping the aged and directing the young ones, and never flurried in all the bustle, but always at leisure to thank any one for any little kindness, or to help any one out of any little difficulty, I thought you were the light of this home, and I prayed God one day to make you the light of mine."

Ah! that shows how love veils people's faults; but he did not know Fritz, and not much of Eva. They were the true sunshine of our home. However, at all events, with God's help, I will do my very best to make Herr Reichenbach's home bright.

But the best of all is, I am not afraid to accept this blessing. I believe it is God, out of his inexpressible love, as Dr. Luther says, who has given it me, and I am not afraid He will think me

too happy.

Before I had Dr. Luther for my confessor, I should never have known if it was to be a blessing or a curse; but now I am not afraid. A chain seems to have dropped from my heart, and a veil from my eyes, and I can call God Father, and take everything fearlessly from him.

And I know Gottfried feels the same. Since I never had a vocation for the higher religious life, it is an especial mercy for me to have found a religion which enables a very poor every-day maiden in the world to love God and to seek his blessing.

June.

Our mother has been full of little tender apologies to me this week, for having called Gottfried (Herr Reichenbach says I am to call him so) old, and bald, and little, and grave.

"You know, darling, I only meant I did not want you to accept him for our sakes. And after all, as you say, he is scarcely bald; and they say all men who think much lose their hair early; and I am sure it is no advantage to be always talking; and every one cannot be as tall as our Fritz and Christopher."

"And after all, dear mother," said the grandmother, "Elsè did *not* choose Herr Reichenbach for your sakes; but are you quite sure he did not choose Elsè for her father's sake? He was always so interested in the steam-pump!"

My mother and I are much cheered by seeing the quiet influence Herr Reichenbach seems to have over Christopher, whose companions and late hours have often caused us anxiety lately. Christopher is not distrustful of him, because he is no priest, and no great favourer of monks and convents; and he is not so much afraid about Christopher as we timid, anxious women were beginning to be. He thinks there is good metal in him; and he says the best ore cannot look like gold until it is fused. It is so difficult for us women, who have to watch from our quiet homes afar, to distinguish the glow of the smelting furnace from the glare of a conflagration.

WITTEMBERG, *September*,
1513.

This morning, Herr Reichenbach, Christopher, and Ulrich von Gersdorf (who is studying here for a time) came in full of excitement, from a discussion they had been hearing between Dr. Luther and some of the doctors and professors of Erfurt.

I do not know that I quite clearly understand what it was about; but they seemed to think it of great importance.

Our house has become rather a gathering place of late; partly, I think, on account of my father's blindness, which always insures that there will be some one at home.

It seems that Dr. Luther attacks the old methods of teaching in the universities, which makes the older professors look on him as a dangerous innovator, while the young delight in him as a hero fighting their battles. And yet the authorities Dr. Luther wishes to re-instate are older than those he attacks. He demands that nothing shall be received as the standard of theological truth except the Holy Scriptures. I cannot understand why there should be so much conflict about this, because I thought all we believed was founded on the Holy Scriptures. I suppose it is not; but if not, on whose authority? I must ask Gottfried this one day when we are alone.

The discussion to-day was between Dr. Andrew Bodenstein, Archdeacon of Wittemberg, Dr. Luther, and Dr. Jodocus of Eisenach, called Trutvetter, his old teacher. Dr. Carlstadt himself, they said, seemed quite convinced; and Dr. Jodocus is silenced and is going back to Erfurt.

The enthusiasm of the students is great. The great point of Dr. Luther's attack seems to be Aristotle, who was a heathen Greek. I cannot think why these Church doctors should be so eager to defend him; but Herr Reichenbach says all the teaching of the schools and all the doctrine of indulgences are in some way founded on this Aristotle, and that Dr. Luther wants to clear away everything which stands as a screen between the students and the Bible.

Ulrich von Gersdorf said that our doctor debates like his uncle, Franz von Sickingen, fights. He stands like a rock on some point he feels firm on; and then, when his opponents are weary of trying to move him, he rushes suddenly down on them, and sweeps them away like a torrent.

"But his great secret seems to be," remarked Christopher, "that he believes every word he says. He speaks, like other men work, as if every stroke were to tell."

And Gottfried said, quietly, "He is fighting the battle of God with the scribes and Pharisees of our days; and whether he triumph or perish, the battle will be won. It is a battle, not merely against falsehood, but for truth, to keep a position he has won."

"When I hear him," said Ulrich, "I wish my student days over, and long to be in the old castle in the Thuringian Forest, to give everything good there a new impulse. He makes me feel the way to fight the world's great battles is for each to conquer the enemies of God in his own heart and home. He speaks of Aristotle and Augustine; but he makes me think of the sloth and tyranny in the castle, and the misery and oppression in the peasant's hut, which are to me what Aristotle and the schoolmen are to him."

"And I," said Christopher, "when he speaks, think of our printing press, until my daily toil there seems the highest work I could do; and to be a printer, and wing such words as his through the world, the noblest thing on earth."

"But his lectures fight the good fight even more than his disputations," remarked Gottfried. "In these debates he clears the world of the foe; but in his explanations of the Psalms and the Romans, he carries the battle within, and clears the heart of the lies which kept it back from God. In his attacks on Aristotle, he leads you to the Bible as the one source of truth; in his discourses on justification by faith he leads you to God as the one source of holiness and joy."

"They say poor Dr. Jodocus is quite ill with vexation at his defeat," said Christopher; "and that there are many bitter things said against Dr. Luther at Erfurt."

"What does that matter," rejoined Ulrich, "since Wittemberg is becoming every month more thronged with students from all parts of Germany, and the Augustinian cloister is already full of young monks, sent hither from various convents, to study under Dr. Luther? The youth and vigour of the nation are with us. Let the dead bury their dead."

"Ah, children," murmured the grandmother, looking up from her knitting, "that is a funeral procession that lasts long. The young always speak of the old as if they had been born old. Do you think our hearts never throbbed high with hope, and that we never fought with dragons? Yet the old serpent is not killed yet. Nor will he be dead when we are dead, and you are old, and your grandchildren take their place in the old fight, and think they are fighting the first battle the world has seen, and vanquishing the last enemy."

"Perhaps not," said Gottfried; "but the last enemy will be overcome at last, and who knows how soon?"

WITTEMBERG, *October*, 1513.

It is a strong bond of union between Herr Reichenbach and me, our reverence and love for Dr. Luther.

He is lecturing now on the Romans and the Psalms, and as I sit at my spinning-wheel, or sew, Gottfried often reads to me notes from these lectures, or tells me what they have been about. This is a comfort to me also, because he has many thoughts and doubts which, were it not for his friendship with Dr. Luther, would make me tremble for him. They are so new and strange to me; and as it is I never venture to speak of them to my mother.

He thinks there is great need of reformations and changes in the Church. He even thinks Christopher not far from right in his dislike of many of the priests and monks, who, he says, lead lives which are a disgrace to Christendom.

But his chief detestation is the sale of indulgences, now preached in many of the towns of Saxony by Dr. Tetzel. He says it is a shameless traffic in lies, and that most men of intelligence and standing in the great cities think so. And he tells me that a very good man, a professor of theology—Dr. John Wesel,—preached openly against them about fifty years ago at the University of Erfurt, and afterwards at Worms and Mainz; and that John of Goch and other holy men were most earnest in denouncing them.

And when I asked if the Pope did not sanction them, he said that to understand what the Pope is one needs to go to Rome. He went there in his youth, not on pilgrimage, but on mercantile business, and he told me that the wickedness he saw there, especially in the family of the reigning Pope, the Borgia, for many years made him hate the very name of religion. Indeed, he said it was principally through Dr. Luther that he had begun again to feel there could be a religion, which, instead of being a cloak for sin, should be an incentive to holiness.

He says also that I have been quite mistaken about "Reineke Fuchs;" that it is no vulgar jest-book, mocking at really sacred things, but a bitter, earnest satire against the hypocrisy which practices all kinds of sin in the name of sacred things.

He doubts even if the Calixtines and Hussites are as bad as they have been represented to be. It alarms me sometimes to hear him say these things. His world is so much larger than mine, it is difficult for my thoughts to follow him into it. If the world is so bad, and there is so much hypocrisy in the holiest places, perhaps I have been hard on poor Christopher after all.

But if Fritz has found it so, how unhappy it must make him!

Can really religious people like Fritz and Eva do nothing better for the world, but leave it to grow more and more corrupt and unbelieving, while they sit apart to weave their robes of sanctity in convents. It does seem time for something to be done. I wonder who will do it?

I thought it might be the Pope; but Gottfried shakes his head, and says, "No good thing can begin at Rome."

"Or the prelates?" I asked one day.

"They are too intent," he said, "on making their courts as magnificent as those of the princes, to be able to interfere with the abuses by which their revenues are maintained."

"Or the princes?"

"The friendship of the prelates is too important to them, for them to interfere in spiritual matters."

"Or the emperor?"

"The emperor," he said, "has enough to do to hold his own against the princes, the prelates, and the pope."

"Or the knights?"

"The knights are at war with the all world," he replied; "to say nothing of their ceaseless private feuds with each other. With the peasants rising on one side in wild insurrection, the great nobles contending against their privileges on the other, and the great burgher families throwing their barbarous splendour into the shade as much as the city palaces do their bare robber castles, the knights and petty nobles have little but bitter words to spare for the abuses of the clergy. Besides, most of them have relations whom they hope to provide for with some good abbey."

"Then the peasants!" I suggested. "Did not the gospel first take root among peasants?"

"*Inspired* peasants and fishermen!" he replied, thoughtfully. "Peasants who had walked up and down the land three years in the presence of the Master. But who is to teach our peasants now? They cannot read!"

"Then it must be the burghers," I said.

"Each may be prejudiced in favour of his order," he replied, with a smile; "but I do think if better days dawn, it will be through the cities. There the new learning takes root; there the rich have society and cultivation, and the poor have teachers; and men's minds are brightened by contact and debate, and there is leisure to think and freedom to speak. If a reformation of abuses were to begin, I think the burghers would promote it most of all."

"But who is to begin it?" I asked. "Has no one ever tried?"

"Many have tried," he replied sadly; "and many have perished in trying. While they were assailing one abuse, others were increasing. Or while they endeavoured to heal some open wound, some one arose and declared that it was impossible to separate the disease from the whole frame, and that they were attempting the life of our Holy Mother the Church."

"Who, then, will venture to begin?" I said. "Can it be Dr. Luther? He is bold enough to venture anything; and since he has done so much good to Fritz, and to you, and to me, why not to the whole Church?"

"Dr. Luther is faithful enough, and bold enough for anything his conscience calls him to," said Gottfried, "but he is occupied with saving men's souls, not with reforming ecclesiastical abuses."

"But if the ecclesiastical abuses came to interfere with the salvation of men's souls," I suggested, "what would Dr. Luther do then?"

"We should see, Elsè," said Gottfried. "If the wolves attacked one of Dr. Luther's sheep, I do not think he would care with what weapon he rescued it, or at what risk."

XIII.

Eva's Story.

NIMPTSCHEN, 1517.

Great changes have taken place during these last three years in Aunt Cotta's home. Elsè has been married more than two years, and sends me wonderful narratives of the beauty and wisdom of her little Margarethe, who begins now to lisp the names of mother, and father, and aunts. Elsè has also taught the little creature to kiss her hand to a picture they have of me, and call it Cousin Eva. They will not adopt my convent name.

Chriemhild also is betrothed to the young knight, Ulrich von Gersdorf, who has a castle in the Thuringian Forest; and she writes that they often speak of Sister Ave, and that he keeps the dried violets still, with a lock of his mother's hair and a relic of his patron saint. Chriemhild says I should scarcely know him again, he is become so earnest and so wise, and so full of good purposes.

And little Thekla writes that she also understands something of Latin. Elsè's husband has taught her; and there is nothing Elsè and Gottfried Reichenbach like so much as to hear her sing the hymns Cousin Eva used to sing.

They seem to think of me as a kind of angel sister, who was early taken to God, and will never grow old. It is very sweet to be remembered thus; but sometimes it seems as if it were hardly me they were remembering or loving, but what I was or might have been.

Would they recognize Cousin Eva in the grave, quiet woman of twenty-two I have become? For

whilst in the old home Time seems to mark his course like a stream by growth and life, here in the convent he seems to mark it only by the slow falling of the shadow on the silent dial—the shadow of death. In the convent there is no growth but growing old.

In Aunt Cotta's home the year expanded from winter into spring, and summer, and autumn—seed-time and harvest—the season of flowers and the season of fruits. The seasons grew into each other, we knew not how or when. In the convent the year is sharply divided into December, January, February, March, and April, with nothing to distinguish one month from another but their names and dates.

In our old home the day brightened from dawn to noon, and then mellowed into sunset, and softly faded into night. Here in the convent the day is separated into hours by the clock.

Sister Beatrice's poor faded face is slowly becoming a little more faded; Aunt Agnes's a little more worn and sharp; and I, like the rest, am six years older than I was six years ago, when I came here; and that is all.

It is true, fresh novices have arrived, and have taken the irrevocable vows, and fair young faces are around me; but my heart aches sometimes when I look at them, and think that they, like the rest of us, have closed the door on life, with all its changes, and have entered on that monotonous pathway to the grave whose stages are simply growing old.

Some of these novices come full of high aspirations for a religious life. They have been told about the heavenly Spouse, who will fill their consecrated hearts with pure, unutterable joys, the world can never know.

Many come as sacrifices to family poverty or family pride, because their noble parents are too poor to maintain them suitably, or in order that their fortunes may swell the dower of some married sister.

I know what disappointment is before them when they learn that the convent is but a poor, childish mimicry of the world, with its petty ambitions and rivalries, but without the life and the love. I know the noblest will suffer most, and may, perhaps, fall the lowest.

To narrow, apathetic natures, the icy routine of habit will more easily replace the varied flow of life. They will fit into their harness sooner, and become as much interested in the gossip of the house or the order, the election of superiors, or the scandal of some neighbouring nunnery, as they would have become in the gossip of the town or village they would have lived in, in the world.

But warm hearts and high spirits—these will chafe and struggle, and dream they have reached depths of self-abasement, or soared to heights of mystical devotion, and then awake, with bitter self-reproaches, to find themselves too weak to cope with some small temptation, like Aunt Agnes.

These I will help all I can. But I have learned, since I came to Nimptschen, that it is a terrible and perilous thing to take the work of the training of our souls out of God's hands into our own. The pruning-knife in his hands must sometimes wound and seem to impoverish; but in ours it cuts, and wounds, and impoverishes, and does *not* prune. We can, indeed, inflict pain on ourselves; but God alone can make pain healing, or suffering discipline.

I can only pray that, however mistaken many may be in immuring themselves here, Thou who art the Good Physician wilt take us, with all our useless self-inflicted wounds, and all our wasted, self-stunted faculties, and as we are and as thou art, still train us for thyself.

The infirmary is what interests me most. Having secluded ourselves from all the joys and sorrows and vicissitudes of common life, we seem scarcely to have left anything in God's hands, wherewith to try our faith and subdue our wills to his, except sickness. Bereavements we cannot know who have bereaved ourselves of all companionship with our beloved for evermore on earth. Nor can we know the trials either of poverty or of prosperity, since we can never experience either; but, having taken the vow of voluntary poverty on ourselves, whilst we can never call anything individually our own, we are freed from all anxieties by becoming members of a richly-endowed order.

Sickness only remains beyond our control; and, therefore, when I see any of the sisterhood laid on the bed of suffering, I think—

"*God has laid thee there!*" and I feel more sure that it is the right thing.

I still instruct the novices; but sometimes the dreary question comes to me—

"For *what* am I instructing them?"

Life has no future for them—only a monotonous prolonging of the monotonous present.

I try to feel, "I am training them for eternity." But who can do that but God, who inhabiteth eternity, and sees the links which connect every moment of the little circles of time with the vast circumference of the everlasting future?

But I do my best. Catharine von Bora, a young girl of sixteen, who has lately entered the convent, interests me deeply. There is such strength in her character and such warmth in her heart. But alas! what scope is there for these here?

Aunt Agnes has not opened her heart in any way to me. True, when I was ill, she watched over me as tenderly as Aunt Cotta could; but when I recovered, she seemed to repel all demonstrations of gratitude and affection, and went on with that round of penances and disciplines, which make the nuns reverence her as so especially saintly.

Sometimes I look with longing to the smoke and lights in the village we can see among the trees from the upper windows of the convent. I know that each little wreath of smoke comes from the hearth of a home where there are father and mother and little children; and the smoke wreaths seem to me to rise like holy clouds of incense to God our Father in heaven.

But the alms given so liberally by the sisterhood are given at the convent-gate, so that we never form any closer connection with the poor around us than that of beggars and almoners; and I long to be their *friend*.

Sometimes I am afraid I acted in impatient self-will in leaving Aunt Cotta's home, and that I should have served God better by remaining there, and that, after all, my departure may have left some little blank it would not have been useless to fill. As the girls marry, Aunt Cotta might have found me a comfort, and, as "Cousin Eva," I might perhaps have been more of a help to Elsè's children than I can be to the nuns here as Sister Ave. But whatever might have been, it is impatience and rebellion to think of that now; and nothing can separate me from God and his love.

Somehow or other, however, even the "Theologia Germanica," and the high, disinterested communion with God it teaches, seemed sweeter to me, in the intervals of an interrupted and busy life, than as the business of this uninterrupted leisure. The hours of contemplation were more blessed for the very trials and occupations which seemed to hinder them.

Sometimes I feel as if my heart also were freezing, and becoming set and hard. I am afraid, indeed, it would, were it not for poor Sister Beatrice, who has had a paralytic stroke, and is now a constant inmate of the infirmary. She speaks at times very incoherently, and cannot think at any time connectedly. But I have found a book which interests her; it is the Latin Gospel of St. Luke, which I am allowed to take from the convent library and translate to her. The narratives are so brief and simple, she can comprehend them, and she never wearies of hearing them. The very familiarity endears them, and to me they are always new.

But it is very strange that there is nothing about penance or vows in it, or the adoration of the blessed Virgin. I suppose I shall find that in the other Gospels, or in the Epistles, which were written after our Lady's assumption into heaven. Sister Beatrice likes much to hear me sing the hymn by Bernard of Clugni, on the perpetuity of joy in heaven:[8]—

Here brief is the sighing,
And brief is the crying,
For brief is the life!
The life there is endless,
The joy there is endless,
And ended the strife.

What joys are in heaven?
To whom are they given?
Ah! what? and to whom?
The stars to the earth-born,
"Best robes" to the sin-worn,
The crown for the doom!

O country the fairest!
Our country the dearest,
We press towards thee!
O Sion the golden!
Our eyes are now holden,
Thy light till we see:

Thy crystalline ocean,
Unvexed by commotion,
Thy fountain of life;
Thy deep peace unspoken,
Pure, sinless, unbroken,—
Thy peace beyond strife:

Thy meek saints all glorious,
Thy martyrs victorious,
Who suffer no more;
Thy halls full of singing,
Thy hymns ever ringing
Along thy safe shore.

Like the lily for whiteness,
Like the jewel for brightness,
Thy vestments, O Bride!

The Lamb ever with thee,
The Bridegroom is with thee,—
With thee to abide!

We know not, we know not,
All human words show not,
The joys we may reach;
The mansions preparing,
The joys for our sharing,
The welcome for each.

O Sion the golden!
My eyes are still holden,
Thy light till I see;
And deep in thy glory,
Unveiled then before me,
My King, look on thee!

April, 1517.

The whole of the Augustinian Order in Saxony has been greatly moved by the visitation of Dr. Martin Luther. He has been appointed Deputy Vicar-General in the place of Dr. Staupitz, who has gone on a mission to the Netherlands, to collect relics for the Elector Frederic's new church at Wittemberg.

Last April Dr. Luther visited the Monastery of Grimma, not far from us; and through our Prioress, who is connected with the Prior of Grimma, we hear much about it.

He strongly recommends the study of the Scriptures and of St. Augustine, in preference to every other book, by the brethren and sisters of his Order. We have begun to follow his advice in our convent, and a new impulse seems given to everything. I have also seen two beautiful letters of Dr. Martin Luther's, written to two brethren of the Augustinian Order. Both were written in April last, and they have been read by many amongst us. The first was to Brother George Spenlein, a monk at Memmingen. It begins, "In the name of Jesus Christ." After speaking of some private pecuniary matters, he writes:—

> "As to the rest, I desire to know how it goes with thy soul; whether, weary of its own righteousness, it learns to breathe and to trust in the righteousness of Christ. For in our age the temptation to presumption burns in many, and chiefly in those who are trying with all their might to be just and good. Ignorant of the righteousness of God, which in Christ is given to us richly and without price, they seek in themselves to do good works, so that at last they may have confidence to stand before God, adorned with merits and virtues,—which is impossible. Thou, when with us, wert of this opinion, and so was I; but now I contend against this error, although I have not yet conquered it.
>
> "Therefore, my dear brother, learn Christ and him crucified; learn to sing to him, and, despairing of thyself, to say to him, 'Lord Jesus, thou art my righteousness, but I am thy sin. Thou hast taken me upon thyself, and given to me what is thine; thou hast taken on thee what thou was not, and has given to me what I was not.' Take care not to aspire to such a purity that thou shalt no longer seem to thyself a sinner; for Christ does not dwell except in sinners. For this he descended from heaven, where he abode with the just, that he might abide with sinners. Meditate on this love of his, and thou shalt drink in his sweet consolations. For if, by our labours and afflictions, we could attain quiet of conscience, why did he die? Therefore, only in Him, by a believing self-despair, both of thyself and of thy works, wilt thou find peace. For he has made thy sins his, and his righteousness he has made thine."

Aunt Agnes seemed to drink in these words like a patient in a raging fever. She made me read them over to her again and again, and then translate and copy them; and now she carries them about with her everywhere.

To me the words that follow are as precious. Dr. Luther says, that as Christ hath borne patiently with us wanderers, we should also bear with others. "Prostrate thyself before the Lord Jesus," he writes, "seek all that thou lackest. He himself will teach thee all, even to do for others as he has done for thee."

The second letter was to Brother George Leiffer of Erfurt. It speaks of affliction thus:—

> "The cross of Christ is divided throughout the whole world. To each his portion comes in time, and does not fail. Thou, therefore, do not seek to cast thy portion from thee, but rather receive it as a holy relic, to be enshrined, not in a gold or silver reliquary, but in the sanctuary of a golden, that is, a loving and submissive heart. For if the wood of the cross was so consecrated by contact with the flesh and blood of Christ that it is considered as the noblest of relics, how much more are injuries, persecutions, sufferings, and the hatred of men, sacred relics, consecrated not by the touch of his body, but by contact with his most loving heart and Godlike will! These we should embrace, and bless, and cherish, since through him the curse is transmuted into blessing, suffering into glory, the cross into joy."

Sister Beatrice delights in these words, and murmurs them over to herself as I have explained them to her. "Yes, I understand; this sickness, helplessness,—all I have lost and suffered,—are sacred relics from my Saviour; not because he forgets, but because he remembers me—he remembers me. Sister Ave, I am content."

And then she likes me to sing her favourite hymn *Jesu dulcis memoria*:—

O Jesus, thy sweet memory
Can fill the heart with ecstasy;
But passing all things sweet that be,
Thy presence, Lord, to me.

What hope, O Jesus, thou canst render
To those who other hopes surrender!
To those who seek thee, O how tender!
But what to those who find!

With Mary, ere the morning break,
Him at the sepulchre I seek,—
Would hear him to my spirit speak,
And see him with my heart.

Wherever I may chance to be,
Thee first my heart desires to see;
How glad when I discover thee;
How blest when I retain!

Beyond all treasures is thy grace;—
Oh, when wilt thou thy steps retrace
And satisfy me with thy face,
And make me wholly glad?

Then come, Oh, come, thou perfect King,
Of boundless glory, boundless spring;
Arise, and fullest daylight bring,
Jesus, expected long!

May, 1517.

Aunt Agnes has spoken to me at last. Abruptly and sternly, as if more angry with herself than repenting or rejoicing, she said to me this morning, "Child, those words of Dr. Luther's have reached my heart. I have been trying all my life to be a saint, and so to reach God. And I have failed utterly. And now I learn that I am a sinner, and yet that God's love reaches me. The cross, the cross of Christ, is my pathway from hell to heaven. I am not a saint. I shall never be a saint. Christ is the only Saint, the Holy One of God; and he has borne my sins, and he is my righteousness. He has done it all; and I have nothing left but to give him all the glory, and to love, to love, to love him to all eternity. And I will do it," she added fervently, "poor, proud, destitute, and sinful creature that I am. I cannot help it; I must."

But strong and stern as the words were, how changed Aunt Agnes's manner!—humble and simple as a child's. And as she left me for some duty in the house, she kissed my forehead, and said, "Ah, child, love me a little, if you can,—not as a saint, but as a poor, sinful old woman, who among her worst sins has counted loving thee too much, which was perhaps, after all, among the least; love me a little, Eva, for my sister's sake, whom you love so much."

XIV.

Elsè's Story.

August, 1517.

Yes, our little Gretchen is certainly a remarkable child. Although she is not yet two years old, she knows all of us by name. She tyranizes over us all, except me. I deny her many things which she cries for; except when Gottfried is present, who, unfortunately, cannot bear to see her unhappy for a moment, and having (he says) had his temper spoilt in infancy by a cross nurse, has no notion of infant education, except to avoid contradiction. Christopher, who always professed a supreme contempt for babies, gives her rides on his shoulder in the most submissive manner. But best of all, I love to see her sitting on my blind father's knee, and stroking his face with a kind of tender, pitiful reverence, as if she felt there was something missing there.

I have taught her, too, to say Fritz's name, when I show her the little lock I wear of his hair; and to kiss Eva's picture. I cannot bear that they should be as lost or dead to her. But I am afraid she is perplexed between Eva's portrait and the picture of the Holy Virgin, which I teach her to bow

and cross her forehead before; because sometimes she tries to kiss the picture of Our Lady, and to twist her little fingers into the sacred sign before Eva's likeness. However, by-and-by she will distinguish better. And are not Eva and Fritz indeed our family saints and patrons? I do believe their prayers bring down blessings on us all.

For our family has bean so much blessed lately! The dear mother's face looks so bright, and has regained something of its old sweet likeness to the Mother of Mercy. And I am so happy, so brimful of happiness. And it certainly does make me feel more religious than I did.

Not the home-happiness only, I mean, but that best blessing of all, that came first, before I knew that Gottfried cared for me,—the knowledge of the love of God to me,—that best riches of all, without which all our riches would be mere cares—the riches of the treasury of God freely opened to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gottfried is better than I ever thought he was. Perhaps he really grows better every year; certainly he seems better and dearer to me.

Chriemhild and Ulrich are to be married very soon. He has gone now to see Franz von Sickingen, and his other relations in the Rhineland, and to make arrangements connected with his marriage. Last year Chriemhild and Atlantis stayed some weeks at the old castle in the Thuringian Forest, near Eisenach. A wild life it seemed to be, from their description, deep in the heart of the forest, in a lonely fortress on a rock, with only a few peasants' huts in sight; and with all kinds of strange legends of demon huntsmen, and elves, and sprites haunting the neighborhood. To me it seems almost as desolate as the wilderness where John the Baptist lived on locusts and wild honey; but Chriemhild thought it delightful. She made acquaintance with some of the poor peasants, and they seemed to think her an angel,—an opinion (Atlantis says) shared by Ulrich's old uncle and aunt, to say nothing of Ulrich himself. At first the aged Aunt Hermentrude was rather distant; but on the Schönberg pedigree having been duly tested and approved, the old lady at length considered herself free to give vent to her feelings, whilst the old knight courteously protested that he had always seen Chriemhild's pedigree in her face.

And Ulrich says there is one great advantage in the solitude and strength of his castle,—he could offer an asylum at any time to Dr. Luther, who has of late become an object of bitter hatred to some of the priests.

Dr. Luther is most kind to our little Gretchen, whom he baptized. He says little children often understand God better than the wisest doctors of divinity.

Thekla has experienced her first sorrow. Her poor little foundling, Nix, is dead. For some days the poor creature had been ailing, and at last he lay for some hours quivering, as if with inward convulsions; yet at Thekla's voice the dull, glassy eyes would brighten, and he would wag his tail feebly as he lay on his side. At last he died; and Thekla was not to be comforted, but sat apart and shed bitter tears. The only thing which cheered her was Christopher's making a grave in the garden for Nix, under the pear tree where I used to sit at embroidery in summer, as now she does. It was of no use to try to laugh her out of her distress. Her lip quivered and her eyes filled with tears if any one attempted it. Atlantis spoke seriously to her on the duty of a little girl of twelve beginning to put away childish things; and even the gentle mother tenderly remonstrated, and said one day, when Dr. Luther had asked her for her favourite, and had been answered by a burst of tears, "My child, if you mourn so for a dog, what will you do when real sorrows come?"

But Dr. Luther seemed to understand Thekla better than any of us, and to take her part. He said she was a child, and her childish sorrows were no more trifles to her than our sorrows are to us; that from heaven we might probably look on the fall of an empire as of less moment than we now thought the death of Thekla's dog; yet that the angels who look down on us from heaven do not despise our little joys and sorrows, nor should we those of the little ones; or words to this effect. He has a strange sympathy with the hearts of children. Thekla was so encouraged by his compassion, that she crept close to him and laid her hand in his, and said, with a look of wistful earnestness, "Will Nix rise again at the last day? Will there be dogs in the other world?"

Many of us were appalled at such an irreverent idea; but Dr. Luther did not seem to think it irreverent. He said, "We know less of what that other world will be than this little one, or than that babe," he added, pointing to my little Gretchen, "knows of the empires or powers of this world. But of this we are sure, the world to come will be no empty, lifeless waste. See how full and beautiful the Lord God has made all things in this passing, perishing world of heaven and earth! How much more beautiful, then, will he make that eternal, incorruptible world! God will make new heavens and a new earth. All poisonous, and malicious, and hurtful creatures will be banished thence,—all that our sin has ruined. All creatures will not only be harmless, but lovely, and pleasant, and joyful, so that we might play with them. 'The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.' Why, then, should there not be little dogs in the new earth, whose skin might be fair as gold, and their hair as bright as precious stones?"

Certainly, in Thekla's eyes, from that moment there has been no doctor of divinity like Dr. Luther.

TORGAU, *November* 10, 1516.

The plague is at Wittemberg. We have all taken refuge here. The university is scattered, and many, also, of the Augustinian monks.

Dr. Luther remains in the convent at Wittemberg. We have seen a copy of a letter of his, dated the 26th October, and addressed to the Venerable Father John Lange, Prior of Erfurt Monastery.

> "Health. I have need of two secretaries or chancellors, since all day long I do nothing but write letters; and I know not whether, always writing, I may not sometimes repeat the same things. Thou wilt see.
>
> "I am convent lecturer; reader at meals; I am desired to be daily parish preacher; I am director of studies, vicar (*i. e.*, prior eleven times over), inspector of the fish-ponds at Litzkau, advocate of the cause of the people of Herzberg at Torgau, lecturer on Paul and on the Psalms; besides what I have said already of my constant correspondence. I have rarely time to recite my Canonical Hours, to say nothing of my own particular temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil. See what a man of leisure I am!
>
> "Concerning Brother John Metzel I believe you have already received my opinion. I will see, however, what I can do. How can you think I can find room for your Sardanapaluses and Sybarites? If you have educated them ill, you must bear with those you have educated ill. I have enough useless brethren;—if, indeed, any are useless to a patient heart. I am persuaded that the useless may become more useful than those who are the most useful now. Therefore bear with them for the time.
>
> "I think I have already written to you about the brethren you sent me. Some I have sent to Magister Spangenburg, as they requested, to save their breathing this pestilential air. With two from Cologne I felt such sympathy, and thought so much of their abilities, that I have retained them, although at much expense. Twenty-two priests, forty-two youths, and in the university altogether forty-two persons are supported out of our poverty. But the Lord will provide.
>
> "You say that yesterday you began to lecture on the Sentences. To-morrow I begin the Epistle to the Galatians; although I fear that, with the plague among us as it is, I shall not be able to continue. The plague has taken away already two or three among us, but not all in one day; and the son of our neighbour Faber, yesterday in health, to-day is dead; and another is infected. What shall I say? It is indeed here, and begins to rage with great cruelty and suddenness, especially among the young. You would persuade me and Master Bartholomew to take refuge with you. Why should I flee? I hope the world would not collapse if Brother Martin fell. If the pestilence spreads, I will indeed disperse the monks throughout the land. As for me, I have been placed here. My obedience as a monk does not suffer me to fly; since what obedience required once, it demands still. Not that I do not fear death—(I am not the Apostle Paul, but only the reader of the Apostle Paul)—but I hope the Lord will deliver me from my fear.
>
> "Farewell; and be mindful of us in this day of the visitation of the Lord, to whom be glory."

This letter has strengthened me and many. Yes, if it had been our duty, I trust, like Dr. Luther, we should have had courage to remain. The courage of his act strengthens us; and also the confession of fear in his words. It does not seem a fear which hath torment, or which fetters his spirit. It does not even crush his cheerfulness. It is a natural fear of dying, which I also cannot overcome. From me, then, as surely from him, when God sees it time to die, He will doubtless remove the dread of death.

This season of the pestilence recalls so much to me of what happened when the plague last visited us at Eisenach!

We have lost some since then,—if I ought to call Eva and Fritz lost. But how my life has been enriched! My husband, our little Gretchen; and then so much outward prosperity! All that pressure of poverty and daily care entirely gone, and so much wherewith to help others! And yet, am I so entirely free from care as I ought to be? Am I not even at times more burdened with it?

When first I married, and had Gottfried on whom to unburden every perplexity, and riches which seemed to me inexhaustible, instead of poverty, I thought I should never know care again.

But is it so? Have not the very things themselves, in their possession, become cares? When I hear of these dreadful wars with the Turks, and of the insurrections and disquiets in various parts, and look round on our pleasant home, and gardens, and fields, I think how terrible it would be again to be plunged into poverty, or that Gretchen ever should be; so that riches themselves become cares. It makes me think of what a good man once told me: that the word in the Bible which is translated "rich," in speaking of Abraham, in other places is translated "heavy;" so that instead of reading, "Abraham left Egypt *rich* in cattle and silver and gold," we might read "*heavy* in cattle, silver, and gold."

Yes, we are on a pilgrimage to the Holy City; we are in flight from an evil world; and too often riches are weights which hinder our progress.

I find it good, therefore, to be here in the small, humble house we have taken refuge in—Gottfried, Gretchen, and I. The servants are dispersed elsewhere; and it lightens my heart to feel how well we can do without luxuries which were beginning to seem like necessaries. Dr. Luther's words come to my mind; "The covetous enjoy what they have as little as what they have not. They cannot even rejoice in the sunshine. They think not what a noble gift the light is—what an

inexpressibly great treasure the sun is, which shines freely on all the world."

Yes, God's common gifts are his most precious; and his most precious gifts—even life itself—have no root in *themselves*. Not that they are *without* root; they are *better* rooted in the depths of His unchangeable love.

It is well to be taught, by such a visitation even as this pestilence, the utter insecurity of everything here. "If the ship itself," as Gottfried says, "is exposed to shipwreck, who, then, can secure the cargo?" Henceforth let me be content with the only security Dr. Luther says God will give us,—the security of his presence and cure: "*I will never leave thee.*"

WITTEMBERG, *June*, 1517.

We are at home once more; and, thank God, our two households are undiminished, save by one death—that of our youngest sister, the baby when we left Eisenach. The professors and students also have returned. Dr. Luther, who remained here all the time, is preaching with more force and clearness.

The town is greatly divided in opinion about him. Dr. Tetzel, the great Papal Commissioner for the sale of indulgences, has established his red cross, announcing the sale of pardons, for some months, at Jüterbok and Zerbst, not far from Wittemberg.

Numbers of the townspeople, alarmed, I suppose, by the pestilence, into anxiety about their souls, have repaired to Dr. Tetzel, and returned with the purchased tickets of indulgence.

I have always been perplexed as to what the indulgences really give. Christopher has terrible stories about the money paid for them being spent by Dr. Tetzel and others on taverns and feasts; and Gottfried says, "It is a bargain between the priests, who love money, and the people, who love sin."

Yesterday morning I saw one of the letters of indulgence for the first time. A neighbour of ours, the wife of a miller, whose weights have been a little suspected in the town, was in a state of great indignation when I went to purchase some flour of her.

"See!" she said; "this Dr. Luther will be wiser than the Pope himself. He has refused to admit my husband to the Holy Sacrament unless he repents and confesses to him, although he took his certificate in his hand."

She gave it to me, and I read it. Certainly, if the doctors of divinity disagree about the value of these indulgences, Dr. Tetzel has no ambiguity nor uncertainty in his language.

> "I," says the letter, "absolve thee from all the excesses, sins, and crimes which thou hast committed, however great and enormous they may be. I remit for thee the pains thou mightest have had to endure in purgatory. I restore thee to participation in the sacraments. I incorporate thee afresh into the communion of the Church. I re-establish thee in the innocence and purity in which thou wast at the time of thy baptism. So that, at the moment of thy death, the gate by which souls pass into the place of torments will be shut upon thee; while, on the contrary, that which leads to the paradise of joy will be open unto thee. And if thou art not called on to die soon, this grace will remain unaltered for the time of thy latter end.
>
> "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,
>
> "Friar JOHN TETZEL, Commissary, has signed it with his own hand."

"To think," said my neighbour, "of the pope promising my Franz admittance into paradise; and Dr. Luther will not even admit him to the altar of the parish church? And after spending such a sum on it! for the friar must surely have thought my husband better off than he is, or he would not have demanded gold of poor struggling people like us."

"But if the angels at the gate of paradise should be of the same mind as Dr. Luther?" I suggested, "would it not be better to find that out here than there?"

"It is impossible," she replied; "have we not the Holy Father's own word? and did we not pay a whole golden florin? It is impossible it can be in vain."

"Put the next florin in your scales instead of in Dr. Tetzel's chest, neighbour," said a student, laughing, as he heard her loud and angry words; "it may weigh heavier with your flour than against your sins."

I left them to finish the discussion.

Gottfried says it is quite true that Dr. Luther in the confessional in the city churches has earnestly protested to many of his penitents against their trusting to these certificates, and has positively refused to suffer any to communicate, except on their confessing their sins, and promising to forsake them, whether provided with indulgences or not.

In his sermon to the people last year on the Ten Commandments, he told them forgiveness was freely given to the penitent by God, and was not to be purchased at any price, least of all with money.

WITTEMBERG, *July* 18.

The whole town is in a ferment to-day, on account of Dr. Luther's sermon yesterday, preached before the Elector in the Castle church.

The congregation was very large, composed of the court, students, and townspeople.

Not a child or ignorant peasant there but could understand the preacher's words. The Elector had procured especial indulgences from the pope in aid of his church, but Dr. Luther made no exception to conciliate him. He said the Holy Scriptures nowhere demand of us any penalty or satisfaction for our sins. God gives and forgives freely without price, out of his unutterable grace; and lays on the forgiven no other duty than true repentance and sincere conversion of the heart, resolution to bear the cross of Christ, and do all the good we can. He declared also that it would be better to give money freely towards the building of St. Peter's Church at Rome, than to bargain with alms for indulgences; that it was more pleasing to God to give to the poor, than to buy these letters, which, he said, would at the utmost do nothing more for any man than remit mere ecclesiastical penances.

As we returned from the church together, Gottfried said,—

"The battle-cry is sounded then at last! The wolf has assailed Dr. Luther's own flock, and the shepherd is roused. The battle-cry is sounded, Elsè, but the battle is scarcely begun."

And when we described the sermon to our grandmother, she murmured,—

"It sounds to me, children, like an old story of my childhood. Have I not heard such words half a century since in Bohemia? and have I not seen the lips which spoke them silenced in flames and blood? Neither Dr. Luther nor any of you know whither you are going. Thank God, I am soon going to him who died for speaking just such words! Thank God I hear them again before I die! I have doubted long about them and about everything; how could I dare to think a few proscribed men right against the whole Church? But since these old words cannot be hushed, but rise from the dead again, I think there must be life in them; eternal life. Children," she concluded, "tell me when Dr. Luther preaches again; I will hear him before I die, that I may tell your grandfather, when I meet him, the old truth is not dead. I think it would give him another joy, even before the throne of God."

WITTEMBERG, *August*.

Christopher has returned from Jüterbok. He saw there a great pile of burning faggots, which Dr. Tetzel had caused to be kindled in the market-place, "to burn the heretics," he said.

We laughed as he related this, and also at the furious threats and curses that had been launched at Dr. Luther from the pulpit in front of the iron money-chest. But our grandmother said, "It is no jest, children; they have done it, and they will do it again yet!"

WITTEMBERG, *November* 1, 1517;
ALL SAINTS' DAY.

Yesterday evening, as I sat at the window with Gottfried in the late twilight, hushing Gretchen to sleep, we noticed Dr. Luther walking rapidly along the street towards the Castle church. His step was firm and quick, and he seemed too full of thought to observe anything as he passed. There was something unusual in his bearing, which made my husband call my attention to him. His head was erect and slightly thrown back, as when he preaches. He had a large packet of papers in his hand, and although he was evidently absorbed with some purpose, he had more the air of a general moving to a battle-field than of a theologian buried in meditation.

This morning, as we went to the early mass of the festival, we saw a great crowd gathered around the doors of the Castle church; not a mob, however, but an eager throng of well-dressed men, professors, citizens, and students; those within the circle reading some writing which was posted on the door, whilst around, the crowd was broken into little knots, in eager but not loud debate.

Gottfried asked what had happened.

"It is only some Latin theses against the indulgences, by Dr. Luther," replied one of the students, "inviting a disputation on the subject."

I was relieved to hear that nothing was the matter, and Gottfried and I quietly proceeded to the service.

"It is only an affair of the university," I said. "I was afraid it was some national disaster, an invasion of the Turks, or some event in the Elector's family."

As we returned, however, the crowd had increased, and the debate seemed to be becoming warm among some of them. One of the students was translating the Latin into German for the benefit of the unlearned, and we paused to listen.

What he read seemed to me very true, but not at all remarkable. We had often heard Dr. Luther

say and even preach similar things. At the moment we came up the words the student was reading were,—

"It is a great error for one to think to make satisfaction for his sins, in that God always forgives gratuitously and from his boundless grace, requiring nothing in return but holy living."

This sentence I remember distinctly, because it was so much like what we had heard him preach. Other propositions followed, such as that it was very doubtful if the indulgences could deliver souls from purgatory, and that it was better to give alms than to buy indulgences. But why these statements should collect such a crowd, and excite such intense interest, I could not quite understand, unless it was because they were in Latin.

One sentence, I observed, aroused very mingled feelings in the crowd. It was the declaration that the Holy Scriptures alone could settle any controversy, and that all the scholastic teachers together could not give authority to one doctrine.

The students and many of the citizens received this announcement with enthusiastic applause, and some of the professors testified a quiet approval of it; but others of the doctors shook their heads, and a few retired at once, murmuring angrily as they went.

At the close came a declaration by Dr. Luther, that "whatever some unenlightened and morbid people might say, he was no heretic."

"Why should Dr. Luther think it necessary to conclude with a declaration that he is no heretic?" I said to Gottfried as we walked home. "Can anything be more full of respect for the Pope and the Church than many of these theses are? And why should they excite so much attention? Dr. Luther says no more than so many of us think!"

"True, Elsè," replied Gottfried, gravely; "but to know how to say what other people only think, is what makes men poets and sages; and to dare to say what others only dare to think, makes men martyrs or reformers, or both."

November 20.

It is wonderful the stir these theses make. Christopher cannot get them printed fast enough. Both the Latin and German printing-presses are engaged, for they have been translated, and demands come for them from every part of Germany.

Dr. Tetzel, they say, is furious, and many of the prelates are uneasy as to the result; the new bishop has dissuaded Dr. Luther from publishing an explanation of them. It is reported that the Elector Frederick it not quite pleased, fearing the effect on the new university, still in its infancy.

Students, however, are crowding to the town, and to Dr. Luther's lectures, more than ever. He is the hero of the youth of Germany.

But none are more enthusiastic about him than our grandmother. She insisted on being taken to church on All Saints' Day, and tottering up the aisle, took her place immediately under Dr. Luther's pulpit, facing the congregation.

She had eyes or ears for none but him. When he came down the pulpit stairs she grasped his hand, and faltered out a broken blessing. And after she came home she sat a long time in silence, occasionally brushing away tears.

When Gottfried and I took leave for the night, she held one of our hands in each of hers, and said, —

"Children! be braver than I have been; that man preaches the truth for which my husband died. God sends him to you. Be faithful to him. Take heed that you forsake him not. It is not given to every one as to me to have the light they forsook in youth restored to them in old age. To me his words are like voices from the dead. They are worth dying for."

My mother is not so satisfied. She likes what Dr. Luther says, but she is afraid what Aunt Agnes might think of it. She thinks he speaks too violently sometimes. She does not like any one to be pained. She cannot herself much like the way they sell the indulgences, but she hopes Dr. Tetzel means well, and she has no doubt that the Pope knows best; and she is convinced that in their hearts all good people mean the same, only she is afraid, in the heat of discussion, every one will go further than any one intends, and so there will be a great deal of bad feeling. She thought it was quite right of Dr. Luther quietly to admonish any of his penitents who were imagining they could be saved without repentance; but why he should excite all the town in this way by these theses she could not understand; especially on All Saints' Day, when so many strangers came from the country, and the holy relics were exhibited, and every one ought to be absorbed with their devotions.

"Ah, little mother," said my father, "women are too tender-hearted for ploughmen's work. You could never bear to break up the clods, and tear up all the pretty wild flowers. But when the harvest comes we will set you to bind up the sheaves, or to glean beside the reapers. No rough hands of men will do that so well as yours."

And Gottfried said his vow as doctor of divinity makes it as much Dr. Luther's plain duty to teach true divinity, as his priestly vows oblige him to guard his flock from error and sin. Gottfried says we have fallen on stormy times. For him that may be best, and by his side all is well for me.

Besides, I am accustomed to rough paths. But when I look on our little tender Gretchen, as her dimpled cheek rests flushed with sleep on her pillow, I cannot help wishing the battle might not begin in her time.

Dr. Luther counted the cost before he fixed these theses to the church door. It was this which made him do it so secretly, without consulting any of his friends. He knew there was risk in it, and he nobly resolved not to involve any one else—Elector, professor, or pastor—in the danger he incurred without hesitation for himself.

December, 1517.

In one thing we all agreed, and that is in our delight in Dr. Luther's lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Gottfried heard them and took notes, and reported them to us in my father's house. We gather around him, all of us, in the winter evenings, while he reads those inspiring words to us. Never, I think, were words like them. Yesterday he was reading to us, for the twentieth time, what Dr. Luther said on the words, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me."

"Read with vehemency," he says, "those words 'me,' and 'for me.' Print this 'me' in thy heart, not doubting that thou art of the number to whom this 'me' belongeth; also, that Christ hath not only loved Peter and Paul, and given himself for them, but that the same grace also which is comprehended in this 'me,' as well pertaineth and cometh unto us as unto them. For as we cannot deny that we are all sinners, all lost; so we cannot deny that Christ died for our sins. Therefore, when I feel and confess myself to be a sinner, why should I not say that I am made righteous through the righteousness of Christ, especially when I hear He loved me and gave himself for me?"

And then my mother asked for the passages she most delights in: "O Christ, I am thy sin, thy curse, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and contrariwise, thou art my righteousness, my blessing, my life, my grace of God, my heaven."

And again, when he speaks of Christ being "made a curse for us, the unspotted and undefiled Lamb of God wrapped in our sins, God not laying our sins upon us, but upon his Son, that he, bearing the punishment thereof, might be our peace, that by his stripes, we might be healed."

And again:—

"Sin is a mighty conqueror, which devoureth all mankind, learned and unlearned, holy, wise, and mighty men. This tyrant flieth upon Christ, and will needs swallow him up as he doth all other. But he seeth not that Christ is a person of invincible and everlasting righteousness. Therefore in this combat sin must needs be vanquished and killed; and righteousness must overcome, live, and reign. So in Christ all sin is vanquished, killed, and buried; and righteousness remaineth a conqueror, and reigneth for ever.

"In like manner Death, which is an omnipotent queen and empress of the whole world, killing kings, princes, and all men, doth mightily encounter with Life, thinking utterly to overcome it and to swallow it up. But because the Life was immortal, therefore when it was overcome, it nevertheless overcame, vanquishing and killing Death. Death, therefore, through Christ, is vanquished and abolished, so that now it is but a painted death, which, robbed of its sting, can no more hurt those that believe in Christ, who is become the death of death.

"So the curse hath the like conflict with the blessing, and would condemn and bring it to nought; but it cannot. For the blessing is divine and everlasting, therefore the curse must needs give place. For if the blessing in Christ could be overcome, then would God himself be overcome. But this is impossible; therefore Christ, the power of God, righteousness, blessing, grace, and life, overcometh and destroyeth those monsters, sin, death, and the curse, without war and weapons, in this our body, so that they can no more hurt those that believe."

Such truths are indeed worth battling for; but who, save the devil, would war against them? I wonder what Fritz would think of it all.

WITTEMBERG, *February*, 1518.

Christopher returned yesterday evening from the market-place, where the students have been burning Tetzel's theses, which he wrote in answer to Dr. Luther's. Tetzel hides behind the papal authority, and accuses Dr. Luther of assailing the Holy Father himself.

But Dr. Luther says nothing shall ever make him a heretic; that he will recognise the voice of the Pope as the voice of Christ himself. The students kindled this conflagration in the market-place entirely on their own responsibility. They are full of enthusiasm for Dr. Martin, and of indignation against Tetzel and the Dominicans.

"Who can doubt," said Christopher, "how the conflict will end, between all learning and honesty and truth on the one side, and a few contemptible avaricious monks on the other?" And he proceeded to describe to us the conflagration and the sayings of the students with as much exultation as if it had been a victory over Tetzel and the indulgence-mongers themselves.

"But it seems to me," I said, "that Dr. Luther is not so much at ease about it as you are. I have noticed lately that he looks grave, and at times very sad. He does not seem to think the victory won."

"Young soldiers," said Gottfried, "on the eve of their first battle may be as blithe as on the eve of a tourney. Veterans are grave before the battle. Their courage comes *with* the conflict. It will be thus, I believe, with Dr. Luther. For surely the battle is coming. Already some of his old friends fall off. They say the censor at Rome, Prierias, has condemned and written against his theses."

"But," rejoined Christopher, "they say also that Pope Leo praised Dr. Luther's genius, and said it was only the envy of the monks which found fault with him. Dr. Luther believes the Pope only needs to learn the truth about these indulgence-mongers to disown them at once."

"Honest men believe all men honest until they are proved dishonest," said Gottfried drily; "but the Roman court is expensive and the indulgences are profitable."

This morning our grandmother asked nervously what was the meaning of the shouting she had heard yesterday in the market-place, and the glare of fire she had seen, and the crackling?

"Only Tetzel's lying theses," said Christopher. She seemed relieved.

"In my early days," she said, "I learned to listen too eagerly to sounds like that. But in those times they burned other things than books or papers in the market-places."

"Tetzel threatens to do so again," said Christopher.

"No doubt they will, if they can," she replied, and relapsed into silence.

XV.

Fritz's Story.

AUGUSTINIAN CONVENT, MAINZ, *November*, 1517.

Seven years have passed since I have written anything in this old chronicle of mine, and as in the quiet of this convent once more I open it, the ink on the first pages is already brown with time; yet a strange familiar fragrance breathes from them, as of early spring flowers. My childhood comes back to me, with all its devout simplicity; my youth, with all its rich prospects and its buoyant, ardent, hopes. My childhood seems like one of those green quiet valleys in my native forests, like the valley of my native Eisenach itself, when that one reach of the forest, and that one quiet town with its spires and church bells, and that one lowly home with its love, its cares, and its twilight talks in the lumber room, were all the world I could see.

Youth rises before me like that first journey through the forest to the University of Erfurt, when the world opened to me like the plains from the breezy heights, a battle-field for glorious achievement, an unbounded ocean for adventure and discovery, a vast field for noble work.

Then came another brief interval, when once again the lowly home at Eisenach became to me dearer and more than all the wide world beside, and all earth and all life seemed to grow sacred and to expand before me in the light of one pure, holy, loving maiden's heart. I have seen nothing so heaven-like since as she was. But then came the great crash which wrenched my life in twain, and made home and the world alike forbidden ground to me.

At first, after that, for years I dared not think of Eva. But since my pilgrimage to Rome, I venture to cherish her memory again. I thank God every day that nothing can erase that image of purity and love from my heart. Had it not been for that, and for the recollection of Dr. Luther's manly, honest piety, there are times when the very existence of truth and holiness on earth would have seemed inconceivable, such a chaos of corruption has the world appeared to me.

How often has the little lowly hearth-fire, glowing from the windows of the old home, saved me from shipwreck, when "for many days neither sun nor stars appeared, and no small tempest lay on me."

For I have lived during these years behind the veil of outward shows, a poor insignificant monk, before whom none thought it worth while to inconvenience themselves with masks or disguises. I have spent hour after hour, moreover, in the confessional. I have been in the sacristy before the mass, and at the convent feast after it. And I have spent months once and again at the heart of Christendom, in Rome itself, where the indulgences which are now stirring up all Germany are manufactured, and where the money gained by the indulgences is spent; *not* entirely on the building of St. Peter's or in holy wars against the Turks!

Thank God that a voice is raised at last against this crying, monstrous lie, the honest voice of Dr. Luther. It is ringing through all the land. I have just returned from a mission through Germany, and I had opportunities of observing the effect of the theses.

The first time I heard of them was from a sermon in a church of the Dominicans in Bavaria.

The preacher spoke of Dr. Luther by name, and reviled the theses as directly inspired by the devil, declaring that their wretched author would have a place in hell lower than all the heretics, from Simon Magus downward.

The congregation were roused and spoke of it as they dispersed. Some piously wondered who this new heretic could be who was worse even than Huss. Others speculated what this new poisonous doctrine could be; and a great many bought a copy of the theses to see.

In the Augustinian convent that evening they formed the subject of warm debate. Not a few of the monks triumphed in them as an effective blow against Tetzel and the Dominicans. A few rejoiced and said these were the words they had been longing to hear for years. Many expressed wonder that people should make so much stir about them, since they said nothing more than all honest men in the land had always thought.

A few nights afterwards I lodged at the house of Ruprecht Haller, a priest in a Franconian village. A woman of quiet and modest appearance, young in form but worn and old in expression, with a subdued, broken-spirited bearing, was preparing our supper, and whilst she was serving the table I began to speak to the priest about the theses of Dr. Luther.

He motioned to me to keep silence, and hastily turned the conversation.

When we were left alone he explained his reasons. "I gave her the money for an indulgence letter last week, and she purchased one from one of Dr. Tetzel's company," he said; "and when she returned her heart seemed lighter than I have seen it for years, since God smote us for our sins, and little Dietrich died. I would not have had her robbed of that little bit of comfort for the world, be it true or false."

Theirs was a sad story, common enough in every town and village as regarded the sin, and only uncommon as to the longing for better things which yet lingered in the hearts of the guilty.

I suggested her returning to her kindred or entering a convent.

"She has no kindred left that would receive her," he said; "and to send her to be scorned and disciplined by a community of nuns—never!"

"But her soul!" I said, "and yours?"

"The blessed Lord received such," he answered almost fiercely, "before the Pharisees."

"Such received Him!" I said quietly, "but receiving Him they went and sinned no more."

"And when did God ever say it was sin for a priest to marry?" he asked; "not in the Old Testament, for the son of Elkanah the priest and Hannah ministered before the Lord in the temple, as perhaps our little Dietrich," he added in a low tone, "ministers before Him in his temple now. And where in the New Testament do you find it forbidden?"

"The Church forbids it," I said.

"Since when?" he asked. "The subject is too near my heart for me not to have searched to see. And five hundred years ago, I have read, before the days of Hildebrand the pope, many a village pastor had his lawful wife, whom he loved as I love Bertha; for God knows neither she nor I ever loved another."

"Does this satisfy her conscience?" I asked.

"Sometimes," he replied bitterly, "but only sometimes. Oftener she lives as one under a curse, afraid to receive any good thing, and bowing to every sorrow as her bitter desert, and the foretaste of the terrible retribution to come."

"Whatever is not of faith is sin," I murmured.

"But what will be the portion of those who call what God sanctions sin," he said, "and bring trouble and pollution into hearts as pure as hers?"

The woman entered the room as he was speaking, and must have caught his words, for a deep crimson flushed her pale face. As she turned away, her whole frame quivered with a suppressed sob. But afterwards, when the priest left the room, she came up to me and said, looking with her sad, dark, lustreless eyes at me, "You were saying that some doubt the efficacy of these indulgences? But do *you*? I cannot trust *him*," she added softly, "he would be afraid to tell me if he thought so."

I hesitated what to say. I could not tell an untruth; and before those searching, earnest eyes, any attempt at evasion would have been vain.

"You do *not* believe this letter can do anything for me," she said; "*nor do I*." And moving quietly to the hearth, she tore the indulgence into shreds, and threw it on the flames.

"Do not tell him this," she said; "he thinks it comforts me."

I tried to say some words about repentance and forgiveness being free to all.

"Repentance for me," she said, "would be to leave him, would it not?"

I could not deny it.

"I will *never* leave him," she replied, with a calmness which was more like principle than passion. "He has sacrificed life for me; but for me he might have been a great and honoured man. And do you think I would leave him to bear his blighted life alone?"

Ah! it was no dread of scorn or discipline which kept her from the convent.

For some time I was silenced. I dared neither to reproach nor to comfort. At length I said, "Life, whether joyful or sorrowful, is very short. Holiness is infinitely better than happiness here, and holiness makes happiness in the life beyond. If you felt it would be for *his* good, you would do anything, at any cost to yourself, would you not?"

Her eyes filled with tears. "You believe, then, that there is some good left, even in me!" she said. "For this may God bless you!" and silently she left the room.

Five hundred years ago these two lives might have been holy, honourable, and happy; and now!—

I left that house with a heavy heart, and a mind more bewildered than before.

But that pale, worn face; those deep, sad, truthful eyes; and that brow, that might have been as pure as the brow of a St. Agnes, have haunted me often since. And whenever I think of it, I say,—

"God be merciful to them and to me, sinners!"

For had not my own good, pure, pious mother doubts and scruples almost as bitter? Did not she also live too often as if under a curse? Who or what has thrown this shadow on so many homes? Who that knows the interior of many convents dares to say they are holier than homes? Who that has lived with, or confessed many monks or nuns, can dare to say their hearts are more heavenly than those of husband or wife, father or mother? Alas! the questions of that priest are nothing new to me. But I dare not entertain them. For if monastic life is a delusion, to what have I sacrificed hopes which were so absorbing, and might have been so pure?

Regrets are burdens a brave man must cast off. For my little life what does it matter? But to see vice shamefully reigning in the most sacred places, and scruples, perhaps false, staining the purest hearts, who can behold these things and not mourn? Crimes a pagan would have abhorred atoned for by a few florins; sins which the Holy Scriptures scarcely seem to condemn, weighing on tender consciences like crimes! What will be the end of this chaos?

The next night I spent in the castle of an old knight in the Thuringian Forest, Otto von Gersdorf. He welcomed me very hospitably to his table, at which a stately old lady presided, his widowed sister.

"What is all this talk about Dr. Luther and his theses?" he asked; "only, I suppose, some petty quarrel between the monks! And yet my nephew Ulrich thinks there is no one on earth like this little Brother Martin. You good Augustinians do not like the Black Friars to have all the profit; is that it?" he asked laughing.

"That is not Dr. Luther's motive, at all events," I said; "I do not believe money is more to him than it is to the birds of the air."

"No, brother," said the lady; "think of the beautiful words our Chriemhild read us from his book on the Lord's Prayer."

"Yes; you, and Ulrich, and Chriemhild, and Atlantis," rejoined the old knight, "you are all alike; the little friar has bewitched you all."

The names of my sisters made my heart beat.

"Does the lady know Chriemhild and Atlantis Cotta?" I asked.

"Come, nephew Ulrich," said the knight to a young man who just then entered the hall from the chase; "tell this good brother all you know of Fraülein Chriemhild Cotta."

We were soon the best friends and long after the old knight and his sister had retired, Ulrich von Gersdorf and I sat up discoursing about Dr. Luther and his noble words and deeds, and of names dearer to us both even than his.

"Then you are Fritz!" he said musingly after a a pause; "the Fritz they all delight to talk of, and think no one can ever be equal to. You are the Fritz that Chriemhild says her mother always hoped would have wedded that angel maiden Eva von Schönberg, who is now a nun at Nimptschen; whose hymn-book "Theologia Teutsch" she carried with her to the convent. I wonder you could have left her to become a monk," he continued; "your vocation must have been very strong."

At that moment it certainly felt very weak. But I would not for the world have let him see this, and I said, with as steady a voice as I could command, "I believe it was God's will."

"Well," he continued, "it is good for any one to have seen her, and to carry that image of purity and piety with him into cloister or home. It is better than any painting of the saints, to have that angelic, child-like countenance, and that voice sweet as church music, in one's heart."

"It is," I said, and I could not have said a word more. Happily for me, he turned to another subject and expatiated for a long time on the beauty and goodness of his little Chriemhild, who was to be his wife, he said, next year; whilst through my heart only two thoughts remained distinct, namely,

what my mother had wished about Eva and me, and that Eva had taken my "Theologia Teutsch" into the convent with her.

It took some days before I could remove that sweet, guileless, familiar face, to the saintly, unearthly height in my heart, where only it is safe for me to gaze on it.

But I believe Ulrich thought me a very sympathizing listener, for in about an hour he said,—

"You are a patient and good-natured monk, to listen thus to my romances. However, she is your sister, and I wish you would be at our wedding. But, at all events, it will be delightful to have news for Chriemhild and all of them about Fritz."

I had intended to go on to Wittemberg for a few days, but after that conversation I did not dare to do so at once. I returned to the university of Tübingen, to quiet my mind a little with Greek and Hebrew, under the direction of the excellent Reuchlin, it being the will of our Vicar-General that I should study the languages.

At Tübingen I found Dr. Luther's theses the great topic of debate. Men of learning rejoiced in the theses as an assault on barbarism and ignorance; men of straightforward integrity hailed them as a protest against a system of lies and imposture; men of piety gave thanks for them as a defence of holiness and truth. The students enthusiastically greeted Dr. Luther as the prince of the new age; the aged Reuchlin and many of the professors recognized him as an assailant of old foes from a new point of attack.

Here I attended for some weeks the lectures of the young doctor, Philip Melancthon (then only twenty one, yet already a doctor for four years), until he was summoned to Wittemberg, which he reached on the 25th of August, 1518.

On business of the order, I was deputed about the same time on a mission to the Augustinian convent at Wittemberg, so that I saw him arrive. The disappointment at his first appearance was great. Could this little unpretending-looking youth be the great scholar Reuchlin had recommended so warmly, and from whose abilities the Elector Frederick expected such great results for his new university?

Dr. Luther was among the first to discover the treasure hidden in this insignificant frame. But his first Latin harangue, four days after his arrival, won the admiration of all; and very soon his lecture-room was crowded.

This was the event which absorbed Wittemberg when first I saw it.

The return to my old home was very strange to me. Such a broad barrier of time and circumstance had grown up between me and those most familiar to me!

Elsè, matronly as she was, with her keys, her stores, her large household, and her two children, the baby Fritz and Gretchen, was in heart the very same to me as when we parted for my first term at Erfurt, her honest, kind blue eyes, had the very same look. But around her was a whole new world of strangers, strange to me as her own new life, with whom I had no links whatever.

With Chriemhild and the younger children, the recollection of me as the elder brother seemed struggling with their reverence for the priest. Christopher appeared to look on me with a mixture of pity, and respect, and perplexity, which prevented my having any intimate intercourse with him at all.

Only my mother seemed unchanged with regard to me, although much more aged and feeble. But in her affection there was a clinging tenderness which pierced my heart more than the bitterest reproaches. I felt by the silent watching of her eyes how she had missed me.

My father was little altered, except that his schemes appeared to give him a new and placid satisfaction, in the very impossibility of their fulfilment, and that the relations between him and my grandmother were much more friendly.

There was at first a little severity in our grandmother's manner to me, which wore off when we understood how much Dr. Luther's teaching had done for us both; and she never wearied of hearing what he had said and done at Rome.

The one who, I felt, would have been entirely the same, was gone for ever; and I could scarcely regret the absence which left that one image undimmed by the touch of time, and surrounded by no barriers of change.

But of Eva no one spoke to me, except little Thekla, who sang to me over and over the Latin hymns Eva had taught her, and asked if she sang them at all in the same way.

I told her yes. They were the same words, the same melodies, much of the same soft, reverent, innocent manner. But little Thekla's voice was deep and powerful, and clear like a thrush's; and Eva's used to be like the soft murmuring of a dove in the depth of some quiet wood—hardly a voice at all—an embodied prayer, as if you stood at the threshold of her heart, and heard the music of her happy, holy, child-like thoughts within.

No, nothing could ever break the echo of that voice to me.

But Thekla and I became great friends. She had scarcely known me of old. We became friends as we were. There was nothing to recall, nothing to efface. And Cousin Eva had been to her as a star

or angel in heaven, or as if she had been another child sent by God out of some beautiful old legend to be her friend.

Altogether, there was some pain in this visit to my old home. I had prayed so earnestly that the blank my departure had made might be filled up; yet now that I saw it filled, and the life of my beloved running its busy course, with no place in it for me, it left a dreary feeling of exile on my heart. If the dead could thus return, would they feel anything of this? Not the holy dead, surely. They would rejoice that the sorrow, having wrought its work, should cease to be so bitter—that the blank should, not, indeed, be filled (no true love can replace another), but veiled and made fruitful, as time and nature veil all ruins.

But the holy dead would revisit earth from a home, a father's house; and that the cloister is not, nor can ever be.

Yet I would gladly have remained at Wittemberg. Compared with Wittemberg, all the world seemed asleep. There it was morning, and an atmosphere of hope and activity was around my heart. Dr. Luther was there; and, whether consciously or not, all who look for better days seem to fix their eyes on him.

But I was sent to Mainz. On my journey thither I went out of my way to take a new book of Dr. Luther's to my poor priest Ruprecht in Franconia. His village lay in the depths of a pine forest. The book was the Exposition of the Lord's Prayer in German, for lay and unlearned people. The priest's house was empty; but I laid the book on a wooden seat in the porch, with my name written in it, and a few words of gratitude for his hospitality. And as I wound my way through the forest, I saw from a height on the opposite side of the valley a woman enter the porch, and stoop to pick up the book, and then stand reading it in the door-way. As I turned away, her figure still stood motionless in the arch of the porch, with the white leaves of the open book relieved against the shadow of the interior.

I prayed that the words might be written on her heart. Wonderful words of holy love and grace I knew were there, which would restore hope and purity to any heart on which they were written.

And now I am placed in this Augustinian monastery at Mainz in the Rhineland.

This convent has its own peculiar traditions. Here is a dungeon in which, not forty years ago (in 1481), died John of Wesel—the old man who had dared to protest against indulgences, and to utter such truths as Dr. Luther is upholding now.

An aged monk of this monastery, who was young when John of Wesel died, remembers him, and has often spoken to me about him. The inquisitors instituted a process against him, which was earned on, like so many others, in the secret of the cloister.

It was said that he made a general recantation, but that two accusations which were brought against him he did not attempt in his defence to deny. They were these: "That it is not his monastic life which saves any monk, but the grace of God;" and "That the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Holy Scriptures alone can interpret them with power to the heart."

The inquisitors burned his books; at which, my informant said, the old man wept.

"Why," he said, "should men be so inflamed against him? There was so much in his books that was good, and must they be all burned for the little evil that was mixed with the good? Surely this was man's judgment, not God's—not His who would have spared Sodom at Abraham's prayer, for but ten righteous, had they been found there. O God," he sighed, "must the good perish with the evil?"

But the inquisitors were not to be moved. The books were condemned and ignominiously burned in public; the old man's name was branded with heresy; and he himself was silenced, and left in the convent prison to die.

I asked the monk who told me of this, what were the especial heresies for which John of Wesel was condemned.

"Heresies against the Church, I believe," he replied. "I have heard him in his sermons declare that the Church was becoming like what the Jewish nation was in the days of our Lord. He protested against the secular splendours of the priests and prelates—against the cold ceremonial into which he said the services had sunk, and the empty superstitions which were substituted for true piety of heart and life. He said that the salt had lost its savour; that many of the priests were thieves and robbers, and not shepherds; that the religion in fashion was little better than that of the Pharisees who put our Lord to death—a cloak for spiritual pride, and narrow, selfish bitterness. He declared that divine and ecclesiastical authority were of very different weight; that the outward professing Church was to be distinguished from the true living Church of Christ; that the power of absolution given to the priest was sacramental, and not judicial. In a sermon at Worms, I once heard him say he thought little of the Pope, the Church, or the Councils, as a foundation to build our faith upon. 'Christ alone,' he declared, 'I praise. May the word of Christ dwell in us richly!'"

"They were bold words," I remarked.

"More than that," replied the aged monk; "John of Wesel protested that what the Bible did not hold as sin, neither could he; and he is even reported to have said, 'Eat on fast days, if thou art

hungry.'"

"That is a concession many of the monks scarcely need," I observed. "His life, then, was not condemned, but only his doctrine."

"I was sorry," the old monk resumed, "that it was necessary to condemn him; for from that time to this, I never have heard preaching that stirred the heart like his. When he ascended the pulpit, the church was thronged. The laity understood and listened to him as eagerly as the religious. It was a pity he was a heretic, for I do not ever expect to hear his like again."

"You have never heard Dr. Luther preach?" I said.

"Doctor Luther who wrote those theses they are talking so much of?" he asked. "Do the people throng to hear his sermons, and hang on his words as if they were words of life?"

"They do," I replied.

"Then," rejoined the old monk softly, "let Dr. Luther take care. That was the way with so many of the heretical preachers. With John of Goch at Mechlin, and John Wesel whom they expelled from Paris, I have heard it was just the same. But," he continued, "if Dr. Luther comes to Mainz, I will certainly try to hear him. I should like to have my cold, dry, old heart moved like that again. Often when I read the holy Gospels John of Wesel's words come back. Brother, it was like the breath of life."

The last man that ventured to say in the face of Germany that man's word is not to be placed on an equality with God's, and that the Bible is the only standard of truth, and the one rule of right and wrong—this is how he died!

How will it be with the next—with the man that is proclaiming this in the face of the world now?

The old monk turned back to me, after we had separated, and said, in a low voice—

"Tell Dr. Luther to take warning by John of Wesel. Holy men and great preachers may so easily become heretics without knowing it. And yet," he added, "to preach such sermons as John of Wesel, I am not sure it is not worth while to die in prison. I think I could be content to die, if I could *hear* one such again! Tell Dr. Luther to take care; but nevertheless, if he comes to Mainz I will hear him."

The good, then, in John of Wesel's words, has not perished, in spite of the flames.

XVI.

Elsè's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *July* 13,
1520.

Many events have happened since last I wrote, both in this little world and in the large world outside.

Our Gretchen has two little brothers, who are as ingenious in destruction, and seem to have as many designs against their own welfare, as their uncles had at their age, and seem likely to perplex Gretchen, dearly as she loves them, much as Christopher and Pollux did me. Chriemhild is married, and has gone to her home in the Thuringian Forest. Atlantis is betrothed to Conrad Winkelried, a Swiss student. Pollux is gone to Spain, on some mercantile affairs of the Eisenach house of Cotta, in which he is a partner; and Fritz has been among us once more. That is now about two years since. He was certainly much graver than of old. Indeed he often looked more than grave, as if some weight of sorrow rested on him. But with our mother and the children he was always cheerful.

Gretchen and Uncle Fritz formed the strongest mutual attachment, and to this day she often asks me when he will come back; and nothing delights her more than to sit on my knee before his picture, and hear me tell over and over again the stories of our old talks in the lumber-room at Eisenach, or of the long days we used to spend in the pine forests, gathering wood for the winter fires. She thinks no festival could be so delightful as that; and her favourite amusement is to gather little bundles of willow or oak twigs, by the river Elbe, or on the Düben Heath, and bring them home for household use. All the splendid puppets and toys her father brings her from Nüremberg, or has sent from Venice, do not give her half the pleasure that she finds in the heath, when he takes her there, and she returns with her little apron full of dry sticks, and her hands as brown and dirty as a little wood-cutter's, fancying she is doing what Uncle Fritz and I did when we were children, and being useful.

Last summer she was endowed with a special apple and pear tree of her own, and the fruit of these she stores with her little fagots to give at Christmas to a poor old woman we know.

Gottfried and I want the children to learn early that pure joy of giving, and of doing kindnesses, which transmutes wealth from dust into true gold, and prevents these possessions which are such

good servants from becoming our masters, and reducing us, as they seem to do so many wealthy people, into the mere slaves and hired guardians of *things*.

I pray God often that the experience of poverty which I had for so many years may never be lost. It seems to me a gift God has given me, just as a course at the university is a gift. I have graduated in the school of poverty, and God grant I may never forget the secrets poverty taught me about the struggles and wants of the poor.

The room in which I write now, with its carpets, pictures, and carved furniture, is very different from the dear bare old lumber-room where I began my Chronicle; and the inlaid ebony and ivory cabinet on which my paper lies is a different desk from the piles of old books where I used to trace the first pages slowly in a childish hand. But the poor man's luxuries will always be the most precious to me. The warm sunbeams, shining through the translucent vine-leaves at the open window, are fairer than all the jewel-like Venetian glass of the closed casements which are now dying crimson the pages of Dr. Luther's Commentary, left open on the window-seat an hour since by Gottfried.

But how can I be writing so much about my own tiny world, when all the world around me is agitated by such great fears and hopes?

At this moment, through the open window, I see Dr. Luther and Dr. Philip Melancthon walking slowly up the street in close conversation. The hum of their voices reaches me here, although they are talking low. How different they look, and are; and yet what friends they have become! Probably, in a great degree, because of the difference. The one looks like a veteran soldier, with his rock-like brow, his dark eyes, his vigorous form, and his firm step; the other, with his high, expanded forehead, his thin worn face, and his slight youthful frame, like a combination of a young student and an old philosopher.

Gottfried says God has given them to each other and to Germany, blessing the Church as he does the world by the union of opposites, rain and sunshine, heat and cold, sea and land, husband and wife.

How those two great men (for Gottfried says Dr. Melancthon is great, and I know that Dr. Luther is) love and reverence each other! Dr. Luther says he is but the forerunner, and Melancthon the true prophet; that he is but the wood-cutter clearing the forest with rough blows, that Dr. Philip may sow the precious seed; and when he went to encounter the legate at Augsburg, he wrote, that if Philip lived it mattered little what became of him.

But *we* do not think so, nor does Dr. Melancthon. "No one," he says, "comes near Dr. Luther, and indeed the heart of the whole nation hangs on him. Who stirs the heart of Germany—of nobles, peasants, princes, women, children—as he does with his noble, faithful words?"

Twice during these last years we have been in the greatest anxiety about his safety,—once when he was summoned before the legate at Augsburg, and once when he went to the great disputation with Dr. Eck at Leipsic.

But how great the difference between his purpose when he went to Augsburg, and when he returned from Leipsic!

At Augsburg he would have conceded anything, but the truth about the free justification of every sinner who believes in Christ. He reverenced the Pope; he would not for the world become a heretic! No name of opprobrium was so terrible to him as that.

At Leipsic he had learned to disbelieve that the Pope had any authority to determine doctrine, and he boldly confessed that the Hussites (men till now abhorred in Saxony as natural enemies as well as deadly heretics) ought to be honoured for confessing sound truth. And from that time both Dr. Luther and Melancthon have stood forth openly as the champions of the Word of God against the Papacy.

Now, however, a worse danger threatens him, even the bull of excommunication which they say is now being forged at Rome, and which has never yet failed to crush where it has fallen. Dr. Luther has, indeed, taught us not to dread it as a spiritual weapon, but we fear its temporal effects, especially if followed by the ban of the empire.

Often, indeed, he talks of taking refuge in some other land; the good Elector, even himself, has at times advised it, fearing no longer to be able to protect him. But God preserve him to Germany!

June 23, 1520.

This evening, as we were sitting in my father's house, Christopher brought us, damp from the press, a copy of Dr. Luther's Appeal to His Imperial Majesty, and to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, on the Reformation of Christendom. Presenting it to our grandmother, he said,—

"Here, madam, is a weapon worthy of the bravest days of the Schönbergs, mighty to the pulling down of strongholds."

"Ah," sighed our mother, "always wars and fightings! It is a pity the good work cannot be done more quietly."

"Ah, grandmother," said my father, "only see how her burgher life has destroyed the heroic spirit of her crusading ancestors. She thinks that the Holy Places are to be won back from the infidels

without a blow, only by begging their pardon and kissing the hem of their garments."

"You should hear Catherine Krapp, Dr. Melancthon's wife!" rejoined our mother; "she agrees with me that these are terrible times. She says she never sees the doctor go away without thinking he may be immured in some dreadful dungeon before they meet again."

"But remember, dear mother," I said, "your fears when first Dr. Luther assailed Tetzel and his indulgences three years ago! And who has gained the victory there? Dr. Martin is the admiration of all good men throughout Germany; and poor Tetzel, despised by his own party, rebuked by the legate, died, they say, of a broken heart just after the great Leipsic disputation."

"Poor Tetzel!" said my father, "his indulgences could not bind up a broken heart. I shall always love Dr. Luther for writing him a letter of comfort when he was dying, despised and forsaken even by his own party. I trust that He who can pardon has had mercy on his soul."

"Read to us, Christopher," said our grandmother; "your mother would not shrink from any battle-field if there were wounds there which her hands could bind."

"No," said Gottfried, "the end of war is peace,—God's peace, based on His truth. Blessed are those who in the struggle never lose sight of the end."

Christopher read, not without interruption. Many things in the book were new and startling to most of us:—

"It is not rashly," Dr. Luther began, "that I, a man of the people, undertake to address your lordships. The wretchedness and oppression that now overwhelm all the states of Christendom, and Germany in particular, force from me a cry of distress. I am constrained to call for help; I must see whether God will not bestow his Spirit on some man belonging to our country, and stretch forth his hand to our unhappy nation."

Dr. Luther never seems to think *he* is to do the great work. He speaks as if he were only fulfilling some plain humble duty, and calling other men to undertake the great achievement; and all the while that humble duty *is* the great achievement, and he is doing it.

Dr. Luther spoke of the wretchedness of Italy, the unhappy land where the Pope's throne is set, her ruined monasteries, her decayed cities, her corrupted people; and then he showed how Roman avarice and pride were seeking to reduce Germany to a state as enslaved. He appealed to the young emperor, Charles, soon about to be crowned. He reminded all the rulers of their responsibilities. He declared that the papal territory, called the patrimony of St. Peter, was the fruit of robbery. Generously holding out his hand to the very outcasts his enemies had sought to insult him most grievously by comparing him with, he said,—

"It is time that we were considering the cause of the Bohemians, and re-uniting ourselves to them."

At these words my grandmother dropped her work, and fervently clasping her hands, leant forward, and fixing her eyes on Christopher, drank in every word with intense eagerness.

When he came to the denunciation of the begging friars, and the recommendation that the parish priests should marry, Christopher interrupted himself by an enthusiastic "vivat."

When, however, after a vivid picture of the oppressions and avarice of the legates, came the solemn abjuration:—

"Hearest thou this, O Pope, not most holy, but most sinful? May God from the heights of his heaven soon hurl thy throne into the abyss!" my mother turned pale, and crossed herself.

What impressed me most was the plain declaration:—

"It has been alleged that the Pope, the bishops, the priests, and the monks and nuns form the estate spiritual or ecclesiastical; while the princes, nobles, burgesses, and peasantry form the secular estate or laity. Let no man, however, be alarmed at this. *All Christians constitute the spiritual estate: and the only difference among them is that of the functions which they discharge.* We have all one baptism, one faith, and it is this which constitutes the spiritual man."

If this is indeed true, how many of my old difficulties it removes with a stroke! All callings, then, may be religious callings; all men and women of a religious order. Then my mother is truly and undoubtedly as much treading the way appointed her as Aunt Agnes; and the monastic life is only one among callings equally sacred.

When I said this to my mother, she said, "I as religious a woman as Aunt Agnes! No, Elsè! whatever Dr. Luther ventures to declare, he would not say that. I do sometimes have a hope that for His dear Son's sake God hears even my poor feeble prayers; but to pray night and day, and abandon all for God, like my sister Agnes, that is another thing altogether."

But when, as we crossed the street to our home, I told Gottfried how much those words of Dr. Luther had touched me, and asked if he really thought we in our secular calling were not only doing our work by a kind of indirect permission, but by a direct vocation from God, he replied,—

"My doubt, Elsè, is whether the vocation which leads men to abandon home is from God at all; whether it has either his command or even his permission."

But if Gottfried is right, Fritz has sacrificed his life to a delusion. How can I believe that? And yet if he could perceive it, how life might change for him! Might he not even yet be restored to us? But I am dreaming.

October 25, 1520.

More and more burning words from Dr. Luther. To-day we have been reading his new book on the Babylonish Captivity. "God has said," he writes in this, "'Whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.' On this promise, if we receive it with faith, hangs our whole salvation. If we believe, our heart is fortified by the divine promise; and although all should forsake the believer, this promise which he believes will never forsake him. With it he will resist the adversary who rushes upon his soul, and will have wherewithal to answer pitiless death, and even the judgment of God." And he says in another place, "The vow made at our baptism is sufficient of itself, and comprehends more than we can ever accomplish. Hence all other vows may be abolished. Whoever enters the priesthood or any religious order, let him well understand that the works of a monk or of a priest, however difficult they may be, differ in no respect in the sight of God from those of a countryman who tills the ground, or of a woman who conducts a household. God values all things by the standard of faith. And it often happens that the simple labour of a male or female servant is more agreeable to God than the fasts and the works of a monk, because in these faith is wanting."

What a consecration this thought gives to my commonest duties! Yes, when I am directing the maids in their work, or sharing Gottfried's cares, or simply trying to brighten his home at the end of the busy day, or lulling my children to sleep, can I indeed be serving God as much as Dr. Luther at the altar or in his lecture-room? I also, then, have indeed my vocation direct from God.

How could I ever have thought the mere publication of a book would have been an event to stir our hearts like the arrival of a friend! Yet it is even thus with every one of those pamphlets of Dr. Luther's. They move the whole of our two households, from our grandmother to Thekla, and even the little maid, to whom I read portions. She says, with tears, "If the mother and father could hear this in the forest!" Students and burghers have not patience to wait till they reach home, but read the heart-stirring pages as they walk through the streets. And often an audience collects around some communicative reader, who cannot be content with keeping the free, liberating truths to himself.

Already, Christopher says, four thousand copies of the "Appeal to the Nobility" are circulating through Germany.

I always thought before of books as the peculiar property of the learned. But Dr. Luther's books are a living voice,—a heart God has awakened and taught, speaking to countless hearts as a man talketh with his friend. I can indeed see now, with my father and Christopher, that the printing press is a nobler weapon than even the spears and broadswords of our knightly Bohemian ancestors.

Wittemberg, *December* 10, 1520.

Dr. Luther has taken a great step to-day. He has publicly burned the Decretals, with other ancient writings, on which the claims of the court of Rome are founded, but which are now declared to be forgeries; and more than this, he has burnt the Pope's bull of excommunication against himself.

Gottfried says that for centuries such a bonfire as this has not been seen. He thinks it means nothing less than an open and deliberate renunciation of the papal tyranny which for so many hundred years has held the whole of western Christendom in bondage. He took our two boys to see it, that we may remind them of it in after years as the first great public act of freedom.

Early in the morning the town was astir. Many of the burghers, professors, and students knew what was about to be done; for this was no deed of impetuous haste or angry vehemence.

I dressed the children early, and we went to my father's house.

Wittemberg is as full now of people of various languages as the tower of Babel must have been after the confusion of tongues. But never was this more manifest than to-day.

Flemish monks from the Augustine cloisters at Antwerp; Dutch students from Finland; Swiss youths, with their erect forms and free mountain gait; knights from Prussia and Lithuania; strangers even from quite foreign lands,—all attracted hither by Dr. Luther's living words of truth, passed under our windows about nine o'clock this morning, in the direction of the Elster gate, eagerly gesticulating and talking as they went. Then Thekla, Atlantis, and I mounted to an upper room, and watched the smoke rising from the pile, until the glare of the conflagration burst through it, and stained with a faint red the pure daylight.

Soon afterwards the crowds began to return: but there seemed to me to be a gravity and solemnity in the manner of most, different from the eager haste with which they had gone forth.

"They seem like men returning from some great Church festival," I said.

"Or from lighting a signal-fire on the mountains, which shall awaken the whole land to freedom," said Christopher, as they rejoined us.

"Or from binding themselves with a solemn oath to liberate their homes, like the Three Men at Grütly," said Conrad Winkelried, the young Swiss to whom Atlantis is betrothed.

"Yes," said Gottfried, "fires which may be the beacons of a world's deliverance, and may kindle the death-piles of those who dared to light them, are no mere students' bravado."

"Who did the deed, and what was burned?" I asked.

"One of the masters of arts lighted the pile," my husband replied, "and then threw on it the Decretals, the false Epistles of St. Clement, and other forgeries, which have propped up the edifice of lies for centuries. And when the flames which consumed them had done their work and died away, Dr. Luther himself, stepping forward, solemnly laid the Pope's bull of excommunication on the fire, saying amidst the breathless silence, 'As thou hast troubled the Lord's saints, may the eternal fire destroy thee.' Not a word broke the silence until the last crackle and gleam of those symbolical flames had ceased, and then gravely but joyfully we all returned to our homes."

"Children," said our grandmother, "you have done well; yet you are not the first that have defied Rome."

"Nor perhaps the last she will silence," said my husband. "But the last enemy will be destroyed at last; and meantime every martyr is a victor."

XVII.

Eva's Story.

I have read the whole of the New Testament through to Sister Beatrice and Aunt Agnes. Strangely different auditors they were in powers of mind and in experience of life; yet both met, like so many in His days on earth, at the feet of Jesus.

"He would not have despised me, even me," Sister Beatrice would say. "Poor, fond creature, half-witted or half-crazed they call me; but He would have welcomed me."

"*Does* He not welcome you?" I said.

"You think so? Yes, I think—I am sure he does. My poor broken bits and remnants of sense and love, He will not despise them. He will take me as I am."

One day when I had been reading to them the chapter in St. Luke with the parables of the lost money, the lost sheep, and the prodigal, Aunt Agnes, resting her cheek on her thin hand, and fixing her large dark eyes on me, listened with intense expectation to the end; and then she said, —

"Is that all, my child? Begin the next chapter."

I began about the rich man and the unjust steward; but before I had read many words,—

"That will do," she said in a disappointed tone.

"It is another subject. Then not one of the Pharisees came after all! If I had been there among the hard, proud Pharisees—as I might have been when he began, wondering, no doubt, that he could so forget himself as to eat with publicans and sinners—if I had been there, and had heard him speak thus, Eva, I must have fallen at his feet and said, 'Lord, I am a Pharisee no more—I am the lost sheep, not one of the ninety and nine—the wandering child, not the elder brother. Place me low, low among the publicans and sinners—lower than any; but only say thou camest also to seek me, even *me*.' And, child, he would not have sent me away! But, Eva," she added, after a pause, wiping away the tears which ran slowly over her withered cheeks, "is it not said anywhere that one Pharisee came to him."

I looked, and could find it nowhere stated positively that one Pharisee had abandoned his pride, and self-righteousness, and treasures of good works, for Jesus. It seemed all on the side of the publicans. Aunt Agnes was at times distressed.

"And yet," she said, "I *have* come. I am no longer among those who think themselves righteous, and despise others. But I must come in behind all. It is I, not the woman who was a sinner, who am the miracle of his grace; for since no sin so keeps men from him as spiritual pride, there can be no sin so degrading in the sight of the pure and humble angels, or of the Lord. But look again, Eva! Is there not one instance of such as I being saved?"

I found the history of Nicodemus, and we traced it through the Gospel from the secret visit to the popular teacher at night, to the open confession of the rejected Saviour before his enemies.

Aunt Agnes thought this might be the example she sought, but she wished to be quite sure.

"Nicodemus came in humility, to learn," she said. "We never read that he despised others, or thought he could make himself a saint."

At length we came to the Acts of the Apostles, and there, indeed, we found the history of one, "of the straitest sect a Pharisee," who verily thought himself doing God service by persecuting the despised Nazarenes to death. And from that time Aunt Agnes sought out and cherished every fragment of St. Paul's history, and every sentence of his sermons and writings. She had found the example she sought of the "Pharisee who was saved"—in him who obtained mercy, "that in him first God might show forth the riches of his long-suffering to those who thereafter, through his word, should believe."

She determined to learn Latin, that she might read these divine words for herself. It was affecting to see her sitting among the novices whom I taught, carefully spelling out the words, and repeating the declensions and conjugations. I had no such patient pupil; for although many were eager at first, not a few relaxed after a few weeks' toil, not finding the results very apparent, and said it would never sound so natural and true as when Sister Ave translated it for them in German.

I wish some learned man would translate the Bible into German. Why does not some one think of it? There is one German translation from the Latin, the prioress says, made about thirty or forty years ago; but it is very large and costly, and not in language that attracts simple people. I wish the Pope would spend some of the money from the indulgences on a new translation of the New Testament. I think it would please God much more than building St. Peter's.

Perhaps, however, if people had the German New Testament they would not buy the indulgences; for in all the Gospels and Epistles I cannot find one word about buying pardons; and, what is more strange, not a word about adoring the Blessed Virgin, or about nunneries or monasteries. I cannot see that the holy apostles founded one such community, or recommended any one to do so.

Indeed there is so much in the New Testament, and in what I have read of the Old, about not worshipping any one but God, that I have quite given up saying any prayers to the Blessed mother, for many reasons.

In the first place, I am much more sure that our Lord can hear us always than his mother, because he so often says so. And I am much more sure he can help, because I know all power is given to him in heaven and in earth.

And in the next place, if I were quite sure that the Blessed Virgin and the saints could hear me always, and could help or would intercede, I am sure also that no one among them—not the Holy Mother herself—is half so compassionate and full of love, or could understand us so well, as He who died for us. In the Gospels, he was always more accessible than the disciples. St. Peter might be impatient in the impetuosity of his zeal. Loving indignation might overbalance the forbearance of St. John the beloved, and he might wish for fire from heaven on those who refused to receive his Master. All the holy apostles rebuked the poor mothers who brought their children, and would have sent away the woman of Canaan; but he tenderly took the little ones into his arms from the arms of the mothers the disciples had rebuked. His patience was never wearied; He never misunderstood or discouraged any one. Therefore I pray to Him and our Father in heaven alone, and *through* Him alone. Because if he is more pitiful to sinners than all the saints, which of all the saints can be beloved of God as he is, the well-beloved Son? He seems everything, in every circumstance, we can ever want. Higher mediation we cannot find, tenderer love we cannot crave.

And very sure I am that the meek Mother of the Lord, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the apostle who determined to know nothing among his converts save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, will not regret any homage transferred from them to Him.

Nay, rather, if the blessed Virgin, and the holy apostles have heard how, through all these years, such grievous and unjust things have been said of their Lord; how his love has been misunderstood, and he has been represented as hard to be entreated,—He who entreats sinners to come and be forgiven;—has not this been enough to shadow their happiness, even in heaven?

A nun has lately been transferred to our convent, who came originally from Bohemia, where all her relatives had been slain for adhering to the party of John Huss, the heretic. She is much older than I am, and she says she remembers well the name of my family, and that my great-uncle, Aunt Agnes' father, died a *heretic*! She cannot tell what the heresy was, but she believes it was something about the blessed sacrament and the authority of the Pope. She had heard that otherwise he was a charitable and holy man.

Was my father, then, a Hussite?

I have found the end of the sentence he gave me as his dying legacy:—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*." And instead of being in a book not fit for Christian children to read, as the priest who took it from me said, it is in the Holy Scriptures!

Can it be possible that the world has come round again to the state it was in when the rulers and priests put the Saviour to death, and St. Paul persecuted the disciples as heretics?

NIMPTSCHEN, 1520.

A wonderful book of Dr. Luther's appeared among us a few weeks since, on the Babylonish

Captivity; and although it was taken from us by the authorities, as dangerous reading for nuns, this was not before many among us had become acquainted with its contents. And it has created a great ferment in the convent. Some say they are words of impious blasphemy; some say they are words of living truth. He speaks of the forgiveness of sins being free; of the Pope and many of the priests being the enemies of the truth of God; and of the life and calling of a monk or nun as in no way holier than that of any humble believing secular man or woman,—a nun no holier than a wife or a household servant!

This many of the older nuns think plain blasphemy. Aunt Agnes says it is true, and more than true; for, from what I tell her, there can be no doubt that Aunt Cotta has been a lowlier and holier woman all her life than she can ever hope to be.

And as to the Bible precepts, they certainly seem far more adapted to people living in homes than to those secluded in convents. Often when I am teaching the young novices the precepts in the Epistles, they say,—

"But sister Ave, find some precepts for us. These sayings are for children, and wives, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters; not for those who have neither home nor kindred on earth."

Then if I try to speak of loving God and the blessed Saviour, some of them say,—

"But we cannot bathe his feet with tears, or anoint them with ointment, or bring him food, or stand by his cross, as the good women did of old. Shut up here, away from every one, how can we show him that we love him?"

And I can only say, "Dear sisters, you are here now; therefore surely God will find some way for you to serve him here."

But my heart aches for them, and I doubt no longer, I feel sure God can never have meant these young, joyous hearts to be cramped and imprisoned thus.

Sometimes I talk about it with Aunt Agnes; and we consider whether, if these vows are indeed irrevocable, and these children must never see their homes again, the convent could not one day be removed to some city where sick and suffering men and women toil and die; so that we might, at least, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit and minister to the sick and sorrowful. That would be life once more, instead of this monotonous routine, which is not so much death as mechanism—an inanimate existence which has never been life.

October, 1520.

Sister Beatrice is very ill. Aunt Agnes has requested as an especial favour to be allowed to share the attending on her with me. Never was gentler nurse or more grateful patient.

It goes to my heart to see Aunt Agnes meekly learning from me how to render the little services required at the sick-bed. She smiles, and says her feeble blundering fingers had grown into mere machines for turning over the leaves of prayer-books, just as her heart was hardening into a machine for repeating prayers. Nine of the young nuns, Aunt Agnes, Sister Beatrice, and I, have been drawn very closely together of late. Among the noblest of these is Catherine von Bora, a young nun, about twenty years of age. There is such truth in her full dark eyes, which look so kindly and frankly into mine, and such character in the firmly-closed mouth. She declines learning Latin, and has not much taste for learned books; but she has much clear practical good sense, and she, with many others, delights greatly in Dr. Luther's writings. They say they are not books; they are a living voice. Every fragment of information I can give them about the doctor is eagerly received, and many rumours reach us of his influence in the world. When he was near Nimptschen, two years ago, at the great Leipsic disputation, we heard that the students were enthusiastic about him, and that the common people seemed to drink in his words almost as they did our Lord's when he spoke upon earth; and what is more, that the lives of some men and women at the court have been entirely changed since they heard him. We were told he had been the means of wonderful conversions; but what was strange in these conversions was, that those so changed did not abandon their position in life, but only their sins, remaining where they were when God called them, and distinguished from others, not by veil or cowl, but by the light of holy works.

On the other hand, many, especially among the older nuns, have received quite contrary impressions, and regard Dr. Luther as a heretic, worse than any who ever rent the Church. These look very suspiciously on us, and subject us to many annoyances, hindering our conversing and reading together as much as possible.

We do, indeed, many of us wonder that Dr. Luther should use such fierce and harsh words against the Pope's servants. Yet St. Paul even "could have wished that those were cut off" that troubled his flock; and the very lips of divine love launched woes against hypocrites and false shepherds severer than any that the Baptist or Elijah ever uttered in their denunciations from the wilderness. It seems to me that the hearts which are tenderest towards the wandering sheep will ever be severest against the seducing shepherds who lead them astray. Only we need always to remember that these very false shepherds themselves are, after all, but wretched lost sheep, driven hither and thither by the great robber of the fold!

1521.

Just now the hearts of the little band among us who owe so much to Dr. Luther are lifted up night and day in prayer to God for him. He is soon to be on his way to the Imperial Diet at Worms. He has the Emperor's safe-conduct, but it is said this did not save John Huss from the flames. In our prayers we are much aided by his own Commentary on the Book of Psalms, which I have just received from Uncle Cotta'a printing-press.

This is now Sister Beatrice's great treasure, as I sit by her bed-side and read it to her.

He says that "the mere frigid use of the Psalms in the canonical hours, though little understood, brought some sweetness of the breath of life to humble hearts of old, like the faint fragrance in the air not far from a bed of roses."

He says, "All other books give us the words and deeds of the saints, but this gives us their inmost souls." He calls the Psalter "the little Bible." "There," he says, "you may look into the hearts of the saints as into Paradise, or into the opened heavens, and see the fair flowers or the shining stars, as it were, of their affections springing or beaming up to God, in response to his benefits and blessings."

March, 1521.

News had reached me to-day from Wittemberg which makes me feel indeed that the days when people deem they do God service by persecuting those who love him, are too truly come back. Thekla writes me that they have thrown Fritz into the convent prison at Mainz, for spreading Dr. Luther's doctrine among the monks. A few lines sent through a friendly monk have told them of this. She sent them on to me.

"My beloved ones," he writes, "I am in the prison where, forty years ago, John of Wesel died for the truth. I am ready to die if God wills it so. His truth is worth dying for, and his love will strengthen me. But if I can I will escape, for the truth is worth living for. If, however, you do not hear of me again, know that the truth I died for is Christ's, and that the love which sustained me is Christ himself. And likewise that to the last I pray for you all, and for Eva; and tell her that the thought of her has helped me often to believe in goodness and truth, and that I look assuredly to meet her and all of you again.—Friedrich Schönberg Cotta."

In prison and in peril of life! Death itself cannot, I know, more completely separate Fritz and me than we are separated already. Indeed, of the death even of one of us, I have often thought as bringing us a step nearer, rending one veil between us. Yet, now that it seems so possible,—that perhaps it has already come,—I feel there was a kind of indefinable sweetness in being only on the same earth together, in treading the same pilgrim way. At least we could help each other by prayer; and now, if he is indeed treading the streets of the heavenly city, so high above, the world does seem darker.

But, alas! he may *not* be in the heavenly city, but in some cold earthly dungeon, suffering I know not what!

I have read the words over and over, until I have almost lost their meaning. He has no morbid desire to die. He will escape if he can, and he is daring enough to accomplish much. And yet, if the danger were not great, he would not alarm Aunt Cotta with even the possibility of death. He always considered others so tenderly.

He says I have helped him, *him* who taught and helped me, a poor ignorant child, so much! Yet I suppose it may be so. It teaches us so much to teach others. And we always understood each other so perfectly with so few words. I feel as if blindness had fallen on me, when I think of him now. My heart gropes about in the dark and cannot find him.

But then I look up, my Saviour, to thee. "To thee the night and the day are both alike." I dare not think he is suffering; it breaks my heart. I cannot rejoice as I would in thinking he may be in heaven. I know not what to ask, but thou art with him as with me. *Keep him close under the shadow of thy wing.* There we are *safe*, and there we are *together*. And oh, comfort Aunt Cotta! She must need it sorely.

Fritz, then, like our little company at Nimptschen, loves the words of Dr. Luther. When I think of this I rejoice almost more than I weep for him. These truths believed in our hearts seem to unite us more than prison or death can divide. When I think of this I can sing once more St. Bernard's hymn:—

SALVE CAPUT CRUENTATUM.

Hail! thou Head, so bruised and wounded,
With the crown of thorns surrounded,
Smitten with the mocking reed,
Wounds which may not cease to bleed
Trickling faint and slow.
Hail! from whose most blessed brow
None can wipe the blood-drops now;
All the bloom of life has fled,
Mortal paleness there instead
Thou before whose presence dread
Angels trembling bow.

All thy vigor and thy life
Fading in this bitter strife;
Death his stamp on thee has set,
Hollow and emaciate,
Faint and drooping there.
Thou this agony and scorn
Hast for me a sinner borne!
Me, unworthy, all for me!
With those wounds of love on thee,
Glorious Face, appear!

Yet in this thine agony,
Faithful Shepherd, think of me
From whose lips of love divine
Sweetest draughts of life are mine;
Purest honey flows;
All unworthy of thy thought,
Guilty, yet reject me not;
Unto me thy head incline,—
Let that dying head of thine
In mine arms repose.

Let me true communion know
With thee in thy sacred woe,
Counting all beside but dross,
Dying with thee on thy cross;—
'Neath it will I die!
Thanks to thee with every breath
Jesus, for thy bitter death;
Grant thy guilty one this prayer:
When my dying hour is near,
Gracious God, be nigh!

When my dying hour must be,
Be not absent then from me;
In that dreadful hour, I pray,
Jesus come without delay;
See, and set me free.
When thou biddest me depart,
Whom I cleave to with my heart.
Lover of my soul, be near,
With thy saving cross appear,—
Show thyself to me!

XVIII.

Thekla's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *April* 2, 1521.

Dr. Luther is gone. We all feel like a family bereaved of our father.

The professors and chief burghers, with numbers of the students, gathered around the door of the Augustinian Convent this morning to bid him farewell. Gottfried Reichenbach was near as he entered the carriage, and heard him say, as he turned to Melacthon, in a faltering voice, "Should I not return, and should my enemies put me to death, O my brother, cease not to teach and to abide steadfastly in the truth. Labour in my place, for I shall not be able to labour myself. If you be spared it matters little that I perish."

And so he drove off. And a few minutes after, we, who were waiting at the door, saw him pass. He did not forget to smile at Elsè and her little ones, or to give a word of farewell to our dear blind father as he passed us. But there was a grave steadfastness in his countenance that made our hearts full of anxiety. As the usher with the imperial standard who preceded him, and then Dr. Luther's carriage, disappeared round a corner of the street, our grandmother, whose chair had been placed at the door that she might see him pass, murmured, as if to herself,—

"Yes, it was with just such a look they went to the scaffold and the stake when I was young."

I could see little, my eyes were so blinded with tears; and when our grandmother said this, I could bear it no longer, but ran up to my room, and here I have been ever since. My mother and Elsè and all of them say I have no control over my feelings; and I am afraid I have not. But it seems to me as if every one I lean my heart on were always taken away. First, there was Eva. She always understood me, helped me to understand myself; did not laugh at my perplexities as

childish, did not think my over-eagerness was always heat of temper, but met my blundering efforts to do right. Different as she was from me (different as an angel from poor bewildered blundering Giant Christopher in Elsè's old legend), she always seemed come down to my level and see my difficulties from where I stood, and so helped me over them; whilst every one else sees them from above, and wonders any one can think such trifles troubles at all. Not, indeed, that my dear mother and Elsè are proud, or mean to look down on any one; but Elsè is so unselfish, her whole life is so bound up in others, that she does not know what more wilful natures have to contend with. Besides, she is now out of the immediate circle of our every-day life at home. Then our mother is so gentle; she is frightened to think what sorrows life may bring me with the changes that must come, if little things give me such joy or grief now. I know she feels for me often more than she dares let me see; but she is always thinking of arming me for the trials she believes must come, by teaching me to be less vehement and passionate about trifles now. But I am afraid it is useless. I think every creature must suffer according to its nature; and if God has made our capacity for joy or sorrow deep, we cannot fill up the channel and say, "Hitherto I will feel; so far, and no further." The *waters are there*,—soon they will recover for themselves the old choked-up courses; and meantime they will overflow. Eva also used to say, "that our armour must grow with our growth, and our strength with the strength of our conflicts; and that there is only one shield which does this, the shield of faith,—a living, daily trust in a living, ever-present God."

But Eva went away. And then Nix died. I suppose if I saw any child now mourning over a dog as I did over Nix, I should wonder much as they all did at me then. But Nix was not only a dog to me. He was Eisenach and my childhood; and a whole world of love and dreams seemed to die for me with Nix.

To all the rest of the world I was a little vehement girl of fourteen; to Nix I was mistress, protector, everything. It was weeks before I could bear to come in at the front door, where he used to watch for me with his wistful eyes, and bound with cries of joy to meet me. I used to creep in at the garden gate.

And then Nix's death was the first approach of Death to me, and the dreadful power was no less a power because its shadow fell first for me on a faithful dog. I began dimly to feel that life, which before that seemed to be a mountain-path always mounting and mounting through golden mists to I know not what heights of beauty and joy, did not end on the heights, but in a dark unfathomed abyss, and that however dim its course might be, it has, alas, no mists, or uncertainty around the nature of its close, but ends certainly, obviously, and universally in death.

I could not tell any one what I felt. I did not know myself. How can we understand a labyrinth until we are through it? I did not even know it was a labyrinth. I only knew that a light had passed away from everything, and a shadow had fallen in its place.

Then it was that Dr. Luther spoke to me of the other world, beyond death, which God would certainly make more full and beautiful than this;—the world on which the shadow of death can never come, because it lies in the eternal sunshine, on the other side of death, and all the shadows fall on this side. That was about the time of my first communion, and I saw much of Dr. Luther, and heard him preach. I did not say much to him, but he let down a light into my heart which, amidst all its wanderings and mistakes, will, I believe, never go out.

He made me understand something of what our dear heavenly Father is, and that willing but unequalled Sufferer—that gracious Saviour who gave himself for our sins, even for mine. And he made me feel that God would understand me better than any one, because love always understands, and the greatest love understands best, and God is love.

Elsè and I spoke a little about it sometimes, but not much. I am still a child to Elsè and to all of them, being the youngest, and so much less self-controlled than I ought to be. Fritz understood it best; at least, I could speak to him more freely,—I do not know why. Perhaps some hearts are made to answer naturally to each other, just as some of the furniture always vibrates when I touch a particular string of the lute, while nothing else in the room seems to feel it. Perhaps, too, sorrow deepens the heart wonderfully, and opens a channel into the depths of all other hearts. And I am sure Fritz has known very deep sorrow. What, I do not exactly know; and I would not for the world try to find out. If there is a secret chamber in his heart, which he cannot bear to open to any one, when I think his thoughts are there, would I not turn aside my eyes and creep softly away, that he might never know I had found it out?

The innermost sanctuary of his heart is, however, I know, not a chamber of darkness and death, but a holy place of daylight, for God is there.

Hours and hours Fritz and I spoke of Dr. Luther, and what he had done for us both; more, perhaps, for Fritz than even for me, because he had suffered more. It seems to me as if we and thousands besides in the world had been worshipping before an altar-picture of our Saviour, which we had been told was painted by a great master after a heavenly pattern. But all we could see was a grim, hard, stern countenance of one sitting on a judgment throne; in his hands lightnings, and worse lightnings buried in the cloud of his severe and threatening brow. And then, suddenly we heard Dr. Luther's voice behind us saying, in his ringing, inspiring tones, "Friends, what are you doing? That is not the right painting. These are only the boards which hide the master's picture."

And so saying, he drew aside the terrible image on which we had been hopelessly gazing, vainly

trying to read some traces of tenderness and beauty there. And all at once the real picture was revealed to us, the picture of the real Christ, with the look on his glorious face which he had on the cross, when he said of his murderers, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do;" and to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son?" or to the sinful woman who washed his feet, "Go in peace."

Fritz and I also spoke very often of Eva. At least, he liked me to speak of her while he listened. And I never weary of speaking of our Eva.

But then Fritz went away. And now it is many weeks since we have heard from him; and the last tidings we had were that little note from the convent-prison of Mainz!

And now Dr. Luther is gone—gone to the stronghold of his enemies—gone, perhaps, as our grandmother says, to martyrdom!

And who will keep that glorious revelation of the true, loving, pardoning God open for us,—with a steady hand keep open those false shutters, now that he is withdrawn? Dr. Melancthon may do as well for the learned, for the theologians; but who will replace Dr. Luther to *us*, to the people, to working men and eager youths, and to women and to children? Who will make us feel as he does that religion is not a study, or a profession, or a system of doctrines, but life in God; that prayer is not, as he said, an ascension of the heart as a spiritual exercise into some vague airy heights, but the lifting of the heart *to God*, to a heart which meets us, cares for us, loves us inexpressibly? Who will ever keep before us as he does the "Our Father," which makes all the rest of the Lord's Prayer and all prayer possible and helpful? No wonder that mothers held out their children to receive his blessing as he left us, and then went home weeping, whilst even strong men brushed away tears from their eyes.

It is true, Dr. Bugenhagen, who has escaped from persecution in Pomerania, preaches fervently in his pulpit; and Archdeacon Carlstadt is full of fire, and Dr. Melancthon full of light; and many good, wise men are left. But Dr. Luther seemed the heart and soul of all. Others might say wiser things, and he might say many things others would be too wise to say, but it is through Dr. Luther's heart that God has revealed His heart and His word to thousands in our country, and no one can ever be to us what he is.

Day and night we pray for his safety.

April 15.

Christopher has returned from Erfurt, where he heard Dr. Luther preach.

He told us that in many places his progress was like that of a beloved prince through his dominions, of a prince who was going out to some great battle for his land.

Peasants blessed him; poor men and women thronged around him and entreated him not to trust his precious life among his enemies. One aged priest at Nüremberg brought out to him a portrait of Savonarola, the good priest whom the Pope burned at Florence not forty years ago. One aged widow came to him and said her parents had told her God would send a deliverer to break the yoke of Rome, and she thanked God she saw him before she died. At Erfurt sixty burghers and professors rode out some miles to escort him into the city. There, where he had relinquished all earthly prospects to beg bread as a monk through the streets, the streets were thronged with grateful men and women, who welcomed him as their liberator from falsehood and spiritual tyranny.

Christopher heard him preach in the church of the Augustinian Convent, where he had (as Fritz told me) suffered such agonies of conflict. He stood there now an excommunicated man, threatened with death; but he stood there as victor, through Christ, over the tyranny and lies of Satan. He seemed entirely to forget his own danger in the joy of the eternal salvation he came to proclaim. Not a word, Christopher said, about himself, or the Diet, or the Pope's bull, or the Emperor, but all about the way a sinner may be saved, and a believer may be joyful. "There are two kinds of works," he said; "external works, our own works. These are worth little. One man builds a church; another makes a pilgrimage to St. Peter's; a third fasts, puts on the hood, goes barefoot. All these works are nothing, and will perish. Now, I will tell you what is the true good work. *God hath raised again a man, the Lord Jesus Christ, in order that he may crush death, destroy sin, shut the gates of hell. This is the work of salvation.* The devil believed he had the Lord in his power when he beheld him between two thieves, suffering the most shameful martyrdom, accursed both of Heaven and man. But God put forth his might, and annihilated death, sin, and hell. Christ hath won the victory. This is the great news! And we are saved by his work, not by our works. The Pope says something very different. I tell you the holy Mother of God herself has been saved, not by her virginity, nor by her maternity, nor by her purity, nor by her works, but solely by means of faith, and by the work of God."

As he spoke the gallery in which Christopher stood listening cracked. Many were greatly terrified, and even attempted to rush out. Dr. Luther stopped a moment, and then stretching out his hand said, in his clear, firm voice, "Fear not, there is no danger. The devil would thus hinder the preaching of the gospel, but he will not succeed." Then returning to his text, he said, "Perhaps you will say to me, 'You speak to us much about faith, teach us how we may obtain it.' Yes, indeed, that is what I desire to teach you. Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, '*Peace be unto you. Behold my hands.*' And this is as if he said, 'O man, it is I alone who have taken away thy sins, and who have redeemed thee, and now *thou hast peace*, saith the Lord.'"

And he concluded,—

"Since God has saved us, let us so order our works that he may take pleasure therein. Art thou rich? Let thy goods be serviceable to the poor. Art thou poor? Let thy services be of use to the rich. If thy labours are useless to all but thyself, the services thou pretendest to render to God are a mere lie."

Christopher left Dr. Luther at Erfurt. He said many tried to persuade the doctor not to venture to Worms; others reminded him of John Huss, burned in spite of the safe-conduct. And as he went, in some places the papal excommunication was affixed on the walls before his eyes; but he said, "If I perish, the truth will not."

And nothing moved him from his purpose. Christopher was most deeply touched with that sermon. He said the text, "*Peace be unto you; and when he had so said Jesus showed unto them his hands and his side*," rang through his heart all the way home to Wittemberg, through the forests and the plain. The pathos of the clear true voice we may never hear again writes them on his heart; and more than that. I trust the deeper pathos of the voice which uttered the cry of agony once on the cross for us,—the agony which won the peace.

Yes; when Dr. Luther speaks he makes us feel we have to do with persons, not with things,—with the devil who hates us, with God who loves us, with the Saviour who died for us. It is not holiness only and justification, or sin and condemnation. It is we sinning and condemned, Christ suffering for us, and God justifying and loving us. It is all I and thou. He brings us face to face with God, not merely sitting serene on a distant imperial throne, frowning in terrible majesty, or even smiling in gracious pity, but coming down to us close, seeking us, and caring, caring unutterably much, that we, even we, should be saved.

I never knew, until Dr. Luther drove out of Wittemberg, and the car with the cloth curtains to protect him from the weather, which the town had provided, passed out of sight, and I saw the tears gently flowing down my mother's face, how much she loved and honoured him.

She seems almost as anxious about him as about Fritz; and she did not reprove me that night when she came in and found me weeping by my bed. She only drew me to her and smoothed down my hair, and said, "Poor little Thekla! God will teach us both how to have none other gods but himself. He will do it very tenderly; but neither thy mother nor thy Saviour can teach thee this lesson without many a bitter tear."

XIX.

Fritz's Story.

EBERNBURG, *April* 2, 1526.

A chasm has opened between me and my monastic life. I have been in the prison, and in the prison have I received at last, in full, my emancipation. The ties I dreaded impatiently to break have been broken for me, and I am a monk no longer.

I could not but speak to my brethren in the convent of the glad tidings which had brought me such joy. It is as impossible for Christian life not to diffuse itself as that living water should not flow, or that flames should not rise. Gradually a little band of Christ's freedmen gathered around me. At first I did not speak to them much of Dr. Luther's writings. My purpose was to show them that Dr. Luther's doctrine was *not* his own, but God's.

But the time came when Dr. Luther's name was on every lip. The bull of excommunication went forth against him from the Vatican. His name was branded as that of the vilest of heretics by every adherent of the Pope. In many churches, especially those of the Dominicans, the people were summoned by the great bells to a solemn service of anathema, where the whole of the priests, gathered at the altar in the darkened building, pronounced the terrible words of doom and then, flinging down their blazing torches extinguished them on the stone pavement, as hope, they said, was extinguished by the anathema for the soul of the accursed.

At one of these services I was accidentally present. And mine was not the only heart which glowed with burning indignation to hear that worthy name linked with those of apostates and heretics, and held up to universal execration. But, perhaps, in no heart there did it enkindle such a fire as in mine. Because I knew the source from which those curses came, how lightly, how carelessly those firebrands were flung; not fiercely, by the fanaticism of blinded consciences, but daintily and deliberately, by cruel, reckless hands, as a matter of diplomacy and policy, by those who cared themselves neither for God's curse nor his blessing. And I knew also the heart which they were meant to wound; how loyal, how tender, how true; how slowly, and with what pain Dr. Luther had learned to believe the idols of his youth a lie; with what a wrench, when the choice at last had to be made between the word of God and the voice of the Church, he had clung to the Bible, and let the hopes, and trust, and friendships of earlier days be torn from him; what anguish that separation still cost him; how willingly, as a humble little child, at the sacrifice of anything but truth and human souls, he would have flung himself again on the bosom of that Church to which, in his fervent youth, he had offered up all that makes life dear.

"*They curse, but bless Thou.*"

The words came, unbidden into my heart, and almost unconsciously from my lips. Around me I heard more than one "Amen;" but at the same time I became aware that I was watched by malignant eyes.

After the publication of the excommunication, they publicly burned the writings of Dr. Luther in the great square. Mainz was the first city in Germany where this indignity was offered him.

Mournfully I returned to my convent. In the cloisters of our Order the opinions concerning Luther are much divided. The writings of St. Augustine have kept the truth alive in many hearts amongst us; and besides this, there is the natural bias to one of our own order, and the party opposition to the Dominicans, Tetzel and Eck, Dr. Luther's enemies. Probably there are few Augustinian convents in which there are not two opposite parties in reference to Dr. Luther.

In speaking of the great truths, of God freely justifying the sinner because Christ died, (the Judge acquitting because the Judge himself had suffered for the guilty), I had endeavoured to trace them, as I have said, beyond all human words to their divine authority. But now to confess Luther seemed to me to have become identical with confessing Christ. It is the truth which is assailed in any age which tests our fidelity. It is to *confess* we are called, not merely to *profess*. If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle-fields besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.

It seems to me also that, practically, the contest in every age of conflict ranges usually round the person of one Faithful, Godsent man, whom to follow loyally is fidelity to God. In the days of the first Judaizing assault on the early Church, that man was St. Paul. In the great Arian battle, this man was Athanasius—"*Athanasius contra mundum*." In our days, in our land, I believe it is Luther; and to deny Luther would be for me who learned the truth from his lips, to deny Christ. Luther, I believe, is the man whom God has given to his Church in Germany in this age. Luther, therefore, I will follow—not as a perfect example, but as a God-appointed leader. Men can never be neutral in great religious contests; and if, because of the little wrong in the right cause, or the little evil in the good man, we refuse to take the side of right, we are, by that very act, silently taking the side of wrong.

When I came back to the convent I found the storm gathering. I was asked if I possessed any of Dr. Luther's writings. I confessed that I did. It was demanded that they should be given up. I said they could be taken from me, but I would not willingly give them up to destruction, because I believed they contained the truth of God. Thus the matter ended until we had each retired to our cells for the night, when one of the older monks came to me and accused me of secretly spreading Lutheran heresy among the brethren.

I acknowledged I had diligently, but not secretly, done all I could to spread among the brethren the truths contained in Dr. Luther's books, although not in his words, but in St. Paul's. A warm debate ensued, which ended in the monk angrily leaving the cell, saying that means would be found to prevent the further diffusion of this poison.

The next day I was taken into the prison where John of Wesel died; the heavy bolts were drawn upon me, and I was left in solitude.

As they left me alone, the monk with whom I had the discussion of the previous night said. "In this chamber, not forty years since, a heretic such as Martin Luther died."

The words were intended to produce wholesome fear: they acted as a bracing tonic. The spirit of the conqueror who had seemed to be defeated there, but now stood with the victorious palm before the Lamb, seemed near me. The Spirit of the truth for which he suffered was with me; and in the solitude of that prison I learned lessons years might not have taught me elsewhere.

No one except those who have borne them knows how strong are the fetters which bind us to a false faith, learned at our mother's knee, and riveted on us by the sacrifices of years. Perhaps I should never have been able to break them. For me, as for thousands of others, they were rudely broken by hostile hands. But the blows which broke them were the accolade which smote me from a monk into a knight and soldier of my Lord.

Yes; there I learned that these vows which have bound me for so many years are bonds, not to God, but to a lying tyranny. The only true vows, as Dr. Luther says, are the vows of our baptism—to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, as soldiers of Christ. The only divine Order is the common order of Christianity. All other orders are disorder; not confederations within the Church, but conspiracies against it. If, in an army, the troops choose to abandon the commander's arrangement, and range themselves, by arbitrary rules, in peculiar uniforms, around self-elected leaders, they would not be soldiers—they would be mutineers.

God's order is, I think, the State to embrace all men, the Church to embrace all Christian men; and the kernel of the State and the type of the Church is the family.

He creates us to be infants, children—sons, daughters—husband, wife—father, mother. He says, Obey your parents, love your wife, reverence your husband, love your children. As children, let the Lord at Nazareth be your model; as married, let the Lord, who loved the Church better than

life, be your type; as parents, let the heavenly Father be your guide. And if we, abandoning every holy name of family love he has sanctioned, and every lowly duty he has enjoined, choose to band ourselves anew into isolated conglomerations of men or women, connected only by a common name and dress, we are not only amiable enthusiasts—we are rebels against the Divine order of humanity.

God, indeed, may call some especially to forsake father and mother, and wife and children, and all things for his dearer love. But when he calls to such destinies, it is by the plain voice of Providence, or by the bitter call of persecution; and then the martyr's or the apostle's solitary path is as much the lowly, simple path of obedience as the mother's or the child's. The crown of the martyr is consecrated by the same holy oil which anoints the head of the bride, the mother, or the child,—the consecration of love and of obedience. There is none other. All that is not duty is sin; all that is not obedience is disobedience; all that is not of love is of self; and self crowned with thorns in a cloister is as selfish as self crowned with ivy at a revel.

Therefore I abandon cowl and cloister for ever. I am no more Brother Sebastian, of the order of the Eremites of St. Augustine. I am Friedrich Cotta, Margaret Cotta's son, Elsè and Thekla's brother Fritz. I am no more a monk. I am a Christian—I am no more a vowed Augustinian. I am a baptized Christian, dedicated to Christ from the arms of my mother, united to Him by the faith of my manhood. Henceforth I will order my life by no routine of ordinances imposed by the will of a dead man hundreds of years since. But day by day I will seek to yield myself, body, soul, and spirit to the living will of my almighty, loving God, saying to him morning by morning, "Give me this day my daily bread. Appoint to me this day my daily task." And He will never fail to hear, however often I may fail to ask.

I had abundance of time for those thoughts in my prison; for during the three weeks I lay there I had, with the exception of the bread and water which were silently laid inside the door every morning, but two visits. And these were from my friend the aged monk who had first told me about John of Wesel.

The first time he came (he said) to persuade me to recant. But whatever he intended, he said little about recantation—much more about his own weakness, which hindered him from confessing the same truth.

The second time he brought me a disguise, and told me he had provided the means for my escape that very night. When, therefore, I heard the echoes of the heavy bolts of the great doors die away through the long stone corridors, and listened till the last tramp of feet ceased, and door after door of the various cells was closed, and every sound was still throughout the building, I laid aside my monk's cowl and frock, and put on the burgher dress provided for me.

To me it was a glad and solemn ceremony, and, alone in my prison, I prostrated myself on the stone floor, and thanked Him who, by his redeeming death and the emancipating word of his free spirit, had made me a free man, nay, infinitely better, *his freedman*.

The bodily freedom to which I looked forward was to me a light boon indeed, in comparison with the liberty of heart already mine. The putting on this common garb of secular life was to me like a solemn investiture with the freedom of the city and the empire of God. Henceforth I was not to be a member of a narrow, separated class, but of the common family; no more to freeze alone on a height, but to tread the lowly path of common duty; to help my brethren, not as men at a sumptuous table throw crumbs to beggars and dogs, but to live amongst them—to share my bread of life with them; no longer as the forerunner in the wilderness, but, like the Master, in the streets, and highways, and homes of men; assuming no nobler name than man created in the image of God, born in the image of Adam; aiming at no loftier title than Christian, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and created anew, to be conformed to his glorious image. Yes, as the symbol of a freedman, as the uniform of a soldier, as the armour of a sworn knight, at once freeman and servant, was that lowly burgher's dress to me; and with a joyful heart, when the aged monk came to me again, I stepped after him, leaving my monk's frock lying in the corner of the cell, like the husk of that old lifeless life.

In vain did I endeavour to persuade my liberator to accompany me in my flight. "The world would be a prison to me, brother," he said with a sad smile. "All I loved in it are dead, and what could I do there, with the body of an old man and the helpless inexperience of a child? Fear not for me," he added; "I also shall, I trust, one day dwell in a home; but not on earth!"

And so we parted, he returning to the convent, and I taking my way, by river and forest, to this castle of the noble knight Franz von Sickingen, on a steep height at the angle formed by the junction of two rivers.

My silent weeks of imprisonment had been weeks of busy life in the world outside. When I reached this castle of Ebernburg, I found the whole of its inhabitants in a ferment about the summoning of Dr. Luther to Worms. His name, and my recent imprisonment for his faith, were a sufficient passport to the hospitality of the castle, and I was welcomed most cordially.

It was a great contrast to the monotonous routine of the convent and the stillness of the prison. All was life and stir; eager debates as to what it would be best to do for Dr. Luther; incessant coming and going of messengers on horse and foot between Ebernburg and Worms, where the Diet is already sitting, and where the good knight Franz spends much of his time in attendance on the Emperor.

Ulrich von Hutton is also here, from time to time, vehement in his condemnation of the fanaticism of monks and the lukewarmness of princes; and Dr. Bucer, a disciple of Dr. Luther's, set free from the bondage of Rome by his healthful words at the great conference of the Augustinians at Heidelberg.

April 30, 1521.

The events of an age seem to have been crowded into the last month. A few days after I wrote last, it was decided to send a deputation to Dr. Luther, who was then rapidly approaching Worms, entreating him not to venture into the city, but to turn aside to Ebernburg. The Emperor's confessor, Glapio, had persuaded the knight von Sickingen and the chaplain Bucer, that all might easily be arranged, if Dr. Luther only avoided the fatal step of appearing at the Diet.

A deputation of horsemen was therefore sent to intercept the doctor on his way, and to conduct him, if he would consent, to Ebernburg, the "refuge and hostelry of righteousness," as it has been termed.

I accompanied the little band, of which Bucer was to be chief spokesman. I did not think Dr. Luther would come. Unlike the rest of the party, I had known him not only when he stepped on the great stage of the world as the antagonist of falsehood, but as the simple, straightforward, obscure monk. And I knew that the step which to others seemed so great, leading him from safe obscurity into perilous pre-eminence before the eyes of all Christendom, was to him no great momentary effort, but simply one little step in the path of obedience and lowly duty which he had been endeavouring to tread so many years. But I feared. I distrusted Glapio, and believed that all this earnestness on the part of the papal party to turn the doctor aside was not for his sake, but for their own.

I needed not, at least, have distrusted Dr. Luther. Bucer entreated him with the eloquence of affectionate solicitude; his faithful friends and fellow-travellers, Jonas, Amsdorf, and Schurff, wavered, but Dr. Luther did not hesitate an instant. He was in the path of obedience. The next step was as unquestionable and essential as all the rest, although, as he had once said, "it led through flames which extended from Worms to Wittemberg, and raged up to heaven." He did not, however, use any of these forcible illustrations now, natural as they were to him. He simply said, —

"I continue my journey. If the Emperor's confessor has anything to say to me, he can say it at Worms. *I will go to the place to which I have been summoned.*"

And he went on, leaving the friendly deputation to return to Ebernburg.

I did not leave him. As we went on the way, some of those who had accompanied him told me through what fervent greetings and against what vain entreaties of fearful affection he had pursued his way thus far; how many had warned him that he was going to the stake, and had wept that they should see his face no more; how, through much bodily weakness and suffering, through acclamations and tears, he had passed on simply and steadfastly, blessing little children in the schools he visited, and telling them to search the Scriptures; comforting the timid and aged, stirring up the hearts of all to faith and prayer, and by his courage and trust more than once turning enemies into friends.

"Are you the man who is to overturn the popedom?" said a soldier, accosting him rather contemptuously at a halting-place; "how will you accomplish that?"

"I rely on Almighty God," he replied, "whose orders I have."

And the soldier replied reverently,—

"I serve the Emperor Charles; your Master is greater than mine."

One more assault awaited Dr. Luther before he reached his destination. It came through friendly lips. When he arrived near Worms, a messenger came riding towards us from his faithful friend Spalatin, the Elector's chaplain, and implored him on no account to think of entering the city.

The doctor's old fervour of expression returned at such a temptation meeting him so near the goal.

"Go tell your master," he said, "that if there were at Worms as many devils as there are tiles on the roofs, yet would I go in."

And he went in. A hundred cavaliers met him near the gates, and escorted him within the city. Two thousand people were eagerly awaiting him, and pressed to see him as he passed through the streets. Not all friends. Fanatical Spaniards were among them, who had torn his books in pieces from the book-stalls, and crossed themselves when they looked at him, as if he had been the devil; baffled partisans of the Pope: and on the other hand, timid Christians who hoped all from his courage; men who had waited long for this deliverence, had received life from his words, and had kept his portrait in their homes and hearts encircled like that of a canonized saint with a glory. And through the crowd he passed, the only man, perhaps, in it who did not see Dr. Luther through a mist of hatred or of glory, but felt himself a solitary, feeble, helpless man, leaning only, yet resting securely, on the arm of Almighty strength.

Those who knew him best perhaps wondered at him most during those days which followed. Not

at his courage—that we had expected—but at his calmness and moderation. It was this which seemed to me most surely the seal of God on that fervent impetuous nature, stamping the work and the man as of God.

We none of us know how he would have answered before that august assembly. At his first appearance some of us feared he might have been too vehement. The Elector Frederick could not have been more moderate and calm. When asked whether he would retract his books, I think there were few among us who were not surprised at the noble self-restraint of his reply. He asked for time.

"Most gracious Emperor, gracious princes and lords," he said, "with regard to the first accusation, I acknowledge the books enumerated to have been from me. I cannot disown them. As regards the second, seeing that is a question of the faith and the salvation of souls, and of God's word, the most precious treasure in heaven or earth, I should act rashly were I to reply hastily. I might affirm less than the case requires, or more than truth demands, and thus offend against that word of Christ, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.' Wherefore I beseech your imperial majesty, with all submission, to allow me time that I may reply without doing prejudice to the word of God."

He could afford to be thought for the time what many of his enemies tauntingly declared him, a coward, brave in the cell, but appalled when he came to face the world.

During the rest of that day he was full of joy; "like a child," said some, "who knows not what is before him;" "like a veteran," said others, "who has prepared everything for the battle;" like both, I thought, since the strength of the veteran in the battles of God is the strength of the child following his Father's eye, and trusting on his Father's arm.

A conflict awaited him afterwards in the course of the night, which one of us witnessed, and which made him who witnessed it feel no wonder that the imperial presence had no terrors for Luther on the morrow.

Alone that night our leader fought the fight to which all other combats were but as a holiday tournament. Prostrate on the ground, with sobs and bitter tears, he prayed,—

"Almighty, everlasting God, how terrible this world is! How it would open its jaws to devour me, and how weak is my trust in thee! The flesh is weak, and the devil is strong! O thou my God, help me against all the wisdom of this world. Do thou the work. It is for thee alone to do it; for the work is thine, not mine. I have nothing to bring me here. I have no controversy to maintain, not I, with the great ones of the earth. I too would that my days should glide along, happy and calm. But the cause is thine. It is righteous, it is eternal. O Lord, help me; thou that art faithful, thou that art unchangeable. It is not in any man I trust. That were vain indeed. All that is in man gives way; all that comes from man faileth. O God, my God, dost thou not hear me? Art thou dead? No; thou canst not die! Thou art but hiding thyself. Thou hast chosen me for this work. I know it. Oh, then, arise and work. Be thou on my side, for the sake of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, who is my defence, my shield and my fortress.

"O Lord, my God, where art thou? Come, come; I am ready—ready to forsake life for thy truth, patient as a lamb. For it is a righteous cause, and it is thine own. I will not depart from thee, now nor through eternity. And although the world should be full of demons; although my body, which, nevertheless, is the work of thine hands, should be doomed to bite the dust, to be stretched upon the rack, cut into pieces, consumed to ashes, the soul is thine. Yes; for this I have the assurance of thy word. My soul is thine. It will abide near thee throughout the endless ages. Amen. O God, help thou me! Amen!"

Ah, how little those who follow know the agony it costs to take the first step, to venture on the perilous ground no human soul around has tried!

Insignificant indeed the terrors of the empire to one who had seen the terrors of the Almighty. Petty indeed are the assaults of flesh and blood to him who has withstood principalities and powers, and the hosts of the prince of darkness.

At four o'clock the Marshal of the Empire came to lead him to his trial. But his real hour of trial was over, and calm and joyful Dr. Luther passed through the crowded streets to the imperial presence.

As he drew near the door, the veteran General Freundsberg, touching his shoulder, said—

"Little monk, you have before you an encounter such as neither I nor any other captains have seen the like of even in our bloodiest campaigns. But if your cause be just, and if you know it to be so, go forward in the name of God, and fear nothing. God will not forsake you."

Friendly heart! he knew not that our Martin Luther was coming *from* his battle-field, and was simply going as a conqueror to declare before men the victory he had won from mightier foes.

And so at last he stood, the monk, the peasant's son, before all the princes of the empire, the kingliest heart among them all, crowned with a majesty which was incorruptible, because invisible to worldly eyes; one against thousands who were bent on his destruction; one in front of thousands who leant on his fidelity; erect because he rested on that unseen arm above.

The words he spoke that day are ringing through all Germany. The closing sentence will never be

forgotten—

"*Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.*"

To him these deeds of heroism are acts of simple obedience; every step inevitable, because every step is duty. In this path he leans on God's help absolutely and only. And all faithful hearts throughout the land respond to his Amen.

On the other hand, many of the polished courtiers and subtle Roman diplomatists saw no eloquence in his words, words which stirred every true heart to its depths. "That man," said they, "will never convince us." How should he? His arguments were not in their language, nor addressed to them, but to true and honest hearts; and to such they spoke.

To men with whom eloquence means elaborate fancies, decorating corruption or veiling emptiness, what could St. Paul seem but a "babbler?"

All men of earnest purpose acknowledged their force;—enemies, by indignant clamour that he should be silenced: friends, by wondering gratitude to God who had stood by him.

It was nearly dark when the Diet broke up. As Dr. Luther came out, escorted by the imperial officers, a panic spread through the crowd collected in the street, and from every lip to lip was heard the cry,—

"They are taking him to prison."

"They are leading me to my hotel," said the calm voice of him whom this day has made the great man of Germany. And the tumult subsided.

EBERNBURG, *June*,
1521.

Dr. Luther has disappeared! Not one that I have seen knows at this moment where they have taken him, whether he is in the hands of friend or foe, whether even he is still on earth!

We ought to have heard of his arrival at Wittemberg many days since. But no inquiries can trace him beyond the village of Mora in the Thuringian Forest. There he went from Eisenach on his way back to Wittemberg, to visit his aged grandmother and some of his father's relations, peasant farmers who live on the clearings of the forest. In his grandmother's lowly home he passed the night, and took leave of her the next morning; and no one has heard of him since.

We are not without hope that he is in the hands of friends; yet fears will mingle with these hopes. His enemies are so many and so bitter; and no means would seem, to many of them, unworthy, to rid the world of such a heretic.

While he yet remained at Worms the Romans strenuously insisted that his obstinacy had made the safe-conduct invalid; some even of the German princes urged that he should be seized; and it was only by the urgent remonstrances of others, who protested that they would never suffer such a blot on German honour, that he was saved.

At the same time the most insidious efforts were made to persuade him to retreat, or to resign his safe-conduct in order to show his willingness to abide by the issue of a fair discussion. This last effort, appealing to Dr. Luther's confidence in the truth for which he was ready to die, had all but prevailed with him. But a knight who was present when it was made, seeing through the treachery, fiercely ejected the priest who proposed it from the house.

Yet through all assaults, insidious or open, Dr. Luther remained calm and unmoved, moved by no threats, ready to listen to any fair proposition.

Among all the polished courtiers and proud princes and prelates, he seemed to me to stand like an ambassador from an imperial court among the petty dignitaries of some petty province. His manners had the dignity of one who has been accustomed to a higher presence than any around him, giving to every one the honour due to him, indifferent to all personal slights, but inflexible on every point that concerned the honour of his sovereign.

Those of us who had known him in earlier days saw in him all the simplicity, the deep earnestness, the child-like delight in simple pleasures we had known in him of old. It was our old friend Martin Luther, but it seemed as if our Luther had come back to us from a residence in heaven, such a peace and majesty dwelt in all he said. One incident especially struck me. When the glass he was about to drink of at the feast given by the Archbishop of Treves, one of the papal party, shivered in his hand as he signed the cross over it, and his friends exclaimed "poison!" he (so ready usually to see spiritual agency in all things) quietly observed that "the glass had doubtless broken on account of its having been plunged too soon into cold water when it was washed."

His courage was no effort of a strong nature. He simply trusted in God, and really was afraid of nothing.

And now he is gone.

Whether among friends or foes, in a hospital refuge such as this, or in a hopeless secret dungeon, to us for the time at least he is dead. No word of sympathy or counsel passes between us. The voice which all Germany hushed its breath to hear is silenced.

Under the excommunication of the Pope, under the ban of the empire, branded as a heretic, sentenced as a traitor, reviled by the Emperor's own edict as "a fool, a blasphemer, a devil clothed in a monk's cowl," it is made treason to give him food or shelter, and a virtue to deliver him to death. And to all this, if he is living, he can utter no word of reply.

Meantime, on the other hand, every word of his is treasured up and clothed with the sacred pathos of the dying words of a father. The noble letter which he wrote to the nobles describing his appearance before the Diet is treasured in every home.

Yet some among us derive not a little hope from the last letter he wrote, which was to Lucas Cranach, from Frankfort. In it he says,—

> "The Jews may sing once more their 'Io! Io!' but to us also the Easter-day will come, and then will we sing Alleluia. A little while we must be silent and suffer. 'A little while,' said Christ, 'and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me.' I hope it may be so now. But the will of God, the best in all things, be done in this as in heaven and earth. Amen."

Many of us think it is a dim hint to those who love him that he knew what was before him, and that after a brief concealment for safety, "till this tyranny be overpast," he will be amongst us once more.

I, at least, think so, and pray that to him this time of silence may be a time of close intercourse with God, from which he may come forth refreshed and strengthened to guide and help us all.

And meantime, a work, not without peril, but full of sacred joy, opens before me. I have been supplied by the friends of Dr. Luther's doctrine with copies of his books and pamphlets, both in Latin and German, which I am to sell as a hawker through the length and breadth of Germany, and in any other lands I can penetrate.

I am to start to-morrow, and to me my pack and strap are burdens more glorious than the armour of a prince of the empire; my humble pedlar's coat and staff are vestments more sacred than the robes of a cardinal or the weeds of a pilgrim.

For am I not a pilgrim to the city which hath foundations! Is not my yoke the yoke of Christ? and am I not distributing, among thirsty and enslaved men, the water of life and the truth which sets the heart free?

BLACK FOREST, *May* 1521.

The first week of my wandering life is over. To-day my way lay through the solitary paths of the Black Forest, which, eleven years ago, I trod with Dr. Martin Luther, on our pilgrimage to Rome. Both of us then wore the monk's frock and cowl. Both were devoted subjects of the Pope, and would have deprecated, as the lowest depth of degradation, his anathema. Yet at that very time Martin Luther bore in his heart the living germ of all that is now agitating men's hearts from Pomerania to Spain. He was already a freedman of Christ, and he knew it. The Holy Scriptures were already to him the one living fountain of truth. Believing simply on Him who died, the just for the unjust, he had received the free pardon of his sins. Prayer was to him the confiding petition of a forgiven child received to the heart of the Father, and walking humbly by his side. Christ he knew already as the Confessor and Priest; the Holy Spirit as the personal teacher through His own Word.

The fetters of the old ceremonial were indeed still around him, but only as the brown casings still swathe many of the swelling buds of the young leaves; which others, this May morning, cracked and burst as I passed along in the silence through the green forest paths. The moment of liberation, to the passer-by always seems a great, sudden effort; but those who have watched the slow swelling of the imprisoned bud, know that the last expansion of life which bursts the scaly cerements is but one moment of the imperceptible but incessant growth, of which even the apparent death of winter was a stage.

But it is good to live in the spring time; and as I went on, my heart sang with the birds and the leaf-buds, "For me also the cerements of winter are burst,—for me and for all the land!"

And as I walked, I sang aloud the old Easter hymn which Eva used to love:—

Fone luctum, Magdalena,
    Et serena lacrymas;
Non es jam cermonis cœna,
    Non cur fletum exprimas;

Causae mille sunt lætandi,
Causae mille exultandi,
        Alleluia resonet!

Suma risum, Magdalena,
    Frons nitescat lucida;
Denigravit omnis pœna,
    Lux coruscat fulgida;

Christus nondum liberavit,
Et de morte triumphavit:
Alleluia resonet!

Gaude, plaude Magdalena,
Tumbâ Christus exiit;
Tristis est per acta scena,
Victor mortis rediit;
Quem deflebis morientem,
Nunc arride resurgentem:
Alleluia resonet!

Tolle vultum, Magdalena,
Redivivum obstupe:
Vide frons quam sit amœna,
Quinque plagas adspice;
Fulgem sicut margaritæ,
Ornamenta rovæ vitæ:
Alleluia resonet!

Vive, vive, Magdalena!
Tua lux reversa est;
Guadiis turgesit vena,
Mortis vis obstersa est;
Maesti procul sunt dolores,
Læti redeant amores:
Alleluia resonet!

Yes, even in the old dark times, heart after heart, in quiet homes and secret convent cells, has doubtless learned this hidden joy. But now the world seems learning it. The winter has its robins, with their solitary warblings; but now the spring is here, the songs come in choruses,—and thank God I am awake to listen!

But the voice which awoke this music first in my heart, among these very forests—and since then, through the grace of God, in countless hearts throughout this and all lands—what silence hushes it now? The silence of the grave, or only of some friendly refuge? In either case, doubtless, it is not silent to God.

I had scarcely finished my hymn, when the trees became more scattered and smaller, as if they had been cleared not long since; and I found myself on the edge of a valley, on the slopes of which nestled a small village, with its spire and belfry rising among the wooden cottages, and flocks of sheep and goats grazing in the pastures beside the little stream which watered it.

I lifted up my heart to God, that some hearts in that peaceful place might welcome the message of eternal peace through the books I carried.

As I entered the village, the priest came out of the parsonage—an aged man, with a gentle, kindly countenance—and courteously saluted me.

I offered to show him my wares.

"It is not likely there will be anything there for me," he said, smiling. "My days are over for ballads and stories, such as I suppose your merchandise consists of."

But when he saw the name of Luther on the title-page of a volume which I showed him, his face changed, and he said in a grave voice, "Do you know what you carry?"

"I trust I do," I replied. "I carry most of these books in my heart as well as on my shoulders."

"But do you know the danger?" the old man continued. "We have heard that Dr. Luther has been excommunicated by the Pope, and laid under the ban of the empire; and only last week, a travelling merchant, such as yourself, told us that his body had been seen pierced through with a hundred wounds."

"That was not true three days since," I said. "At least, his best friends at Worms knew nothing of it."

"Thank God!" he said; "for in this village we owe that good man much. And if," he added timidly, "he has indeed fallen into heresy, it would be well he had time to repent."

In that village I sold many of my books, and left others with the good priest, who entertained me most hospitably, and sent me on my way with a tearful farewell, compounded of blessings, warnings, and prayers.

PARIS, *July*, 1521.

I have crossed the French frontier, and have been staying some days in this great, gay, learned city.

In Germany, my books procured me more of welcome than of opposition. In some cases, even

where the local authorities deemed it their duty publicly to protest against them, they themselves secretly assisted in their distribution. In others, the eagerness to purchase, and to glean any fragment of information about Luther, drew a crowd around me, who, after satisfying themselves that I had no news to give them of his present state, lingered as long as I would speak, to listen to my narrative of his appearance before the Emperor at Worms, while murmurs of enthusiastic approval, and often sobs and tears, testified the sympathy of the people with him. In the towns, many more copies of his "Letter to the German Nobles" were demanded than I could supply.

But what touched me most was to see the love and almost idolatrous reverence which had gathered around his name in remote districts, among the oppressed and toiling peasantry.

I remember especially, in one village, a fine-looking old peasant farmer taking me to an inner room where hung a portrait of Luther, encircled with a glory, with a curtain before it.

"See!" he said. "The lord of that castle," and he pointed to a fortress on an opposite height, "has wrought me and mine many a wrong. Two of my sons have perished in his selfish feuds, and his huntsmen lay waste my fields as they choose in the chase; yet, if I shoot a deer, I may be thrown into the castle dungeon, as mine have been before. But their reign is nearly over now. I saw *that man* at Worms. I heard him speak, bold as a lion, for the truth, before emperor, princes, and prelates. God has sent us the deliverer; and the reign of righteousness will come at last, when every man shall have his due."

"Friend," I said, with an aching heart, "the Deliverer came fifteen hundred years ago, but the reign of justice has not come to the world yet. The Deliverer was crucified, and his followers since then have suffered, not reigned."

"God is patient," he said, "and *we* have been patient long, God knows; but I trust the time is come at last."

"But the redemption Dr. Luther proclaims," I said, gently, "is liberty from a worse bondage than that of the nobles, and it is a liberty no tyrant, no dungeon, can deprive us of—the liberty of the sons of God;"—and he listened earnestly while I spoke to him of justification, and of the suffering, redeeming Lord. But at the end he said—

"Yes, that is good news. But I trust Dr. Luther will avenge many a wrong among us yet. They say he was a peasant's son like me."

If I were Dr. Luther, and knew that the wistful eyes of the oppressed and sorrowful throughout the land were turned to me, I should be tempted to say—

"Lord, let me die before these oppressed and burdened hearts learn how little I can help them!"

For verily there is much evil done under the sun. Yet as truly there is healing for every disease, remedy for every wrong, and rest from every burden, in the tidings Dr. Luther brings. But remedy of a different kind, I fear, from what too many fondly expect!

It is strange, also, to see how, in these few weeks, the wildest tales have sprung up and spread in all directions about Dr. Luther's disappearance. Some say he has been secretly murdered, and that his wounded corpse has been seen; others, that he was borne away bleeding through the forest to some dreadful doom; while others boldly assert that he will re-appear at the head of a band of liberators, who will go through the length and breadth of the land, redressing every wrong, and punishing every wrong-doer.

Truly, if a few weeks can throw such a haze around facts, what would a century without a written record have done for Christianity; or what would that record itself have been without inspiration?

The country was in some parts very disturbed. In Alsace I came on a secret meeting of the peasants, who have bound themselves with the most terrible oaths to wage war to the death against the nobles.

More than once I was stopped by a troop of horsemen near a castle, and my wares searched, to see if they belonged to the merchants of some city with whom the knight of the castle was at feud; and on one of these occasions it might have fared ill with me if a troop of Landsknechts in the service of the empire had not appeared in time to rescue me and my companions.

Yet everywhere the name of Luther was of equal interest. The peasants believed he would rescue them from the tyranny of the nobles; and many of the knights spoke of him as the assertor of German liberties against a foreign yoke. More than one poor parish priest welcomed him as the deliverer from the avarice of the great abbeys or the prelates. Thus, in farm-house and hut, in castle and parsonage, I and my books found many a cordial welcome. And all I could do was to sell the books, and tell all who would listen, that the yoke Luther's words were powerful to break was the yoke of the devil the prince of all oppressors, and that the freedom he came to republish was freedom from the tyranny of sin and self.

My true welcome, however, the one which rejoiced my heart, was when any said, as many did, on sick-beds, in lowly and noble homes, and in monasteries—

"Thank God, these words are in our hearts already. They have taught us the way to God; they *have* brought us peace and freedom."

Or when others said—

"I must have that book. This one and that one that I know is another man since he read Dr. Luther's words."

But if I was scarcely prepared for the interest felt in Dr. Luther in our own land, true German that he is, still less did I expect that his fame would have reached to Paris, and even further.

The night before I reached this city I was weary with a long day's walk in the dust and heat, and had fallen asleep on a bench in the garden outside a village inn, under the shade of a trellised vine, leaving my pack partly open beside me. When I awoke, a grave and dignified-looking man, who, from the richness of his dress and arms, seemed to be a nobleman, and, from the cut of his slashed doubtlet and mantle, a Spaniard, sat beside me, deeply engaged in reading one of my books. I did not stir at first, but watched him in silence. The book he held was a copy of Luther's Commentary on the Galatians, in Latin.

In a few minutes I moved, and respectfully saluted him.

"Is this book for sale?" he asked

I said it was and named the price.

He immediately laid down twice the sum, saying, "Give a copy to some one who cannot buy."

I ventured to ask if he had seen it before.

"I have," he said. "Several copies were sent by a Swiss printer, Frobenius, to Castile. And I saw it before at Venice. It is prohibited in both Castile and Venice now. But I have always wished to possess a copy that I might judge for myself. Do you know Dr. Luther?" he asked, as he moved away.

"I have known and reverenced him for many years," I said.

"They say his life is blameless, do they not?" he asked.

"Even his bitterest enemies confess it to be so," I replied.

"He spoke like a brave man before the Diet," he resumed; "gravely and quietly, as true men speak who are prepared to abide by their words. A noble of Castile could not have spoken with more dignity than that peasant's son. The Italian priests thought otherwise; but the oratory which melts girls into tears from pulpits is not the eloquence for the councils of men. That monk had learned his oratory in a higher school. If you ever see Dr. Luther again," he added, "tell him that some Spaniards, even in the Emperor's court, wished him well."

And here in Paris I find a little band of devout and learned men, Lefevre, Farel, and Briconnet, bishop of Meaux, actively employed in translating and circulating the writings of Luther and Melancthon. The truth in them, they say, they had learned before from the book of God itself, namely, justification through faith in a crucified Saviour leading to a life devoted to him. But jealous as the French are of admitting the superiority of anything foreign, and contemptuously as they look on us unpolished Germans, the French priests welcome Luther as a teacher and a brother, and are as eager to hear all particulars of his life as his countrymen in every town and quiet village throughout Germany.

They tell me also that the king's own sister, the beautiful and learned Duchess Margaret of Valois, reads Dr. Luther's writings, and values them greatly.

Indeed, I sometimes think if he had carried out the intention he formed some years since, of leaving Wittemberg for Paris, he would have found a noble sphere of action here. The people are so frank in speech, so quick in feeling and perception; and their bright keen wit cuts so much more quickly to the heart of a fallacy than our sober, plodding, Northern intellect.

BASEL.

Before I left Ebernburg, the knight Ulrich von Hutten had taken a warm interest in my expedition; had especially recommended me to seek out Erasmus, if ever I reached Switzerland; and had himself placed some copies of Erasmus' sermons, "Praise of folly," among my books.

Personally I feel a strong attachment to that brave knight. I can never forget the generous letter he wrote to Luther before his appearance at the Diet:—"*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.* O my beloved Luther, my reverend father, fear not; be strong. Fight valiantly for Christ. As for me, I also will fight bravely. Would to God I might see how they knit their brows.... May Christ preserve you."

Yes, to see the baffled enemies knit their brows as they did then, would have been a triumph to the impetuous soldier, but at the time he was prohibited from approaching the Court. Luther's courageous and noble defence filled him with enthusiastic admiration. He declared the doctor to be a greater soldier than any of the knights. When he heard of Dr. Luther's disappearance he would have collected a band of daring spirits like himself, and scoured the country in search of him. Hutten's objects were high and unselfish. He had no mean and petty ambitions. With sword and pen he had contended against oppression and hypocrisy. To him the Roman Court was detestable, chiefly as a foreign yoke; the corrupt priesthood, as a domestic usurpation. He had a high ideal of knighthood, and believed that his order, enlightened by learning, and inspired by a free and lofty faith, might emancipate Germany and Christendom. Personal danger he despised,

and personal aims.

Yet with all his fearlessness and high aspirations, I scarcely think he hoped himself to be the hero of his ideal chivalry. The self-control of the pure true knight was too little his. In his visions of a Christendom from which falsehood and avarice were to be banished, and where authority was to reside in an order of ideal knights, Franz von Sickingen, the brave good lord of Ebernburg, with his devout wife Hedwiga, was to raise the standard, around which Ulrich and all the true men in the land were to rally. Luther, Erasmus, and Sickingen, he thought—the types of the three orders, learning, knighthood, and priesthood,—might regenerate the world.

Erasmus had begun the work with unveiling the light in the sanctuaries of learning. Luther had carried it on by diffusing the light among the people. The knights must complete it by forcibly scattering the powers of darkness. Conflict is Erasmus' detestation. It is Luther's necessity. It is Hutten's delight.

I did not, however, expect much sympathy in my work from Erasmus. It seemed to me that Hutten, admiring his clear, luminous genius, attributed to him the fire of his own warm and courageous heart. However, I intended to seek him out at Basel.

Circumstances saved me the trouble.

As I was entering the city, with my pack nearly empty, hoping to replenish it from the presses of Frobenius, an elderly man, with a stoop in his shoulders, giving him the air of a student, ambled slowly past me, clad in a doctor's gown and hat, edged with a broad border of fur. The keen small dark eyes surveyed me and my pack for a minute, and then reining in his horse he joined me, and said, in a soft voice and courtly accent, "We are of the same profession, friend. We manufacture, and you sell. What have you in your pack?"

I took out three of my remaining volumes. One was Luther's "Commentary on the Galatians;" the others, his "Treatise on the Lord's Prayer," and his "Letter to the German Nobles."

The rider's brow darkened slightly, and he eyed me suspiciously.

"Men who supply ammunition to the people in times of insurrection seldom do it at their own risk," he said. "Young man, you are on a perilous mission, and would do well to count the cost."

"I have counted the cost, sir," I said, "and I willingly brave the peril."

"Well, well," he replied, "some are born for battle-fields, and some for martyrdom; others for neither. Let each keep to his calling,—

'Nequissimam pacem justissimo bello antifero'

But 'those who let in the sea on the marshes little know where it will spread.'"

This illustration from the Dutch dykes awakened my suspicions as to who the rider was, and looking at the thin, sensitive, yet satirical lips, the delicate, sharply-cut features, the pallid complexion, and the dark keen eyes I had seen represented in so many portraits, I could not doubt with whom I was speaking. But I did not betray my discovery.

"Dr. Luther has written some good things, nevertheless," he said. "If he had kept to such devotional works as this," returning to me "The Lord's prayer," "he might have served his generation quietly and well; but to expose such mysteries as are treated of here to the vulgar gaze, it is madness!" and he hastily closed the "Galatians." Then glancing at the "Letter to the Nobles," he almost threw it into my hand, saying petulently,—

"That pamphlet is an insurrection in itself."

"What other books have you?" he asked after a pause.

I drew out my last copy of the "Encomium of Folly."

"Have you sold many of these?" he asked coolly.

"All but this copy," I replied.

"And what did people say of it?"

"That depended on the purchasers," I replied. "Some say the author is the wisest and wittiest man of the age, and if all knew where to stop as he does, the world would slowly grow into Paradise, instead of being turned upside down as it is now. Others, on the contrary, say that the writer is a coward, who has no courage to confess the truth he knows. And others, again, declare the book is worse than any of Luther's and that Erasmus is the source of all the mischief in the world, since if he had not broken the lock, Luther would never have entered the door."

"And *you* think?" he asked.

"I am but a poor pedlar, sir," I said; "but I think there is a long way between Pilate's delivering up the glorious King he knew was innocent—perhaps began to see might be divine, and St. Peter's denying the Master he loved. And the Lord who forgave Peter knows which is which; which the timid disciple, and which the cowardly friend of His foes. But the eye of man, it seems to me, may find it impossible to distinguish. I would rather be Luther at the Diet of Worms, and under anathema and ban, than either."

"Bold words!" he said, "to prefer an excommunicated heretic to the prince of the apostles!"

But a shade passed over his face, and courteously bidding me farewell, he rode on.

The conversation seemed to have thrown a shadow and chill over my heart.

After a time, however, the rider slackened his pace again, and beckoned to me to rejoin him.

"Have you friends in Basel?" he asked kindly.

"None," I replied; "but I have letters to the printer Frobenius, and I was recommended to seek out Erasmus."

"Who recommended you to do that?" he asked.

"The good knight Ulrich von Hutten," I replied.

"The prince of all turbulent spirits!" he murmured gravely. "Little indeed is there in common between Erasmus of Rotterdam and that firebrand."

"Ritter Ulrich has the greatest admiration for the genius of Erasmus," I said, "and thinks that his learning, with the swords of a few good knights, and the preaching of Luther, might set Christendom right."

"Ulrich von Hutten should set his own life right first," was the reply. "But let us leave discoursing of Christendom and these great projects, which are altogether beyond our sphere. Let the knights set chivalry right, and the cardinals the papacy, and the emperor the empire. Let the hawker attend to his pack, and Erasmus to his studies. Perhaps hereafter it will be found that his satires on the follies of the monasteries, and above all his earlier translation of the New Testament, had their share in the good work. His motto is, 'Kindle the light and the darkness will disperse of itself.'"

"If Erasmus," I said, "would only consent to share in the result he has indeed contributed so nobly to bring about!"

"Share in what?" he replied quickly; "in the excommunication of Luther? or in the wild projects of Hutten? Have it supposed that he approves of the coarse and violent invectives of the Saxon monk, or the daring schemes of the adventurous knight? No; St. Paul wrote courteously, and never returned railing for railing. Erasmus should wait till he find a reformer like the apostle ere he join the Reformation. But, friend," he added, "I do not deny that Luther is a good man, and means well. If you like to abandon your perilous pack, and take to study, you may come to my house, and I will help you as far as I can with money and counsel. For I know what it is to be poor, and I think you ought to be better than a hawker. And," he added, bringing his horse to a stand, "if you hear Erasmus maligned again as a coward or a traitor, you may say that God has more room in his kingdom than any men have in their schools; and that it is not always so easy for men who see things on many sides to embrace one. Believe also that the loneliness of those who see too much or dare too little to be partisans, often has anguish bitterer than the scaffolds of martyrs. But," he concluded in a low voice, as he left me, "be careful never again to link the names of Erasmus and Hutten. I assure you nothing can be more unlike. And Ulrich von Hutten is a most rash and dangerous man."

"I will be careful never to forget Erasmus," I said, bowing low, as I took the hand he offered. And the doctor rode on.

Yes, the sorrows of the undecided are doubtless bitterer than those of the courageous; bitterer as poison is bitterer than medicine, as an enemy's wound is bitterer than a physician's. Yet it is true that the clearer the insight into difficulty and danger, the greater need be the courage to meet them. The path of the rude simple man who sees nothing but right on one side, and nothing but wrong on the other, is necessarily plainer than his who, seeing much evil in the good cause, and some truth at the foundation of all error, chooses to suffer for the right, mixed as it is, and to suffer side by side with men whose manners distress him, just because he believes the cause is on the whole that of truth and God. Luther's school may not indeed have room for Erasmus, nor Erasmus's school for Luther; but God may have compassion and room for both.

At Basel I replenished my pack from the stores of Frobenius, and received very inspiriting tidings from him of the spread of the truth of the gospel (especially by means of the writings of Luther) into Italy and Spain. I did not apply further to Erasmus.

NEAR ZURICH, *July*.

My heart is full of resurrection hymns. Everywhere in the world it seems Easter-tide. This morning, as I left Zurich, and, climbing one of the heights on this side, looked down on the lake, rippled with silver, through the ranges of green and forest-covered hills, to the glorious barrier of far-off mountains, purple, and golden, and snow-crowned, which encircles Switzerland, and thought of the many hearts which, during these years, have been awakened here to the liberty of the sons of God, the old chant of Easter and Spring burst from my lips:—

Plandite cœli,
Rideat æther
Summus et imus
Gaudeat orbis!

Transivit atræ
Turba procellæ!
Subuit almæ
Gloria palmæ!

Surgite verni,
Surgite flores,
Germina pictis
Surgite campis!
Teneris mistæ
Violis rosæ;
Candida sparsis
Lilla calthis!

Currite plenis
Carmina venis,
Fundite lætum
Barbita metrum;
Namque revixit
Sicuti dixit
Pius illæsus
Funere Jesus.

Plaudite montes,
Ludite fontes,
Resonent valles,
Repetant colles!
Io revixit.
Sicuti dixit
Pius illæsus
Funere Jesus[9]

And when I ceased, the mountain stream which dashed over the rocks beside me, the whispering grasses, the trembling wild-flowers, the rustling forests, the lake with its ripples, the green hills and solemn snow-mountains beyond—all seemed to take up the chorus.

There is a wonderful, invigorating influence about Ulrich Zwingle, with whom I have spent many days lately. It seems as if the fresh air of the mountains among which he passed his youth were always around him. In his presence it is impossible to despond. While Luther remains immovably holding every step of ground he has taken, Zwingle presses on, and surprises the enemy asleep in his strongholds. Luther carries on the war like the Landsknechts, our own firm and impenetrable infantry; Zwingle, like his own impetuous mountaineers, sweeps down from the heights upon the foe.

In Switzerland I and my books have met with more sudden and violent varieties of reception than anywhere else; the people are so free and unrestrained. In some villages, the chief men, or the priest himself, summoned all the inhabitants by the church bell, to hear all I had to tell about Dr. Luther and his work, and to buy his books; my stay was one constant *fête*, and the warm-hearted peasants accompanied me miles on my way, discoursing of Zwingle and Luther, the broken yoke of Rome, and the glorious days of freedom that were coming. The names of Luther and Zwingle were on every lip, like those of Tell and Winkelried and the heroes of the old struggle of Swiss liberation.

In other villages, on the contrary, the peasants gathered angrily around me, reviled me as a spy and an intruding foreigner, and drove me with stones and rough jests from among them, threatening that I should not escape so easily another time.

In some places they have advanced much further than among us in Germany. The images have been removed from the churches, and the service is read in the language of the people.

But the great joy is to see that the light has not been spread only from torch to torch, as human illumination spread, but has burst at once on Germany, France, and Switzerland, as heavenly light dawns from above. It is this which makes it not an illumination merely, but morning and spring! Lefevre in France and Zwingle in Switzerland both passed through their period of storms and darkness, and both, awakened by the heavenly light to the new world, found that it was no solitude—that others also were awake, and that the day's work had begun, as it should, with matin songs.

Now I am tending northwards once more. I intend to renew my stores at my father's press at Wittemberg. My heart yearns also for news of all dear to me there. Perhaps, too, I may yet see Dr. Luther, and find scope for preaching the evangelical doctrine among my own people.

For better reports have come to us from Germany and we believe Dr. Luther is in friendly keeping, though where, is still a mystery.

THE PRISON OF A DOMINICAN CONVENT,
FRANCONIA, *August*.

All is changed for me. Once more prison walls are around me, and through prison bars I look out on the world I may not re-enter. I counted this among the costs when I resolved to give myself up to spreading far and wide the glad tidings of redemption. It was worth the cost; it is worth whatever man can inflict—for I trust that those days have not been spent in vain.

Yesterday evening, as the day was sinking, I found my way once more to the parsonage of Priest Ruprecht in the Franconian village. The door was open, but I heard no voices. There was a neglected look about the little garden. The vine was hanging untwined around the porch. The little dwelling, which had been so neat, had a dreary, neglected air. Dust lay thick on the chairs, and the remains of the last meal were left on the table. And yet it was evidently not unoccupied. A book lay upon the window-sill, evidently lately read. It was the copy of Luther's German Commentary on the Lord's Prayer which I had left that evening many months ago in the porch.

I sat down on a window seat, and in a little while I saw the priest coming slowly up the garden. His form was much bent since I saw him last. He did not look up as he approached the house. It seemed as if he expected no welcome. But when I went out to meet him, he grasped my hand cordially, and his face brightened. When, however, he glanced at the book in my hand, a deeper shade passed over his brow; and, motioning me to a chair, he sat down opposite me without speaking.

After a few minutes he looked up, and said in a husky voice, "That book did what all the denunciations and terrors of the old doctrines could not do. It separated us. She has left me."

He paused for some minutes, and then continued,—"The evening that she found that book in the porch, when I returned I found her reading it. 'See!' she said, 'at last some one has written a religious book for me! It was left here open, in the porch, at these words: "If thou dost feel that in the sight of God and all creatures thou art a fool, a sinner, impure, and condemned, ... there remaineth no solace for thee, and no salvation, unless in Jesus Christ. To know him is to understand what the apostle says,—'Christ has of God been made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' He is the bread of God—our bread, given to us as children of the heavenly Father. To believe is nothing else than to eat this bread from heaven." And look again. The book says, "It touches God's heart when we call him Father,"—and again, "*Which art in heaven.*" "He that acknowledges he has a Father who is in heaven, owns that he is like an orphan on the earth. Hence his heart feels an ardent longing, like a child living away from its father's country, amongst strangers, wretched and forlorn. It is as if he said, "Alas! my Father, thou art in heaven, and I, thy miserable child, am on earth, far from thee amid danger, necessity, and sorrow." 'Ah, Ruprecht,' she said, her eyes streaming with tears, 'that is so like what I feel,—so lost, and orphaned, and far away from home.' And then, fearing she had grieved me, she added, 'Not that I am neglected. Thou knowest I could never feel that. But oh, can it be possible that God would take me back, not after long years of penance, but *now*, and *here*, to his very heart?"

"I could say little to teach her, but from that time this book was her constant companion. She begged me to find out all the passages in my Latin Gospels which speak of Jesus suffering for sinners, and of God as the Father. I was amazed to see how many there were. The book seemed full of them. And so we went on for some days, until one evening she came to me, and said, 'Ruprecht, if God is indeed so infinitely kind and good, and has so loved us, we must obey him, must we not?' I could not for the world say No, and I had not the courage to say Yes, for I knew what she meant."

Again he paused.

"I knew too well what she meant, when, on the next morning, I found the breakfast laid, and everything swept and prepared as usual, and on the table, in printed letters on a scrap of paper, which she must have copied from the book, for she could not write, 'Farewell. We shall be able to pray for each other now. And God will be with us, and will give us to meet hereafter, without fear of grieving him, in our Father's house."

"Do you know where she is?" I asked.

"She has taken service in a farm-house several miles away in the forest," he replied. "I have seen her once. She looked very thin and worn. But she did not see me."

The thought which had so often suggested itself to me before, came with irresistible force into my mind then,—"If those vows of celibacy are contrary to the will of God, can they be binding?" But I did not venture to suggest them to my host. I only said, "Let us pray that God will lead you both. The heart can bear many a heavy burden if the conscience is free!"

"True," he said. And together we knelt down, whilst I spoke to God. And the burden of our prayer was neither more nor less than this, "Our Father which art in heaven, not our will, but thine be done."

On the morrow I bade him farewell, leaving him several other works of Luther's. And I determined not to lose an hour in seeking Melancthon and the doctors of Wittemberg, and placing this case before them.

And now, perhaps, I shall never see Wittemberg again!

It is not often that I have ventured into the monasteries, but to-day a young monk, who was walking in the meadows of this abbey, seemed so interested in my books, that I followed him to

the convent, where he thought I should dispose of many copies. Instead of this, however, whilst I was waiting in the porch for him to return, I heard the sound of angry voices in discussion inside, and before I could perceive what it meant, three or four monks came to me, seized my pack, bound my hands, and dragged me to the convent prison, where I now am.

"It is time that this pestilence should be checked," said one of them. "Be thankful if your fate is not the same as that of your poisonous books, which are this evening to make a bonfire in the court."

And with these words I was left alone in this low, damp, dark cell, with its one little slit high in the wall, which, until my eyes grew accustomed to it, seemed only to admit just light enough to show the iron fetters hanging from the walls. But what power can make me a captive while I can sing:—

Mortis portis practis, fortis
Fortior vim sustulit;
Et per crucem regem trucem,
Infernorum perculit.

Lumen clarum tenebrarum
Sedibus resplenduit;
Dum salvare, recreare
Quod creavit, voluit.

Hinc creator, ne peccator,
Moreretur, moritur;
Cujus morte, nova sorte,
Vita nobis oritur.[10]

Are not countless hearts now singing this resurrection hymn, to some of whom my hands brought the joyful tidings? In the lonely parsonage, in the forest and farm, hearts set free by love from the fetters of sin—in village and city, in mountain and plain!

And at Wittemberg, in happy homes, and in the convent, are not my beloved singing it too?

September.

Yet the time seems long to lie in inaction here. With these tidings, "The Lord is risen," echoing through her heart, would it not have been hard for the Magdalene to be arrested on her way to the bereaved disciples before she could tell it?

October.

I have a hope of escape. In a corner of my prison I discovered, some days since, the top of an arch, which I believe must belong to a blocked-up door. By slow degrees—working by night, and covering over my work by day—I have dug out a flight of steps which led to it. This morning I succeeded in dislodging one of the stones with which the door-way had been roughly filled up, and through the space surveyed the ground outside. It was a portion of a meadow, sloping to the stream which turned the abbey mills. This morning two of the monks came to summon me to an examination before the Prior, as to my heresies; but to-night I hope to dislodge the few more stones, and this very night, before morning dawn, to be treading with free step the forest covered hills beyond the valley.

My limbs feel feeble with insufficient food, and the damp, close air of the cell; and the blood flows with feverish, uncertain rapidity through my veins; but, doubtless, a few hours on the fresh, breezy hills will set all this right.

And yet once more I shall see my mother, and Elsè, and Thekla, and little Gretchen, and all—all but one, who, I fear, is still imprisoned in convent walls. Yet once more I trust to go throughout the land spreading the joyful tidings.—"The Lord is risen indeed;" the work of redemption is accomplished, and He who once lived and suffered on earth, compassionate to heal, now lives and reigns in heaven, mighty to save.

XX.

Thekla's Story.

TUNNENBERG, *May*,
1521

Is the world really the same? Was there really ever a spring like this, when the tide of life seems overflowing and bubbling up in leaf-buds, flowers, and song, and streams?

It cannot be *only* that God has given me the great blessing of Bertrand de Crèqui's love, and that life opens in such bright fields of hope and work before us two; or that this is the first spring I

ever spent in the country. It seems to me that God is really pouring a tide of fresh life throughout the world.

Fritz has escaped from the prison at Maintz, and he writes as if he felt this an Easter-tide for all men. In all places, he says, the hearts of men are opening to the glad tidings of the redeeming love of God.

Can it be, however, that every May is such a festival among the woods, and that this solemn old forest holds such fairy holiday every year, garlanding its bare branches and strewing every brown nook which a sunbeam can reach, with showers of flowers, such as we strew on a bride's path? And then, who could have imagined that those grave old firs and stately birches could become the cradles of all these delicate-tufted blossoms and tenderly-folded leaflets, bursting on all sides from their gummy casings? And—joy of all joys!—it is not unconscious vegetable life only which thus expands around us. It is God touching every branch and hidden root, and waking them to beauty! It is not sunshine merely, and soft breezes; it is our Father smiling on his works, and making the world fresh and fair for his children,—it is the healing touch and the gracious Voice we have learned to know. "We are in the world, and the world was made by Thee;" "*Te Deum laudamus*: we acknowledge thee, O Saviour, to be the Lord."

Our Chriemhild certainly has a beautiful home. Bertrand's home, also, is a castle in the country, in Flanders. But he says their country is not like this forest-land. It has long been cleared by industrious hands. There are long stately avenues leading to his father's chateau; but all around, the land is level, and waving with grass and green or golden corn-fields. That, also, must be beautiful. But probably the home he has gone to prepare for me may not be there. Some of his family are very bitter against what they call his Lutheran heresy, and although he is the heir, it is very possible that the branch of the family which adheres to the old religion may wrest the inheritance from him. That, we think, matters little. God will find the right place for us, and lead us to it, if we ask him. And if it be in the town, after all, the tide of life in human hearts is nobler than that in trees and flowers. In a few months we shall know. Perhaps he may return here, and become a professor at Wittemberg, whither Dr. Luther's name brought him a year since to study.

June, 1521.

A rumour has reached us, that Dr. Luther has disappeared on his way back from Worms.

This spring, in the world as well as in the forest, will doubtless have its storms. Last night, the thunder echoed from hill to hill, and the wind wailed wildly among the pines. Looking out of my narrow window in the tower on the edge of the rock, where I sleep, it was awful to see the foaming torrent below gleaming in the lightning-flashes, which opened out sudden glimpses into the depths of the forest, leaving it doubly mysterious.

I thought of Fritz's lonely night, when he lost himself in the forest; and thanked God that I had learned to know the thunder as His voice, and His voice as speaking peace and pardon. Only, at such times I should like to gather all dear to me around me; and those dearest to me are scattered far and wide.

The old knight Ulrich is rather impetuous and hot-tempered; and his sister, Ulrich's aunt, Dame Hermentrud, is grave and stately. Fortunately, they both look on Chriemhild as a wonder of beauty and goodness; but I have to be rather careful. Dame Hermentrud is apt to attribute any over-vehemence of mine in debate to the burgher Cotta-blood; and although they both listen with interest to Ulrich or Chriemhild's version of Dr. Luther's doctrines, Dame Hermentrud frequently warns me against unfeminine exaggeration or eagerness in these matters, and reminds me that the ancestors of the Gersdorf family were devout and excellent people long before a son was born to Hans Luther the miner.

The state of the peasants distresses Chriemhild and me extremely. She and Ulrich were full of plans for their good when they came here to live; but she is at present almost exclusively occupied with the education of a little knightly creature, who came into the world two months since, and is believed to concentrate in his single little person all the ancestral virtues of all the Gersdorfs, to say nothing of the Schönbergs. He has not, Dame Hermantrud asserts, the slightest feature of resemblance to the Cottas. I cannot, certainly, deny that he bears unmistakable traces of that aristocratic temper and that lofty taste for ruling which at times distinguished my grandmother, and, doubtless, all the Gersdorfs from the days of Adam downward, or at least from the time of Babel. Beyond that, I believe, few pedigrees are traced, except in a general way to the sons of Noah. But it is a great honour for me to be connected, even in the humblest manner, with such a distinguished little being. In time, I am not without hopes that it will introduce a little reflex nobility even into my burgher nature: and meantime Chriemhild and I secretly trace remarkable resemblances in the dear baby features to our grandmother, and even to our beloved, sanguine, blind father. It is certainly a great consolation that our father chose our names from the poems and the stars and the calendar of aristocratic saints, instead of from the lowly Cotta pedigree.

Ulrich has not indeed by any means abandoned his scheme of usefulness among the peasantry who live on his uncle's estates. But he finds more opposition than he expected. The old knight, although ready enough to listen to any denunciations of the self-indulgent priests and lazy monks (especially those of the abbey whose hunting-grounds adjoin his own), is very averse to making the smallest change in anything. He says the boors are difficult enough to keep in order as it is; that if they are taught to think for themselves, there will be no safety for the game, or for

anything else. They will be quoting the Bible in all kinds of wrong senses against their rightful lords, and will perhaps even take to debating the justice of the hereditary feuds, and refuse to follow their knight's banner to the field.

As to religion, he is quite sure that the Ave and the Pater are as much as will be expected of them; whilst Dame Hermentrud has most serious doubts of this new plan of writing books and reading prayers in the language of the common people. They will be thinking themselves as wise as the priests, and perhaps wiser than their masters.

But Ulrich's chief disappointment is with the peasants themselves. They seem as little anxious for improvement as the lords are for them, and are certainly suspicious to a most irritating degree of any schemes for their welfare issuing from the castle. As to their children being taught to read, they consider it an invasion of their rights, and murmur that if they follow the nobles in hunt and foray, and till their fields, and go to mass on Sunday, the rest of their time is their own, and it is an usurpation in priest or knight to demand more.

It will, I fear, be long before the dry, barren crust of their dull hard life is broken; and yet the words of life are for them as much as for us! And one great difficulty seems to me, that if they were taught to read, there are so few German religious books. Except a few tracts of Dr. Luther's, what is there that they could understand? If some one would only translate the record of the words and acts of our Lord and his apostles, it would be worth while then teaching every one to read.

And if we could only get them to confide in us! There must be thought, and we know there is affection underneath all this reserve. It is a heavy heritage for the long ancestry of the Gersdorfs to have bequeathed to this generation, these recollections of tyranny and this mutual distrust. Yet Ulrich says it is too common throughout the land. Many of the old privileges of the nobles were so terribly oppressive in hard or careless hands.

The most promising field at present seems to be among the household retainers. Among these there is strong personal attachment; and the memory of Ulrich's pious mother seems to have left behind it that faith in goodness which is one of the most precious legacies of holy lives.

Even the peasants in the village speak lovingly of her; of the medicine she used to distil from the forest-herbs, and distribute with her own hands to the sick. There is a tradition also in the castle of a bright maiden called Beatrice who used to visit the cottage homes, and bring sunshine whenever she came. But she disappeared years ago, they say; and the old family nurse shakes her head as she tells me how the Lady Beatrice's heart was broken, when she was separated by family feuds from her betrothed, and after that she went to the convent at Nimptschen, and has been dead to the world ever since.

Nimptschen! that is the living grave where our precious Eva is buried. And yet where she is I am sure it can be no grave of death. She will bring life and blessings with her. I will write to her, especially about this poor blighted Beatrice.

Altogether the peasants seem much less suspicious of the women of the Gersdorf family than of the men. They will often listen attentively even to me. And when Chriemhild can go among them a little more, I hope better days will dawn.

August, 1521.

This morning we had a strange encounter. Some days since we received a mysterious intimation from Wittemberg, that Dr. Luther is alive and in friendly keeping, not far from us. To-day Ulrich and I were riding through the forest to visit an outlying farm of the Gersdorfs in the direction of Eisenach, when we heard across a valley the huntsman's horn, with the cry of the dogs in full chase. In a few moments an opening among the trees brought us in sight of the hunt sweeping towards us up the opposite slopes of the valley. Apart from the hunt, and nearer us, at a narrow part of the valley, we observed a figure in the cap and plumes of a knight, apparently watching the chase as we were. As we were looking at him, a poor bewildered leveret flew towards him, and cowered close to his feet. He stooped, and gently taking it up, folded it in the long sleeve of his tunic, and stepped quickly aside. In another minute, however, the hunt swept up towards him, and the dogs scenting the leveret, seized on it in its refuge, dragged it down, and killed it.

This unusual little incident, this human being putting himself on the side of the pursued, instead of among the pursuers, excited our attention. There was also something is the firm figure and sturdy gait that perplexingly reminded us of some one we knew. Our road lay across the valley, and Ulrich rode aside to greet the strange knight. In a moment he returned to me, and whispered,—

"It is Martin Luther!"

We could not resist the impulse to look once more on the kind honest face, and riding close to him we bowed to him.

He gave us a smile of recognition, and laying his hand on Ulrich's saddle said, softly, "The chase is a mystery of higher things. See how, as these ferocious dogs seized my poor leveret from its refuge, Satan rages against souls, and seeks to tear from their hiding-place even those already saved. But the Arm which holds them is stronger than mine. I have had enough of this kind of chase," he added; "sweeter to me the chase of the bears, wolves, boars, and foxes which lay

waste the Church, than that of these harmless creatures. And of such rapacious beasts there are enough in the world."

My heart was full of the poor peasants I had been seeing lately. I never could feel afraid of Dr. Luther, and this opportunity was too precious to be thrown away. It always seemed the most natural thing in the world to open one's heart to him. He understood so quickly and so fully. As he was wishing us good-bye, therefore, I said (I am afraid, in that abrupt blundering way of mine),—

"Dear Dr. Luther, the poor peasants here are so ignorant! and I have scarcely anything to read to them which they can understand. Tell some one, I entreat you, to translate the Gospels into German for them; such German as your 'Discourse on the Magnificat,' or 'The Lord's Prayer,' for they all understand that."

He smiled, and said, kindly,—

"It is being done, my child. I am trying in my Patmos tower once more to unveil the Revelation to the common people; and, doubtless, they will hear it gladly. That book alone is the sun from which all true teachers draw their light. Would that it were in the language of every man, held in every hand, read by every eye, listened to by every ear, treasured up in every heart. And it will be yet, I trust."

He began to move away, but as we looked reverently after him he turned to us again, and said, "Remember the wilderness was the scene of the temptation. Pray for me, that in the solitude of my wilderness I may be delivered from the tempter." And waving his hand, in a few minutes he was out of sight.

We thought it would be an intrusion to follow him, or to inquire where he was concealed. But as the hunt passed away, Ulrich recognized one of the huntsmen as a retainer of the Elector Frederick at his castle of the Wartburg.

And now when every night and morning in my prayers I add, as usual, the name of Dr. Luther to those of my mother and father and all dear to me, I think of him passing long days and nights alone in that grim castle, looking down on the dear old Eisenach valley, and I say, "Lord, make the wilderness to him the school for his ministry to all our land."

For was not our Saviour himself led first into the wilderness, to overcome the tempter in solitude, before he came forth to teach, and heal, and cast out devils?

October.

Ulrich has seen Dr. Luther again. He was walking in the forest near the Wartburg, and looked very ill and sad. His heart was heavy on account of the disorders in the Church, the falsehood and bitterness of the enemies of the gospel, and the impetuosity or lukewarmness of too many of its friends. He said it would almost have been better if they had left him to die by the hands of his enemies. His blood might have cried to God for deliverance. He was ready to yield himself to them as an ox to the yoke. He would rather be burned on live coals, than sleep away the precious years thus, half alive, in sloth and ease. And yet, from what Ulrich gathered further from him of his daily life, his "sloth and ease" would seem arduous toil to most men. He saw the room where Dr. Luther lives and labours day and night, writing letters of consolation to his friends, and masterly replies, they say, to the assailants of the truth, and (better than all) translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into German.

The room has a large window commanding many reaches of the forest; and he showed Ulrich the rookery in the tops of the trees below, whence he learned lessons in politics from the grave consultations of the rooks who hold their Diet there; he also spoke to him of the various creatures in rock and forest which soothed his solitude, the birds singing among the branches, the berries, wild flowers, and the clouds and stars. But he alluded also to fearful conflicts, visible and audible appearances of the Evil One; and his health seemed much shattered.

We fear that noble loving heart is wearing itself out in the lonely fortress. He seems chafing like a war-horse at the echo of the distant battle; or a hunter at the sound of the chase; or, rather, as a captive general who sees his troops, assailed by force and stratagem, broken and scattered, and cannot break his chains to rally and to lead them on.

Yet he spoke most gratefully of his hospitable treatment in the castle; said he was living like a prince or a cardinal; and deprecated the thought that the good cause would not prosper without his presence.

"I cannot be with them in death," he said, "nor they with me! Each must fight that last fight, go through that passion alone. And only those will overcome who have learned how to win the victory before, and grounded deep in the heart that word, which is the great power against sin and the devil, that Christ has died for each one of us, and has overcome Satan for ever."

He said also that if Melancthon lived it mattered little to the Church what happened to him. The Spirit of Elijah came in double power on Elisha.

And he gave Ulrich two or three precious fragments of his translation of the Gospels, for me to read to the peasants.

November.

I have gone with my precious bits of the German Bible that is to be into many a cottage during this month,—simple narratives of poor, leprous, and palsied people, who came to the Lord, and he touched them and healed their diseases; and of sinners whom he forgave.

It is wonderful how the simple people seem to drink them in; that is, those who care at all for such things. "Is this indeed what the Lord Christ is like?" they say; "then, surely, we may speak to him in our own words, and ask just what we want, as those poor men and women did of old. Is it true, indeed, that peasants, women, and sick people could come straight to the Lord himself? Was he not always kept off from common people by a band of priests and saints? Was he indeed to be spoken to by all, and He such a great Lord?"

I said that I thought it was the necessity of human princes, and not their glory, to be obliged to employ deputies, and not let each one plead his own case. They look greatest afar off, surrounded by the pomp of a throne, because in themselves they are weak and sinful, like other men. But he needed no pomp, nor the dignity of distance, because he is not like other men, but sinless and divine, and the glory is in Himself, not in the things around him.

Then I had a narrative of the crucifixion to read; and many a tear have I seen stream over rough cheeks, and many a smile beam in dim aged eyes as I read this.

"We seem to understand it all at once," an old woman said; "and yet there always seems something more in it each time."

December.

This morning I had a letter from Bertrand,—the first for many weeks. He is full of hope; not, indeed, of recovering his inheritance, but of being at Wittemberg again in a few weeks.

I suppose my face looked very bright when I received it and ran with the precious letter to my own room; for Dame Hermentrud said much this evening about receiving everything with moderation, and about the propriety of young maidens having a very still and collected demeanour, and about the uncertainty of all things below. My heavenly Father knows I do not forget that all things are uncertain; although, often, I dare not dwell on it. But He has given me this good gift—He himself—and I will thank him with an overflowing heart for it!

I cannot understand Dame Hermentrud's religion. She seems to think it prudent, and a duty, to take everything God gives coolly, as if we did not care very much about it, lest He should think he had given us something too good for us, and grudge it to us, and take it away again.

No; if God does take away, He takes away as He gave, in infinite love; and I would not for the world add darkness to the dark days, if they must come, by the bitter regret that I did not enjoy the sunshine whilst He gave it. For, indeed, I cannot help fearing sometimes, when I think of the martyrs of old, and the bitterness of the enemies of the good tidings now. But then I try to look up, and try to say, "Safer, O Father, in thy hands than in mine." And all the comfort of the prayer depends on how I can comprehend and feel that name, "Father!"

XXI.

Eva's Story.

CISTERCIAN CONVENT,
NIMPTSCHEN,
September 2, 1521.

They have sent me several sheets of Dr. Luther's translation of the New Testament, from Uncle Cotta's press at Wittemberg.

Of all the works he ever did for God, this seems to me the mightiest and the best. None has ever so deeply stirred our convent. Many of the sisters positively refuse to join in any invocation of the saints. They declare that it must be Satan himself who has kept this glorious book locked up in a dead language out of reach of women and children and the common people. And the young nuns say it is so interesting, it is not in the least like a book of sermons, or a religious treatise.

"It is like every-day life," said one of them to me, "with what every one wants brought into it; a perfect Friend, so infinitely good, so near, and so completely understanding our inmost hearts. Ah, Sister Eva," she added, "if they could only hear of this at home!"

October.

To-day we have received a copy of Dr. Luther's thesis against the monastic life.

"There is but one only spiritual estate," he writes, "which is holy and makes holy, and that is Christianity,—the faith which is the common right of all."

"Monastic institutions," he continues, "to be of any use ought to be schools, in which children may be brought up until they are adults. But as it is, they are houses in which men and women become children, and ever continue childish."

Too well, alas! I know the truth of these last words; the hopeless, childish occupation with trifles, into which the majority of the nuns sink when the freshness of youth and the bitter conflict of separation from all dear to the heart has subsided, and the great incidents of life have become the decorating the church for a festival, or the pomp attending the visit of an Inspector or Bishop.

It is against this I have striven. It is this I dread for the young sisters; to see them sink into contented trifling with religious playthings. And I have been able to see no way of escape, unless, indeed, we could be transferred to some city and devote ourselves to the case of the sick and poor.

Dr. Luther, however, admits of another solution. We hear that he has counselled the Prior of the Monastery at Erfurt to suffer any monks who wish it freely to depart. And many, we have been told, in various monasteries, have already left, and returned to serve God in the world.

Monks can, indeed, do this. The world is open before them, and in some way they are sure to find occupation. But with us it is different. Torn away from our natural homes, the whole world around us is a trackless desert.

Yet how can I dare to say this? Since the whole world is the work of our heavenly father's hands, and may be the way to our Father's house, will not He surely find a place for each of us in it, and a path for us through it?

November 10.

Nine of the younger nuns have come to the determination, if possible, to give up the conventual life, with its round of superstitious observances. This evening we held a consultation in Sister Beatrice's cell. Aunt Agnes joined us.

It was decided that each should write to her relatives, simply confessing that she believed the monastic vows and life to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and praying to be received back into her family.

Sister Beatrice and Aunt Agnes decided to remain patiently where they were.

"My old home would be no more a home to me now than the convent," Sister Beatrice said. "There is liberty for me to die here, and an open way for my spirit to return to God."

And Aunt Agnes said,—

"Who knows but that there may be some lowly work left for me to do here yet! In the world I should be as helpless as a child, and why should I return to be a burden on my kindred."

They both urged me to write to Elsè or Aunt Cotta to receive me. But I can scarcely think it my duty. Aunt Cotta has her children around her. Elsè's home is strange to me. Besides, kind as every one has been to me, I am as a stray waif on the current of this world, and have no home in it. I think God has enabled me to cheer and help some few here, and while Aunt Agnes and Sister Beatrice remain, I cannot bear the thought of leaving. At all events I will wait.

November 22.

Fritz is in prison again. For many weeks they had heard nothing from him, and were wondering where he was, when a letter came from a priest called Ruprect Haller, in Franconia. He says Fritz came to his house one evening in July, remained the night, left next morning with his pack of Lutheran books, intending to proceed direct to Wittemberg, and gave him the address of Aunt Cotta there. But a few weeks afterwards a young monk met him near the Dominican Convent, and asked if he were the priest at whose house a pedlar had spent a night a few weeks before. The priest admitted it; whereon the young monk said to him, in a low, hurried accent,—

"Write to his friends, if you know them, and say he is in the prison of the convent, under strong suspicion of heresy. I am the young monk to whom he gave a book on the evening he came. Tell them I did not intend to betray him, although I led him into the net; and if ever they should procure his escape, and you see him again, tell him I have kept his book." The good priest says something also about Fritz having been his salvation. And he urges that the most strenuous exertions should be made to liberate him, and any powerful friends we have should be entreated to intercede, because the Prior of the Dominican Convent where he is imprisoned is a man of the severest temper, and a mighty hater of heretics.

Powerful friends! I know none whom we can entreat but God.

It was in July, then, that he was captured, two months since. I wonder if it is only my impatient spirit! but I feel as if I *must* go to Aunt Cotta. I have a feeling she will want me now. I think I might comfort her; for who can tell what two months in a Dominican prison may have done for him?

In our convent have we not a prison, low, dark, and damp enough to weigh the life out of any one in six weeks! From one of the massive low pillars hang heavy iron fetters, happily rusted now from disuse; and in a corner are a rack and other terrible instruments, now thrown aside there,

on which some of the older nuns say they have seen stains of blood.

When he was in prison before at Mainz, I did not seem so desponding about his deliverance as I feel now.

Are these fears God's merciful preparations for some dreadful tidings about to reach us? or are they the mere natural enfeebling of the power to hope as one grows older?

December, 1521.

Many disappointments have fallen on us during the last fortnight. Answer after answer has come to those touching entreaties of the nine sisters to their kindred, in various tones of feeling, but all positively refusing to receive them back to their homes.

Some of the relatives use the bitterest reproaches and the severest menaces. Others write tenderly and compassionately, but all agree that no noble family can possibly bring on itself the disgrace of aiding a professed nun to break her vows. Poor children! my heart aches for them, some of them are so young, and were so confident of being welcomed back with open arms, remembering the tears with which they were given up.

Now indeed they are thrown on God. He will not fail them; but who can say what thorny paths their feet may have to tread?

It has also been discovered here that some of them have written thus to their relations, which renders their position far more difficult and painful.

Many of the older nuns are most indignant at what they consider an act of the basest treachery and sacrilege. I also am forbidden to have any more intercourse with the suspected sisters. Search has been made in every cell, and all the Lutheran books have been seized, whilst the strictest attendance is required at all the services.

February 10, 1522.

Sister Beatrice is dead, after a brief illness. The gentle, patient spirit is at rest.

It seems difficult to think of joy associated with that subdued and timid heart, even in heaven. I can only think of her as *at rest*.

One night after she died I had a dream, in which I seemed to see her entering into heaven. Robed and veiled in white, I saw her slowly ascending the way to the gates of the City. Her head and her eyes were cast on the ground, and she did not seem to dare to look up at the pearly gates, even to see if they were open or closed. But two angels, the gentlest spirits in heaven, came out and met her, and each taking one of her hands, led her silently inside, like a penitent child. And as she entered, the harps and songs within seemed to be hushed to music soft as the dreamy murmur of a summer noon. Still she did not look up, but passed through the golden streets with her hands trustingly folded in the hands of the angels, until she stood before the throne. Then from the throne came a Voice, which said, "Beatrice, it is I; be not afraid." And when she heard that voice, a quiet smile beamed over her face like a glory, and for the first time she raised her eyes; and sinking at His feet, murmured, "Home!" And it seemed to me as if that one word from the low, trembling voice vibrated through every harp in heaven; and from countless voices, ringing as happy children's, and tender as a mother's, came back, in a tide of love and music, the word, "Welcome home."

This was only a dream; but it is no dream that she is there!

She said little in her illness. She did not suffer much. The feeble frame made little resistance to the low fever which attacked her. The words she spoke were mostly expressions of thankfulness for little services, or entreaties for forgiveness for any little pain she fancied she might have given.

Aunt Agnes and I chiefly waited on her. She was uneasy if we were long away from her. Her thoughts often recurred to her girlhood in the old castle in the Thuringian Forest; and she liked to hear me speak of Chriemhild and Ulrich, and their infant boy. One evening she called me to her, and said, "Tell my sister Hermentrud, and my brother, I am sure they all meant kindly in sending me here; and it has been a good place for me, especially since you came. But tell Chriemhild and Ulrich," she added, "if they have daughters, to remember plighted troth is a sacred thing, and let it not be lightly severed. Not that the sorrow has been evil for me; only I would not have another suffer. All, all has been good for me, and I so unworthy of all!"

Then passing her thin hands over my head as I knelt beside her, she said, "Eva, you have been like a mother, a sister, a child,—everything to me. Go back to your old home when I am gone. I like to think you will be there."

Then, as if fearing she might have been ungrateful to Aunt Agnes, she asked for her, and said, "I can never thank you enough for all you have done for me. The blessed Lord will remember it; for did he not say, 'In that ye have done it unto the *least*.'"

And in the night, as I sat by her alone, she said, "Eva, I have dreaded very much to die. I am so very weak in spirit, and dread everything. But I think God must make it easier for the feeble such as me. For although I do not feel any stronger I am not afraid now. It must be because He is

holding me up."

She then asked me to sing; and with a faltering voice I sung, as well as I could, the hymn, *Astant angelorum chori:—*

High the angel-choirs are raising
    Heart and voice in harmony:
The Creator King still praising,
    Whom in beauty there they see!
Sweetest strains from soft harps stealing,
Trumpet notes of triumph pealing;
Radiant wings and white robes gleaming,
Up the steps of glory streaming,
Where the heavenly bells are ringing,
Holy, holy, holy, singing
    To the mighty Trinity!
For all earthly care and sighing
    In that city cease to be!

And two days after, in the grey of the autumn morning, she died. She fell asleep with the name of Jesus on her lips.

It is strange how silent and empty the convent seems, only because that feeble voice is hushed and that poor shadowy form has passed away!

February, 1522.

Sister Beatrice has been laid in the convent church-yard with solemn mournful dirges and masses, and stately ceremonies, which seemed to me little in harmony with her timid, shrinking nature, or with the peace her spirit rests in now.

The lowly mound in the church-yard, marked by no memorial but a wooden cross, accords better with her memory. The wind will rustle gently there next summer, through the grass; and this winter the robin will warble quietly in the old elm above.

But I shall never see the grass clothe that earthly mound. It is decided that I am to leave the convent this week. Aunt Agnes and two of the young sisters have just left my cell, and all is planned.

The persecutions against those they call the Lutheran Sisters increase continually, whilst severer and more open proceedings are threatened. It is therefore decided that I am to make my escape at the first favourable opportunity, find my way to Wittemberg, and then lay the case of the nine nuns before the Lutheran doctors, and endeavour to provide for their rescue.

February 20, 1522.

At last the peasant's dress in which I am to escape is in my cell, and this very night, when all is quiet, I am to creep out of the window of Katherine von Bora's cell, into the convent garden. Aunt Agnes has been nervously eager about my going, and has been busy secretly storing a little basket with provisions. But to-night, when I went into her cell to wish her good-bye, she quite broke down, and held me tight in her arms, as if she could never let me go, while her lips quivered, and tears rolled slowly over her thin furrowed cheeks. "Eva, child," she said, "who first taught me to love in spite of myself, and then taught me that God is love, and that he could make me, believing in Jesus, a happy, loving child again! how can I part with thee?"

"Thou wilt join me again," I said, "and your sister who loves thee so dearly!"

She shook her head and smiled through her tears, as she said,—

"Poor helpless old woman that I am, what would you all do with me in the busy life outside?"

But her worst fear was for me, in my journey alone to Wittemberg, which seemed to her, who for forty years had never passed the convent walls, so long and perilous. Aunt Agnes always thinks of me as a young girl, and imagines every one must think me beautiful, because love makes me so to her. She is sure they will take me for some princess in disguise.

She forgets I am a quiet, sober-looking woman of seven-and-twenty, whom no one will wonder to see gravely plodding along the highway.

But I almost made her promise to come to us at Wittemberg; and at last she reproached herself with distrusting God, and said she ought never to have feared that his angels would watch over me.

Once more, then, the world opens before me; but I do not hope (and why should I wish?) that it should be more to me than this convent has been,—a place where God will be with me and give me some little loving services to do for him.

But my heart does yearn to embrace dear Aunt Cotta and Elsè once more, and little Thekla. And when Thekla marries, and Aunt and Uncle Cotta are left alone, I think they may want me, and Cousin Eva may grow old among Elsè's children, and all the grandchildren, helping one and

another a little, and missed a little when God takes me.

But chiefly I long to be near Aunt Cotta, now that Fritz is in that terrible prison. She always said I comforted her more than any one, and I think I may again.

XXII.

Elsè's Story.

October, 1521.

Christopher has just returned from a journey to Halle. They have dared once more to establish the sale of indulgences there, under the patronage of the young and self-indulgent Archbishop Albert of Mainz. Many of the students and the more thoughtful burghers are full of indignation at seeing the great red cross once more set up, and the heavenly pardons hawked through the streets for sale. This would not have been attempted, Gottfried feels sure, had not the enemy believed that Dr. Luther's voice is silenced for ever. Letters from him are, however, privately handed about among us here, and more than one of us know that he is in safe keeping not very far from us.

November.

Gottfried has just brought me the letter from Luther to the Archbishop of Mainz; which will at least convince the indulgence-mongers that they have roused the sleeping lion.

He reminds the Archbishop-Elector that a conflagration has already been raised by the protest of one poor insignificant monk against Tetzel; he warns him that the God who gave strength to that feeble human voice because its spoke his truth, "is living still, and will bring down the lofty cedars and the haughty Pharoahs, and can easily humble an Elector of Mainz although there were four Emperors supporting him." He solemnly requires him to put down that avaricious sale of lying pardons at Mainz, or he will speedily publish a denunciation (which he has already written) against "The New School at Halle." "For Luther," he says, "is not dead yet."

We are in great doubt how the Archbishop will bear such a bold remonstrance.

November 20.

The remonstrance has done its work. The Prince Archbishop has written a humble and apologetic letter to Dr. Luther, and the indulgences are once more banished from Halle.

At Wittemberg, however, Dr. Luther's letters do not at all compensate for his absence. There is great confusion here, and not seldom there are encounters between the opposite parties in the streets.

Almost all the monks in the Augustinian Convent refused some weeks since to celebrate private masses or to adore the host. The gentle Dr. Melancthon and the other doctors at first remonstrated, but were at length themselves convinced, and appealed to the Elector of Saxony himself to abolish these idolatrous ceremonies. We do not yet know how he will act. No public alterations have yet been made in the Church services.

But the great event which is agitating Wittemberg now is the abandonment of the cloister and the monastic life by thirteen of the Augustinian monks. The Pastor Feldkirchen declared against priestly vows, and married some months since. But he was only a secular priest; and the opinions of all good men about the marriage of the priests of the parochial churches have long been undivided amongst us.

Concerning the monks, however, it is different. For the priests to marry is merely a change of state; for the monks to abandon their vows is the destruction of their order, and of the monastic life altogether.

Gottfried and I are fully persuaded they are right; and we honour greatly these men, who, disclaiming maintenance at other people's expense, are content to place themselves among the students at the university. More especially, however, I honour the older or less educated brethren, who, relinquishing the consideration and idle plenty of the cloister, set themselves to learn some humble trade. One of these has apprenticed himself to a carpenter; and as we passed his bench the other day, and watched him perseveringly trying to train his unaccustomed fingers to handle the tools, Gottfried took off his cap and respectfully saluted him, saying,—

"Yes, that is right. Christianity must begin again with the carpenter's home at Nazareth."

In our family, however, opinions are divided. Our dear, anxious mother perplexes herself much as to what it will all lead to. It is true that Fritz's second imprisonment has greatly shaken her faith in the monks; but she is distressed at the unsettling tendencies of the age. To her it seems all destructive; and the only solution she can imagine for the difficulties of the times is, that these must be the latter days, and that when everything is pulled down, our Lord himself will come speedily to build up his kingdom in the right way.

Deprived of the counsel of Fritz and her beloved Eva, and of Dr. Luther—in whom lately she had grown more to confide, although she always deprecates his impetuosity of language—she cannot make up her mind what to think about anything. She has an especial dread of the vehemence of the Archdeacon Carlstadt; and the mild Melancthon is too much like herself in disposition for her to lean on his judgment.

Nevertheless, this morning, when I went to see them, I found her busily preparing some nourishing soup; which, when I asked her, she confessed was destined for the recusant monk who had become a carpenter.

"Poor creatures," she said apologetically, "they were accustomed to live well in the cloister, and I should not like them to feel the difference too suddenly."

Our grandmother is more than eighty now. Her form is still erect, although she seldom moves from her arm-chair; and her faculties seem little dimmed, except that she cannot attend to anything for any length of time. Sometimes I think old age to her is more like the tender days of early spring, than hard and frosty winter. Thekla says it seems as if this life were dawning softly for her into a better; or as if God were keeping her, like Moses, with undimmed eyes and strength unabated, till she may have the glimpse of the Promised Land, and see the deliverance she has so long waited for close at hand.

With our children she is as great a favourite as she was with us; she seems to have forgotten her old ways of finding fault; either because she feels less responsibility about the third generation, or because she sees all their little faults through a mellowed light. I notice, too, that she has fallen on quite a different vein of stories from those which used to rivet us. She seems to pass over the legendary lore of her early womanhood, back to the experiences of her own stirring youth and childhood. The mysteries of our grandfather's history, which we vainly sought to penetrate, are all opened to Gretchen and the boys. The saints and hermits, whose adventures were our delight, are succeeded by stories of secret Hussite meetings to read the Scriptures among the forests and mountains of Bohemia; of wild retreats in caves, where whole families lived for months in concealment; of heart-rending captures or marvellous escapes.

The heroes of my boys will be, not St. Christopher and St. George, but Hussite heretics! My dear mother often throws in a warning word to the boys, that those were evil times, and that people do not need to lead such wild lives now. But the text makes far more impression on the children than the commentary.

Our grandmother's own chief delight is still in Dr. Luther's writings. I have lately read over to her and my father, I know not how many times, his letter from the Wartburg, "to the little band of Christ at Wittemberg," with his commentary accompanying it on the 37th Psalm—"Fret not thyself because of evildoers."

Our dear father is full of the brightest visions. He is persuaded that the whole world is being rapidly set right, and that it matters little, indeed, that his inventions could not be completed, since we are advancing at full speed into the Golden Age of humanity.

Thus, from very opposite points and through very different paths, he and my mother arrive at the same conclusion.

We have heard from Thekla that Ulrich has visited Dr. Luther at the Wartburg, where he is residing. I am so glad to know where he is. It is always so difficult to me to think of people without knowing the scene around them. The figure itself seems to become shadowy in the vague, shadowy, unknown world around it. It is this which adds to my distress about Fritz. Now I can think of Dr. Luther sitting in that large room in which I waited for the Elector with my embroidery, so many years ago—looking down the steep over the folded hills, reaching one behind another till the black pines and the green waving branches fade into lovely blue beneath the golden horizon. And at sunset I seem to see how the shadows creep over the green valleys where we used to play, and the low sun lights up the red stems of the pines.

Or in the summer noon I see him sitting with his books—great folios, Greek, and Hebrew, and Latin—toiling at that translation of the Book of God, which is to be the blessing of all our people; while the warm sunbeams draw out the aromatic scent of the fir-woods, and the breezes bring it in at the open window.

Or at early morning I fancy him standing by the castle walls, looking down on the towers and distant roofs of Eisenach, while the bell of the great convent booms up to him the hour; and he thinks of the busy life beginning in the streets, where once he begged for bread at Aunt Ursula Cotta's door. Dear Aunt Ursula, I wish she could have lived till now, to see the rich harvest an act of loving-kindness will sometimes bring forth.

Or at night, again, when all sounds are hushed except the murmur of the unseen stream in the valley below, and the sighing of the wind through the forest, and that great battle begins which he has to fight so often with the powers of darkness, and he tries to pray, and cannot lift his heart to God, I picture him opening his casement, and looking down on forest, rook, and meadow, lying dim and lifeless beneath him, glance from these up to God, and re-assure himself with the truth he delights to utter—

"*God lives still!*" feeling, as he gazes, that night is only hiding the sun, not quenching him, and watching till the grey of morning slowly steals up the sky and down into the forest.

Yes, Dr. Melancthon has told us how he toils and how he suffers at the

Wartburg, and how once he wrote, "Are my friends forgetting to pray for me, that the conflict is so terrible?" No; Gottfried remembers him always among our dearest names of kith and kindred.

"But," he said to-day, "we must leave the training of our chief to God."

Poor, tried, perplexed Saint Elizabeth! another royal heart is suffering at the Wartburg now, another saint is earning his crown through the cross at the old castle home; but not to be canonized in the Papal Calendar!

December 21.

The chapter of the Augustinian Order in Thuringia and Misnia has met here within this last month, to consider the question of the irrevocable nature of monastic vows. They have come to the decision that in Christ there is neither layman nor monk; that each is free to follow his conscience.

Christmas Day,
1521.

This has been a great day with us.

Archdeacon Carlstadt announced, some little time since, that he intended, on the approaching Feast of the Circumcision, to administer the holy sacrament to the laity under the two species of bread and wine. His right to do this having been disputed, he hastened the accomplishment of his purpose, lest it should be stopped by any prohibition from the court.

To-day, after his sermon in the City Church, in which he spoke of the necessity of replacing the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass by the holy supper, he went to the altar, and, after pronouncing the consecration of the elements in German, he turned towards the people, and said solemnly,—

"Whosoever feels heavy laden with the burden of his sins, and hungers and thirsts for the grace of God, let him come and receive the body and blood of the Lord."

A brief silence followed his words, and then, to my amazement, before any one else stirred, I saw my timid, retiring mother slowly moving up the aisle, leading my father by the hand. Others followed; some with reverent, solemn demeanour, others perhaps with a little haste and over-eagerness. And as the last had retired from the altar, the archdeacon, pronouncing the general absolution, added solemnly,—

"Go, and sin no more."

A few moments' pause succeeded, and then, from many voices here and there, gradually swelling to a full chorus, arose the Agnus Dei,—

"Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. Give us peace."

We spent the Christmas, as usual, in my father's house. Wondering, as I did, at my mother's boldness, I did not like to speak to her on the subject; but, as we sat alone in the afternoon, while our dear father, Gottfried, Christopher and the children had gone to see the skating on the Elbe, she said to me,—

"Elsè, I could not help going. It seemed like the voice of our Lord himself saying to me, '*Thou* art heavy laden-come!' I never understood it all as I do now. It seemed as if I *saw* the gospel with my eyes,—saw that the redemption is finished, and that now the feast is spread. I forgot to question whether I repented, or believed, or loved enough. I saw through the ages the body broken and the blood shed for me on Calvary; and now I saw the table spread, and heard the welcome, and I could not help taking your father's hand and going up at once."

"Yes, dear mother, you set the whole congregation the best example!" I said.

"I!" she exclaimed. "Do you mean that I went up before any one else? What! before all the holy men, and doctors, and the people in authority? Elsè, my child, what have I done? But I did not think of myself, or of any one else. I only seemed to hear His voice calling me; and what could I do but go? And, indeed, I cannot care now how it looked! Oh, Elsè," she continued, "it is worth while to have the world thus agitated to restore this feast again to the Church; worth while," she added with a trembling voice, "even to have Fritz in prison for this. The blessed Lord has sacrificed himself for us, and we are living in the festival. He died for sinners. He spread the feast for the hungry and thirsty. Then those who feel their sins most must be not the last but the first to come. I see it all now. That holy sacrament is the gospel for me."

February 10, 1522.

The whole town is in commotion.

Men have appeared among us who say that they are directly inspired from heaven; that study is quite unnecessary—indeed, an idolatrous concession to the flesh and the letter; that it is wasting time and strength to translate the Holy Scriptures, since, without their understanding a word of Greek or Hebrew, God has revealed its meaning to their hearts.

These men come from Zwickau. Two of them are cloth-weavers; and one is Münzer, who was a priest. They also declare themselves to be prophets. Nicholas Storck, a weaver, their leader, has chosen twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples, in imitation of our Lord. And one of them cried in awful tones, to-day through the streets,—

"Woe, woe to the impious governers of Christendom! Within less then seven years the world shall be made desolate. The Turk will overrun the land. No sinner shall remain alive. God will purify the earth by blood, and all the priests will be put to death. The saints will reign. The day of the Lord is at hand. Woe! woe!"

Opinions are divided throughout the university and the town about them. The Elector himself says he would rather yield up his crown and go through the world a beggar than resist the voice of the Lord. Dr. Melancthon hesitated, and says we must try the spirits whether they be of God. The Archdeacon Carlstadt is much impressed with them, and from his professorial chair even exhorts the students to abandon the vain pursuits of carnal wisdom, and to return to earn their bread, according to God's ordinance, in the sweat of their brow. The master of the boys' school called, from the open window of the school-room, to the citizens to take back their children. Not a few of the students are dispersing, and others are in an excitable state, ready for any tumult. The images have been violently torn from one of the churches and burnt. The monks of the Convent of the Cordeliers have called the soldiers to their aid against a threatened attack.

Gottfried and others are persuaded that these men of Zwickau are deluded enthusiasts. He says, "The spirit which undervalues the word of God cannot be the Spirit of God."

But among the firmest opponents of these new doctrines is, to our surprise, our charitable mother. Her gentle, lowly spirit seems to shrink from them as with a heavenly instinct. She says, "The Spirit of God humbles—does not puff up."

When it was reported to us the other day that Nicholas Storck had seen the angel Gabriel in the night, who flew towards him and said to him, "As for thee, thou shalt be seated on my throne!" the mother said,—

"It is new language to the angel Gabriel, to speak of *his* throne. The angels in old times used to speak of the throne of God."

And when another said that it was time to sift the chaff from the wheat, and to form a Church of none but saints, she said,—

"That would never suit me then. I must stay outside, in the Church of redeemed sinners. And did not St. Paul himself say, as Dr. Luther told us, 'Sinners, of whom I am chief?'"

"But are you not afraid," some one asked her, "of dishonouring God by denying his messengers, if, after all, these prophets should be sent from him?"

"I think not," she replied quietly. "Until the doctors are sure, I think I cannot displease my Saviour by keeping to the old message."

My father, however, is much excited about it; he sees no reason why there should not be prophets at Wittemberg as well as at Jerusalem; and in these wonderful days, he argues, what wonders can be too great to believe?

I and many others long exceedingly for Dr. Luther. I believe, indeed, Gottfried is right, but it would be terrible to make a mistake; and Dr. Luther always seems to see straight to the heart of a thing at once, and storms the citadel, while Dr. Melancthon is going round and round, studying each point of the fortifications.

Dr. Luther never wavers in opinion in his letters, but warns us most forcibly against these delusions of Satan. But then people say he has not seen or heard the "prophets." One letter can be discussed and answered long before another comes, and the living eye and voice are much in such a conflict as this.

What chief could lead an army on to battle by letters?

February 26, 1522.

Our dove of peace has come back to our home; our Eva! This evening, when I went over with a message to my mother, to my amazement I saw her sitting with her hand in my father's, quietly reading to him the twenty-third psalm, while my grandmother sat listening, and my mother was contentedly knitting beside them.

It seemed as if she had scarcely been absent a day, so quietly had she glided into her old place. It seemed so natural, and yet so like a dream, that the sense of wonder passed from me as it does in dreams, and I went up to her and kissed her forehead.

"Dear Cousin Elsè, is it you!" she said. "I intended to have come to you the first thing to-morrow."

The dear, peaceful, musical voice, what a calm it shed over the home again!

"You see you have all left Aunt Cotta," she said, with a slight tremulousness in her tone, "so I am come back to be with her always, if she will let me."

There were never any protestations of affection between my mother and Eva, they understand

each other so completely.

February 28.

Yes, it is no dream. Eva has left the convent, and is one of us once more. Now that she has resumed all her old ways, I wonder more than ever how we could have got on without her. She speaks as quietly of her escape from the convent, and her lonely journey across the country, as if it were the easiest and most every-day occurrence. She says every one seemed anxious to help her and take care of her.

She is very little changed. Hers was not a face to change. The old guileless expression is on her lips—the same trustful, truthful light in her dark soft eyes; the calm, peaceful brow, that always reminded one of a sunny, cloudless sky, is calm and bright still; and around it the golden hair, not yet grown from its conventual cutting, clusters in little curls which remind me of her first days with us at Eisenach. Only all the character of the face seems deepened, I cannot say shadowed, but penetrated with that kind of look which I fancy must always distinguish the face of the saints above from those of the angels,—those who have suffered from those who have only sympathized; that deep, tender, patient, trusting, human look, which is stamped on those who have passed to the heavenly rapturous "*Thy will be done*," through the agony of "*Not my will, but Thine*."

At first Gretchen met her with the kind of reverent face she has at church; and she asked me afterwards, "Is that really the Cousin Eva in the picture?" But now there is the most familiar intimacy between them, and Gretchen confidingly and elaborately expounds to Cousin Eva all her most secret plans and delights. The boys, also, have a most unusual value for her good opinion, and appear to think her judgment beyond that of ordinary women; for yesterday little Fritz was eagerly explaining to her the virtues of a new bow that had been given him, formed in the English fashion.

She is very anxious to set nine young nuns, who have embraced the Lutheran doctrine, free from Nimptschen. Gottfried thinks it very difficult, but by no means impracticable in time.

Meanwhile, what a stormy world our dove has returned to!—the university well-nigh disorganized; the town in commotion; and no German Bible yet in any one's hands, by which, as Gottfried says, the claims of these new prophets might be tested.

Yet it does not seem to depress Eva. She says it seems to her like coming out of the ark into a new world; and, no doubt, Noah did not find everything laid out in order for him. She is quite on my mother's side about the prophets. She says, the apostles preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. If the Zwickau prophets preach him, they preach nothing new; and if they preach themselves, neither God nor the angel Gabriel gave them that message.

Our great sorrow is Fritz's continued imprisonment. At first we felt sure he would escape, but every month lessens our hopes, until we scarcely dare speak of him except in our prayers. Yet daily, together with his deliverance, Gottfried and I pray for the return of Dr. Luther, and for the prosperous completion of his translation of the German Bible, which Gottfried believes will be the greatest boon Dr. Luther has given, or can ever give, to the German people, and through them to them Christendom.

Saturday, March 8,
1522.

The great warm heart is beating amongst us once more!

Dr. Luther is once more dwelling quietly in the Augustinian cloister, which he left for Worms a year ago. What changes since then! He left us amid our tears and vain entreaties not to trust his precious life to the treacherous safe-conduct which had entrapped John Huss to the stake.

He returns unscathed and triumphant—the defender of the good cause before emperor, prelates, and princes—the hero of our German people.

He left citizens and students for the most part trembling at the daring of his words and deeds.

He returns to find students and burghers impetuously and blindly rushing on the track he opened, beyond his judgment and convictions.

He left, the foremost in the attack, timidly followed as he hurried forward, braving death alone.

He returns to recall the scattered forces, dispersed and divided in wild and impetuous pursuit.

Will, then, his voice be as powerful to recall and reorganize as it was to urge forward?

He wrote to the Elector, on his way from the Wartburg, disclaiming his protection—declaring that he returned to the flock God had committed to him at Wittemberg, called and constrained by God himself, and under mightier protection than that of an elector! "The sword," he said, "could not defend the truth. The mightiest are those whose faith is mightiest. Relying on his master, Christ, and on him alone, he came."

Gottfried says it is fancy, but already it seems to me I see a difference in the town—less bold, loud talking, than the day before yesterday; as in a family of eager, noisy boys, whose father is amongst them again. But after to-morrow, we shall be able to judge better. He is to preach in the city pulpit.

We have heard him preach once more. Thank God, those days in the wilderness, as he called it, have surely not been lost days for Dr. Luther.

As he stood again in the pulpit, many among the crowded congregation could not refrain from shedding tears of joy. In that familiar form and truthful, earnest face, we saw the man who had stood unmoved before the emperor and all the great ones of the empire—alone, upholding the truth of God.

Many of us saw, moreover, with even deeper emotion, the sufferer who, during those last ten months, had stood before an enemy more terrible than pope or emperor, in the solitude of the Wartburg; and while his own heart and flesh were often well-nigh failing in the conflict, had never failed to carry on the struggle bravely and triumphantly for us his flock; sending masterly replies to the University of Paris; smiting the lying traffic with indulgences, by one noble remonstrance, from the trembling hands of the Archbishop of Mainz; writing letter after letter of consolation or fatherly counsel to the little flock of Christ at Wittemberg; and, through all, toiling at that translation of the Word of God, which is the great hope of our country.

But older, tenderer, more familiar associations, mastered all the others when we heard his voice again—the faithful voice that had warned and comforted us so long in public and in private. To others, Dr. Luther might be the hero of Worms, the teacher of Germany, the St. George who had smitten the dragon of falsehood: to us he was the true, affectionate pastor; and many of us, I believe, heard little of the first words of his sermon, for the mere joy of hearing his voice again, as the clear, deep tones, vibrated through the silent church.

He began with commending our faith. He said we had made much progress during his absence. But he went on to say, "We must have more than faith—we must have love. If a man with a sword in his hand happens to be alone, it matters little whether he keep it in the scabbard or not; but if he is in the midst of a crowd, he must take care to hold it so as not to hurt any one.

"A mother begins with giving her infant milk. Would it live if she gave it first meat and wine?

"But, thou, my friend, hast, perhaps had enough of milk! It way be well for thee. Yet let thy weaker, younger brother take it. The time was when thou also couldst have taken nothing else.

"See the sun! It brings us two things—light and heat. The rays of light beam directly on us. No king is powerful enough to intercept those keen, direct, swift rays. But heat is radiated back to us from every side. Thus, like the light, faith should ever be direct and inflexible; but love, like the heat, should radiate on all sides, and meekly adapt itself to the wants of all.

"The abolition of the mass, you say," he continued, "is according to Scripture. I agree with you. But in abolishing it, what regard had you for order and decency? You should have offered fervent prayers to God, public authority should have been applied to, and every one would have seen then that the thing came from God.

"The mass is a bad thing; God is its enemy: it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout the whole world it were superceded by the supper of the gospel. But let none tear any one away from it with violence. The matter ought to be committed to God. It is His Word that must act, and not we. And wherefore? do you say? Because I do not hold the hearts of men in my hand as the potter holds the clay in his. Our work is to speak; God will act. Let us preach. The rest belongs to him. If I employ force, what do I gain? Changes in demeanour, outward shows, grimaces, shams, hypocrisies. But what becomes of sincerity of heart, of faith, of Christian love? All is wanting where these are wanting; and for the rest I would not give the stalk of a pear.

"What we want is the heart; and to win that, we must preach the gospel. Then the word will drop to-day into one heart, to-morrow into another, and will so work that each will forsake the mass. God effects more than you and I and the whole world combined could attempt. He secures the heart; and when that is won, all is won.

"I say not this in order to re-establish the mass. Since it has been put down, in God's name let it remain so. But ought it to have been put down in the way it has been? St. Paul, on arriving at the great city of Athens, found altars there erected to false gods. He passed from one to another, made his own reflections on all, but touched none. But he returned peaceably to the Forum, and declared to the people that all those gods were mere idols. This declaration laid hold on the hearts of some, and the idols fell without Paul's touching them. I would preach, I would speak, I would write, but I would lay constraint on no one; for faith is a voluntary thing. See what I have done! I rose in opposition to the pope, to indulgences, and the Papists; but I did so without tumult or violence. I pressed before all things the word of God; I preached, I wrote; I did nothing else. And while I was asleep, or seated at table in conversation with Amsdorf and Melancthon, over our Wittemberg beer, that Word which I had been preaching was working, and subverted the popedom as never before it was damaged by assault of prince or emperor. I did nothing; all was done by the Word. Had I sought to appeal to force, Germany might by this time have been steeped in blood. And what would have been the result? Ruin and desolation of soul and body. I therefore kept myself quiet, and left the Word to force its own way through the world. Know you what, the devil thinks when he sees people employ violence in disseminating the gospel among men? Seated with his arms crossed behind hell fire, Satan says, with a malignant look and hideous leer, 'Ah, but these fools are wise men, indeed, to do my work for me!' But when he sees the Word go forth and engage alone on the field of battle, then he feels ill at ease; his knees smite

against each other, he shudders and swoons away with terror."

Quietly and reverently, not with loud debatings and noisy protestations of what they would do next, the congregation dispersed.

The words of forbearance came with such weight from that daring, fearless heart, which has braved the wrath of popedom and empire above for God, and still braves excommunication and ban!

Wednesday, March 11.

Yesterday again Dr. Luther preached. He earnestly warned us against the irreverent participation in the holy sacrament. "It is not the external eating, which makes the Christian," he said; "it is the internal and spiritual eating, which is the work of faith, and without which all external things are mere empty shows and vain grimaces. Now this faith consists in firmly believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that having charged himself with our sins and our iniquities, and having borne them on the cross, he is himself the sole, the all-sufficient expiation; that he ever appears before God; that he reconciles us to the Father, and that he has given us the sacrament of his body in order to strengthen our faith in that unutterable mercy. If I believe these things, God is my defender: with him on my side, I brave sin, death, hell, and demons; they can do me no harm, nor even touch a hair of my head. This spiritual bread is the consolation of the afflicted, the cure of the sick, the life of the dying, food to the hungry, the treasure of the poor. He who is not grieved by his sins, ought not, then, to approach this altar. What would he do there? Ah, did our conscience accuse us, did our heart feel crushed at the thought of our shortcomings, we could not then lightly approach the holy sacrament."

There were more among us than the monk Gabriel Didymus (a few days since one of the most vehement of the violent faction, now sobered and brought to his right mind), that could say as we listened, "Verily it is as the voice of an angel."

But, thank God, it is not the voice of an angel, but a human voice vibrating to every feeling of our hearts—the voice of our own true, outspoken Martin Luther, who will, we trust, now remain with us to build up with the same word which has already cleared away so much.

And yet I cannot help feeling as if his absence had done its work for us as well as his return. If the hands of violence can be arrested now, I cannot but rejoice they have done just as much as they have.

Now, let Dr. Luther's principle stand. Abolish nothing that is not directly prohibited by the Holy Scriptures.

March 30.

Dr. Luther's eight discourses are finished, and quiet is restored to Wittemberg. The students resume their studies, the boys return to school; each begins with a lowly heart once more the work of his calling.

No one has been punished. Luther would not have force employed either against the superstitious or the unbelieving innovators. "Liberty," he says, "is of the essence of faith."

With his tender regard for the sufferings of others we do not wonder so much at this.

But we all wonder far more at the gentleness of his words. They say the bravest soldiers make the best nurses of their wounded comrades. Luther's hand seems to have laid aside the battle-axe, and coming among his sick and wounded and perplexed people here, he ministers to them gently as the kindest woman—as our own mother could, who is herself won over to love and revere him with all her heart.

Not a bitter word has escaped him, although the cause these disorders are risking is the cause for which he has risked his life.

And there are no more tumults in the streets. The frightened Cordelier monks may carry on their ceremonies without terror, or the aid of soldiery. All the warlike spirits are turned once more from raging against small external things, to the great battle beginning everywhere against bondage and superstition.

Dr. Luther himself has engaged Dr. Melancthon's assistance in correcting and perfecting the translation of the New Testament, which he made in the solitude of the Wartburg. Their friendship seems closer than ever.

Christopher's press is in the fullest activity, and all seem full of happy, orderly occupation again.

Sometimes I tremble when I think how much we seem to depend on Dr. Luther, lest we should make an idol of him; but Thekla, who is amongst us again, said to me when I expressed this fear, —

"Ah, dear Elsè, that is the old superstition. When God gives us a glorious summer and good harvest, are we to receive it coldly and enjoy it tremblingly, lest he should send us a bad season next year to prevent our being too happy? If he sends the dark days, will he not also give us a lamp for our feet through them?"

And even our gentle mother said,—

"I think if God gives us a staff, Elsè, he *intends* us to lean on it."

"And when he takes it away," said Eva, "I think He is sure to give us his own hand instead! I think what grieves God is, when we use his gifts for what he did *not* intend them to be; as if, for instance, we were to *plant* our staff, instead of *leaning* on it; or to set it up as an image and adore it, instead of resting on it and adoring God. *Then*, I suppose, we might have to learn that our idol was not in itself a support, or a living thing at all, but only a piece of lifeless wood."

"Yes," said Thekla decidedly, "when God gives us friends, I believe he means us to love them as much as we can. And when he gives us happiness, I am sure he means us to enjoy it as much as we can. And when he gives soldiers a good general, he means them to trust and follow him. And when he gives us back Dr. Luther and Cousin Eva," she added, drawing Eva's hand from her work and covering it with kisses, "I am quite sure he means us to welcome them with all our hearts, and feel that we can never make enough of them. O Elsè," she added, smiling, "you will never, I am afraid, be set quite free from the old fetters. Every now and then we shall hear them clanking about you, like the chains of the family ghost of the Gersdorfs. You will never quite believe, dear good sister, that God is not better pleased with you when you are sad than when you are happy."

"He is often nearest," said Eva softly, "when we are sad." And Thekla's lip quivered and her eyes filled with tears as she replied in a different tone,—

"I think I know that too, Cousin Eva."

Poor child, she has often had to prove it. Her heart must often ache when she thinks of the perilous position of Bertrand de Crèqui among his hostile kindred in Flanders. And it is therefore she cannot bear a shadow of a doubt to be thrown on the certainty of their re-union.

The evangelical doctrine is enthusiastically welcomed at Antwerp and other cities of the Low Countries. But, on the other hand, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities oppose it vehemently, and threaten persecution.

May, 1522.

Dr. Luther has had an interview with Mark Stübner, the schoolmaster Cellarius, and others of the Zwickau prophets and their disciples. He told them plainly that he believed their violent, self-willed, fanatical proceedings were suggested, not by the Holy Spirit of love and truth, but by the spirit of lies and malice. Yet he is said to have listened to them with quietness. Cellarius, they say, foamed and gnashed his teeth with rage, but Stübner showed more self-restraint.

However, the prophets have all left Wittemberg, and quiet is restored.

A calm has come down on the place, and on every home in it—the calm of order and subjection instead of the restlessness of self-will. And all has been accomplished through the presence and the words of the man whom God has sent to be our leader, and whom we acknowledge. Not one act of violence has been done since he came. He would suffer no constraint either on the consciences of the disciples of the "prophets," or on those of the old superstition. He relies, as we all do, on the effect of the translation of the Bible into German, which is now quietly and rapidly advancing.

Every week the doctors meet in the Augustinian Convent, now all but empty, to examine the work done, and to consult about the difficult passages. When once this is accomplished, they believe God will speak through those divine pages direct to all men's hearts, and preachers and doctors may retire to their lowly subordinate places.

XXIII.

Atlantis' Story.

Chriemhild and I have always been the least clever of the family, and with much less that is distinctive about us. Indeed, I do not think there is anything particularly characteristic about us, except our being twins. Thekla says we are pure Saxons, and have neither of us anything of the impetuous Czech or Bohemian blood; which may so far be good for me, because Conrad has not a little of the vehement Swiss character in him. Every one always spoke of Chriemhild and me, and thought of us together; and when they called us the beauties of the family, I think they chiefly meant that we looked pleasant together by contrast. Thekla says God sends the flowers into the world as twins; contrasting with each other just as we did,—the dark-eyed violets with the fair primroses; golden gorse, and purple heather. Chriemhild she used sometimes to call sister Primrose, and me sister Violet. Chriemhild, however, is beautiful by herself without me,—so tall, and fair, and placid, and commanding-looking, with her large grey eyes, her calm broad brow, and her erect full figure, which always made her gentle manner seem condescending like a queen's. But I am nothing without Chriemhild; only people used to like to see my small slight figure, and my black eyes and hair, beside hers.

I wonder what Conrad Winkelried's people will think of me in that far-off mountainous

Switzerland whither he is to take me! He is sure they will all love me; but how can I tell? Sometimes my heart flutters a great deal to think of leaving home, and Elsè and the dear mother, and all. It is true Chriemhild seemed to find it quite natural when the time came, but she is so different. Every one was sure to be pleased with Chriemhild.

And I am so accustomed to love and kindness. They all know me so well here, and how much less clever I am than the rest, that they all bear with me tenderly. Even Thekla, who is often a little vehement, is always gentle with me, although she may laugh a little sometimes when I say anything more foolish than usual. I am so often making discoveries of things that every one else knew long since. I do not think I am so much afraid on my own account, because I have so little right to expect anything, and always get so much more than I deserve from our dear heavenly Father and from every one. Only on Conrad's account I should like to be a little wiser, because he knows so many languages, and is so very clever. When I spoke to Elsè about it once, she smiled and said she had the same kind of fears once, but if we ask him, God will always give us just the wisdom we want day by day. It is part of the "daily bread," she said. And certainly Elsè is not learned, and yet every one loves her, and she does so much good in a quiet way. But then, although she is not learned, she seems to me wise in little things. And she used to write a Chronicle when she was younger than I am. She told me so, although I have never seen it. I have been thinking that perhaps it is writing the Chronicle that has made her wise, and therefore I intend to try to write one. But as at present I can think of nothing to say of my own, I will begin by copying a narrative Conrad lent me to read a few days since, written by a young Swiss student, a friend of his, who has just come to Wittemberg from St. Gall, where his family live. His name is Johann Kessler, and Conrad thinks him very good and diligent.

"*Copy of Johann Kessler's Narrative.*

"As we were journeying towards Wittemberg to study the Holy Scriptures, at Jena we encountered a fearful tempest, and after many inquiries in the town for an inn where we might pass the night, we could find none, either by seeking or asking; no one would give us a night's lodging. For it was carnival time, when people have little care for pilgrims and strangers. So we went forth again from the town, to try if we could find a village where we might rest for the night.

"At the gate, however, a respectable-looking man met us, and spoke kindly to us, and asked whither we journeyed so late at night, since in no direction could we reach house or inn where we could find shelter before dark night set in. It was, moreover, a road easy to lose; he counselled us, therefore, to remain all night where we were.

"We answered,—

"'Dear father, we have been at all the inns, and they sent us from one to another; everywhere they refused us lodging; we have, therefore, no choice but to journey further.'

"Then he asked if we had also inquired at the sign of the Black Bear.

"Then we said,—

"'We have not seen it. Friend, where is it?'

"Then he led us a little out of the town. And when we saw the Black Bear, lo, whereas all the other landlords had refused us shelter, the landlord there came himself out at the gate to receive us, bade us welcome, and led us into the room.

"There we found a man sitting alone at the table, and before him lay a little book. He greeted us kindly, asked us to draw near, and to place ourselves by him at the table. For our shoes (may we be excused for writing it) were so covered with mud and dirt, that we were ashamed to enter boldly into the chamber, and had seated ourselves on a little bench in a corner near the door.

"Then he asked us to drink, which we could not refuse. When we saw how cordial and friendly he was, we seated ourselves near him at his table as he had asked us, and ordered wine that we might ask him to drink in return. We thought nothing else but that he was a trooper, as he sat there, according to the custom of the country, in hosen and tunic, without armour, a sword by his side, his right hand on the pommel of his sword, his left grasping its hilt. His eyes were black and deep, flashing and beaming like a star, so that they could not well be looked at.

"Soon he began to ask what was our native country. But he himself replied,—

"'You are Switzers. From what part of Switzerland?"

"We answered,—

"'From St Gall.'

"Then he said,—

"If you are going hence to Wittemberg, as I hear, you will find good fellow-countrymen there, namely, Doctor Hieronymus Schurf, and his brother, Doctor Augustin.'

"We said,—

"'We have letters to them.' And then we inquired,

"'Sir, can you inform us if Martin Luther is now at Wittemberg, or if not, where he is?'

"He said,—

"'I have reliable information that Luther is not now at Wittemberg. He will, however, soon be there. Philip Melancthon is there now; he teaches Greek, and others teach Hebrew. I counsel you earnestly to study both; for both are necessary in order to understand the Holy Scriptures.'

"We said,—

"'God be praised! For if God spare our lives we will not depart till we see and hear that man; since on his account we have undertaken this journey, because we understood that he purposes to abolish the priesthood, together with the mass, as an unfounded worship. For as we have from our youth been destined by our parents to be priests, we would know what kind of instruction he will give us, and on what authority he seeks to effect such an object.'

"After these words, he asked,—

"'Where have you studied hitherto?'

"Answer, 'At Basel.'

"Then he said, 'How goes it at Basel? Is Erasmus of Rotterdam still there, and what is he doing?"

"'Sir,' said we, 'we know not that things are going on there otherwise than well. Also, Erasmus is there, but what he is occupied with is unknown to any one, for he keeps himself very quiet, and in great seclusion.'

"This discourse seemed to us very strange in the trooper; that he should know how to speak of both the Schurfs, of Philip, and Erasmus, and also of the study of Hebrew and Greek.

"Moreover, he now and then used Latin words, so that we deemed he must be more than a common trooper.

"'Friend,' he asked, 'what do they think in Switzerland of Luther.'

"'Sir, there, as elsewhere, there are various opinions. Many cannot enough exalt him, and praise God that He has made His truth plain through him, and laid error bare; many, on the other hand, and among these more especially the clergy, condemn him as a reprobate heretic.'

"Then he said, 'I can easily believe it is the clergy that speak thus.'

"With such conversation we grew quite confidential, so that my companion took up the little book that lay before him, and looked at it. It was a Hebrew Psalter. Then he laid it quickly down again, and the trooper drew it to himself. And my companion said, 'I would give a finger from my hand to understand that language.'

"He answered, 'You will soon comprehend it, if you are diligent; I also desire to understand it better, and practise myself daily in it.'

"Meantime the day declined, and it became quite dark, when the host came to the table.

"When he understood our fervent desire and longing to see Martin Luther, he said,—

"'Good friends, if you had been here two days ago, you would have had your wish, for he sat here at table, and' (pointing with his finger) 'in that place.'

"It vexed and fretted us much that we should have lingered on the way; and we vented our anger on the muddy and wretched roads that had delayed us.

"But we added,—

"'It rejoices us, however, to sit in the house and at the table where he sat.'

"Thereat the host laughed, and went out at the door.

"After a little while, he called me to come to him at the door of the chamber. I was alarmed, fearing I had done something unsuitable, or that I had unwittingly given some offence. But the host said to me,—

"Since I perceive that you so much wish to see and hear Luther,—that is he who is sitting with you.'

"I thought he was jesting, and said,—

"'Ah, Sir Host, you would befool me and my wishes with a false image of Luther!'

"He answered,—

"'It is certainly he. But do not seem as if you knew this.'

"I could not believe it; but I went back into the room, and longed to tell my companion what the host had disclosed to me. At last I turned to him, and whispered softly,—

"'The host has told me that is Luther.'

"He, like me, could not at once believe it, and said,—

"'He said, perhaps, it was Hutten, and thou hast misunderstood him.'

"And because the stranger's bearing and military dress suited Hutten better than Luther, I suffered myself to be persuaded he had said, 'It is Hutten,' since the two names had a somewhat similar sound. What I said further, therefore, was on the supposition that I was conversing with Huldrich ab Hutten, the knight.

"While this was going on, two merchants arrived, who intended also to remain the night; and after they had taken off their outer coats and their spurs, one laid down beside him an unbound book.

"Then he the host had (as I thought) called Martin Luther, asked what the book was.

"'It is Dr. Martin Luther's Exposition of certain Gospels and Epistles, just published. Have you not yet seen it?'

"Said Martin, 'It will soon be sent to me.'

"Then said the host,—

"'Place yourselves at table; we will eat.'

"But we besought him to excuse us, and give us a place apart. But he said,—

"'Good friends, seat yourselves at the table. I will see that you are welcome.'

"When Martin heard that he said,—

"'Come, come, I will settle the score with the host by-and-by.'

"During the meal, Martin said many pious and friendly words, so that the merchants and we were dumb before him, and heeded his discourse far more than our food. Among other things, he complained, with a sigh, how the princes and nobles were gathered at the Diet at Nürnberg on account of God's word, many difficult matters, and the oppression of the German nation, and yet seemed to have no purpose but to bring about better times by means of tourneys, sleigh-rides, and all kinds of vain, courtly pleasures; whereas the fear of God and Christian prayer would accomplish so much more.

"'Yet these,' said he sadly, 'are our Christian princes!'

"'Further, he said, 'We must hope that the evangelical truth will bring forth better fruit in our children and successors—who will never have been poisoned by papal error, but will be planted in the pure truth and word of God—than in their parents, in whom these errors are so deeply rooted that they are hard to eradicate.'

"After this, the merchants gave their opinion, and the elder of them said,—

"'I am a simple, unlearned layman, and have no special understanding of these matters; but as I look at the thing, I say, Luther must either be an angel from heaven or a devil from hell. I would gladly give ten florins to be confessed by him, for I believe he could and would enlighten my conscience.'

"Meantime the host came secretly to us and said,—

"'Martin has paid for your supper.'

"This pleased us much, not on account of the gold or the meal, but because that man had made us his guests.

"After supper, the merchants rose and went into the stable to look after their horses. Meanwhile Martin remained in the room with us, and we thanked him for his kindness and generosity, and ventured to say we took him to be Huldrich ab Hutten. But he said,—

"'I am not he.'

"Thereon the host came, and Martin said,—

"'I have to-night become a nobleman, for these Switzers take me for Huldrich ab Hutten.'

"And then he laughed at the jest, and said,—

"'They take me for Hutten, and you take me for Luther. Soon I shall become Markolfus the clown.'

"And after this he took a tall beer-glass, and said, according to the custom of the country,—

"'Switzers, drink after me a friendly draught to each other's welfare.'

"But as I was about to take the glass from him, he changed it, and ordered, instead, a glass of wine, and said,—

"'Beer is a strange and unwonted beverage to you. Drink the wine.'

"Thereupon he stood up, threw his mantle over his shoulder, and took leave. He offered us his hand, and said,—

"'When you come to Wittemberg, greet Dr. Hieronymus Schurf from me.'

"We said,—

"'Gladly would we do that, but what shall we call you, that he may understand the greeting?'

"He said,—

"'Say nothing more than, *He who is coming* sends you greeting. He will at once understand the words.'

"Thus he took leave of us, and retired to rest.

"Afterwards the merchants returned into the room, and desired the host to bring them more to drink, whilst they had much talk with him as to who this guest really was.

"The host confessed he took him to be Luther; whereupon they were soon persuaded, and regretted that they had spoken so unbecomingly before him, and said they would rise early on the following morning, before he rode off, and beg him not to be angry with them, or to think evil of them, since they had not known who he was.

"This happened as they wished, and they found him the next morning in the stable.

"But Martin said, 'You said last night at supper you would gladly give ten florins to confess to Luther. When you confess yourselves to him you will know whether I am Martin Luther or not.'

"Further than this he did not declare who he was, but soon afterwards mounted and rode off to Wittemberg.

"On the same day we came to Naumburg, and as we entered a village (it lies under a mountain, and I think the mountain is called Orlamunde, and the village Nasshausen), a stream was flowing through it which was swollen by the rain of the previous day, and had carried away part of the bridge, so that no one could ride over it. In the same village we lodged for the night, and it happened that we again found in the inn the two merchants; so they, for Luther's sake, insisted on making us their guests at this inn.

"On the Saturday after, the day before the first Sunday in Lent, we went to Dr. Hieronymus Schurf, to deliver our letters of introduction. When we were called into the room, lo and behold! there we found the trooper Martin, as before at Jena; and with him were Philip Melancthon, Justus Jonas, Nicolaus Amsdorf, and Dr. Augustin Schurf, who were relating to him what had happened at Wittemberg during his absence. He greeted us, and, laughing, pointed with his finger and said, 'This is Philip Melancthon, of whom I spoke to you.'"

I have copied this to begin to improve myself, that I may be a better companion for Conrad, and also because in after years I think we shall prize anything which shows how our Martin Luther won the hearts of strangers, and how, when returning to Wittemberg an excommunicated and outlawed man, with all the care of the evangelical doctrine on him, he had a heart at leisure for little acts of kindness and words of faithful counsel.

What a blessing it is for me, who can understand nothing of the "Theologia Teutsch," even in German, and never could have learned Latin like Eva, that Dr. Luther's sermons are so plain to me, great and learned as he is. Chriemhild and I always understood them; and although we could never talk much to others, at night in our bed-room we used to speak to each other about them, and say how very simple religion seemed when he spoke of it,—just to believe in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, and to love him, and to do all we can to make every one around us happier and better. What a blessing for people who are not clever, like Chriemhild and me, to have been born in days when we are taught that religion is faith and love, instead of all of those complicated rules and lofty supernatural virtues which people used to call religion.

And yet they say faith and love and humility are more really hard than all the old penances and good works.

But that must be, I think, to people who have never heard, as we have from Dr. Luther, so much about God to make us love him; or to people who have more to be proud of than Chriemhild and I and so find it more difficult to think little of themselves.

XXIV.

Eva's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *October*, 1522.

How strange it seemed at first to be moving freely about in the world once more, and to come back to the old home at Wittemberg! Very strange to find the places so little changed, and the people so much. The little room where Elsè and I used to sleep, with scarcely an article of

furniture altered, except that Thekla's books are there instead of Elsè's wooden crucifix; and the same view over the little garden, with its pear-tree full of white blossoms, to the Elbe with bordering oaks and willows, all then in their freshest delicate early green; while the undulations of the level land faded in soft blues to the horizon.

But, unlike the convent, all the changes in the people seemed to have been wrought by the touch of life rather than by that of death.

In Elsè's own home across the street, the ringing of those sweet childish voices, so new to me, and yet familiar with echoes of old tones and looks of our own well-remembered early days! And on Elsè herself the change seemed only such as that which develops the soft tints of spring into the green of shadowing leaves.

Christopher has grown from the self-assertion of boyhood into the strength and protecting kindness of manhood. Uncle Cotta's blindness seems to dignify him and make him the central object of every one's tender, reverent care, while his visions grow brighter in the darkness, and more placid on account of his having no responsibility as to fulfilling them. He seems to me a kind of hallowing presence in the family, calling out every one's sympathy and kindness, and pathetically reminding us by his loss of the preciousness of our common mercies.

On the grandmother's heart the light is more like dawn than sunset—so fresh, and soft, and full of hope her old age seems. The marks of fretting, daily anxiety, and care have been smoothed from dear Aunt Cotta's face; and although a deep shadow rests there often when she thinks of Fritz, I feel sure sorrow is not now to her the shadow of a mountain of divine wrath, but the shadow of a cloud which brings blessing and hides light, which the Sun of love drew forth, and the Rainbow of promise consecrates.

Yet he has the place of the first-born in her heart. With the others, though not forgotten, I think his place is partly filled—but never with her. Elsè's life is very full. Atlantis never knew him as the elder ones did; and Thekla, dearly as she learned to love him during his little sojourn at Wittemberg, has her heart filled with the hopes of her future, or at times overwhelmed with its fears. With all it almost seems he would have in some measure to make a place again, if he were to return. But with Aunt Cotta the blank is as utterly a blank, and a sacred place kept free from all intrusion, as if it were a chamber of her dead, kept jealously locked and untouched since the last day he stood living there. Yet surely he is not dead; I say so to myself and to her when she speaks of it, a thousand times. Why, then, does this hopeless feeling creep over me when I think of him? It seems so impossible to believe he ever can be amongst us any more. If it would please God only to send us some little word! But since that letter from Priest Ruprecht Haller, not a syllable has reached us. Two months since, Christopher went to this priest's village in Franconia, and lingered some days in the neighbourhood, making inquiries in every direction around the monastery where he is. But he could hear nothing, save that in the autumn of last year, the little son of a neighbouring knight, who was watching his mother's geese on the outskirts of the forest near the convent, used to hear the sounds of a man's voice singing from the window of her tower where the convent prison is. The child used to linger near the spot to listen to the songs, which, he said, were so rich and deep—sacred, like church hymns, but more joyful than anything he ever heard at church. He thought they were Easter hymns; but since one evening in last October he has never heard them, although he has often listened. Nearly a year since now!

Yet nothing can silence those resurrection hymns in his heart!

Aunt Cotta's great comfort is the holy sacrament. Nothing, she says, lifts up her heart like that. Other symbols, or writings, or sermons bring before her, she says, some part of truth; but the Holy Supper brings the Lord Himself before her. Not one truth about him, or another, but *himself*; not one act of his holy life alone, nor even his atoning death, but his very person, human and divine,—*himself* living, dying, conquering death, freely bestowing life. She has learned that to attend that holy sacrament is not, as she once thought, to perform a good work, which always left her more depressed than before with the feeling how unworthy and coldly she had done it; but to look off from self to Him who finished *the good work* of redemption for us. As Dr. Melancthon says,—

"Just as looking at the cross is not the doing of a good work, but simply contemplating a sign which recalls to us the death of Christ;

"Just as looking at the sun is not the doing of a good work, but simply contemplating a sign which recalls to us Christ and his gospel;

"So participating at the Lord's table is not the doing of a good work, but simply the making use of a sign which brings to mind the grace that has been bestowed on us by Christ."

"But here lies the difference; symbols discovered by man simply recall what they signify, whereas the signs given by God not only recall the things, but further assure the heart with respect to the will of God."

"As the sight of a cross does not justify, so the mass does not justify. As the sight of a cross is not a sacrifice, either for our sins or for the sins of others, so the mass is not a sacrifice."

"There is but one sacrifice, there is but one satisfaction—Jesus Christ. Beyond him there is nothing of the kind."

I have been trying constantly to find a refuge for the nine evangelical nuns I left at Nimptschen,

but hitherto in vain. I do not, however, by any means despair. I have advised them now to write themselves to Dr. Luther.

October, 1522.

The German New Testament is published at last.

On September the 21st it appeared; and that day, happening to be Aunt Cotta's birthday, when she came down among us in the morning, Gottfried Reichenbach met her, and presented her with two large folio volumes in which it is printed, in the name of the whole family.

Since then one volume always lies on a table in the general sitting-room, and one in the window of Aunt Cotta's bed-room.

Often now she comes down in the morning with a beaming face, and tells us of some verse she has discovered. Uncle Cotta calls it her diamond-mine, and says, "The little mother has found the El Dorado after all!"

One morning it was,—

"Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you;' and that lasted her many days."

To-day it was,—

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." "Eva," she said, "that seems to me so simple. It seems to me to mean, that when sorrow comes, then the great thing we have to do is, to see we do not lose hold of *patience*; she seems linked to all the other graces, and to lead them naturally into the heart, hand in hand, one by one. Eva, dear child," she added, "is that what is meant?"

I said how often those words had cheered me, and how happy it is to think that all the while these graces are illumining the darkness of the heart, the dark hours are passing away, until all at once Hope steals to the casement and withdraws the shutters; and the light which has slowly been dawning all the time streams into the heart, "the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost."

"But," rejoined Aunt Cotta, "we cannot ourselves bring in Experience, or reach the hand of Hope, or open the window to let in the light of love; we can only look up to God, keep firm hold of Patience, and *she will bring all the rest*."

"And yet," I said, "*peace* comes before *patience*, peace with God through faith in Him who was delivered for our offences. All these graces do not lead us up to God. We have access to him first, and in his presence we learn the rest."

Yes, indeed, the changes in the Wittemberg world since I left it, have been wrought by the hand of life, and not by that of death, or time, which is his shadow. For have not the brightest been wrought by the touch of the Life himself?

It is God, not time, that has mellowed our grandmother's character; it is God and not time that has smoothed the careworn wrinkles from Aunt Cotta's brow.

It is life and not death that has all but emptied the Augustinian convent, sending the monks back to their places in the world, to serve God and proclaim his gospel.

It is the water of life that is flowing through home after home in the channel of Dr. Luther's German Testament and bringing forth fruits of love, and joy, and peace.

And we know it is life and not death which is reigning in that lonely prison, wherein the child heard the resurrection hymns, and that is triumphing now in the heart of him who sang them, wherever he may be!

XXV.

Thekla's Story.

October, 1522.

Once more the letters come regularly from Flanders; and in most ways their tidings are joyful. Nowhere throughout the world, Bertrand writes, does the evangelical doctrine find such an eager reception as there. The people in the great free cities have been so long accustomed to judge for themselves, and to speak their minds freely. The Augustinian monks who studied at Wittemberg, took back the gospel with them to Antwerp, and preached it openly in their church, which became so thronged with eager hearers, that numbers had to listen outside the doors. It is true, Bertrand says, that the Prior and one or two of the monks have been arrested, tried at Brussels, and silenced; but the rest continue undauntedly to preach as before, and the effect of the persecution has been only to deepen the interest of the citizens.

The great new event which is occupying us all now, however, is the publication of Dr. Luther's

New Testament. Chriemhild writes that is the greatest boon to her, because being afraid to trust herself to say much, she simply reads, and the peasants seem to understand that book better than anything she can say about it; or even, if at any time they come to anything which perplexes them, they generally find that by simply reading on it grows quite clear. Also, she writes, Ulrich reads it every evening to all the servants, and it seems to bind the household together wonderfully. They feel that at last they have found something inestimably precious, which is yet no "privilege" of man or class, but the common property of all.

In many families at Wittemberg the book is daily read, for there are few of those who can read at all who cannot afford a copy, since the price is but a florin and a half.

New hymns also are beginning to spring up among us. We are no more living on the echo of old songs. A few days since a stranger from the north sang before Dr. Luther's windows, at the Augustinian convent, a hymn beginning,—

"Es ist das Heil uns kommen her."

Dr. Luther desired that it might be sung again. It was a response from Prussia to the glad tidings which have gone forth far and wide through his words! He said "he thanked God with a full heart."

The delight of having Eva among us once more is so great! Her presence seems to bring peace with it. It is not what she says or does, but what she is. It is more like the effect of music than anything else I know. A quiet seems to come over one's heart from merely being with her. No one seems to fill so little space, or make so little noise in the world as Eva, when she is there; and yet when she is gone, it is as if the music and the light had passed from the place. Everything about her always seems so in tune. Her soft, quiet voice, her gentle, noiseless movements, her delicate features, the soft curve of her cheek, those deep loving eyes, of which one never seems able to remember anything but that Eva herself looks through them into your heart.

All so different from me, who can scarcely ever come into a room without upsetting something, or disarranging some person, and can seldom enter on a conversation without upsetting some one's prejudices, or grating on some one's feelings!

It seems to me sometimes as if God did indeed lead Eva, as the Psalm says, "by His eye;" as if he had trained her to what she is by the direct teaching of his gracious voice, instead of by the rough training of circumstances. And nevertheless, she never makes me feel her hopelessly above me. The light is not like a star, which makes one feel "how peaceful it must be there, in these heights," but brings little light upon our path. It is like a lowly sunbeam coming down among us, and making us warm and bright.

She always makes me think of the verse about the saint who was translated silently to heaven, because he had "*walked with God*." Yes, I am sure that is her secret.

Only I have a malicious feeling that I should like to see her for once thoroughly tossed out of her calm, just to be quite sure it is God's peace, and not some natural or fairy gift, or a stoical impassiveness from the "Theologia Teutsch." Sometimes, I fancy for an instant whether it is not a little too much with Eva, as if she were "translated" already; as if she had passed to *the other side* of the deepest earthly joy and sorrow, at least as regards herself. Certainly she has not as regards others. Her sympathy is indeed no condescending alms, flung from the other side of the flood, no pitying glance cast down on grief she feels, but could never share. Have I not seen her lip quiver, when I spoke of the dangers around Bertrand, even when my voice was firm, and felt her tears on my face when she drew me to her heart.

December, 1522.

That question at last is answered! I *have* seen Cousin Eva moved out of her calm, and feel at last quite sure she is not "translated" yet. Yesterday evening we were all sitting in the family room. Our grandmother was dozing by the stove. Eva and my mother were busy at the table, helping Atlantis in preparing the dresses for her wedding, which is to be early in next year. I was reading to my father from Dr. Melancthon's new book, "The Common Places," (which all learned people say is so much more elegant and beautifully written than Dr. Luther's works, but which is to me only just a composed book, and not like all Dr. Luther's writings, a voice from the depths of a heart.) I was feeling like my grandmother, a little sleepy, and, indeed, the whole atmosphere around us seemed drowsy and still, when our little maid, Lottchen, opened the door with a frightened expression, and before she could say anything, a pale tall man stood there. Only Eva and I were looking towards the door. I could not think who it was, until a low startled voice exclaimed "Fritz!" and looking around at Eva, I saw she had fainted.

In another instant he was kneeling beside her, lavishing every tender name on her, while my mother stood on the other side, holding the unconscious form in her arms, and sobbing out Fritz's name.

Our dear father stood up, asking bewildered questions—our grandmother awoke, and rubbing her eyes, surveyed the whole group with a puzzled expression, murmuring,—

"Is it a dream? Or are the Zwickau prophets right after all, and is it the resurrection?"

But no one seemed to remember that tears and endearing words and bewildered exclamations

were not likely to restore any one from a fainting fit, until to my great satisfaction our good motherly Elsè appeared at the door, saying, "What is it? Lottchen ran over to tell me she thought there were thieves."

Then comprehending everything at a glance, she dipped a handkerchief in water, and bathed Eva's brow, and fanned her with it, until in a few minutes she awoke with a short sobbing breath, and in a little while her eyes opened, and as they rested on Fritz, a look of the most perfect rest came over her face, she placed her other hand on the one he held already, and closed her eyes again. I saw great tears falling under the closed eyelids. Then looking up again and seeing my mother bending over her, she drew down her hand and laid it on Fritz's, and we left those three alone together.

When we were all safely in the next room, we all by one impulse began to weep. I sobbed,—

"He looks so dreadfully ill. I think they have all but murdered him."

And Elsè said,—

"She has exactly the same look on her face that came over it when she was recovering from the plague, and he stood motionless beside her, with that rigid hopeless tranquility on his face, just before he left to be a monk. What will happen next?"

And my grandmother said in a feeble broken voice,

"He looks just as your grandfather did when he took leave of me in prison. Indeed, sometimes I am quite confused in mind. It seems as if things were coming over again. I can hardly make out whether it is a dream, or a ghost, or a resurrection."

Our father only did not join in our tears. He said what was very much wiser.

"Children, the greatest joy our house has known since Fritz left has came to it to-day. Let us give God thanks." And we all stood around him while he took the little velvet cap from his bald head and thanked God, while we all wept out our Amen. After that we grew calmer; the overwhelming tumult of feeling, in which we could scarcely tell joy from sorrow, passed, and we began to understand it was indeed a great joy which had been given to us.

Then we heard a little stir in the house, and my mother summoned us back; but we found her alone with Fritz, and would insist on his submitting to an unlimited amount of family caresses and welcomes.

"Come, Fritz, and assure our grandmother that you are alive, and that you have never been dead," said Elsè. And then her eyes filling with tears, she added, "What you must have suffered! If I had not remembered you before you received the tonsure, I should scarcely have known you now with your dark, long beard, and your white thin face."

"Yes," observed Atlantis in the deliberate way in which she usually announces her discoveries, "no doubt that is the reason why Eva recognized Fritz before Thekla did, although they were both facing the door, and must have seen him at the same time. She remembered him before he received the tonsure."

We all smiled a little at Atlantis' discovery, whereupon she looked up with a bewildered expression, and said, "Do you think, then, she did *not* recognize him? I did not think of that. Probably, then, she took him for a thief, like Lottchen!"

Fritz was deep in conversation with our mother, and was not heeding us, but Elsè laughed softly as she patted Atlantis' hand, and said,—

"Conrad Winkelried must have expressed himself very plainly, sister, before you understood him."

"He did, sister Elsè," replied Atlantis gravely. "But what has that to do with Eva?"

When I went up to our room, Eva's and mine, I found her kneeling by her bed. In a few minutes she rose, and clasping me in her arms, she said,—

"God is very good, Thekla. I have believed that so long, but never half enough until to-night."

I saw that she had been weeping, but the old calm had come back to her face, only with a little more sunshine on it.

Then, as if she feared to be forgetting others in her own happiness, she took my hand and said—

"Dear Thekla, God is leading us all through all the dark days to the morning. We must never distrust Him any more!"

And without saying another word we retired to rest. In the morning when I woke Eva was sitting beside me with a lamp on the table, and the large Latin Bible open before her. I watched her face for some time. It looked so pure, and good, and happy, with that expression on it which always helped me to understand the meaning of the words, "child of God," "little children," as Dr. Melancthon says our Lord called his disciples just before he left them. There was so much of the unclouded trustfulness of the "*child*" in it, and yet so much of the peace and depth which are of *God*.

After I had been looking at her a while she closed the Bible and began to alter a dress of mine

which she had promised to prepare for Christmas. As she was sewing, she hummed softly, as she was accustomed, some strains of old church music. At length I said—

"Eva, how old were you when Fritz became a monk?"

"Sixteen," she said softly; "he went away just after the plague."

"Then you have been separated twelve long years," I said. "God, then, sometimes exercises patience a long while."

"It does not seem long now," she said; "we both believed we were separated by God, and separated for ever on earth."

"Poor Eva," I said; "and this was the sorrow which helped to make you so good."

"I did not know it had been so great a sorrow, Thekla," she said with a quivering voice, "until last night."

"Then you had loved each other all that time," I said, half to myself.

"I suppose so," she said in a low voice. "But I never knew till yesterday how much."

After a short silence, she began again with a smile,—

"Thekla, he thinks me unchanged during all those years; me, the matron of the novices! But oh, how he is changed! What a life-time of suffering on his face! How they must have made him suffer!"

"God gives it to you as your life-work to restore and help him," I said. "O Eva, it must be the best woman's lot in the world to bind up for the dearest on earth the wounds which men have inflicted. It must be joy unutterable to receive back from God's own hands a love you have both so dearly proved you were ready to sacrifice for him."

"Your mother thinks so too," she said. "She said last night the vows which would bind us together would be holier than any ever uttered by saint or hermit."

"Did our mother say that?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Eva. "And she said she was sure Dr. Luther would think so also."

XXVI.

Fritz's Story.

December 31,
1522.

We are betrothed. Solemnly in the presence of our family and friends Eva has promised to be my wife; and in a few weeks we are to be married. Our home (at all events, at first) is to be in the Thuringian forest, in the parsonage belonging to Ulrich von Gersdorf's castle. The old priest is too aged to do anything. Chriemhild has set her heart on having us to reform the peasantry, and they all believe the quiet and the pure air of the forest will restore my health, which has been rather shattered by all I have gone through during these last months, although not as much as they think. I feel strong enough for anything already. What I have lost during all those years in being separated from her! How poor and one-sided my life has been! How strong the rest her presence gives me, makes me to do whatever work God may give me!

Amazing blasphemy on God to assert that the order in which he has founded human life is disorder, that the love which the Son of God compares to the relation between himself and his Church sullies or lowers the heart.

Have these years then been lost? Have I wandered away wilful and deluded from the lot of blessing God had appointed me, since that terrible time of the plague, at Eisenach? Have all these been wasted years? Has all the suffering been fruitless, unnecessary pain? And, after all, do I return with precious time lost and strength diminished just to the point I might have reached so long ago!

For Eva I am certain this is not so; every step of her way, the loving Hand has led her. Did not the convent through her become a home or a way to the Eternal Home to many? But for me? No, for me also the years have brought more than they have taken away! Those who are to help the perplexed and toiling men of their time, must first go down into the conflicts of their time. Is it not this which makes even Martin Luther the teacher of our nation? Is it not this which qualifies weak and sinful men to be preachers of the gospel instead of angels from heaven?

The holy angels sang on their heavenly heights the glad tidings of great joy, but the shepherds, the fishermen, and the publican spoke it in the homes of men! The angel who liberated the apostles from prison said, as if spontaneously, from the fulness of his heart, "Go speak to the people the words *of this life*." But the trembling lips of Peter who had denied, and Thomas who

had doubted, and John who had misunderstood, were to speak the life-giving words to men, denying, doubting, misconceiving men, to tell what they knew, and how the Saviour could forgive.

The voice that had been arrested in cowardly curses by the look of divine pardoning love, had a tone in it the Archangel Michael's could never have!

And when the Pharisees, hardest of all, were to be reached, God took a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a blasphemer, a persecutor, one who could say, "I might also have confidence in the flesh," "I persecuted the Church of God."

Was David's secret contest in vain, when slaying the lion and the bear, to defend those few sheep in the wilderness, he proved the weapons with which he slew Goliath and rescued the host of Israel? Were Martin Luther's years in the convent of Erfurt lost? Or have they not been the school-days of his life, the armoury where his weapons were forged, the gymnasium in which his eye and hand were trained for the battle-field?

He has seen the monasteries from within; he has felt the monastic life from within. He can say of all these internal rules, "I have proved them, and found them powerless to sanctify the heart." It is this which gives the irresistible power to his speaking and writing. It is this which by God's grace enables him to translate the Epistles of Paul the Pharisee and the Apostle as he has done. The truths had been translated by the Holy Spirit into the language of his experience, and graven on his heart long before; so that in rendering the Greek into German he also testified of things he had seen, and the Bible from his pen reads as if it had been originally written in German, for the German people.

To me also in my measure these years have not been time lost. There are many truths that one only learns in their fulness by proving the bitter bondage of the errors they contradict.

Perhaps also we shall help each other and others around us better for having been thus trained apart. I used to dream of the joy of leading her into life. But now God gives her back to me enriched with all those years of separate experience, not as the Eva of childhood, when I saw her last, but ripened to perfect womanhood; not merely to reflect my thoughts, but to blend the fulness of her life with mine.

XXVII.

Eva's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *January*, 1525.

How little idea I had how the thought of Fritz was interwoven with all my life! He says he knew only too well how the thoughts of me was bound up with every hope and affection of his!

But he contended against it long. He said that conflict was far more agonizing than all he suffered in the prison since. For many years he thought it sin to think of me. I never thought it sin to think of him. I was sure it was not, whatever my confessor might say. Because I had always thanked God more than for anything else in the world, for all he had been to me, and had taught me, and I felt so sure what I could thank God for could not be wrong.

But now it is *duty* to love him best. Of that I am quite sure. And certainly it is not difficult. My only fear is that he will be disappointed in me when he learns just what I am, day by day, with all the halo of distance gone. And yet I am not really afraid. Love weaves better glories than the mists of distance. And we do not expect miracles from each other, or that life is to be a Paradise. Only the unutterable comfort of being side by side in every conflict, trial, joy, and supporting each other! If I can say "only" of that! For I do believe our help will be mutual. Far weaker and less wise as I am than he is, with a range of thought and experience so much narrower, and a force of purpose so much feebler, I feel I have a kind of strength which may in some way, at some times even help Fritz. And it is this which makes me see the good of these separated years, in which otherwise I might have lost so much. With him the whole world seems so much larger and higher to me, and yet during these years, I do feel God has taught me something, and it is a happiness to have a little more to bring him than I could have had in my early girlhood.

It was for my sake, then, he made that vow of leaving us for ever!

And Aunt Cotta is so happy. On that evening when he returned, and we three were left alone, she said, after a few minutes' silence—

"Children, let us all kneel down, and thank God that he has given me the desire of my heart."

And afterwards she told us what she had always wished and planned for Fritz and me, and how she had thought his abandoning of the world a judgment for her sins; but how she was persuaded now that the curse borne for us was something infinitely more than anything she could have endured, and that it had been all borne, and nailed to the bitter cross, and rent and blotted out for ever. And now, she said, she felt as if the last shred of evil were gone, and her life were beginning again in us—to be blessed and a blessing beyond her utmost dreams.

Fritz does not like to speak much of what he suffered in the prison of that Dominican convent, and least of all to me; because, although I repeat to myself, "It is over—over for ever!"—whenever I think of his having been on the dreadful rack, it all seems present again.

He was on the point of escaping the very night they came and led him in for examination in the torture-chamber. And after that, they carried him back to prison, and seemed to have left him to die there. For two days they sent him no food; but then the young monk who had first spoken to him, and induced him to come to the convent, managed to steal to him almost every day with food and water, and loving words of sympathy, until his strength revived a little, and they escaped together through the opening he had dug in the wall before the examination. But their escape was soon discovered, and they had to hide in the caves and recesses of the forest for many weeks before they could strike across the country and find their way to Wittemberg at last.

But it is over now. And yet not over. He who suffered will never forget the suffering faithfully borne for him. And the prison at the Dominican convent will be a fountain of strength for his preaching among the peasants in the Thuringian Forest. He will be able to say, "God can sustain in all trials. He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. *I know it, for I have proved it.*" And I think that will help him better to translate the Bible to the hearts of the poor, than even the Greek and Hebrew he learned at Rome and Tübingen.

XXVIII.

Elsè's Story.

All our little world is in such a tumult of thankfulness and joy at present, that I think I am the only sober person left in it.

The dear mother hovers around her two lost ones with quiet murmurs of content, like a dove around her nest, and is as absorbed as if she were marrying her first daughter, or were a bride herself, instead of being the established and honoured grandmother that she is. Chriemhild and I might find it difficult not to be envious, if we had not our own private consolations at home.

Eva and Fritz are certainly far more reasonable, and instead of regarding the whole world as centering in them, like our dear mother, appear to consider themselves made to serve the whole world, which is more Christian-like, but must also have its limits. I cannot but feel it a great blessing for them that they have Chriemhild and Ulrich, and more especially Gottfried and me, to look after their temporal affairs.

For instance, house linen. Eva, of course, has not a piece; and as to her bridal attire, I believe she would be content to be married in a nun's robe, or in the peasant's dress she escaped from Nimptschen in. However, I have stores which, as Gretchen is not likely to require them just yet, will, no doubt, answer the purpose. Gretchen is not more than eight, but I always think it well to be beforehand; and my maidens had already a stock of linen enough to stock several chests for her, which, under the circumstances, seems quite a special providence.

Gottfried insists upon choosing her wedding dress. And my mother believes her own ancestral jewelled head-dress with the pearls (which once in our poverty we nearly sold to a merchant at Eisenach) has been especially preserved for Eva.

It is well that Atlantis, who is to be married on the same day, is the meekest and most unselfish of brides, and that her marriage outfit is already all but arranged.

Chriemhild and Ulrich have persuaded the old knight to rebuild the parsonage; and she writes what a delight it is to watch it rising among the cottages in the village, and think of the fountain of blessing that house will be to all.

Our grandmother insists on working with her dear, feeble hands, on Eva's wedding stores, and has ransacked her scanty remnants of former splendour, and brought out many a quaint old jewel from the ancient Schönberg treasures.

Christopher is secretly preparing them a library of all Dr. Luther's and Dr. Melancthon's books, beautifully bound, and I do not know how many learned works besides.

And the melancholy has all passed from Fritz's face, or only remains as the depth of a river to bring out the sparkle of its ripples.

The strain seems gone from Eva's heart and his. They both seem for the first time all they were meant to be.

Just now, however, another event is almost equally filling our grandmother's heart.

A few days since, Christopher brought in two foreigners to introduce to us. When she saw them, her work dropped from her hands, and half rising to meet them, she said some words in a language strange to all of us.

The countenances of the strangers brightened as she spoke, and they replied in the same language.

After a few minutes' conversation, our grandmother turned to us, and said,—

"They are Bohemians,—they are Hussites. They know my husband's name. The truth he died for is still living in my country."

The rush of old associations was too much for her. Her lips quivered, the tears fell slowly over her cheeks, and she could not say another word.

The strangers consented to remain under my father's roof for the night, and told us the errand which brought them to Wittemberg.

From generation to generation, since John Huss was martyred, they said, the truth he taught had been preserved in Bohemia, always at the risk, and often at the cost of life. Sometimes it had perplexed them much that nowhere in the world beside could they hear of those who believed the same truth. Could it be possible that the truth of God was banished to the mountain fastnesses? Like Elijah of old, they felt disposed to cry in their wilderness, "I, only I, am left."

"But they could not have been right to think thus," said my mother, who never liked the old religion to be too much reproached. "God has always had his own who have loved him, in the darkest days. From how many convent cells have pious hearts looked up to him. It requires great teaching of the Holy Spirit and many battles to make a Luther; but, I think, it requires only to touch the hem of Christ's garment to make a Christian.

"Yes," said Gottfried, opening our beloved commentary on the Galatians, "what Dr. Luther said is true indeed, 'Some there were in the olden time whom God called by the text of the gospel and by baptism. These walked in simplicity and humbleness of heart, thinking the monks and friars, and such only as were annointed by the bishops, to be religious and holy, and themselves to be profane and secular, and not worthy to be compared to them. Wherefore, they, feeling in themselves no good works to set against the wrath and judgment of God, did fly to the death and passion of Christ, and were saved in this simplicity.'"

"No doubt it was so," said the Bohemian deputies. "But all this was hidden from the eye of man. Twice our fathers sent secret messengers through the length and breadth of Christendom to see if they could find any that did understand, that did seek after God, and everywhere they found carelessness, superstition, darkness, but no response."

"Ah," said my mother, "that is a search only the eye of God can make. Yet, doubtless, the days were dark."

"They came back without having met with any response," continued the strangers, "and again our fathers had to toil and suffer on alone. And now the sounds of life have reached us in our mountain solitudes from all parts of the world; and we have come to Wittemberg to hear the voice which awoke them first, and to claim brotherhood with the evangelical Christians here. Dr. Luther has welcomed us, and we return to our mountains to tell our people that the morning has dawned on the world at last."

The evening passed in happy intercourse, and before we separated, Christopher brought his lute, and we all sang together the hymn of John Huss, which Dr. Luther has published among his own: —

"Jesus Christus nostra salus,"

and afterwards Luther's own glorious hymn in German, "*Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein*:"

Dear Christian people, all rejoice;
Each soul with joy upspringing:
Pour forth one song with heart and voice,
With love and gladness singing.
Give thanks to God, our Lord above—
Thanks for his miracles of love:
Dearly he hath redeemed us!

The devil's captive bound I lay,
Lay in death's chains forlorn;
My sins distressed me night and day—
The sin within me born;
I could not do the thing I would,
In all my life was nothing good,
Sin had possessed me wholly.

My good works could no comfort shed,
Worthless must they be rated;
My free will to all good was dead,
And God's just judgments hated.
Me of all hope my sins bereft:
Nothing but death to me was left,
And death was hell's dark portal.

Then God saw with deep pity moved

My grief that knew no measure;
Pitying he saw, and freely loved,—
To save me was his pleasure.
The Father's heart to me was stirred,
He saved me with no sovereign word,
His very best it cost him.

He spoke to his beloved Son
With infinite compassion,
"Go hence, my heart's most precious crown.
Be to the lost salvation;
Death, his relentless tyrant slay,
And bear him from his sins away,
With thee to live forever."

Willing the Son took that behest,
Born of a maiden mother,
To his own earth he came a guest,
And made himself my brother.
All secretly he went his way,
Veiled in my mortal flesh he lay,
And thus the foe he vanquished.

He said to me, "Cling close to me,
Thy sorrows now are ending!
Freely I gave myself for thee,
Thy life with mine defending;
For I am thine, and thou art mine,
And where I am there thou shalt shine,
The foe shall never reach us.

True, he will shed my heart's life blood,
And torture me to death:
All this I suffer for thy good,
This hold with earnest faith.
Death dieth through my life divine;
I sinless bear those sins of thine,
And so shalt thou be rescued.

I rise again to heaven from hence,
High to my Father soaring,
Thy Master there to be, and thence,
My spirit on thee pouring;
In every grief to comfort thee,
And teach thee more and more of me,
Into all truth still guiding.

What I have done and taught on earth,
Do thou, and teach, none dreading;
That so God's kingdom may go forth,
And His high praise be spreading;
And guard thee from the words of men,
Lest the great joy be lost again;
Thus my last charge I leave thee."

Afterwards, at our mother's especial desire, Eva and Fritz sang a Latin resurrection hymn from the olden time.[11]

The renewal of the world
Countless new joys bringeth forth:
Christ arising, all things rise—
Rise with him from earth.
All the creatures feel their Lord—
Feel his festal light outpoured.

Fire springs up with motion free,
Breezes wake up soft and warm;
Water flows abundantly,
Earth remaineth firm.
All things light now skyward soar,
Solid things are rooted more;
All things are made new.

Ocean waves, grown tranquil, lie
Smiling 'neath the heavens serene;
All the air breathes light and fresh;

Our valley groweth green.
Verdure clothes the arid plain,
Frozen waters gush again
At the touch of spring.

For the frost of death is melted
The prince of this world lieth low;
And his empire strong among us,
All is broken now.
Grasping Him in whom alone
He could nothing claim or own,
His domain he lost.

Paradise is now regained,
Life has vanquished death;
And the joys he long had lost,
Man recovereth.
The cherubim at God's own word
Turn aside the flaming sword;
The long-lost blessing is restored.
The closed way opened free.[12]

The next morning the strangers left us; but all the day our grandmother sat silent and tranquil, with her hands clasped, in an inactivity very unusual with her. In the evening, when we had assembled again—as we all do now every day in the old house—she said quietly, "Children, sing to me the 'Nunc Dimittis.' God has fulfilled every desire of my heart; and, if he willed it, I should like now to depart in peace to my dead. For I know they live unto him."

Afterwards, we fell into conversation about the past. It was the eve of the wedding-day of Eva and Fritz, and Atlantis and Conrad. And we, a family united in one faith, naturally spoke together of the various ways in which God had led us to the one end.

The old days rose up before me, when the ideal of holiness had towered above my life, grim and stony, like the fortress of the Wartburg (in which my patroness had lived), above the streets of Eisenach, and when even Christ the Lord seemed to me, as Dr. Luther says, "a law-maker giving more strait and heavy commands than Moses himself"—an irrevocable, unapproachable Judge, enthroned far up in the cold spaces of the sky; and heaven, like a convent, with very high walls, peopled by nuns rigid as Aunt Agnes. And then the change which came over all my heart when I learned, through Dr. Luther's teaching, that God is love—is our Father; that Christ is the Saviour, who gave himself for our sins, and loved us better than life; that heaven is our Father's house; that holiness is simply loving God—who is so good, and who has so loved us, and, loving one another, that the service we have to render is simply to give thanks and to do good;—when, as Dr. Luther said, that word "our" was written deeply in my heart—that for *our* sins He died—for mine,—that for all, for us, for *me*, He gave himself.

And then Fritz told us how he had toiled and tormented himself to reconcile God to him, until he found, through Dr. Luther's teaching, that our sins have been borne away by the Lamb of God—the sacrifice not of man's gift, but of God's; "that in that one person, Jesus Christ, we had forgiveness of sins and eternal life;" that God is to us as the father to the prodigal son—entreating *us* to be reconciled to Him. And he told us also, how he had longed for a priest, who could know infallibly all his heart, and secure him from the deceitfulness and imperfectness of his own confessions, and assure him that, knowing all his sin to its depths, with all its aggravations, he yet pronounced him absolved. And at last he had found that Priest, penetrating to the depths of his heart, tracing every act to its motive, every motive to its source, and yet pronouncing him absolved, freely, fully, at once—imposing no penance, but simply desiring a life of thanksgiving in return. "And this Priest," he added, "is with me always; I make my confession to him every evening, or oftener, if I need it; and as often as I confess, He absolves, and bids me be of good courage—go in peace, and sin no more. But He is not on earth. He dwells in the holy of holies, which never more is empty, like the solitary sanctuary of the old temple on all days in the year but one. He ever liveth to make intercession for us!"

Then we spoke together of the two great facts Dr. Luther had unveiled to us from the Holy Scriptures, that there is one sacrifice of atonement, the spotless Lamb of God, who gave himself once for our sins; and that there is but one priestly Mediator, the Son of Man and Son of God; that, in consequence of this, all Christians are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices; and the feeblest has his offering, which, through Jesus Christ, God delights to accept, having first accepted the sinner himself in the Beloved.

Our mother spoke to us, in a few words, of the dreadful thoughts she had of God—picturing him rather as the lightning than the light; of the curse which she feared was lowering like a thunder-cloud over her life, until Dr. Luther began to show her that the curse has been borne for us by Him who was made a curse for us, and removed for ever from all who trust in him. "And then," she said, "the Holy Supper taught me the rest. He bore for us the cross; he spreads for us the feast. We have, indeed, the cross to bear, but never more the curse; the cross from man, temptation from the devil, but from God nothing but blessing."

But Eva said she could not remember the time when she did not think God good and kind beyond

all. There were many other things in religion which perplexed her; but this had always seemed clear, that God so loved the world, he gave his Son. And she had always hoped that all the rest would be clear one day in the light of that love. The joy which Dr. Luther's writings had brought her was, she thought, like seeing the stains cleared away from some beautiful painting, whose beauty she had known but not fully seen—or like having a misunderstanding explained about a dear friend. She had always wondered about the hard penances to appease One who loved so much, and the many mediators to approach Him; and it had been an inexpressible delight to find that these were all a mistake, and that access to God was indeed open—that the love and the sin, —life and death,—had met on the cross, and the sin had been blotted out, and death swallowed up of life.

In such discourse we passed the eve of the wedding day.

And now the day has vanished like a bright vision; our little gentle loving Atlantis has gone with her husband to their distant home, the bridal crowns are laid aside, and Eva and Fritz in their sober every-day dress, but with the crown of unfading joy in their hearts, have gone together to their lowly work in the forest, to make one more of those hallowed pastor's homes which are springing up now in the villages of our land.

But Gretchen's linen-chest is likely to be long before it can be stored again. We have just received tidings of the escape of Eva's friends, the nine nuns of Nimptschen, from the convent, at last! They wrote to Dr. Luther, who interested himself much in seeking asylums for them. And now Master Leonard Koppe of Torgan has brought them safely to Wittemberg concealed in his beer waggon. They say one of the nuns in their haste left her slipper behind. They are all to be received into various homes, and Gottfried and I are to have the care of Catherine von Bora, the most determined and courageous, it is said, of all, from whose cell they effected their escape.

I have been busy preparing the guest-chamber for her, strewing lavender on the linen, and trying to make it home-like for the young maiden who is banished for Christ's sake from her old home.

I think it must bring blessings to any home to have such guests.

June, 1523.

Our guest, the noble maiden Catherine von Bora, has arrived. Grave and reserved she seems to be, although Eva spoke of her as very cheerful, and light as well as firm of heart. I feel a little afraid of her. Her carriage has a kind of majesty about it which makes me offer her more deference than sympathy. Her eyes are dark and flashing, and her forehead is high and calm.

This is not so remarkable in me, I having been always easily appalled by dignified persons; but even Dr. Luther, it seems to me, is somewhat awed by this young maiden. He thinks her rather haughty and reserved. I am not sure whether it is pride or a certain maidenly dignity.

I am afraid I have too much of the homely burgher Cotta nature to be quite at ease with her.

Our grandmother would doubtless have understood her better than either our gentle mother or I, but the dear feeble form seems to have been gradually failing since that meeting with the emissaries of the Bohemian Church. Since the wedding she has not once left her bed. She seems to live more than ever in the past, and calls people by the names she knew them in her early days, speaking of our grandfather as "Franz," and calling our mother "Greta" instead of "the mother." In the past she seems to live, and in that glorious present, veiled from her view by so thin a veil. Towards heaven the heart, whose earthly vision is closing, is as open as ever. I sit beside her and read the Bible and Dr. Luther's books, and Gretchen says to her some of the new German hymns, Dr. Luther's, and his translation of John Huss's hymns. To-day she made me read again and again this passage,—"Christian faith is not, as some say, an empty husk in the heart until love shall quicken it; but if it be true faith, it is a sure trust and confidence in the heart whereby Christ is apprehended, so that Christ is the object of faith; *yea, rather even, in faith Christ himself is present*. Faith therefore justifieth because it apprehendeth and possesseth this treasure, Christ present. Wherefore Christ apprehended by faith, and dwelling in the heart, is the true Christian righteousness."

It is strange to sit in the old house, now so quiet, with our dear blind father downstairs, and only Thekla at home of all the sisters, and the light in that brave, strong heart of our grandmother growing slowly dim; or to hear the ringing sweet childish voice of Gretchen repeating the hymns of this glorious new time to the failing heart of the olden time.

Last night, while I watched beside that sick bed, I thought much of Dr. Luther alone in the Augustinian monastery, patiently abiding in the dwelling his teaching has emptied, sending forth thence workers and teachers throughout the world; and as I pondered what he has been to us, to Fritz and Eva in their lowly hallowed home, to our mother, to our grandmother, to the Bohemian people, to little Gretchen singing her hymns to me, to the nine rescued nuns, to Aunt Agnes in the convent, and Christopher at his busy printing-press, to young and old, religious and secular; I wonder what the new time will bring to that brave, tender, warm heart which has set so many hearts which were in bondage free, and made life rich to so many who were poor, yet has left his own life so solitary still.

XXIX.

Eva's Story.

THURINGIAN FOREST, *July*, 1523.

It is certainly very much happier for Fritz and me to live in the pastor's house than in the castle; down among the homes of men, and the beautiful mysteries of this wonderful forest land, instead of towering high above all on a fortified height. Not of course that I mean the heart may not be as lowly in the castle as in the cottage; but it seems to me a richer and more fruitful life to dwell among the people than to be raised above them. The character of the dwelling seems to symbolize the nature of the life. And what lot can be so blessed as ours?

Linked to all classes that we may serve our Master who came to minister among all. In education equal to the nobles, or rather to the patrician families of the great cities, who so far surpass the country proprietors in culture,—in circumstances the pastor is nearer the peasant, knowing by experience what are the homely trials of straitened means. Little offices of kindness can be interchanged between us. Muhme Trüdchen finds a pure pleasure in bringing me a basket of her new-laid eggs as an acknowledgment of Fritz's visits to her sick boy; and it makes it all the sweeter to carry food to the family of the old charcoal-burner in the forest-clearing that our meals for a day or two have to be a little plainer in consequence. I think gifts which come from loving contrivance and a little self-denial, must be more wholesome to receive than the mere overflowings of a full store. And I am sure they are far sweeter to give. Our lowly home seems in some sense the father's house of the village; and it is such homes, such hallowed centres of love and ministry, which God through our Luther is giving back to village after village in our land.

But, as Fritz says, I must be careful not to build our parsonage into a pinnacle higher than any castle, just to make a pedestal for him, which I certainly sometimes detect myself doing. His gifts seem to me so rich, and his character is, I am sure, so noble, that it is natural I should picture to myself his vocation as the highest in the world. That it is the highest, however, I am secretly convinced; the highest as long as it is the lowliest.

The people begin to be quite at home with us now. There are no great gates, no moat, no heavy draw-bridge between us and the peasants. Our doors stand open; and timid hands which could never knock to demand admittance at castle or convent gate can venture gently to lift our latch. Mothers creep to the kitchen with their sick children to ask for herbs, lotions, or drinks, which I learned to distil in the convent. And then I can ask them to sit down, and we often naturally begin to speak of Him who healed the sick people with a word, and took the little children from the mothers' arms to His to bless them. Sometimes, too, stories of wrong and sorrow come out to me which no earthly balm can cure, and I can point to Him who only can heal because He only can forgive.

Then Fritz says he can preach so differently from knowing the heart-cares and burdens of his flock; and the people seem to so feel differently when they meet again from the pulpit with sacred words and histories which they have grown familiar with in the home.

A few of the girls come to me also to learn sewing or knitting, and to listen or learn to read Bible stories. Fritz meanwhile instructs the boys in the Scriptures and in sacred music, because the schoolmaster is growing old and can teach the children little but a few Latin prayers by rote, and to spell out the German alphabet.

I could not have imagined such ignorance as we have found here. It seems, Fritz says, as if the first preachers of Christianity to the Germans had done very much for the heart of the nation what the first settlers did for its forests, made a clearing here and there, built a church, and left the rest to its original state.

The bears and wolves which prowl about the forest, and sometimes in winter venture close to the thresholds of our houses, are no wilder than the wild legends which haunt the hearts of the peasants. On Sundays they attire themselves in their holiday clothes, come to hear mass, bow before the sacred host, and the crucifix, and image of the Virgin, and return to continue during the week their every-day terror-worship of the spirits of the forest. They seem practically to think our Lord is the God of the church and the village, while the old pagan sprites retain possession of the forest. They appear scarcely even quite to have decided St. Christopher's question, "Which is the *strongest*, that I may worship him?"

But, alas, whether at church or in the forest, the worship they have been taught seems to have been chiefly one of fear. The Cobolds and various sprites they believe will bewitch their cows, set fire to their hay-stacks, lead them astray through the forest, steal their infants from the cradle to replace them by fairy changelings. Their malignity and wrath they deprecate, therefore, by leaving them gleanings of corn or nuts, by speaking of them with feigned respect, or by Christian words and prayer, which they use as spells.

From the Almighty God they fear severer evil. He, they think, is to sit on the dreadful day of wrath on the judgment throne to demand strict account of all their misdeeds. Against His wrath also they have been taught to use various remedies which seem to us little better than a kind of spiritual spells; paters, aves, penances, confessions, indulgences.

To protect them against the forest sprites they have secret recourse to certain gifted persons,

mostly shrivelled, solitary, weird old women (successors, Fritz says, of the old pagan prophetesses), who for money perform certain rites of white magic for them; or give them written charms to wear, or teach them magic rhymes to say.

To protect them against God, they used to have recourse to the priest, who performed masses for them, laid ghosts, absolved sins, promised to turn aside the vengeance of offended heaven.

But in both cases they seem to have the melancholy persuasion that the ruling power is hostile to them. In both cases, religion is not so much a *worship* as a *spell*; not an approach to God, but an interposing of something to keep off the weight of his dreaded presence.

When first we began to understand this, it used to cost me many tears.

"How can it be," I said one day to Fritz, "that all the world seems so utterly to misunderstand God?"

"There is an enemy in the world," he said, solemnly, "sowing lies about God in every heart."

"Yet God is mightier than Satan," I said; "how is it then that no ray penetrates through the darkness from fruitful seasons, from the beauty of the spring-time, from the abundance of the harvest, from the joys of home, to show the people that God is love?"

"Ah, Eva," he said sadly, "have you forgotten that not only is the devil in the world, but sin in the heart? He lies, indeed, about God, when he persuades us that God grudges us blessings; but he tells the truth about ourselves when he reminds us that we are sinners, under the curse of the good and loving law. The lie would not stand for an instant if it were not founded on the truth. It is only by confessing the truth, on which his falsehood is based, that we can destroy it. We must say to the peasants, 'Your fear is well founded. See *on that cross* what your sin cost!'"

"But the old religion displayed the crucifix," I said.

"Thank God, it did—it does!" he said. "But instead of the crucifix, we have to tell of a cross from which the Crucified is gone; of an empty tomb and a risen Saviour; of the curse removed; of God, who gave the Sacrifice, welcoming back the Sufferer to the throne."

We have not made much change in the outward ceremonies. Only, instead of the sacrifice of the mass, we have the Feast of the Holy Supper; no elevation of the host, no saying of private masses for the dead; and all the prayers, thanksgivings, and hymns, in German.

Dr. Luther still retains the Latin in some of the services of Wittemberg, on account of its being an university town, that the youth may be trained in the ancient languages. He said he would gladly have some of the services in Greek and Hebrew, in order thereby to make the study of those languages as common as that of Latin. But here in the forest, among the ignorant peasants, and the knights, who, for the most part, forget before old age what little learning they acquired in boyhood, Fritz sees no reason whatever for retaining the ancient language; and delightful it is to watch the faces of the people when he reads the Bible or Luther's hymns, now that some of them begin to understand that the divine service is something in which their hearts and minds are to join, instead of a kind of magic external rite to be performed for them.

It is a great delight also to us to visit Chriemhild and Ulrich von Gersdorf at the castle. The old knight and Dame Hermentrud were very reserved with us at first; but the knight has always been most courteous to me, and Dame Hermentrud, now that she is convinced that we have no intention of trenching on her state, receives us very kindly.

Between us, moreover, there is another tender bond since she has allowed herself to speak of her sister Beatrice, to me known only as the subdued and faded aged nun; to Dame Hermentrud, and the aged retainers and villagers, remembered in her bright, but early blighted, girlhood.

Again and again I have to tell her sister the story of her gradual awakening from uncomplaining hopelessness to a lowly and heavenly rest in Christ; and of her meek and peaceful death.

"Great sacrifices," she said once, "have to be made to the honour of a noble lineage, Frau Pastorin. I also have had my sorrows;" and she opened a drawer of a cabinet, and showed me the miniature portraits of a nobleman and his young boy, her husband and son, both in armour. "These both were slain in a feud with the family to which Beatrice's betrothed belonged," she said bitterly. "And should our lines ever be mingled in one?"

"But are these feuds never to die out?" I said.

"Yes," she replied sternly, leading me to a window, from which we looked on a ruined castle in the distance. "*That* feud has died out. The family is extinct!"

"The Lord Christ tells us to forgive our enemies," I said quietly.

"Undoubtedly," she replied; "but the von Bernsteins were usurpers of our rights, robbers and murderers. Such wrongs must be avenged, or society would fall to pieces."

Towards the peasants Dame Hermentrud has very condescending and kindly feelings, and frequently gives us food and clothing for them, although she still doubts the wisdom of teaching them to read.

"Every one should be kept in his place," she says.

And as yet I do not think she can form any idea of heaven, except as of a well organized community, in which the spirits of the nobles preside loftily on the heights, while the spirits of the peasants keep meekly to the valleys; the primary distinction between earth and heaven being, that in heaven all will know how to keep in their places.

And no doubt in one sense she is right. But how would she like the order in which places in heaven are assigned?

"*The first shall be last, and the last first.*"

"*He that is chief among you, let him be as he that doth serve.*"

Among the peasants sometimes, on the other hand, Fritz is startled by the bitterness of feeling which betrays itself against the lords; how the wrongs of generations are treasured up, and the name of Luther is chiefly revered from a vague idea that he, the peasant's son, will set the peasants free.

Ah, when will God's order be established in the world, when each, instead of struggling upwards in selfish ambition, and pressing others down in mean pride—looking up to envy, and looking down to scorn—shall look up to honour and look down to help! when all shall "by love serve one another?"

September, 1523.

We have now a guest of whom I do not dare to speak to Dame Hermentrud. Indeed, the whole history Fritz and I will never tell to any here.

A few days since a worn, grey-haired old man came to our house, whom Fritz welcomed as an old friend. It was Priest Ruprecht Haller, from Franconia. Fritz had told me something of his history, so that I knew what he meant, when in a quivering voice he said, abruptly, taking Fritz aside,—

"Bertha is very ill—perhaps dying. I must never see her any more. She will not suffer it, I know. Can you go and speak a few words of comfort to her?"

Fritz expressed his readiness to do anything in his power, and it was agreed that Priest Ruprecht was to stay with us that night, and that they were to start together on the morrow for the farm where Bertha was at service, which lay not many miles off through the forest.

But in the night I had a plan, which I determined to set going before I mentioned it to Fritz, because he will often consent to a thing which is once *begun*, which he would think quite impracticable if it is only *proposed*; that is, especially as regards anything in which I am involved. Accordingly, the next morning I rose very early and went to our neighbour, Farmer Herder, to ask him to lend us his old grey pony for the day, to bring home an invalid. He consented, and before we had finished breakfast the pony was at the door.

"What is this?" said Fritz.

"It is Farmer Herder's pony to take me to the farm where Bertha lives, and to bring her back," I said.

"Impossible, my love!" said Fritz.

"But you see it is already all arranged, and begun to be done," I said; "I am dressed, and the room is all ready to receive her."

Priest Ruprecht rose from the table, and moved towards me, exclaiming fervently,—

"God bless you!" Then seeming to fear that he had said what he had no right to say, he added, "God bless you for the thought. But it is too much!" and he left the room.

"What would you do, Eva?" Fritz said, looking in much perplexity at me.

"Welcome Bertha as a sister," I said, "and nurse her until she is well."

"But how can I suffer you to be under one roof?" he said.

I could not help my eyes filling with tears.

"The Lord Jesus suffered such to anoint his feet," I said, "and she, you told me, loves Him, has given up all dearest to her to keep his words. Let us blot out the past as he does, and let her begin life again from our home, if God wills it so."

Fritz made no further objection. And through the dewy forest paths we went, we three; and with us, I think we all felt, went Another, invisible, the Good Shepherd of the wandering sheep.

Never did the green glades and forest flowers and solemn pines seem to me more fresh and beautiful, and more like a holy cathedral than that morning.

After a little meek resistance Bertha came back with Fritz and me. Her sickness seemed to me to be more the decline of one for whom life's hopes and work are over, than any positive disease. And with care, the grey pony brought her safely home.

Never did our dear home seem to welcome us so brightly as when we led her back to it, for whom it was to be a sanctuary of rest, and refuge from bitter tongues.

There was a little room over the porch which we had set apart as the guest-chamber; and very sweet it was to me that Bertha should be its first inmate; very sweet to Fritz and me that our home should be what our Lord's heart is, a refuge for the outcast, the penitent, the solitary, and the sorrowful.

Such a look of rest came over her poor, worn face, when at last she was laid on her little bed!

"I think I shall get well soon," she said the next morning, "and then you will let me stay and be your servant; when I am strong I can work really hard and there is something in you both which makes me feel this like home."

"We will try," I said, "to find out what God would have us do."

She does improve daily. Yesterday she asked for some spinning, or other work to do, and it seems to cheer her wonderfully. To-day she has been sitting in our dwelling-room with her spinning-wheel. I introduced her to the villagers who come in as a friend who has been ill. They do not know her history.

January, 1524.

It is all accomplished now. The little guest-chamber over the porch is empty again, and Bertha is gone.

As she was recovering Fritz received a letter from Priest Ruprecht, which he read in silence, and then laid aside until we were alone on one of our expeditions to the old charcoal-burner's in the forest.

"Haller wants to see Bertha once more," he said, dubiously.

"And why not Fritz?" I said; "why should not the old wrong as far as possible be repaired, and those who have given each other up at God's commandment, be given back to each other by his commandment?"

"I have thought so often, my love," he said, "but I did not know what you would think."

So after some little difficulty and delay, Bertha and

Priest Ruprecht Haller were married very quietly in our village church, and went forth to a distant village in Pomerania, by the Baltic Sea, from which Dr. Luther had received a request to send them a minister of the gospel.

It went to my heart to see the two go forth together down the village street, those two whose youth inhuman laws and human weakness had so blighted. There was a reverence about his tenderness to her, and a wistful lowliness in hers for him, which said, "All that thou hast lost for me, as far as may be I will make up to thee in the years that remain!"

But as we watched her pale face and feeble steps, and his bent, though still vigorous form, Fritz took my hands as we turned back into the house, and said,—

"It is well. But it can hardly be for long!"

And I could not answer him for tears.

XXX.

Elsè's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *August*, 1524.

The slow lingering months of decline are over. Yesterday our grandmother died. As I looked for the last time on the face that had smiled on me from childhood, the hands which rendered so many little loving services to me, none of which can evermore be returned to her, what a sacred tenderness is thrown over all recollection of her, how each little act of thoughtful consideration and self-denial rushes back on the heart, what love I can see glowing through the anxious care which sometimes made her a little querulous, especially with my father, although never lately.

Can life ever be quite the same again? Can we ever forget to bear tenderly with little infirmities such as those of hers which seem so blameless now, or to prize with a thankfulness which would flood with sunshine our little cares, the love which must one day be silent to us as she is now?

Her death seems to age us all into another generation! She lived from the middle of the old world into the full morning of the new; and a whole age of the past seems to die with her. But after seeing those Bohemian deputies and knowing that Fritz and Eva were married, she ceased to wish to live. She had lived, she said, through two mornings of time on earth, and now she longed for the daybreak of heaven.

But yesterday morning, one of us! and now one of the heavenly host! Yesterday we knew every thought of her heart, every detail of her life, and now she is removed into a sphere of which we

know less than of the daily life of the most ancient of the patriarchs. As Dr. Luther says, an infant on its mother's breast has as much understanding of the life before it, as we of the life before us after death. "Yet," he saith also, "since God hath made his world of earth and sky so fair, how much fairer that imperishable world beyond!"

All seems to me clear and bright after the resurrection; but *now*? where is that spirit now, so familiar to us and so dear, and now so utterly separated?

Dr. Luther said, "A Christian should say, I know that it is thus I shall journey hence; when my soul goes forth, charge is given to God's kings and high princes, who are the dear angels, to receive me and convoy me safely home. The Holy Scriptures, he writes, teach nothing of purgatory, but tell us that the spirits of the just enjoy the sweetest and most delightful peace and rest. How they live there, indeed, we know not, or what the place is where they dwell. But this we know assuredly, they are in no grief or pain, but rest in the grace of God. As in this life they were wont to fall softly asleep in the guard and keeping of God and the dear angels, without fear of harm, although the devils might prowl around them; so after this life do they repose in the hand of God."

"*To depart and be with Christ is far better.*"

"*To-day in Paradise with me.*"

"*Absent from the body, at home with the Lord.*"

Everything for our peace and comfort concerning those who are gone depends on what those words "*with me*" were to them and are to us. Where and how they live, indeed, we know not; with Whom we know. The more then, O our Saviour and theirs! we know of Thee, the more we know of them. With Thee, indeed, the waiting-time before the resurrection can be no cold drear ante-chamber of the palace. Where Thou art, must be light, love, and home.

Precious as Dr. Luther's own words are, what are they at a time like this, compared with the word of God he has unveiled to us?

My mother, however, is greatly cheered by these words of his, "Our lord and Saviour grant us joyfully to see each other again hereafter. For our faith is sure, and we doubt not that we shall see each other again with Christ in a little while; since the departure from this life to be with Christ is less in God's sight, than if I go from you to Mansfeld, or you took leave of me to go from Wittemberg to Mansfeld. This is assuredly true. A brief hour of sleep and all will be changed."

WITTEMBERG, *September*,
1524.

During this month we have been able often to give thanks that the beloved feeble form is at rest. The times seem very troublous. Dr. Luther thinks most seriously of them. Rumours have reached us for some time of an uneasy feeling among the peasantry. Fritz wrote about it from the Thuringian Forest. The peasants, as our good Elector said lately, have suffered many wrongs from their lords; and Fritz says they had formed the wildest hopes of better days from Dr. Luther and his words. They thought the days of freedom had come. And bitter and hard it is for them to learn that the gospel brings freedom now as of old by giving strength to suffer, instead of by suddenly redressing wrong. The fanatics, moreover, have been among them. The Zwickau prophets and Thomas Münzer (silenced last year at Wittemberg by Luther's return from the Wartburg), have promised them all they actually expected from Luther. Once more, they say, God is sending inspired men on earth, to introduce a new order of things, no more to teach the saints how to bow, suffer, and be patient; but how to fight and avenge themselves of their adversaries, and to reign.

October, 1524.

Now, alas, the peasants are in open revolt, rushing through the land by tens of thousands. The insurrection began in the Black Forest, and now it sweeps throughout the land, gathering strength as it advances, and bearing everything before it by the mere force of numbers and movements. City after city yields and admits them, and swears to their Twelve Articles, which in themselves they say are not so bad, if only they were enforced by better means. Castle after castle is assailed and falls. Ulrich writes in burning indignation at the cruel deaths they have inflicted on noble men and women, and on their pillaging the convents. Fritz, on the other hand, writes entreating us not to forget the long catalogue of legalized wrongs which had lead to this moment of fierce and lawless vengeance.

Dr. Luther, although sympathizing with the peasants by birth, and by virtue of his own quick and generous indignation at injustice, whilst with a prophet's plainness he blames the nobles for their exactions and tyranny, yet sternly demands the suppression of the revolt with the sword. He says this is essential, if it were only to free the honest and well-meaning peasantry from the tyranny of the ambitious and turbulent men who compel them to join their banner on pain of death. With a heart that bleeds at every severity, he counsels the severest measures as the most merciful. More than once he and others of the Wittemberg doctors have succeeded in quieting and dispersing riotous bands of the peasants assembled by tens of thousands, with a few calm and earnest words. But bitter, indeed, are these times to him. The peasants whom he pities, and because he pities condemns, call out that he has betrayed them, and threaten his life. The prelates and princes of the old religion declare all this disorder and pillage are only the natural consequences

of his false doctrine. But between them both he goes steadfastly forward, speaking faithful words to all. More and more, however, as terrible rumours reach us of torture, and murder, and wild pillage, he seems to become convinced that mercy and vigour are on the same side. And now he, whose journey through Germany not three years since was a triumphal procession, has to ride secretly from place to place on his errands of peace-making, in danger of being put to death by the people if he were discovered!

My heart aches for these peasants. These are not the Pharisees who were "*not blind*," but understood only too well what they rejected. They are the "multitudes," the common people, who as of old heard the voice of love and truth gladly; for whom dying he pleaded, "They know not what they do."

April, 1525.

The tide has turned. The army of the empire, under Truchsess, is out. Phillip of Hesse, after quieting his own dominions, is come to Saxony to suppress the revolt here. Our own gentle and merciful Elector, who so reluctantly drew the sword, is, they say, dying. The world is full of change!

Meantime, in our little Wittemberg world, changes are in prospect. It seems probable that Dr. Luther, after settling the other eight nuns, and endeavouring also to find a home for Catherine von Bora, will espouse her himself. A few months since he tried to persuade her to marry Glatz, pastor of Orlamund, but she refused. And now it seems certain that the solitary Augustinian convent will become a home, and that she will make it so.

Gottfried and I cannot but rejoice. In this world of tumult and unrest, it seems so needful that that warm, earnest heart should have one place where it can rest, one heart that will understand and be true to him if all else should become estranged, as so many have. And this, we trust, Catherine von Bora will be to him.

Reserved, and with an innate dignity, which will befit the wife of him whom God has called in so many ways to be the leader of the hearts of men, she has a spirit which will prevent her sinking into the mere reflection of that resolute character, and a cheerfulness and womanly tact which will, we hope, sustain him through many a depressing hour, such as those who wear earth's crowns of any kind must know.

December, 1525.

This year has, indeed, been a year of changes. The peasant revolt is crushed. At Frankenhausen, the last great victory was gained. Thomas Münzer was slain, and his undisciplined hosts fled in hopeless confusion. The revolt is crushed, alas! Gottfried says, as men too generally crush their enemies when once in their power, exceeding the crime in the punishment, and laying up a store of future revolt and vengeance for future generations.

The good and wise Elector Friedrich died just before the victory. It is well, perhaps, that he did not live to see the terrible vengeance that has been inflicted, the roadsteads lined with gibbets, torture returned by torture, insult by cruel mocking. The poor deluded people, especially the peasantry, wept for the good Elector, and said, "Ah, God, have mercy on us! We have lost our father!" He used to speak kindly to their children in the fields, and was always ready to listen to a tale of wrong. He died humbly as a Christian; he was buried royally as a prince.

Shortly before his death, his chaplain, Spalatin, came to see him. The Elector gave him his hand, and said, "You do well to come to me. We are commanded to visit the sick."

Neither brother nor any near relative was with him when he died. The services of all brave men were needed in those stormy days. But he was not forsaken. To the childless, solitary sufferer, his faithful servants were like a family.

"Oh, dear children," he said, "I suffer greatly!"

Then Joachim Sack, one of his household, a Silesian, said,—

"Most gracious master, if God will, you will soon be better."

Shortly after the dying prince said,—

"Dear children, I am ill indeed."

And Sack answered,—

"Gracious lord, the Almighty God sends you all this with a Father's love, and with the best will to you."

Then the prince repeated softly, in Latin, the words of Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

And once more he said,—

"Dear children, I am very ill."

And the faithful Joachim comforted him again,—"My gracious Master, the Almighty God, sends it all to your electoral highness from the greatest love."

The prince clasped his hands, and said,—

"*For that I can trust my good God!*" and added, "Help me, help me, O my God."

And after receiving the holy communion in both kinds, he called his servants around him, and said,—

"Dear children, I entreat you, that in whatever I have done you wrong, by word or deed, you will forgive me for God's sake, and pray others to do the same. For we princes do much wrong often to poor people that should not be."

As he spoke thus, all that were in the room could not restrain their tears, and seeing that, he said,—

"Dear children, weep not for me. It will not be long with me now. But think of me, and pray to God for me."

Spalatin had copied some verses of the Bible for him, which he put on his spectacles to read for himself. He thought much of Luther, whom, much as he had befriended him, he had never spoken to, and sent for him. But it was in vain. Luther was on the Hartz mountains, endeavouring to quell the peasants' revolt. That interview is deferred to the world where all earthly distinctions are forgotten, but where the least Christian services are remembered.

So, "a child of peace," as one said, he departed, and rests in peace, through the high and only merits of the only Son of God, in whom, in his last testament, he confessed was "all his hope."

It was a solemn day for Wittemberg when they laid him in his grave in the Electoral Church, which he had once so richly provided with relics. His body lying beneath it is the most sacred relic it enshrines for us now.

Knights and burghers met the coffin at the city gate; eight noblemen carried it, and a long train of mourners passed through the silent streets. Many chanted around the tomb the old Latin hymns, "In media vitæ," and "Si bona suscipimur," and also the German, "From deepest need I cry to Thee," and—

> "In Fried und Freud fahr ich dahin."
> "I journey hence in peace and joy."

The money which would in former times have purchased masses for his soul, was given to the poor. And Dr. Luther preached a sermon on that promise, "Those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him," which makes it needless, indeed, to pray for the repose of those who thus sleep.

Gretchen asked me in the evening what the hymn meant,—

> "I journey hence in peace and joy."

I told her it was the soul of the prince that thus journeyed hence.

"The procession was so dark and sad," she said, "the words did not seem to suit."

"That procession was going to the grave," said Thekla, who was with us. "There was another procession, which we could not see, going to heaven. The holy angels, clothed in radiant white, were carrying the happy spirit to heaven, and singing, as they went, anthems such as that, while we were weeping here."

"I should like to see that procession of the dear angels, Aunt Thekla," said Gretchen. "Mother says the good Elector had no little children to love him, and no one to call him any tenderer name than 'Your electoral highness' when he died. But on the other side of the grave he will not be lonely, will he? The holy angels will have tender names for him there, will they not?"

"The Lord Jesus will, at all events," I said. "He calleth his own sheep by name."

And Gretchen was comforted for the Elector.

Not long after that day of mourning came a day of rejoicing to our household, and to all the friendly circle at Wittemberg.

Quietly, in our house, on June the 23d, Dr. Luther and Catherine von Bora were married.

A few days afterwards the wedding feast was held on the home-bringing of the bride to the Augustinian cloister, which, together with "twelve brewings of beer yearly," the good Elector John Frederic has given Luther as a wedding present. Brave old John Luther and his wife, and Luther's pious mother came to the feast from Mansfeld, and a day of much festivity it was to all.

And now for six months, what Luther calls "that great thing, the union and communion between husband and wife," hath hallowed the old convent into a home, whilst the prayer of faith and the presence of Him whom faith sees, have consecrated the home into a sanctuary of love and peace.

Many precious things hath Dr. Luther said of marriage. God, he says, has set the type of marriage before us throughout all creation. Each creature seeks its perfection through being blent with

another. The very heaven and earth picture it to us, for does not the sky embrace the green earth as its bride? "Precious, excellent, glorious," he says, "is that word of the Holy Ghost, 'the heart of the husband doth safely trust in her.'"

He says also, that so does he honour the married state, that before he thought of marrying his Catherine, he had resolved, if he should be laid suddenly on his dying bed, to be espoused before he died, and to give two silver goblets to the maiden as his wedding and dying gift. And lately he counselled one who was to be married, "Dear friend, do thou as I did, when I would take my Käthe. I prayed to our Lord God with all my heart. A good wife is a companion of life, and her husband's solace and joy, and when a pious man and wife love each other truly, the devil has little power to hurt them.

"All men," he said, "believe and understand that marriage is marriage, a hand a hand, riches are riches; but to believe that marriage is of God, and ordered and appointed by God; that the hand is made by God, that wealth and all we have and are is given by God, and is to be used as his work to his praise, that is not so commonly believed. And a good wife," he said, "should be loved and honoured, firstly, because she is God's gift and present: secondly, because God has endowed women with noble and great virtues, which, when they are modest, faithful, and believing, far overbalance their little failings and infirmities."

WITTEMBERG, *December*, 1525.

Another year all but closed—a year of mingled storm and sunshine? The sorrow we dreaded for our poor Thekla is come at last too surely. Bertrand de Créquy is dead! He died in a prison alone, for conscience' sake, but at peace in God. A stranger from Flanders brought her a few words of farewell in his handwriting, and afterwards saw him dead, so that she cannot doubt. She seems to move about like one walking in a dream, performing every common act of life as before, but with the soul asleep. We are afraid what will be the end of it. Gold help her! She is now gone for the Christmas to Eva and Fritz.

Sad divisions have sprung up among the evangelical Christians. Dr. Luther is very angry at some doctrines of Karlstadt and the Swiss brethren concerning the holy sacraments, and says they will be wise above what is written. We grieve at these things, especially as our Atlantis has married a Swiss, and Dr. Luther will not acknowledge them as brethren. Our poor Atlantis is much perplexed, and writes that she is sure her husband meaneth not to undervalue the Holy Supper, and that in very truth they find their Saviour present there as we do. But Dr. Luther is very stern about it. He fears disorders and wild opinions will be brought in again, such as led to the slaughter of the peasants' war. Yet he himself is sorely distressed about it, and saith often that the times are so evil the end of the world is surely drawing nigh.

In the midst of all this perplexity, we who love him rejoice that he has that quiet home in the Augustei, where "Lord Käthe," as he calls her, and her little son Hänschen reign, and where the dear, holy angels, as Luther says, watch over the cradle of the child.

It was a festival to all Wittemberg when little Hans Luther was born.

Luther's house is like the sacred hearth of Wittemberg and of all the land. There in the winter evenings he welcomes his friends to the cheerful room with the large window, and sometimes they sing good songs or holy hymns in parts, accompanied by the lute and harp, music at which Dr. Luther is sure King David would be amazed and delighted, could he rise from his grave, "since there can have been none so fine in his days." "The devil," he says, "always flies from music, especially from sacred music, because he is a despairing spirit, and cannot bear joy and gladness."

And in the summer days he sits under the pear tree in his garden, while Käthe works beside him; or he plants seeds and makes a fountain; or he talks to her and his friends about the wonders of beauty God has set in the humblest flowers, and the picture of the resurrection he gives us in every delicate twig that in spring bursts from the dry brown stems of winter.

More and more we see what a good wife God has given him in Catherine von Bora, with her cheerful, firm, and active spirit, and her devoted affection for him. Already she has the management of all the finance of the household, a very necessary arrangement, if the house of Luther is not to go to ruin, for Dr. Luther would give everything, even to his clothes and furniture, to any one in distress, and he will not receive any payment either for his books or for teaching the students.

She is a companion for him, moreover, and not a mere listener, which he likes, however much he may laugh at her eloquence, "in her own department surpassing Cicero's," and sarcastically relate how when first they were married, not knowing what to say, but wishing to "make conversation," she used to say, as she sat at her work beside him, "Herr Doctor, is not the lord high chamberlain in Prussia the brother of the margrave?" hoping that such high discourse would not be too trifling for him! He says, indeed, that if he were to seek an obedient wife, he would carve one for himself out of stone. But the belief among us is, that there are few happier homes than Dr. Luther's; and if at any time Catherine finds him oppressed with a sadness too deep for her ministry to reach, she quietly creeps out and calls Justus Jones, or some other friend, to come and cheer the doctor. Often, also, she reminds him of the letters he has to write; and he likes to have her sitting by him while he writes, which is a proof sufficient that she can be silent when necessary, whatever jests the Doctor may make about her "long sermons, which she certainly

never would have made, if, like other preachers, she had taken the precaution of beginning with the Lord's Prayer!"

The Christian married life, as he says, "is a humble and a holy life," and well, indeed, is it for our German Reformation that its earthly centre is neither a throne, nor a hermitage, but a lowly Christian home.

PARSONAGE OF GERSDORF, *June*, 1527.

I am staying with Eva while Fritz is absent making a journey of inspection of the schools throughout Saxony at Dr. Luther's desire, with Dr. Philip Melancthon, and many other learned men.

Dr. Luther has set his heart on improving the education of the children, and is anxious to have some of the revenues of the suppressed convents appropriated to this purpose before all are quietly absorbed by the nobles and princes for their own uses.

It is a renewal of youth to me, in my sober middle age, to be here along with Eva, and yet not alone. For the terror of my youth is actually under our roof with me. *Aunt Agnes* is an inmate of Fritz's home! During the pillaging of the convents and dispersing of the nuns, which took place in the dreadful peasants' war, she was driven from Nimptschen, and after spending a few weeks with our mother at Wittemberg, has finally taken refuge with Eva and Fritz.

But Eva's little twin children, Heinz and Agnes, will associate a very different picture with the name of Aunt Agnes from the rigid lifeless face and voice which used to haunt my dreams of a religious life, and make me dread the heaven, of whose inhabitants, I was told, Aunt Agnes was a type.

Perhaps the white hair softens the high but furrowed brow; yet surely there was not that kindly gleam in the grave eyes I remember, or that tender tone in the voice. Is it an echo of the voices of the little ones she so dearly loves, and a reflection of the sunshine in their eyes? No; better than that even, I know, because Eva told me. It is the smile and the music of a heart made as that of a little child through believing in the Saviour. It is the peace of the Pharisee, who has won the publican's blessing by meekly taking the publican's place.

I confess, however, I do not think Aunt Agnes's presence improves the discipline of Eva's household. She is exceedingly slow to detect any traces of original sin in Eva's children, while to me, on the contrary, the wonder is that any creature so good and exemplary as Eva should have children so much like other people's—even mine. One would have thought that her infants would have been a kind of half angels, taking naturally to all good things, and never doing wrong except by mistake in a gentle and moderate way. Whereas, I must say, I hear frequent little wails of rebellion from Eva's nursery, especially at seasons of ablution, much as from mine; and I do not think even our Fritz ever showed more decided pleasure in mischief, or more determined self-will, than Eva's little rosy Heinz.

One morning after a rather prolonged little battle between Heinz and his mother about some case of oppression of little Agnes, I suggested to Aunt Agnes—

"Only to think that Eva, if she had kept to her vocation, might have attained to the full ideal of the Theologia Teutsch, have become a St. Elizabeth, or indeed far better?"

Aunt Agnes looked up quickly—

"And you mean to say she is not better now! You imagine that spinning meditations all day long is more Christian work for a woman than training these little ones for God, and helping them to fight their first battles with the devil!"

"Perhaps not, Aunt Agnes," I said, "but then, you see, I know nothing of the inside of a convent."

"*I do*," said Aunt Agnes emphatically, "and also the inside of a nun's heart. And I know what wretched work we make of it when we try to take our education out of our Heavenly Father's hands into our own. Do you think," she continued, "Eva did not learn more in the long nights when she watched over her sick child than she could have learned in a thousand self-imposed vigils before any shrine? And to-night, when she kneels with Heinz, as she will, and says with him, 'Pray God forgive little Heinz for being a naughty boy to-day,' and lays him on his pillow, and as she watches him fall asleep, asks God to bless and train the wilful little one, and then asks for pardon herself, do you not think she learns more of what 'forgiveness' means and 'Our Father' than from a year's study of the Theologia Teutsch?"

I smiled and said, "Dear Aunt Agnes, if Fritz wants to hear Eva's praises well sung, I will tell him to suggest to you whether it might not have been a higher vocation for her to remain a nun!"

"Ah! child," said Aunt Agnes, with a little mingling of the old sternness, and the new tenderness in her voice, "if you had learned what I have from those lips, and in this house, you could not, even in jest, bear to hear a syllable of reflection on either."

Indeed, even Aunt Agnes cannot honour this dear home more than I do. Open to every peasant who has a sorrow or a wrong to tell, it is also linked with the castle; and linked to both, not by any class privileges, but because here peasants and nobles alike are welcomed as men and women, and as Christian brothers and sisters.

Now and then we pay a visit to the castle, where our noble sister Chriemhild is enthroned. But my tastes have always been burgher like, and the parsonage suits me much better than the castle. Besides, I cannot help feeling some little awe of Dame Hermentrud, especially when my two boys are with me, they being apt to indulge in a burgher freedom in their demeanour. The furniture and arrangements of the castle are a generation behind our own at Wittemberg, and I cannot at all make the boys comprehend the majesty of the Gersdorf ancestry, nor the necessary inferiority of people who live in streets to those who live in isolated rock fortresses. So that I am reduced to the Bible law of "honour to grey hairs" to enforce due respect to Dame Hermentrud.

Little Fritz wants to know what the Gersdorf ancestry are renowned for. "Was it for learning?" he asked.

I thought not, as it is only this generation who have learned to read, and the old knight even is suspected of having strong reasons for preferring listening to Ulrich's reading to using a book for himself.

"Was it then for courage?"

"Certainly, the Gersdorfs had always been brave."

"With whom, then, had they fought?"

"At the time of the Crusades, I believed, against the infidels."

"And since then?"

I did not feel sure, but looking at the ruined castle of Bernstein and the neighbouring height, I was afraid it was against their neighbours.

And so, after much cross questioning, the distinctions of the Gersdorf family seemed to be chiefly reduced to their having been Gersdorfs, and having lived at Gersdorf for a great many hundred years.

Then Fritz desired to know in what way his cousins, the Gersdorfs of this generation, are to distinguish themselves? This question also was a perplexity to me, as I know it often is to Chriemhild. They must not on any account be merchants; and now that in the Evangelical Church the great abbeys are suppressed, and some of the bishoprics are to be secularized, it is hardly deemed consistent with Gersdorf dignity that they should become clergymen. The eldest will have the castle. One of them may study civil law. For the others nothing seems open but the idling dependent life of pages and military attendants in the castles of some of the greater nobles.

If the past is the inheritance of the knights, it seems to me the future is far more likely to be the possession of the active burgher families. I cannot but feel thankful for the lot which opens to our boys honourable spheres of action in the great cities of the empire. There seems no room for expansion in the life of those petty nobles. While the patrician families of the cities are sailing on the broad current of the times, encouraging art, advancing learning, themselves sharing all the thought and progress of the time, these knightly families in the country remain isolated in their grim castles ruling over a few peasants, and fettered to a narrow local circle, while the great current of the age sweeps by them.

Gottfried says, narrow and ill-used privileges always end in ruining those who bigotedly cling to them. The exclusiveness which begins by shutting others out, commonly ends in shutting the exclusive in. The lordly fortress becomes the narrow prison.

All these thoughts passed through my mind as I left the rush-strewn floor of the hall where Dame Hermentrud had received me and my boys, with a lofty condescension, while, in the course of the interview, I had heard her secretly remarking to Chriemhild how unlike the cousins were; "It was quite singular how entirely the Gersdorf children were unlike the Cottas!"

But it was not until I entered Eva's lowly home, that I detected the bitter root of wounded pride from which my deep social speculations sprang. I had been avenging myself on the Schönberg-Gersdorf past by means of the Cotta-Reichenbach future. Yes; Fritz and Eva's lowly home is nobler than Chriemhild's, and richer than ours; richer and nobler just in as far as it is more lowly and more Christian!

And I learned my lesson after this manner.

"Dame Hermentrud is very proud," I said to Eva, as I returned from the castle and sat down beside her in the porch, where she was sewing; "and I really cannot see on what ground."

Eva made no reply, but a little amused smile played about her mouth, which for the moment rather aggravated me.

"Do you mean to say she is *not* proud, Eva?" I continued controversially.

"I did not mean to say that any one was not proud," said Eva.

"Did you mean then to imply that she has anything to be proud of?"

"There are all the ghosts of all the Gersdorfs," said Eva; "and there is the high ancestral privilege of wearing velvet and pearls, which you and I dare not assume."

"Surely," said I, "the privilege of possessing Lucas Cranach's pictures, and Albrecht Dürer's carvings, is better than that."

"Perhaps it is," said Eva demurely; "perhaps wealth is as firm ground for pride to build on as ancestral rank. Those who have neither, like Fritz and I, may be the most candid judges."

I laughed, and felt a cloud pass from my heart. Eva had dared to call the sprite which vexed me by his right name, and like any other gnome or cobold, he vanished instantly.

Thank God our Eva is Cousin Eva again, instead of Sister Ave; that her single heart is here among us to flash the light on our consciences just by shining, instead of being hidden under a saintly canopy in the shrine of some distant convent.

July, 1527.

Fritz is at home. It was delightful to see what a festival his return was, not only in the home, but in the village—the children running to the doors to receive a smile, the mothers stopping in their work to welcome him. The day after his return was Sunday. As usual, the children of the village were assembled at five o'clock in the morning to church. Among them were our boys, and Chriemhild's, and Eva's twins, Heinz and Agnes—rosy, merry children of the forest as they are. All, however, looked as good and sweet as if they had been children of Eden, as they tripped that morning after each other over the village green, their bright little forms passing in and out of the shadow of the great beech-tree which stands opposite the church.

The little company all stood together in the church before the altar, while Fritz stood on the step and taught them. At first they sang a hymn, the elder boys in Latin, and then all together in German; and then Fritz heard them say Luther's Catechism. How sweetly the lisping, childish voices answered his deep, manly voice; like the rustling of the countless summer leaves outside, or the fall of the countless tiny cascades of the village stream in the still summer morning.

"My dear child, what art thou?" he said.

Answer from the score of little hushed, yet ringing voices—

"I am a Christian."

"How dost thou know that?"

"Because I am baptized, and believe on my dear Lord Jesus Christ."

"What is it needful that a Christian should know for his salvation?"

Answer—"The Catechism."

And afterwards, in the part concerning the Christian faith, the sweet voices repeated the Creed in German.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty."

And Fritz's voice asked gently—

"What does that mean?"

Answer—"I believe that God has created me and all creatures; has given me body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them to me; and that he has also given me my clothes and my shoes, and whatsoever I eat or drink; that richly and daily he provides me with all needful nourishment for body and life, and guards me from all danger and evil; and all this out of pure fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or deserving of mine. And for all this I am bound to thank and praise him, and also to serve and obey him. This is certainly true."

Again—

"I believe in Jesus Christ," &c.

"What does that mean?"

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human creature, has purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with his own holy precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and dying, that I may be his own, and I live in his kingdom under him, and serve him in endless righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns forever. This is certainly true."

And again,

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

"What does that mean?"

"I believe that not by my own reason or power can I believe on Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the right faith, as he calls all Christian people on earth, gathers,

enlightens, sanctifies them, and through Jesus keeps them in the right and only faith, among which Christian people he daily richly forgives all sins, to me and all believers, and at the last day will awaken me and all the dead, and to me and all believers in Christ will give eternal life. This is certainly true."

And again, on the Lord's Prayer, the children's voices began,—

"Our Father who art in heaven."

"What does that mean?"

"God will in this way sweetly persuade us to believe that he is our true Father, and that we are his true children; that cheerfully and with all confidence we may ask of him as dear children ask of their dear fathers."

And at the end,

"What does Amen mean?"

"That I should be sure such prayers are acceptable to the Father in heaven, and granted by him, for he himself has taught us thus to pray, and promised that he will hear us. Amen, amen—that means, *yes, yes, that shall be done*."

And when it was asked,—

"Who receives the holy sacrament worthily?"

Softly came the answer,—

"He is truly and rightly prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins.' But he who doubts or disbelieves these words, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, '*for you*,' need simple believing hearts."

As I listened to the simple living words, I could not wonder that Dr. Luther often repeats them to himself, or rather, as he says, '*to God*,' as an antidote to the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And so the childish voices died away in the morning stillness of the church, and the shadow of the bell-tower fell silently across the grassy mounds or wooden crosses beneath which rest the village dead; and as we went home, the long shadow of the beech-tree fell on the dewy village green.

Then, before eleven o'clock, the church bell began to ring, and the peasants came trooping from the different clearings of the forest. One by one we watched the various groups in their bright holiday dresses, issuing out of the depths of dark green shade, among them, doubtless, many a branch of the Luther family who live in this neighbourhood. Afterwards each door in the village poured out its contributions, and soon the little church was full, the men and women seated on the opposite sides of the church, and the aged gathered around the pulpit. Fritz's text was Eva's motto, "*God so loved the world*." Simply, with illustrations such as they could understand, he spoke to them of God's infinite love, and the infinite cost at which he had redeemed us, and of the love and trust and obedience we owe him, and, according to Dr. Luther's advice he did not speak too long, but "called black black, and white white, keeping to one simple subject, so that the people may go away and say, '*The sermon was about this.*'" For, as I heard Dr. Luther say, "We must not speak to the common people of high difficult things, or with mysterious words. To the church come little children, maid-servants, old men and women, to whom high doctrine teaches nothing. For, if they say about it, 'Ah, he said excellent things, he has made a fine sermon!' And one asks, 'What about, then?' they reply, 'I know not.' Let us remember what pains our Lord Christ took to preach simply. From the vineyard, from the sheepfold, from trees, he drew his illustrations, all that the people might feel and understand."

That sermon of Fritz's left a deep rest in my heart. He spoke not of justification, and redemption merely, but of the living God redeeming and justifying us. Greater service can no one render us than to recall to us what God has done for us, and how he really and tenderly cares for us.

In the afternoon, the children were gathered for a little while in the school-room, and questioned about the sermon. At sunset again we all met for a short service in the church, and sang evening hymns in German, after which the pastor pronounced the benediction, and the little community scattered once more to their various homes.

With the quiet sunshine, and the light shed on the home by Fritz's return, to-day seemed to me almost like a day in Paradise.

Thank God again and again for Dr. Luther, and especially for these two great benefits given back to us through him—first, that he has unsealed the fountain of God's word from the icy fetters of the dead language, and sent it flowing through the land, everywhere wakening winter into spring; and secondly, that he has vindicated the sanctity of marriage and the home life it constitutes; unsealing the grave-stones of the convent gates, and sending forth the religion entranced and buried there to bless the world in a thousand lowly, holy, Christian homes such as this.

XXXI.

Thekla's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *September*, 1527.

I have said it from my heart at last! yes, I am sure I say it from my heart, and if with a broken heart, God will not despise that.

"*Our Father* which art in heaven, *thy will, not mine be done*."

I thought I could bear anything better than suspense; but I had no idea what a blank of despair the certainty would bring.

Then came dreadful rebellious thoughts, that God should let him die alone; and then recurred to my heart all they had said to me about not making idols, and I began to fear I had never really loved or worshipped God at all, but only Bertrand; and then came a long time of blank and darkness into which no light of human or divine love or voices of comfort seemed in the least to penetrate. I thought God would never receive me until I could say, "Thy will be done," and this I could not say.

The first words I remember that seemed to convey any meaning at all to me were some of Dr. Luther's in a sermon. He said it was easy to believe in God's pardoning love in times of peace, but in times of temptation when the devil assailed the soul with all his fiery darts, he himself found it hard, indeed, to hold to the truth he knew so well, that Christ was not a severe judge, or a hard exactor, but a forgiving Saviour, indeed love itself, pure unalterable love.

Then I began to understand it was *the devil*, the malignant exacting evil spirit that I had been listening to in the darkness of my heart, that it was he who had been persuading me I must not dare to go to my Father, before I could bring him a perectly submissive heart.

And then I remembered the words, "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden;" and, alone in my room, I fell on my knees, and cried, "O blessed Saviour, O heavenly Father, I am not submissive; but I am weary, weary and heavy-laden; and I come to thee. Wilt thou take me as I am, and teach me in time to say, 'Thy will be done!'" And he received me, and in time he has taught me. At least I can say so to-night. To-morrow, perhaps, the old rebellion will come back. But if it does, I will go again to our heavenly Father and say again, "Not submissive yet, only heavy-laden! Father, take my hand, and say, begin again!"

Because amidst all these happy homes I felt so unnecessary to any one, and so unutterably lonely. I longed for the old convents to bury myself in, away from all joyous sounds. But, thank God, they were closed for me; and I do not wish for them now.

Dr. Luther began to help me by showing me how the devil had been keeping me from God.

And now God has helped me by sending through my heart again a glow of thankfulness and love.

The plague has been at Wittemberg again. Dr. Luther's house has been turned into an hospital; for dear as are his Käthe and his little Hans to him, he would not flee from the danger, any more than years ago, when he was a monk in the convent which is now his home.

And what a blessing his strong and faithful words have been among us, from the pulpit, by the dying bed, or in the house of mourning.

But it is through my precious mother chiefly that God has spoken to my heart, and made me feel he does indeed sustain, and care, and listen. She was so nearly gone. And now she is recovering. They say the danger is over. And never more will I say in my heart, "To me only God gives no home," or fear to let my heart entwine too closely round those God has left me to love, because of the anguish when that clasp is severed. I will take the joy and the love with all its possibilities of sorrow, and trust in God for both.

Perhaps, also, God may have some little work of love for me to do, some especial service even for me, to make me needed in the world as long as I am here. For to-day Justus Jonas, who has lost his little son in the plague, came to me and said,—

"Thekla, come and see my wife. She says you can comfort her, for you can comprehend sorrow."

Of course I went. I do not think I said anything to comfort her. I could do little else but weep with her, as I looked on the little, innocent, placid, lifeless face. But when I left her she said I had done her good, and begged me to come again.

So, perhaps, God has some blessed services for me to render him, which I could only have learned as he has taught me; and when we meet hereafter, Bertrand and I, and hear that dear divine and human voice that has led us through the world, we *together* shall be glad of all this bitter pain that we endured and felt, and give thanks for it for ever and for ever!

XXXII.

Elsè's Story.

WITTEMBERG, *May*, 1530.

Of all the happy homes God has given to Germany through Dr. Luther, I think none are happier than his own.

The walls of the Augustine convent echo now with the pattering feet and ringing voices of little children, and every night the angels watch over the sanctuary of a home. The birthdays of Dr. Luther's children are festivals to us all, and more especially the birthday of little Hans the first-born was so.

Yet death also has been in that bright home. Their second child, a babe, Elizabeth, was early taken from her parents. Dr. Luther grieved over her much. A little while after her death he wrote to his friend Hausmann:

"Grace and peace. My Johannulus thanks thee, best Nicholas, for the rattle, in which he glories and rejoices wondrously.

"I have begun to write something about the Turkish war, which will not, I hope, be useless.

"My little daughter is dead; my darling little Elizabeth. It is strange how sick and wounded she has left my heart, almost as tender as a woman's, such pity moves me for that little one. I never could have believed before what is the tenderness of a father's heart for his children. Do thou pray to the Lord for me, in Whom fare-thee-well."

Catherine von Bora is honoured and beloved by all. Some indeed complain of her being too economical; but what would become of Dr. Luther and his family if she were as reckless in giving as he is? He has been known even to take advantage of her illness to bestow his plate on some needy student. He never will receive a kreuzer from the students he teaches, and he refuses to sell his writings, which provokes both Gottfried and me, noble as it is of him, because the great profits they bring would surely be better spent by Dr. Luther than by the printers who get them now. Our belief is, that were it not for Mistress Luther, the whole household would have long since been reduced to beggary, and Dr. Luther, who does not scruple to beg of the Elector or of any wealthy person for the needs of others (although never for his own), knows well how precarious such a livelihood is.

His wife does not, however, always succeed in restraining his propensities to give everything away. Not long ago, in defiance of her remonstrating looks, in her presence he bestowed on a student who came to him asking money to help him home from the university, a silver goblet which had been presented to him, saying that he had no need to drink out of silver.

We all feel the tender care with which she watches over his health, a gift to the whole land. His strength has never quite recovered the strain on it during those years of conflict and penance in the monastery at Erfurt. And it is often strained to the utmost now. All the monks and nuns who have renounced their idle maintenance in convents for conscience' sake; all congregations that desire an evangelical pastor; all people of all kinds in trouble of mind, body, or estate, turn to Dr. Luther for aid or counsel, as to the warmest heart and the clearest head in the land. His correspondence is incessant, embracing and answering every variety of perplexity, from counselling evangelical princes how best to reform their states, to directions to some humble Christian woman how to find peace for her conscience in Christ. And besides the countless applications to him for advice, his large heart seems always at leisure to listen to the appeal of the persecuted far and near, or to the cry of the bereaved and sorrowful.

Where shall we find the spring of all this activity but in the *Bible*, of which he says, "There are few trees in that garden which I have not shaken for fruit;" and in *prayer*, of which he, the busiest man in Christendom, (as if he were a contemplative hermit) says, "Prayer is the Christian's business (Das Gebet ist des Christen Handwerk)."

Yes, it is the leisure he makes for prayer which gives leisure for all besides. It is the hours passed with the life-giving word which make sermons, and correspondence, and teaching of all kinds to him simply the out-pouring of a full heart.

Yet such a life wears out too quickly. More than once has Mistress Luther been in sore anxiety about him during the four years they have been married.

Once, in 1527, when little Hans was the baby, and he believed he should soon have to leave her a widow with the fatherless little one, he said rather sadly he had nothing to leave her but the silver tankards which had been presented to him.

"Dear doctor," she replied, "if it be God's will, then I also choose that you be with him rather than me. It is not so much I and my child even that need you as the multitude of pious Christians. Trouble yourself not about me."

What her courageous hopefulness and her tender watchfulness have been to him, he showed when he said,—

"I am too apt to expect more from my Käthe, and from Melancthon, than I do from Christ, my Lord. And yet I well know that neither they nor any one on earth has suffered, or can suffer, what he hath suffered for me."

But although incessant work may weigh upon his body, there are severer trials which weigh upon his spirit. The heart so quick to every touch of affection or pleasure cannot but be sensitive to injustice or disappointment. It cannot therefore be easy for him to bear that at one time it should be perilous for him to travel on account of the indignation of the nobles, whose relatives he has rescued from nunneries; and at another time equally unsafe because of the indignation of the peasants, for whom, though he boldly and openly denounced their made insurrection, he pleads fervently with nobles and princes.

But bitterer than all other things to him, are the divisions among evangelical Christians. Every truth he believes flashes on his mind with such overwhelming conviction that it seems to him nothing but incomprehensible wilfulness for any one else not to see it. Every conviction he holds, he holds with the grasp of one ready to die for it—not only with the tenacity of possession, but of a soldier to whom its defence has been intrusted. He would not, indeed, have any put to death or imprisoned for their misbelief. But hold out the hand of fellowship to those who betray any part of his Lords trust, he thinks,—how dare he? Are a few peaceable days to be purchased at the sacrifice of eternal truth?

And so the division has taken place between us and the Swiss.

My Gretchen perplexed me the other day, when we were coming from the city church, where Dr. Luther had been preaching against the Anabaptists and the Swiss, (whom he will persist in classing together,) by saying,—

"Mother, is not Uncle Winkelried a Swiss, and is he not a good man?"

"Of course Uncle Conrad is a good man, Gretchen," rejoined our Fritz, who had just returned from a visit to Atlantis and Conrad. "How can you ask such questions?"

"But he is a Swiss, and Dr. Luther said we must take care not to be like the Swiss, because they say wicked things about the holy sacraments."

"I am sure Uncle Conrad does not say wicked things," retorted Fritz, vehemently. "I think he is almost the best man I ever saw. Mother," he continued, "why does Dr. Luther speak so of the Swiss?"

"You see, Fritz," I said, "Dr. Luther never stayed six months among them as you did; and so he has never seen how good they are at home."

"Then," rejoined Fritz, sturdily, "if Dr. Luther has not seen them, I do not think he should speak so of them."

I was driven to have recourse to maternal authority to close the discussion, reminding Fritz that he was a little boy, and could not pretend to judge of good and great men, like Dr. Luther. But, indeed, I could not help half agreeing with the child. It was impossible to make him understand how Dr. Luther has fought his way inch by inch to the freedom in which we now stand at ease; how he detests the Zwinglian doctrines, not so much for themselves, as for what he thinks they imply. How will it be possible to make our children, who enter on the peaceful inheritance so dearly won, understand the rough, soldierly vehemence, of the warrior race, who re-conquered that inheritance for them?

As Dr. Luther says, "It is not a little thing to change the whole religion and doctrine of the Papacy. How hard it has been to me, they will see in that Day. Now no one believes it!"

God appointed David to fight the wars of Israel, and Solomon to build the temple. Dr. Luther has had to do both. What wonder if the hand of the soldier can sometimes be traced in the work of peace!

Yet, why should I perplex myself about this? Soon, too soon, death will come, and consecrate the virtues of our generation to our children, and throw a softening veil over our mistakes.

Even now that Dr. Luther is absent from us at Coburg, in the castle there, how precious his letters are; and how doubly sacred the words he preached to us last Sunday from the pulpit, now that to-morrow we are not to hear him.

He is placed in the castle at Coburg, in order to be nearer the Diet at Augsburg, so as to aid Dr. Melancthon, who is there, with his counsel. The Elector dare not trust the royal heart and straightforward spirit of our Luther among the prudent diplomatists at the Diet.

Mistress Luther is having a portrait taken of their little Magdalen, who is now a year old, and especially dear to the Doctor, to send to him in the fortress.

June, 1530.

Letters have arrived from and about Dr. Luther. His father is dead—the brave, persevering, self-denying, truthful old man, who had stamped so much of his own character on his son. "It is meet I should mourn such a parent," Luther writes, "who through the sweat of his brow had nurtured and educated me, and made me what I am." He felt it keenly, especially since he could not be

with his father at the last; although he gives thanks that he lived in these times of light, and departed strong in the faith of Christ. Dr. Luther's secretary writes, however, that the portrait of his little Magdalen comforts him much. He has hung it on the wall opposite to the place where he sits at meals.

Dr. Luther is now the eldest of his race. He stands in the foremost rank of the generations slowly advancing to confront death.

To-day I have been sitting with Mistress Luther in the garden behind the

Augustei, under the shade of the pear-tree, where she so often sits beside the Doctor. Our children were playing around us—her little Hänschen with the boys, while the little Magdalen sat cooing like a dove over some flowers, which she was pulling to pieces, on the grass at our feet.

She talked to me much about the Doctor; how dearly he loves the little ones, and what lessons of divine love and wisdom he learns from their little plays. He says often, that beautiful as all God's works are, little children are the fairest of all; that the dear angels especially watch over them. He is very tender with them, and says sometimes they are better theologians than he is, for they trust God. Deeper prayers and higher theology he never hopes to reach than the first the little ones learn—the Lord's Prayer and the Catechism. Often, she said, he says over the Catechism, to remind himself of all the treasures of faith we possess.

It is delightful too, she says, to listen to the heavenly theology he draws from birds and leaves and flowers, and the commonest gifts of God or events of life. At table, a plate of fruit will open to him a whole volume of God's bounty, on which he will discourse. Or, taking a rose in his hand, he will say, "A man who could make one rose like this would be accounted most wonderful; and God scatters countless such flowers around us! But the very infinity of his gifts makes us blind to them."

And one evening, he said of a little bird, warbling its last little song before it went to roost, "Ah, dear little bird! he has chosen his shelter, and is quietly rocking himself to sleep, without a care for to-morrow's lodging; calmly holding by his little twig, and leaving God to think for him."

In spring he loves to direct her attention to the little points and tufts of life peeping everywhere from the brown earth or the bare branches. "Who," he said, "that had never witnessed a spring-time would have guessed, two months since, that these lifeless branches had concealed within them all that hidden power of life? It will be thus with us at the resurrection. God writes his gospel, not in the Bible alone, but in trees, and flowers, and clouds, and stars."

And thus, to Mistress Luther, that little garden, with his presence and his discourse, has become like an illuminated Gospel and Psalter.

I ventured to ask her some questions, and, among others, if she had ever heard him speak of using a form of words in prayer. She said she had once heard him say "we might use forms of words in private prayer until the wings and feathers of our souls are grown, that we may soar freely upward into the pure air of God's presence." But *his* prayers, she says, are sometimes like the trustful pleadings of his little boy Hänschen with him; and sometimes like the wrestling of a giant in an agony of conflict.

She said, also, that she often thanks God for the Doctor's love of music. When his mind and heart have been strained to the utmost, music seems to be like a bath of pure fresh water to his spirit, bracing and resting it at once.

I indeed have myself heard him speak of this, when I have been present at the meetings he has every week at his house for singing in parts. "The devil," he says—"that lost spirit—cannot endure sacred songs of joy. Our passions and impatiences, our complainings and our cryings, our Alas! and our Woe is me! please him well; but our songs and psalms vex him and grieve him sorely."

Mistress Luther told me she had many an anxious hour about the Doctor's health. He is often so sorely pressed with work and care; and he has never recovered the weakening effects of his early fasts and conflicts.

His tastes at table are very simple, his favourite dishes are herrings and pease-soup. His habits are abstemious, and when engrossed with any especial work, he would forget or go without his meals altogether if she did not press him to take them. When writing his Commentary on the Twenty-second Psalm, he shut himself up for three days with nothing but bread and salt; until, at last, she had to send for a locksmith to break open the door, when they found him absorbed in meditation.

And yet, with all his deep thoughts and his wide cares, like a king's or an archbishop's, he enters into his children's games as if he were a boy; and never fails, if he is at a fair on his travels, to bring the little ones home some gift for a fairing.

She showed me a letter she had just received from him from Coburg, for his little son Hänschen. She allowed me to copy it. It is written thus:—

> "Grace and peace in Christ to my heartily dear little son.
>
> "I see gladly that thou learnest well and prayest earnestly. Do thus, my little son, and go on. When I come home I will bring thee a beautiful fairing. I know a pleasant garden, wherein many children walk about. They have little golden coats, and pick up beautiful

apples under the trees, and pears, cherries, and plums. They dance and are merry, and have also beautiful little ponies, with golden reins and silver saddles. Then I asked the man whose the garden is, whose children those were. He said, 'These are the children who love to pray, who learn their lessons, and are good.' Then I said, 'Dear man, I also have a little son; he is called Hänsichen Luther. Might not he also come into the garden, that he might eat such apples and pears, and ride on such beautiful little ponies, and play with these children?' Then the man said, 'If he loves to pray, learn his lessons, and is good, he also shall come into the garden—Lippus and Jost also (the little sons of Melancthon and Justus Jonas); and when they all come together, they also shall have pipes, drums, lutes, and all kinds of music; and shall dance, and shoot with little bows and arrows.'

"And he showed me there a fair meadow in the garden, prepared for dancing. There were many pipes of pure gold, drums, and silver bows and arrows. But it was still early in the day, so that the children had not had their breakfasts. Therefore I could not wait for the dancing, and said to the man, 'Ah, dear sir, I will go away at once, and write all this to my little son Hänsichen, that he may be sure to pray and to learn well, and be good, that he also may come into this garden. But he has a dear aunt, Lena; he must bring her with him.' Then said the man, 'Let it be so; go and write him thus.'

"Therefore, my dear little son Hänsichen, learn thy lessons, and pray with a cheerful heart; and tell all this to Lippus and Justus too, that they also may learn their lessons and pray. So shall you all come together into this garden. Herewith I commend you to the Almighty God; and greet Aunt Lena, and give her a kiss from me.—Thy dear father,

"Martin Luther."

Some who have seen this letter say it is too trifling for such serious subjects. But heaven is not a grim and austere, but a most bright and joyful place; and Dr. Luther is only telling the child in his own childish language what a happy place it is. Does not God our heavenly Father do even so with us?

I should like to have seen Dr. Luther turn from his grave letters to princes and doctors about the great Augsburg Confession, which they are now preparing, to write these loving words to his little Hans. No wonder "Catharine Lutherinn," "Doctoress Luther," "mea dominus Ketha," "my lord Käthe," as he calls her, is a happy woman. Happy for Germany that the Catechism in which our children learn the first elements of divine truth, grew out of the fatherly heart of Luther, instead of being put together by a Diet or a General Council.

One more letter I have copied, because my children were so interested in it. Dr. Luther finds at all times great delight in the songs of birds. The letter I have copied was written on the 28th April to his friends who meet around his table at home.

"Grace and peace in Christ, dear sirs and friends! I have received all your letters, and understand how things are going on with you. That you, on the other hand, may understand how things are going on here, I would have you know that we, namely, I, Master Veit, and Cyriacus, are not going to the Diet at Augsburg. We have, however, another Diet of our own here.

"Just under our window there is a grove like a little forest, where the choughs and crows have convened a diet, and there is such a riding hither and thither, such an incessant tumult, day and night, as if they were all merry and mad with drinking. Young and old chatter together, until I wonder how their breath can hold out so long. I should like to know if any of those nobles and cavaliers are with you; it seems to me they must be gathered here out of the whole world.

"I have not yet seen their emperor; but their great people are always strutting and prancing before our eyes, not, indeed, in costly robes, but all simply clad in one uniform, all alike black, all alike grey-eyed, and all singing one song, only with the most amusing varieties between young and old, and great and small. They are not careful to have a great palace and hall of assembly, for their hall is vaulted with the beautiful, broad sky, their floor is the field strewn with fair, green branches, and their walls reach as far as the ends of the world. Neither do they require steeds and armour; they have feathered wheels with which they fly from shot and danger. They are, doubtless, great and mighty lords, but what they are debating I do not yet know.

"As far, however, as I understand through an interpreter, they are planning a great foray and campaign against the wheat, barley, oats, and all kinds of grain, and many a knight will win his spurs in this war, and many a brave deed will be done.

"Thus we sit here in our Diet, and hear and listen with great delight, and learn how the princes and lords, with all the other estates of the empire, sing and live so merrily. But our especial pleasure is to see how cavalierly they pace about, whet their beaks, and furbish their armour, that they may win glory and victory from wheat and oats. We wish them health and wealth,—and that they may all at once be impaled on a quickset hedge!

"For I hold they are nothing better than sophists and Papists with their preaching and writing; and I should like to have these also before me in our assembly, that I might

hear their pleasant voices and sermons, and see what a useful people they are to devour all that is on the face of the earth, and afterwards chatter no one knows how long!

"To-day we have heard the first nightingale; for they would not trust April. We have had delightful weather here, no rain, except a little yesterday. With you, perhaps, it is otherwise. Herewith I commend you to God. Keep house well. Given from the Diet of the grain-Turks, the 28th of April, anno 1530.

"MARTINUS LUTHER."

Yet, peaceful and at leisure as he seems, Gottfried says the whole of Germany is leaning now once more on the strength of that faithful heart.

The Roman diplomatists again and again have all but persuaded Melancthon to yield everything for peace; and, but for the firm and faithful words which issue from "this wilderness," as Luther calls the Coburg fortress, Gottfried believes all might have gone wrong. Severely and mournfully has Dr. Luther been constrained to write more than once to "Philip Pusillanimity," demanding that at least he should not give up the doctrine of justification by faith, and abandon all to the decision of the bishops!

It is faith which gives Luther this clearness of vision. "It is God's word and cause," he writes, "therefore our prayer is certainly heard, and already he has determined and prepared the help that shall help us. This cannot fail. For he says, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. See, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands.' I have lately seen two miracles," he continues; "the first, as I was looking out of my window and saw the stars in heaven, and all that beautiful vaulted roof of God, and yet saw no pillars on which the Master Builder had fixed this vault; yet the heaven fell not, but all that grand arch stood firm. Now, there are some who search for such pillars, and want to touch and grasp them, and since they cannot, they wonder and tremble as if the heaven must certainly fall, for no other reason but because they cannot touch and grasp its pillars. If they could lay hold on those, think they, then the heaven would stand firm!

"The second miracle was—I saw great clouds rolling over us, with such a ponderous weight that they might be compared to a great ocean, and yet I saw no foundation on which they rested or were based, nor any shore which kept them back; yet they fell not on us, but frowned on us with a stern countenance, and fled. But when they had passed by, then shone forth both their foundation and our roof which had kept them back—the rainbow! Truly a weak, thin, slight foundation and roof, which soon melted away into the clouds, and was more like a shadowy prism, such as we see through coloured glass, than a strong and firm foundation! so that we might well distrust that feeble dyke which kept back that terrible weight of waters. Yet we found, in fact, that this unsubstantial prism could bear up the weight of waters, and that it guards us safely. But there are some who look rather at the thickness and massy weight of the waters and clouds, than at this thin, slight, narrow bow of promise. They would like to *feel the strength* of that shadowy, evanescent arch, and because they cannot do this, they are ever fearing that the clouds will bring back the deluge."

Heavenly Father, since one man who trusts thy word can thus uphold a nation, what could not thy word do for each of us if we would each of us thus trust it, and Thee who speakest it.

XXXIII.

Thekla's Story.

WITTEMBERG, 1540.

The time I used to dread most of all in my life, after that great bereavement which laid it waste, is come. I am in the monotonous level of solitary middle age. The sunny heights of childhood, and even the joyous breezy slopes of youth, are almost out of sight behind me; and the snowy heights of reverend age, from which we can look over into the promised land beyond, are almost as far before me. Other lives have grown from the bubbling spring into the broad and placid river, while mine is still the little narrow stream it was at first; only, creeping slow and noiseless through the flats, instead of springing gladly from rock to rock, making music wherever it came. Yet I am content; absolutely, fully content. I am sure that my life also has been ordered by the highest wisdom and love; and that (as far as my faithless heart does not hinder it) God is leading me also on to the very highest and best destiny for me.

I did not always think so. I used to fear that not only would this bereavement throw a shadow on my earthly life, but that it would stunt and enfeeble my nature for ever; that missing all the sweet, ennobling relationships of married life, even throughout the ages I should be but an undeveloped, one-sided creature.

But one day I was reading in Dr. Luther's German Bible the chapter about the body of Christ, the twelfth of First Corinthians, and great comfort came into my heart through it. I saw that we are

not meant to be separate atoms, each complete in itself, but members of a body, each only complete through union with all the rest. And then I saw how entirely unimportant it is in what place Christ shall set me in his body; and how impossible it is for us to judge what he is training us for, until the body is perfected and we see what we are to be in it.

On the Düben Heath also, soon after, when I was walking home with Elsè's Gretchen, the same lesson came to me in a parable, through a clump of trees under the shade of which we were resting. Often, from a distance, we had admired the beautiful symmetry of the group, and now, looking up, I saw how imperfect every separate tree was, all leaning in various directions, and all only developed on one side. If each tree had said, "I am a beech tree, and I ought to throw out branches on every side, like my brother standing alone on the heath," what would have become of that beautiful clump? And looking up through the green interwoven leaves to the blue sky I said,—

"Heavenly Father, thou art wise! I will doubt no more. Plant me where thou wilt in thy garden, and let me grow as thou wilt! Thou wilt not let me fail of my highest end."

Dr. Luther also said many things which helped me from time to time, in conversation or in his sermons.

"The barley," he said, "must suffer much from man. First, it is cast into the earth that it may decay. Then, when it is grown up and ripe, it is cut and mown down. Then it is crushed and pressed, fermented and brewed into beer.

"Just such a martyr also is the linen or flax. When it is ripe it is plucked, steeped in water, beaten, dried, hacked, spun, and woven into linen, which again is torn and cut. Afterwards it is made into plaster for sores, and used for binding up wounds. Then it becomes lint, is laid under the stamping machines in the paper mill, and torn into small bits. From this they make paper for writing and printing.

"These creatures, and many others like them, which are of great use to us, must thus suffer. Thus also must good, godly Christians suffer much from the ungodly and wicked. Thus, however, the barley, wine, and corn are ennobled; in man becoming flesh, and in the Christian man's flesh entering into the heavenly kingdom."

Often he speaks of the "dear, holy cross, a portion of which is given to all Christians."

"All the saints," he said once, when a little child of one of his friends lay ill, "must drink of the bitter cup. Could Mary even, the dear mother of our Lord, escape? All who are dear to him must suffer. Christians conquer when they suffer; only when they rebel and resist are they defeated and lose the day."

He, indeed, knows what trial and temptation mean. Many a bitter cup has he had to drink, he to whom the sins, and selfishness, and divisions of Christians are personal sorrow and shame. It is therefore, no doubt, that he knows so well how to sustain and comfort. Those, he says, who are to be the bones and sinews of the Church must expect the hardest blows.

Well I remember his saying, when, on the 8th of August, 1529, before his going to Coburg, he and his wife lay sick of a fever, while he suffered also from sciatica, and many other ailments,—

"God has touched me sorely. I have been impatient; but God knows better than I whereto it serves. *Our Lord God is like a printer who sets the letters backwards, so that here we cannot read them. When we are printed off yonder, in the life to come, we shall read all clear and straightforward.* Meantime we must have patience."

In other ways more than I can number he and his words have helped me. No one seems to understand as he does what the devil is and does. It is the *temptation* in the sorrow which is the thing to be dreaded and guarded against. This was what I did not understand at first when Bertrand died. I thought I was rebellious, and dared not approach God till I ceased to feel rebellious. I did not understand that the malignant one who tempted me to rebel also tempted me to think God would not forgive. I had thought before of affliction as a kind of sanctuary where naturally I should feel God near. I had to learn that it is also night-time, even "the hour of darkness," in which the prince of darkness draws near unseen. As Luther says, "The devil torments us in the place where we are most tender and weak, as in Paradise he fell not on Adam, but on Eve."

Inexpressible was the relief to me when I learned who had been tormenting me, and turned to Him who vanquished the tempter of old to banish him now from me. For terrible as Dr. Luther knows that fallen angel to be,—"the antithesis," as he said, "of the Ten Commandments," who for thousands of years has been studying with an angel's intellectual power, or how most effectually to distress and ruin man,—he always reminds us that, nevertheless, the devil is a vanquished foe, that the victory has not now to be won; that, bold as the evil one is to assail and tempt the unguarded, a word or look of faith will compel him to flee "like a beaten hound." It is this blending of the sense of Satan's power to tempt, with the conviction of his powerlessness to injure the believing heart, which has so often sustained me in Dr. Luther's words.

But it is not only thus that he has helped me. He presses on us often the necessity of occupation. It is better, he says, to engage in the humblest work, than to sit still alone and encounter the temptations of Satan. "Oft in my temptations I have need to talk even with a child, in order to expel such thoughts as the devil possesses me with; and this teaches me not to boast as if of

myself I were able to help myself, and to subsist without the strength of Christ. I need one at times to help me who in his whole body has not as much theology as I have in one finger." "The human heart," he says, "is like a millstone in a mill: when you put wheat under it, it turns, and grinds, and bruises the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat it still grinds on, but then it is itself it grinds and wears away. So the human heart, unless it be occupied with some employment, leaves space for the devil, who wriggles himself in, and brings with him a whole host of evil thoughts, temptations, tribulations, which grind away the heart."

After hearing him say this, I tried hard to find myself some occupation. At first it seemed difficult. Elsè wanted little help with her children, or only occasionally. At home the cares of poverty were over, and my dear father and mother lived in comfort, without my aid. I used discontentedly to wish sometimes that we were poor again, as in Elsè's girlish days, that I might be needed, and really feel it of some use to spin and embroider, instead of feeling that I only worked for the sake of not being idle, and that no one would be the better for what I did.

At other times I used to long to seclude myself from all the happy life around, and half to reproach Dr. Luther in my heart for causing the suppression of the convents. In a nunnery, at least, I thought I should have been something definite and recognized, instead of the negative, undeveloped creature, I felt myself to be, only distinguished from those around by the absence of what made their lives real and happy.

My mother's recovery from the plague helped to cure me of that, by reminding me of the home blessings still left. I began, too, to confide once more in God, and I was comforted by thinking of what my grandmother said to me one day when I was a little girl, crying hopelessly over a tangled skein and sobbing, "I shall never untangle it." "Wind, dear child, *wind on*, inch by inch, undo each knot one by one, and the skein will soon disentangle itself." So I resolved to wind on my little thread of life day by day, and undo one little knot after another, until now, indeed, the skein has disentangled itself.

Few women, I think, have a life more full of love and interest than mine. I have undertaken the care of a school for little girls, among whom are two orphans, made fatherless by the peasants' war, who were sent to us; and this also I owe to Dr. Luther. He has nothing more at heart than the education of the young; nothing gives him more pain than to see the covetousness which grudges funds for schools; and nothing more joy than to see the little ones grow up in all good knowledge. As he wrote to the Elector John from Coburg twelve years ago:—

"The merciful God shows himself indeed gracious in making his Word so fruitful in your land. The tender little boys and maidens are so well instructed in the Catechism and Scriptures, that my heart melts when I see that young boys and girls can pray, believe, and speak better of God and Christ than all the convents and schools could in the olden time.

"Such youth in your grace's land are a fair Paradise, of which the like is not in the world. It is as if God said, 'Courage, dear Duke John, I commit to thee my noblest treasure, my pleasant Paradise; thou shalt be father over it. For under thy guard and rule I place it, and give thee the honour that thou shalt be my gardener and steward.' This is assuredly true. It is even as if our Lord himself were your grace's guest and ward, since his Word and his little ones are your perpetual guests and wards."

For a little while a lady, a friend of his wife, resided in his house in order to commence such a school at Wittemberg for young girls; and now it has become my charge. And often Dr. Luther comes in and lays his hands on the heads of the little ones, and asks God to bless them, or listens while they repeat the Catechism or the Holy Scriptures.

December 25,
1542.

Once more the Christmas tree has been planted in our homes at Wittemberg. How many such happy Christian homes there are among us! Our Elsè's, Justus Jonas', and his gentle, sympathizing wife, who, Dr. Luther says, "always brings comfort in her kind pleasant countenance." We all meet at Elsè's home on such occasions now. The voices of the children are better than light to the blind eyes of my father, and my mother renews her own maternal joys again in her grandchildren, without the cares.

But of all these homes, none is happier or more united than Dr. Luther's. His child-like pleasure in little things makes every family festival in his house so joyous; and the children's plays and pleasures, as well as their little troubles, are to him a perpetual parable of the heavenly family, and of our relationship to God. There are five children in his family now; Hans, the first born; Magdalen, a lovely, loving girl of thirteen; Paul, Martin, and Margaretha.

How good it is for those who are bereaved and sorrowful that our Christian festivals point forward and upward as well as backward; that the eternal joy to which we are drawing ever nearer is linked to the earthly joy which has passed away. Yes, the old heathen tree of life, which that young green fir from the primeval forests of our land is said to typify, has been christened into the Christmas tree. The old tree of life was a tree of sorrow, and had its roots in the evanescent earth, and at its base sat the mournful Destinies, ready to cut the thread of human life. Nature ever renewing herself contrasted mournfully with the human life that blooms but once. But our tree of life is a tree of joy, and is rooted in the eternal Paradise of joy. The angels watch over it, and it recalls the birth of the Second Man—the Lord from heaven—who is not

merely "a living soul, but a life-giving spirit." In it the evanescence of Nature, immortal as she seems, is contrasted with the true eternal life of mortal man. In the joy of the little ones, once more, thank God, my whole heart seems to rejoice; for I also have my face towards the dawn, and I can hear the fountain of life bubbling up whichever way I turn. Only, *before* me it is best and freshest! for it is springing up to life everlasting.

December, 1542.

A shadow has fallen on the peaceful home of Dr. Luther: Magdalen, the unselfish, obedient, pious, loving child—the darling of her father's heart—is dead; the first-born daughter, whose portrait, when she was a year old, used to cheer and delight him at Coburg.

On the 5th of this last September she was taken ill, and then Luther wrote at once to his friend Marcus Crodel to send his son John from Torgau, where he was studying, to see his sister. He wrote,—

"Grace and peace, my Marcus Crodel. I request that you will conceal from my John what I am writing to you. My daughter Magdalen is literally almost at the point of death—soon about to depart to her Father in heaven, unless it should yet seem fit to God to spare her. But she herself so sighs to see her brother, that I am constrained to send a carriage to fetch him. They indeed loved one another greatly. May she survive to his coming! I do what I can, lest afterwards the sense of having neglected anything should torture me. Desire him, therefore, without mentioning the cause, to return hither at once with all speed in this carriage; hither,—where she will either sleep in the Lord or be restored. Farewell in the Lord."

Her brother came, but she was not restored.

As she lay very ill, Doctor Martin said,—

"She is very dear to me; but, gracious God, if it is thy will to take her hence, I am content to know that she will be with thee."

And as she lay in the bed, he said to her,—

"Magdalenchen, my little daughter, thou wouldst like to stay with thy father; and thou art content also to go to thy Father yonder."

Said she, "Yes, dearest father; as God wills."

Then said the father,—

"Thou darling child, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Then he turned away and said,—

"She is very dear to me. If the flesh is so strong, what will the spirit be?"

And among other things he said,—

"For a thousand years God has given no bishop such great gifts as he has given me; and we should rejoice in his gifts. I am angry with myself that I cannot rejoice in my heart over her, nor give thanks; although now and then I can sing a little song to our God, and thank him a little for all this. But let us take courage; living or dying, we are the Lord's. 'Sive vivimus, sive moremur, Domini sumus.' This is true, whether we take 'Domini' in the nominative or the genitive: we are the Lord's, and in him we are lords over death and life."

Then said Master George Rörer,—

"I once heard your reverence say a thing which often comforts me—namely, 'I have prayed our Lord God that he will give me a happy departure when I journey hence. And he will do it; of that I feel sure. At my latter end I shall yet speak with Christ my Lord, were it for ever so brief a space.' I fear sometimes," continued Master Rörer, "that I shall depart hence suddenly, in silence, without being able to speak a word."

Then said Dr. Martin Luther,—

"Living or dying, we are the Lord's. It is equally so whether you are killed by falling down stairs, or were sitting and writing, and suddenly should die. It would not injure me if I fell from a ladder and lay dead at its foot; for the devil hates us grievously, and might even bring about such a thing as that."

When, at last, the little Magdalen lay at the point of death, her father fell on his knees by her bedside, wept bitterly and prayed that God would receive her. Then she departed, and fell asleep in her father's arms. Her mother was also in the room, but further off, on account of her grief. This happened a little after nine o'clock on the Wednesday after the 19th Sunday after Trinity, 1542.

The doctor repeated often, as before said,—

"I would desire indeed to keep my daughter, if our Lord God would leave her with me; for I love her very dearly. But His will be done; for nothing can be better than that for her."

Whilst she still lived, he said to her,—

"Dear daughter, thou hast also a Father in heaven: thou art going to him."

Then said Master Philip,—

"The love of parents is an image and illustration of the love of God, engraven on the human heart. If, then, the love of God to the human race is as great as that of parents to their children, it is indeed great and fervent."

When she was laid in the coffin, Doctor Martin said,—

"Thou darling Lenichen, how well it is with thee!"

And as he gazed on her lying there, he said,—

"Ah, thou sweet Lenichen, thou shalt rise again, and shine like a star; yes, like the sun!"

They had made the coffin too narrow and too short, and he said,—

"The bed is too small for thee! I am indeed joyful in spirit, but after the flesh I am very sad, this parting is so beyond measure trying. Wonderful it is that I should know she is certainly at peace, and that all is well with her, and yet should be so sad."

And when the people who came to lay out the corpse, according to custom, spoke to the doctor, and said they were sorry for his affliction, he said,—

"You should rejoice. I have sent a saint to heaven; yes, a living saint! May we have such a death! Such a death I would gladly die this very hour."

Then said one, "That is true indeed; yet every one would wish to keep his own."

Doctor Martin answered,—

"Flesh is flesh, and blood is blood. I am glad that she is yonder. There is no sorrow but that of the flesh."

To others who came he said,—

"Grieve not. I have sent a saint to heaven; yes, I have sent two such thither!" alluding to his infant Elizabeth.

As they were chanting by the corpse, "Lord, remember not our former sins, which are of old," he said,—

"I say, O Lord, not our former sins only, nor only those of old, but our present sins; for we are usurers, exactors, misers. Yea, the abomination of the mass is still in the world!"

When the coffin was closed, and she was buried, he said, "*There is indeed a resurrection of the body.*"

And as they returned from the funeral, he said,—

"My daughter is now provided for in body and soul. We Christians have nothing to complain of; we know it must be so. We are more certain of eternal life than of anything else; for God who has promised it to us for his dear Son's sake, can never lie. Two saints of my flesh our Lord God has taken, but not of my blood. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom."

Among other things, he said,—

"We must take great care for our children, and especially for the poor little maidens; we must not leave it to others to care for them. I have no compassion on the boys. A lad can maintain himself wherever he is, if he will only work; and if he will not work, he is a scoundrel. But the poor maiden-kind must have a staff to lean on."

And again,—

"I gave this daughter very willingly to our God. After the flesh, I would indeed have wished to keep her longer with me; but since he has taken her hence, I thank him."

The night before Magdalen Luther died, her mother had a dream, in which she saw two men clothed in fair raiment, beautiful and young, come and lead her daughter away to her bridal. When, on the next morning, Philip Melancthon came into the cloister, and asked her how her daughter was, she told him her dream.

But he was alarmed at it, and said to others,—

"Those young men are the dear angels who will come and lead this maiden into the kingdom of heaven, to the true Bridal."

And the same day she died.

Some little time after her death, Dr. Martin Luther said,—

"If my daughter Magdalen could come to life again and bring with her to me the Turkish kingdom, I would not have it. Oh, she is well cared for; 'Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.' Who dies thus, certainly has eternal life. I would that I, and my children, and ye all could thus all depart; for evil days are coming. There is neither help nor counsel more on earth, I see, until the

Judgment Day. I hope, if God will, it will not be long delayed; for covetousness and usury increase."

And often at supper he repeated, "Et multipicata sunt mala in terris."

He himself made this epitaph, and had it placed on his Magdalen's tomb:—

"Dormio cum sanctis hic Magdaleni Lutheri
Filia, et hoc strato tecta quiesco meo,
Filia mortis eram peccati semine nata,
Sanguine sed vivo, Christe, redempta tuo."[13]

In German,—

"Here sleep I, Lenichen, Dr. Luther's little daughter,
Rest with all the saints in my little bed;
I who was born in sins,
And must forever have been lost.
But now I live and all is well with me,
Lord Christ, redeemed with thy blood."

Yet indeed, although he tries to cheer others, he laments long and deeply himself, as many of his letters show.

To Jonas he wrote,—

> "I think you will have heard that my dearest daughter Magdalen is born again to the eternal kingdom of Christ. But although I and my wife ought to do nothing but give thanks, rejoicing in so happy and blessed a departure, by which she has escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk, and the devil; yet such is the strength of natural affection, that we cannot part with her without sobs and groans of heart. They cleave to our heart, they remain fixed in its depths—her face, her words—the looks, living and dying, of that most dutiful and obedient child; so that even the death of Christ (and what are all deaths in comparison with that?) scarcely can efface her death from our minds. Do thou, therefore, give thanks to God in our stead. Wonder at the great work of God who thus glorifies our flesh! She was, as thou knowest, gentle and sweet in disposition, and was altogether lovely. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, who called and chose, and has thus magnified her! I wish for myself and all mine, that we may attain to such a death; yea, rather, to such a life, which only I ask from God, the Father of all consolation and mercy."

And again, to Jacob Probst, pastor at Bremen—

> "My most dear child, Magdalen, has departed to her heavenly Father, falling asleep full of faith in Christ. An indignant horror against death softens my tears. I loved her vehemently. But in *that day* we shall be avenged on death, and on him who is the author of death."

And to Amsdorf—

> "Thanks to thee for endeavouring to console me on the death of my dearest daughter. I loved her not only for that she was my flesh, but for her most placid and gentle spirit, ever so dutiful to me. But now I rejoice that she is gone to live with her heavenly Father, and is fallen into sweetest sleep until that day. For the times are and will be worse and worse; and in my heart I pray that to thee, and to all dear to me, may be given such an hour of departure, and with such placid quiet, truly to fall asleep in the Lord. '*The just are gathered, and rest in their beds.*' 'For verily the world is as a horrible Sodom.'"

And to Lauterbach—

> "Thou writest well, that in this most evil age death (or more truly, sleep) is to be desired by all. And although the departure of that most dear child has, indeed, no little moved me, yet I rejoice more that she, a daughter of the kingdom, is snatched from the jaws of the devil and the world; so sweetly did she fall asleep in Christ."

So mournfully and tenderly he writes and speaks, the shadow of that sorrow at the centre of his life overspreading the whole world with darkness to him. Or rather, as he would say, the joy of that loving, dutiful child's presence being withdrawn, he looks out from his cold and darkened hearth, and sees the world as it is; the covetousness of the rich; the just demands, yet insurrectionary attempts of the poor; the war with the Turks without, the strife in the empire within; the fierce animosities of impending religious war; the lukewarmness and divisions among his friends. For many years God gave that feeling heart a refuge from all these in the bright, unbroken circle of his home. But now the next look to him seems beyond this life; to death, which unveils the kingdom of truth and righteousness, and love, to each, one by one; or still more, to the glorious Advent which will manifest it to all. Of this he delights to speak. The end of the world, he feels sure, is near; and he says all preachers should tell their people to pray for its

coming, as the beginning of the golden age. He said once—"O gracious God, come soon again! I am waiting ever for the day—the spring morning, when day and night are equal, and the clear, bright rose of that dawn shall appear. From that glow of morning I imagine a thick, black cloud will issue, forked with lightning, and then a crash, and heaven and earth will fall. Praise be to God, who has taught us to long and look for that day. In the Papacy, they sing—

'Dies iræ, dies illa;'

but we look forward to it with hope; and I trust it is not far distant."

Yet he is no dreamer, listlessly clasping his hands in the night, and watching for the dawn. He is of the day, a child of the light; and calmly, and often cheerfully, he pursues his life of ceaseless toil for others, considerately attending to the wants and pleasures of all, from the least to the greatest; affectionately desirous to part with his silver plate, rather than not give a generous reward to a faithful old servant, who was retiring from his service; pleading the cause of the helpless; writing letters of consolation to the humblest who need his aid; caring for all the churches, yet steadily disciplining his children when they need it, or ready to enter into any scheme for their pleasure.

WITTEMBERG, 1530.

It seems as if Dr. Luther were as necessary to us now as when he gave the first impulse to better things, by affixing his theses to the doors of Wittemberg, or when the eyes of the nation centred on him at Worms. In his quiet home he sits and holds the threads which guide so many lives, and the destinies of so many lands. He has been often ailing lately, and sometimes very seriously. The selfish luxury of the rich burghers and nobles troubles him much. He almost forced his way one day into the Elector's cabinet, to press on him the appropriation of some of the confiscated church revenues to the payment of pastors and schoolmasters; and earnestly, again and again, from the pulpit, does he denounce covetousness.

"All other vices," he says, "bring their pleasures; but the wretched avaricious man is the slave of his goods, not their master; he enjoys neither this world nor the next. Here he has purgatory, and there hell; while faith and content bring rest to the soul here, and afterwards bring the soul to heaven. For the avaricious lack what they have, as well as what they have not."

Never was a heart more free from selfish interests and aims than his. His faith is always seeing the invisible God; and to him it seems the most melancholy folly, as well as sin, that people should build their nests in this forest, on all whose trees he sees "the forester's mark of destruction."

The tone of his preaching has often lately been reproachful and sad.

Elsè's Gretchen, now a thoughtful maiden of three-and-twenty, said to me the other day,—

"Aunt Thekla, why does Dr. Luther preach some times as if his preaching had done no good? Have not many of the evil things he attacked been removed? Is not the Bible in every home? Our mother says we cannot be too thankful for living in these times, when we are taught the truth about God, and are given a religion of trust and love, instead of one of distrust and dread. Why does Dr. Luther often speak as if nothing had been done?"

And I could only say,—

"We see what has been done; but Dr. Luther only knows what he hoped to do. He said one day —'If I had known at first that men were so hostile to the Word of God, I should have held my peace. I imagined that they sinned merely through ignorance.'"

"I suppose, Gretchen," I said, "that he had before him the vision of the whole of Christendom flocking to adore and serve his Lord, when once he had shown them how good He is. *We* see what Dr. Luther has done. *He* sees what he hoped, and contrasts it with what is left undone."

XXXIV.

The Mother's Story.

I do not think there is another old man and woman in Christendom who ought to be so thankful as my husband and I.

No doubt all parents are inclined to look at the best side of their own children; but with ours there is really no other side to look at, it seems to me. Perhaps Elsè has sometimes a little too much of my anxious mind; but even in her tender heart, as in all the others, there is a large measure of her father's hopefulness. And then, although they have, perhaps, none of them quite his inventive genius, yet that seems hardly a matter of regret; because, as things go in the world, other people seem so often, at the very goal, to step in and reap the fruit of these inventions, just by adding some insignificant detail which makes the invention work, and gives them the appearance of having been the real discoverers.

Not that I mean to murmur for one instant against the people who have this little knack of just putting the finishing touch and making things succeed; that also, as the house-father says, is God's gift, and although it cannot certainly be compared to these great, lofty thoughts and plans of my husband's, it has more current value in the world. Not, again, that I would for an instant murmur at the world. We have all so much more in it than we deserve (except, perhaps, my dearest husband, who cares so little for its rewards!) It has been quite wonderful how good every one has been to us. Gottfried Reichenbach, and all our sons-in-law, are like sons to us; and certainly could not have prized our daughters more if they had had the dowry of princesses! although I must candidly say I think our dear daughters without a kreutzer of dowry are worth a fortune to any man. I often wonder how it is they are such housewives, and so sensible and wise in every way, when I never considered myself at all a clever manager. To be sure their father's conversation was always very improving; and my dear blessed mother was a store-house of wisdom and experience. However, there is no accounting for these things. God is wonderfully good in blessing the humblest efforts to train up the little ones for him. We often think the poverty of their early years was quite a school of patience and household virtues for them all. Even Christopher and Thekla, who caused us more anxiety at first than the others, are the very stay and joy of our old age; which shows how little we can foresee what good things God is preparing for us.

How I used at one time to tremble for them both! It shocked Elsè and me so grievously to see Christopher, as we thought, quite turning his back on religion, after Fritz became a monk; and what a relief it was to see him find in Dr. Luther's sermons and in the Bible the truth which bowed his heart in reverence, yet left his character free to develop itself without being compressed into a mould made for other characters. What a relief it was to hear that he turned, not from religion, but from what was false in the religion then taught, and to see him devoting himself to his calling as a printer with a feeling as sacred as Fritz to his work as a pastor!

Then our Thekla, how anxious I was about her at one time! how eager to take her training out of God's hands into my own, which I thought, in my ignorance, might spare her fervent, enthusiastic, loving heart some pain.

I wanted to tame down and moderate everything in her by tender warnings and wise precepts. I wanted her to love less vehemently, to rejoice with more limitation, to grieve more moderately. I tried hard to compress her character into a narrower mould. But God would not have it so. I can see it all now. She was to love and rejoice, and then to weep and lament, according to the full measure of her heart, that in the heights and depths to which God led her, she might learn what she was to learn of the heights and depths of the love which extends beyond all joy and below all sorrow. Her character, instead of becoming dwarfed and stunted, as my ignorant hand might have made it, was to be thus braced, and strengthened, and rooted, that others might find shelter beneath her sympathy and love, as so many do now. I would have weakened in order to soften; God's providence has strengthened and expanded while softening, and made her strong to endure and pity as well as strong to feel.

No one can say what she is to us, the one left entirely to us, to whom we are still the nearest and the dearest, who binds our years together by the unbroken memory of her tender care, and makes us young in her child-like love, and brings into our failing life the activity and interest of mature age by her own life of active benevolence.

Elsè and her household are the delight of our daily life; Eva and Fritz are our most precious and consecrated treasures, and all the rest are good and dear as children can be; but to all the rest we are the grandmother and the grandfather. To Thekla we are "father" and "mother" still, the shelter of her life and the home of her affections. Only, sometimes my old anxious fears creep over me when I think what she will do when we are gone. But I have no excuse for these now, with all those promises of our Lord, and his words about the lilies and the birds, in plain German in my Bible, and the very same lilies and birds preaching to me in colours and songs as plain from the eaves and from the garden outside my window.

Never did any woman owe so much to Dr. Luther and the Reformation as I. Christopher's religion; Fritz and Eva's marriage; Thekla's presence in our home, instead of her being a nun in some convent-prison; all the love of the last months my dear sister Agnes and I spent together before her peaceful death; and the great weight of fear removed from my own heart!

And yet my timid, ease-loving nature, will sometimes shrink, not so much from what has been done, as from the way in which it has been done. I fancy a little more gentleness might have prevented so terrible a breach between the new and the old religions; that the peasant war might have been saved; and somehow or other (how, I cannot at all tell) the good people on both sides might have been kept at one. For that there are good people on both sides, nothing will ever make me doubt. Indeed, is not one of our sons—our good and sober-minded Pollux—still in the old Church? And can I doubt that he and his devout, affectionate little wife, who visits the poor and nurses the sick, love God and try to serve him?

In truth, I cannot help half counting it among our mercies that we have one son still adhering to the old religion; although my children, who are wiser than I, do not think so; nor my husband, who is wiser than they; nor Dr. Luther, who is, on the whole, I believe, wiser than any one. Perhaps I should rather say, that great as the grief is to us and the loss to him, I cannot help seeing some good in our Pollux remaining as a link between us and the religion of our fathers. It seems to remind us of the tie of our common creation and redemption, and our common faith, however dim, in our Creator and Redeemer. It prevents our thinking all Christendom which

belongs to the old religion quite the same as the pagans or the Turks; and it also helps a little to prevent their thinking us such hopeless infidels.

Besides, although they would not admit it, I feel sure that Dr. Luther and the Reformation have taught Pollux and his wife many things. They also have a German Bible; and although it is much more cumbrous than Dr. Luther's, and, it seems to me, not half such genuine, hearty German, still he and his wife can read it; and I sometimes trust we shall find by-and-by we did not really differ so very much about our Saviour, although we may have differed about Dr. Luther.

Perhaps I am wrong, however, in thinking that great changes might have been more quietly accomplished. Thekla says the spring must have its thunder-storms as well as its sunshine and gentle showers, and that the stone could not be rolled away from the sepulchre, nor the veil rent in the holy place without an earthquake.

Elsè's Gottfried says the devil would never suffer his lies about the good and gracious God to be set aside without a battle; and that the dear holy angels have mighty wars to wage, as well as silent watch to keep by the cradles of the little ones. Only I cannot help wishing that the Reformers, and even Dr. Luther himself, would follow the example of the archangel Michael in not returning railing for railing.

Of one thing, however, I am quite sure, whatever any one may say; and that is that it is among our great mercies that our Atlantis married a Swiss, so that through her we have a link with our brethren the evangelical Christians who follow the Zwinglian Confession. I shall always be thankful for the months her father and I passed under their roof. If Dr. Luther could only know how they revere him for his noble work, and how one they are with us and him in faith in Christ and Christian love!

I was a little perplexed at one time how it could be that such good men should separate, until Thekla reminded me of that evil one who goes about accusing God to us, and us to one another.

On the other hand, some of the Zwinglians are severe on Dr. Luther for his "compromise with Rome," and his "unscriptural doctrines," as some of them call his teaching about the sacraments.

These are things on which my head is not clear enough to reason. It is always so much more natural to me to look out for points of agreement than of difference; and it does seem to me, that deep below all the differences good men often mean the same. Dr. Luther looks on holy baptism in contrast with the monastic vows, and asserts the common glory of the baptism and Christian profession which all Christians share, against the exclusive claims of any section of priests or monks. And in the holy Supper, it seems to me simply the certainty of the blessing, and the reality of the presence of our Saviour in the sacrament, that he is really vindicating, in his stand on the words, "This is my body." Baptism represents to him the consecration and priesthood of all Christians, to be defended against all narrow privileges of particular orders; the holy Supper, the assured presence of Christ, to be defended against all doubters.

To the Swiss, on the other hand, the contrast is between faith and form, letter and spirit. This is, at all events, what my husband thinks.

I wish Dr. Luther would spend a few months with our Atlantis and her Conrad. I shall always be thankful *we* did.

Lately, the tone of Dr. Luther's preaching has often been reproachful and full of warning. These divisions between the evangelical Christians distress him so much. Yet he himself, with that resolute will of his, keeps them apart, as he would keep his children from poison, saying severe and bitter things of the Zwinglians, which sometimes grieve me much, because I know Conrad Winkelried's parish and Atlantis' home.

Well, one thing is certain: if Dr. Luther had been like me, we should have had no Reformation at all. And Dr. Luther and the Reformation have brought peace to my heart and joy to my life, for which I would go through any storms. Only, to leave our dear ones behind in the storms is another thing!

But our dear heavenly Father has not, indeed, called us to leave them yet. When he does call us, he will give us the strength for that. And then we shall see everything quite clearly, because we shall see our Saviour quite clearly, as He is, know his love, and love him quite perfectly. What that will be we know not yet!

But I am quite persuaded that when we do really see our blessed Lord face to face, and see all things in his light, we shall all be very much surprised, and find we have something to unlearn, as well as infinitely much to learn; not Pollux, and the Zwinglians, and I only, but Dr. Philip Melancthon, and Dr. Luther, and all!

For the Reformation, and even Dr. Luther's German Bible, have not taken all the clouds away. Still, we see through a glass darkly.

But they have taught us that there is nothing evil and dark behind to be found out; only, much to be revealed which is too good for us yet to understand, and too bright for us yet to see.

XXXV.

Eva's Agnes's Story.

EISLEBEN, 1542.

Aunt Elsè says no one in the world ought to present more thanksgivings to God than Heinz and I, and I am sure she is right.

In the first place we have the best father and mother in the world, so that whenever from our earliest years they have spoken to us about our Father in heaven, we have had just to think of what they were on earth to us, and feel that all their love and goodness together are what God is; only (if we can conceive such a thing) much more. We have only had to *add* to what they are, to learn what God is, not to take anything away; to say to ourselves, as we think of our parents, so kind in judging others, so loving, so true, God is like that—only the love is greater and wiser than our father's, tenderer and more sympathizing than our mother's (difficult as it is to imagine). And then there is just one thing in which he is unlike. His power is unbounded. He can give to us every blessing he sees it good to give.

With such a father and mother on earth, and such a Father in heaven, and with Heinz, how can I ever thank our God enough?

And our mother is so young still! Our dear father said the other day, "her hair has not a tinge of grey in it, but is as golden as our Agnes's." And her face is so fair and sweet, and her voice so clear and full in her own dear hymns, or in talking! Aunt Elsè says, it makes one feel at rest to look at her, and that her voice always was the sweetest in the world, something between church music and the cooing of a dove. Aunt Elsè says also, that even as a child she had just the same way she has now of seeing what you are thinking about—of *coming into* your heart, and making everything that is good in it feel it is understood, and all that is bad in it feel detected and slink away.

Our dear father does not, indeed, look so young; but I like men to look as if they had been in the wars—as if their hearts had been well ploughed and sown. And the grey in his hair, and the furrows on his forehead—those two upright ones when he is thinking—and the firm compression of his mouth, and the hollow on his cheek, seem to me quite as beautiful in their way as our mother's placid brow, and the dear look on her lips, like the dawn of a smile, as if the law of kindness had moulded every curve.

Then, in the second place (perhaps I ought to have said in the first,) we have the "Catechism." And Aunt Elsè says we have no idea, Heinz and I, what a blessing that is to us. We certainly did not always think it a blessing when we were learning it. But I begin to understand it now, especially since I have been staying at Wittemberg with Aunt Elsè, and she has told me about the perplexities of her childhood and early youth.

Always to have learned about God as the Father who "cares for us every day"—gives us richly all things to enjoy, and "that all out of pure, fatherly, divine love and goodness; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he has redeemed me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, to be his own—redeemed me, not with gold and silver, but with his holy, precious blood;" and of the Holy Spirit, that "he dwells with us daily, calls us by his gospel, enlightens, and richly forgives;"—all this, she says, is the greatest blessing any one can know. To have no dark, suspicious thoughts of the good God, unconsciously drunk in from infancy, to dash away from our hearts—Dr. Luther himself says we have little idea what a gift that is to us young people of this generation.

It used to be like listening to histories of dark days centuries ago, to hear Aunt Elsè speak of her childhood at Eisenach, when Dr. Luther also was a boy, and used to sing for bread at our good kinswoman Ursula Cotta's door—when the monks and nuns from the many high-walled convents used to walk demurely in their dark robes about the streets; and Aunt Elsè used to tremble at the thought of heaven, because it might be like a convent garden, and all the heavenly saints like Aunt Agnes.

Our dear Great-Aunt Agnes, how impossible for us to understand her being thus dreaded!—she who was the playmate of our childhood; and used to spoil us, our mother said, by doing everything we asked, and making us think she enjoyed being pulled about, and made a lion or a Turk of, as much as we enjoyed it. How well I remember now the pang that came over Heinz and me when we were told to speak and step softly, because she was ill, and then taken for a few minutes in the day to sit quite still by her bed-side with picture-books, because she loved to look at us, but could not bear any noise. And at last the day when we were led in solemnly, and she could look at us no more, but lay quite still and white, while we placed our flowers on the bed, and we both felt it too sacred and too much like being at church to cry—until our evening prayer-time came, and our mother told us that Aunt Agnes did not need our prayers any longer, because God had made her quite good and happy in heaven. And Heinz said he wished God would take us all, and make us quite good and happy with her. But I, when we were left in our cribs alone, sobbed bitterly, and could not sleep. It seemed so terrible to think Aunt Agnes did not want us any more, and that we could do nothing more for her—she who had been so tenderly good to us! I was so afraid, also, that we had not been kind enough to her, had teased her to play with us, and made more noise than we ought; and that that was the reason God had taken her away. Heinz could not understand that at all. He was quite sure God was too kind; and, although he also cried,

he soon fell asleep. It was a great relief to me when our mother came round, as she always did the last thing to see if we were asleep, and I could sob out my troubles on her heart, and say—

"Will Aunt Agnes never want us any more?"

"Yes, darling," said our mother; "she wants us now. She is waiting for us all to come to her."

"Then it was not because we teased her, and were noisy, she was taken away? We did love her so very dearly! And can we do nothing for her now?"

Then she told me how Aunt Agnes had suffered much here, and that our heavenly Father had taken her *home*, and that, although we could not do anything for her now, we need not leave her name out of our nightly prayers, because we could always say, "Thank God for taking dear Aunt Agnes home!"

And so two things were written on my heart that night, that there was a place like home beyond the sky, where Aunt Agnes was waiting for us, loving us quite as much as ever, with God who loved us more than any one; and that we must be as kind as possible to people, and not give any one a moment's pain, because a time may come when they will not need our kindness any more.

It is very difficult for me who always think of Aunt Agnes waiting for us in heaven, with the wistful loving look she used to have when she lay watching for Heinz and me to come and sit by her bed-side, to imagine what different thoughts Aunt Elsè had about her when she was a nun.

But Aunt Elsè says that she has no doubt that Heinz and I, with our teasing, and our noise, and our love, were among the chief instruments of her sanctification. Yes, those days of Aunt Elsè's childhood appear almost as far away from us as the days of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, who lived at the Wartburg, used to seem from Aunt Elsè. It is wonderful to think what that miner's son, whom old John Reineck remembers carrying on his shoulders to the school-house up the hill, here at Eisleben, has done for us all. So completely that grim old time seems to have passed away. There is not a monastery left in all Saxony, and the pastors are all married, and schools are established in every town, where Dr. Luther says the young lads and maidens hear more about God and Christianity than the nuns and monks in all the convents had learned thirty years ago.

Not that all the boys and maidens are good as they ought to be. No; that is too plain from what Heinz and I feel and know, and also from what our dear father preaches in the pulpit on Sundays. Our mother says sometimes she is afraid we of this generation shall grow up weak, and self-indulgent, and ease-loving, unlike our fathers who had to fight for every inch of truth they hold, with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

But our dear father smiles gravely, and says, she need not fear. These three enemies are not slain yet and will give the young generation enough to do. Besides, the Pope is still reigning at Rome, and the Emperor is even now threatening us with an army, to say nothing of the Turks, and the Anabaptists, of whom Dr. Luther says so much.

I knew very little of the world until two years ago, and not much, I am afraid, of myself. But when I was about fifteen I went alone to stay with Aunt Chriemnild and Aunt Elsè, and then I learned many things which in learning troubled me not a little, but now that they are learned make me happier than before, which our mother says is the way with most of God's lessons. Before these visits I had never left home; and although Heinz, who had been away, and was also naturally more thrown with other people as a boy than I was, often told me I knew no more of actual life than a baby, I never understood what he meant.

I suppose I had always unconsciously thought our father and mother were the centre of the world to every one as well as to us; and had just been thankful for my lot in life, because I believed in all respects no one else had anything so good; and entertained a quiet conviction that in their hearts every one thought the same. And to find that to other people our lot in life seemed pitiable and poor, was an immense surprise to me, and no little grief!

When we left our old home in the forest many years since, when Heinz and I were quite children; and it only lingered in our memories as a kind of Eden or fairy-land, where, amongst wild flowers, and green glades, and singing birds, and streams, we made a home for all our dreams, not questioning, however, in our hearts that our new home at Eisleben was quite as excellent in its way. Have we not a garden behind the house with several apple-trees, and a pond as large as any of our neighbours, and an empty loft for wet days—the perfection of a loft—for telling fairy tales in, or making experiments, or preparing surprises of wonderful cabinet work with Heinz's tools? And has not our Eisleben valley also its green and wooded hills, and in the forests around are there not strange glows all night from the great miners' furnaces to which those of the charcoal-burners in the Thuringian forest are mere toys? And are there not, moreover, all kinds of wild caverns and pits from which, at intervals, the miners come forth, grimy and independent, and sing their wild songs in chorus as they come home from work? And is not Eisleben Dr. Luther's birth-place? And have we not a high grammar-school which Dr. Luther founded, and in which our dear father teaches Latin? And do we not hear him preach once every Sunday?

To me it always seemed, and seems still, that nothing can be nobler than our dear father's office of telling the people the way to heaven on Sundays, and teaching their children the way to be wise and good on earth in the week. It was a great shock to me when I found every one did not think the same.

Not that every one was not always most kind to me; but it happened in this way.

One day some visitors had been at Uncle Ulrich's castle. They had complimented me on my golden hair, which Heinz always says is the colour of the princess' in the fairy tale. I went out at Aunt Chriemhild's desire, feeling half shy and half flattered, to play with my cousins in the forest. As I was sitting hidden among the trees, twining wreaths from the forget-me-nots my cousins were gathering by the stream below, these ladies passed again. I heard one of them say,—

"Yes, she is a well-mannered little thing for a schoolmaster's daughter."

"I cannot think whence a burgher maiden—the Cottas are all burghers, are they not—should inherit those little white hands and those delicate features," said the other.

"Poor, too, doubtless, as they must be!" was the reply, "one would think she had never had to work about the house, as no doubt she must."

"Who was her grandfather?"

"Only a printer at Wittemberg!"

"Only a schoolmaster!" and "only a printer!"

My whole heart rose against the scornful words. Was this what people meant by paying compliments? Was this the estimate my father was held in in the world—he, the noblest man in it, who was fit to be the Elector or the Emperor? A bitter feeling came over me, which I thought was affection and an aggrieved sense of justice. But love is scarcely so bitter, or justice so fiery.

I did not tell any one, nor did I shed a tear, but went on weaving my forget-me-not wreaths, and forswore the wicked and hollow world. Had I not promised to do so long since, through my godsponsers, at my baptism? Now, I thought, I was learning what all that meant.

At Aunt Elsè's, however, another experience awaited me. There was to be a fair, and we were all to go in our best holiday dresses. My cousins had rich Oriental jewels on their bodices; and although, as burgher maidens, they might not, like my cousins at the castle, wear velvets, they had jackets and dresses of the stiffest, richest silks, which Uncle Reichenbach had sent for from Italy and the East.

My stuff dress certainly looked plain beside them, but I did not care in the least for that; my own dear mother and I had made it together; and she had hunted up some old precious stores to make me a taffetas jacket, which, as it was the most magnificent apparel I had ever possessed, we had both looked at with much complacency. Nor did it seem to me in the least less beautiful now. The touch of my mother's fingers had been on it, as she smoothed it round me the evening before I came away. And Aunt Elsè had said it was exactly like my mother. But my cousins were not quite pleased, it was evident; especially Fritz and the elder boys. They said nothing; but on the morning of the fête, a beautiful new dress, the counterpart of my cousins', was laid at my bed-side before I awoke.

I put it on with some pleasure, but, when I looked at myself in the glass—it was very unreasonable—I could not bear it. It seemed a reproach on my mother, and on my humble life and my dear, poor home at Eisleben, and I sat down and cried bitterly, until a gentle knock at the door aroused me; and Aunt Elsè came in, and found me sitting with tears on my face and on the beautiful new dress, exceedingly ashamed of myself.

"Don't you like it, my child? It was our Fritz's thought. I was afraid you might not be pleased."

"My mother thought the old one good enough," I said in a very faltering tone. "It was good enough for my home. I had better go home again."

Aunt Elsè was carefully wiping away the tears from my dress, but at these words she began to cry herself, and drew me to her heart, and said it was exactly what she should have felt in her young days at Eisenach, but that I must just wear the new dress to the fête, and then I need never wear it again unless I liked; and that I was right in thinking nothing half so good as my mother, and all she did, because nothing ever was, or would be, she was sure.

So we cried together, and were comforted; and I wore the green taffetas to the fair.

But when I came home again to Eisleben, I felt more ashamed of myself than of the taffetas dress or of the flattering ladies at the Castle. The dear, precious old home, in spite of all I could persuade myself to the contrary, did look small and poor, and the furniture worn and old. And yet I could see there new traces of care and welcome everywhere—fresh rushes on the floors; a new white quilt on my little bed, made, I knew, by my mother's hands.

She knew very soon that I was feeling troubled about something, and soon she knew it all, as I told her my bitter experiences of life.

"Your father, 'only a schoolmaster!'" she said, "and you yourself presented with a new taffetas dress! Are these all your grievances, little Agnes?"

"*All*, mother!" I exclaimed; "and *only*!"

"Is your father anything else than a schoolmaster, Agnes?" she said.

"I am not ashamed of that for an instant, mother," I said; "you could not think it. I think it is much nobler to teach children than to hunt foxes, and buy and sell bales of silk and wool. But the world

seems to me exceedingly hollow and crooked; and I never wish to see any more of it. Oh, mother, do you think it was all nonsense in me?"

"I think, my child, you have had an encounter with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and I think they are no contemptible enemies. And I think you have not left them behind."

"But is not our father's calling nobler than any one's, and our home the nicest in the world?" I said; "and Eisleben really as beautiful in its way as the Thuringian forest, and as wise as Wittemberg?"

"All callings may be noble," she said; "and the one God calls us to is the noblest for us. Eisleben is not, I think, as beautiful as the old forest-covered hills at Gersdorf; nor Luther's birth-place as great as his dwelling-place, where he preaches and teaches, and sheds around him the influence of his holy daily life. Other homes may be as good as yours, dear child, though none can be so to you."

And so I learned that what makes any calling noble is its being commanded by God, and what makes anything good is its being given by God; and that contentment consists not in persuading ourselves that our things are the very best in the world, but in believing they are the best for us, and giving God thanks for them.

That was the way I began to learn to know the world. And also in that way I began better to understand the Catechism, especially the part about the Lord's Prayer, and that on the second article of the Creed, where we learn of Him who suffered for our sins and redeemed us with his holy precious blood.

I have just returned from my second visit to Wittemberg, which was much happier than my first—indeed, exceedingly happy.

The great delight of my visit, however, has been seeing and hearing Dr. Luther. His little daughter, Magdalen, three years younger than I am, had died not long before, but that seemed only to make Dr. Luther kinder than ever to all young maidens—"the poor maiden-kind," as he calls them.

His sermons seemed to me like a father talking to his children; and Aunt Elsè says he repeats the Catechism often himself "to God" to cheer his heart and strengthen himself—the great Dr. Martin Luther!

I had heard so much of him, and always thought of him as the man nearest God on earth, great with a majesty surpassing infinitely that of the Elector or the Emperor. And now it was a great delight to see him in his home, in the dark wainscoted room looking on his garden, and to see him raise his head from his writing and smile kindly at us as he sat at the great table in the broad window, with Mistress Luther sewing on a lower seat beside him, and little Margaretha Luther, the youngest child, quietly playing beside them, contented with a look now and than from her father.

I should like to have seen Magdalen Luther. She must have been such a good and loving child. But that will be hereafter in heaven!

I suppose my feeling for Dr. Luther is different from that of my mother and father. They knew him during the conflict. We only know him as the conqueror, with the palm, as it were, already in his hand.

But my great friend at Wittemberg is Aunt Thekla. I think, on the whole, there is no one I should more wish to be like. She understands one in that strange way, without telling, like my mother. I think it is because she has felt so much. Aunt Elsè told me of the terrible sorrow she had when she was young.

Our dear mother and father also had their great sorrows, although they came to the end of their sorrow in this life, and Aunt Thekla will only come to the end of hers in the other world. But it seems to have consecrated them all, I think, in some peculiar way. They all, and Dr. Luther also, make me think of the people who, they say, have the gift, by striking on the ground, of discovering where the hidden springs lie that others may know where to dig for the wells. Can sorrow only confer this gift of knowing where to find the hidden springs in the heart? If so, it must be worth while to suffer. Only there are just one or two sorrows which it seems almost impossible to bear!

But, as our mother says, our Saviour has all the gifts in His hands; and "the greatest gift" of all (in whose hands the roughest tools can do the finest work) "is *love*!" And that is just the gift every one of us may have without limit.

XXXVI.

Thekla's Story.

WITTEMBERG, 23d *January*,

Dr. Luther has left Wittemberg to-day for Eisleben, his birth-place, to settle a dispute between the Counts of Mansfeld concerning certain rights of church patronage.

He left in good spirits, intending to return in a few days. His three sons, John, Martin, and Paul, went with him. Mistress Luther is anxious and depressed about his departure, but we trust without especial cause, although he has often of late been weak and suffering.

The dullness and silence which to me always seem to settle down on Wittemberg in his absence are increased now doubtless by this wintry weather, and the rains and storms which have been swelling the rivers to floods. He is, indeed, the true father and king of our little world; and when he is with us all Germany and the world seem nearer us through his wide-seeing mind and his heart that thrills to every touch of want or sorrow throughout the world.

February.

Mistress Luther has told me to-day that Dr. Luther said before he left he could "lie down on his death-bed with joy if he could first see his dear Lords of Mansfeld reconciled." She says also that he has just concluded the Commentary on Genesis, on which he has been working these ten years, with these words—

"*I am weak and can do no more. Pray God he may grant me a peaceful and happy death.*"

She thinks his mind has been dwelling of late more than usual, even with him, on death, and fears he feels some inward premonition or presentiment of a speedy departure.

So long he has spoken of death as a thing to be desired! Yet it always makes our hearts ache to hear him do so. Of the Advent, as the end of all evil and the beginning of the Kingdom, we can well bear to hear him speak, but not of that which if the end of all evil to him, would seem like the beginning of all sorrows to us.

Now, however, Mistress Luther is somewhat comforted by his letters, which are more cheerful than those she received during his absence last year, when he counselled her to sell all their Wittemberg property, and take refuge in her estate at Zöllsdorf, that he might know her safe out of Wittemberg—that "haunt of selfishness and luxury"—before he died.

His first letter since leaving Wittemberg this time is addressed—

> "To my kind and dear Käthe Lutherin, at Wittemberg, grace and peace in the Lord.
>
> "Dear Käthe,—To-day at half-past eight o'clock we reached Halle, but have not yet arrived at Eisleben; for a great anabaptist encountered us with water-floods and great blocks of ice, which covered the land, and threatened to baptize us all again. Neither could we return, on account of the Mulda. Therefore we remain tranquilly here at Halle, between the two streams. Not that we thirst for water to drink, but console ourselves with good Torgau beer and Rhine wine, in case the Saala should break out into a rage again. For we and our servants, and the ferrymen, would not tempt God by venturing on the water; for the devil is furious against us, and dwells in the water-floods; and it is better to escape him than to complain of him, nor is it necessary that we should become the jest of the pope and his hosts. I could not have believed that the Saala could have made such a brewing, bursting over the causeway and all. Now no more; but pray for us and be pious. I hold, hadst thou been here, thou hadst counselled us to do precisely what we have done. So for once we should have taken thy advice. Herewith I commend you to God. Amen. At Halle, on the day of the Conversion of St. Paul.
>
> "Martinus Luther."

Four other letters she has received, one dated on the 2d of February, addressed—

> "To my heartily beloved consort Katherin Lutherin, the Zöllsdorfian doctoress, proprietress of the Saümarkt, and whatever else she may be, grace and peace in Christ; and my old poor (and, as know, powerless) love to thee!
>
> "Dear Käthe,—I became very weak on the road to Eisleben, for my sins; although, wert thou here, thou wouldst have said it was for the sins of the Jews. For near Eisleben we passed through a village where many Jews reside, and it is true, as I came through it, a cold wind came through my Baret (doctor's hat), and my head, as if it would turn my brain to ice.
>
> "Thy sons left Mansfeld yesterday, because Hans von Jene so humbly entreated them to accompany him. I know not what they do. If it were cold, they might help me freeze here. Since, however, it is warm again, they may do or suffer anything else they like. Herewith I commend you and all the house to God, and greet all our friends. Vigilia purificationis."

And again—

> Eisleben.

"To the deeply learned lady Katherin, my gracious consort at Wittemberg, grace and peace.

"Dear Käthe,—We sit here and suffer ourselves to be tortured, and would gladly be away; but that cannot be, I think, for a week. Thou mayest say to Master Philip that he may correct his exposition; for he has not yet rightly understood why the Lord called riches thorns. Here is the school in which to learn that" (*i. e.*, the Mansfeld controversies about property). "But it dawns on me that in the Holy Scriptures thorns are always menaced with fire; therefore I have all the more patience, hoping, with God's help, to bring some good out of it all. It seems to me the devil laughs at us; but God laughs him to scorn! Amen. Pray for us. The messenger hastes. On St. Dorothea's day. M. L. (thy old lover)."

Dr. Luther seems to be enjoying himself in his own simple hearty way, at his old home. Nobles and burghers give him the most friendly welcome.

The third letter Mistress Luther has received is full of playful tender answers to her anxieties about him.

"To my dear consort Katherin Lutherin, doctoress and selftormentor at Wittemberg, my gracious lady, grace and peace in the Lord.

"Read thou, dear Käthe, the Gospel of John, and the smaller Catechism, and then thou wilt say at once, 'All that in the book is said of me.' For thou must needs take the cares of thy God upon thee, as if He were not almighty, and could not create ten Doctor Martins, if the one old Doctor Martin were drowned in the Saala. Leave me in peace with thy cares I have a better guardian than thou and all the angels. It is He who lay in the manger, and was fondled on a maiden's breast; but who sitteth also now on the right hand of God the Almighty Father. Therefore be at peace."

And again—

"To the saintly anxious lady, Katherin Lutherin, Doctorin Zulsdorferin at Wittemberg, my gracious dear wife, grace and peace in Christ.

"Most saintly lady Doctoress,—We thank your ladyship kindly for your great anxiety and care for us which prevented your sleeping; for since the time that you had this care for us, a fire nearly consumed us in our inn, close by my chamber door; and yesterday (doubtless by the power of your care), a stone almost fell on our head, and crushed us as in a mouse-trap. For in our private chamber during more than two days, lime and mortar crashed above us, until we sent for work-men, who only touched the stone with two fingers, when it fell, as large as a large pillow two hand-breadths wide. For all this we should have to thank your anxiety; had not the dear holy angels been guarding us also! I begin to be anxious that if your anxieties do not cease, at last the earth may swallow us up, and all the elements pursue us. Dost thou indeed teach the Catechism and the creed? Do thou then pray and leave God to care, as it is promised. 'Cast they burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.'

"We would now gladly be free and journey homewards, if God willed it so. Amen. Amen. Amen. On Scholastica's Day. The willing servant of your holiness,

"Martin Luther."

February 17th.

Good news for us all at Wittemberg! Mistress Luther has received a letter from the doctor, dated the 14th February, announcing his speedy return:—

"To my kind dear wife Katharin Lutherin von Bora, at Wittemberg.

"Grace and peace in the Lord, dear Käthe! We hope this week to come home again, if God will. God has shown us great grace; for the lords have arranged all through their referees, except two or three articles—one of which is that Count Gebhard and Count Albrecht should again become brothers, which I undertake to-day, and will invite them to be my guests, that they may speak to each other, for hitherto they have been dumb, and have embittered one another with severe letters.

"The young men are all in the best spirits, make excursions with fools' bells on sledges —the young ladies also—and amuse themselves together; and among them also Count Gebhard's son. So we must understand God is *exauditor precum*.

"I send to thee some game which the Countess Albrecht has presented to me. She rejoices with all her heart at the peace. Thy sons are still at Mansfeld. Jacob Luther will take good care of them. We have food and drink here like noblemen, and we are waited on well—too well, indeed—so that we might forget you at Wittemberg. I have no ailments.

"This thou canst show to Master Philip, to Doctor Pomer, and to Doctor Creuzer. The report has reached this place that Doctor Martin has been snatched away (*i. e.*, by the

devil), as they say at Magdeburg and at Leipzig. Such fictions these countrymen compose, who see as far as their noses. Some say the emperor is thirty miles from this, at Soest, in Westphalia; some that the Frenchman is captive, and also the Landgrave. But let *us* sing and say, we will wait what God the Lord will do.—Eisleben, on the Sunday Valentini. M. LUTHER, D."

So the work of peace-making is done, and Dr. Luther is to return to us this week—long, we trust, to enjoy among us the peace-maker's beatitude.

XXXVII.

Fritz's Story.

EISLEBEN, 1546.

It has been quite a festival day at Eisleben. The child who, sixty-three years since, was born here to John Luther, the miner, returns to-day the greatest man in the empire, to arbitrate in a family dispute of the Counts of Mansfeld.

As Eva and I watched him enter the town to-day from the door of our humble happy home, she said,—

"He that is greatest among you shall be as he that doth serve."

These ten last years of service have, however, aged him much!

I could not conceal from myself that they had. There are traces of suffering on the expressive face, and there is a touch of feebleness in the form and step.

"How is it," I said to Eva, "that Elsè or Thekla did not tell us of this? He is certainly much feebler."

"They are always with him," she said, "and we never see what Time is doing, love; but only what he has done."

Her words made me thoughtful. Could it be that such changes were passing on us also, and that we were failing to observe them?

When Dr. Luther and the throng had passed, we returned into the house, and Eva resumed her knitting, while I recommenced the study of my sermon; but secretly I raised my eyes from my books and surveyed her. If time had indeed thus been changing that beloved form, it was better I should know it, to treasure more the precious days he was so treacherously stealing.

Yet scarcely, with the severest scrutiny, could I detect the trace of age or suffering on her face or form. The calm brow was as white and calm as ever. The golden hair, smoothly braided under her white matronly cap, was as free from grey as even our Agnes', who was flitting in and out of the winter sunshine, busy with household work in the next room. There was a roundness on the cheek, although, perhaps, its curve was a little changed; and when she looked up, and met my eyes, was there not the very same happy, child-like smile as ever, that seemed to overflow from a world of sunshine within?

"No!" I said; "Eva, thank God, I have not deluded myself! Time has not stolen a march on you yet."

"Think how I have been shielded, Fritz," she said. "What a sunny and sheltered life mine has been, never encountering any storm except under the shelter of such a home and such a love. But Dr. Luther has been so long the one foremost and highest, on whose breast the first force of every storm has burst."

Just then our Heinz came in.

"Your father is trying to prove I am not growing old," she said.

"Who said such a thing of our mother?" asked Heinz, turning fiercely to Agnes.

"No one," I said; "but it startled me to see the change in Dr. Luther, and I began to fear what changes might have been going on unobserved in our own home."

"Is Dr. Luther much changed?" said Heinz. "I think I never saw a nobler face, so resolute and true, and with such a keen glance in his dark eyes. He might have been one of the emperor's greatest generals—he looks so like a veteran."

"Is he not a veteran, Heinz?" said Eva. "Has he not fought all our battles for us for years? What did you think of him, Agnes?"

"I remember best the look he gave my father and you," she said. "His face looked so full of kindness; I thought how happy he must make his home."

That evening was naturally a time, with Eva and me, for going over the past. And how much of it

is linked with Dr. Luther! That our dear home exists at all is, through God, his work. And more even than that: the freedom and peace of our hearts came to us chiefly at first through him. All the past came back to me when I saw his face again; as if suddenly flashed on me from a mirror. The days when he sang before Aunt Ursula Cotta's door at Eisenach—when the voice which has since stirred all Christendom to its depths sang carols for a piece of bread. Then the gradual passing away of the outward trials of poverty, through his father's prosperity and liberality—the brilliant prospects opening before him at the university—his sudden, yet deliberate closing of all those earthly schemes—the descent into the dark and bitter waters, where he fought the fight for his age, and, all but sinking, found the Hand that saved him, and came to the shore again on the right side; and not alone, but upheld evermore by the hand that rescued him, and which he has made known to the hearts of thousands.

Then I seemed to see him stand before the emperor at Worms, in that day when men did not know whether to wonder most at his gentleness or his daring—in that hour which men thought was his hour of conflict, but which was in truth his hour of triumph, after the real battle had been fought and the real victory won.

And now twenty years more had passed away; the Bible has been translated by him into German, and is speaking in countless homes; homes hallowed (and, in many instances, created) by his teaching.

"What then," said Eva, "has been gained by his teaching and his work?"

"The yoke of tradition, and of the Papacy, is broken," I said. "The gospel is preached in England, and, with more or less result, throughout Germany. In Denmark, an evangelical pastor has consecrated King Christian III. In the low countries, and elsewhere, men and women have been martyred, as in the primitive ages, for the faith. In France and in Switzerland evangelical truth has been embraced by tens of thousands, although not in Dr. Luther's form, nor only from his lips."

"These are great results," she replied; "but they are external—at least, we can only see the outside of them. What fruit is there in this little world, around us at Eisleben, of whose heart we know something?"

"The golden age is, indeed, not come," I said, "or the Counts of Mansfeld would not be quarrelling about church patronage, and needing Dr. Luther as a peace-maker. Nor would Dr. Luther need so continually to warn the rich against avarice, and to denounce the selfishness which spent thousands of florins to buy exemption from future punishment, but grudges a few kreuzers to spread the glad tidings of the grace of God. If covetousness is idolatry, it is too plain that the Reformation has, with many, only changed the idol."

"Yet," replied Eva, "it is certainly something to have the idol removed from the Church to the market, to have it called by a despised instead of by a hallowed name, and disguised in any rather than in sacred vestments."

Thus we came to the conclusion that the Reformation had done for us what sunrise does. It had wakened life, and ripened real fruits of heaven in many places, and it had revealed evil and noisome things in their true forms. The world, the flesh and the devil remain unchanged; but it is much to have learned that the world is not a certain definite region outside the cloister, but an atmosphere to be guarded against as around us everywhere; that the flesh is not the love of kindred or of nature, but of *self in these*, and that the devil's most fiery dart is distrust of God. For us personally, and ours, how infinitely much Dr. Luther has done; and if for us and ours, how much for countless other hearts and homes unknown to us!

Monday, *February* 15, 1543.

Dr. Luther administered the communion yesterday, and preached. It has been a great help to have him going in and out among us. Four times he has preached; it seems to us, with as much point and fervour as ever. To-day, however, there was a deep solemnity about his words. His text was in Matt. xi., "Fear not, therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." He must have felt feebler than he seemed, for he closed with the words—

"This, and much more, may be said from the passage; but I am too weak, and *here we will close*."

Eva seemed very grave all the rest of the day; and when I returned from the school on this morning, she met me with an anxious face at the door, and said—

"Is the doctor better?"

"I have not heard that he is ill," I said. "He was engaged with the arbitration again to-day."

"I cannot get those words of his out of my head," she said; "they haunt me—'*Here we will close*.' I cannot help thinking what it would be never to hear that faithful voice again."

"You are depressed, my love," I said, "at the thought of Dr. Luther's leaving us this week. But by-

and-by we will stay some little time at Wittemberg, and hear him again there."

"If God will!" she said gravely. "What God has given us, through him, can never be taken away."

I have inquired again about him, however, frequently to-day, but there seems no cause for anxiety. He retired from the Great Hall where the conferences and the meals take place, at eight o'clock; and this evening, as often before during his visit, Dr. Jonas overheard him praying aloud at the window of his chamber.

Thursday, 18*th February*.

The worst—the very worst—has come to pass! The faithful voice is, indeed, silenced to us on earth for ever.

Here where the life began it has closed. He who, sixty-three years ago, lay here a little helpless babe, lies here again a lifeless corpse. Yet it is not with sixty-three years ago, but with three days since that we feel the bitter contrast. Three days ago he was among us the counsellor, the teacher, the messenger of God, and now that heart, so open, so tender to sympathize with sorrows, and so strong to bear a nation's burden, has ceased to beat.

Yesterday it was observed that he was feeble and ailing. The Princes of Anhalt and the Count Albert of Mansfeld, with Dr. Jonas and his other friends, entreated him to rest in his own room during the morning. He was not easily persuaded to spare himself, and probably would not have yielded then, had he not felt that the work of reconciliation was accomplished, in all save a few supplementary details. Much of the forenoon, therefore, he reposed on a leathern couch in his room, occasionally rising, with the restlessness of illness, and pacing the room, or standing in the window praying, so that Dr. Jonas and Cœlius, who were in another part of the room, could hear him. He dined, however, at noon, in the Great Hall, with those assembled there. At dinner he said to some near him, "If I can, indeed, reconcile the rulers of my birth-place with each other, and then, with God's permission, accomplish the journey back to Wittemberg, I would go home and lay myself down to sleep in my grave, and let the worms devour my body."

He was not one weakly to sigh for sleep before night; and we now know too well from how deep a sense of bodily weariness and weakness that wish sprang. Tension of heart and mind, and incessant work,—the toil of a daily mechanical labourer, with the keen, continuous thought of the highest thinker,—working as much as any drudging slave, and as intensely as if all he did was his delight,—at sixty-three the strong, peasant frame was worn out as most men's are at eighty, and he longed for rest.

In the afternoon he complained of painful pressure on the breast, and requested that it might be rubbed with warm cloths. This relieved him a little; and he went to supper again with his friends in the Great Hall. At table he spoke much of eternity, and said he believed his own death was near; yet his conversation was not only cheerful, but at times gay, although it related chiefly to the future world. One near him asked whether departed saints would recognize each other in heaven. He said, Yes, he thought they would.

When he left the supper-table he went to his room.

In the night,—last night,—his two sons, Paul and Martin, thirteen and fourteen years of age, sat up to watch with him, with Justus Jonas, whose joys and sorrows he had shared through so many years. Cœlius and Aurifaber also were with him. The pain in the breast returned, and again they tried rubbing him with hot cloths. Count Albert came, and the Countess, with two physicians, and brought him some shavings from the tusk of a sea-unicorn, deemed a sovereign remedy He took it, and slept till ten. Then he awoke, and attempted once more to pace the room a little; but he could not, and returned to bed. Then he slept again till one. During those two or three hours of sleep, his host Albrecht, with his wife, Ambrose, Jonas, and Luther's son, watched noiselessly beside him, quietly keeping up the fire. Everything depended on how long he slept, and how he woke.

The first words he spoke when he awoke sent a shudder of apprehension through their hearts.

He complained of cold, and asked them to pile up more fire. Alas! the chill was creeping over him which no effort of man could remove.

Dr. Jonas asked him if he felt very weak.

"Oh," he replied, "how I suffer! My dear Jonas, I think I shall die here, at Eisleben, where I was born and baptized."

His other friends were awakened, and brought in to his bed-side.

Jonas spoke of the sweat on his brow as a hopeful sign, but Dr. Luther answered—

"It is the cold sweat of death. I must yield up my spirit, for my sickness increaseth."

Then he prayed fervently, saying—

"Heavenly Father! everlasting and merciful God thou hast revealed to me thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Him have I taught; Him have I experienced; Him have I confessed; Him I love and adore as my beloved Saviour, Sacrifice, and Redeemer—Him whom the godless persecute, dishonour, and reproach. O heavenly Father, though I must resign my body, and be borne away

from this life, I know that I shall be with Him for ever. Take my poor soul up to Thee!"

Afterwards he took a little medicine, and, assuring his friends that he was dying, said three times —

"Father, into thy hands do I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, thou faithful God. Truly *God hath so loved the world*!"

Then he lay quiet and motionless. Those around sought to rouse him, and began to rub his chest and limbs, and spoke to him, but he made no reply. Then Jonas and Cœlius, for the solace of the many who had received the truth from his lips, spoke aloud, and said—

"Venerable father, do you die trusting in Christ, and in the doctrine you have constantly preached?"

He answered by an audible and joyful "Yes!"

That was his last word on earth. Then turning on his right side, he seemed to fall peaceably asleep for a quarter of an hour. Once more hope awoke in the hearts of his children and his friends; but the physician told them it was no favourable symptom.

A light was brought near his face; a death-like paleness was creeping over it, and his hands and feet were becoming cold.

Gently once more he sighed; and, with hands folded on his breast, yielded up his spirit to God without a struggle.

This was at four o'clock in the morning of the 18th of February.

And now, in the house opposite the church where he was baptized, and signed with the cross for the Christian warfare, Martin Luther lies—his warfare accomplished, his weapons laid aside, his victory won—at rest beneath the standard he has borne so nobly. In the place where his eyes opened on this earthly life his spirit has awakened to the heavenly life. Often he used to speak of death as the Christian's true birth, and of this life as but a growing into the chrysalis-shell in which the spirit lives till its being is developed, and it bursts the shell, casts off the web, struggles into life, spreads its wings and sours up to God.

To Eva and me it seems a strange, mysterious seal set on his faith, that his birth-place and his place of death—the scene of his nativity to earth and heaven—should be the same.

We can only say, amidst irrepressible tears, those words often on his lips, "O death! bitter to those whom thou leavest in life!" and "Fear not, *God liveth still*."

XXXVIII.

Elsè's Story.

March, 1546

It is all over. The beloved, revered form is with us again, but Luther our Father, our pastor, our friend, will never be amongst us more. His ceaseless toil and care for us all have worn him out,—the care which wastes life more than sorrow,—care such as no man knew since the apostle Paul, which only faith such as St. Paul's enabled him to sustain so long.

This morning his widow, his orphan sons and daughter, and many of the students and citizens went out to the Eastern Gate of the city to meet the funeral procession. Slowly it passed through the streets, so crowded, yet so silent, to the city church where he used to preach.

Fritz came with the procession from Eisleben, and Eva, with Heinz and Agnes, are also with us, for it seemed a necessity to us all once more to feel and see our beloved around us, now that death has shown us the impotence of a nation's love to retain the life dearest and most needed of all.

Fritz has been telling us of that mournful funeral journey from Eisleben.

The Counts of Mansfeld, with more than fifty horsemen, and many princes, counts, and barons, accompanied the coffin. In every village through which they passed the church-bells tolled as if for the prince of the land; at every city gate magistrates, clergy, young and old, matrons, maidens, and little children, thronged to meet the procession, clothed in mourning, and chanting funeral hymns?—German evangelical hymns of hope and trust, such as he had taught them to sing. In the last church in which it lay before reaching its final resting-place at Wittemberg, the people gathered around it, and sang one of his own hymns, "I journey hence in peace," with voices broken by sobs and floods of tears.

Thus day and night the silent body was borne slowly through the Thuringian land. The peasants once more remembered his faithful affection for them, and everywhere, from village and hamlet, and from every little group of cottages, weeping men and women pressed forward to do honour to the poor remains of him they had so often misunderstood in life.

After Pastor Bugenhagen's funeral sermon from Luther's pulpit, Melancthon spoke a few words beside the coffin in the city church. They loved each other well. When Melancthon heard of his death he was most deeply affected, and said in the lecture-room,—

"The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins and of faith in the Son of God, has not been discovered by any human understanding, but has been revealed unto us by God *through this man* whom he has raised up."

In the city church, beside the coffin, before the body was lowered into its last resting-place near the pulpit where he preached, Dr. Melancthon pronounced these words in Latin, which Caspar Creutziger immediately translated into German,—

"Every one who truly knew him, must bear witness that he was a benevolent, charitable man, gracious in all his discourse, kindly and most worthy of love, and neither rash, passionate, self-willed, or ready to take offence. And, nevertheless, there were also in him an earnestness and courage in his words and bearing such as become a man like him. His heart was true and faithful, and without falsehood. The severity which he used against the foes of the doctrine in his writings did not proceed from a quarrelsome or angry disposition, but from great earnestness and zeal for the truth. He always showed a high courage and manhood, and it was no little roar of the enemy which could appall him. Menaces, dangers, and terror dismayed him not. So high and keen was his understanding, that he alone in complicated, dark, and difficult affairs soon perceived what was to be counselled and to be done. Neither, as some think, was he regardless of authority, but diligently regarded the mind and will of those with whom he had to do. His doctrine did not consist in rebellious opinions made known with violence; it is rather an interpretation of the divine will and of the true worship of God, an explanation of the word of God, namely of the gospel of Christ. Now he is united with the prophets of whom he loved to talk. Now they greet him as their fellow-labourer, and with him praise the Lord who gathers and preserves his Church. But we must retain a perpetual, undying recollection of this our beloved father, and never let his memory fade from our hearts."

His effigy will be placed in the city church, but his living portrait is enshrined in countless hearts. His monuments are the schools throughout the land, every hallowed pastor's home, and above all, "the German Bible for the German people!"

WITTEMBERG, *April*, 1547.

We stand now in the foremost rank of the generations of our time. Our father's house on earth has passed away for ever. Gently, not long after Dr Luther's death, our gentle mother passed away, and our father entered on the fulfilment of those never-failing hopes to which, since his blindness, his buoyant heart has learned more and more to cling.

Scarcely separated a year from each other, both in extreme old age, surrounded by all dearest to them on earth, they fell asleep in Jesus.

And now Fritz, who has an appointment at the university, lives in the paternal house with his Eva and our Thekla, and the children.

Of all our family I sometimes think Thekla's life is the most blessed. In our evangelical church, also, I perceive, God by his providence makes nuns; good women, whose wealth of love is poured out in the Church; whose inner as well as whose outer circle is the family of God. How many whom she has trained in the school and nursed in the seasons of pestilence or adversity, live on earth to call her blessed, or live in heaven to receive her into the everlasting habitations!

And among the reasons why her life is so high and loving, no doubt one is, that socially her position is one not of exaltation but of lowliness.

She has not replaced, by any conventional dignities of the cloister, God's natural dignities of wife and mother. Through life hers has been the *lowest* place; therefore, among other reasons, I oft think in heaven it may be the *highest*. But we shall not grudge it her, Eva and Chriemhild and Atlantis and I.

With what joy shall we see those meek and patient brows crowned with the brightest crowns of glory and immortal joy!

The little garden behind the Augustei has become a sacred place. Luther's widow and children still live there. Those who knew him, and therefore loved him best, find a sad pleasure in lingering under the shadow of the trees which used to shelter him, beside the fountain and the little fish-pond which he made, and the flowers he planted, and recalling his words and his familiar ways; how he used to thank God for the fish from the pond, and the vegetables sent to his table from the garden; how he used to wonder at the providence of God, who fed the sparrows and all the little birds, "which must cost him more in a year than the revenue of the king of France;" how he rejoiced in the "dew, that wonderful work of God," and the rose, which no artist could imitate, and the voice of the birds. How living the narratives of the Bible became when he spoke of them!—of the great apostle Paul whom he so honoured, but pictured as "an insignificant-looking, meagre man, like Philip Melancthon;" or of the Virgin Mary, "who must have been a high and noble creature, a fair and gracious maiden, with a kind sweet voice;" or of the lowly home at Nazareth, "where the Saviour of the world was brought up as a little obedient child."

And not one of us, with all his vehemence, could ever remember a jealous or suspicious word, or

a day of estrangement, so generous and trustful was his nature.

Often, also, came back to us the tones of that rich, true voice, and of the lute or lyre, which used so frequently to sound from the dwelling-room with the large window, at his friendly entertainments, or in his more solitary hours.

Then, in twilight hours of quiet, intimate converse, Mistress Luther can recall to us the habits of his more inner home life—how in his sicknesses he used to comfort her, and when she was weeping would say, with irrepressible tears, "Dear Käthe, our children trust us, though they cannot understand; so must we trust God. It is well if we do; all comes from him." And his prayers morning and evening, and frequently at meals, and at other times in the day—his devout repeating of the Smaller Catechism "to God"—his frequent fervent utterance of the Lord's prayer, or of psalms from the Psalter, which he always carried with him as a pocket prayer-book. Or, at other times, she may speak reverently of his hours of conflict, when his prayers became a tempest—a torrent of vehement supplication—a wrestling with God, a son in agony at the feet of a father. Or, again, of his sudden wakings in the night, to encounter the unseen devil with fervent prayer, or scornful defiance, or words of truth and faith.

More than one among us knew what reason he had to believe in the efficacy of prayer. Melancthon, especially, can never forget the day when he lay at the point of death, half unconscious, with eyes growing dim, and Luther came and exclaimed with dismay,—

"God save us! how successfully has the devil misused this mortal frame!"

And then turning from the company towards the window, to pray, looking up to the heavens, he came (as he himself said afterwards), "as a mendicant and a suppliant to God, and pressed him with all the promises of the Holy Scriptures he could recall; so that God must hear me, if ever again I should trust his promises."

After that prayer, he took Melancthon by the hand, and said, "Be of good cheer, Philip, you will not die." And from that moment Melancthon began to revive and recover consciousness, and was restored to health.

Especially, however, we treasure all he said of death and the resurrection, of heaven and the future world of righteousness and joy, of which he so delighted to speak. A few of these sayings I may record for my children.

"In the Papacy, they made pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints—to Rome, Jerusalem, St. Jago —to atone for sins. But now, we in faith can make true pilgrimages which really please God. When we diligently read the prophets, psalms, and evangelists, we journey towards God, not through cities of the saints, but in our thoughts and hearts, and visit the true Promised Land and Paradise of everlasting life.

"The devil has sworn our death, but he will crack a deaf nut. The kernel will be gone."

He had so often been dangerously ill that the thought of death was very familiar to him. In one of his sicknesses he said, "I know I shall not live long. My brain is like a knife worn to the hilt; it can cut no longer."

"At Coburg I used to go about and seek for a quiet place where I might be buried, and in the chapel under the cross I thought I could lie well. But now I am worse than then. God grant me a happy end! I have no desire to live longer."

When asked if people could be saved under the Papacy who had never heard his doctrine of the gospel, he said, "Many a monk have I seen, before whom, on his death-bed, they held the crucifix, as was then the custom. Through faith in His merits and passion, they may, indeed, have been saved."

"What is our sleep," he said, "but a kind of death? And what is death itself but a night sleep? In sleep all weariness is laid aside, and we become cheerful again, and rise in the morning fresh and well. So shall we awake from our graves in the last day, as though we had only slept a night, and bathe our eyes and rise fresh and well.

"I shall rise," he said, "and converse with you again. This finger, on which is this ring, shall be given to me again. All must be restored. 'God will create new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' There all will be pure rapture and joy. Those heavens and that earth will be no dry, barren sand. When a man is happy, a tree, a nosegay, a flower, can give him gladness. Heaven and earth will be renewed, and we who believe shall be everywhere *at home*. Here it is not so; we are driven hither and thither, that we may have to sigh for that heavenly fatherland."

"When Christ causes the trumpet to peal at the last day, all will come forth like the insects which in winter lie as dead, but when the sun comes, awake to life again; or as the birds who lie all the winter hidden in clefts of the rocks, or in hollow banks by the river sides, yet live again in the spring."

He said at another time, "Go into the garden, and ask the cherry-tree how it is possible that from a dry, dead twig, can spring a little bud, and from the bud can grow cherries. Go into the house and ask the matron how it can be that from the eggs under the hen living chickens will come forth. For if God does thus with cherries and birds, canst thou not honour him by trusting that if he let the winter come over thee—suffer thee to die and decay in the ground—he can also, in the

true summer, bring thee forth again from the earth, and awaken thee from the dead?"

"O gracious God!" he exclaimed, "come quickly, come at last! I wait ever for that day—that morning of spring!"

And he waits for it still. Not now, indeed, on earth, "in what kind of place we know not," as he said; "but most surely free from all grief and pain, resting in peace and in the love and grace of God."

We also wait for that Day of Redemption, still in the weak flesh and amidst the storm and the conflict; but strong and peaceful in the truth Martin Luther taught us, and in the God he trusted to the last.

THE END.

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[1] Paralipomenon.

[2] That is, skeletons left on the gallows for the ravens to peck at.

[3] "Jesu, Sovereign Lord of heaven, sweetest Friend to me.
King of all the universe, all was made by thee;
Who can know or comprehend the wonders thou has wrought,
Since the saving of the lost thee so low hath brought?

Thee the love of souls drew down from beyond the sky,—
Drew thee from thy glorious home, thy palace bright and high!
To this narrow vale of tears thou thy footsteps bendest:
Hard the work thou tak'st on thee, rough the way thou wendest."

[4] An approved method of treatment of the plague in those times.

[5] "Great Father Augustine, receive our prayers,
And through them effectually reconcile the Creator;
And rule thy flock, the highest glory of rulers.

The poor praise thee, lover of poverty;
True judges love thee, defender of truth;
Breaking the honeycomb of the honey of Scripture, thou distributest it to us.

Making smooth to us what before was obscure;
Thou, from the words of the Saviour, furnishest us with wholesome bread,
And givest to drink draughts of life from the nectar of the psalms.

Thou writest the holy rule for the life of priests,
Which, whosoever love and follow, keep the royal road,
And by thy holy leading return to their fatherland.

Salvation to the King of kings, life, glory, and dominion;
Honour and praise be to the Trinity throughout all ages,
To Him who declareth us to be fellow-citizens with the citizens of heaven."

[6] Ad perennis vitæ fontem mens sitivit arida,
Claustra carnis præstò frangi clausa quærit anima,
Gliscit, ambit, electatur, exul frui patriâ.
&c. &c. &c.

(The translation only is given above.)

[7] "Ye who would live holily, depart from Rome: all things are allowed here, except to be upright."

[8] Hic breve vivitur, hic breve plangitur, hic breve fletur,
Non breve vivere, non breve plangere, retribuetur.
O retributio! stat brevis actio, vita perennis,
O retributio! cœlica mansio stat lue plenis,
etc. etc., etc.

[9] Smile praises, O sky!
Soft breathe them, O air,
Below and on high,
And everywhere!
Awake thee, O spring!
Ye flowers, come forth,
With thousand hues tinting
The soft green earth!
Ye violets tender,
And sweet roses bright,
Gay Lent-lilies blended
With pure lilies white.

Sweep tides of rich music
The new world along,
And pour in full measure,
Sweet lyres, your song!
The black troop of storms
Has yielded to calm;
Tufted blossoms are peeping,
And early palm.
Sing, sing, for He liveth!
He lives, as He said;—
The Lord has arisen,
Unharmed, from the dead!
Clap, clap your hands, mountains!
Ye valleys, resound!
Leap, leap for joy, fountains!
Ye hills, catch the sound!
All triumph; He liveth!
He lives, as He said:—
The Lord has arisen,
Unharmed, from the dead!

[10] Lo, the gates of death are broken,
And the strong man armed is spoiled,
Of his armour, which he trusted,
By the stronger Arm despoiled.
Vanquished is the Prince of Hell;
Smitten by the cross, he fell.

That the sinner might not perish,
For him the Creator dies;
By whose death, our dark lot changing,
Life again for us doth rise,

[11] Mundi renovatio
Nova parit gaudia,
Resurgente Domino
Conresurgunt omnia;
Elementa serviunt,
Et auctoris sentiunt,
Quanta sint solemnia.
&c. &c. &c.

(The translation only is given above.)

[12] Adam of St. Victor, twelfth century.

[13] A friend has translated it thus:—

I, Luther's daughter Magdalen,
Here slumber with the blest;
Upon this bed I lay my head,
And take my quiet rest.

I was a child of death on earth,
In sin my life was given;
But on the tree Christ died for me,
And now I live in heaven.

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