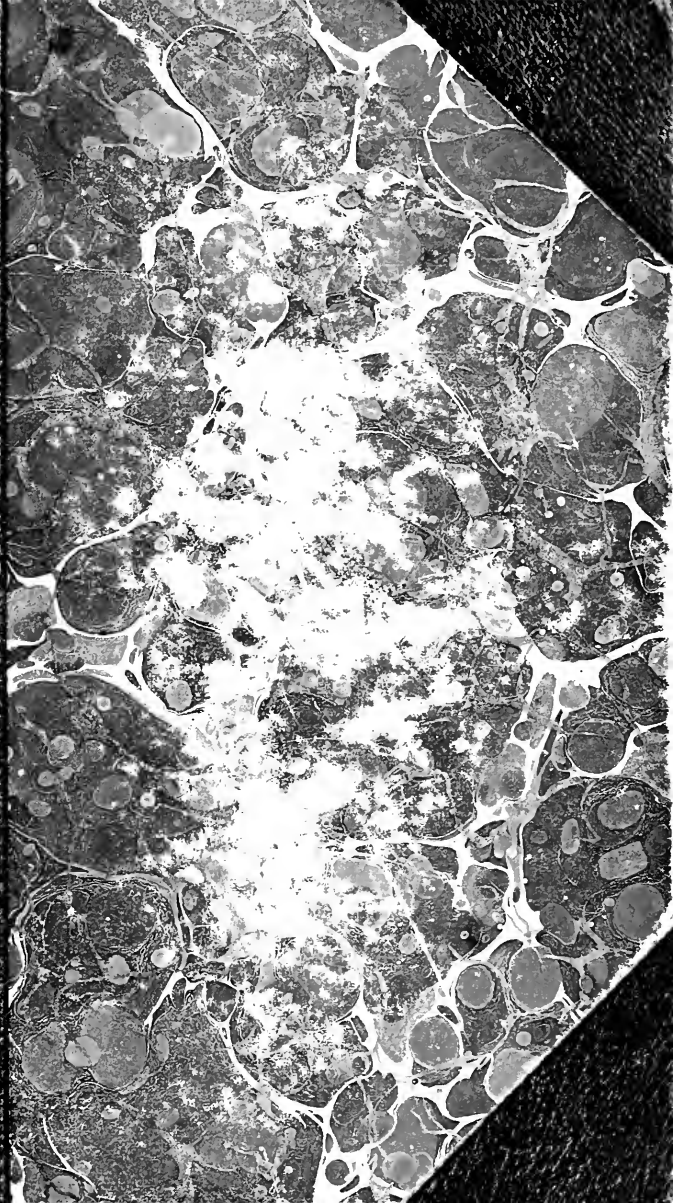


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CHRONICLES  
OF THE  
SCHÖNBERG-COTTA  
FAMILY

IN TWO VOLUMES —VOL. I

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NEW YORK  
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1890





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THE portions of these Chronicles which refer to Luther, Melancthon, Frederic of Saxony, and other historical persons, can be verified from Luther's "Tischreden;" Luther's "Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken;" edited by De Wette; the four volumes called, "Geist aus Luther's Schriften," edited by F. W. Lomler, C. F. Lucius, Dr. T. Rust, L. Sackreuter, and Dr. Ernst Zimmermann; Tutschmann's "Friedrich der Weise;" the "History of the Reformation," by Ranke; and that by D'Aubigné; with the ordinary English historical works relating to the period.



CHRONICLES  
OF THE  
SCHÖNBERG-COTTA FAMILY.

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I.

ELSE'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, 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\* 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

\* Paralipomenon.

mean me to begin as 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 Else, 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 monastery 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 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 Cismo 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 all to 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 reprovèd 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 some-

times 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 Else, 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 fatherless 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 store-room. 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 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 Elsel, foolish children, shall have no Christmas dinner for their pains; and Elsel 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 Elsel! 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 childfaces — 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 fire-wood 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 has 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 Möhra, 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 thirteen. 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 favourite 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 fulfil 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 friend 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 saints' 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.

ERFURT, 1503.

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, never more, 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 Aschpüttel 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, everyday 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 be compared 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 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 Elèsè. I fancy I see her kind blue eyes filling with reproachful tears. For there is no doubt that in Elèsè's heart I have no rival, even in a dream. Poor loving little Elèsè!

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. Elèsè 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 melan-

choly 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 everyday 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 forests, 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 Elzé 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 disappointment 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 fagots 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 pro-

bably 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 Elzé 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 con-

fidence 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 Elzé, 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 descendants of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Elector Frederic has, indeed, lately founded a new University at Wittenberg, but we at



Erfurt have little fear of Wittenberg 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 slightly of the Church ceremonies, calling the Mass a comedy, and the holy relics ravens' bones;\* 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.

\* That is, skeletons left on the gallows for the ravens to peck at.

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-humoured 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 humour 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 favourite 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 1505.*

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 Else or our mother's skilful 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 stanchèd.

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 1505.*

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 Elselè weigh on me often heavily. It must be long yet before I can help them effectually, and meantime the bright youth of my little Elselè, 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 look 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 Else 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 Elzé 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 1505.*

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 1505.*

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 those 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.

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## 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 any 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 grand

mother, "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 churchyard 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 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 moon-

light 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 bare 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 than 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 heavers 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; tomorrow 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 in 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 Else, 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, everyday 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 *cannot* 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 Else, *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 everyday, 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.

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## 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 Elselè 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 conflicts 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 im-

pulse, 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, hardworking, 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 a 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 on 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 evervigilant 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 Else 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 childlike 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,"

OR

Jesu mi dulcissime, Domine cœlorum,  
 Conditor omnipotens, Rex universorum;  
 Quis jam actus sufficit mirari gesterum,  
 Quæ te ferre compulit salus miserorum.  
 Te de cœle caritas traxit animarum,  
 Pro quibus palatium deserens præclarum;  
 Miseram ingrediens vallem lacrymarum,  
 Opus durum suscipis, et iter amarum.\*

The sonorous words of the ancient imperial language sound so sweet and strange, and yet so familiar from

\* "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 hast 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."

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 Elèsè, 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 wilful, 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 everyday 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 Hutten, 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.

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## V.

## ELSE'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 bedside. "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,\* and let no one come near him but you and your mother."

When I returned to the bedside, 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 in-

\* An approved method of treatment of the plague in those times.

voking 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 bedside 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 we 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, 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 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 into 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 Else. 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. Elsel 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 appropinquabit.*" 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 præsulam.

Amatorem paupertatis, te collaudant pauperes;  
Assertorem veritatis amant veri iudices;  
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 psalmodum nectare.

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

Regi regum salus, vita, decus et imperium;  
Trinitati laus et honor sit per omne sæculum,  
Qui concives nos ascribat superuorum civium."\*

\* "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."

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 of the 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." Else, 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 those 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 straight-way 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 Wittenberg, 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 some-

thing 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, wast martyred thyself, hast pleaded for my forsaken mother and for me, and sendest me this day some ray of hope.

ST. JOSEPH. — *March 19.* —  
AUGUSTINIAN CLOISTER, ERFURT.

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 *sinner*s, 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.

And 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.

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## VII.

## ELSE'S STORY.

*January 25.*

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, mothers, brothers, sister, 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 toward 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 folios 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. Women 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 slightly 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. There-

fore 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. Tetzels 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 Tetzels 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. Tetzels 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. Tetzèl 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 of the wing of the archangel Michael. Reinhardt says he supposes the devil gave it to Dr. Tetzèl. 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. Tetzèl 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 and do 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 5.*

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 Rübzahl 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 from love, and I love him; and all the rest I am content to leave."

"But to-night as I look at her dear childlike 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 up 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 im-

proved 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 Wittenberg 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 guildens, 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 Wittenberg, 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 Wittenberg 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 churchyard 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 bedside. 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 prescribed me scarcely any penance, although I endeavoured 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 Wittenberg.

I trust now that the heavy pressure of pecuniary

care which has weighed so long on my mother and Elèsè 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 her himself 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 Wittenberg. 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 postles 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 birthplace of St. Francis. And the collection is still continually being increased.

They showed me a book printed at Wittenberg 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 Wittenberg 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 accom-

plished 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 Nürnberg. 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 Elzé and the others will miss the beauty of the forest-covered hills around Eisenach, when they remove to Wittenberg, 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 sand-wastes, 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 seems 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 oftentimes 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 it is 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 triflcth 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 on 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 Elzé, 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 recognised 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 shalt 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 if 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.

## ELÈS'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 Wittenberg. 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 waggon 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.

WITTENBERG, *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 Wittenberg, 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 Wittenberg. 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 war-like 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 neighbours 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 Wittenberg 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 waggon, 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 interests 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 Wittenberg, 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 re-assured.

"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 Else, 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 Wittenberg."

"Cotta!" rejoined the knight more respectfully, "a good burgher name;" and saying this he rode back to the waggon, 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 Fräulein?" he said, doffing his hat and addressing Eva.

She made no reply, but continued arranging her flowers, without changing feature or colour, except that her lip curled and quivered slightly.

"The Fräulein 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 Fräulein, 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 expres-

sion 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 horse-back 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 my 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 Wittenberg 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 ab-

sorbed. 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 than 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 Else, 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: \* —

\* Ad perennis vitæ fontem mens sitivit arida,  
 Clastra carnis præstò frangi clausa quærit anima,  
 Gliscit, ambit, electatur, exul frui patriâ.  
 &c. &c. &c.

The translation only is given above.

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 offence 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 gatherèd;  
 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 for ever, 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.*

Wittenberg 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 re-assured, and did not pursue the subject, fearing it might suggest what I dreaded to my mother.

WITTENBERG, *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 on 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.

*June 20.*

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 skilful 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.

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## 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<sup>r</sup> 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 do 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 sanete vultis, discedite Roma:  
Omnia hic esse licent, non licet esse probum.”\*

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

\* [“Ye who would live holily, depart from Rome: all things are allowed here, except to be upright.”]

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 me 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

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 women, 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 Else 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 connec-

tion, 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 power, 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!

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## 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 of 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 Wittenberg, 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 Ger-

manica," which El<sup>s</sup>e 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 Wittenberg 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 her 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 till 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 Elzé'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 moments 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 Elzé. 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 than 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.

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## XII.

## ELSE'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, *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 Wittenberg 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, Elèsè, 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 Wittenberg; 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 Wittenberg. 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 defensorum;” which Herr Reichenbach translated, “*I swear vigorously to defend evangelical truth.*”

This oath is only required at one other university besides Wittenberg — 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 could not 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 1515.*

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, 1515.*

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 Wittenberg we have never gone into debt; so that, after thinking a little, I was re-assured. 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 re-appeared with an impatience very unusual for her, and led me in herself.

"Elsè, darling, come here," said my father. And when he felt my hand 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, Else, 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 Else 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 Wittenberg, 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 inexpres-

sible 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 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.

WITTENBERG, *September 1515.*

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 Wittenberg, 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 Wittenberg 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?"

WITTENBERG, *October 1515.*

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 practises 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 all the 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."

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## XIII.

## EVA'S STORY.

NIMPTSCHEN, 1516.

GREAT changes have taken place during these last three years in Aunt Cotta's home. Else 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. Else 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 Aye, 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. Else's husband has taught her; and there is nothing Else 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 recognise 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 five years older than I was five 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 ambitious 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, or (worse still!) 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 seems 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 Else'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:\*

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 now are 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 still are holden,  
Thy light till I see;  
And deep in thy glory,  
Unveiled then before me,  
My King, look on thee!

*June 1516.*

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

\* Hic breve vivitur, hic breve plangitur, hic breve fletur,  
Non breve vivere, non breve plangere, retribuatur.  
O retributio! stat brevis actio, vita perennis,  
O retributio! cœlica mansio stat lue pleniss.,  
          &c                  &c.                  &c.

in the place of Dr. Staupitz, who has gone on a mission to the Netherlands, to collect relics for the Elector Frederick's new church at Wittenberg.

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 wast not, and hast 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; —  
O when wilt thou thy steps retrace,  
And satisfy me with thy face,  
And make me wholly glad?

Then come, O come, thou perfect King,  
Of boundless glory boundless spring;  
Arise, and fullest daylight bring,  
Jesus, expected long!

*July 1516.*

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 searched 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 certainly, after all, among the least; love me a little, Eva, for my sister's sake, whom you love so much."

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## XIV.

## ELSE'S STORY.

*August 1517.*

YES, our little Gretchen is certainly rather a remarkable child. Although she is not yet two years old, she knows all of us by name. She tyrannizes 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 been 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 is 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 neighbourhood. 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’ 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 Wittenberg. We have all taken refuge here. The university is scattered, and many, also, of the Augustinian monks.

Dr. Luther remains in the convent at Wittenberg. 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 of the prior, (*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!

\* Luther’s Tischreden.



“Concerning Brother John Metzler 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 Sardauapaluses 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 placid 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 necessities. Doctor 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 Doctor Luther says God will give us — the security of His presence and care: "*I will never leave thee.*"

WITTENBERG, 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 than ever.

The town is greatly divided in opinion about him. Doctor Tetzal, the great Papal Commissioner for the sale of indulgences, has established his red cross, announcing the sale of pardons, for some months, at Jüterbogk and Zerbst, not far from Wittenberg.

Numbers of the townspeople, alarmed, I suppose, by the pestilence into anxiety about their souls, have repaired to Dr. Tetzal, 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. Tetzal 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 to 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. Tetzels 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 church 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.

WITTENBERG, *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, in order to conciliate him. He said the Holy Scriptures nowhere demand of us any penalty or satisfaction for our sins. God gives and forgives freely and 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 to 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."

WITTENBERG, *August.*

Christopher has returned from Jüterbogk. He saw there a great pile of burning faggots, which Dr. Tetzels 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!"

WITTENBERG, *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 gra-

tuitously 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, Else," 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. Tetzels, 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 is 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. Tetzels 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 affixed 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 are 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.

WITTENBERG, *February 1518.*

Christopher returned yesterday evening from the market-place, where the students have been burning Tetzels' theses, which he wrote in answer to Dr. Luther's. Tetzels 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 Tetzels 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 Tetzels 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 Tetzels 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."

"Tetzels threatens to do so again," said Christopher.

"No doubt they will, if they can," she replied, and relapsed into silence.

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## XV.

## FRITZ'S STORY.

AUGUSTINIAN CONVENT, MAINZ, *November 1617.*

SIX 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 Tetzels 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. Tetzels 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 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 Fräulein 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 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 and '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 I 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 believed 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 Wittenberg 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 recognised 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 Melanchthon (then only twenty-one, yet already a doctor for four years), until he was summoned to Wittenberg, 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 Wittenberg, 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 Wittenberg 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, childlike 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 Wittenberg. Compared with Wittenberg, 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 doorway. 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 Rhine-land.

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 carried 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 priests 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.

"Dr. 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 Wessel 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.”

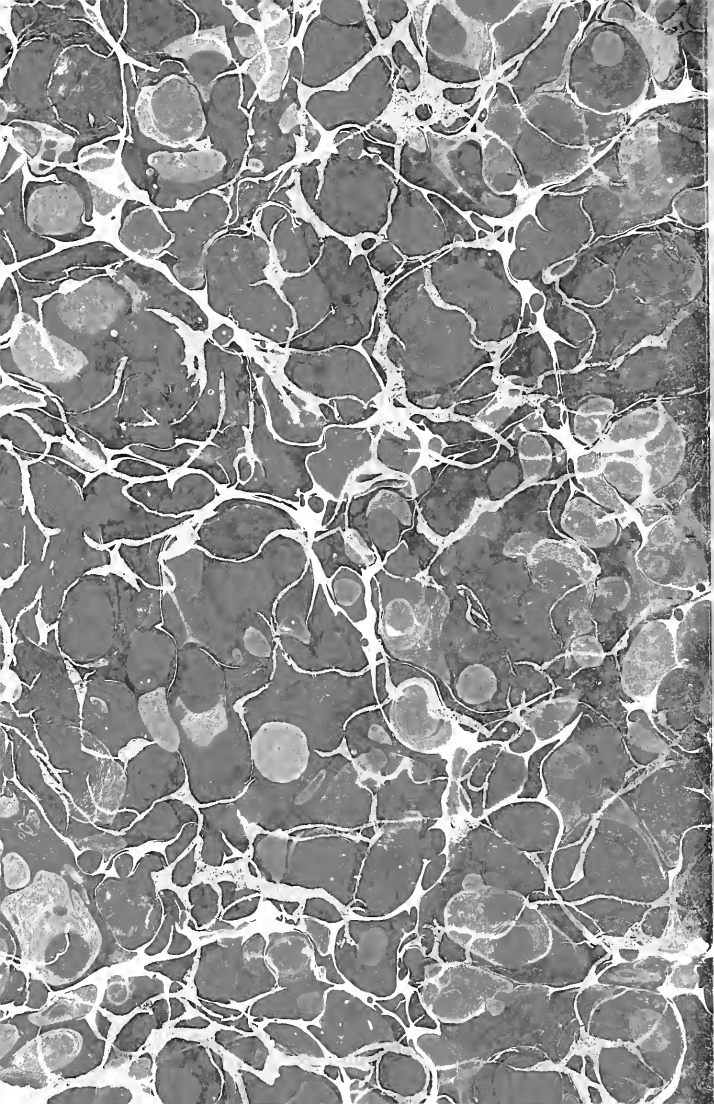
The good, then, in John of Wesel’s words, has not perished, in spite of the flames.

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