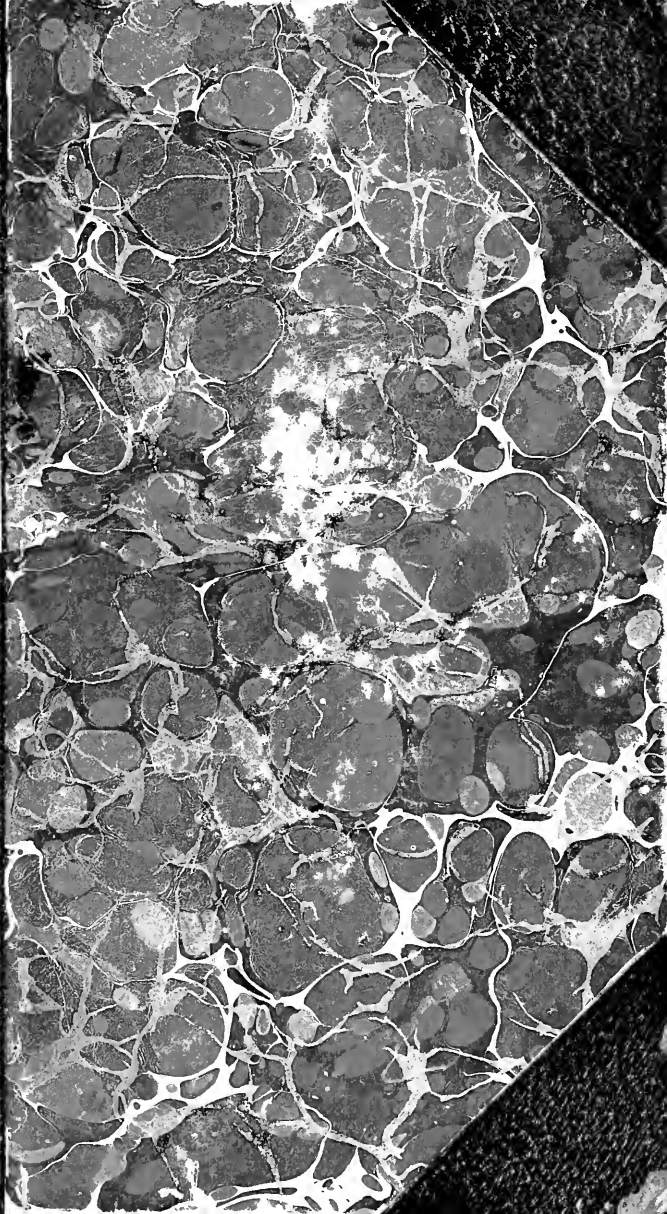


A
A
0
0
3
6
5
5
7
2



6-1a
2

PR
4453
C38C2
V.2 Charles -
Chronicles of the

**Southern Branch
of the
University of California
Los Angeles**

Form L 1

PR
4453
C38C2
V.2

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below

DEC 14 1923
NOV 4 1926

47

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

0262

STATE STREET BOOKS
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

CHRONICLES
OF THE
SCHÖNBERG-COTTA
FAMILY

6262

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II



NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

1890

CHRONICLES
OF THE
SCHÖNBERG-COTTA FAMILY.

XVI.

ELSE'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, *July 13, 1520.*

MANY events have happened since last I wrote, both in this little world and in the large world outside.

Our Gretchen has two little brothers, who are as ingenious in destruction, and seem to have as many designs against their own welfare, as their uncles had at their age, and seem likely to perplex Gretchen, dearly as she loves them, much as Christopher and Pollux did me. Chriemhild is married, and has gone to her home in the Thuringian Forest. Atlantis is betrothed to Conrad Winkelried, a Swiss student. Pollux is gone to Spain, on some mercantile affairs of the Eisenach house of Cotta, in which he is a partner; and Fritz has been among us once more. That is now about two years since. He was certainly much graver than of old. Indeed he often looked more than grave, as if some weight of sorrow rested on him. But with our mother and the children he was always cheerful.

Gretchen and Uncle Fritz formed the strongest mutual attachment, and to this day she often asks me when he will come back; and nothing delights her more than to sit on my knee before his picture, and hear me tell over and over again the stories of our old talks in the lumber-room at Eisenach, or of the long days we used to spend in the pine forests, gathering wood for the winter fires. She thinks no festival could be so delightful as that; and her favourite amusement is to gather little bundles of willow or oak twigs, by the river Elbe, or on the Düben Heath, and bring them home for household use. All the splendid puppets and toys her father brings her from Nüremberg, or has sent from Venice, do not give her half the pleasure that she finds in the heath, when he takes her there, and she returns with her little apron full of dry sticks, and her hands as brown and dirty as a little wood-cutter's, fancying she is doing what Uncle Fritz and I did when we were children, and being useful.

Last summer she was endowed with a special apple and pear tree of her own, and the fruit of these she stores with her little fagots to give at Christmas to a poor old woman we know.

Gottfried and I want the children to learn early that pure joy of giving, and of doing kindnesses, which transmutes wealth from dust into true gold, and prevents these possessions which are such good servants from becoming our masters, and reducing us, as they seem to do so many wealthy people, into the mere slaves and hired guardians of *things*.

I pray God often that the experience of poverty which I had for so many years may never be lost. It seems to me a gift God has given me, just as a course

at the university is a gift. I have graduated in the school of poverty, and God grant I may never forget the secrets poverty taught me about the struggles and wants of the poor.

The room in which I write now, with its carpets, pictures, and carved furniture, is very different from the dear bare old lumber-room where I began my Chronicle; and the inlaid ebony and ivory cabinet on which my paper lies is a different desk from the piles of old books where I used to trace the first pages slowly in a childish hand. But the poor man's luxuries will always be the most precious to me. The warm sunbeams, shining through the translucent vine-leaves at the open window, are fairer than all the jewel-like Venetian glass of the closed casements which are now dying crimson the pages of Dr. Luther's Commentary, left open on the window-seat an hour since by Gottfried.

But how can I be writing so much about my own tiny world, when all the world around me is agitated by such great fears and hopes?

At this moment, through the open window, I see Dr. Luther and Dr. Philip Melancthon walking slowly up the street in close conversation. The hum of their voices reaches me here, although they are talking low. How different they look, and are; and yet what friends they have become! Probably, in a great degree, because of the difference. The one looks like a veteran soldier, with his rock-like brow, his dark eyes, his vigorous form, and his firm step; the other, with his high, expanded forehead, his thin worn face, and his slight youthful frame, like a combination of a young student and an old philosopher.

Gottfried says God has given them to each other and to Germany, blessing the Church as he does the world by the union of opposites, rain and sunshine, heat and cold, sea and land, husband and wife.

How those two great men (for Gottfried says Dr. Melanchthon is great, and I know that Dr. Luther is) love and reverence each other! Dr. Luther says he is but the forerunner, and Melanchthon the true prophet; that he is but the wood-cutter clearing the forest with rough blows, that Dr. Philip may sow the precious seed; and when he went to encounter the legate at Augsburg, he wrote, that if Philip lived it mattered little what became of him.

But *we* do not think so, nor does Dr. Melanchthon. "No one," he says, "comes near Dr. Luther, and indeed the heart of the whole nation hangs on him. Who stirs the heart of Germany — of nobles, peasants, princes, women, children — as he does with his noble faithful words?"

Twice during these last years we have been in the greatest anxiety about his safety, — once when he was summoned before the legate at Augsburg, and once when he went to the great disputation with Dr. Eck at Leipsic.

But how great the difference between his purpose when he went to Augsburg, and when he returned from Leipsic!

At Augsburg he would have conceded anything, but the truth about the free justification of every sinner who believes in Christ. He revered the Pope; he would not for the world become a heretic! No name of opprobrium was so terrible to him as that.

At Leipsic he had learned to disbelieve that the

Pope had any authority to determine doctrine, and he boldly confessed that the Hussites (men till now abhorred in Saxony as natural enemies as well as deadly heretics) ought to be honoured for confessing sound truth. And from that time both Dr. Luther and Melancthon have stood forth openly as the champions of the Word of God against the Papacy.

Now, however, a worse danger threatens him, even the bull of excommunication which they say is now being forged at Rome, and which has never yet failed to crush where it has fallen. Dr. Luther has, indeed, taught us not to dread it as a spiritual weapon, but we fear its temporal effects, especially if followed by the ban of the empire.

Often, indeed, he talks of taking refuge in some other land; the good Elector, even himself, has at times advised it, fearing no longer to be able to protect him. But God preserve him to Germany!

June 25, 1520.

This evening, as we were sitting in my father's house, Christopher brought us, damp from the press, a copy of Dr. Luther's Appeal to His Imperial Majesty, and to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, on the Reformation of Christendom. Presenting it to our grandmother, he said, —

"Here, madam, is a weapon worthy of the bravest days of the Schönbergs, mighty to the pulling down of strongholds."

"Ah," sighed our mother, "always wars and fightings! It is a pity the good work cannot be done more quietly."

"Ah, grandmother," said my father, "only see how

her burgher life has destroyed the heroic spirit of her crusading ancestors. She thinks that the Holy Places are to be won back from the infidels without a blow, only by begging their pardon and kissing the hem of their garments."

"You should hear Catherine Krapp, Dr. Melanchthon's wife!" rejoined our mother; "she agrees with me that these are terrible times. She says she never sees the doctor go away without thinking he may be immured in some dreadful dungeon before they meet again."

"But remember, dear mother," I said, "your fears when first Dr. Luther assailed Tetzal and his indulgences three years ago! And who has gained the victory there? Dr. Martin is the admiration of all good men throughout Germany; and poor Tetzal, despised by his own party, rebuked by the legate, died, they say, of a broken heart just after the great Leipsic disputation."

"Poor Tetzal!" said my mother, "his indulgences could not bind up a broken heart. I shall always love Dr. Luther for writing him a letter of comfort when he was dying, despised and forsaken even by his own party. I trust that He who can pardon has had mercy on his soul."

"Read to us, Christopher," said our grandmother; "your mother would not shrink from any battle-field if there were wounds there which her hands could bind."

"No," said Gottfried, "the end of war is peace, — God's peace, based on His truth. Blessed are those who in the struggle never lose sight of the end."

Christopher read, not without interruption. Many things in the book were new and startling to most of us: —

“It is not rashly,” Dr. Luther began, “that I, a man of the people, undertake to address your lordships. The wretchedness and oppression that now overwhelm all the states of Christendom, and Germany in particular, force from me a cry of distress. I am constrained to call for help; I must see whether God will not bestow his Spirit on some man belonging to our country, and stretch forth his hand to our unhappy nation.”

Dr. Luther never seems to think *he* is to do the great work. He speaks as if he were only fulfilling some plain humble duty, and calling other men to undertake the great achievement; and all the while that humble duty *is* the great achievement, and he is doing it.

Dr. Luther spoke of the wretchedness of Italy, the unhappy land where the Pope's throne is set, her ruined monasteries, her decayed cities, her corrupted people; and then he showed how Roman avarice and pride were seeking to reduce Germany to a state as enslaved. He appealed to the young emperor, Charles, soon about to be crowned. He reminded all the rulers of their responsibilities. He declared that the papal territory, called the patrimony of St. Peter, was the fruit of robbery. Generously holding out his hand to the very outcasts his enemies had sought to insult him most grievously by comparing him with, he said, —

“It is time that we were considering the cause of the Bohemians, and re-uniting ourselves to them.”

At these words my grandmother dropped her work, and fervently clasping her hands, leant forward, and fixing her eyes on Christopher, drank in every word with intense eagerness.

When he came to the denunciation of the begging

friars, and the recommendation that the parish priests should marry, Christopher interrupted himself by an enthusiastic "vivat."

When, however, after a vivid picture of the oppressions and avarice of the legates, came the solemn abjuration: —

"Hearest thou this, O Pope, not most holy, but most sinful? May God from the heights of his heaven soon hurl thy throne into the abyss!" my mother turned pale, and crossed herself.

What impressed me most was the plain declaration: —

"It has been alleged that the Pope, the bishops, the priests, and the monks and nuns form the estate spiritual or ecclesiastical; while the princes, nobles, burgesses, and peasantry form the secular estate or laity. Let no man, however, be alarmed at this. *All Christians constitute the spiritual estate; and the only difference among them is that of the functions which they discharge.* We have all one baptism, one faith, and it is this which constitutes the spiritual man."

If this is indeed true, how many of my old difficulties it removes with a stroke! All callings, then, may be religious callings; all men and women of a religious order. Then my mother is truly and undoubtedly as much treading the way appointed her as Aunt Agnes; and the monastic life is only one among callings equally sacred.

When I said this to my mother, she said, "I as religious a woman as Aunt Agnes! No, Elsè! whatever Dr. Luther ventures to declare, he would not say that. I do sometimes have a hope that for His dear Son's sake God hears even my poor feeble prayers; but to

pray night and day, and abandon all for God, like my sister Agnes, that is another thing altogether."

But when, as we crossed the street to our home, I told Gottfried how much those words of Dr. Luther had touched me, and asked if he really thought we in our secular calling were not only doing our work by a kind of indirect permission, but by a direct vocation from God, he replied, —

"My doubt, *Else*, is whether the vocation which leads men to abandon home is from God at all; whether it has either his command or even his permission."

But if Gottfried is right, Fritz has sacrificed his life to a delusion. How can I believe that? And yet if he could perceive it, how life might change for him! Might he not even yet be restored to us? But I am dreaming.

October 25, 1520.

More and more burning words from Dr. Luther. To-day we have been reading his new book on the Babylonish Captivity. "God has said," he writes in this, "'Whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.' On this promise, if we receive it with faith, hangs our whole salvation. If we believe, our heart is fortified by the divine promise; and although all should forsake the believer, this promise which he believes will never forsake him. With it he will resist the adversary who rushes upon his soul, and will have wherewithal to answer pitiless death, and even the judgment of God." And he says in another place, "The vow made at our baptism is sufficient of itself, and comprehends more than we can ever accomplish. Hence all other vows may be abolished. Whoever enters the priesthood or any religious order, let him well understand

that the works of a monk or of a priest, however difficult they may be, differ in no respect in the sight of God from those of a countryman who tills the ground, or of a woman who conducts a household. God values all things by the standard of faith. And it often happens that the simple labour of a male or female servant is more agreeable to God than the fasts and the works of a monk, because in these faith is wanting."

What a consecration this thought gives to my commonest duties! Yes, when I am directing the maids in their work, or sharing Gottfried's cares, or simply trying to brighten his home at the end of the busy day, or lulling my children to sleep, can I indeed be serving God as much as Dr. Luther at the altar or in his lecture-room? I also, then, have indeed my vocation direct from God.

How could I ever have thought the mere publication of a book would have been an event to stir our hearts like the arrival of a friend! Yet it is even thus with every one of those pamphlets of Dr. Luther's. They move the whole of our two households, from our grandmother to Thekla, and even the little maid, to whom I read portions. She says, with tears, "If the mother and father could hear this in the forest!" Students and burghers have not patience to wait till they reach home, but read the heart-stirring pages as they walk through the streets. And often an audience collects around some communicative reader, who cannot be content with keeping the free, liberating truths to himself.

Already, Christopher says, four thousand copies of the "Appeal to the Nobility" are circulating through Germany.

I always thought before of books as the peculiar property of the learned. But Dr. Luther's books are a living voice, — a heart God has awakened and taught, speaking to countless hearts as a man talketh with his friend. I can indeed see now, with my father and Christopher, that the printing-press is a nobler weapon than even the spears and broadswords of our knightly Bohemian ancestors.

WITTENBERG, *December 10, 1520.*

Dr. Luther has taken a great step to-day. He has publicly burned the Decretals, with other ancient writings, on which the claims of the court of Rome are founded, but which are now declared to be forgeries; and more than this, he has burnt the Pope's bull of excommunication against himself.

Gottfried says that for centuries such a bonfire as this has not been seen. He thinks it means nothing less than an open and deliberate renunciation of the papal tyranny which for so many hundred years has held the whole of western Christendom in bondage. He took our two boys to see it, that we may remind them of it in after years as the first great public act of freedom.

Early in the morning the town was astir. Many of the burghers, professors, and students knew what was about to be done; for this was no deed of impetuous haste or angry vehemence.

I dressed the children early, and we went to my father's house.

Wittenberg is as full now of people of various languages as the tower of Babel must have been after

the confusion of tongues. But never was this more manifest than to-day.

Flemish monks from the Augustine cloisters at Antwerp; Dutch students from Finland; Swiss youths, with their erect forms and free mountain gait; knights from Prussia and Lithuania; strangers even from quite foreign lands, — all attracted hither by Dr. Luther's living words of truth, passed under our windows about nine o'clock this morning, in the direction of the Elster gate, eagerly gesticulating and talking as they went. Then Thekla, Atlantis, and I mounted to an upper room, and watched the smoke rising from the pile, until the glare of the conflagration burst through it, and stained with a faint red the pure daylight.

Soon afterwards the crowds began to return; but there seemed to me to be a gravity and solemnity in the manner of most, different from the eager haste with which they had gone forth.

"They seem like men returning from some great Church festival," I said.

"Or from lighting a signal-fire on the mountains, which shall awaken the whole land to freedom," said Christopher, as they rejoined us.

"Or from binding themselves with a solemn oath to liberate their homes, like the Three Men at Grütli," said Conrad Winkelried, the young Swiss to whom Atlantis is betrothed.

"Yes," said Gottfried, "fires which may be the beacons of a world's deliverance, and may kindle the death-piles of those who dared to light them, are no mere students' bravado."

"Who did the deed, and what was burned?" I asked.

“One of the masters of arts lighted the pile,” my husband replied, “and then threw on it the Decretals, the false Epistles of St. Clement, and other forgeries, which have propped up the edifice of lies for centuries. And when the flames which consumed them had done their work and died away, Dr. Luther himself, stepping forward, solemnly laid the Pope’s bull of excommunication on the fire, saying amidst the breathless silence, ‘As thou hast troubled the Lord’s saints, may the eternal fire destroy thee.’ Not a word broke the silence until the last crackle and gleam of those symbolical flames had ceased, and then gravely but joyfully we all returned to our homes.”

“Children,” said our grandmother, “you have done well; yet you are not the first that have defied Rome.”

“Nor perhaps the last she will silence,” said my husband. “But the last enemy will be destroyed at last; and meantime every martyr is a victor.”

XVII.

EVA'S STORY.

I HAVE read the whole of the New Testament through to Sister Beatrice and Aunt Agnes. Strangely different auditors they were in powers of mind and in experience of life; yet both met, like so many in His days on earth, at the feet of Jesus.

"He would not have despised me, even me," Sister Beatrice would say. "Poor, fond creature, half-witted or half-crazed they call me; but He would have welcomed me."

"Does He not welcome you?" I said.

"You think so? Yes, I think — I am sure he does. My poor broken bits and remnants of sense and love, He will not despise them. He will take me as I am."

One day when I had been reading to them the chapter in St. Luke with the parables of the lost money, the lost sheep, and the prodigal, Aunt Agnes, resting her cheek on her thin hand, and fixing her large dark eyes on me, listened with intense expectation to the end; and then she said, —

"Is that all, my child? Begin the next chapter."

I began about the rich man and the unjust steward; but before I had read many words, —

"That will do," she said in a disappointed tone. "It is another subject. Then not one of the Pharisees came after all! If I had been there among the hard,

proud Pharisees — as I might have been when he began, wondering, no doubt, that he could so forget himself as to eat with publicans and sinners — if I had been there, and had heard him speak thus, Eva, I must have fallen at his feet and said, ‘Lord, I am a Pharisee no more — I am the lost sheep, not one of the ninety and nine — the wandering child, not the elder brother. Place me low, low among the publicans and sinners — lower than any; but only say thou camest also to seek me, even *me*.’ And, child, he would not have sent me away! But, Eva,” she added, after a pause, wiping away the tears which ran slowly over her withered cheeks, “is it not said anywhere that one Pharisee came to him?”

I looked, and could find it nowhere stated positively that one Pharisee had abandoned his pride, and self-righteousness, and treasures of good works, for Jesus. It seemed all on the side of the publicans. Aunt Agnes was at times distressed.

“And yet,” she said, “I *have* come. I am no longer among those who think themselves righteous, and despise others. But I must come in behind all. It is I, not the woman who was a sinner, who am the miracle of his grace; for since no sin so keeps men from him as spiritual pride, there can be no sin so degrading in the sight of the pure and humble angels, or of the Lord. But look again, Eva! Is there not one instance of such as I being saved?”

I found the history of Nicodemus, and we traced it through the Gospel from the secret visit to the popular Teacher at night, to the open confession of the rejected Saviour before his enemies.

Aunt Agnes thought this might be the example she sought, but she wished to be quite sure.

"Nicodemus came in humility, to learn," she said. "We never read that he despised others, or thought he could make himself a saint."

At length we came to the Acts of the Apostles, and there, indeed, we found the history of one, "of the strictest sect a Pharisee, who verily thought himself doing God service by persecuting the despised Nazarenes to death. And from that time Aunt Agnes sought out and cherished every fragment of St. Paul's history, and every sentence of his sermons and writings. She had found the example she sought of the "Pharisee who was saved" — in him who obtained mercy, "that in him first God might show forth the riches of his long-suffering to those who thereafter, through his word, should believe."

She determined to learn Latin, that she might read these divine words for herself. It was affecting to see her sitting among the novices whom I taught, carefully spelling out the words, and repeating the declensions and conjugations. I had no such patient pupil; for although many were eager at first, not a few relaxed after a few weeks' toil, not finding the results very apparent, and said it would never sound so natural and true as when Sister Ave translated it for them into German.

I wish some learned man would translate the Bible into German. Why does not some one think of it? There is one German translation from the Latin, the prioress says, made about thirty or forty years ago; but it is very large and costly, and not in language that attracts simple people. I wish the Pope would

spend some of the money from the indulgences on a new translation of the New Testament. I think it would please God much more than building St. Peter's.

Perhaps, however, if people had the German New Testament they would not buy the indulgences; for in all the Gospels and Epistles I cannot find one word about buying pardons; and, what is more strange, not a word about adoring the Blessed Virgin, or about nunneries or monasteries. I cannot see that the holy apostles founded one such community, or recommended any one to do so.

Indeed, there is so much in the New Testament, and in what I have read of the Old, about not worshipping any one but God, that I have quite given up saying any prayers to the Blessed Mother, for many reasons.

In the first place, I am much more sure that our Lord can hear us always than his mother, because he so often says so. And I am much more sure he can help, because I know all power is given to him in heaven and in earth.

And in the next place, if I were quite sure that the Blessed Virgin and the saints could hear me always, and could help or would intercede, I am sure also that no one among them — not the Holy Mother herself — is half so compassionate and full of love, or could understand us so well, as He who died for us. In the Gospels, he was always more accessible than the disciples. St. Peter might be impatient in the impetuosity of his zeal. Loving indignation might overbalance the forbearance of St. John the beloved, and he might wish for fire from heaven on those who refused to receive his Master. All the holy apostles

rebuked the poor mothers who brought their children, and would have sent away the woman of Canaan; but he tenderly took the little ones into his arms from the arms of the mothers the disciples had rebuked. His patience was never wearied; He never misunderstood or discouraged any one. Therefore I pray to Him and our Father in heaven alone, and *through* Him alone. Because if he is more pitiful to sinners than all the saints, which of all the saints can be beloved of God as he is, the well-beloved Son? He seems everything, in every circumstance, we can ever want. Higher mediation we cannot find, tenderer love we cannot crave.

And very sure I am that the meek Mother of the Lord, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the apostle who determined to know nothing among his converts save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, will not regret any homage transferred from them to Him.

Nay, rather, if the blessed Virgin, and the holy apostles have heard how, through all these years, such grievous and unjust things have been said of their Lord; how his love has been misunderstood, and he has been represented as hard to be entreated, — He who entreats sinners to come and be forgiven; — has not this been enough to shadow their happiness, even in heaven?

A nun has lately been transferred to our convent, who came originally from Bohemia, where all her relatives had been slain for adhering to the party of John Huss, the heretic. She is much older than I am, and she says she remembers well the name of my family, and that my great-uncle, Aunt Agnes' father, died a *heretic!* She cannot tell what the heresy was, but she

believes it was something about the blessed sacrament and the authority of the Pope. She had heard that otherwise he was a charitable and holy man.

Was my father, then, a Hussite?

I have found the end of the sentence he gave me as his dying legacy: — "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" And instead of being in a book not fit for Christian children to read, as the priest who took it from me said, it is in the Holy Scriptures!

Can it be possible that the world has come round again to the state it was in when the rulers and priests put the Saviour to death, and St. Paul persecuted the disciples as heretics?

NIMPTSCHEN, 1520.

A wonderful book of Dr. Luther's appeared among us a few weeks since, on the Babylonish Captivity; and although it was taken from us by the authorities, as dangerous reading for nuns, this was not before many among us had become acquainted with its contents. And it has created a great ferment in the convent. Some say they are words of impious blasphemy; some say they are words of living truth. He speaks of the forgiveness of sins being free; of the Pope and many of the priests being the enemies of the truth of God; and of the life and calling of a monk or nun as in no way holier than that of any humble believing secular man or woman, — a nun no holier than a wife or a household servant!

This many of the older nuns think plain blasphemy. Aunt Agnes says it is true, and more than true; for,

from what I tell her, there can be no doubt that Aunt Cotta has been a lowlier and holier woman all her life than she can ever hope to be.

And as to the Bible precepts, they certainly seem far more adapted to people living in homes than to those secluded in convents. Often when I am teaching the young novices the precepts in the Epistles, they say, —

“But sister Ave, find some precepts for *us*. These sayings are for children, and wives, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters; not for those who have neither home nor kindred on earth.”

Then if I try to speak of loving God and the blessed Saviour, some of them say, —

“But we cannot bathe his feet with tears, or anoint them with ointment, or bring him food, or stand by his cross, as the good women did of old. Shut up here, away from every one, how can we show him that we love him?”

And I can only say, “Dear sisters, you *are* here now; therefore surely God will find some way for you to serve him here.”

But my heart aches for them, and I doubt no longer, I feel sure God can never have meant these young, joyous hearts to be cramped and imprisoned thus.

Sometimes I talk about it with Aunt Agnes; and we consider whether, if these vows are indeed irrevocable, and these children must never see their homes again, the convent could not one day be removed to some city where sick and suffering men and women toil and die; so that we might, at least, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit and minister to the sick and

sorrowful. That would be life once more, instead of this monotonous routine, which is not so much death as mechanism — an inanimate existence which has never been life.

October, 1520.

Sister Beatrice is very ill. Aunt Agnes has requested as an especial favour to be allowed to share the attending on her with me. Never was gentler nurse or more grateful patient.

It goes to my heart to see Aunt Agnes meekly learning from me how to render the little services required at the sick-bed. She smiles, and says her feeble blundering fingers had grown into mere machines for turning over the leaves of prayer-books, just as her heart was hardening into a machine for repeating prayers. Nine of the young nuns, Aunt Agnes, Sister Beatrice, and I, have been drawn very closely together of late. Among the noblest of these is Catherine von Bora, a young nun, about twenty years of age. There is such truth in her full dark eyes, which look so kindly and frankly into mine, and such character in the firmly-closed mouth. She declines learning Latin, and has not much taste for learned books; but she has much clear practical good sense, and she, with many others, delights greatly in Dr. Luther's writings. They say they are not books; they are a living voice. Every fragment of information I can give them about the doctor is eagerly received, and many rumours reach us of his influence in the world. When he was near Nimptschen, two years ago, at the great Leipsic disputation, we heard that the students were enthusiastic about him, and that the common people seemed to drink in his words almost as they did our Lord's when

he spoke upon earth; and what is more, that the lives of some men and women at the court have been entirely changed since they heard him. We were told he had been the means of wonderful conversions; but what was strange in these conversions was, that those so changed did not abandon their position in life, but only their sins, remaining where they were when God called them, and distinguished from others, not by veil or cowl, but by the light of holy works.

On the other hand, many, especially among the older nuns, have received quite contrary impressions, and regard Dr. Luther as a heretic, worse than any who ever rent the Church. These look very suspiciously on us, and subject us to many annoyances, hindering our conversing and reading together as much as possible.

We do, indeed, many of us wonder that Dr. Luther should use such fierce and harsh words against the Pope's servants. Yet St. Paul even "could have wished that those were cut off" that troubled his flock; and the very lips of divine love launched woes against hypocrites and false shepherds severer than any that the Baptist or Elijah ever uttered in their denunciations from the wilderness. It seems to me that the hearts which are tenderest towards the wandering sheep will ever be severest against the seducing shepherds who lead them astray. Only we need always to remember that these very false shepherds themselves are, after all, but wretched lost sheep, driven hither and thither by the great robber of the fold!

1521.

Just now the hearts of the little band among us who owe so much to Dr. Luther are lifted up night

and day in prayer to God for him. He is soon to be on his way to the Imperial Diet at Worms. He has the Emperor's safe-conduct, but it is said this did not save John Huss from the flames. In our prayers we are much aided by his own Commentary on the Book of Psalms which I have just received from Uncle Cotta's printing-press.

This is now Sister Beatrice's great treasure, as I sit by her bed-side and read it to her.

He says that "the mere frigid use of the Psalms in the canonical hours, though little understood, brought some sweetness of the breath of life to humble hearts of old, like the faint fragrance in the air not far from a bed of roses."

He says, "All other books give us the words and deeds of the saints, but this gives us their inmost souls." He calls the Psalter "the little Bible." "There," he says, "you may look into the hearts of the saints as into Paradise, or into the opened heavens, and see the fair flowers or the shining stars, as it were, of their affections springing or beaming up to God, in response to his benefits and blessings."

March, 1521.

News has reached me to-day from Wittenberg which makes me feel indeed that the days when people deem they do God service by persecuting those who love him, are too truly come back. Thekla writes me that they have thrown Fritz into the convent prison at Mainz, for spreading Dr. Luther's doctrine among the monks. A few lines sent through a friendly monk have told them of this. She sent them on to me.

"My beloved ones," he writes, "I am in the prison

where, forty years ago, John of Wesel died for the truth. I am ready to die if God wills it so. His truth is worth dying for, and his love will strengthen me. But if I can I will escape, for the truth is worth living for. If, however, you do not hear of me again, know that the truth I died for is Christ's, and that the love which sustained me is Christ himself. And likewise, that to the last I pray for you all, and for Eva; and tell her that the thought of her has helped me often to believe in goodness and truth, and that I look assuredly to meet her and all of you again. — FRIEDRICH SCHÖNBERG-COTTA."

In prison and in peril of life! Death itself cannot, I know, more completely separate Fritz and me than we are separated already. Indeed, of the death even of one of us, I have often thought as bringing us a step nearer, rending one veil between us. Yet, now that it seems so possible, — that perhaps it has already come, — I feel there was a kind of indefinable sweetness in being only on the same earth together, in treading the same pilgrim way. At least we could help each other by prayer; and now, if he is indeed treading the streets of the heavenly city, so high above, the world does seem darker.

But, alas! he may *not* be in the heavenly city, but in some cold earthly dungeon, suffering I know not what!

I have read the words over and over, until I have almost lost their meaning. He has no morbid desire to die. He will escape if he can, and he is daring enough to accomplish much. And yet, if the danger were not great, he would not alarm Aunt Cotta with even the possibility of death. He always considered others so tenderly.

He says I have helped him, *him* who taught and helped me, a poor ignorant child, so much! Yet I suppose it may be so. It teaches us so much to teach others. And we always understood each other so perfectly with so few words. I feel as if blindness had fallen on me, when I think of him now. My heart gropes about in the dark and cannot find him.

But then I look up, my Saviour, to thee. "To thee the night and the day are both alike." I dare not think he is suffering; it breaks my heart. I cannot rejoice as I would in thinking he may be in heaven, I know not what to ask, but thou art with him as with me. *Keep him close under the shadow of thy wing.* There we are *safe*, and there we are *together*. And oh, comfort Aunt Cotta! She must need it sorely.

Fritz, then, like our little company at Nimptschen, loves the words of Dr. Luther. When I think of this I rejoice almost more than I weep for him. These truths believed in our hearts seem to unite us more than prison or death can divide. When I think of this I can sing once more St. Bernard's hymn: —

SALVE CAPUT CRUENTATUM.

Hail! thou Head, so bruised and
wounded,

With the crown of thorns surrounded.
Smitten with the mocking reed,
Wounds which may not cease to bleed

Trickling faint and slow.

Hail! from whose most blessed brow
None can wipe the blood-drops
now;

All the bloom of life has fled,
Mortal paleness there instead;
Thou before whose presence dread
Angels trembling bow.

All thy vigour and thy life
Fading in this bitter strife;
Death his stamp on thee has set,
Hollow and emaciate,
Faint and drooping there.

Thou this agony and scorn
Hast for me a sinner borne!
Me, unworthy, all for me!
With those wounds of love on thee,
Glorious Face, appear!

Yet in this thine agony,
Faithful Shepherd, **think of me**

From whose lips of love divine
 Sweetest draughts of life are mine,
 Purest honey flows;
 All unworthy of thy thought,
 Guilty, yet reject me not;
 Unto me thy head incline, —
 Let that dying head of thine
 In mine arms repose!

Let me true communion know
 With thee in thy sacred woe,
 Counting all beside but dross,
 Dying with thee on thy cross; —
 'Neath it will I die!

Thanks to thee with every breath
 Jesus, for thy bitter death;
 Grant thy guilty one this prayer:
 When my dying hour is near,
 Gracious God, be nigh!

When my dying hour must be,
 Be not absent then from me;
 In that dreadful hour, I pray,
 Jesus come without delay;
 See, and set me free
 When thou biddest me depart,
 Whom I cleave to with my heart,
 Lover of my soul, be near,
 With thy saving cross appear, —
 Show thyself to me!

XVIII

THEKLA'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, April 2, 1521.

DR. LUTHER is gone. We all feel like a family bereaved of our father.

The professors and chief burghers, with numbers of the students, gathered around the door of the Augustinian Convent this morning to bid him farewell. Gottfried Reichenbach was near as he entered the carriage, and heard him say, as he turned to Melanchthon, in a faltering voice, "Should I not return, and should my enemies put me to death, O my brother, cease not to teach and to abide steadfastly in the truth. Labour in my place, for I shall not be able to labour myself. If you be spared it matters little that I perish."

And so he drove off. And a few minutes after, we, who were waiting at the door, saw him pass. He did not forget to smile at Elsè and her little ones, or to give a word of farewell to our dear blind father as he passed us. But there was a grave steadfastness in his countenance that made our hearts full of anxiety. As the usher with the imperial standard who preceded him, and then Dr. Luther's carriage, disappeared round a corner of the street, our grandmother, whose chair had been placed at the door that she might see him pass, murmured, as if to herself, —

"Yes, it was with just such a look they went to the scaffold and the stake when I was young."

I could see little, my eyes were so blinded with

tears; and when our grandmother said this, I could bear it no longer, but ran up to my room, and here I have been ever since. My mother and Elèsè and all of them say I have no control over my feelings; and I am afraid I have not. But it seems to me as if every one I lean my heart on were always taken away. First, there was Eva. She always understood me, helped me to understand myself; did not laugh at my perplexities as childish, did not think my over-eagerness was always heat of temper, but met my blundering efforts to do right. Different as she was from me (different as an angel from poor bewildered blundering Giant Christopher in Elèsè's old legend), she always seemed to come down to my level and see my difficulties from where I stood, and so helped me over them; whilst every one else sees them from above, and wonders any one can think such trifles troubles at all. Not, indeed, that my dear mother and Elèsè are proud, or mean to look down on any one; but Elèsè is so unselfish, her whole life is so bound up in others, that she does not know what more wilful natures have to contend with. Besides, she is now out of the immediate circle of our everyday life at home. Then our mother is so gentle; she is frightened to think what sorrows life may bring me with the changes that must come, if little things give me such joy or grief now. I know she feels for me often more than she dares let me see; but she is always thinking of arming me for the trials she believes must come, by teaching me to be less vehement and passionate about trifles now. But I am afraid it is useless. I think every creature must suffer according to its nature; and if God has made our capacity for joy or sorrow deep, we cannot fill up the channel

and say, "Hitherto I will feel; so far, and no further." The *waters are there*, — soon they will recover for themselves the old choked-up courses; and meantime they will overflow. Eva also used to say, "that our armour must grow with our growth, and our strength with the strength of our conflicts; and that there is only one shield which does this, the shield of faith, — a living, daily trust in a living, ever-present God."

But Eva went away. And then Nix died. I suppose if I saw any child now mourning over a dog as I did over Nix, I should wonder much as they all did at me then. But Nix was not only a dog to me. He was Eisenach and my childhood; and a whole world of love and dreams seemed to die for me with Nix.

To all the rest of the world I was a little vehement girl of fourteen; to Nix I was mistress, protector, everything. It was weeks before I could bear to come in at the front door, where he used to watch for me with his wistful eyes, and bound with cries of joy to meet me. I used to creep in at the garden gate.

And then Nix's death was the first approach of Death to me, and the dreadful power was no less a power because its shadow fell first for me on a faithful dog. I began dimly to feel that life, which before that seemed to be a mountain-path always mounting and mounting through golden mists to I know not what heights of beauty and joy, did not end on the heights, but in a dark unfathomed abyss, and that however dim its course might be, it has, alas, no mists, or uncertainty around the nature of its close, but ends certainly, obviously, and universally in death.

I could not tell any one what I felt. I did not know myself. How can we understand a labyrinth

until we are through it? I did not even know it was a labyrinth. I only knew that a light had passed away from everything, and a shadow had fallen in its place.

Then it was that Dr. Luther spoke to me of the other world, beyond death, which God would certainly make more full and beautiful than this; — the world on which the shadow of death can never come, because it lies in the eternal sunshine, on the other side of death, and all the shadows fall on this side. That was about the time of my first communion, and I saw much of Dr. Luther, and heard him preach. I did not say much to him, but he let down a light into my heart which, amidst all its wanderings and mistakes, will, I believe, never go out.

He made me understand something of what our dear heavenly Father is, and that willing but unequalled Sufferer — that gracious Saviour who gave himself for our sins, even for mine. And he made me feel that God would understand me better than any one because love always understands, and the greatest love understands best, and God is love.

Elsè and I spoke a little about it sometimes, but not much. I am still a child to Elsè and to all of them, being the youngest, and so much less self-controlled than I ought to be. Fritz understood it best; at least, I could speak to him more freely, — I do not know why. Perhaps some hearts are made to answer naturally to each other, just as some of the furniture always vibrates when I touch a particular string of the lute, while nothing else in the room seems to feel it. Perhaps, too, sorrow deepens the heart wonderfully, and opens a channel into the depths of

all other hearts. And I am sure Fritz has known very deep sorrow. What, I do not exactly know; and I would not for the world try to find out. If there is a secret chamber in his heart, which he cannot bear to open to any one, when I think his thoughts are there, would I not turn aside my eyes and creep softly away, that he might never know I had found it out?

The innermost sanctuary of his heart is, however, I know, not a chamber of darkness and death, but a holy place of daylight, for God is there.

Hours and hours Fritz and I spoke of Dr. Luther, and what he had done for us both; more, perhaps, for Fritz than even for me, because he had suffered more. It seems to me as if we and thousands besides in the world had been worshipping before an altar-picture of our Saviour, which we had been told was painted by a great master after a heavenly pattern. But all we could see was a grim, hard, stern countenance of one sitting on a judgment-throne; in his hands lightnings, and worse lightnings buried in the cloud of his severe and threatening brow. And then, suddenly we heard Dr. Luther's voice behind us saying, in his ringing, inspiriting tones, "Friends, what are you doing? That is not the right painting. These are only the boards which hide the master's picture." And so saying, he drew aside the terrible image on which we had been hopelessly gazing, vainly trying to read some traces of tenderness and beauty there. And all at once the real picture was revealed to us, the picture of the real Christ, with the look on his glorious face which he had on the cross, when he said of his murderers, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do;"

and to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son;" or to the sinful woman who washed his feet, "Go in peace."

Fritz and I also spoke very often of Eva. At least, he liked me to speak of her while he listened. And I never weary of speaking of our Eva.

But then Fritz went away. And now it is many weeks since we have heard from him; and the last tidings we had were that little note from the convent-prison of Mainz!

And now Dr. Luther is gone — gone to the stronghold of his enemies — gone, perhaps, as our grandmother says, to martyrdom!

And who will keep that glorious revelation of the true, loving, pardoning God open for us, — with a steady hand keep open those false shutters, now that he is withdrawn? Dr. Melancthon may do as well for the learned, for the theologians; but who will replace Dr. Luther to *us*, to the people, to working men and eager youths, and to women and to children? Who will make us feel as he does that religion is not a study, or a profession, or a system of doctrines, but life in God; that prayer is not, as he said, an ascension of the heart as a spiritual exercise into some vague airy heights, but the lifting of the heart *to God*, to a heart which meets us, cares for us, loves us inexpressibly? Who will ever keep before us as he does that "Our Father," which makes all the rest of the Lord's Prayer and all prayer possible and helpful? No wonder that mothers held out their children to receive his blessing as he left us, and then went home weeping, whilst even strong men brushed away tears from their eyes.

It is true, Dr. Bugenhagen, who has escaped from

persecution in Pomerania, preaches fervently in his pulpit; and Archdeacon Carlstadt is full of fire, and Dr. Melanchthon full of light; and many good, wise men are left. But Dr. Luther seemed the heart and soul of all. Others might say wiser things, and he might say many things others would be too wise to say, but it is through Dr. Luther's heart that God has revealed His heart and His word to thousands in our country, and no one can ever be to us what he is.

Day and night we pray for his safety.

April 15.

Christopher has returned from Erfurt, where he heard Dr. Luther preach.

He told us that in many places his progress was like that of a beloved prince through his dominions; of a prince who was going out to some great battle for his land.

Peasants blessed him; poor men and women thronged around him and entreated him not to trust his precious life among his enemies. One aged priest at Nürnberg brought out to him a portrait of Savonarola, the good priest whom the Pope burned at Florence not forty years ago. One aged widow came to him and said her parents had told her God would send a deliverer to break the yoke of Rome, and she thanked God she saw him before she died. At Erfurt sixty burghers and professors rode out some miles to escort him into the city. There, where he had relinquished all earthly prospects to beg bread as a monk through the streets, the streets were thronged with grateful men and women, who welcomed him as their liberator from falsehood and spiritual tyranny.

Christopher heard him preach in the church of the Augustinian Convent, where he had (as Fritz told me) suffered such agonies of conflict. He stood there now an excommunicated man, threatened with death; but he stood there as victor, through Christ, over the tyranny and lies of Satan. He seemed entirely to forget his own danger in the joy of the eternal salvation he came to proclaim. Not a word, Christopher said, about himself, or the Diet, or the Pope's bull, or the Emperor, but all about the way a sinner may be saved, and a believer may be joyful. "There are two kind of works," he said; "external works, our own works. These are worth little. One man builds a church; another makes a pilgrimage to St. Peter's; a third fasts, puts on the hood, goes barefoot. All these works are nothing, and will perish. Now, I will tell you what is the true good work. *God hath raised again a man, the Lord Jesus Christ, in order that he may crush death, destroy sin, shut the gates of hell. This is the work of salvation.* The devil believed he had the Lord in his power when he beheld him between two thieves, suffering the most shameful martyrdom, accursed both of Heaven and man. But God put forth his might, and annihilated death, sin, and hell. Christ hath won the victory. This is the great news! And we are saved by his work, not by our works. The Pope says something very different. I tell you the holy Mother of God herself has been saved, not by her virginity, nor by her maternity, nor by her purity, nor by her works, but solely by means of faith, and by the work of God."

As he spoke the gallery in which Christopher stood listening cracked. Many were greatly terrified, and even attempted to rush out. Dr. Luther stopped a

moment, and then stretching out his hand said, in his clear, firm voice, "Fear not, there is no danger. The devil would thus hinder the preaching of the gospel, but he will not succeed." Then returning to his text, he said, "Perhaps you will say to me, 'You speak to us much about faith, teach us how we may obtain it.' Yes, indeed, that is what I desire to teach you. Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, '*Peace be unto you. Behold my hands.*' And this is as if he said, 'O man, it is I alone who have taken away thy sins, and who have redeemed thee, and now *thou hast peace*, saith the Lord.'"

And he concluded, —

"Since God has saved us, let us so order our works that he may take pleasure therein. Art thou rich? Let thy goods be serviceable to the poor. Art thou poor? Let thy services be of use to the rich. If thy labours are useless to all but thyself, the services thou pretendest to render to God are a mere lie."

Christopher left Dr. Luther at Erfurt. He said many tried to persuade the doctor not to venture to Worms; others reminded him of John Huss, burned in spite of the safe-conduct. And as he went, in some places the papal excommunication was affixed on the walls before his eyes; but he said, "If I perish, the truth will not."

And nothing moved him from his purpose. Christopher was most deeply touched with that sermon. He says the text, "*Peace be unto you; and when he had so said Jesus showed unto them his hands and his side,*" rang through his heart all the way home to Wittenberg, through the forests and the plain. The pathos of the clear true voice we may never hear again writes them

on his heart; and more than that, I trust, the deeper pathos of the voice which uttered the cry of agony once on the cross for us, — the agony which won the peace.

Yes; when Dr. Luther speaks he makes us feel we have to do with persons, not with things, — with the devil who hates us, with God who loves us, with the Saviour who died for us. It is not holiness only and justification, or sin and condemnation. It is we sinning and condemned, Christ suffering for us, and God justifying and loving us. It is all I and thou. He brings us face to face with God, not merely sitting serene on a distant imperial throne, frowning in terrible majesty, or even smiling in gracious pity, but coming down to us close, seeking us, and caring, caring unutterably much, that we, even we, should be saved.

I never knew, until Dr. Luther drove out of Wittenberg, and the car with the cloth curtains to protect him from the weather, which the town had provided, passed out of sight, and I saw the tears gently flowing down my mother's face, how much she loved and honoured him.

She seems almost as anxious about him as about Fritz; and she did not reprove me that night when she came in and found me weeping by my bed. She only drew me to her and smoothed down my hair, and said, "Poor little Thekla! God will teach us both how to have none other gods but himself. He will do it very tenderly; but neither thy mother nor thy Saviour can teach thee this lesson without many a bitter tear."

XIX.

FRITZ'S STORY.

EBERNBURG, *April 2, 1521.*

A CHASM has opened between me and my monastic life. I have been in the prison, and in the prison have I received at last, in full, my emancipation. The ties I dreaded impatiently to break have been broken for me, and I am a monk no longer.

I could not but speak to my brethren in the convent of the glad tidings which had brought me such joy. It is as impossible for Christian life not to diffuse itself as that living water should not flow, or that flames should not rise. Gradually a little band of Christ's freedmen gathered around me. At first I did not speak to them much of Dr. Luther's writings. My purpose was to show them that Dr. Luther's doctrine was *not* his own, but God's.

But the time came when Dr. Luther's name was on every lip. The bull of excommunication went forth against him from the Vatican. His name was branded as that of the vilest of heretics by every adherent of the Pope. In many churches, especially those of the Dominicans, the people were summoned by the great bells to a solemn service of anathema, where the whole of the priests, gathered at the altar in the darkened building, pronounced the terrible words of doom, and then, flinging down their blazing torches extinguished them on the stone pavement, as hope, they said, was

extinguished by the anathema for the soul of the accursed.

At one of these services I was accidentally present. And mine was not the only heart which glowed with burning indignation to hear that worthy name linked with those of apostates and heretics, and held up to universal execration. But, perhaps, in no heart there did it enkindle such a fire as in mine. Because I knew the source from which those curses came, how lightly, how carelessly those firebrands were flung; not fiercely, by the fanaticism of blinded consciences, but daintily and deliberately, by cruel, reckless hands, as a matter of diplomacy and policy, by those who cared themselves neither for God's curse nor his blessing. And I knew also the heart which they were meant to wound; how loyal, how tender, how true; how slowly, and with what pain Dr. Luther had learned to believe the idols of his youth a lie; with what a wrench, when the choice at last had to be made between the word of God and the voice of the Church, he had clung to the Bible, and let the hopes, and trust, and friendships of earlier days be torn from him; what anguish that separation still cost him; how willingly, as a humble little child, at the sacrifice of anything but truth and human souls, he would have flung himself again on the bosom of that Church to which, in his fervent youth, he had offered up all that makes life dear.

"They curse, but bless Thou."

The words came unbidden into my heart, and almost unconsciously from my lips. Around me I heard more than one "Amen;" but at the same time I became aware that I was watched by malignant eyes.

After the publication of the excommunication, they

publicly burned the writings of Dr. Luther in the great square. Mainz was the first city in Germany where this indignity was offered him.

Mournfully I returned to my convent. In the cloisters of our Order the opinions concerning Luther are much divided. The writings of St. Augustine have kept the truth alive in many hearts amongst us; and besides this, there is the natural bias to one of our own order, and the party opposition to the Dominicans, Tetzels and Ecks, Dr. Luther's enemies. Probably there are few Augustinian convents in which there are not two opposite parties in reference to Dr. Luther.

In speaking of the great truths, of God freely justifying the sinner because Christ died, (the Judge acquitting because the Judge himself had suffered for the guilty), I had endeavoured to trace them, as I have said, beyond all human words to their divine authority. But now to confess Luther seemed to me to have become identical with confessing Christ. It is the truth which is assailed in any age which tests our fidelity. It is to *confess* we are called, not merely to *profess*. If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle-field besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.

It seems to me also that, practically, the contest in every age of conflict ranges usually round the person of one faithful, God-sent man, whom to follow loyally

is fidelity to God. In the days of the first Judaizing assault on the early Church, that man was St. Paul. In the great Arian battle, this man was Athanasius — "*Athanasius contra mundum.*" In our days, in our land, I believe it is Luther; and to deny Luther would be for me, who learned the truth from his lips, to deny Christ. Luther, I believe, is the man whom God has given to his Church in Germany in this age. Luther, therefore, I will follow — not as a perfect example, but as a God-appointed leader. Men can never be neutral in great religious contests; and if, because of the little wrong in the right cause, or the little evil in the good man, we refuse to take the side of right, we are, by that very act, silently taking the side of wrong.

When I came back to the convent I found the storm gathering. I was asked if I possessed any of Dr. Luther's writings. I confessed that I did. It was demanded that they should be given up. I said they could be taken from me, but I would not willingly give them up to destruction, because I believed they contained the truth of God. Thus the matter ended until we had each retired to our cells for the night, when one of the older monks came to me and accused me of secretly spreading Lutheran heresy among the brethren.

I acknowledged I had diligently, but not secretly, done all I could to spread among the brethren the truths contained in Dr. Luther's books, although not in his words, but in St. Paul's. A warm debate ensued, which ended in the monk angrily leaving the cell, saying that means would be found to prevent the further diffusion of this poison.

The next day I was taken into the prison where

John of Wesel died; the heavy bolts were drawn upon me, and I was left in solitude.

As they left me alone, the monk with whom I had the discussion of the previous night said, "In this chamber, not forty years since, a heretic such as Martin Luther died."

The words were intended to produce wholesome fear: they acted as a bracing tonic. The spirit of the conqueror who had seemed to be defeated there, but now stood with the victorious palm before the Lamb, seemed near me. The Spirit of the truth for which he suffered was with me; and in the solitude of that prison I learned lessons years might not have taught me elsewhere.

No one except those who have borne them knows how strong are the fetters which bind us to a false faith, learned at our mother's knee, and rivetted on us by the sacrifices of years. Perhaps I should never have been able to break them. For me, as for thousands of others, they were rudely broken by hostile hands. But the blows which broke them were the accolade which smote me from a monk into a knight and soldier of my Lord.

Yes; there I learned that these vows which have bound me for so many years are bonds, not to God, but to a lying tyranny. The only true vows, as Dr. Luther says, are the vows of our baptism — to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, as soldiers of Christ. The only divine Order is the common order of Christianity. All other orders are disorder; not confederations within the Church, but conspiracies against it. If, in an army, the troops chose to abandon the commander's arrangement, and range themselves, by arbitrary rules, in peculiar uniforms, around self-elected

leaders, they would not be soldiers — they would be mutineers.

God's order is, I think, the State to embrace all men, the Church to embrace all Christian men; and the kernel of the State and the type of the Church is the family.

He creates us to be infants, children — sons, daughters — husband, wife — father, mother. He says, Obey your parents, love your wife, reverence your husband, love your children. As children, let the Lord at Nazareth be your model; as married, let the Lord, who loved the Church better than life, be your type; as parents, let the heavenly Father be your guide. And if we, abandoning every holy name of family love he has sanctioned, and every lowly duty he has enjoined, choose to band ourselves anew into isolated conglomerations of men or women, connected only by a common name and dress, we are not only amiable enthusiasts — we are rebels against the Divine order of humanity.

God, indeed, may call some especially to forsake father and mother, and wife and children, and all things for his dearer love. But when he calls to such destinies, it is by the plain voice of Providence, or by the bitter call of persecution; and then the martyr's or the apostle's solitary path is as much the lowly, simple path of obedience as the mother's or the child's. The crown of the martyr is consecrated by the same holy oil which anoints the head of the bride, the mother, or the child, — the consecration of love and of obedience. There is none other. All that is not duty is sin; all that is not obedience is disobedience; all that is not of love is of self; and self crowned with thorns in a

cloister is as selfish as self crowned with ivy at a revel.

Therefore I abandon cowl and cloister for ever. I am no more Brother Sebastian, of the order of the Eremites of St. Augustine. I am Friedrich Cotta, Margaret Cotta's son, Elsè and Thekla's brother Fritz. I am no more a monk. I am a Christian. I am no more a vowed Augustinian. I am a baptized Christian, dedicated to Christ from the arms of my mother, united to Him by the faith of my manhood. Henceforth I will order my life by no routine of ordinances imposed by the will of a dead man hundreds of years since. But day by day I will seek to yield myself, body, soul, and spirit, to the living will of my almighty, loving God, saying to him morning by morning, "Give me this day my daily bread. Appoint to me this day my daily task." And he will never fail to hear, however often I may fail to ask.

I had abundance of time for those thoughts in my prison; for during the three weeks I lay there I had, with the exception of the bread and water which were silently laid inside the door every morning, but two visits. And these were from my friend the aged monk who had first told me about John of Wesel.

The first time he came (he said) to persuade me to recant. But whatever he intended, he said little about recantation — much more about his own weakness, which hindered him from confessing the same truth.

The second time he brought me a disguise, and told me he had provided the means for my escape that very night. When, therefore, I heard the echoes of the heavy bolts of the great doors die away through

the long stone corridors, and listened till the last tramp of feet ceased, and door after door of the various cells was closed, and every sound was still throughout the building, I laid aside my monk's cowl and frock, and put on the burgher dress provided for me.

To me it was a glad and solemn ceremony, and, alone in my prison, I prostrated myself on the stone floor, and thanked Him who, by his redeeming death and the emancipating word of his free Spirit, had made me a free man, nay, infinitely better, *his freed-man*.

The bodily freedom to which I looked forward was to me a light boon indeed, in comparison with the liberty of heart already mine. The putting on this common garb of secular life was to me like a solemn investiture with the freedom of the city and the empire of God. Henceforth I was not to be a member of a narrow, separated class, but of the common family; no more to freeze alone on a height, but to tread the lowly path of common duty; to help my brethren, not as men at a sumptuous table throw crumbs to beggars and dogs, but to live amongst them — to share my bread of life with them; no longer as the forerunner in the wilderness, but, like the Master, in the streets, and highways, and homes of men; assuming no nobler name than man created in the image of God, born in the image of Adam; aiming at no loftier title than Christian, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and created anew, to be conformed to his glorious image. Yes, as the symbol of a freed-man, as the uniform of a soldier, as the armour of a sworn knight, at once freeman and servant, was that lowly burgher's dress to me; and with a joyful heart,

when the aged monk came to me again, I stepped after him, leaving my monk's frock lying in the corner of the cell, like the husk of that old lifeless life.

In vain did I endeavour to persuade my liberator to accompany me in my flight. "The world would be a prison to me, brother," he said with a sad smile. "All I loved in it are dead, and what could I do there, with the body of an old man and the helpless inexperience of a child? Fear not for me," he added; "I also shall, I trust, one day dwell in a home; but not on earth!"

And so we parted, he returning to the convent, and I taking my way, by river and forest, to this castle of the noble knight Franz von Sickingen, on a steep height at the angle formed by the junction of two rivers.

My silent weeks of imprisonment had been weeks of busy life in the world outside. When I reached this castle of Ebernburg, I found the whole of its inhabitants in a ferment about the summoning of Dr. Luther to Worms. His name, and my recent imprisonment for his faith, were a sufficient passport to the hospitality of the castle, and I was welcomed most cordially.

It was a great contrast to the monotonous routine of the convent and the stillness of the prison. All was life and stir; eager debates as to what it would be best to do for Dr. Luther; incessant coming and going of messengers on horse and foot between Ebernburg and Worms, where the Diet is already sitting, and where the good knight Franz spends much of his time in attendance on the Emperor.

Ulrich von Hutten is also here, from time to time,

vehement in his condemnation of the fanaticism of monks and the lukewarmness of princes; and Dr. Bucer, a disciple of Dr. Luther's, set free from the bondage of Rome by his healthful words at the great conference of the Augustinians at Heidelberg.

April 30, 1521.

The events of an age seem to have been crowded into the last month. A few days after I wrote last, it was decided to send a deputation to Dr. Luther, who was then rapidly approaching Worms, entreating him not to venture into the city, but to turn aside to Ebernburg. The Emperor's confessor, Glapio, had persuaded the knight von Sickingen and the chaplain Bucer, that all might easily be arranged, if Dr. Luther only avoided the fatal step of appearing at the Diet.

A deputation of horsemen was therefore sent to intercept the doctor on his way, and to conduct him, if he would consent, to Ebernburg, the "refuge and hostelry of righteousness," as it has been termed.

I accompanied the little band, of which Bucer was to be chief spokesman. I did not think Dr. Luther would come. Unlike the rest of the party, I had known him not only when he stepped on the great stage of the world as the antagonist of falsehood, but as the simple, straightforward, obscure monk. And I knew that the step which to others seemed so great, leading him from safe obscurity into perilous pre-eminence before the eyes of all Christendom, was to him no great momentary effort, but simply one little step in the path of obedience and lowly duty which he had been endeavouring to tread so many years. But I feared. I distrusted Glapio, and believed that

all this earnestness on the part of the papal party to turn the doctor aside was not for his sake, but for their own.

I needed not, at least, have distrusted Dr. Luther. Bucer entreated him with the eloquence of affectionate solicitude; his faithful friends and fellow-travellers, Jonas, Amsdorf, and Schurff, wavered, but Dr. Luther did not hesitate an instant. He was in the path of obedience. The next step was as unquestionable and essential as all the rest, although, as he had once said, "it led through flames which extended from Worms to Wittenberg, and raged up to heaven." He did not, however, use any of these forcible illustrations now, natural as they were to him. He simply said, —

"I continue my journey. If the Emperor's confessor has anything to say to me, he can say it at Worms. *I will go to the place to which I have been summoned.*"

And he went on, leaving the friendly deputation to return baffled to Ebernburg.

I did not leave him. As he went on the way, some of those who had accompanied him told me through what fervent greetings and against what vain entreaties of tearful affection he had pursued his way thus far; how many had warned him that he was going to the stake, and had wept that they should see his face no more; how through much bodily weakness and suffering, through acclamations and tears, he had passed on simply and steadfastly, blessing little children in the schools he visited, and telling them to search the Scriptures; comforting the timid and aged, stirring up the hearts of all to faith and prayer, and by his

courage and trust more than once turning enemies into friends.

“Are you the man who is to overturn the pope-dom?” said a soldier, accosting him rather contemptuously at a halting-place; “how will you accomplish that?”

“I rely on Almighty God,” he replied, “whose orders I have.”

And the soldier replied reverently, —

“I serve the Emperor Charles; your Master is greater than mine.”

One more assault awaited Dr. Luther before he reached his destination. It came through friendly lips. When he arrived near Worms, a messenger came riding rapidly towards us from his faithful friend Spalatin, the Elector’s chaplain, and implored him on no account to think of entering the city.

The doctor’s old fervour of expression returned at such a temptation meeting him so near the goal.

“Go tell your master,” he said, “that if there were at Worms as many devils as there are tiles on the roofs, yet would I go in.”

And he went in. A hundred cavaliers met him near the gates, and escorted him within the city. Two thousand people were eagerly awaiting him, and pressed to see him as he passed through the streets. Not all friends. Fanatical Spaniards were among them, who had torn his books in pieces from the bookstalls, and crossed themselves when they looked at him, as if he had been the devil; baffled partisans of the Pope: and on the other hand, timid Christians who hoped all from his courage; men who had waited long for this deliverance, had received life from his words, and had

kept his portrait in their homes and hearts encircled like that of a canonized saint with a glory. And through the crowd he passed, the only man, perhaps, in it who did not see Dr. Luther through a mist of hatred or of glory, but felt himself a solitary, feeble, helpless man, leaning only, yet resting securely, on the arm of Almighty strength.

Those who knew him best perhaps wondered at him most during those days which followed. Not at his courage — that we had expected — but at his calmness and moderation. It was this which seemed to me most surely the seal of God on that fervent impetuous nature, stamping the work and the man as of God.

We none of us knew how he would have answered before that august assembly. At his first appearance some of us feared he might have been too vehement. The Elector Frederick could not have been more moderate and calm. When asked whether he would retract his books; I think there were few among us who were not surprised at the noble self-restraint of his reply. He asked for time.

“Most gracious Emperor, gracious princes and lords,” he said, “with regard to the first accusation, I acknowledge the books enumerated to have been from me. I cannot disown them. As regards the second, seeing that is a question of the faith and the salvation of souls, and of God’s word, the most precious treasure in heaven or earth, I should act rashly were I to reply hastily. I might affirm less than the case requires, or more than truth demands, and thus offend against that word of Christ, ‘Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in

heaven.' Wherefore I beseech your imperial majesty, with all submission, to allow me time that I may reply without doing prejudice to the word of God."

He could afford to be thought for the time what many of his enemies tauntingly declared him, a coward, brave in the cell, but appalled when he came to face the world.

During the rest of that day he was full of joy; "like a child," said some, "who knows not what is before him;" "like a veteran," said others, "who has prepared everything for the battle;" like both, I thought, since the strength of the veteran in the battles of God is the strength of the child following his Father's eye, and trusting on his Father's arm.

A conflict awaited him afterwards in the course of the night, which one of us witnessed, and which made him who witnessed it feel no wonder that the imperial presence had no terrors for Luther on the morrow.

Alone that night our leader fought the fight to which all other combats were but as a holiday tournament. Prostrate on the ground, with sobs and bitter tears, he prayed, —

"Almighty, everlasting God, how terrible this world is! How it would open its jaws to devour me, and how weak is my trust in thee! The flesh is weak, and the devil is strong! O thou my God, help me against all the wisdom of this world. Do thou the work. It is for thee alone to do it; for the work is thine, not mine. I have nothing to bring me here. I have no controversy to maintain, not I, with the great ones of the earth. I too would that my days should glide along, happy and calm. But the cause is thine. It is righteous, it is eternal. O Lord, help me; thou that

art faithful, thou that art unchangeable. It is not in any man I trust. That were vain indeed. All that is in man gives way; all that comes from man faileth. O God, my God, dost thou not hear me? Art thou dead? No; thou canst not die! Thou art but hiding thyself. Thou hast chosen me for this work. I know it. Oh, then, arise and work. Be thou on my side, for the sake of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, who is my defence, my shield, and my fortress.

"O Lord, my God, where art thou? Come, come; I am ready — ready to forsake life for thy truth, patient as a lamb. For it is a righteous cause, and it is thine own. I will not depart from thee, now nor through eternity. And although the world should be full of demons; although my body, which, nevertheless, is the work of thine hands, should be doomed to bite the dust, to be stretched upon the rack, cut into pieces, consumed to ashes, the soul is thine. Yes; for this I have the assurance of thy word. My soul is thine. It will abide near thee throughout the endless ages. Amen. O God, help thou me! Amen."

Ah, how little those who follow know the agony it costs to take the first step, to venture on the perilous ground no human soul around has tried!

Insignificant indeed the terrors of the empire to one who had seen the terrors of the Almighty. Petty indeed are the assaults of flesh and blood to him who has withstood principalities and powers, and the hosts of the prince of darkness.

At four o'clock the Marshal of the Empire came to lead him to his trial. But his real hour of trial was over, and calm and joyful Dr. Luther passed through the crowded streets to the imperial presence.

As he drew near the door, the veteran General Freundsberg, touching his shoulder, said —

“Little monk, you have before you an encounter such as neither I nor any other captains have seen the like of even in our bloodiest campaigns. But if your cause be just, and if you know it to be so, go forward in the name of God, and fear nothing. God will not forsake you.”

Friendly heart! he knew not that our Martin Luther was coming *from* his battle-field, and was simply going as a conqueror to declare before men the victory he had won from mightier foes.

And so at last he stood, the monk, the peasant's son, before all the princes of the empire, the kingliest heart among them all, crowned with a majesty which was incorruptible, because invisible to worldly eyes; one against thousands who were bent on his destruction; one in front of thousands who leant on his fidelity; erect because he rested on that unseen arm above.

The words he spoke that day are ringing through all Germany. The closing sentence will never be forgotten —

“Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”

To him these deeds of heroism are acts of simple obedience; every step inevitable, because every step is duty. In this path he leans on God's help absolutely and only. And all faithful hearts throughout the land respond to his Amen.

On the other hand, many of the polished courtiers and subtle Roman diplomatists saw no eloquence in his words, words which stirred every true heart to its

depths. "That man," said they, "will never convince us." How should he? His arguments were not in their language, nor addressed to them, but to true and honest hearts; and to such they spoke.

To men with whom eloquence means elaborate fancies, decorating corruption or veiling emptiness, what could St. Paul seem but a "babbling?"

All men of earnest purpose acknowledged their force; — enemies, by indignant clamour that he should be silenced; friends, by wondering gratitude to God who had stood by him.

It was nearly dark when the Diet broke up. As Dr. Luther came out, escorted by the imperial officers, a panic spread through the crowd collected in the street, and from every lip to lip was heard the cry, —

"They are taking him to prison."

"They are leading me to my hotel," said the calm voice of him whom this day has made the great man of Germany. And the tumult subsided.

EBERNBURG, *June 1521.*

Dr. Luther has disappeared! Not one that I have seen knows at this moment where they have taken him, whether he is in the hands of friend or foe, whether even he is still on earth!

We ought to have heard of his arrival at Wittenberg many days since. But no inquiries can trace him beyond the village of Möhra in the Thuringian Forest. There he went from Eisenach on his way back to Wittenberg, to visit his aged grandmother and some of his father's relations, peasant farmers who live on the clearings of the forest. In his grandmother's lowly

home he passed the night, and took leave of her the next morning; and no one has heard of him since.

We are not without hope that he is in the hands of friends; yet fears will mingle with these hopes. His enemies are so many and so bitter; and no means would seem, to many of them, unworthy, to rid the world of such a heretic.

While he yet remained at Worms the Romans strenuously insisted that his obstinacy had made the safe-conduct invalid; some even of the German princes urged that he should be seized; and it was only by the urgent remonstrances of others, who protested that they would never suffer such a blot on German honour, that he was saved.

At the same time the most insidious efforts were made to persuade him to retract, or to resign his safe-conduct in order to show his willingness to abide by the issue, of a fair discussion. This last effort, appealing to Dr. Luther's confidence in the truth for which he was ready to die, had all but prevailed with him. But a knight who was present when it was made, seeing through the treachery, fiercely ejected the priest who proposed it from the house.

Yet through all assaults, insidious or open, Dr. Luther remained calm and unmoved, moved by no threats, ready to listen to any fair proposition.

Among all the polished courtiers and proud princes and prelates, he seemed to me to stand like an ambassador from an imperial court among the petty dignitaries of some petty province. His manners had the dignity of one who has been accustomed to a higher presence than any around him, giving to every one the honour due to him, indifferent to all personal slights, but in-

flexible on every point that concerned the honour of his sovereign.

Those of us who had known him in earlier days saw in him all the simplicity, the deep earnestness, the childlike delight in simple pleasures we had known in him of old. It was our old friend Martin Luther, but it seemed as if our Luther had come back to us from a residence in heaven, such a peace and majesty dwelt in all he said. One incident especially struck me. When the glass he was about to drink of at the feast given by the Archbishop of Treves, one of the papal party, shivered in his hand as he signed the cross over it, and his friends exclaimed "poison!" he (so ready usually to see spiritual agency in all things) quietly observed that "the glass had doubtless broken on account of its having been plunged too soon into cold water when it was washed."

His courage was no effort of a strong nature. He simply trusted in God, and really was afraid of nothing.

And now he is gone.

Whether among friends or foes, in a hospitable refuge such as this, or in a hopeless secret dungeon, to us for the time at least he is dead. No word of sympathy or counsel passes between us. The voice which all Germany hushed its breath to hear is silenced.

Under the excommunication of the Pope, under the ban of the empire, branded as a heretic, sentenced as a traitor, reviled by the Emperor's own edict as "a fool, a blasphemer, a devil clothed in a monk's cowl," it is made treason to give him food or shelter, and a virtue to deliver him to death. And to all this, if he is living, he can utter no word of reply.

Meantime, on the other hand, every word of his is treasured up and clothed with the sacred pathos of the dying words of a father. The noble letter which he wrote to the nobles describing his appearance before the Diet is treasured in every home.

Yet some among us derive not a little hope from the last letter he wrote, which was to Lucas Cranach, from Frankfurt. In it he says, —

“The Jews may sing once more their ‘Io! Io!’ but to us also the Easter-day will come, and then will we sing Alleluiah. A little while we must be silent and suffer. ‘A little while,’ said Christ, ‘and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me.’ I hope it may be so now. But the will of God, the best in all things, be done in this as in heaven and earth. Amen.”

Many of us think this is a dim hint to those who love him that he knew what was before him, and that after a brief concealment for safety, “till this tyranny be overpast,” he will be amongst us once more.

I, at least, think so, and pray that to him this time of silence may be a time of close intercourse with God, from which he may come forth refreshed and strengthened to guide and help us all.

And meantime, a work, not without peril, but full of sacred joy, opens before me. I have been supplied by the friends of Dr. Luther’s doctrine with copies of his books and pamphlets, both in Latin and German, which I am to sell as a hawker through the length and breadth of Germany, and in any other lands I can penetrate.

I am to start to-morrow, and to me my pack and strap are burdens more glorious than the armour of a

prince of the empire; my humble pedlar's coat and staff are vestments more sacred than the robes of a cardinal or the weeds of a pilgrim.

For am I not a pilgrim to the city which hath foundations? Is not my yoke the yoke of Christ? and am I not distributing, among thirsty and enslaved men, the water of life and the truth which sets the heart free?

BLACK FOREST, *May 1521.*

The first week of my wandering life is over. To-day my way lay through the solitary paths of the Black Forest, which, eleven years ago, I trod with Dr. Martin Luther, on our pilgrimage to Rome. Both of us then wore the monk's frock and cowl. Both were devoted subjects of the Pope, and would have deprecated, as the lowest depth of degradation, his anathema. Yet at that very time Martin Luther bore in his heart the living germ of all that is now agitating men's hearts from Pomerania to Spain. He was already a freedman of Christ, and he knew it. The Holy Scriptures were already to him the one living fountain of truth. Believing simply on Him who died, the just for the unjust, he had received the free pardon of his sins. Prayer was to him the confiding petition of a forgiven child received to the heart of the Father, and walking humbly by his side. Christ he knew already as the Confessor and Priest; the Holy Spirit as the personal teacher through His own Word.

The fetters of the old ceremonial were indeed still around him, but only as the brown casings still swathe many of the swelling buds of the young leaves; which others, this May morning, cracked and burst as I passed along in the silence through the green forest

paths. The moment of liberation, to the passer-by always seems a great, sudden effort; but those who have watched the slow swelling of the imprisoned bud, know that the last expansion of life which bursts the scaly cerements is but one moment of the imperceptible but incessant growth, of which even the apparent death of winter was a stage.

But it is good to live in the spring-time; and as I went on, my heart sang with the birds and the leaf-buds, "For me also the cerements of winter are burst, — for me and for all the land!"

And as I walked, I sang aloud the old Easter hymn which Eva used to love: —

Pone luctum, Magdalena,
Et serena lacrymas;
Non est jam sermonis cœna,
Non cur fletum exprimas;
Causae mille sunt lætandi,
Causae mille exultandi,
Alleluia resonet!

Sume risum, Magdaleua,
Frons nitescat lucida;
Demigravit omnis pœna,
Lux coruscat fulgida;
Christus mundum liberavit,
Et de morte triumphavit:
Alleluia resonet!

Gaude, plaude, Magdalena,
Tumbâ Christus exiit;
Tristis est peracta scena,
Victor mortis rediit;

Quem deflebas morientem,
Nunc arride resurgentem:
Alleluia resonet!

Tolle vultum, Magdalena,
Redivivum obstupe:
Vide frons quam sit amœna,
Quinque plagas adspice;
Fulgent sicut margaritæ,
Ornamenta novæ vitæ:
Alleluia resonet!

Vive, vive, Magdalena!
Tua lux reversa est;
Gaudiis turgescit vena,
Mortis vis abstersa est;
Maesti procul sunt dolores,
Læti redeant amores:
Alleluia resonet!

Yes, even in the old dark times, heart after heart, in quiet homes and secret convent cells, has doubtless learned this hidden joy. But now the world seems learning it. The winter has its robins, with their

solitary warblings; but now the spring is here, the songs come in choruses, — and thank God I am awake to listen!

But the voice which awoke this music first in my heart, among these very forests — and since then, through the grace of God, in countless hearts throughout this and all lands — what silence hushes it now? The silence of the grave, or only of some friendly refuge? In either case, doubtless, it is not silent to God.

I had scarcely finished my hymn, when the trees became more scattered and smaller, as if they had been cleared not long since; and I found myself on the edge of a valley, on the slopes of which nestled a small village, with its spire and belfry rising among the wooden cottages, and flocks of sheep and goats grazing in the pastures beside the little stream which watered it.

I lifted up my heart to God, that some hearts in that peaceful place might welcome the message of eternal peace through the books I carried.

As I entered the village, the priest came out of the parsonage — an aged man, with a gentle, kindly countenance — and courteously saluted me.

I offered to show him my wares.

“It is not likely there will be anything there for me,” he said, smiling. “My days are over for ballads and stories, such as I suppose your merchandise consists of.”

But when he saw the name of Luther on the title-page of a volume which I showed him, his face changed, and he said in a grave voice, “Do you know what you carry?”

“I trust I do,” I replied. “I carry most of these books in my heart as well as on my shoulders.”

“But do you know the danger?” the old man continued. “We have heard that Dr. Luther has been excommunicated by the Pope, and laid under the ban of the empire; and only last week, a travelling merchant, such as yourself, told us that his body had been seen, pierced through with a hundred wounds.”

“That was not true three days since,” I said. “At least, his best friends at Worms knew nothing of it.”

“Thank God!” he said; “for in this village we owe that good man much. And if,” he added timidly, “he has indeed fallen into heresy, it would be well he had time to repent.”

In that village I sold many of my books, and left others with the good priest, who entertained me most hospitably, and sent me on my way with a tearful farewell, compounded of blessings, warnings, and prayers.

PARIS, *July 1521.*

I have crossed the French frontier, and have been staying some days in this great, gay, learned city.

In Germany, my books procured me more of welcome than of opposition. In some cases, even where the local authorities deemed it their duty publicly to protest against them, they themselves secretly assisted in their distribution. In others, the eagerness to purchase, and to glean any fragment of information about Luther, drew a crowd around me, who, after satisfying themselves that I had no news to give them of his present state, lingered as long as I would speak, to listen to my narrative of his appearance before the Emperor at Worms, while murmurs of enthusiastic approval, and often sobs and tears, testified the sympathy of the people with him. In the towns, many

more copies of his "Letter to the German Nobles" were demanded than I could supply.

But what touched me most was to see the love and almost idolatrous reverence which had gathered around his name in remote districts, among the oppressed and toiling peasantry.

I remember especially, in one village, a fine-looking old peasant farmer taking me to an inner room where hung a portrait of Luther, encircled with a glory, with a curtain before it.

"See!" he said. "The lord of that castle" and he pointed to a fortress on an opposite height) "has wrought me and mine many a wrong. Two of my sons have perished in his selfish feuds, and his huntsmen lay waste my fields as they choose in the chase; yet, if I shoot a deer, I may be thrown into the castle dungeon, as mine have been before. But their reign is nearly over now. I saw *that man* at Worms. I heard him speak, bold as a lion, for the truth, before emperor, princes, and prelates. God has sent us the deliverer; and the reign of righteousness will come at last, when every man shall have his due."

"Friend," I said, with an aching heart, "the Deliverer came fifteen hundred years ago, but the reign of justice has not come to the world yet. The Deliverer was crucified, and his followers since then have suffered, not reigned."

"God is patient," he said, "and *we* have been patient long, God knows; but I trust the time is come at last."

"But the redemption Dr. Luther proclaims," I said, gently, "is liberty from a worse bondage than that of the nobles, and it is a liberty no tyrant, no dungeon,

can deprive us of — the liberty of the sons of God;” — and he listened earnestly while I spoke to him of justification, and of the suffering, redeeming Lord. But at the end he said —

“Yes, that is good news. But I trust Dr. Luther will avenge many a wrong among us yet. They say he was a peasant’s son like me.”

If I were Dr. Luther, and knew that the wistful eyes of the oppressed and sorrowful throughout the land were turned to me, I should be tempted to say —

“Lord, let me die before these oppressed and burdened hearts learn how little I can help them!”

For verily there is much evil done under the sun. Yet as truly there is healing for every disease, remedy for every wrong, and rest from every burden, in the tidings Dr. Luther brings. But remedy of a different kind, I fear, from what too many fondly expect!

It is strange, also, to see how, in these few weeks, the wildest tales have sprung up and spread in all directions about Dr. Luther’s disappearance. Some say he has been secretly murdered, and that his wounded corpse has been seen; others, that he was borne away bleeding through the forest to some dreadful doom; while others boldly assert that he will re-appear at the head of a band of liberators, who will go through the length and breadth of the land, redressing every wrong, and punishing every wrong-doer.

Truly, if a few weeks can throw such a haze around facts, what would a century without a written record have done for Christianity; or what would that record itself have been without inspiration?

The country was in some parts very disturbed. In Alsace I came on a secret meeting of the peasants,

who have bound themselves with the most terrible oaths to wage war to the death against the nobles.

More than once I was stopped by a troop of horsemen near a castle, and my wares searched, to see if they belonged to the merchants of some city with whom the knight of the castle was at feud; and on one of these occasions it might have fared ill with me if a troop of Landsknechts in the service of the empire had not appeared in time to rescue me and my companions.

Yet everywhere the name of Luther was of equal interest. The peasants believed he would rescue them from the tyranny of the nobles; and many of the knights spoke of him as the assertor of German liberties against a foreign yoke. More than one poor parish priest welcomed him as the deliverer from the avarice of the great abbeys or the prelates. Thus, in farmhouse and hut, in castle and parsonage, I and my books found many a cordial welcome. And all I could do was to sell the books, and tell all who would listen, that the yoke Luther's words were powerful to break was the yoke of the devil, the prince of all oppressors, and that the freedom he came to republish was freedom from the tyranny of sin and self.

My true welcome, however, the one which rejoiced my heart, was when any said, as many did, on sick-beds, in lowly and noble homes, and in monasteries —

“Thank God, these words are in our hearts ready. They have taught us the way to God; they *have* brought us peace and freedom.”

Or when others said —

“I must have that book. This one and that one

that I know is another man since he read Dr. Luther's words."

But if I was scarcely prepared for the interest felt in Dr. Luther in our own land, true German that he is, still less did I expect that his fame would have reached to Paris, and even further.

The night before I reached this city I was weary with a long day's walk in the dust and heat, and had fallen asleep on a bench in the garden outside a village inn, under the shade of a trellised vine, leaving my pack partly open beside me. When I awoke, a grave and dignified-looking man, who, from the richness of his dress and arms, seemed to be a nobleman, and, from the cut of his slashed doublet and mantle, a Spaniard, sat beside me, deeply engaged in reading one of my books. I did not stir at first, but watched him in silence. The book he held was a copy of Luther's Commentary on the Galatians, in Latin.

In a few minutes I moved, and respectfully saluted him.

"Is this book for sale?" he asked.

I said it was, and named the price.

He immediately laid down twice the sum, saying, "Give a copy to some one who cannot buy."

I ventured to ask if he had seen it before.

"I have," he said. "Several copies were sent by a Swiss printer, Frobenius, to Castile. And I saw it before at Venice. It is prohibited in both Castile and Venice now. But I have always wished to possess a copy that I might judge for myself. Do you know Dr. Luther?" he asked, as he moved away.

"I have known and revered him for many years," I said.

"They say his life is blameless, do they not?" he asked.

"Even his bitterest enemies confess it to be so," I replied.

"He spoke like a brave man before the Diet," he resumed; "gravely and quietly, as true men speak who are prepared to abide by their words. A noble of Castile could not have spoken with more dignity than that peasant's son. The Italian priests thought otherwise; but the oratory which melts girls into tears from pulpits is not the eloquence for the councils of men. That monk had learned his oratory in a higher school. If you ever see Dr. Luther again," he added, "tell him that some Spaniards, even in the Emperor's court, wished him well."

And here in Paris I find a little band of devout and learned men, Lefevre, Farel, and Briçonnet, bishop of Meaux, actively employed in translating and circulating the writings of Luther and Melancthon. The truth in them, they say, they had learned before from the book of God itself, namely, justification through faith in a crucified Saviour leading to a life devoted to him. But jealous as the French are of admitting the superiority of anything foreign, and contemptuously as they look on us unpolished Germans, the French priests welcome Luther as a teacher and a brother, and are as eager to hear all particulars of his life as his countrymen in every town and quiet village throughout Germany.

They tell me also that the king's own sister, the beautiful and learned Duchess Margaret of Valois, reads Dr. Luther's writings, and values them greatly.

Indeed, I sometimes think if he had carried out the

intention he formed some years since, of leaving Wittenberg for Paris, he would have found a noble sphere of action here. The people are so frank in speech, so quick in feeling and perception; and their bright keen wit cuts so much more quickly to the heart of a fallacy than our sober, plodding, Northern intellect.

BASEL.

Before I left Ebernburg, the knight Ulrich von Hutten had taken a warm interest in my expedition; had especially recommended me to seek out Erasmus, if ever I reached Switzerland; and had himself placed some copies of Erasmus' sermons, "Praise of Folly," among my books.

Personally I feel a strong attachment to that brave knight. I can never forget the generous letter he wrote to Luther before his appearance at the Diet: — "*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.* O my beloved Luther, my revered father, fear not; be strong. Fight valiantly for Christ. As for me, I also will fight bravely. Would to God I might see how they knit their brows. . . . May Christ preserve you."

Yes, to see the baffled enemies knit their brows as they did then, would have been a triumph to the impetuous soldier, but at the time he was prohibited from approaching the Court. Luther's courageous and noble defence filled him with enthusiastic admiration. He declared the doctor to be a greater soldier than any of the knights. When we heard of Dr. Luther's disappearance he would have collected a band of daring spirits like himself, and scoured the country in search of him. Hutten's objects were high and unselfish. He

had no mean and petty ambitions. With sword and pen he had contended against oppression and hypocrisy. To him the Roman Court was detestable, chiefly as a foreign yoke; the corrupt priesthood, as a domestic usurpation. He had a high ideal of knighthood, and believed that his order, enlightened by learning, and inspired by a free and lofty faith, might emancipate Germany and Christendom. Personal danger he despised, and personal aims.

Yet with all his fearlessness and high aspirations, I scarcely think he hoped himself to be the hero of his ideal chivalry. The self-control of the pure true knight was too little his. In his visions of a Christendom from which falsehood and avarice were to be banished, and where authority was to reside in an order of ideal knights, Franz von Sickingen, the brave good lord of Ebernburg, with his devout wife Hedwiga, was to raise the standard, around which Ulrich and all the true men in the land were to rally. Luther, Erasmus, and Sickingen, he thought — the types of the three orders, learning, knighthood, and priesthood, — might regenerate the world.

Erasmus had began the work with unveiling the light in the sanctuaries of learning. Luther had carried it on by diffusing the light among the people. The knights must complete it by forcibly scattering the powers of darkness. Conflict is Erasmus' detestation. It is Luther's necessity. It is Hutten's delight.

I did not, however, expect much sympathy in my work from Erasmus. It seemed to me that Hutten, admiring his clear, luminous genius, attributed to him the fire of his own warm and courageous heart. However, I intended to seek him out at Basel.

Circumstances saved me the trouble.

As I was entering the city, with my pack nearly empty, hoping to replenish it from the presses of Frobenius, an elderly man, with a stoop in his shoulders, giving him the air of a student, ambled slowly past me, clad in a doctor's gown and hat, edged with a broad border of fur. The keen small dark eyes surveyed me and my pack for a minute, and then reining in his horse he joined me, and said, in a soft voice and courtly accent, "We are of the same profession, friend. We manufacture, and you sell. What have you in your pack?"

I took out three of my remaining volumes. One was Luther's "Commentary on the Galatians;" the others, his "Treatise on the Lord's Prayer," and his "Letter to the German Nobles."

The rider's brow darkened slightly, and he eyed me suspiciously.

"Men who supply ammunition to the people in times of insurrection seldom do it at their own risk," he said. "Young man, you are on a perilous mission, and would do well to count the cost."

"I have counted the cost, sir," I said, "and I willingly brave the peril."

"Well, well," he replied, "some are born for battlefields, and some for martyrdom; others for neither. Let each keep to his calling, —

'Nequissimam pacem justissimo bello antifero,'

But 'those who let in the sea on the marshes little know where it will spread.'

This illustration from the Dutch dykes awakened my suspicions as to who the rider was, and looking at

the thin, sensitive, yet satirical lips, the delicate, sharply-cut features, the pallid complexion, and the dark keen eyes I had seen represented in so many portraits, I could not doubt with whom I was speaking. But I did not betray my discovery.

"Dr. Luther has written some good things, nevertheless," he said. "If he had kept to such devotional works as this," returning to me "The Lord's Prayer," "he might have served his generation quietly and well; but to expose such mysteries as are treated of here to the vulgar gaze, it is madness!" and he hastily closed the "Galatians." Then glancing at the "Letter to the Nobles," he almost threw it into my hand, saying petulantly, —

"That pamphlet is an insurrection in itself."

"What other books have you?" he asked after a pause.

I drew out my last copy of the "Encomium of Folly."

"Have you sold many of these?" he asked coolly.

"All but this copy," I replied.

"And what did people say of it?"

"That depended on the purchasers," I replied. "Some say the author is the wisest and wittiest man of the age, and if all knew where to stop as he does, the world would slowly grow into Paradise, instead of being turned upside down as it is now. Others, on the contrary, say that the writer is a coward, who has no courage to confess the truth he knows. And others, again, declare the book is worse than any of Luther's, and that Erasmus is the source of all the mischief in the world, since if he had not broken the lock, Luther would never have entered the door."

“And *you* think?” he asked.

“I am but a poor pedlar, sir,” I said; “but I think there is a long way between Pilate’s delivering up the glorious King he knew was innocent — perhaps began to see might be divine, and St. Peter’s denying the Master he loved. And the Lord who forgave Peter knows which is which; which the timid disciple, and which the cowardly friend of His foes. But the eye of man, it seems to me, may find it impossible to distinguish. I would rather be Luther at the Diet of Worms, and under anathema and ban, than either.”

“Bold words!” he said, “to prefer an excommunicated heretic to the prince of the apostles!”

But a shade passed over his face, and courteously bidding me farewell, he rode on.

The conversation seemed to have thrown a shadow and chill over my heart.

After a time, however, the rider slackened his pace again, and beckoned to me to rejoin him.

“Have you friends in Basel?” he asked kindly.

“None,” I replied; “but I have letters to the printer Frobenius, and I was recommended to seek out Erasmus.”

“Who recommended you to do that?” he asked.

“The good knight Ulrich von Hutten,” I replied.

“The prince of all turbulent spirits!” he murmured gravely. “Little indeed is there in common between Erasmus of Rotterdam and that firebrand.”

“Ritter Ulrich has the greatest admiration for the genius of Erasmus,” I said, “and thinks that his learning, with the swords of a few good knights, and the preaching of Luther, might set Christendom right.”

"Ulrich von Hutten should set his own life right first," was the reply. "But let us leave discoursing of Christendom and these great projects, which are altogether beyond our sphere. Let the knights set chivalry right, and the cardinals the papacy, and the emperor the empire. Let the hawker attend to his pack, and Erasmus to his studies. Perhaps hereafter it will be found that his satires on the follies of the monasteries, and above all his earlier translation of the New Testament, had their share in the good work. His motto is, 'Kindle the light and the darkness will disperse of itself.'"

"If Erasmus," I said, "would only consent to share in the result he has indeed contributed so nobly to bring about!"

"Share in what?" he replied quickly; "in the excommunication of Luther? or in the wild project of Hutten? Have it supposed that he approves of the coarse and violent iuvectives of the Saxon monk, or the daring schemes of the adventurous knight? No; St. Paul wrote courteously, and never returned railing for railing. Erasmus should wait till he find a reformer like the apostle ere he join the Reformation. But, friend," he added, "I do not deny that Luther is a good man, and means well. If you like to abandon your perilous pack, and take to study, you may come to my house, and I will help you as far as I can with money and counsel. For I know what it is to be poor, and I think you ought to be better than a hawker. And," he added, bringing his horse to a stand, "if you hear Erasmus maligned again as a coward or a traitor, you may say that God has more room in his kingdom than any men have in their schools; and that

it is not always so easy for men who see things on many sides to embrace one. Believe also that the loneliness of those who see too much or dare too little to be partisans, often has anguish bitterer than the scaffolds of martyrs. But," he concluded in a low voice, as he left me, "be careful never again to link the names of Erasmus and Hutten. I assure you nothing can be more unlike. And Ulrich von Hutten is a most rash and dangerous man.

"I will be careful never to forget Erasmus," I said, bowing low, as I took the hand he offered. And the doctor rode on.

Yes, the sorrows of the undecided are doubtless bitterer than those of the courageous; bitterer as poison is bitterer than medicine, as an enemy's wound is bitterer than a physician's. Yet it is true that the clearer the insight into difficulty and danger, the greater need be the courage to meet them. The path of the rude simple man who sees nothing but right on one side, and nothing but wrong on the other, is necessarily plainer than his who, seeing much evil in the good cause, and some truth at the foundation of all error, chooses to suffer for the right, mixed as it is, and to suffer side by side with men whose manners distress him, just because he believes the cause is on the whole that of truth and God. Luther's school may not indeed have room for Erasmus, nor Erasmus's school for Luther; but God may have compassion and room for both.

At Basel I replenished my pack from the stores of Frobenius, and received very inspiring tidings from him of the spread of the truth of the gospel (especially

by means of the writings of Luther) into Italy and Spain. I did not apply further to Erasmus.

NEAR ZÜRICH, *July.*

My heart is full of resurrection hymns. Everywhere in the world it seems Easter-tide. This morning, as I left Zürich, and, climbing one of the heights on this side, looked down on the lake, rippled with silver, through the ranges of green and forest-covered hills, to the glorious barrier of far-off mountains, purple, and golden, and snow-crowned, which encircles Switzerland, and thought of the many hearts which, during these years, have been awakened here to the liberty of the sons of God, the old chant of Easter and Spring burst from my lips: —

Plaudite cœli,
Rideat æther
Summus et imus
Gaudeat orbis!
Transivit atræ
Turba procellæ!
Subiit almæ
Gloria palmæ!

Surgite verni,
Surgite flores,
Germina pictis
Surgite campis!
Teneris mistæ
Violis rosæ;
Candida sparsis
Lilia calthis!

Currite pleuis
Carmina venis,
Fundite lætum
Barbita metrum;
Namque revixit
Sicuti dixit
Pius illæsus
Funere Jesus.

Plaudite montes,
Ludite fontes,
Resonent valles,
Repetant colles!
Io revixit,
Sicuti dixit
Pius illæsus
Funere Jesus.*

* Smile praises, O sky!
Soft breathe them, O air,
Below and on high,
And everywhere!
The black troop of storms
Has yielded to calm;
Tufted blossoms are peeping,
And early palm.

Awake thee, O spring!
Ye flowers, come forth,
With thousand hues tinting
The soft green earth!
Ye violets tender,
And sweet roses bright,
Gay Lent-lilies blended
With pure lilies white.

And when I ceased, the mountain stream which dashed over the rocks beside me, the whispering grasses, the trembling wild-flowers, the rustling forests, the lake with its ripples, the green hills and solemn snow-mountains beyond — all seemed to take up the chorus.

There is a wonderful, invigorating influence about Ulrich Zwingli, with whom I have spent many days lately. It seems as if the fresh air of the mountains among which he passed his youth were always around him. In his presence it is impossible to despond. While Luther remains immovably holding every step of ground he has taken, Zwingli presses on, and surprises the enemy asleep in his strongholds. Luther carries on the war like the Landsknechts, our own firm and impenetrable infantry; Zwingli, like his own impetuous mountaineers, sweeps down from the heights upon the foe.

In Switzerland I and my books have met with more sudden and violent varieties of reception than anywhere else; the people are so free and unrestrained. In some villages, the chief men, or the priest himself, summoned all the inhabitants by the church bell, to hear all I had to tell about Dr. Luther and his work, and to buy his books; my stay was one constant *fête*; and the warm-hearted peasants accompanied me miles

Sweep tides of rich music
The new world along,
And pour in full measure,
Sweet lyres, your song!
Sing, sing, for He liveth!
He lives, as He said; —
The Lord has arisen,
Unharm'd, from the dead!

Clap, clap your hands, mountains!
Ye valleys, resound!
Leap, leap for joy, fountains!
Ye hills, catch the sound!
All triumph; He liveth!
He lives, as He said; —
The Lord has arisen,
Unharm'd, from the dead!

on my way, discoursing of Zwingli and Luther, the broken yoke of Rome, and the glorious days of freedom that were coming. The names of Luther and Zwingli were on every lip, like those of Tell and Winkelried and the heroes of the old struggle of Swiss liberation.

In other villages, on the contrary, the peasants gathered angrily around me, reviled me as a spy and an intruding foreigner, and drove me with stones and rough jests from among them, threatening that I should not escape so easily another time.

In some places they have advanced much further than among us in Germany. The images have been removed from the churches, and the service is read in the language of the people.

But the great joy is to see that the light has not been spread only from torch to torch, as human illumination spread, but has burst at once on Germany, France, and Switzerland, as heavenly light dawns from above. It is this which makes it not an illumination merely, but morning and spring! Lefevre in France and Zwingli in Switzerland both passed through their period of storms and darkness, and both, awakened by the heavenly light to the new world, found that it was no solitude — that others also were awake, and that the day's work had begun, as it should, with matin songs.

Now I am tending northwards once more. I intend to renew my stores at my father's press at Wittenberg. My heart yearns also for news of all dear to me there. Perhaps, too, I may yet see Dr. Luther, and find scope for preaching the evangelical doctrine among my own people.

For better reports have come to us from Germany, and we believe Dr. Luther is in friendly keeping, though where, is still a mystery.

THE PRISON OF A DOMINICAN CONVENT,
FRANCONIA, *August.*

All is changed for me. Once more prison walls are around me, and through prison bars I look out on the world I may not re-enter. I counted this among the costs when I resolved to give myself to spreading far and wide the glad tidings of redemption. It was worth the cost; it is worth whatever man can inflict — for I trust th t those days have not been spent in vain.

Yesterday evening, as the day was sinking, I found my way once more to the parsonage of Priest Ruprecht in the Franconian village. The door was open, but I heard no voices. There was a neglected look about the little garden. The vine was hanging untwined around the porch. The little dwelling, which had been so neat, had a dreary, neglected air. Dust lay thick on the chairs, and the remains of the last meal were left on the table. And yet it was evidently not unoccupied. A book lay upon the window-sill, evidently lately read. It was the copy of Luther's German Commentary on the Lord's Prayer which I had left that evening many months ago in the porch.

I sat down on a window seat, and in a little while I saw the priest coming slowly up the garden. His form was much bent since I saw him last. He did not look up as he approached the house. It seemed as if he expected no welcome. But when I went out to meet him, he grasped my hand cordially, and his face

brightened. When, however, he glanced at the book in my hand, a deeper shade passed over his brow; and, motioning me to a chair, he sat down opposite me without speaking.

After a few minutes, he looked up, and said in a husky voice, "That book did what all the denunciations and terrors of the old doctrine could not do. It separated us. She has left me."

He paused for some minutes, and then continued, — "The evening that she found that book in the porch, when I returned I found her reading it. 'See!' she said, 'at last some one has written a religious book for me! It was left here open, in the porch, at these words: "If thou dost feel that in the sight of God and all creatures thou art a fool, a sinner, impure, and condemned, . . . there remaineth no solace for thee, and no salvation, unless in Jesus Christ. To know him is to understand what the apostle says, — 'Christ has of God been made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' He is the bread of God — our bread, given to us as children of the heavenly Father. To believe is nothing else than to eat this bread from heaven." And look again. The book says, "It touches God's heart when we call him Father," — and again, "*Which art in heaven.*" "He that acknowledges he has a Father who is in heaven, owns that he is like an orphan on the earth. Hence his heart feels an ardent longing, like a child living away from its father's country, amongst strangers, wretched and forlorn. It is as if he said, "Alas! my Father, thou art in heaven, and I, thy miserable child, am on earth, far from thee amid danger, necessity, and sorrow." 'Ah, Ruprecht,' she said, her eyes streaming

with tears, 'that is so like what I feel, — so lost, and orphaned, and far away from home.' And then, fearing she had grieved me, she added, 'Not that I am neglected. Thou knowest I could never feel that. But oh, can it be possible that God would take me back, not after long years of penance, but *now*, and *here*, to his very heart?'

"I could say little to teach her, but from that time this book was her constant companion. She begged me to find out all the passages in my Latin Gospels which speak of Jesus suffering for sinners, and of God as the Father. I was amazed to see how many there were. The book seemed full of them. And so we went on for some days, until one evening she came to me, and said, 'Ruprecht, if God is indeed so infinitely kind and good, and has so loved us, we must obey him, must we not?' I could not for the world say No, and I had not the courage to say Yes, for I knew what she meant."

Again he paused.

"I knew too well what she meant, when, on the next morning, I found the breakfast laid, and everything swept and prepared as usual, and on the table, in printed letters on a scrap of paper, which she must have copied from the book, for she could not write, 'Farewell. We shall be able to pray for each other now. And God will be with us, and will give us to meet hereafter, without fear of grieving him, in our Father's house.'"

"Do you know where she is?" I asked.

"She has taken service in a farm-house several miles away in the forest," he replied. "I have seen

her once. She looked very thin and worn. But she did not see me."

The thought which had so often suggested itself to me before, came with irresistible force into my mind then, — "If those vows of celibacy are contrary to the will of God, can they be binding?" But I did not venture to suggest them to my host. I only said, "Let us pray that God will lead you both. The heart can bear many a heavy burden if the conscience is free!"

"True," he said. And together we knelt down, whilst I spoke to God. And the burden of our prayer was neither more nor less than this, "Our Father which art in heaven, not our will, but thine be done."

On the morrow I bade him farewell, leaving him several other works of Luther's. And I determined not to lose an hour in seeking Melancthon and the doctors at Wittenberg, and placing this case before them.

And now, perhaps, I shall never see Wittenberg again!

It is not often that I have ventured into the monasteries, but to-day a young monk, who was walking in the meadows of this abbey, seemed so interested in my books, that I followed him to the convent, where he thought I should dispose of many copies. Instead of this, however, whilst I was waiting in the porch for him to return, I heard the sound of angry voices in discussion inside, and before I could perceive what it meant, three or four monks came to me, seized my pack, bound my hands, and dragged me to the convent prison, where I now am.

“It is time that this pestilence should be checked,” said one of them. “Be thankful if your fate is not the same as that of your poisonous books, which are this evening to make a bonfire in the court.”

And with these words I was left alone in this low, damp, dark cell, with its one little slit high in the wall, which, until my eyes grew accustomed to it, seemed only to admit just light enough to show the iron fetters hanging from the walls. But what power can make me a captive while I can sing: —

Mortis portis fractis, fortis
Fortior vim sustulit;
Et per crucem regem trucem,
Infernorum perculit.

Lumen clarum tenebrarum
Sedibus resplenduit ;

Dum salvare, recreare
Quod creavit, voluit.

Hinc Creator, ne peccator,
Moreretur, moritur;
Cujus morte, nova sorte,
Vita nobis oritur.*

Are not countless hearts now singing this resurrection hymn, to some of whom my hands brought the joyful tidings? In the lonely parsonage, in the forest and farm, hearts set free by love from the fetters of sin — in village and city, in mountain and plain!

And at Wittenberg, in happy homes, and in the convent, are not my beloved singing it too?

September.

Yet the time seems long to lie in inaction here.

* Lo, the gates of death are broken
And the strong man armed is
spoiled
Of his armour, which he trusted,
By the stronger Arm despoiled.
Vanquished is the Prince of Hell;
Smitten by the cross, he fell.

That the sinner might not perish,
For him the Creator dies;
By whose death, our dark lot
changing,
Life again for us doth rise.

With these tidings, "The Lord is risen," echoing through her heart, would it not have been hard for the Magdalene to be arrested on her way to the bereaved disciples before she could tell it?

October.

I have a hope of escape. In a corner of my prison I discovered, some days since, the top of an arch, which I believe must belong to a blocked-up door. By slow degrees — working by night, and covering over my work by day — I have dug out a flight of steps which led to it. This morning I succeeded in dislodging one of the stones with which the door-way had been roughly filled up, and through the space surveyed the ground outside. It was a portion of a meadow, sloping to the stream which turned the abbey mills. This morning two of the monks came to summon me to an examination before the Prior, as to my heresies; but to-night I hope to dislodge the few more stones, and this very night, before morning dawn, to be treading with free step the forest-covered hills beyond the valley.

My limbs feel feeble with insufficient food, and the damp, close air of the cell; and the blood flows with feverish, uncertain rapidity through my veins; but, doubtless, a few hours on the fresh, breezy hills will set all this right.

And yet once more I shall see my mother, and Elèsè, and Thekla, and little Gretchen, and all, — all but one, who, I fear, is still imprisoned in convent walls. Yet once more I trust to go throughout the land spreading the joyful tidings, — "The Lord is

risen indeed;" the work of redemption is accomplished, and He who once lived and suffered on earth, compassionate to heal, now lives and reigns in heaven, mighty to save.

XX.

THEKLA'S STORY.

TUNNENBERG, *May 1521.*

Is the world really the same? Was there really ever a spring like this, when the tide of life seems overflowing and bubbling up in leaf-buds, flowers, and songs, and streams?

It cannot be *only* that God has given me the great blessing of Bertrand de Créqui's love, and that life opens in such bright fields of hope and work before us two; or that this is the first spring I ever spent in the country. It seems to me that God is really pouring a tide of fresh life throughout the world.

Fritz has escaped from the prison at Mainz, and he writes as if he felt this an Easter-tide for all men. In all places, he says, the hearts of men are opening to the glad tidings of the redeeming love of God.

Can it be, however, that every May is such a festival among the woods, and that this solemn old forest holds such fairy holiday every year, garlanding its bare branches and strewing every brown nook which a sunbeam can reach, with showers of flowers, such as we strew on a bride's path? And then, who could have imagined that those grave old firs and stately birches could become the cradles of all these delicate-tufted blossoms and tenderly-folded leaflets, bursting on all sides from their gummy casings? And — joy of all joys! — it is not unconscious vegetable life only which

thus expands around us. It is God touching every branch and hidden root, and waking them to beauty! It is not sunshine merely, and soft breezes; it is our Father smiling on his works, and making the world fresh and fair for his children, — it is the healing touch and the gracious Voice we have learned to know. "We are in the world, and the world was made by Thee;" and "*Te Deum laudamus*: we acknowledge thee, O Saviour, to be the Lord."

Our Chriemhild certainly has a beautiful home. Bertrand's home, also, is a castle in the country, in Flanders. But he says their country is not like this forest-land. It has long been cleared by industrious hands. There are long stately avenues leading to his father's chateau; but all around, the land is level, and waving with grass and green or golden corn-fields. That, also, must be beautiful. But probably the home he has gone to prepare for me may not be there. Some of his family are very bitter against what they call his Lutheran heresy, and although he is the heir, it is very possible that the branch of the family which adheres to the old religion may wrest the inheritance from him. That, we think, matters little. God will find the right place for us, and lead us to it, if we ask him. And if it be in the town, after all, the tide of life in human hearts is nobler than that in trees and flowers. In a few months we shall know. Perhaps he may return here, and become a professor at Wittenberg, whither Dr. Luther's name brought him a year since to study.

June 1521.

A rumour has reached us, that Dr. Luther has disappeared on his way back from Worms.

This spring, in the world as well as in the forest, will doubtless have its storms. Last night, the thunder echoed from hill to hill, and the wind wailed wildly among the pines. Looking out of my narrow window in the tower on the edge of the rock, where I sleep, it was awful to see the foaming torrent below gleaming in the lightning-flashes, which opened out sudden glimpses into the depths of the forest, leaving it doubly mysterious.

I thought of Fritz's lonely night, when he lost himself in the forest; and thanked God that I had learned to know the thunder as His voice, and His voice as speaking peace and pardon. Only, at such times I should like to gather all dear to me around me; and those dearest to me are scattered far and wide.

The old knight Ulrich is rather impetuous and hot-tempered; and his sister, Ulrich's aunt, Dame Hermentrud, is grave and stately. Fortunately, they both look on Chriemhild as a wonder of beauty and goodness; but I have to be rather careful. Dame Hermentrud is apt to attribute any over-vehemence of mine in debate to the burgher Cotta blood; and although they both listen with interest to Ulrich or Chriemhild's version of Dr. Luther's doctrines, Dame Hermentrud frequently warns me against unfeminine exaggeration or eagerness in these matters, and reminds me that the ancestors of the Gersdorf family were devout and excellent people long before a son was born to Hans Luther the miner.

The state of the peasants distresses Chriemhild and me extremely. She and Ulrich were full of plans for their good when they came here to live; but she is at present almost exclusively occupied with the education of a little knightly creature, who came into the world

two months since, and is believed to concentrate in his single little person all the ancestral virtues of all the Gersdorfs, to say nothing of the Schönbergs. He has not, Dame Hermentrud asserts, the slightest feature of resemblance to the Cottas. I cannot, certainly, deny that he bears unmistakable traces of that aristocratic temper and that lofty taste for ruling which at times distinguished my grandmother, and, doubtless, all the Gersdorfs from the days of Adam downward, or at least from the time of Babel. Beyond that, I believe, few pedigrees are traced, except in a general way to the sons of Noah. But it is a great honour for me to be connected, even in the humblest manner, with such a distinguished little being. In time, I am not without hopes that it will introduce a little reflex nobility even into my burgher nature; and meantime Chriembild and I secretly trace remarkable resemblances in the dear baby features to our grandmother, and even to our beloved, sanguine, blind father. It is certainly a great consolation that our father chose our names from the poems and the stars and the calendar of aristocratic saints, instead of from the lowly Cotta pedigree.

Ulrich has not indeed by any means abandoned his scheme of usefulness among the peasantry who live on his uncle's estates. But he finds more opposition than he expected. The old knight, although ready enough to listen to any denunciations of the self-indulgent priests and lazy monks (especially those of the abbey whose hunting-grounds adjoin his own), is very averse to making the smallest change in anything. He says the boors are difficult enough to keep in order as it is; that if they are taught to think for themselves, there will be no safety for the game, or for anything else.

They will be quoting the Bible in all kinds of wrong senses against their rightful lords, and will perhaps even take to debating the justice of the hereditary feuds, and refuse to follow their knight's banner to the field.

As to religion, he is quite sure that the Ave and the Pater are as much as will be expected of them; whilst Dame Hermentrud has most serious doubts of this new plan of writing books and reading prayers in the language of the common people. They will be thinking themselves as wise as the priests, and perhaps wiser than their masters.

But Ulrich's chief disappointment is with the peasants themselves. They seem as little anxious for improvement as the lords are for them, and are certainly suspicious to a most irritating degree of any schemes for their welfare issuing from the castle. As to their children being taught to read, they consider it an invasion of their rights, and murmur that if they follow the nobles in hunt and foray, and till their fields, and go to mass on Sunday, the rest of their time is their own, and it is an usurpation in priest or knight to demand more.

It will, I fear, be long before the dry, barren crust of their dull hard life is broken; and yet the words of life are for them as much as for us! And one great difficulty seems to me, that if they were taught to read, there are so few German religious books. Except a few tracts of Dr. Luther's, what is there that they could understand? If some one would only translate the record of the words and acts of our Lord and his apostles, it would be worth while then teaching every one to read.

And if we could only get them to confide in us! There must be thought, and we know there is affection underneath all this reserve. It is a heavy heritage for the long ancestry of the Gersdorfs to have bequeathed to this generation, these recollections of tyranny and wrong, and this mutual distrust. Yet Ulrich says it is too common throughout the land. Many of the old privileges of the nobles were so terribly oppressive in hard or careless hands.

The most promising field at present seems to be among the household retainers. Among these there is strong personal attachment; and the memory of Ulrich's pious mother seems to have left behind it that faith in goodness which is one of the most precious legacies of holy lives.

Even the peasants in the village speak lovingly of her; of the medicine she used to distil from the forest-herbs, and distribute with her own hands to the sick. There is a tradition also in the castle of a bright maiden called Beatrice who used to visit the cottage homes, and bring sunshine whenever she came. But she disappeared years ago, they say; and the old family nurse shakes her head as she tells me how the Lady Beatrice's heart was broken, when she was separated by family feuds from her betrothed, and after that she went to the convent at Nimptschen, and has been dead to the world ever since.

Nimptschen! that is the living grave where our precious Eva is buried. And yet where she is I am sure it can be no grave of death. She will bring life and blessings with her. I will write to her, especially about this poor blighted Beatrice.

Altogether the peasants seem much less suspicious

of the women of the Gersdorf family than of the men. They will often listen attentively even to me. And when Chriemhild can go among them a little more, I hope better days will dawn.

August 1521.

This morning we had a strange encounter. Some days since we received a mysterious intimation from Wittenberg, that Dr. Luther is alive and in friendly keeping, not far from us. To-day Ulrich and I were riding through the forest to visit an out-lying farm of the Gersdorfs in the direction of Eisenach, when we heard across a valley the huntsman's horn, with the cry of the dogs in full chase. In a few moments an opening among the trees brought us in sight of the hunt sweeping towards us up the opposite slopes of the valley. Apart from the hunt, and nearer us, at a narrow part of the valley, we observed a figure in the cap and plumes of a knight, apparently watching the chase as we were. As we were looking at him, a poor bewildered leveret flew towards him, and covered close to his feet. He stooped, and gently taking it up, folded it in the long sleeve of his tunic, and stepped quickly aside. In another minute, however, the hunt swept up towards him, and the dogs scenting the leveret, seized on it in its refuge, dragged it down, and killed it.

This unusual little incident, this human being putting himself on the side of the pursued, instead of among the pursuers, excited our attention. There was also something in the firm figure and sturdy gait that perplexingly reminded us of some one we knew. Our road lay across the valley, and Ulrich rode aside to

greet the strange knight. In a moment he returned to me, and whispered, —

“It is Martin Luther!”

We could not resist the impulse to look once more on the kind honest face, and riding close to him we bowed to him.

He gave us a smile of recognition, and laying his hand on Ulrich's saddle said, softly, “The chase is a mystery of higher things. See how, as these ferocious dogs seized my poor leveret from its refuge, Satan rages against souls, and seeks to tear from their hiding-place even those already saved. But the Arm which holds them is stronger than mine. I have had enough of this kind of chase,” he added; “sweeter to me the chase of the bears, wolves, boars, and foxes which lay waste the Church, than that of these harmless creatures. And of such rapacious beasts there are enough in the world.”

My heart was full of the poor peasants I had been seeing lately. I never could feel afraid of Dr. Luther, and this opportunity was too precious to be thrown away. It always seemed the most natural thing in the world to open one's heart to him. He understood so quickly and so fully. As he was wishing us good-bye, therefore, I said (I am afraid, in that abrupt blundering way of mine), —

“Dear Dr. Luther, the poor peasants here are so ignorant! and I have scarcely anything to read to them which they can understand. Tell some one, I entreat you, to translate the Gospels into German for them; such German as your ‘Discourse on the Magnificat,’ or ‘The Lord's Prayer,’ for they all understand that.”

He smiled, and said, kindly, —

"It is being done, my child. I am trying in my Patmos tower once more to unveil the Revelation to the common people; and, doubtless, they will hear it gladly. That book alone is the sun from which all true teachers draw their light. Would that it were in the language of every man, held in every hand, read by every eye, listened to by every ear, treasured up in every heart. And it will be yet, I trust."

He began to move away, but as we looked reverently after him he turned to us again, and said, "Remember the wilderness was the scene of the temptation. Pray for me, that in the solitude of my wilderness I may be delivered from the tempter." And waving his hand, in a few minutes he was out of sight.

We thought it would be an intrusion to follow him, or to inquire where he was concealed. But as the hunt passed away, Ulrich recognised one of the huntsmen as a retainer of the Elector Frederick at his castle of the Wartburg.

And now when every night and morning in my prayers I add, as usual, the name of Dr. Luther to those of my mother and father and all dear to me, I think of him passing long days and nights alone in that grim castle, looking down on the dear old Eisenach valley, and I say, "Lord, make the wilderness to him the school for his ministry to all our land."

For was not our Saviour himself led first into the wilderness, to overcome the tempter in solitude, before he came forth to teach, and heal, and cast out devils?

October.

Ulrich has seen Dr. Luther again. He was walking

in the forest near the Wartburg, and looked very ill and sad. His heart was heavy on account of the disorders in the Church, the falsehood and bitterness of the enemies of the gospel, and the impetuosity or lukewarmness of too many of its friends. He said it would almost have been better if they had left him to die by the hands of his enemies. His blood might have cried to God for deliverance. He was ready to yield himself to them as an ox to the yoke. He would rather be burned on live coals, than sleep away the precious years thus, half alive, in sloth and ease. And yet, from what Ulrich gathered further from him of his daily life, his "sloth and ease" would seem arduous toil to most men. He saw the room where Dr. Luther lives and labours day and night, writing letters of consolation to his friends, and masterly replies, they say, to the assailants of the truth, and (better than all) translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into German.

The room has a large window commanding many reaches of the forest; and he showed Ulrich the rookery in the tops of the trees below, whence he learned lessons in politics from the grave consultations of the rooks who hold their Diet there; he also spoke to him of the various creatures in rock and forest which soothed his solitude, the birds singing among the branches, the berries, wild flowers, and the clouds and stars. But he alluded also to fearful conflicts, visible and audible appearances of the Evil One; and his health seemed much shattered.

We fear that noble loving heart is wearing itself out in the lonely fortress. He seems chafing like a war-horse at the echo of the distant battle; or a hunter

at the sound of the chase; or, rather, as a captive general who sees his troops, assailed by force and stratagem, broken and scattered, and cannot break his chains to rally and to lead them on.

Yet he spoke most gratefully of his hospitable treatment in the castle; said he was living like a prince or a cardinal; and deprecated the thought that the good cause would not prosper without his presence.

"I cannot be with them in death," he said, "nor they with me! Each must fight that last fight, go through that passion alone. And only those will overcome who have learned how to win the victory before, and grounded deep in the heart that word, which is the great power against sin and the devil, that Christ has died for each one of us, and has overcome Satan for ever."

He said also that if Melanchthon lived it mattered little to the Church what happened to him. 'The Spirit of Elijah came in double power on Elisha.

And he gave Ulrich two or three precious fragments of his translation of the Gospels, for me to read to the peasants.

November.

I have gone with my precious bits of the German Bible that is to be into many a cottage during this month, — simple narratives of poor, leprous, and palsied people, who came to the Lord, and he touched them and healed their diseases; and of sinners whom he forgave.

It is wonderful how the simple people seem to drink them in; that is, those who care at all for such things. "Is this indeed what the Lord Christ is like?" they say; "then, surely, we may speak to him in our own

words, and ask just what we want, as those poor men and women did of old. Is it true, indeed, that peasants, women, and sick people could come straight to the Lord himself? Was he not always kept off from common people by a band of priests and saints? Was he indeed to be spoken to by all, and He such a great Lord?"

I said that I thought it was the necessity of human princes, and not their glory, to be obliged to employ deputies, and not let each one plead his own case. They look greatest afar off, surrounded by the pomp of a throne, because in themselves they are weak and sinful, like other men. But he needed no pomp, nor the dignity of distance, because he is not like other men, but sinless and divine, and the glory is in Himself, not in the things around him.

Then I had a narrative of the crucifixion to read; and many a tear have I seen stream over rough cheeks, and many a smile beam in dim aged eyes as I read this.

"We seem to understand it all at once," an old woman said; and yet there always seems something more in it each time."

December.

This morning I had a letter from Bertrand, — the first for many weeks. He is full of hope; not, indeed, of recovering his inheritance, but of being at Wittenberg again in a few weeks.

I suppose my face looked very bright when I received it and ran with the precious letter to my own room; for Dame Hermentrud said much this evening about receiving everything with moderation, and about the propriety of young maidens having a very still and

collected demeanour, and about the uncertainty of all things below. My heavenly Father knows I do not forget that all things are uncertain; although, often, I dare not dwell on it. But He has given me this good gift — He Himself — and I will thank him with an overflowing heart for it!

I cannot understand Dame Hermentrud's religion. She seems to think it prudent, and a duty, to take everything God gives coolly, as if we did not care very much about it, lest He should think he had given us something too good for us, and grudge it to us, and take it away again.

No; if God does take away, He takes away as He gave, in infinite love; and I would not for the world add darkness to the dark days, if they must come, by the bitter regret that I did not enjoy the sunshine whilst He gave it. For, indeed, I cannot help fearing sometimes, when I think of the martyrs of old, and the bitterness of the enemies of the good tidings now. But then I try to look up, and try to say, "Safer, O Father, in thy hands than in mine." And all the comfort of the prayer depends on how I can comprehend and feel that name, "Father!"

XXI.

EVA'S STORY.

CISTERCIAN CONVENT, NIMPTSCHEN,
September 2, 1521.

THEY have sent me several sheets of Dr. Luther's translation of the New Testament, from Uncle Cotta's press at Wittenberg.

Of all the works he ever did for God, this seems to me the mightiest and the best. None has ever so deeply stirred our convent. Many of the sisters positively refuse to join in any invocation of the saints. They declare that it must be Satan himself who has kept this glorious book locked up in a dead language out of reach of women and children and the common people. And the young nuns say it is so interesting, it is not in the least like a book of sermons, or a religious treatise.

"It is like everyday life," said one of them to me, "with what every one wants brought into it; a perfect Friend, so infinitely good, so near, and so completely understanding our inmost hearts. Ah, Sister Eva," she added, "if they could only hear of this at home!"

October.

To-day we have received a copy of Dr. Luther's thesis against the monastic life.

"There is but one only spiritual estate," he writes, "which is holy and makes holy, and that is Christianity, — the faith which is the common right of all."

"Monastic institutions," he continues, "to be of any use ought to be schools, in which children may be brought up until they are adults. But as it is, they are houses in which men and women become children, and ever continue childish."

Too well, alas! I know the truth of these last words; the hopeless, childish occupation with trifles, into which the majority of the nuns sink when the freshness of youth and the bitter conflict of separation from all dear to the heart has subsided, and the great incidents of life have become the decorating the church for a festival, or the pomp attending the visit of an Inspector or Bishop.

It is against this I have striven. It is this I dread for the young sisters; to see them sink into contented trifling with religious playthings. And I have been able to see no way of escape, unless, indeed, we could be transferred to some city and devote ourselves to the care of the sick and poor.

Dr. Luther, however, admits of another solution. We hear that he has counselled the Prior of the Monastery at Erfurt to suffer any monks who wish it freely to depart. And many, we have been told, in various monasteries have already left, and returned to serve God in the world.

Monks can, indeed, do this. The world is open before them, and in some way they are sure to find occupation. But with us it is different? Torn away from our natural homes, the whole world around us is a trackless desert.

Yet how can I dare to say this? Since the whole world is the work of our heavenly Father's hands, and may be the way to our Father's house, will not He

surely find a place for each of us in it, and a path for us through it?

November 10.

Nine of the younger nuns have come to the determination, if possible, to give up the conventual life, with its round of superstitious observances. This evening we held a consultation in Sister Beatrice's cell. Aunt Agnes joined us.

It was decided that each should write to her relatives, simply confessing that she believed the monastic vows and life to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and praying to be received back into her family.

Sister Beatrice and Aunt Agnes decided to remain patiently where they were.

"My old home would be no more a home to me now than the convent," sister Beatrice said. "There is liberty for me to die here, and an open way for my spirit to return to God."

And Aunt Agnes said, —

"Who knows but that there may be some lowly work left for me to do here yet! In the world I should be as helpless as a child, and why should I return to be a burden on my kindred."

They both urged me to write to Else or Aunt Cotta, to receive me. But I can scarcely think it my duty. Aunt Cotta has her children around her. Else's home is strange to me. Besides, kind as every one has been to me, I am as a stray waif on the current of this world, and have no home in it. I think God has enabled me to cheer and help some few here, and while Aunt Agnes and Sister Beatrice remain, I cannot bear the thought of leaving. At all events I will wait.

November 22.

Fritz is in prison again. For many weeks they had heard nothing from him, and were wondering where he was, when a letter came from a priest called Ruprecht Haller, in Franconia. He says Fritz came to his house one evening in July, remained the night, left next morning with his pack of Lutheran books, intending to proceed direct to Wittenberg, and gave him the address of Aunt Cotta there. But a few weeks afterwards a young monk met him near the Dominican Convent, and asked if he were the priest at whose house a pedlar had spent a night a few weeks before. The priest admitted it; whereon the young monk said to him, in a low, hurried accent, —

“Write to his friends, if you know them, and say he is in the prison of the convent, under strong suspicion of heresy. I am the young monk to whom he gave a book on the evening he came. Tell them I did not intend to betray him, although I led him into the net; and if ever they should procure his escape, and you see him again, tell him I have kept his book.” The good priest says something also about Fritz having been his salvation. And he urges that the most strenuous exertions should be made to liberate him, and any powerful friends we have should be entreated to intercede, because the Prior of the Dominican Convent where he is imprisoned is a man of the severest temper, and a mighty hater of heretics.

Powerful friends! I know none whom we can entreat but God.

It was in July, then, that he was captured, two months since. I wonder if it is only my impatient spirit! but I feel as if I *must* go to Aunt Cotta. I have

a feeling she will want me now. I think I might comfort her; for who can tell what two months in a Dominican prison may have done for him?

In our convent have we not a prison, low, dark, and damp enough to weigh the life out of any one in six weeks! From one of the massive low pillars hang heavy iron fetters, happily rusted now from disuse; and in a corner are a rack and other terrible instruments, now thrown aside there, on which some of the older nuns say they have seen stains of blood.

When he was in prison before at Mainz, I did not seem so desponding about his deliverance as I feel now.

Are these fears God's merciful preparations for some dreadful tidings about to reach us? or are they the mere natural enfeebling of the power to hope as one grows older?

December, 1521.

Many disappointments have fallen on us during the last fortnight. Answer after answer has come to those touching entreaties of the nine sisters to their kindred, in various tones of feeling, but all positively refusing to receive them back to their homes.

Some of the relatives use the bitterest reproaches and the severest menaces. Others write tenderly and compassionately, but all agree that no noble family can possibly bring on itself the disgrace of aiding a professed nun to break her vows. Poor children! my heart aches for them, some of them are so young, and were so confident of being welcomed back with open arms, remembering the tears with which they were given up.

Now indeed they are thrown on God. He will not fail them; but who can say what thorny paths their feet may have to tread?

It has also been discovered here that some of them have written thus to their relations, which renders their position far more difficult and painful.

Many of the older nuns are most indignant at what they consider an act of the basest treachery and sacrilege. I also am forbidden to have any more intercourse with the suspected sisters. Search has been made in every cell, and all the Lutheran books have been seized, whilst the strictest attendance is required at all the services.

February 10, 1522.

Sister Beatrice is dead, after a brief illness. The gentle, patient spirit is at rest.

It seems difficult to think of joy associated with that subdued and timid heart, even in heaven. I can only think of her as *at rest*.

One night after she died I had a dream, in which I seemed to see her entering into heaven. Robed and veiled in white, I saw her slowly ascending the way to the gates of the City. Her head and her eyes were cast on the ground, and she did not seem to dare to look up at the pearly gates, even to see if they were open or closed. But two angels, the gentlest spirits in heaven, came out and met her, and each taking one of her hands, led her silently inside, like a penitent child. And as she entered, the harps and songs within seemed to be hushed to music soft as the dreamy murmur of a summer noon. Still she did not look up, but passed through the golden streets with her hands trust-

ingly folded in the hands of the angels, until she stood before the throne. Then from the throne came a Voice, which said, "Beatrice, it is I; be not afraid." And when she heard that voice, a quiet smile beamed over her face like a glory, and for the first time she raised her eyes; and sinking at His feet, murmured, "Home!" And it seemed to me as if that one word from the low, trembling voice vibrated through every harp in heaven; and from countless voices, ringing as happy children's, and tender as a mother's, came back, in a tide of love and music, the words, "Welcome home."

This was only a dream; but it is no dream that she is there!

She said little in her illness. She did not suffer much. The feeble frame made little resistance to the low fever which attacked her. The words she spoke were mostly expressions of thankfulness for little services, or entreaties for forgiveness for any little pain she fancied she might have given.

Aunt Agnes and I chiefly waited on her. She was uneasy if we were long away from her. Her thoughts often recurred to her girlhood in the old castle in the Thuringian Forest; and she liked to hear me speak of Chriemhild and Ulrich, and their infant boy. One evening she called me to her, and said, "Tell my sister Hermentrud, and my brother, I am sure they all meant kindly in sending me here; and it has been a good place for me, especially since you came. But tell Chriemhild and Ulrich," she added, "if they have daughters, to remember plighted troth is a sacred thing, and let it not be lightly severed. Not that the sorrow has been evil for me; only I would not have another

suffer. All, all has been good for me, and I so unworthy of all!

Then passing her thin hands over my head as I knelt beside her, she said, "Eva, you have been like a mother, a sister, a child, — everything to me. Go back to your old home when I am gone. I like to think you will be there."

Then, as if fearing she might have been ungrateful to Aunt Agnes, she asked for her, and said, "I can never thank you enough for all you have done for me. The blessed Lord will remember it; for did he not say, 'In that ye have done it unto the *least*.'"

And in the night, as I sat by her alone, she said, "Eva, I have dreaded very much to die. I am so very weak in spirit, and dread everything. But I think God must make it easier for the feeble such as me. For although I do not feel any stronger I am not afraid now. It must be because He is holding me up."

She then asked me to sing; and with a faltering voice I sung, as well as I could, the hymn, *Astant angelorum chori*: —

High the angel-choirs are raising	Up the steps of glory streaming,
Heart and voice in harmony:	Where the heavenly bells are ring-
The Creator King still praising,	ing,
Whom in beauty there they see!	Holy, holy, holy, singing
Sweetest strains from soft harps steal-	To the mighty Trinity!
ing,	For all earthly care and sighing
Trumpets notes of triumph pealing;	In that city cease to be!
Radiant wings and white robes	
gleaming,	

And two days after, in the grey of the autumn morning, she died. She fell asleep with the name of Jesus on her lips.

It is strange how silent and empty the convent seems, only because that feeble voice is hushed and that poor shadowy form has passed away!

February 1522.

Sister Beatrice has been laid in the convent churchyard with solemn, mournful dirges and masses, and stately ceremonies, which seemed to me little in harmony with her timid, shrinkig nature, or with the peace her spirit rests in now.

The lowly mound in the churchyard, marked by no memorial but a wooden cross, accords better with her memory. The wind will rustle gently there next summer, through the grass; and this winter the robin will warble quietly in the old elm above.

But I shall never see the grass clothe that earthy mound. It is decided that I am to leave the convent this week. Aunt Agnes and two of the young sisters have just left my cell, and all is planned.

The petty persecutions against those they call the Lutheran Sisters increase continually, whilst severer and more open proceedings are threatened. It is therefore decided that I am to make my escape at the first favourable opportunity, find my way to Wittenberg, and then lay the case of the nine nuns before the Lutheran doctors, and endeavour to provide for their rescue.

February 20, 1522.

At last the peasant's dress in which I am to escape is in my cell, and this very night, when all is quiet, I am to creep out of the window of Catherine von Bora's cell, into the convent garden. Aunt Agnes has been nervously eager about my going, and has been

busy secretly storing a little basket with provisions. But to-night, when I went into her cell to wish her good-bye, she quite broke down, and held me tight in her arms, as if she could never let me go, while her lips quivered, and tears rolled slowly over her thin, furrowed cheeks. "Eva, child," she said, "who first taught me to love in spite of myself, and then taught me that God is love, and that he could make me, believing in Jesus, a happy, loving child again! how can I part with thee?"

"Thou wilt join me again," I said, "and your sister who loves thee so dearly!"

She shook her head and smiled through her tears, as she said, —

"Poor helpless old woman that I am, what would you all do with me in the busy life outside?"

But her worst fear was for me, in my journey alone to Wittenberg, which seemed to her, who for forty years had never passed the convent walls, so long and perilous. Aunt Agnes always thinks of me as a young girl, and imagines every one must think me beautiful, because love makes me so to her. She is sure they will take me for some princess in disguise.

She forgets I am a quiet, sober-looking woman of seven-and-twenty, whom no one will wonder to see gravely plodding along the highway.

But I almost made her promise to come to us at Wittenberg; and at last she reproached herself with distrusting God, and said she ought never to have feared that his angels would watch over me.

Once more, then, the world opens before me; but I do not hope (and why should I wish?) that it should be more to me than this convent has been, — a place

where God will be with me and give me some little loving services to do for him.

But my heart does yearn to embrace dear Aunt Cotta and Else once more, and little Thekla. And when Thekla marries, and Aunt and Uncle Cotta are left alone, I think they may want me, and Cousin Eva may grow old among Else's children, and all the grandchildren, helping one and another a little, and missed a little when God takes me.

But chiefly I long to be near Aunt Cotta, now that Fritz is in that terrible prison. She always said I comforted her more than any one, and I think I may again.

XXII.

ELSE'S STORY.

October 1521.

CHRISTOPHER has just returned from a journey to Halle. They have dared once more to establish the sale of indulgences there, under the patronage of the young and self-indulgent Archbishop Albert of Mainz. Many of the students and the more thoughtful burghers are full of indignation at seeing the great red cross once more set up, and the heavenly pardons hawked through the streets for sale. This would not have been attempted, Gottfried feels sure, had not the enemy believed that Dr. Luther's voice is silenced for ever. Letters from him are, however, privately handed about among us here, and more than one of us know that he is in safe keeping not very far from us.

November.

Gottfried has just brought me the letter from Luther to the Archbishop of Mainz; which will at least convince the indulgence-mongers that they have roused the sleeping lion.

He reminds the Archbishop-Elector that a conflagration has already been raised by the protest of one poor insignificant monk against Tetzels; he warns him that the God who gave strength to that feeble human voice because it spoke his truth, "is living still, and will bring down the lofty cedars and the haughty Pharaohs, and can easily humble an Elector of Mainz

although there were four Emperors supporting him." He solemnly requires him to put down that avaricious sale of lying pardons at Mainz, or he will speedily publish a denunciation (which he has already written) against the New School at Halle." "For Luther," he says, "is not dead yet."

We are in great doubt how the Archbishop will bear such a bold remonstrance.

November 20.

The remonstrance has done its work. The Prince Archbishop has written a humble and apologetic letter to Dr. Luther, and the indulgences are once more banished from Halle.

At Wittenberg, however, Dr. Luther's letters do not at all compensate for his presence. There is great confusion here, and not seldom there are encounters between the opposite parties in the streets.

Almost all the monks in the Augustinian Convent refused some weeks since to celebrate private masses or to adore the host. The gentle Dr. Melancthon and the other doctors at first remonstrated, but were at length themselves convinced, and appealed to the Elector of Saxony himself to abolish these idolatrous ceremonies. We do not yet know how he will act. No public alterations have yet been made in the Church services.

But the great event which is agitating Wittenberg now is the abandonment of the cloister and the monastic life by thirteen of the Augustinian monks. The Pastor Feldkirchen declared against priestly vows, and married some months since. But he was only a secular priest; and the opinions of all good men about the

marriage of the priests of the parochial churches have long been undivided amongst us.

Concerning the monks, however, it is different. For the priests to marry is merely a change of state; for the monks to abandon their vows is the destruction of their order, and of the monastic life altogether.

Gottfried and I are fully persuaded they are right; and we honour greatly these men, who, disclaiming maintenance at other people's expense, are content to place themselves among the students at the university. More especially, however, I honour the older or less educated brethren, who, relinquishing the consideration and idle plenty of the cloister, set themselves to learn some humble trade. One of these has apprenticed himself to a carpenter; and as we passed his bench the other day, and watched him perseveringly trying to train his unaccustomed fingers to handle the tools, Gottfried took off his cap and respectfully saluted him, saying, —

“Yes, that is right. Christianity must begin again with the carpenter's home at Nazareth.”

In our family, however, opinions are divided. Our dear, anxious mother perplexes herself much as to what it will all lead to. It is true that Fritz's second imprisonment has greatly shaken her faith in the monks; but she is distressed at the unsettling tendencies of the age. To her it seems all destructive; and the only solution she can imagine for the difficulties of the times is, that these must be the latter days, and that when everything is pulled down, our Lord himself will come speedily to build up his kingdom in the right way.

Deprived of the counsel of Fritz and her beloved

Eva, and of Dr. Luther — in whom lately she had grown more to confide, although she always deprecates his impetuosity of language — she cannot make up her mind what to think about anything. She has an especial dread of the vehemence of the Archdeacon Carlstadt; and the mild Melancthon is too much like herself in disposition for her to lean on his judgment.

Nevertheless, this morning, when I went to see them, I found her busily preparing some nourishing soup; which, when I asked her, she confessed was destined for the recusant monk who had become a carpenter.

“Poor creatures,” she said apologetically, “they were accustomed to live well in the cloister, and I should not like them to feel the difference too suddenly.”

Our grandmother is more than eighty now. Her form is still erect, although she seldom moves from her arm-chair; and her faculties seem little dimmed, except that she cannot attend to anything for any length of time. Sometimes I think old age to her is more like the tender days of early spring, than hard and frosty winter. Thekla says it seems as if this life were dawning softly for her into a better; or as if God were keeping her, like Moses, with undimmed eyes and strength unabated, till she may have the glimpse of the Promised Land, and see the deliverance she has so long waited for close at hand.

With our children she is as great a favourite as she was with us; she seems to have forgotten her old ways of finding fault; either because she feels less responsibility about the third generation, or because she sees all their little faults through a mellowed light. I

notice, too, that she has fallen on quite a different vein of stories from those which used to rivet us. She seems to pass over the legendary lore of her early womanhood, back to the experiences of her own stirring youth and childhood. The mysteries of our grandfather's history, which we vainly sought to penetrate, are all opened to Gretchen and the boys. The saints and hermits, whose adventures were our delight, are succeeded by stories of secret Hussite meetings to read the Scriptures among the forests and mountains of Bohemia; of wild retreats in caves, where whole families lived for months in concealment; of heart-rending captures or marvellous escapes.

The heroes of my boys will be, not St. Christopher and St. George, but Hussite heretics! My dear mother often throws in a warning word to the boys, that those were evil times, and that people do not need to lead such wild lives now. But the text makes far more impression on the children than the commentary.

Our grandmother's own chief delight is still in Dr. Luther's writings. I have lately read over to her and my father, I know not how many times, his letter from the Wartburg, "to the little band of Christ at Wittenberg," with his commentary accompanying it on the 37th Psalm — "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers."

Our dear father is full of the brightest visions. He is persuaded that the whole world is being rapidly set right, and that it matters little, indeed, that his inventions could not be completed, since we are advancing at full speed into the Golden Age of humanity.

Thus, from very opposite points and through very

different paths, he and my mother arrive at the same conclusion.

We have heard from Thekla that Ulrich has visited Dr. Luther at the Wartburg, where he is residing. I am so glad to know where he is. It is always so difficult to me to think of people without knowing the scene around them. The figure itself seems to become shadowy, in the vague, shadowy, unknown world around it. It is this which adds to my distress about Fritz. Now I can think of Dr. Luther sitting in that large room in which I waited for the Elector with my embroidery, so many years ago — looking down the steep over the folded hills, reaching one behind another till the black pines and the green waving branches fade into lovely blue beneath the golden horizon. And at sunset I seem to see how the shadows creep over the green valleys where we used to play, and the low sun lights up the red stems of the pines.

Or in the summer noon I see him sitting with his books — great folios, Greek, and Hebrew, and Latin — toiling at that translation of the Book of God, which is to be the blessing of all our people; while the warm sunbeams draw out the aromatic scent of the fir-woods, and the breezes bring it in at the open window.

Or at early morning I fancy him standing by the castle walls, looking down on the towers and distant roofs of Eisenach, while the bell of the great convent booms up to him the hour, and he thinks of the busy life beginning in the streets, where once he begged for bread at Aunt Ursula Cotta's door. Dear Aunt Ursula, I wish she could have lived till now, to see the rich harvest an act of loving-kindness will sometimes bring forth.

Or at night, again, when all sounds are hushed except the murmur of the unseen stream in the valley below, and the sighing of the wind through the forest, and that great battle begins which he has to fight so often with the powers of darkness, and he tries to pray, and cannot lift his heart to God, I picture him opening his casement, and looking down on forest, rock, and meadow, lying dim and lifeless beneath him, glance from these up to God, and re-assure himself with the truth he delights to utter —

“*God lives still!*” feeling, as he gazes, that night is only hiding the sun, not quenching him, and watching till the grey of morning slowly steals up the sky and down into the forest.

“Yes, Dr. Melancthon has told us how he toils and how he suffers at the Wartburg, and how once he wrote, “Are my friends forgetting to pray for me, that the conflict is so terrible?” No; Gottfried remembers him always among our dearest names of kith and kindred.

“But,” he said to-day, “we must leave the training of our chief to God.”

Poor, tried, perplexed Saint Elizabeth! another royal heart is suffering at the Wartburg now, another saint is earning his crown through the cross at the old castle home; but not to be canonized in the Papal Calendar!

December 24.

The Chapter of the Augustinian Order in Thuringia and Misnia has met here within this last month, to consider the question of the irrevocable nature of monastic vows. They have come to the decision that in Christ

there is neither layman nor monk; that each is free to follow his conscience.

Christmas Day, 1521.

This has been a great day with us.

Archdeacon Carlstadt announced, some little time since, that he intended, on the approaching Feast of the Circumcision, to administer the holy sacrament to the laity under the two species of bread and wine. His right to do this having been disputed, he hastened the accomplishment of his purpose, lest it should be stopped by any prohibition from the court.

To-day, after his sermon in the City Church, in which he spoke of the necessity of replacing the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass by the holy supper, he went to the altar, and, after pronouncing the consecration of the elements in German, he turned towards the people, and said solemnly, —

“Whosoever feels heavy laden with the burden of his sins, and hungers and thirsts for the grace of God, let him come and receive the body and blood of the Lord.”

A brief silence followed his words, and then, to my amazement, before any one else stirred, I saw my timid retiring mother slowly moving up the aisle, leading my father by the hand. Others followed; some with reverent, solemn demeanour, others perhaps with a little haste and over eagerness. And as the last had retired from the altar, the archdeacon, pronouncing the general absolution, added solemnly, —

“Go, and sin no more.”

A few moments' pause succeeded, and then, from many voices here and there, gradually swelling to a full chorus, arose the *Agnus Dei*, —

"Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. Give us peace."

We spent the Christmas, as usual, in my father's house. Wondering, as I did, at my mother's boldness, I did not like to speak to her on the subject; but, as we sat alone in the afternoon, while our dear father, Gottfried, Christopher, and the children had gone to see the skating on the Elbe, she said to me, —

"Elsè, I could not help going. It seemed like the voice of our Lord himself saying to me, '*Thou art heavy laden — come!*' I never understood it all as I do now. It seemed as if I *saw* the gospel with my eyes, — saw that the redemption is finished, and that now the feast is spread. I forgot to question whether I repented, or believed, or loved enough. I saw through the ages the body broken and the blood shed for me on Calvary; and now I saw the table spread, and heard the welcome, and I could not help taking your father's hand and going up at once."

"Yes, dear mother, you set the whole congregation the best example!" I said.

"I!" she exclaimed. "Do you mean that I went up before any one else? What! before all the holy men, and doctors, and the people in authority? Elsè, my child, what have I done? But I did not think of myself, or of any one else. I only seemed to hear His voice calling me; and what could I do but go? And, indeed, I cannot care now how it looked! Oh, Elsè," she continued, "it is worth while to have the world thus agitated to restore his feast again to the Church; worth while," she added with a trembling voice, "even to have Fritz in prison for this. The blessed Lord has sacrificed himself for us, and we are living in the fes-

tival. He died for sinners. He spread the feast for the hungry and thirsty. Then those who feel their sins most must be not the last but the first to come. I see it all now. That holy sacrament is the gospel for me."

February 10, 1522.

The whole town is in commotion.

Men have appeared among us who say that they are directly inspired from heaven; that study is quite unnecessary — indeed, an idolatrous concession to the flesh and the letter; that it is wasting time and strength to translate the Holy Scriptures, since, without their understanding a word of Greek or Hebrew, God has revealed its meaning to their hearts.

These men come from Zwickau. Two of them are cloth-weavers; and one is Münzer, who was a priest. They also declare themselves to be prophets. Nicholas Storck, a weaver, their leader, has chosen twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples, in imitation of our Lord. And one of them cried in awful tones, to-day through the streets, —

"Woe, woe to the impious governors of Christendom? Within less than seven years the world shall be made desolate. The Turk will overrun the land. No sinner shall remain alive. God will purify the earth by blood, and all the priests will be put to death. The saints will reign. The day of the Lord is at hand. Woe! woe!"

Opinions are divided throughout the university and the town about them. The Elector himself says he would rather yield up his crown and go through the world a beggar than resist the voice of the Lord. Dr. Melanchthon hesitates, and says we must try the

spirits, whether they be of God. The Archdeacon Carlstadt is much impressed with them, and from his professorial chair even exhorts the students to abandon the vain pursuits of carnal wisdom, and to return to earn their bread, according to God's ordinance, in the sweat of their brow. The master of the boys' school called, from the open window of the school-room, to the citizens to take back their children. Not a few of the students are dispersing, and others are in an excitable state, ready for any tumult. The images have been violently torn from one of the churches and burnt. The monks of the Convent of the Cordeliers have called the soldiers to their aid against a threatened attack.

Gottfried and others are persuaded that these men of Zwickau are deluded enthusiasts. He says, "The spirit which undervalues the word of God cannot be the Spirit of God."

But among the firmest opponents of these new doctrines is, to our surprise, our charitable mother. Her gentle, lowly spirit seems to shrink from them as with a heavenly instinct. She says, "The Spirit of God humbles — does not puff up."

When it was reported to us the other day that Nicholas Storck had seen the angel Gabriel in the night, who flew towards him and said to him, "As for thee, thou shalt be seated on my throne!" the mother said, —

"It is new language to the angel Gabriel, to speak of *his* throne. The angels in old times used to speak of the throne of God."

And when another said that it was time to sift the

chaff from the wheat, and to form a Church of none but saints, she said, —

“That would never suit me, then. I must stay outside, in the Church of redeemed sinners. And did not St. Paul himself say, as Dr. Luther told us, ‘Sinners, of whom I am chief?’”

“But are you not afraid,” some one asked her, “of dishonouring God by denying his messengers, if, after all, these prophets should be sent from him?”

“I think not,” she replied quietly. “Until the doctors are sure, I think I cannot displease my Saviour by keeping to the old message.”

My father, however, is much excited about it; he sees no reason why there should not be prophets at Wittenberg as well as at Jerusalem; and in these wonderful days, he argues, what wonders can be too great to believe?

I and many others long exceedingly for Dr. Luther. I believe, indeed, Gottfried is right, but it would be terrible to make a mistake; and Dr. Luther always seems to see straight to the heart of a thing at once, and storms the citadel, while Dr. Melancthon is going round and round, studying each point of the fortifications.

Dr. Luther never wavers in opinion in his letters, but warns us most forcibly against these delusions of Satan. But then people say he has not seen or heard the “prophets.” One letter can be discussed and answered long before another comes, and the living eye and voice are much in such a conflict as this.

What chief could lead an army on to battle by letters?

February 26, 1522.

Our dove of peace has come back to our home; our Eva! This evening, when I went over with a message to my mother, to my amazement I saw her sitting with her hand in my father's, quietly reading to him the twenty-third psalm, while my grandmother sat listening, and my mother was contentedly knitting beside them.

It seemed as if she had scarcely been absent a day, so quietly had she glided into her old place. It seemed so natural, and yet so like a dream, that the sense of wonder passed from me as it does in dreams, and I went up to her and kissed her forehead.

"Dear Cousin Elsè, is it you!" she said. "I intended to have come to you the first thing to-morrow."

The dear, peaceful, musical voice, what a calm it shed over the home again!

"You see you have all left Aunt Cotta," she said, with a slight tremulousness in her tone, "so I am come back to be with her always, if she will let me."

There were never any protestations of affection between my mother and Eva, they understand each other so completely.

February 28.

Yes, it is no dream. Eva has left the convent, and is one of us once more. Now that she has resumed all her old ways, I wonder more than ever how we could have got on without her. She speaks as quietly of her escape from the convent, and her lonely journey across the country, as if it were the easiest and most every-day occurrence. She says every one seemed anxious to help her and take care of her.

She is very little changed. Hers was not a face to change. The old guileless expression is on her lips — the same trustful, truthful light in her dark soft eyes; the calm, peaceful brow, that always reminded one of a sunny, cloudless sky, is calm and bright still; and around it the golden hair, not yet grown from its conventual cutting, clusters in little curls which remind me of her first days with us at Eisenach. Only all the character of the face seems deepened, I cannot say shadowed, but penetrated with that kind of look which I fancy must always distinguish the faces of the saints above from those of the angels, — those who have suffered from those who have only sympathized; that deep, tender, patient, trusting, human look, which is stamped on those who have passed to the heavenly rapturous "*Thy will be done,*" through the agony of "*Not my will, but Thine.*"

At first Gretchen met her with the kind of reverent face she has at church; and she asked me afterwards, "Is that really the Cousin Eva in the picture?" But now there is the most familiar intimacy between them, and Gretchen confidently and elaborately expounds to Cousin Eva all her most secret plans and delights. The boys, also, have a most unusual value for her good opinion, and appear to think her judgment beyond that of ordinary women; for yesterday little Fritz was eagerly explaining to her the virtues of a new bow that had been given him, formed in the English fashion.

She is very anxious to set nine young nuns, who have embraced the Lutheran doctrine, free from Nimptschen. Gottfried thinks it very difficult, but by no means impracticable in time.

Meanwhile, what a stormy world our dove has re-

turned to! — the university well-nigh disorganized; the town in commotion; and no German Bible yet in any one's hands, by which, as Gottfried says, the claims of these new prophets might be tested.

Yet it does not seem to depress Eva. She says it seems to her like coming out of the ark into a new world; and, no doubt, Noah did not find everything laid out in order for him. She is quite on my mother's side about the prophets. She says, the apostles preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. If the Zwickau prophets preach him, they preach nothing new; and if they preach themselves, neither God nor the angel Gabriel gave them that message.

Our great sorrow is Fritz's continued imprisonment. At first we felt sure he would escape, but every month lessens our hopes, until we scarcely dare speak of him except in our prayers. Yet daily, together with his deliverance, Gottfried and I pray for the return of Dr. Luther, and for the prosperous completion of his translation of the German Bible, which Gottfried believes will be the greatest boon Dr. Luther has given, or can ever give, to the German people, and through them to Christendom.

Saturday, March 8, 1522.

The great warm heart is beating amongst us once more!

Dr. Luther is once more dwelling quietly in the Augustinian cloister, which he left for Worms a year ago. What changes since then! He left us amid our tears and vain entreaties not to trust his precious life to the treacherous safe-conduct which had entrapped John Huss to the stake.

He returns unscathed and triumphant — the defender of the good cause before emperor, prelates, and princes — the hero of our German people.

He left citizens and students for the most part trembling at the daring of his words and deeds.

He returns to find students and burghers impetuously and blindly rushing on in the track he opened, beyond his judgment and convictions.

He left, the foremost in the attack, timidly followed as he hurried forward, braving death alone.

He returns to recall the scattered forces, dispersed and divided in wild and impetuous pursuit.

Will, then, his voice be as powerful to recall and re-organize as it was to urge forward?

He wrote to the Elector, on his way from the Wartburg, disclaiming his protection — declaring that he returned to the flock God had committed to him at Wittenberg, called and constrained by God himself, and under mightier protection than that of an elector! "The sword," he said, "could not defend the truth. The mightiest are those whose faith is mightiest. Relying on his master, Christ, and on him alone, he came."

Gottfried says it is fancy, but already it seems to me I see a difference in the town — less bold, loud talking, than the day before yesterday; as in a family of eager, noisy boys, whose father is amongst them again. But after to-morrow, we shall be able to judge better. He is to preach in the city pulpit.

Monday, March 10, 1522.

We have heard him preach once more. Thank

God, those days in the wilderness, as he called it, have surely not been lost days for Dr. Luther.

As he stood again in the pulpit, many among the crowded congregation could not refrain from shedding tears of joy. In that familiar form and truthful, earnest face, we saw the man who had stood unmoved before the emperor and all the great ones of the empire — alone, upholding the truth of God.

Many of us saw, moreover, with even deeper emotion, the sufferer who, during those last ten months, had stood before an enemy more terrible than pope or emperor, in the solitude of the Wartburg; and while his own heart and flesh were often well-nigh failing in the conflict, had never failed to carry on the struggle bravely and triumphantly for us his flock; sending masterly replies to the University of Paris; smiting the lying traffic with indulgences, by one noble remonstrance, from the trembling hands of the Archbishop of Mainz; writing letter after letter of consolation or fatherly counsel to the little flock of Christ at Wittenberg; and, through all, toiling at that translation of the Word of God, which is the great hope of our country.

But older, tenderer, more familiar associations, mastered all the others when we heard his voice again — the faithful voice that had warned and comforted us so long in public and in private. To others, Dr. Luther might be the hero of Worms, the teacher of Germany, the St. George who had smitten the dragon of falsehood: to us he was the true, affectionate pastor; and many of us, I believe, heard little of the first words of his sermon, for the mere joy of hearing his

voice again, as the clear, deep tones, vibrated through the silent church.

He began with commending our faith. He said we had made much progress during his absence. But he went on to say, "We must have more than faith — we must have love. If a man with a sword in his hand happens to be alone, it matters little whether he keep it in the scabbard or not; but if he is in the midst of a crowd, he must take care to hold it so as not to hurt any one.

"A mother begins with giving her infant milk. Would it live if she gave it first meat and wine?"

"But, thou, my friend, hast, perhaps had enough of milk! It may be well for thee. Yet let thy weaker, younger brother take it. The time was when thou also couldst have taken nothing else.

"See the sun! It brings us two things — light and heat. The rays of light beam directly on us. No king is powerful enough to intercept those keen, direct, swift rays. But heat is radiated back to us from every side. Thus, like the light, faith should ever be direct and inflexible; but love, like the heat, should radiate on all sides, and meekly adapt itself to the wants of all.

"The abolition of the mass, you say," he continued, "is according to Scripture. I agree with you. But in abolishing it, what regard had you for order and decency? You should have offered fervent prayers to God, public authority should have been applied to, and every one would have seen then that the thing came from God.

"The mass is a bad thing; God is its enemy; it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout

the whole world it were superseded by the supper of the gospel. But let none tear any one away from it with violence. The matter ought to be committed to God. It is His Word that must act, and not we. And wherefore? do you say? Because I do not hold the hearts of men in my hand as the potter holds the clay in his. Our work is to speak; God will act. Let us preach. The rest belongs to him. If I employ force, what do I gain? Changes in demeanour, outward shows, grimaces, shams, hypocrisies. But what becomes of sincerity of heart, of faith, of Christian love? All is wanting where these are wanting; and for the rest I would not give the stalk of a pear.

“What we want is the heart; and to win that, we must preach the gospel. Then the word will drop to-day into one heart, to-morrow into another, and will so work that each will forsake the mass. God effects more than you and I and the whole world combined could attempt. He secures the heart; and when that is won, all is won.

“I say not this in order to re-establish the mass. Since it has been put down, in God's name let it remain so. But ought it to have been put down in the way it has been? St. Paul, on arriving at the great city of Athens, found altars there erected to false gods. He passed from one to another, made his own reflections on all, but touched none. But he returned peaceably to the Forum, and declared to the people that all these gods were mere idols. This declaration laid hold on the hearts of some, and the idols fell without Paul's touching them. I would preach, I would speak, I would write, but I would lay constraint on no one; for faith is a voluntary thing. See what I have done! I

rose in opposition to the pope, to indulgences, and the Papists; but I did so without tumult or violence. I pressed before all things the word of God; I preached, I wrote; I did nothing else. And while I was asleep, or seated at table in conversation with Amsdorf and Melanchthon, over our Wittenberg beer, that Word which I had been preaching was working, and subverted the popedom as never before it was damaged by assault of prince or emperor. I did nothing; all was done by the Word. Had I sought to appeal to force, Germany might by this time have been steeped in blood. And what would have been the result? Ruin and desolation of soul and body. I therefore kept myself quiet, and left the Word to force its own way through the world. Know you what the devil thinks when he sees people employ violence in disseminating the gospel among men? Seated with his arms crossed behind hell fire, Satan says, with a malignant look and hideous leer, 'Ah, but these fools are wise men, indeed, to do my work for me!' But when he sees the Word go forth and engage alone on the field of battle, then he feels ill at ease; his knees smite against each other, he shudders and swoons away with terror."

Quietly and reverently, not with loud debatings and noisy protestations of what they would do next, the congregation dispersed.

The words of forbearance came with such weight from that daring, fearless heart, which has braved the wrath of popedom and empire alone for God, and still braves excommunication and ban!

Wednesday, March 11.

Yesterday again Dr. Luther preached. He earnestly

warned us against the irreverent participation in the holy sacrament. "It is not the external eating which makes the Christian," he said; "it is the internal and spiritual eating, which is the work of faith, and without which all external things are mere empty shows and vain grimaces. Now this faith consists in firmly believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that having charged himself with our sins and our iniquities, and having borne them on the cross, he is himself the sole, the all-sufficient expiation; that he ever appears before God; that he reconciles us to the Father, and that he has given us the sacrament of his body in order to strengthen our faith in that unutterable mercy. If I believe these things, God is my defender: with him on my side, I brave sin, death, hell, and demons; they can do me no harm, nor even touch a hair of my head. The spiritual bread is the consolation of the afflicted, the cure of the sick, the life of the dying, food to the hungry, the treasure of the poor. He who is not grieved by his sins, ought not, then, to approach this altar. What would he do there? Ah, did our conscience accuse us, did our heart feel crushed at the thought of our shortcomings, we could not then lightly approach the holy sacrament."

There were more among us than the monk Gabriel Didymus (a few days since one of the most vehement of the violent faction, now sobered and brought to his right mind), that could say as we listened, "Verily it is as the voice of an angel."

But, thank God, it is not the voice of an angel, but a human voice vibrating to every feeling of our hearts — the voice of our own true, outspoken Martin Luther, who will, we trust, now remain with us to

build up with the same word which has already cleared away so much.

And yet I cannot help feeling as if his absence had done its work for us as well as his return. If the hands of violence can be arrested now, I cannot but rejoice they have done just as much as they have.

Now, let Dr. Luther's principle stand. Abolish nothing that is not directly prohibited by the Holy Scriptures.

March 30.

Dr. Luther's eight discourses are finished, and quiet is restored to Wittenberg. The students resume their studies, the boys return to school; each begins with a lowly heart once more the work of his calling.

No one has been punished. Luther would not have force employed either against the superstitious or the unbelieving innovators. "Liberty," he says, "is of the essence of faith."

With his tender regard for the sufferings of others we do not wonder so much at this.

But we all wonder far more at the gentleness of his words. They say the bravest soldiers make the best nurses of their wounded comrades. Luther's hand seems to have laid aside the battle-axe, and coming among his sick and wounded and perplexed people here, he ministers to them gently as the kindest woman — as our own mother could, who is herself won over to love and revere him with all her heart.

Not a bitter word has escaped him, although the cause these disorders are risking is the cause for which he has risked his life.

And there are no more tumults in the streets. The frightened Cordelier monks may carry on their cere-

monies without terror, or the aid of soldiery. All the warlike spirits are turned once more from raging against small external things, to the great battle beginning everywhere against bondage and superstition.

Dr. Luther himself has engaged Dr. Melanchthon's assistance in correcting and perfecting the translation of the New Testament, which he made in the solitude of the Wartburg. Their friendship seems closer than ever.

Christopher's press is in the fullest activity, and all seem full of happy, orderly occupation again.

Sometimes I tremble when I think how much we seem to depend on Dr. Luther, lest we should make an idol of him; but Thekla, who is amongst us again, said to me when I expressed this fear, —

“Ah, dear Else, that is the old superstition. When God gives us a glorious summer and good harvest, are we to receive it coldly and enjoy it tremblingly, lest he should send us a bad season next year to prevent our being too happy? If he sends the dark days, will he not also give us a lamp for our feet through them?”

And even our gentle mother said, —

“I think if God gives us a staff, Else, he *intends* us to lean on it.”

“And when he takes it away,” said Eva, “I think He is sure to give us his own hand instead! I think what grieves God is, when we use his gifts for what he did *not* intend them to be; as if, for instance, we were to *plant* our staff, instead of *leaning* on it; or to set it up as an image and adore it, instead of resting on it and adoring God. *Then*, I suppose, we might have to learn that our idol was not in itself a support,

or a living thing at all, but only a piece of lifeless wood."

"Yes," said Thekla decidedly, "when God gives us friends, I believe he means us to love them as much as we can. And when he gives us happiness, I am sure he means us to enjoy it as much as we can. And when he gives soldiers a good general, he means them to trust and follow him. And when he gives us back Dr. Luther and Cousin Eva," she added, drawing Eva's hand from her work and covering it with kisses, "I am quite sure he means us to welcome them with all our hearts, and feel that we can never make enough of them. O Elsè," she added, smiling, "you will never, I am afraid, be set quite free from the old fetters. Every now and then we shall hear them clanking about you, like the chains of the family ghost of the Gersdorfs. You will never quite believe, dear good sister, that God is not better pleased with you when you are sad than when you are happy."

"He is often nearest," said Eva softly, "when we are sad." And Thekla's lip quivered and her eyes filled with tears as she replied in a different tone, —

"I think I know that too, Cousin Eva."

Poor child, she has often had to prove it. Her heart must often ache when she thinks of the perilous position of Bertrand de Créqui among his hostile kindred in Flanders. And it is therefore she cannot bear a shadow of a doubt to be thrown on the certainty of their re-union.

The evangelical doctrine is enthusiastically welcomed at Antwerp and other cities of the Low Countries. But, on the other hand, the civil and ecclesiastical

authorities oppose it vehemently, and threaten persecution.

May 1522.

Dr. Luther has had an interview with Mark Stübner, the schoolmaster Cellarius, and others of the Zwickau prophets and their disciples. He told them plainly that he believed their violent, self-willed, fanatical proceedings were suggested, not by the Holy Spirit of love and truth, but by the spirit of lies and malice. Yet he is said to have listened to them with quietness. Cellarius, they say, foamed and gnashed his teeth with rage, but Stübner showed more self-restraint.

However, the prophets have all left Wittenberg, and quiet is restored.

A calm has come down on the place, and on every home in it — the calm of order and subjection instead of the restlessness of self-will. And all has been accomplished through the presence and the words of the man whom God has sent to be our leader, and whom we acknowledge. Not one act of violence has been done since he came. He would suffer no constraint either on the consciences of the disciples of the "prophets," or on those of the old superstition. He relies, as we all do, on the effect of the translation of the Bible into German, which is now quietly and rapidly advancing.

Every week the doctors meet in the Augustinian Convent, now all but empty, to examine the work done, and to consult about the difficult passages. When once this is accomplished, they believe God will speak through those divine pages direct to all men's hearts, and preachers and doctors may retire to their lowly subordinate places.

XXIII.

ATLANTIS' STORY.

CHRIEMHILD and I have always been the least clever of the family, and with much less that is distinctive about us. Indeed, I do not think there is anything particularly characteristic about us, except our being twins. Thekla says we are pure Saxons, and have neither of us anything of the impetuous Czech or Bohemian blood; which may so far be good for me, because Conrad has not a little of the vehement Swiss character in him. Every one always spoke of Chriemhild and me, and thought of us together; and when they called us the beauties of the family, I think they chiefly meant that we looked pleasant together by contrast. Thekla says God sends the flowers into the world as twins; contrasting with each other just as we did, — the dark-eyed violets with the fair primroses; golden gorse, and purple heather. Chriemhild she used sometimes to call sister Primrose, and me sister Violet. Chriemhild, however, is beautiful by herself without me, — so tall, and fair, and placid, and commanding-looking, with her large grey eyes, her calm broad brow, and her erect full figure, which always made her gentle manner seem condescending like a queen's. But I am nothing without Chriemhild; only people used to like to see my small slight figure, and my black eyes and hair, beside hers.

I wonder what Conrad Winkelried's people will

think of me in that far-off mountainous Switzerland whither he is to take me! He is sure they will all love me; but how can I tell? Sometimes my heart flutters a great deal to think of leaving home, and Elsel and the dear mother, and all. It is true Chriemhild seemed to find it quite natural when the time came, but she is so different. Every one was sure to be pleased with Chriemhild.

And I am so accustomed to love and kindness. They all know me so well here, and how much less clever I am than the rest, that they all bear with me tenderly. Even Thekla, who is often a little vehement, is always gentle with me, although she may laugh a little sometimes when I say anything more foolish than usual. I am so often making discoveries of things that every one else knew long since. I do not think I am so much afraid on my own account, because I have so little right to expect anything, and always get so much more than I deserve from our dear heavenly Father and from every one. Only on Conrad's account I should like to be a little wiser, because he knows so many languages, and is so very clever. When I spoke to Elsel about it once, she smiled and said she had the same kind of fears once, but if we ask him, God will always give us just the wisdom we want day by day. It is part of the "daily bread," she said. And certainly Elsel is not learned, and yet every one loves her, and she does so much good in a quiet way. But then, although she is not learned, she seems to me wise in little things. And she used to write a Chronicle when she was younger than I am. She told me so, although I have never seen it. I have been thinking that perhaps it is writing the Chronicle that has made her wise,

and therefore I intend to try to write one. But as at present I can think of nothing to say of my own, I will begin by copying a narrative Conrad lent me to read a few days since, written by a young Swiss student, a friend of his, who has just come to Wittenberg from St. Gall, where his family live. His name is Johann Kessler, and Conrad thinks him very good and diligent.

Copy of Johann Kessler's Narrative.

“As we were journeying towards Wittenberg to study the Holy Scriptures, at Jena we encountered a fearful tempest, and after many inquiries in the town for an inn where we might pass the night, we could find none, either by seeking or asking; no one would give us a night's lodging. For it was carnival time, when people have little care for pilgrims and strangers. So we went forth again from the town, to try if we could find a village where we might rest for the night.

“At the gate, however, a respectable-looking man met us, and spoke kindly to us, and asked whither we journeyed so late at night, since in no direction could we reach house or inn where we could find shelter before dark night set in. It was, moreover, a road easy to lose; he counselled us, therefore, to remain all night where we were.

“We answered, —

“‘Dear father, we have been at all the inns, and they sent us from one to another; everywhere they refused us lodging; we have, therefore, no choice but to journey further.’

“Then he asked if we had also inquired at the sign of the Black Bear.

“Then we said, —

“We have not seen it. Friend, where is it?”

“Then he led us a little out of the town. And when we saw the Black Bear, lo, whereas all the other landlords had refused us shelter, the landlord there came himself out at the gate to receive us, bade us welcome, and led us into the room.

“There we found a man sitting alone at the table, and before him lay a little book. He greeted us kindly, asked us to draw near, and to place ourselves by him at the table. For our shoes (may we be excused for writing it) were so covered with mud and dirt, that we were ashamed to enter boldly into the chamber, and had seated ourselves on a little bench in a corner near the door.

“Then he asked us to drink, which we could not refuse. When we saw how cordial and friendly he was, we seated ourselves near him at his table as he had asked us, and ordered wine that we might ask him to drink in return. We thought nothing else but that he was a trooper, as he sat there, according to the custom of the country, in hosen and tunic, without armour, a sword by his side, his right hand on the pommel of the sword, his left grasping its hilt. His eyes were black and deep, flashing and beaming like a star, so that they could not well be looked at.

“Soon he began to ask what was our native country. But he himself replied, —

“You are Switzers. From what part of Switzerland?”

“We answered, —

“‘From St. Gall.’

“Then he said, —

“‘If you are going hence to Wittenberg, as I hear, you will find good fellow-countrymen there, namely, Doctor Hieronymus Schurf, and his brother, Doctor Augustin.’

“We said, —

“‘We have letters to them.’ And then we inquired,

“‘Sir, can you inform us if Martin Luther is now at Wittenberg, or if not where he is?’

“He said, —

“‘I have reliable information that Luther is not now at Wittenberg. He will, however, soon be there. Philip Melanchthon is there now; he teaches Greek, and others teach Hebrew. I counsel you earnestly to study both; for both are necessary in order to understand the Holy Scriptures.’

“We said, —

“‘God be praised! For if God spare our lives we will not depart till we see and hear that man; since on his account have we undertaken this journey, because we understood that he purposes to abolish the priesthood, together with the mass, as an unfounded worship. For as we have from our youth been destined by our parents to be priests, we would know what kind of instruction he will give us, and on what authority he seeks to effect such an object.’

“After these words, he asked, —

“‘Where have you studied hitherto?’

“Answer, ‘At Basel.’

“Then said he, ‘How goes it at Basel? Is Erasmus of Rotterdam still there, and what is he doing?’

“‘Sir,’ said we, ‘we know not that things are going on there otherwise than well. Also, Erasmus is there, but what he is occupied with is unknown to any one, for he keeps himself very quiet, and in great seclusion.’

“This discourse seemed to us very strange in the trooper; that he should know how to speak of both the Schurfs, of Philip, and Erasmus, and also of the study of Hebrew and Greek.

“Moreover, he now and then used Latin words, so that we deemed he must be more than a common trooper.

“‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘what do they think in Switzerland of Luther.’

“‘Sir, there, as elsewhere, there are various opinions. Many cannot enough exalt him, and praise God that He has made His truth plain through him, and laid error bare; many, on the other hand, and among these more especially the clergy, condemn him as a reprobate heretic.’

“Then he said, ‘I can easily believe it is the clergy that speak thus.’

“With such conversation we grew quite confidential, so that my companion took up the little book that lay before him, and looked at it. It was a Hebrew Psalter. Then he laid it quickly down again, and the trooper drew it to himself. And my companion said, ‘I would give a finger from my hand to understand that language.’

“He answered, ‘You will soon comprehend it, if you are diligent: I also desire to understand it better, and practise myself daily in it.’

“Meantime the day declined, and it became quite dark, when the host came to the table.

“When he understood our fervent desire and longing to see Martin Luther, he said, —

“‘Good friends, if you had been here two days ago, you would have had your wish, for he sat here at table, and’ (pointing with his finger) ‘in that place.’

“It vexed and fretted us much that we should have lingered on the way; and we vented our anger on the muddy and wretched roads that had delayed us.

“But we added, —

“‘It rejoices us, however, to sit in the house and at the table where he sat.’

“Thereat the host laughed, and went out at the door.

“After a little while, he called me to come to him at the door of the chamber. I was alarmed, fearing I had done something unsuitable, or that I had unwittingly given some offence. But the host said to me, —

“‘Since I perceive that you so much wish to see and hear Luther, — that is he who is sitting with you.’

“I thought he was jesting, and said, —

“‘Ah, Sir Host, you would befool me and my wishes with a false image of Luther!’

“He answered, —

“‘It is certainly he. But do not seem as if you knew this.’

“I could not believe it; but I went back into the room, and longed to tell my companion what the host had disclosed to me. At last I turned to him, and whispered softly, —

“‘The host has told me that is Luther.’

“He, like me, could not at once believe it, and said, —

“He said, perhaps, it was Hutten, and thou hast misunderstood him.’

“And because the stranger’s bearing and military dress suited Hutten better than Luther, I suffered myself to be persuaded he had said, ‘It is Hutten,’ since the two names had a somewhat similar sound. What I said further, therefore, was on the supposition that I was conversing with Huldreich ab Hutten, the knight.

“While this was going on, two merchants arrived, who intended also to remain the night; and after they had taken off their outer coats and their spurs, one laid down beside him an unbound book.

“Then he the host had (as I thought) called Martin Luther, asked what the book was.

“‘It is Dr. Martin Luther’s Exposition of certain Gospels and Epistles, just published. Have you not yet seen it?’

“Said Martin, ‘It will soon be sent to me.’

“Then said the host, —

“‘Place yourselves at table; we will eat.’

“But we besought him to excuse us, and give us a place apart. But he said, —

“‘Good friends, seat yourselves at the table. I will see that you are welcome.’

“When Martin heard that, he said, —

“‘Come, come, I will settle the score with the host by-and-by.’

“During the meal, Martin said many pious and friendly words, so that the merchants and we were dumb before him, and heeded his discourse far more than our food. Among other things, he complained, with a sigh, how the princes and nobles were gathered at the Diet at Nürnberg on account of God’s word,

many difficult matters, and the oppression of the German nation, and yet seemed to have no purpose but to bring about better times by means of tourneys, sleigh-rides, and all kinds of vain, courtly pleasures; whereas the fear of God and Christian prayer would accomplish so much more.

“‘Yet these,’ said he sadly, ‘are our Christian princes!’

“Further, he said, ‘We must hope that the evangelical truth will bring forth better fruit in our children and successors — who will never have been poisoned by papal error, but will be planted in the pure truth and word of God — than in their parents, in whom these errors are so deeply rooted that they are hard to eradicate.’

“After this, the merchants gave their opinion, and the elder of them said, —

“‘I am a simple, unlearned layman, and have no special understanding of these matters; but as I look at the thing, I say, Luther must either be an angel from heaven or a devil from hell. I would gladly give ten florins to be confessed by him, for I believe he could and would enlighten my conscience.’

“Meantime the host came secretly to us and said, —

“‘Martin has paid for your supper.’

“This pleased us much, not on account of the gold or the meal, but because that man had made us his guests.

“After supper, the merchants rose and went into the stable to look after their horses. Meanwhile Martin remained in the room with us, and we thanked him for his kindness and generosity, and ventured to say we took him to be Huldreich ab Hutten. But he said, —

“‘I am not he.’

“‘Thereon the host came, and Martin said, —

“‘I have to-night become a nobleman, for these Switzers take me for Huldreich ab Hutten.’

“‘And then he laughed at the jest, and said, —

“‘They take me for Hutten, and you take me for Luther. Soon I shall become Markolfus the clown.’

“‘And after this he took a tall beer-glass, and said, according to the custom of the country, —

“‘Switzers, drink after me a friendly draught to each other’s welfare.’

“‘But as I was about to take the glass from him, he changed it, and ordered, instead, a glass of wine, and said, —

“‘Beer is a strange and unwonted beverage to you. Drink the wine.’

“‘Thereupon he stood up, threw his mantle over his shoulder, and took leave. He offered us his hand, and said, —

“‘When you come to Wittenberg, greet Dr. Hieronymus Schurf from me.’

“‘We said, —

“‘Gladly would we do that, but what shall we call you, that he may understand the greeting?’

“‘He said, —

“‘Say nothing more than, *He who is coming* sends you greeting. He will at once understand the words.’

“‘Thus he took leave of us, and retired to rest.

“‘Afterwards the merchants returned into the room, and desired the host to bring them more to drink, whilst they had much talk with him as to who this guest really was.

“‘The host confessed he took him to be Luther;

whereupon they were soon persuaded, and regretted that they had spoken so unbecomingly before him, and said they would rise early on the following morning, before he rode off, and beg him not to be angry with them, or to think evil of them, since they had not known who he was.

“This happened as they wished, and they found him the next morning in the stable.

“But Martin said, ‘You said last night at supper you would gladly give ten florins to confess to Luther. When you confess yourselves to him you will know whether I am Martin Luther or not.’

“Further than this he did not declare who he was, but soon afterwards mounted and rode off to Wittenberg.

“On the same day we came to Naumburg, and as we entered a village (it lies under a mountain, and I think the mountain is called Orlamünde, and the village Nasshausen), a stream was flowing through it which was swollen by the rain of the previous day, and had carried away part of the bridge, so that no one could ride over it. In the same village we lodged for the night, and it happened that we again found in the inn the two merchants; so they, for Luther’s sake, insisted on making us their guests at this inn.

“On the Saturday after, the day before the first Sunday in Lent, we went to Dr. Hieronymus Schurf, to deliver our letters of introduction. When we were called into the room, lo and behold! there we found the trooper Martin, as before at Jena; and with him were Philip Melancthon, Justus Jonas, Nicolaus Amsdorf, and Dr. Augustin Schurf, who were relating to him what had happened at Wittenberg during his ab-

sence. He greeted us, and, laughing, pointed with his finger and said, "This is Philip Melanchthon, of whom I spoke to you."

I have copied this to begin to improve myself, that I may be a better companion for Conrad, and also because in after years I think we shall prize anything which shows how our Martin Luther won the hearts of strangers, and how, when returning to Wittenberg an excommunicated and outlawed man, with all the care of the evangelical doctrine on him, he had a heart at leisure for little acts of kindness and words of faithful counsel.

What a blessing it is for me, who can understand nothing of the "Theologia Teutsch," even in German, and never could have learned Latin like Eva, that Dr. Luther's sermons are so plain to me, great and learned as he is. Chriemhild and I always understood them; and although we could never talk much to others, at night in our bed-room we used to speak to each other about them, and say how very simple religion seemed when he spoke of it, — just to believe in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, and to love him, and to do all we can to make every one around us happier and better. What a blessing for people who are not clever, like Chriemhild and me, to have been born in days when we are taught that religion is faith and love, instead of all of those complicated rules and lofty supernatural virtues which people used to call religion.

And yet they say faith and love and humility are more really hard than all the old penances and good works.

But that must be, I think, to people who have never heard, as we have from Dr. Luther, so much about God to make us love him; or to people who have more to be proud of than Chriemhild and I and so find it more difficult to think little of themselves.

XXIV.

EVA'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, *October 1522.*

How strange it seemed at first to be moving freely about in the world once more, and to come back to the old home at Wittenberg! Very strange to find the places so little changed, and the people so much. The little room where Else and I used to sleep, with scarcely an article of furniture altered, except that Thekla's books are there instead of Else's wooden crucifix; and the same view over the little garden, with its pear-tree full of white blossom, to the Elbe with its bordering oaks and willows, all then in their freshest delicate early green, while the undulations of the level land faded in soft blues to the horizon.

But, unlike the convent, all the changes in the people seemed to have been wrought by the touch of life rather than by that of death.

In Else's own home across the street, the ringing of those sweet childish voices, so new to me, and yet familiar with echoes of old tones and looks of our own well-remembered early days! And on Else herself the change seemed only such as that which develops the soft tints of spring into the green of shadowing leaves.

Christopher has grown from the self-assertion of boyhood into the strength and protecting kindness of manhood. Uncle Cotta's blindness seems to dignify him and make him the central object of every one's tender, reverent care, while his visions grow brighter

in the darkness, and more placid on account of his having no responsibility as to fulfilling them. He seems to me a kind of hallowing presence in the family, calling out every one's sympathy and kindness, and pathetically reminding us by his loss of the preciousness of our common mercies.

On the grandmother's heart the light is more like dawn than sunset — so fresh, and soft, and full of hope her old age seems. The marks of fretting, daily anxiety, and care have been smoothed from dear Aunt Cotta's face; and although a deep shadow rests there often when she thinks of Fritz, I feel sure sorrow is not now to her the shadow of a mountain of divine wrath, but the shadow of a cloud which brings blessing and hides light, which the Sun of love drew forth, and the Rainbow of promise consecrates.

Yet he has the place of the first-born in her heart. With the others, though not forgotten, I think his place is partly filled — but never with her. Elsel's life is very full. Atlantis never knew him as the elder ones did; and Thekla, dearly as she learned to love him during his little sojourn at Wittenberg, has her heart filled with the hopes of her future, or at times overwhelmed with its fears. With all it almost seems he would have in some measure to make a place again, if he were to return. But with Aunt Cotta the blank is as utterly a blank, and a sacred place kept free from all intrusion, as if it were a chamber of her dead, kept jealously locked and untouched since the last day he stood living there. Yet he surely is not dead; I say so to myself and to her when she speaks of it, a thousand times. Why, then, does this hopeless feeling creep over me when I think of him? It seems so impossible

to believe he ever can be amongst us any more. If it would please God only to send us some little word! But since that letter from Priest Ruprecht Haller, not a syllable has reached us. Two months since, Christopher went to this priest's village in Franconia, and lingered some days in the neighbourhood, making inquiries in every direction around the monastery where he his. But he could hear nothing, save that in the autumn of last year, the little son of a neighbouring knight, who was watching his mother's geese on the outskirts of the forest near the convent, used to hear the sounds of a man's voice singing from the window of the tower where the convent prison is. The child used to linger near the spot to listen to the songs, which, he said, were so rich and deep — sacred, like church hymns, but more joyful than anything he ever heard at church. He thought they were Easter hymns; but since one evening in last October he has never heard them, although he has often listened. Nearly a year since now!

Yet nothing can silence those resurrection hymns in his heart!

Aunt Cotta's great comfort is the holy sacrament. Nothing, she says, lifts up her heart like that. Other symbols, or writings, or sermons bring before her, she says, some part of truth; but the Holy Supper brings the Lord Himself before her. Not one truth about him, or another, but *himself*; not one act of his holy life alone, nor even his atoning death, but his very person, human and divine, — *himself* living, dying, conquering death, freely bestowing life. She has learned that to attend that holy sacrament is not, as she once thought, to perform a good work, which always left

her more depressed than before with the feeling how unworthily and coldly she had done it; but to look off from self to Him who finished *the good work* of redemption for us. As Dr. Melanchthon says, —

“Just as looking at the cross is not the doing of a good work, but simply contemplating a sign which recalls to us the death of Christ;

“Just as looking at the sun is not the doing of a good work, but simply contemplating a sign which recalls to us Christ and his gospel;

“So participating at the Lord’s table is not the doing of a good work, but simply the making use of a sign which brings to mind the grace that has been bestowed on us by Christ.”

“But here lies the difference; symbols discovered by man simply recall what they signify, whereas the signs given by God not only recall the things, but further assure the heart with respect to the will of God.”

“As the sight of a cross does not justify, so the mass does not justify. As the sight of a cross is not a sacrifice, either for our sins or for the sins of others, so the mass is not a sacrifice.”

“There is but one sacrifice, there is but one satisfaction — Jesus Christ. Beyond him there is nothing of the kind.”

I have been trying constantly to find a refuge for the nine evangelical nuns I left at Nimptschen, but hitherto in vain. I do not, however, by any means despair. I have advised them now to write themselves to Dr. Luther.

October 1522.

The German New Testament is published at last.

On September the 21st it appeared; and that day, happening to be Aunt Cotta's birthday, when she came down among us in the morning, Gottfried Reichenbach met her, and presented her with two large folio volumes in which it is printed, in the name of the whole family.

Since then one volume always lies on a table in the general sitting-room, and one in the window of Aunt Cotta's bed-room.

Often now she comes down in the morning with a beaming face, and tells us of some verse she has discovered. Uncle Cotta calls it her diamond-mine, and says, "The little mother has found the El Dorado after all!"

One morning it was, —

"Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you;" and that lasted her many days.

To-day it was, —

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." "Eva," she said, "that seems to me so simple. It seems to me to mean, that when sorrow comes, then the great thing we have to do is, to see we do not lose hold of *patience*; she seems linked to all the other graces, and to lead them naturally into the heart, hand in hand, one by one. Eva, dear child," she added, "is that what is meant?"

I said how often those words had cheered me, and how happy it is to think that all the while these graces are illumining the darkness of the heart, the dark hours are passing away, until all at once Hope steals to the

casement and withdraws the shutters; and the light which has slowly been dawning all the time, streams into the heart, "the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost."

"But," rejoined Aunt Cotta, "we cannot ourselves bring in Experience, or reach the hand of Hope, or open the window to let in the light of Love; we can only look up to God, keep firm hold of Patience, and *she will bring all the rest.*"

"And yet," I said, "*peace* comes before *patience*, peace with God through faith in Him who was delivered for our offences. All these graces do not lead us up to God. We have access to him first, and in his presence we learn the rest."

Yes, indeed, the changes in the Wittenberg world since I left it, have been wrought by the hand of life, and not by that of death, or time, which is his shadow. For have not the brightest been wrought by the touch of the Life himself?

It is God, not time, that has mellowed our grandmother's character; it is God and not time that has smoothed the care-worn wrinkles from Aunt Cotta's brow.

It is life and not death that has all but emptied the Augustinian convent, sending the monks back to their places in the world, to serve God and proclaim his gospel.

It is the water of life that is flowing through home after home in the channel of Dr. Luther's German Testament, and bringing forth fruits of love, and joy, and peace.

And we know it is life and not death which is

reigning in that lonely prison, wherein the child heard the resurrection hymns, and that is triumphing now in the heart of him who sang them, wherever he may be!

XXV.

THEKLA'S STORY.

October 1522.

ONCE more the letters come regularly from Flanders; and in most ways their tidings are joyful. Nowhere throughout the world, Bertrand writes, does the evangelical doctrine find such an eager reception as there. The people in the great free cities have been so long accustomed to judge for themselves and to speak their mind freely. The Augustinian monks who studied at Wittenberg, took back the gospel with them to Antwerp, and preached it openly in their church, which became so thronged with eager hearers, that numbers had to listen outside the doors. It is true, Bertrand says, that the Prior and one or two of the monks have been arrested, tried at Brussels, and silenced; but the rest continue undauntedly to preach as before, and the effect of the persecution has been only to deepen the interest of the citizens.

The great new event which is occupying us all now, however, is the publication of Dr. Luther's New Testament. Chriemhild writes that it is the greatest boon to her, because being afraid to trust herself to say much, she simply reads, and the peasants seem to understand that book better than anything she can say about it; or even, if at any time they come to anything which perplexes them, they generally find that by simply reading on it grows quite clear. Also, she writes, Ulrich reads it every evening to all the servants, and

it seems to bind the household together wonderfully. They feel that at last they have found something inestimably precious, which is yet no "privilege" of man or class, but the common property of all.

In many families at Wittenberg the book is daily read, for there are few of those who can read at all who cannot afford a copy, since the price is but a florin and a half.

New hymns also are beginning to spring up among us. We are no more living on the echo of old songs. A few days since a stranger from the north sang before Dr. Luther's windows, at the Augustinian convent, a hymn beginning, —

"Es ist das Heil uns kommen her."

Dr. Luther desired that it might be sung again. It was a response from Prussia to the glad tidings which have gone forth far and wide through his words! He said "he thanked God with a full heart."

The delight of having Eva among us once more is so great! Her presence seems to bring peace with it. It is not what she says or does, but what she is. It is more like the effect of music than anything else I know. A quiet seems to come over one's heart from merely being with her. No one seems to fill so little space, or make so little noise in the world as Eva, when she is there; and yet when she is gone, it is as if the music and the light had passed from the place. Everything about her always seems so in tune. Her soft, quiet voice, her gentle, noiseless movements, her delicate features, the soft curve of her cheek, those deep loving eyes, of which one never seems able to remember anything but that Eva herself looks through them into your heart.

All so different from me, who can scarcely ever come into a room without upsetting something, or disarranging some person, and can seldom enter on a conversation without upsetting some one's prejudices, or grating on some one's feelings!

It seems to me sometimes as if God did indeed lead Eva, as the Psalm says, "by His eye;" as if he had trained her to what she is by the direct teaching of his gracious voice, instead of by the rough training of circumstances. And nevertheless, she never makes me feel her hopelessly above me. The light is not like a star, which makes one feel "how peaceful it must be there, in these heights," but brings little light upon our path. It is like a lowly sunbeam coming down among us, and making us warm and bright.

She always makes me think of the verse about the saint who was translated silently to heaven, because he had "*walked with God.*" Yes, I am sure that is her secret.

Only I have a malicious feeling that I should like to see her for once thoroughly tossed out of her calm, just to be quite sure it is God's peace, and not some natural or fairy gift, or a stoical impassiveness from the "*Theologia Teutsch.*" Sometimes I fancy for an instant whether it is not a little too much with Eva, as if she were "translated" already; as if she had passed to *the other side* of the deepest earthly joy and sorrow, at least as regards herself. Certainly she has not as regards others. Her sympathy is indeed no condescending alms, flung from the other side of the flood, no pitying glance cast down on grief she feels, but could never share. Have I not seen her lip quiver, when I spoke of the dangers around Bertrand, even

when my voice was firm, and felt her tears on my face when she drew me to her heart.

December 1522.

That question at last is answered! I *have* seen Cousin Eva moved out of her calm, and feel at last quite sure she is not "translated" yet. Yesterday evening we were all sitting in the family-room. Our grandmother was dozing by the stove. Eva and my mother were busy at the table, helping Atlantis in preparing the dresses for her wedding, which is to be early in next year. I was reading to my father from Dr. Melancthon's new book, "The Common Places," (which all learned people say is so much more elegant and beautifully written than Dr. Luther's works, but which is to me only just a composed book, and not like all Dr. Luther's writings, a voice from the depths of a heart). I was feeling like my grandmother, a little sleepy, and, indeed, the whole atmosphere around us seemed drowsy and still, when our little maid, Lottchen, opened the door with a frightened expression, and before she could say anything, a pale tall man stood there. Only Eva and I were looking towards the door. I could not think who it was, until a low startled voice exclaimed "Fritz!" and looking round at Eva, I saw she had fainted.

In another instant he was kneeling beside her, lavishing every tender name on her, while my mother stood on the other side, holding the unconscious form in her arms, and sobbing out Fritz's name.

Our dear father stood up, asking bewildered questions — our grandmother awoke, and rubbing her eyes, surveyed the whole group with a puzzled expression, murmuring, —

“Is it a dream? Or are the Zwickau prophets, right after all, and is it the resurrection?”

But no one seemed to remember that tears and endearing words and bewildered exclamations were not likely to restore any one from a fainting fit, until to my great satisfaction our good motherly El^sè appeared at the door, saying, “What is it? Lottchen ran over to tell me she thought there were thieves.”

Then comprehending everything at a glance, she dipped a handkerchief in water, and bathed Eva’s brow, and fanned her with it, until in a few minutes she awoke with a short sobbing breath, and in a little while her eyes opened, and as they rested on Fritz, a look of the most perfect rest came over her face, she placed her other hand on the one he held already, and closed her eyes again. I saw great tears falling under the closed eyelids. Then looking up again and seeing my mother bending over her, she drew down her hand and laid it on Fritz’s, and we left those three alone together.

When we were all safely in the next room, we all by one impulse began to weep. I sobbed, —

“He looks so dreadfully ill. I think they have all but murdered him.”

And El^sè said, —

“She has exactly the same look on her face that came over it when she was recovering from the plague, and he stood motionless beside her, with that rigid hopeless tranquillity on his face, just before he left to be a monk. What will happen next?”

And my grandmother said in a feeble broken voice, —

“He looks just as your grandfather did when he

took leave of me in prison. Indeed, sometimes I am quite confused in mind. It seems as if things were coming over again. I can hardly make out whether it is a dream, or a ghost, or a resurrection.

Our father only did not join in our tears. He said what was very much wiser.

"Children, the greatest joy our house has known since Fritz left has come to it to-day. Let us give God thanks." And we all stood around him while he took the little velvet cap from his bald head and thanked God, while we all wept out our Amen. After that we grew calmer; the overwhelming tumult of feeling, in which we could scarcely tell joy from sorrow, passed, and we began to understand it was indeed a great joy which had been given to us.

Then we heard a little stir in the house, and my mother summoned us back; but we found her alone with Fritz, and would insist on his submitting to an unlimited amount of family caresses and welcomes.

"Come, Fritz, and assure our grandmother that you are alive, and that you have never been dead," said Elsi. And then her eyes filling with tears, she added, "What you must have suffered! If I had not remembered you before you received the tonsure, I should scarcely have known you now with your dark, long beard, and your white thin face."

"Yes," observed Atlantis in the deliberate way in which she usually announces her discoveries, "no doubt that is the reason why Eva recognised Fritz before Thekla did, although they were both facing the door, and must have seen him at the same time. She remembered him before he received the tonsure."

We all smiled a little at Atlantis' discovery, where-

upon she looked up with a bewildered expression, and said, "Do you think, then, she did *not* recognise him? I did not think of that. Probably, then, she took him for a thief, like Lottchen!"

Fritz was deep in conversation with our mother, and was not heeding us, but Elsè laughed softly as she patted Atlantis' hand, and said, —

"Conrad Winkelried must have expressed himself very plainly, sister, before you understood him."

"He did, sister Elsè," replied Atlantis gravely. "But what has that to do with Eva?"

When I went up to our room, Eva's and mine, I found her kneeling by her bed. In a few minutes she rose, and clasping me in her arms, she said —

"God is very good, Thekla. I have believed that so long, but never half enough until to-night."

I saw that she had been weeping, but the old calm had come back to her face, only with a little more sunshine on it.

Then, as if she feared to be forgetting others in her own happiness, she took my hand and said —

"Dear Thekla, God is leading us all through all the dark days to the morning. We must never distrust Him any more!"

And without saying another word we retired to rest. In the morning when I woke Eva was sitting beside me with a lamp on the table, and the large Latin Bible open before her. I watched her face for some time. It looked so pure, and good, and happy, with that expression on it which always helped me to understand the meaning of the words, "child of God," "little children," as Dr. Melancthon says our Lord called his disciples just before he left them. There

was so much of the unclouded trustfulness of the "*child*" in it, and yet so much of the peace and depth which are of *God*.

After I had been looking at her a while she closed the Bible and began to alter a dress of mine which she had promised to prepare for Christmas. As she was sewing, she hummed softly, as she was accustomed, some strains of old church music. At length I said —

"Eva, how old were you when Fritz became a monk?"

"Sixteen," she said softly; "he went away just after the plague."

"Then you have been separated twelve long years," I said. "God, then, sometimes exercises patience a long while."

"It does not seem long now," she said; "we both believed we were separated by God, and separated for ever on earth."

"Poor Eva," I said; "and this was the sorrow which helped to make you so good."

"I did not know it had been so great a sorrow, Thekla," she said with a quivering voice, "until last night."

"Then you had loved each other all that time," I said, half to myself.

"I suppose so," she said in a low voice. "But I never knew till yesterday how much."

After a short silence she began again, with a smile.

"Thekla, he thinks me unchanged during all those years; me, the matron of the novices! But, oh, how he is changed! What a life-time of suffering on his face! How they must have made him suffer!"

“God gives it to you as your life-work to restore and help him,” I said. “O Eva, it must be the best woman’s lot in the world to bind up for the dearest on earth the wounds which men have inflicted. It must be joy unutterable to receive back from God’s own hands a love you have both so dearly proved you were ready to sacrifice for him.”

“Your mother thinks so too,” she said. “She said last night the vows which would bind us together would be holier than any ever uttered by saint or hermit.”

“Did our mother say that?” I asked.

“Yes,” replied Eva. “And she said she was sure Dr. Luther would think so also.”

XXVI.

FRITZ'S STORY.

December 31, 1522.

WE are betrothed. Solemnly in the presence of our family and friends Eva has promised to be my wife; and in a few weeks we are to be married. Our home, (at all events, at first) is to be in the Thuringian forest, in the parsonage belonging to Ulrich von Gersdorf's castle. The old priest is too aged to do anything. Chriemhild has set her heart on having us to reform the peasantry, and they all believe the quiet and the pure air of the forest will restore my health, which has been rather shattered by all I have gone through during these last months, although not as much as they think. I feel strong enough for anything already. What I have lost during all those years in being separated from her! How poor and one-sided my life has been! How strong the rest her presence gives me, makes me to do whatever work God may give me!

Amazing blasphemy on God to assert that the order in which he has founded human life is disorder, that the love which the Son of God compares to the relation between himself and his Church sullies or lowers the heart.

Have these years then been lost? Have I wandered away wilful and deluded from the lot of blessing God had appointed me, since that terrible time of the plague, at Eisenach? Have all these been wasted years? Has all the suffering been fruitless, unnecessary pain? And, after all, do I return with precious time lost and

strength diminished just to the point I might have reached so long ago?

For Eva I am certain this is not so; every step of her way, the loving Hand has led her. Did not the convent through her become a home or a way to the Eternal Home to many? But for me? No, for me also the years have brought more than they have taken away! Those who are to help the perplexed and toiling men of their time, must first go down into the conflicts of their time. Is it not this which makes even Martin Luther the teacher of our nation? Is it not this which qualifies weak and sinful men to be preachers of the gospel instead of angels from heaven?

The holy angels sang on their heavenly heights the glad tidings of great joy, but the shepherds, the fishermen, and the publican spoke it in the homes of men! The angel who liberated the apostles from prison said, as if spontaneously, from the fulness of his heart, "Go speak to the people the words of *this life*." But the trembling lips of Peter who had denied, and Thomas who had doubted, and John who had misunderstood, were to speak the life-giving words to men, denying, doubting, misconceiving men, to tell what they knew, and how the Saviour could forgive.

The voice that had been arrested in cowardly curses by the look of divine pardoning love, had a tone in it the Archangel Michael's could never have!

And when the Pharisees, hardest of all, were to be reached, God took a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a blasphemer, a persecutor, one who could say, "I might also have confidence in the flesh," "I persecuted the Church of God."

Was David's secret contest in vain, when slaying

the lion and the bear, to defend those few sheep in the wilderness, he proved the weapons with which he slew Goliath and rescued the hosts of Israel? Were Martin Luther's years in the convent of Erfurt lost? Or have they not been the school-days of his life, the armoury where his weapons were forged, the gymnasium in which his eye and hand were trained for the battle-field?

He has seen the monasteries from within; he has felt the monastic life from within. He can say of all these external rules, "I have proved them, and found them powerless to sanctify the heart." It is this which gives the irresistible power to his speaking and writing. It is this which by God's grace enables him to translate the Epistles of Paul the Pharisee and the Apostle as he has done. The truths had been translated by the Holy Spirit into the language of his experience, and graven on his heart long before; so that in rendering the Greek into German he also testified of things he had seen, and the Bible from his pen reads as if it had been originally written in German, for the German people.

To me also in my measure these years have not been time lost. There are many truths that one only learns in their fulness by proving the bitter bondage of the errors they contradict.

Perhaps also we shall help each other and others around us better for having been thus trained apart. I used to dream of the joy of leading her into life. But now God gives her back to me enriched with all those years of separate experience, not as the Eva of childhood, when I saw her last, but ripened to perfect womanhood; not merely to reflect my thoughts, but to blend the fulness of her life with mine.

XXVII.

EVA'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, *January 1825.*

How little idea I had how the thought of Fritz was interwoven with all my life! He says he knew only too well how the thought of me was bound up with every hope and affection of his!

But he contended against it long. He said that conflict was far more agonizing than all he suffered in the prison since. For many years he thought it sin to think of me. I never thought it sin to think of him. I was sure it was not, whatever my confessor might say. Because I had always thanked God more than for anything else in the world, for all he had been to me, and had taught me, and I felt so sure what I could thank God for could not be wrong.

But now it is *duty* to love him best. Of that I am quite sure. And certainly it is not difficult. My only fear is that he will be disappointed in me when he learns just what I am, day by day, with all the halo of distance gone. And yet I am not really afraid. Love weaves better glories than the mists of distance. And we do not expect miracles from each other, or that life is to be a Paradise. Only the unutterable comfort of being side by side in every conflict, trial, joy, and supporting each other! If I can say "only" of that! For I do believe our help will be mutual. Far weaker and less wise as I am than he is, with a range of thought and experience so much narrower,

and a force of purpose so much feebler, I feel I have a kind of strength which may in some way, at some times even help Fritz. And it is this which makes me see the good of these separated years, in which otherwise I might have lost so much. With him the whole world seems so much larger and higher to me, and yet during these years, I do feel God has taught me something, and it is a happiness to have a little more to bring him than I could have had in my early girlhood.

It was for my sake, then, he made that vow of leaving us for ever!

And Aunt Cotta is so happy. On that evening when he returned, and we three were left alone, she said, after a few minutes' silence —

“Children, let us all kneel down, and thank God that he has given me the desire of my heart.”

And afterwards she told us what she had always wished and planned for Fritz and me, and how she had thought his abandoning of the world a judgment for her sins; but how she was persuaded now that the curse borne for us was something infinitely more than anything she could have endured, and that it had been all borne, and nailed to the bitter cross, and rent and blotted out for ever. And now, she said, she felt as if the last shred of evil were gone, and her life were beginning again in us — to be blessed and a blessing beyond her utmost dreams.

Fritz does not like to speak much of what he suffered in the prison of that Dominican convent, and least of all to me; because, although I repeat to myself, “It is over — over for ever!” — whenever I

think of his having been on the dreadful rack, it all seems present again.

He was on the point of escaping the very night they came and led him in for examination in the torture-chamber. And after that, they carried him back to prison, and seem to have left him to die there. For two days they sent him no food; but then the young monk who had first spoken to him, and induced him to come to the convent, managed to steal to him almost every day with food and water, and loving words of sympathy, until his strength revived a little, and they escaped together through the opening he had dug in the wall before the examination. But their escape was soon discovered, and they had to hide in the caves and recesses of the forest for many weeks before they could strike across the country and find their way to Wittenberg at last.

But it is over now. And yet not over. He who suffered will never forget the suffering faithfully borne for him. And the prison at the Dominican convent will be a fountain of strength for his preaching among the peasants in the Thuringian Forest. He will be able to say, "God can sustain in all trials. He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. *I know it, for I have proved it.*" And I think that will help him better to translate the Bible to the hearts of the poor, than even the Greek and Hebrew he learned at Rome and Tübingen.

XXVIII.

ELSE'S STORY.

ALL our little world is in such a tumult of thankfulness and joy at present, that I think I am the only sober person left in it.

The dear mother hovers around her two lost ones with quiet murmurs of content, like a dove around her nest, and is as absorbed as if she were marrying her first daughter, or were a bride herself, instead of being the established and honoured grandmother that she is. Chriemhild and I might find it difficult not to be envious, if we had not our own private consolations at home.

Eva and Fritz are certainly far more reasonable, and instead of regarding the whole world as centering in them, like our dear mother, appear to consider themselves made to serve the whole world, which is more Christian-like, but must also have its limits. I cannot but feel it a great blessing for them that they have Chriemhild and Ulrich, and more especially Gottfried and me, to look after their temporal affairs.

For instance, house linen. Eva, of course, has not a piece; and as to her bridal attire, I believe she would be content to be married in a nun's robe, or in the peasant's dress she escaped from Nimptschen in. However, I have stores which, as Gretchen is not likely to require them just yet, will, no doubt, answer the purpose. Gretchen is not more than eight, but I al-

ways think it well to be beforehand; and my maidens had already a stock of linen enough to stock several chests for her, which, under the circumstances, seems quite a special providence.

Gottfried insists upon choosing her wedding dress. And my mother believes her own ancestral jewelled head-dress with the pearls (which once in our poverty we nearly sold to a merchant at Eisenach) has been especially preserved for Eva.

It is well that Atlantis, who is to be married on the same day, is the meekest and most unselfish of brides, and that her marriage outfit is already all but arranged.

Chriemhild and Ulrich have persuaded the old knight to rebuild the parsonage; and she writes what a delight it is to watch it rising among the cottages in the village, and think of the fountain of blessing that house will be to all.

Our grandmother insists on working with her dear, feeble hands, on Eva's wedding stores, and has ransacked her scanty remnants of former splendour, and brought out many a quaint old jewel from the ancient Schönberg treasures.

Christopher is secretly preparing them a library of all Dr. Luther's and Dr. Melancthon's books, beautifully bound, and I do not know how many learned works besides.

And the melancholy has all passed from Fritz's face, or only remains as the depth of a river to bring out the sparkle of its ripples.

The strain seems gone from Eva's heart and his. They both seem for the first time all they were meant to be.

Just now, however, another event is almost equally filling our grandmother's heart.

A few days since, Christopher brought in two foreigners to introduce to us. When she saw them, her work dropped from her hands, and half rising to meet them, she said some words in a language strange to all of us.

The countenance of the strangers brightened as she spoke, and they replied in the same language.

After a few minutes' conversation, our grandmother turned to us, and said, —

“They are Bohemians, — they are Hussites. They know my husband's name. The truth he died for is still living in my country.”

The rush of old associations was too much for her. Her lips quivered, the tears fell slowly over her cheeks, and she could not say another word.

The strangers consented to remain under my father's roof for the night, and told us the errand which brought them to Wittenberg.

From generation to generation, since John Huss was martyred, they said, the truth he taught had been preserved in Bohemia, always at the risk, and often at the cost of life. Sometimes it had perplexed them much that nowhere in the world beside could they hear of those who believed the same truth. Could it be possible that the truth of God was banished to the mountain fastnesses? Like Elijah of old, they felt disposed to cry in their wilderness, “I, only I, am left.”

“But they could not have been right to think thus,” said my mother, who never liked the old religion to be too much reproached. “God has always had his

own who have loved him, in the darkest days. From how many convent cells have pious hearts looked up to him. It requires great teaching of the Holy Spirit and many battles to make a Luther; but, I think, it requires only to touch the hem of Christ's garment to make a Christian."

"Yes," said Gottfried, opening our beloved commentary on the Galatians, "what Dr. Luther said is true indeed, 'Some there were in the olden time whom God called by the text of the gospel and by baptism. These walked in simplicity and humbleness of heart, thinking the monks and friars, and such only as were anointed by the bishops, to be religious and holy, and themselves to be profane and secular, and not worthy to be compared to them. Wherefore, they feeling in themselves no good works to set against the wrath and judgment of God, did fly to the death and passion of Christ, and were saved in this simplicity.'"

"No doubt it was so," said the Bohemian deputies. "But all this was hidden from the eye of man. Twice our fathers sent secret messengers through the length and breadth of Christendom to see if they could find any that did understand, that did seek after God, and everywhere they found carelessness, superstition, darkness, but no response."

"Ah," said my mother, "that is a search only the eye of God can make. Yet, doubtless, the days were dark."

"They came back without having met with any response," continued the strangers, "and again our fathers had to toil and suffer on alone. And now the sounds of life have reached us in our mountain solitudes from all parts of the world; and we have come to Wit-

tenberg to hear the voice which awoke them first, and to claim brotherhood with the evangelical Christians here. Dr. Luther has welcomed us, and we return to our mountains to tell our people that the morning has dawned on the world at last."

The evening passed in happy intercourse, and before we separated, Christopher brought his lute, and we all sang together the hymn of John Huss, which Dr. Luther has published among his own: —

"Jesus Christus nostra salus,"

and afterwards Luther's own glorious hymn in German: —

"Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein."

Dear Christian people, all rejoice,
Each soul with joy upspringing;
Pour forth one song with heart and
voice,
With love and gladness singing.
Givethanks to God, our Lord above—
Thanks for his miracle of love;
Dearly he hath redeemed us!

The devil's captive bound I lay,
Lay in death's chains forlorn;
My sins distressed me night and day—
The sin within me born;
I could not do the thing I would,
In all my life was nothing good,
Sin had possessed me wholly.

My good works could no comfort
shed,
Worthless must they be rated;
My free will to all good was dead,
And God's just judgments hated.
Me of all hope my sins bereft:
Nothing out death to me was left,
And death was hell's dark portal.

Then God saw with deep pity moved
My grief that knew no measure;
Pitying he saw, and freely loved, —
To save me was his pleasure.
The Father's heart to me was stirred.
He saved me with no sovereign
word,
His very best it cost him.

He spoke to his beloved Son
With infinite compassion,
"Go hence, my heart's most pre-
cious crown
Be to the lost salvation;
Death, his relentless tyrant slay,
And bear him from his sins away,
With thee to live for ever."

Willing the Son took that behest,
Born of a maiden mother,
To his own earth he came a guest,
And made himself my brother.
All secretly he went his way,
Veiled in my mortal flesh he lay,
And thus the foe he vanquished.

He said to me, "Cling close to me,
 Thy sorrows now are ending;
 Freely I gave myself for thee,
 Thy life with mine defending;
 For I am thine, and thou art mine,
 And where I am there thou shalt
 shine,
 The foe shall never reach us.

True, he will shed my heart's life
 blood,
 And torture me to death;
 All this I suffer for thy good,
 This hold with earnest faith.
 Death dieth through my life diviue;
 I sinless bear those sins of thine,
 And so shalt thou be rescued.

Afterwards, at our mother's especial desire, Eva and Fritz sang a Latin resurrection hymn from the olden time.*

The renewal of the world
 Countless new joys bringeth forth:
 Christ arising, all things rise —
 Rise with him from earth.
 All the creatures feel their Lord —
 Feel his festal light outpoured.

Fire springs up with motion free,
 Breezes wake up soft and warm;
 Water flows abundantly,
 Earth remaineth firm.

All things light now sky-ward soar,
 Solid things are rooted more:
 All things are made new.

Ocean waves, grown tranquil, lie
 Smiling 'neath the heavens serene;
 All the air breathes light and fresh;
 Our valley groweth green.

* Mundi renevatio
 Nova parit gaudia,
 Resurgente Domino
 Conresurgunt omnia;

The translation only is given above.

** Adam of St. Victor, twelfth century.

I rise again to heaven from hence,
 High to my Father soaring,
 Thy Master there to be, and thence,
 My Spirit on thee pouring;
 In every grief to comfort thee,
 And teach thee more and more of
 me,
 Into all truth still gulding.

What I have done and taught on earth,
 Do thou, and teach, none dreading;
 That so God's kingdom may go forth,
 And his high praise be spreading;
 And guard thee from the words of
 men,
 Lest the great joy be lost again;
 Thus my last charge I leave thee."

Verdure clothes the arid plain,
 Frozen waters gush again
 At the touch of spring.

For the frost of death is melted,
 The prince of this world lieth low;
 And his empire strong among us,
 All is broken now.
 Grasping Him in whom alone
 He could nothing claim or own,
 His domain he lost.

Paradise is now regained,
 Life has vanquished death;
 And the joys he long had lost,
 Man recovereth.
 The cherubim at God's own word
 Turn aside the flaming sword;
 The long-lost blessing is restored,
 The closed way opened free.**

Elementa serviunt,
 Et auctoris sentiunt,
 Quanta sint solemnna.
 &c. &c. &c.

The next morning the strangers left us; but all the day our grandmother sat silent and tranquil, with her hands clasped, in an inactivity very unusual with her. In the evening, when we had assembled again — as we all do now every day in the old house — she said quietly, “Children, sing to me the ‘Nunc Dimittis.’ God has fulfilled every desire of my heart; and, if he willed it, I should like now to depart in peace to my dead. For I know they live unto him.”

Afterwards, we fell into conversation about the past. It was the eve of the wedding-day of Eva and Fritz, and Atlantis and Conrad. And we, a family united in one faith, naturally spoke together of the various ways in which God had led us to the one end.

The old days rose up before me, when the ideal of holiness had towered above my life, grim and stony, like the fortress of the Wartburg (in which my patroness had lived), above the streets of Eisenach; and when even Christ the Lord seemed to me, as Dr. Luther says, “a law-maker giving more strait and heavy commands than Moses himself” — an irrevocable, unapproachable Judge, enthroned far up in the cold spaces of the sky; and heaven, like a convent, with very high walls, peopled by nuns rigid as Aunt Agnes. And then the change which came over all my heart when I learned, through Dr. Luther’s teaching, that God is love — is our Father; that Christ is the Saviour, who gave himself for our sins, and loved us better than life; that heaven is our Father’s house; that holiness is simply loving God — who is so good, and who has so loved us, and, loving one another, that the service we have to render is simply to give thanks and to do good; — when, as Dr. Luther said, that word “our”

was written deeply in my heart — that for *our* sins He died — for mine, — that for all, for us, for *me*, He gave himself.

And then Fritz told us how he had toiled and tormented himself to reconcile God to him, until he found, through Dr. Luther's teaching, that our sins have been borne away by the Lamb of God — the sacrifice not of man's gift, but of God's; "that in that one person, Jesus Christ, we had forgiveness of sins and eternal life;" that God is to us as the father to the prodigal son — entreating *us* to be reconciled to Him. And he told us also, how he had longed for a priest, who could know infallibly all his heart, and secure him from the deceitfulness and imperfectness of his own confessions, and assure him that, knowing all his sin to its depths, with all its aggravations, he yet pronounced him absolved. And at last he had found that Priest, penetrating to the depths of his heart, tracing every act to its motive, every motive to its source, and yet pronouncing him absolved, freely, fully, at once — imposing no penance, but simply desiring a life of thanksgiving in return. "And this Priest," he added, "is with me always; I make my confession to him every evening, or oftener, if I need it; and as often as I confess, He absolves, and bids me be of good courage — go in peace, and sin no more. But He is not on earth. He dwells in the holy of holies, which never more is empty, like the solitary sanctuary of the old temple on all days in the year but one. He ever liveth to make intercession for us!"

Then we spoke together of the two great facts Dr. Luther had unveiled to us from the Holy Scriptures, that there is one sacrifice of atonement, the spotless

Lamb of God, who gave himself once for our sins; and that there is but one priestly Mediator, the Son of Man and Son of God; that, in consequence of this, all Christians are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices; and the feeblest has his offering, which, through Jesus Christ, God delights to accept, having first accepted the sinner himself in the Beloved.

Our mother spoke to us, in a few words, of the dreadful thoughts she had of God — picturing him rather as the lightning than the light; of the curse which she feared was lowering like a thunder-cloud over her life, until Dr. Luther began to show her that the curse has been borne for us by Him who was made a curse for us, and removed for ever from all who trust in him. “And then,” she said, “the Holy Supper taught me the rest. He bore for us the cross; he spreads for us the feast. We have, indeed, the cross to bear, but never more the curse; the cross from man, temptation from the devil, but from God nothing but blessing.”

But Eva said she could not remember the time when she did not think God good and kind beyond all. There were many other things in religion which perplexed her; but this had always seemed clear, that God so loved the world, he gave his Son. And she had always hoped that all the rest would be clear one day in the light of that love. The joy which Dr. Luther's writings had brought her was, she thought, like seeing the stains cleared away from some beautiful painting, whose beauty she had known but not fully seen — or like having a misunderstanding explained about a dear friend. She had always wondered about the hard penances to appease One who loved so much, and the

many mediators to approach Him; and it had been an inexpressible delight to find that these were all a mistake, and that access to God was indeed open — that the love and the sin, — life and death, — had met on the cross, and the sin had been blotted out, and death swallowed up of life.

In such discourse we passed the eve of the wedding-day.

And now the day has vanished like a bright vision; our little gentle loving Atlantis has gone with her husband to their distant home, the bridal crowns are laid aside, and Eva and Fritz in their sober everyday dress, but with the crown of unfading joy in their hearts, have gone together to their lowly work in the forest, to make one more of those hallowed pastor's homes which are springing up now in the villages of our land.

But Gretchen's linen-chest is likely to be long before it can be stored again. We have just received tidings of the escape of Eva's friends, the nine nuns of Nimptschen, from the convent, at last! They wrote to Dr. Luther, who interested himself much in seeking asylums for them. And now Master Leonard Koppe of Torgau has brought them safely to Wittenberg concealed in his beer waggon. They say one of the nuns in their haste left her slipper behind. They are all to be received into various homes, and Gottfried and I are to have the care of Catherine von Bora, the most determined and courageous, it is said, of all, from whose cell they effected their escape.

I have been busy preparing the guest-chamber for her, strewing lavender on the linen, and trying to

make it home-like for the young maiden who is banished for Christ's sake from her old home.

I think it must bring blessings to any home to have such guests.

June 1525.

Our guest, the noble maiden Catherine von Bora, has arrived. Grave and reserved she seems to be, although Eva spoke of her as very cheerful, and light as well as firm of heart. I feel a little afraid of her. Her carriage has a kind of majesty about it which makes me offer her more deference than sympathy. Her eyes are dark and flashing, and her forehead is high and calm.

This is not so remarkable in me, I having been always easily appalled by dignified persons; but even Dr. Luther, it seems to me, is somewhat awed by this young maiden. He thinks her rather haughty and reserved. I am not sure whether it is pride or a certain maidenly dignity.

I am afraid I have too much of the homely burgher Cotta nature to be quite at ease with her.

Our grandmother would doubtless have understood her better than either our gentle mother or I, but the dear feeble form seems to have been gradually failing since that meeting with the emissaries of the Bohemian Church. Since the wedding she has not once left her bed. She seems to live more than ever in the past, and calls people by the names she knew them in her early days, speaking of our grandfather as "Franz," and calling our mother "Greta" instead of "the mother." In the past she seems to live, and in that glorious present, veiled from her view by so thin a

veil. Towards heaven the heart, whose earthly vision is closing, is as open as ever. I sit beside her and read the Bible and Dr. Luther's books, and Gretchen says to her some of the new German hymns, Dr. Luther's, and his translation of John Huss's hymns. To-day she made me read again and again this passage, — "Christian faith is not, as some say, an empty husk in the heart until love shall quicken it; but if it be true faith, it is a sure trust and confidence in the heart whereby Christ is apprehended, so that Christ is the object of faith; *yea, rather even, in faith Christ himself is present.* Faith therefore justifieth because it apprehendeth and possesseth this treasure, Christ present. Wherefore Christ apprehended by faith, and dwelling in the heart, is the true Christian righteousness."

It is strange to sit in the old house, now so quiet, with our dear blind father downstairs, and only Thekla at home of all the sisters, and the light in that brave, strong heart of our grand mother growing slowly dim; or to hear the ringing sweet childish voice of Gretchen repeating the hymns of this glorious new time to the failing heart of the olden time.

Last night, while I watched beside that sick-bed, I thought much of Dr. Luther alone in the Augustinian monastery, patiently abiding in the dwelling his teaching has emptied, sending forth thence workers and teachers throughout the world; and as I pondered what he has been to us, to Fritz and Eva in their lowly hallowed home, to our mother, to our grandmother, to the Bohemian people, to little Gretchen singing her hymns to me, to the nine rescued nuns, to Aunt Agnes in the convent, and Christopher at his busy printing-

press, to young and old, religious and secular; I wonder what the new time will bring to that brave, tender, warm heart which has set so many hearts which were in bondage free, and made life rich to so many who were poor, yet has left his own life so solitary still.

XXIX.

EVA'S STORY.

THURINGIAN FOREST, *July 1523.*

It is certainly very much happier for Fritz and me to live in the pastor's house than in the castle; down among the homes of men, and the beautiful mysteries of this wonderful forest land, instead of towering high above all on a fortified height. Not of course that I mean the heart may not be as lowly in the castle as in the cottage; but it seems to me a richer and more fruitful life to dwell among the people than to be raised above them. The character of the dwelling seems to symbolize the nature of the life. And what lot can be so blessed as ours?

Linked to all classes that we may serve our Master who came to minister among all. In education equal to the nobles, or rather to the patrician families of the great cities, who so far surpass the country proprietors in culture, — in circumstances the pastor is nearer the peasant, knowing by experience what are the homely trials of straitened means. Little offices of kindness can be interchanged between us. Muhme Trüdchen finds a pure pleasure in bringing me a basket of her new-laid eggs as an acknowledgment of Fritz's visits to her sick boy; and it makes it all the sweeter to carry food to the family of the old charcoal-burner in the forest-clearing that our meals for a day or two have to be a little plainer in consequence. I think gifts which come from loving contrivance and a little

self-denial, must be more wholesome to receive than the mere overflowings of a full store. And I am sure they are far sweeter to give. Our lowly home seems in some sense the father's house of the village; and it is such homes, such hallowed centres of love and ministry, which God through our Luther is giving back to village after village in our land.

But, as Fritz says, I must be careful not to build our parsonage into a pinnacle higher than any castle, just to make a pedestal for him, which I certainly sometimes detect myself doing. His gifts seem to me so rich, and his character is, I am sure, so noble, that it is natural I should picture to myself his vocation as the highest in the world. That it is the highest, however, I am secretly convinced; the highest as long as it is the lowliest.

The people begin to be quite at home with us now. There are no great gates, no moat, no heavy draw-bridge between us and the peasants. Our doors stand open; and timid hands which could never knock to demand admittance at castle or convent gate can venture gently to lift our latch. Mothers creep to the kitchen with their sick children to ask for herbs, lotions, or drinks, which I learned to distil in the convent. And then I can ask them to sit down, and we often naturally begin to speak of Him who healed the sick people with a word, and took the little children from the mothers' arms to His to bless them. Sometimes, too, stories of wrong and sorrow come out to me which no earthly balm can cure, and I can point to Him who only can heal because He only can forgive.

Then Fritz says he can preach so differently from knowing the heart-cares and burdens of his flock; and

the people seem to feel so differently when they meet again from the pulpit with sacred words and histories which they have grown familiar with in the home.

A few of the girls come to me also to learn sewing or knitting, and to listen or learn to read Bible stories. Fritz meanwhile instructs the boys in the Scriptures and in sacred music, because the schoolmaster is growing old and can teach the children little but a few Latin prayers by rote, and to spell out the German alphabet.

I could not have imagined such ignorance as we have found here. It seems, Fritz says, as if the first preachers of Christianity to the Germans had done very much for the heart of the nation what the first settlers did for its forests, made a clearing here and there, built a church, and left the rest to its original state.

The bears and wolves which prowl about the forest, and sometimes in winter venture close to the thresholds of our houses, are no wilder than the wild legends which haunt the hearts of the peasants. On Sundays they attire themselves in their holiday clothes, come to hear mass, bow before the sacred host, and the crucifix, and image of the Virgin, and return to continue during the week their everyday terror-worship of the spirits of the forest. They seem practically to think our Lord is the God of the church and the village, while the old pagan sprites retain possession of the forest. They appear scarcely even quite to have decided St. Christopher's question, "Which is the *strongest*, that I may worship him?"

But, alas, whether at church or in the forest, the worship they have been taught seems to have been chiefly one of fear. The Cobolds and various sprites

they believe will bewitch their cows, set fire to their hay-stacks, lead them astray through the forest, steal their infants from the cradle to replace them by fairy changelings. Their malignity and wrath they deprecate, therefore, by leaving them gleanings of corn or nuts, by speaking of them with feigned respect, or by Christian words and prayer, which they use as spells.

From the Almighty God they fear severer evil. He, they think, is to sit on the dreadful day of wrath on the judgment throne to demand strict account of all their misdeeds. Against His wrath also they have been taught to use various remedies which seem to us little better than a kind of spiritual spells; *paters*, *aves*, penances, confession, indulgences.

To protect them against the forest sprites they have secret recourse to certain gifted persons, mostly shrivelled, solitary, weird old women (successors, Fritz says, of the old pagan prophetesses), who for money perform certain rites of white magic for them; or give them written charms to wear; or teach them magic rhymes to say.

To protect them against God, they used to have recourse to the priest, who performed masses for them, laid ghosts, absolved sins, promised to turn aside the vengeance of offended heaven.

But in both cases they seem to have the melancholy persuasion that the ruling power is hostile to them. In both cases, religion is not so much a *worship* as a *spell*; not an approach to God, but an interposing of something to keep off the weight of his dreaded presence.

When first we began to understand this, it used to cost me many tears.

"How can it be," I said one day to Fritz, "that

all the world seems so utterly to misunderstand God?"

"There is an enemy in the world," he said, solemnly, "sowing lies about God in every heart."

"Yet God is mightier than Satan," I said; "how is it then that no ray penetrates through the darkness from fruitful seasons, from the beauty of the spring-time, from the abundance of the harvest, from the joys of home, to show the people that God is love?"

"Ah, Eva," he said sadly, "have you forgotten that not only is the devil in the world, but sin in the heart? He lies, indeed, about God, when he persuades us that God grudges us blessings; but he tells the truth about ourselves when he reminds us that we are sinners, under the curse of the good and loving law. The lie would not stand for an instant if it were not founded on the truth. It is only by confessing the truth, on which his falsehood is based, that we can destroy it. We must say to the peasants, "Your fear is well founded. See *on that cross* what your sin cost!"

"But the old religion displayed the crucifix," I said.

"Thank God, it did — it does!" he said. "But, instead of the crucifix, we have to tell of a cross from which the Crucified is gone; of an empty tomb and a risen Saviour; of the curse removed; of God, who gave the Sacrifice, welcoming back the Sufferer to the throne."

We have not made much change in the outward ceremonies. Only, instead of the sacrifice of the mass, we have the Feast of the Holy Supper; no elevation of the host, no saying of private masses for the dead;

and all the prayers, thanksgivings, and hymns, in German.

Dr. Luther still retains the Latin in some of the services of Wittenberg, on account of its being an university town, that the youth may be trained in the ancient languages. He said he would gladly have some of the services in Greek and Hebrew, in order thereby to make the study of those languages as common as that of Latin. But here in the forest, among the ignorant peasants, and the knights, who, for the most part, forget before old age what little learning they acquired in boyhood, Fritz sees no reason whatever for retaining the ancient language; and delightful it is to watch the faces of the people when he reads the Bible or Luther's hymns, now that some of them begin to understand that the divine service is something in which their hearts and minds are to join, instead of a kind of magic external rite to be performed for them.

It is a great delight also to us to visit Chriemhild and Ulrich von Gersdorf at the castle. The old knight and Dame Hermentrud were very reserved with us at first; but the knight has always been most courteous to me, and Dame Hermentrud, now that she is convinced we have no intention of trenching on her state, receives us very kindly.

Between us, moreover, there is another tender bond, since she has allowed herself to speak of her sister Beatrice, to me known only as the subdued and faded aged nun; to Dame Hermentrud, and the aged retainers and villagers, remembered in her bright, but early blighted, girlhood.

Again and again I have to tell her sister the story of her gradual awakening from uncomplaining hope-

lessness to a lowly and heavenly rest in Christ; and of her meek and peaceful death.

"Great sacrifices," she said once, "have to be made to the honour of a noble lineage, Frau Pastorin. I also have had my sorrows;" and she opened a drawer of a cabinet, and showed me the miniature portraits of a nobleman and his young boy, her husband and son, both in armour. "These both were slain in a feud with the family to which Beatrice's betrothed belonged," she said bitterly. "And should our lines ever be mingled in one?"

"But are these feuds never to die out?" I said.

"Yes," she replied sternly, leading me to a window, from which we looked on a ruined castle in the distance. "*That* feud has died out. The family is extinct!"

"The Lord Christ tells us to forgive our enemies," I said quietly.

"Undoubtedly," she replied; "but the von Bernsteins were usurpers of our rights, robbers and murderers. Such wrongs must be avenged, or society would fall to pieces."

Towards the peasants Dame Hermentrud has very condescending and kindly feelings, and frequently gives us food and clothing for them, although she still doubts the wisdom of teaching them to read.

"Every one should be kept in his place," she says.

And as yet I do not think she can form any idea of heaven, except as of a well organized community, in which the spirits of the nobles preside loftily on the heights, while the spirits of the peasants keep meekly to the valleys; the primary distinction between earth

and heaven being, that in heaven all will know how to keep in their places.

And no doubt in one sense she is right. But how would she like the order in which places in heaven are assigned?

"The first shall be last, and the last first."

"He that is chief among you, let him be as he that doth serve."

Among the peasants sometimes, on the other hand, Fritz is startled by the bitterness of feeling which betrays itself against the lords; how the wrongs of generations are treasured up, and the name of Luther is chiefly revered from a vague idea that he, the peasant's son, will set the peasants free.

Ah, when will God's order be established in the world, when each, instead of struggling upwards in selfish ambition, and pressing others down in mean pride — looking up to envy, and looking down to scorn — shall look up to honour and look down to help! when all shall "by love serve one another?"

September 1525.

We have now a guest of whom I do not dare to speak to Dame Hermentrud. Indeed, the whole history Fritz and I will never tell to any here.

A few days since a worn, grey-haired old man came to our house, whom Fritz welcomed as an old friend. It was Priest Ruprecht Haller, from Franconia. Fritz had told me something of his history, so that I knew what he meant, when in a quivering voice he said, abruptly, taking Fritz aside, —

"Bertha is very ill — perhaps dying. I must never see her any more. She will not suffer it, I

know. Can you go and speak a few words of comfort to her?"

Fritz expressed his readiness to do anything in his power, and it was agreed that Priest Ruprecht was to stay with us that night, and that they were to start together on the morrow for the farm where Bertha was at service, which lay not many miles off through the forest.

But in the night I had a plan, which I determined to set going before I mentioned it to Fritz, because he will often consent to a thing which is once *begun*, which he would think quite impracticable if it is only *proposed*; that is, especially as regards anything in which I am involved. Accordingly, the next morning I rose very early and went to our neighbour, Farmer Herder, to ask him to lend us his old grey pony for the day, to bring home an invalid. He consented, and before we had finished breakfast the pony was at the door.

"What is this?" said Fritz.

"It is Farmer Herder's pony to take me to the farm where Bertha lives, and to bring her back," I said.

"Impossible, my love!" said Fritz.

"But you see it is already all arranged, and begun to be done," I said; "I am dressed, and the room is all ready to receive her."

Priest Ruprecht rose from the table, and moved towards me, exclaiming fervently, —

"God bless you!" Then seeming to fear that he had said what he had no right to say, he added, "God bless you for the thought. But it is too much!" and he left the room.

"What would you do, Eva?" Fritz said, looking in much perplexity at me.

"Welcome Bertha as a sister," I said, "and nurse her until she is well."

"But how can I suffer you to be under one roof?" he said.

I could not help my eyes filling with tears.

"The Lord Jesus suffered such to anoint his feet," I said, "and she, you told me, loves Him, has given up all dearest to her to keep his words. Let us blot out the past as he does, and let her begin life again from our home, if God wills it so."

Fritz made no further objection. And through the dewy forest paths we went, we three; and with us, I think we all felt, went Another, invisible, the Good Shepherd of the wandering sheep.

Never did the green glades and forest flowers and solemn pines seem to me more fresh and beautiful, and more like a holy cathedral than that morning.

After a little meek resistance Bertha came back with Fritz and me. Her sickness seemed to me to be more the decline of one for whom life's hopes and work are over, than any positive disease. And with care, the grey pony brought her safely home.

Never did our dear home seem to welcome us so brightly as when we led her back to it, for whom it was to be a sanctuary of rest, and refuge from bitter tongues.

There was a little room over the porch which we had set apart as the guest-chamber; and very sweet it was to me that Bertha should be its first inmate; very sweet to Fritz and me that our home should be what

our Lord's heart is, a refuge for the outcast, the penitent, the solitary, and the sorrowful.

Such a look of rest came over her poor, worn face, when at last she was laid on her little bed!

"I think I shall get well soon," she said the next morning, "and then you will let me stay and be your servant; when I am strong I can work really hard, and there is something in you both which makes me feel this like home."

"We will try," I said, "to find out what God would have us do."

She does improve daily. Yesterday she asked for some spinning, or other work to do, and it seems to cheer her wonderfully. To-day she has been sitting in our dwelling-room with her spinning-wheel. I introduced her to the villagers who come in as a friend who has been ill. They do not know her history.

January 1524.

It is all accomplished now. The little guest-chamber over the porch is empty again, and Bertha is gone.

As she was recovering Fritz received a letter from Priest Ruprecht, which he read in silence, and then laid aside until we were alone on one of our expeditions to the old charcoal-burner's in the forest.

"Haller wants to see Bertha once more," he said, dubiously.

"And why not, Fritz?" I said; "why should not the old wrong as far as possible be repaired, and those who have given each other up at God's commandment, be given back to each other by his commandment?"

"I have thought so often, my love," he said, "but I did not know what you would think."

So after some little difficulty and delay, Bertha and Priest Ruprecht Haller were married very quietly in our village church, and went forth to a distant village in Pomerania, by the Baltic Sea, from which Dr. Luther had received a request to send them a minister of the gospel.

It went to my heart to see the two go forth together down the village street, those two whose youth inhuman laws and human weakness had so blighted. There was a reverence about his tenderness to her and a wistful lowliness in hers for him, which said, "All that thou hast lost for me, as far as may be I will make up to thee in the years that remain!"

But as we watched her pale face and feeble steps, and his bent, though still vigorous form, Fritz took my hands as we turned back into the house, and said, —

"It is well. But it can hardly be for long!"
And I could not answer him for tears.

XXX.

ELSE'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, *August 1524.*

THE slow lingering months of decline are over. Yesterday our grandmother died. As I looked for the last time on the face that had smiled on me from childhood, the hands which rendered so many little loving services to me, none of which can evermore be returned to her, what a sacred tenderness is thrown over all recollection of her, how each little act of thoughtful consideration and self-denial rushes back on the heart, what love I can see glowing through the anxious care which sometimes made her a little querulous, especially with my father, although never lately.

Can life ever be quite the same again? Can we ever forget to bear tenderly with little infirmities such as those of hers, which seem so blameless now, or to prize with a thankfulness which would flood with sunshine our little cares, the love which must one day be silent to us as she is now?

Her death seems to age us all into another generation! She lived from the middle of the old world into the full morning of the new; and a whole age of the past seems to die with her. But after seeing those Bohemian deputies and knowing that Fritz and Eva were married, she ceased to wish to live. She had lived, she said, through two mornings of time on earth, and now she longed for the daybreak of heaven.

But yesterday morning, one of us! and now one

of the heavenly host! Yesterday we knew every thought of her heart, every detail of her life, and now she is removed into a sphere of which we know less than of the daily life of the most ancient of the patriarchs. As Dr. Luther says, an infant on its mother's breast has as much understanding of the life before it, as we of the life before us after death. "Yet," he saith also, "since God hath made his world of earth and sky so fair, how much fairer that imperishable world beyond!"

All seems to me clear and bright after the resurrection; but *now?* where is that spirit now, so familiar to us and so dear, and now so utterly separated?

Dr. Luther said, "A Christian should say, I know that it is thus I shall journey hence; when my soul goes forth, charge is given to God's kings and high princes, who are the dear angels, to receive me and convoy me safely home. The Holy Scriptures, he writes, teach nothing of purgatory, but tell us that the spirits of the just enjoy the sweetest and most delightful peace and rest. How they live there, indeed, we know not, or what the place is where they dwell. But this we know assuredly, they are in no grief or pain, but rest in the grace of God. As in this life they were wont to fall softly asleep in the guard and keeping of God and the dear angels, without fear of harm, although the devils might prowl around them; so after this life do they repose in the hand of God."

"To depart and be with Christ is far better."

"To-day in Paradise with me."

"Absent from the body, at home with the Lord."

Everything for our peace and comfort concerning those who are gone depends on what those words

"*with me*" were to them and are to us. Where and how they live, indeed, we know not; with Whom we know. The more then, O our Saviour and theirs! we know of Thee, the more we know of them. With Thee, indeed, the waiting-time before the resurrection can be no cold drear ante-chamber of the palace. Where Thou art, must be light, love, and home.

Precious as Dr. Luther's own words are, what are they at a time like this, compared with the word of God he has unveiled to us?

My mother, however, is greatly cheered by these words of his, "Our Lord and Saviour grant us joyfully to see each other again hereafter. For our faith is sure, and we doubt not that we shall see each other again with Christ in a little while; since the departure from this life to be with Christ is less in God's sight, than if I go from you to Mansfeld, or you took leave of me to go from Wittenberg to Mansfeld. This is assuredly true. A brief hour of sleep and all will be changed."

WITTENBERG, *September 1524.*

During this month we have been able often to give thanks that the beloved feeble form is at rest. The times seem very troublous. Dr. Luther thinks most seriously of them. Rumours have reached us for some time of an uneasy feeling among the peasantry. Fritz wrote about it from the Thuringian Forest. The peasants, as our good Elector said lately, have suffered many wrongs from their lords; and Fritz says they had formed the wildest hopes of better days from Dr. Luther and his words. They thought the days of freedom had come. And bitter and hard it is for them to learn that the

gospel brings freedom now as of old by giving strength to suffer, instead of by suddenly redressing wrong. The fanatics, moreover, have been among them. The Zwickau prophets and Thomas Münzer (silenced last year at Wittenberg by Luther's return from the Wartburg), have promised them all they actually expected from Luther. Once more, they say, God is sending inspired men on earth, to introduce a new order of things, no more to teach the saints how to bow, suffer, and be patient; but how to fight and avenge themselves of their adversaries, and to reign.

October 1524.

Now, alas, the peasants are in open revolt, rushing through the land by tens of thousands. The insurrection began in the Black Forest, and now it sweeps throughout the land, gathering strength as it advances, and bearing everything before it by the mere force of numbers and movement. City after city yields and admits them, and swears to their Twelve Articles, which in themselves they say are not so bad, if only they were enforced by better means. Castle after castle is assailed and falls. Ulrich writes in burning indignation at the cruel deaths they have inflicted on noble men and women, and on their pillaging the convents. Fritz, on the other hand, writes entreating us not to forget the long catalogue of legalized wrongs which had led to this moment of fierce and lawless vengeance.

Dr. Luther, although sympathizing with the peasants by birth, and by virtue of his own quick and generous indignation at injustice, whilst with a prophet's plainness he blames the nobles for their exactions and

tyranny, yet sternly demands the suppression of the revolt with the sword. He says this is essential, if it were only to free the honest and well-meaning peasantry from the tyranny of the ambitious and turbulent men who compel them to join their banner on pain of death. With a heart that bleeds at every severity, he counsels the severest measures as the most merciful. More than once he and others of the Wittenberg doctors have succeeded in quieting and dispersing riotous bands of the peasants assembled by tens of thousands, with a few calm and earnest words. But bitter, indeed, are these times to him. The peasants whom he pities, and because he pities condemns, call out that he has betrayed them, and threaten his life. The prelates and princes of the old religion declare all this disorder and pillage are only the natural consequences of his false doctrine. But between them both he goes steadfastly forward, speaking faithful words to all. More and more, however, as terrible rumours reach us of torture, and murder, and wild pillage, he seems to become convinced that mercy and vigour are on the same side. And now he, whose journey through Germany not three years since was a triumphal procession, has to ride secretly from place to place on his errands of peace-making, in danger of being put to death by the people if he were discovered!

My heart aches for these peasants. These are not the Pharisees who were "*not blind*," but understood only too well what they rejected. They are the "multitudes," the common people, who as of old heard the voice of love and truth gladly; for whom dying he pleaded, "They know not what they do."

April 1525.

The tide has turned. The army of the empire, under Truchsess, is out. Philip of Hesse, after quieting his own dominions, is come to Saxony to suppress the revolt here. Our own gentle and merciful Elector, who so reluctantly drew the sword, is, they say, dying. The world is full of change!

Meantime, in our little Wittenberg world, changes are in prospect. It seems probable that Dr. Luther, after settling the other eight nuns, and endeavouring also to find a home for Catherine von Bora, will espouse her himself. A few months since he tried to persuade her to marry Glatz, pastor of Orlamünde, but she refused. And now it seems certain that the solitary Augustinian convent will become a home, and that she will make it so.

Gottfried and I cannot but rejoice. In this world of tumult and unrest, it seems so needful that that warm, earnest heart should have one place where it can rest, one heart that will understand and be true to him if all else should become estranged, as so many have. And this, we trust, Catherine von Bora will be to him.

Reserved, and with an innate dignity, which will befit the wife of him whom God has called in so many ways to be the leader of the hearts of men, she has a spirit which will prevent her sinking into the mere reflection of that resolute character, and a cheerfulness and womanly tact which will, we hope, sustain him through many a depressing hour, such as those who wear earth's crowns of any kind must know.

December 1525.

This year has, indeed, been a year of changes. The peasant revolt is crushed. At Frankenhäusen, the last great victory was gained. Thomas Münzer was slain, and his undisciplined hosts fled in hopeless confusion. The revolt is crushed, alas! Gottfried says, as men too generally crush their enemies when once in their power, exceeding the crime in the punishment, and laying up a store of future revolt and vengeance for future generations.

The good and wise Elector Friedrich died just before the victory. It is well, perhaps, that he did not live to see the terrible vengeance that has been inflicted, the roadsteads lined with gibbets, torture returned by torture, insult by cruel mocking. The poor deluded people, especially the peasantry, wept for the good Elector, and said, "Ah, God, have mercy on us! We have lost our father!" He used to speak kindly to their children in the fields, and was always ready to listen to a tale of wrong. He died humbly as a Christian; he was buried royally as a prince.

Shortly before his death, his chaplain, Spalatin, came to see him. The Elector gave him his hand, and said, "You do well to come to me. We are commanded to visit the sick."

Neither brother nor any near relative was with him when he died. The services of all brave men were needed in those stormy days. But he was not forsaken. To the childless, solitary sufferer his faithful servants were like a family.

"Oh, dear children," he said, "I suffer greatly!"

Then Joachim Sack, one of his household, a Silesian, said, —

"Most gracious master, if God will, you will soon be better."

Shortly after the dying prince said, —

"Dear children, I am ill indeed."

And Sack answered, —

"Gracious lord, the Almighty God sends you all this with a Father's love, and with the best will to you."

Then the prince repeated softly, in Latin, the words of Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

And once more he said, —

"Dear children, I am very ill."

And the faithful Joachim comforted him again, —

"My gracious Master, the Almighty God, sends it all to your electoral highness from the greatest love."

The prince clasped his hands, and said, —

"*For that I can trust my good God!*" and added, "Help me, help me, O my God."

And after receiving the holy communion in both kinds, he called his servants around him, and said, —

"Dear children, I entreat you, that in whatever I have done you wrong, by word or deed, you will forgive me for God's sake, and pray others to do the same. For we princes do much wrong often to poor people that should not be."

As he spoke thus, all that were in the room could not restrain their tears, and seeing that, he said, —

"Dear children, weep not for me. It will not be long with me now. But think of me, and pray to God for me,"

Spalatin had copied some verses of the Bible for him, which he put on his spectacles to read for him-

self. He thought much of Luther, whom, much as he had befriended him, he had never spoken to, and sent for him. But it was in vain. Luther was on the Hartz mountains, endeavouring to quell the peasants' revolt. That interview is deferred to the world where all earthly distinctions are forgotten, but where the least Christian services are remembered."

So, "a child of peace," as one said, "he departed, and rests in peace, through the high and only merits of the only Son of God," in whom, in his 1st testament, he confessed was "all his hope."

It was a solemn day for Wittenberg when they laid him in his grave in the Electoral Church, which he had once so richly provided with relics. His body lying beneath it is the most sacred relic it enshrines for us now.

Knights and burghers met the coffin at the city gate; eight noblemen carried it, and a long train of mourners passed through the silent streets. Many chanted around the tomb the old Latin hymns, "In media vitæ," and "Si bona suscipimur," and also the German, "From deepest need I cry to Thee," and —

"In Fried und Freud fahr ich dahin."

"I journey hence in peace and joy."

The money which would in former times have purchased masses for his soul, was given to the poor. And Dr. Luther preached a sermon on that promise, "Those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him," which makes it needless, indeed, to pray for the repose of those who thus sleep.

Gretchen asked me in the evening what the hymn meant, —

"I journey hence in peace and joy."

I told her it was the soul of the prince that thus journeyed hence.

"The procession was so dark and sad," she said, "the words did not seem to suit."

"That procession was going to the grave," said Thekla, who was with us. "There was another procession, which we could not see, going to heaven. The holy angels, clothed in radiant white, were carrying the happy spirit to heaven, and singing, as they went, anthems such as that, while we were weeping here."

"I should like to see that procession of the dear angels, Aunt Thekla," said Gretchen. "Mother says the good Elector had no little children to love him, and no one to call him any tenderer name than 'Your electoral highness' when he died. But on the other side of the grave he will not be lonely, will he? The holy angels will have tender names for him there, will they not?"

"The Lord Jesus will, at all events," I said. "He calleth his own sheep by name."

And Gretchen was comforted for the Elector.

Not long after that day of mourning came a day of rejoicing to our household, and to all the friendly circle at Wittenberg.

Quietly, in our house, on June the 23d, Dr. Luther and Catherine von Bora were married.

A few days afterwards the wedding feast was held on the home-bringing of the bride to the Augustinian cloister, which, together with "twelve brewings of beer yearly," the good Elector John Frederic has given Luther as a wedding present. Brave old John Luther and his wife, and Luther's pious mother came to the

feast from Mansfeld, and a day of much festivity it was to all.

And now for six months, what Luther calls "that great thing, the union and communion between husband and wife," hath hallowed the old convent into a home, whilst the prayer of faith and the presence of Him whom faith sees, have consecrated the home into a sanctuary of love and peace.

Many precious things hath Dr. Luther said of marriage. God, he says, has set the type of marriage before us throughout all creation. Each creature seeks its perfection through being blent with another. The very heaven and earth picture it to us, for does not the sky embrace the green earth as its bride? "Precious, excellent, glorious," he says, "is that word of the Holy Ghost, 'the heart of the husband doth safely trust in her.'"

He says also, that so does he honour the married state, that before he thought of marrying his Catherine, he had resolved, if he should be laid suddenly on his dying bed, to be espoused before he died, and to give two silver goblets to the maiden as his wedding and dying gift. And lately he counselled one who was to be married, "Dear friend, do thou as I did, when I would take my Käthe. I prayed to our Lord God with all my heart. A good wife is a companion of life, and her husband's solace and joy, and when a pious man and wife love each other truly, the devil has little power to hurt them.

"All men," he said, "believe and understand that marriage is marriage, a hand a hand, riches are riches; but to believe that marriage is of God, and ordered and appointed by God; that the hand is made by God,

that wealth and all we have and are is given by God, and is to be used as his work to his praise, that is not so commonly believed. 'And a good wife,' he said, "should be loved and honoured, firstly, because she is God's gift and present: secondly, because God has endowed women with noble and great virtues, which, when they are modest, faithful, and believing, far overbalance their little failings and infirmities."

WITTENBERG, *December 1525.*

Another year all but closed — a year of mingled storm and sunshine! The sorrow we dreaded for our poor Thekla is come at last too surely. Bertrand de Créquy is dead! He died in a prison alone, for conscience' sake, but at peace in God. A stranger from Flanders brought her a few words of farewell in his handwriting, and afterwards saw him dead, so that she cannot doubt. She seems to move about like one walking in a dream, performing every common act of life as before, but with the soul asleep. We are afraid what will be the end of it. God help her! She is now gone for the Christmas to Eva and Fritz.

Sad divisions have sprung up among the evangelical Christians. Dr. Luther is very angry at some doctrines of Karlstadt and the Swiss brethren concerning the holy sacraments, and says they will be wise above what is written. We grieve at these things, especially as our Atlantis has married a Swiss, and Dr. Luther will not acknowledge them as brethren. Our poor Atlantis is much perplexed, and writes that she is sure her husband meaneth not to undervalue the Holy Supper, and that in very truth they find their Saviour present there as we do. But Dr. Luther is very stern

about it. He fears disorders and wild opinions will be brought in again, such as led to the slaughter of the peasants' war. Yet he himself is sorely distressed about it, and saith often that the times are so evil the end of the world is surely drawing nigh.

In the midst of all this perplexity, we who love him rejoice that he has that quiet home in the Augustei, where "Lord Käthe," as he calls her, and her little son Hänschen reign, and where the dear, holy angels, as Luther says, watch over the cradle of the child.

It was a festival to all Wittenberg when little Hans Luther was born.

Luther's house is like the sacred hearth of Wittenberg and of all the laud. There in the winter evenings he welcomes his friends to the cheerful room with the large window, and sometimes they sing good songs or holy hymns in parts, accompanied by the lute and harp, music at which Dr. Luther is sure King David would be amazed and delighted, could he rise from his grave, "since there can have been none so fine in his days." "The devil," he says, "always flies from music, especially from sacred music, because he is a despairing spirit, and cannot bear joy and gladness."

And in the summer days he sits under the pear tree in his garden, while Käthe works beside him; or he plants seeds and makes a fountain; or he talks to her and his friends about the wonders of beauty God has set in the humblest flowers, and the picture of the resurrection he gives us in every delicate twig that in spring bursts from the dry brown stems of winter.

More and more we see what a good wife God has

given him in Catherine von Bora, with her cheerful, firm, and active spirit, and her devoted affection for him. Already she has the management of all the finance of the household, a very necessary arrangement, if the house of Luther is not to go to ruin; for Dr. Luther would give everything, even to his clothes and furniture, to any one in distress, and he will not receive any payment either for his books or for teaching the students.

She is a companion for him, moreover, and not a mere listener, which he likes, however much he may laugh at her eloquence, "in her own department surpassing Cicero's," and sarcastically relate how when first they were married, not knowing what to say, but wishing to "make conversation," she used to say, as she sat at her work beside him, "Herr Doctor, is not the lord high chamberlain in Prussia the brother of the margrave?" hoping that such high discourse would not be too trifling for him! He says, indeed, that if he were to seek an obedient wife, he would carve one for himself out of stone. But the belief among us is, that there are few happier homes than Dr. Luther's; and if at any time Catherine finds him oppressed with a sadness too deep for her ministry to reach, she quietly creeps out and calls Justus Jonas, or some other friend, to come and cheer the doctor. Often, also, she reminds him of the letters he has to write; and he likes to have her sitting by him while he writes, which is a proof sufficient that she can be silent when necessary, whatever jests the Doctor may make about her "long sermons, which she certainly never would have made, if, like other preachers, she had taken the precaution of beginning with the Lord's Prayer!"

The Christian married life, as he says, "is a humble and a holy life," and well, indeed, is it for our German Reformation that its earthly centre is neither a throne, not a hermitage, but a lowly Christian home.

PARSONAGE OF GERSDORF, *June 1527.*

I am staying with Eva while Fritz is absent making a journey of inspection of the schools throughout Saxony at Dr. Luther's desire, with Dr. Philip Melanchthon, and many other learned men.

Dr. Luther has set his heart on improving the education of the children, and is anxious to have some of the revenues of the suppressed convents appropriated to this purpose before all are quietly absorbed by the nobles and princes for their own uses.

It is a renewal of youth to me, in my sober middle age, to be here along with Eva, and yet not alone. For the terror of my youth is actually under our roof with me. *Aunt Agnes* is an inmate of Fritz's home! During the pillaging of the convents and dispersing of the nuns, which took place in the dreadful peasants' war, she was driven from Nimptschen, and after spending a few weeks with our mother at Wittenberg, has finally taken refuge with Eva and Fritz.

But Eva's little twin children, Heinz and Agnes, will associate a very different picture with the name of Aunt Agnes from the rigid lifeless face and voice which used to haunt my dreams of a religious life, and make me dread the heaven, of whose inhabitants, I was told, Aunt Agnes was a type.

Perhaps the white hair softens the high but furrowed brow; yet surely there was not that kindly gleam in the grave eyes I remember, or that tender tone in

the voice. Is it an echo of the voices of the little ones she so dearly loves, and a reflection of the sunshine in their eyes? No; better than that even, I know, because Eva told me. It is the smile and the music of a heart made as that of a little child through believing in the Saviour. It is the peace of the Pharisee who has won the publican's blessing by meekly taking the publican's place.

I confess, however, I do not think Aunt Agnes's presence improves the discipline of Eva's household. She is exceedingly slow to detect any traces of original sin in Eva's children, while to me, on the contrary, the wonder is that any creature so good and exemplary as Eva should have children so much like other people's — even mine. One would have thought that her infants would have been a kind of half angels, taking naturally to all good things, and never doing wrong except by mistake in a gentle and moderate way. Whereas, I must say, I hear frequent little wails of rebellion from Eva's nursery, especially at seasons of ablution, much as from mine; and I do not think even our Fritz ever showed more decided pleasure in mischief or more determined self-will, than Eva's little rosy Heinz.

One morning, after a rather prolonged little battle between Heinz and his mother about some case of oppression of little Agnes, I suggested to Aunt Agnes —

“Only to think that Eva, if she had kept to her vocation, might have attained to the full ideal of the *Theologia Teutsch*, have become a *St. Elizabeth*, or indeed far better?”

Aunt Agnes looked up quickly —

“And you mean to say she is not better now! You imagine that spinning meditations all day long is more

Christian work for a woman than training these little ones for God, and helping them to fight their first battles with the devil!"

"Perhaps not, Aunt Agnes," I said, but then, you see, I know nothing of the inside of a convent."

"*I do*," said Aunt Agnes emphatically, "and also of the inside of a nun's heart. And I know what wretched work we make of it when we try to take our education out of our Heavenly Father's hands into our own. Do you think," she continued, "Eva did not learn more in the long nights when she watched over her sick child than she could have learned in a thousand self-imposed vigils before any shrine? And tonight, when she kneels with Heinz, as she will, and says with him, 'Pray God forgive little Heinz for being a naughty boy to-day,' and lays him on his pillow, and as she watches him fall asleep, asks God to bless and train the wilful little one, and then asks for pardon herself, do you not think she learns more of what 'forgiveness' means and 'Our Father' than from a year's study of the *Theologia Deutsch*?"

I smiled and said, "Dear Aunt Agnes, if Fritz wants to hear Eva's praises well sung, I will tell him to suggest to you whether it might not have been a higher vocation for her to remain a nun!"

"Ah! child," said Aunt Agnes with a little mingling of the old sternness and the new tenderness in her voice, "if you had learned what I have from those lips, and in this house, you could not, even in jest, bear to hear a syllable of reflection on either."

Indeed, even Aunt Agnes cannot honour this dear home more than I do. Open to every peasant who has a sorrow or a wrong to tell, it is also linked with the

castle; and linked to both not by any class privileges, but because here peasants and nobles alike are welcomed as men and women, and as Christian brothers and sisters.

Now and then we pay a visit to the castle, where our noble sister Chriemhild is enthroned. But my tastes have always been burgher-like, and the parsonage suits me much better than the castle. Besides, I cannot help feeling some little awe of Dame Hermentrud, especially when my two boys are with me, they being apt to indulge in a burgher freedom in their demeanour. The furniture and arrangements of the castle are a generation behind our own at Wittenberg, and I cannot at all make the boys comprehend the majesty of the Gersdorf ancestry, nor the necessary inferiority of people who live in streets to those who live in isolated rock fortresses. So that I am reduced to the Bible law of "honour to grey hairs" to enforce due respect to Dame Hermentrud.

Little Fritz wants to know what the Gersdorf ancestry are renowned for. "Was it for learning?" he asked.

I thought not, as it is only this generation who have learned to read, and the old knight even is suspected of having strong reasons for preferring listening to Ulrich's reading to using a book for himself.

"Was it then for courage?"

"Certainly, the Gersdorfs had always been brave."

"With whom, then, had they fought?"

"At the time of the Crusades, I believed, against the infidels."

"And since then?"

I did not feel sure, but looking at the ruined castle

of Bernstein and the neighbouring height, I was afraid it was against their neighbours.

And so, after much cross questioning, the distinctions of the Gersdorf family seemed to be chiefly reduced to their having been Gersdorfs, and having lived at Gersdorf for a great many hundred years.

Then Fritz desired to know in what way his cousins, the Gersdorfs of this generation, are to distinguish themselves! This question also was a perplexity to me, as I know it often is to Chriemhild. They must not on any account be merchants; and now that in the Evangelical Church the great abbeys are suppressed, and some of the bishoprics are to be secularized, it is hardly deemed consistent with Gersdorf dignity that they should become clergymen. The eldest will have the castle. One of them may study civil law. For the others nothing seems open but the idling dependent life of pages and military attendants in the castles of some of the greater nobles.

If the past is the inheritance of the knights, it seems to me the future is far more likely to be the possession of the active burgher families. I cannot but feel thankful for the lot which opens to our boys honourable spheres of action in the great cities of the empire. There seems no room for expansion in the life of those petty nobles. While the patrician families of the cities are sailing on the broad current of the times, encouraging art, advancing learning, themselves sharing all the thought and progress of the time, these knightly families in the country remain isolated in their grim castles ruling over a few peasants, and fettered to a narrow local circle, while the great current of the age sweeps by them.

Gottfried says, narrow and ill-used privileges always end in ruining those who bigotedly cling to them. The exclusiveness which begins by shutting others out, commonly ends in shutting the exclusive in. The lordly fortress becomes the narrow prison.

All these thoughts passed through my mind as I left the rush-strewn floor of the hall where Dame Hermentrud had received me and my boys, with a lofty condescension, while, in the course of the interview, I had heard her secretly remarking to Chriemhild how unlike the cousins were; "It was quite singular how entirely the Gersdorf children were unlike the Cottas!"

But it was not until I entered Eva's lowly home, that I detected the bitter root of wounded pride from which my deep social speculations sprang. I had been avenging myself on the Schönberg-Gersdorf past by means of the Cotta-Reichenbach future. Yes; Fritz and Eva's lowly home is nobler than Chriemhild's, and richer than ours; richer and nobler just in as far as it is more lowly and more Christian!

And I learned my lesson after this manner.

"Dame Hermentrud is very proud," I said to Eva, as I returned from the castle and sat down beside her in the porch, where she was sewing; "and I really cannot see on what ground."

Eva made no reply, but a little amused smile played about her mouth, which for the moment rather aggravated me.

"Do you mean to say she is *not* proud, Eva?" I continued controversially.

"I did not mean to say that any one was not proud," said Eva.

“Did you mean then to imply that she has anything to be proud of?”

“There are all the ghosts of all the Gersdorfs,” said Eva; “and there is the high ancestral privilege of wearing velvet and pearls, which you and I dare not assume.”

“Surely,” said I, “the privilege of possessing Lucas Cranach’s pictures, and Albrecht Dürer’s carvings, is better than that.”

“Perhaps it is,” said Eva demurely; “perhaps wealth is as firm ground for pride to build on as ancestral rank. Those who have neither, like Fritz and I, may be the most candid judges.”

I laughed, and felt a cloud pass from my heart. Eva had dared to call the sprite which vexed me by his right name, and like any other gnome or cobold, he vanished instantly.

Thank God our Eva is Cousin Eva again, instead of Sister Ave; that her single heart is here among us to flash the light on our consciences just by shining, instead of being hidden under a saintly canopy in the shrine of some distant convent.

July 1527.

Fritz is at home. It was delightful to see what a festival his return was, not only in the home, but in the village — the children running to the doors to receive a smile, the mothers stopping in their work to welcome him. The day after his return was Sunday. As usual, the children of the village were assembled at five o’clock in the morning to church. Among them were our boys, and Chriemhild’s, and Eva’s twins, Heinz and Agnes — rosy, merry children of the forest

as they are. All, however, looked as good and sweet as if they had been children of Eden, as they tripped that morning after each other over the village green, their bright little forms passing in and out of the shadow of the great beech-tree which stands opposite the church.

The little company all stood together in the church before the altar, while Fritz stood on the step and taught them. At first they sang a hymn, the elder boys in Latin, and then all together in German; and then Fritz heard them say Luther's Catechism. How sweetly the lisping, childish voices answered his deep, manly voice; like the rustling of the countless summer leaves outside, or the fall of the countless tiny cascades of the village stream in the still summer morning.

"My dear child, what art thou?" he said.

Answer from the score of little hushed, yet ringing voices —

"I am a Christian."

"How dost thou know that?"

"Because I am baptized, and believe on my dear Lord Jesus Christ."

"What is it needful that a Christian should know for his salvation?"

Answer — "The Catechism."

And afterwards, in the part concerning the Christian faith, the sweet voices repeated the Creed in German.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty."

And Fritz's voice asked gently —

"What does that mean?"

Answer — "I believe that God has created me and all creatures; has given me body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, reason, and all my senses, and still

preserves them to me; and that he has also given me my clothes and my shoes, and whatsoever I eat or drink; that richly and daily he provides me with all needful nourishment for body and life, and guards me from all danger and evil; and all this out of pure fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or deserving of mine. And for all this I am bound to thank and praise him, and also to serve and obey him. This is certainly true."

Again —

"I believe in Jesus Christ," &c.

"What does that mean?"

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human creature, has purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with his own holy precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and dying, that I may be his own, and live in his kingdom under him, and serve him in endless righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns for ever. This is certainly true."

And again,

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

"What does that mean?"

"I believe that not by my own reason or power can I believe on Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the right faith, as he calls all Christian people on earth, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies them,

and through Jesus keeps them in the right and only faith, among which Christian people he daily richly forgives all sins, to me and all believers, and at the last day will awaken me and all the dead, and to me and all believers in Christ will give eternal life. This is certainly true."

And again, on the Lord's Prayer, the children's voices began, —

"Our Father who art in heaven."

"What does that mean?"

"God will in this way sweetly persuade us to believe that he is our true Father, and that we are his true children; that cheerfully and with all confidence we may ask of him as dear children ask of their dear fathers."

And at the end,

"What does Amen mean?"

"That I should be sure such prayers are acceptable to the Father in heaven, and granted by him, for he himself has taught us thus to pray, and promised that he will hear us. Amen, amen — that means, *yes, yes, that shall be done.*"

And when it was asked, —

"Who receives the holy sacrament worthily?"

Softly came the answer, —

"He is truly and rightly prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins.' But he who doubts or disbelieves these words, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, '*for you,*' need simple believing hearts."

As I listened to the simple living words, I could not wonder that Dr. Luther often repeats them to him-

self, or rather, as he says, 'to God,' as an antidote to the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And so the childish voices died away in the morning stillness of the church, and the shadow of the bell-tower fell silently across the grassy mounds or wooden crosses beneath which rest the village dead; and as we went home, the long shadow of the beech-tree fell on the dewy village green.

Then, before eleven o'clock, the church bell began to ring, and the peasants came trooping from the different clearings of the forest. One by one we watched the various groups in their bright holiday dresses, issuing out of the depths of dark green shade, among them, doubtless, many a branch of the Luther family who live in this neighbourhood. Afterwards each door in the village poured out its contributions, and soon the little church was full, the men and women seated on the opposite sides of the church, and the aged gathered around the pulpit. Fritz's text was Eva's motto, "*God so loved the world.*" Simply, with illustrations such as they could understand, he spoke to them of God's infinite love, and the infinite cost at which he had redeemed us, and of the love and trust and obedience we owe him, and, according to Dr. Luther's advice he did not speak too long, but "called black black, and white white, keeping to one simple subject, so that the people may go away and say, '*The sermon was about this.*'" For, as I heard Dr. Luther say, "We must not speak to the common people of high difficult things, or with mysterious words. To the church come little children, maid-servants, old men and women, to whom high doctrine teaches nothing. For, if they say about it, 'Ah, he said excellent things, he has made a fine

sermon!' And one asks, 'What about, then?' they reply, 'I know not.' Let us remember what pains our Lord Christ took to preach simply. From the vineyard, from the sheepfold, from trees, he drew his illustrations, all that the people might feel and understand."

That sermon of Fritz's left a deep rest in my heart. He spoke not of justification, and redemption merely, but of the living God redeeming and justifying us. Greater service can no one render us than to recall to us what God has done for us, and how he really and tenderly cares for us.

In the afternoon, the children were gathered for a little while in the school-room, and questioned about the sermon. At sunset again we all met for a short service in the church, and sang evening hymns in German, after which the pastor pronounced the benediction, and the little community scattered once more to their various homes.

With the quiet sunshine, and the light shed on the home by Fritz's return, to-day seemed to me almost like a day in Paradise.

Thank God again and again for Dr. Luther, and especially for these two great benefits given back to us through him — first, that he has unsealed the fountain of God's word from the icy fetters of the dead language, and sent it flowing through the land, everywhere wakening winter into spring; and secondly, that he has vindicated the sanctity of marriage and the home life it constitutes; unsealing the grave-stones of the convent gates, and sending forth the religion entranced and buried there to bless the world in a thousand lowly, holy, Christian homes such as this.

XXXI.

THEKLA'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, September 1527.

I HAVE said it from my heart at last! yes, I am sure I say it from my heart, and if with a broken heart, God will not despise that.

"Our Father which art in heaven, *thy will, not mine be done."*

I thought I could bear anything better than suspense; but I had no idea what a blank of despair the certainty would bring.

Then came dreadful rebellious thoughts, that God should let him die alone! and then recurred to my heart all they had said to me about not making idols, and I began to fear I had never really loved or worshipped God at all, but only Bertrand; and then came a long time of blank and darkness into which no light of human or divine love or voices of comfort seemed in the least to penetrate. I thought God would never receive me until I could say, "Thy will be done," and this I could not say.

The first words I remember that seemed to convey any meaning at all to me were some of Dr. Luther's in a sermon. He said it was easy to believe in God's pardoning love in times of peace, but in times of temptation when the devil assailed the soul with all his fiery darts, he himself found it hard, indeed, to hold to the truth he knew so well, that Christ was

not a severe judge, or a hard exactor, but a forgiving Saviour, indeed love itself, pure unalterable love.

Then I began to understand it was *the devil*, the malignant exacting evil spirit that I had been listening to in the darkness of my heart, that it was he who had been persuading me I must not dare to go to my Father, before I could bring him a perfectly submissive heart.

And then I remembered the words, "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden;" and, alone in my room, I fell on my knees, and cried, "O blessed Saviour, O heavenly Father, I am not submissive; but I am weary, weary and heavy-laden; and I come to thee. Wilt thou take me as I am, and teach me in time to say, 'Thy will be done!'" And he received me, and in time he has taught me. At least I can say so to-night. To-morrow, perhaps, the old rebellion will come back. But if it does, I will go again to our heavenly Father and say again, "Not submissive yet, only heavy-laden! Father, take my hand, and say, begin again!"

Because amidst all these happy homes I felt so unnecessary to any one, and so unutterably lonely. I longed for the old convents to bury myself in, away from all joyous sounds. But, thank God, they were closed for me; and I do not wish for them now.

Dr. Luther began to help me by showing me how the devil had been keeping me from God.

And now God has helped me by sending through my heart again a glow of thankfulness and love.

The plague has been at Wittenberg again. Dr. Luther's house has been turned into an hospital; for

dear as are his Käthe and his little Hans to him, he would not flee from the danger, any more than years ago, when he was a monk in the convent which is now his home.

And what a blessing his strong and faithful words have been among us, from the pulpit, by the dying bed, or in the house of mourning.

But it is through my precious mother chiefly that God has spoken to my heart, and made me feel he does indeed sustain, and care, and listen. She was so nearly gone. And now she is recovering. They say the danger is over. And never more will I say in my heart, "To me only God gives no home," or fear to let my heart entwine too closely round those God has left me to love, because of the anguish when that clasp is severed. I will take the joy and the love with all its possibilities of sorrow, and trust in God for both.

Perhaps, also, God may have some little work of love for me to do, some especial service even for me, to make me needed in the world as long as I am here. For to-day Justus Jonas, who has lost his little son in the plague, came to me and said, —

"Thekla, come and see my wife. She says you can comfort her, for you can comprehend sorrow."

Of course I went. I do not think I said anything to comfort her. I could do little else but weep with her, as I looked on the little, innocent, placid, lifeless face. But when I left her she said I had done her good, and begged me to come again.

So, perhaps, God has some blessed services for me to render him, which I could only have learned as he has taught me; and when we meet hereafter, Bertrand

and I, and hear that dear divine and human voice that has led us through the world, we *together* shall be glad of all this bitter pain that we endured and felt, and give thanks for it for ever and for ever!

XXXII.

ELSE'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, *May 1527.*

OF all the happy homes God has given to Germany through Dr. Luther, I think none are happier than his own.

The walls of the Augustine convent echo now with the pattering feet and ringing voices of little children, and every night the angels watch over the sanctuary of a home. The birthdays of Dr. Luther's children are festivals to us all, and more especially the birthday of little Hans the firstborn was so.

Yet death also has been in that bright home. Their second child, a babe, Elizabeth, was early taken from her parents. Dr. Luther grieved over her much. A little while after her death he wrote to his friend Hausmann: —

“Grace and peace. My Johannulus thanks thee, best Nicholas, for the rattle, in which he glories and rejoices wondrously.

“I have begun to write something about the Turkish war, which will not, I hope, be useless.

“My little daughter is dead; my darling little Elizabeth. It is strange how sick and wounded she has left my heart, almost as tender as a woman's, such pity moves me for that little one. I never could have believed before what is the tenderness of a father's heart for his children. Do thou pray to the Lord for me, in Whom fare-thee-well.”

Catherine von Bora is honoured and beloved by all. Some indeed complain of her being too economical; but what would become of Dr. Luther and his family if she were as reckless in giving as he is? He has been known even to take advantage of her illness to bestow his plate on some needy student. He never will receive a kreuzer from the students he teaches; and he refuses to sell his writings, which provokes both Gottfried and me, noble as it is of him, because the great profits they bring would surely be better spent by Dr. Luther than by the printers who get them now. Our belief is, that were it not for Mistress Luther, the whole household would have long since been reduced to beggary, and Dr. Luther, who does not scruple to beg of the Elector or of any wealthy person for the needs of others (although never for his own), knows well how precarious such a livelihood is.

His wife does not, however, always succeed in restraining his propensities to give everything away. Not long ago, in defiance of her remonstrating looks, in her presence he bestowed on a student who came to him asking money to help him home from the university, a silver goblet which had been presented to him, saying that he had no need to drink out of silver.

We all feel the tender care with which she watches over his health, a gift to the whole land. His strength has never quite recovered the strain on it during those years of conflict and penance in the monastery at Erfurt. And it is often strained to the utmost now. All the monks and nuns who have renounced their idle maintenance in convents for conscience' sake; all congregations that desire an evangelical pastor; all people of all kinds in trouble of mind, body, or estate, turn to Dr.

Luther for aid or counsel, as to the warmest heart and the clearest head in the land. His correspondence is incessant, embracing and answering every variety of perplexity, from counselling evangelical princes how best to reform their states, to directions to some humble Christian woman how to find peace for her conscience in Christ. And besides the countless applications to him for advice, his large heart seems always at leisure to listen to the appeal of the persecuted far and near, or to the cry of the bereaved and sorrowful.

Where shall we find the spring of all this activity but in the *Bible*, of which he says, "There are few trees in that garden which I have not shaken for fruit;" and in *prayer*, of which he, the busiest man in Christendom, (as if he were a contemplative hermit) says, "Prayer is the Christian's business (Das Gebet ist des Christen Handwerk)."

Yes, it is the leisure he makes for prayer which gives him leisure for all besides. It is the hours passed with the life-giving word which make sermons, and correspondence, and teaching of all kinds to him simply the outpouring of a full heart.

Yet such a life wears out too quickly. More than once has Mistress Luther been in sore anxiety about him during the four years they have been married.

Once, in 1527, when little Hans was the baby, and he believed he should soon have to leave her a widow with the fatherless little one, he said rather sadly he had nothing to leave her but the silver tankards which had been presented to him.

"Dear doctor," she replied, "if it be God's will, then I also choose that you be with him rather than me. It is not so much I and my child even that need

you as the multitude of pious Christians. Trouble yourself not about me."

What her courageous hopefulness and her tender watchfulness have been to him, he showed when he said, —

"I am too apt to expect more from my Käthe, and from Melanchthon, than I do from Christ my Lord. And yet I well know that neither they nor any one on earth has suffered, or can suffer, what he hath suffered for me."

But although incessant work may weigh upon his body, there are severer trials which weigh upon his spirit. The heart so quick to every touch of affection or pleasure cannot but be sensitive to injustice or disappointment. It cannot therefore be easy for him to bear that at one time it should be perilous for him to travel on account of the indignation of the nobles, whose relatives he has rescued from nunneries; and at another time equally unsafe because of the indignation of the peasants, for whom, though he boldly and openly denounced their mad insurrection, he pleads fervently with nobles and princes.

But bitterer than all other things to him, are the divisions among evangelical Christians. Every truth he believes flashes on his mind with such overwhelming conviction, that it seems to him nothing but incomprehensible wilfulness for any one else not to see it. Every conviction he holds, he holds with the grasp of one ready to die for it — not only with the tenacity of possession, but of a soldier to whom its defence has been intrusted. He would not, indeed, have any put to death or imprisoned for their misbelief. But hold out the hand of fellowship to those who betray any part

of his Lord's trust, he thinks, — how dare he? Are a few peaceable days to be purchased at the sacrifice of eternal truth?

And so the division has taken place, between us and the Swiss.

My Gretchen perplexed me the other day, when we were coming from the city church, where Dr. Luther had been preaching against the Anabaptists and the Swiss, (whom he will persist in classing together,) by saying, —

“Mother, is not Uncle Winkelried a Swiss, and is he not a good man?”

“Of course Uncle Conrad is a good man, Gretchen,” rejoined our Fritz, who had just returned from a visit to Atlantis and Conrad. “How can you ask such questions?”

“But he is a Swiss, and Dr. Luther said we must take care not to be like the Swiss, because they say wicked things about the holy sacraments.”

“I am sure Uncle Conrad does not say wicked things,” retorted Fritz, vehemently. “I think he is almost the best man I ever saw. Mother,” he continued, “why does Dr. Luther speak so of the Swiss?”

“You see, Fritz,” I said, “Dr. Luther never stayed six months among them as you did; and so he has never seen how good they are at home.”

“Then,” rejoined Fritz, sturdily, “if Dr. Luther has not seen them, I do not think he should speak so of them.”

I was driven to have recourse to maternal authority to close the discussion, reminding Fritz that he was a little boy, and could not pretend to judge of good and great men like Dr. Luther. But, indeed, I could not

help half agreeing with the child. It was impossible to make him understand how Dr. Luther has fought his way inch by inch to the freedom in which we now stand at ease; how he detests the Zwinglian doctrines, not so much for themselves, as for what he thinks they imply. How will it be possible to make our children, who enter on the peaceful inheritance so dearly won, understand the rough, soldierly vehemence, of the warrior race, who re-conquered that inheritance for them?

As Dr. Luther says, "It is not a little thing to change the whole religion and doctrine of the Papacy. How hard it has been to me, they will see in that Day. Now no one believes it!"

God appointed David to fight the wars of Israel, and Solomon to build the temple. Dr. Luther has had to do both. What wonder if the hand of the soldier can sometimes be traced in the work of peace!

Yet, why should I perplex myself about this? Soon, too soon, death will come, and consecrate the virtues of our generation to our children, and throw a softening veil over our mistakes.

Even now that Dr. Luther is absent from us at Coburg, in the castle there, how precious his letters are; and how doubly sacred the words he preached to us last Sunday from the pulpit, now that to-morrow we are not to hear him.

He is placed in the castle at Coburg, in order to be nearer the Diet at Augsburg, so as to aid Dr. Melancthon, who is there, with his counsel. The Elector dare not trust the royal heart and straightforward spirit of our Luther among the prudent diplomatists at the Diet.

Mistress Luther is having a portrait taken of their

little Magdalen, who is now a year old, and especially dear to the Doctor, to send to him in the fortress.

June 1530.

Letters have arrived from and about Dr. Luther. His father is dead — the brave, persevering, self-denying, truthful old man, who had stamped so much of his own character on his son. "It is meet I should mourn such a parent," Luther writes, "who through the sweat of his brow had nurtured and educated me, and made me what I am." He felt it keenly, especially since he could not be with his father at the last; although he gives thanks that he lived in these times of light, and departed strong in the faith of Christ. Dr. Luther's secretary writes, however, that the portrait of his little Magdalen comforts him much. He has hung it on the wall opposite to the place where he sits at meals.

Dr. Luther is now the eldest of his race. He stands in the foremost rank of the generations slowly advancing to confront death.

To-day I have been sitting with Mistress Luther in the garden behind the Augustei, under the shade of the pear-tree, where she so often sits beside the Doctor. Our children were playing around us — her little Hänschen with the boys, while the little Magdalen sat cooing like a dove over some flowers, which she was pulling to pieces, on the grass at our feet.

She talked to me much about the Doctor; how dearly he loves the little ones, and what lessons of divine love and wisdom he learns from their little plays.

He says often, that beautiful as all God's works

are, little children are the fairest of all; that the dear angels especially watch over them. He is very tender with them, and says sometimes they are better theologians than he is, for they trust God. Deeper prayers and higher theology he never hopes to reach than the first the little ones learn — the Lord's Prayer and the Catechism. Often, she said, he says over the Catechism, to remind himself of all the treasures of faith we possess.

It is delightful too, she says, to listen to the heavenly theology he draws from birds and leaves and flowers, and the commonest gifts of God or events of life. At table, a plate of fruit will open to him a whole volume of God's bounty, on which he will discourse. Or, taking a rose in his hand, he will say, "A man who could make one rose like this would be accounted most wonderful; and God scatters countless such flowers around us! But the very infinity of his gifts makes us blind to them."

And one evening, he said of a little bird, warbling its last little song before it went to roost, "Ah, dear little bird! he has chosen his shelter, and is quietly rocking himself to sleep, without a care for to-morrow's lodging; calmly holding by his little twig, and leaving God to think for him."

In spring he loves to direct her attention to the little points and tufts of life peeping everywhere from the brown earth or the bare branches. "Who," he said, "that had never witnessed a spring-time would have guessed, two months since, that these lifeless branches had concealed within them all that hidden power of life? It will be thus with us at the resurrection. God

writes his gospel, not in the Bible alone, but in trees, and flowers, and clouds, and stars."

And thus, to Mistress Luther, that little garden, with his presence and his discourse, has become like an illuminated Gospel and Psalter.

I ventured to ask her some questions, and, among others, if she had ever heard him speak of using a form of words in prayer. She said she had once heard him say "we might use forms of words in private prayer until the wings and feathers of our souls are grown, that we may soar freely upward into the pure air of God's presence." But *his* prayers, she says, are sometimes like the trustful pleadings of his little boy Hänschen with him; and sometimes like the wrestling of a giant in an agony of conflict.

She said, also, that she often thanks God for the Doctor's love of music. When his mind and heart have been strained to the utmost, music seems to be like a bath of pure fresh water to his spirit, bracing and resting it at once.

I indeed have myself heard him speak of this, when I have been present at the meetings he has every week at his house for singing in parts. "The devil," he says — "that lost spirit — cannot endure sacred songs of joy. Our passions and impatiences, our complainings and our cryings, our Alas! and our Woe is me! please him well; but our songs and psalms vex him and grieve him sorely."

Mistress Luther told me she had many an anxious hour about the Doctor's health. He is often so sorely pressed with work and care; and he has never recovered the weakening effects of his early fasts and conflicts.

His tastes at table are very simple, his favourite dishes are herrings and pease-soup. His habits are abstemious, and when engrossed with any especial work, he would forget or go without his meals altogether if she did not press him to take them. When writing his Commentary on the Twenty-second Psalm, he shut himself up for three days with nothing but bread and salt; until, at last, she had to send for a locksmith to break open the door, when they found him absorbed in meditation.

And yet, with all his deep thoughts and his wide cares, like a king's or an archbishop's, he enters into his children's games as if he were a boy; and never fails, if he is at a fair on his travels, to bring the little ones home some gift for a fairing.

She showed me a letter she had just received from him from Ceburg, for his little son Hänschen. She allowed me to copy it. It is written thus: —

“Grace and peace in Christ to my heartily dear little son.

“I see gladly that thou learnest well and prayest earnestly. Do thus, my little son, and go on. When I come home I will bring thee a beautiful fairing. I know a pleasant garden, wherein many children walk about. They have little golden coats, and pick up beautiful apples under the trees, and pears, cherries, and plums. They dance and are merry, and have also beautiful little ponies, with golden reins and silver saddles. Then I asked the man whose the garden is, whose children those were. He said, ‘These are the children who love to pray, who learn their lessons, and are good.’ Then I said, ‘Dear man, I also have

a little son; he is called Hänsichen Luther. Might not he also come into the garden, that he might eat such apples and pears, and ride on such beautiful little ponies, and play with these children?' Then the man said, 'If he loves to pray, learns his lessons, and is good, he also shall come into the garden — Lippus and Jost also (the little sons of Melanchthon and Justus Jonas); and when they all come together, they also shall have pipes, drums, lutes, and all kinds of music; and shall dance, and shoot with little bows and arrows.'

"And he showed me there a fair meadow in the garden, prepared for dancing. There were many pipes of pure gold, drums, and silver bows and arrows. But it was still early in the day, so that the children had not had their breakfasts. Therefore I could not wait for the dancing, and said to the man, 'Ah, dear sir, I will go away at once, and write all this to my little son Hänsichen, that he may be sure to pray and to learn well, and be good, that he also may come into this garden. But he has a dear aunt, Lena; he must bring her with him.' Then said the man, 'Let it be so; go and write him thus.'

"Therefore, my dear little son Hänsichen, learn thy lessons, and pray with a cheerful heart; and tell all this to Lippus and Justus too, that they also may learn their lessons and pray. So shall you all come together into this garden. Herewith I commend you to the Almighty God; and greet Aunt Lena, and give her a kiss from me. — Thy dear father,

MARTIN LUTHER."

Some who have seen this letter say it is too trifling

for such serious subjects. But heaven is not a grim and austere, but a most bright and joyful place; and Dr. Luther is only telling the child in his own childish language what a happy place it is. Does not God our heavenly Father do even so with us?

I should like to have seen Dr. Luther turn from his grave letters to princes and doctors about the great Augsburg Confession, which they are now preparing, to write these loving words to his little Hans. No wonder "Catharine Lutherin," "Doctoress Luther," "mea dominus Ketha," "my lord Käthe," as he calls her, is a happy woman. Happy for Germany that the Catechism in which our children learn the first elements of divine truth, grew out of the fatherly heart of Luther, instead of being put together by a Diet or a General Council.

One more letter I have copied, because my children were so interested in it. Dr. Luther finds at all times great delight in the songs of birds. The letter I have copied was written on the 28th April to his friends who meet around his table at home.

"Grace and peace in Christ, dear sirs and friends! I have received all your letters, and understand how things are going on with you. That you, on the other hand, may understand how things are going on here, I would have you know that we, namely, I, Master Veit, and Cyriacus, are not going to the Diet at Augsburg. We have, however, another Diet of our own here.

"Just under our window there is a grove like a little forest, where the choughs and crows have convened a diet, and there is such a riding hither and

thither, such an incessant tumult, day and night, as if they were all merry and mad with drinking. Young and old chatter together, until I wonder how their breath can hold out so long. I should like to know if any of those nobles and cavaliers are with you; it seems to me they must be gathered here out of the whole world.

“I have not yet seen their emperor; but their great people are always strutting and prancing before our eyes, not, indeed, in costly robes, but all simply clad in one uniform, all alike black, all alike grey-eyed, and all singing one song, only with the most amusing varieties between young and old, and great and small. They are not careful to have a great palace and hall of assembly, for their hall is vaulted with the beautiful, broad sky, their floor is the field strewn with fair, green branches, and their walls reach as far as the ends of the world. Neither do they require steeds and armour; they have feathered wheels with which they fly from shot and danger. They are, doubtless, great and mighty lords, but what they are debating I do not yet know.

“As far, however, as I understand through an interpreter, they are planning a great foray and campaign against the wheat, barley, oats, and all kinds of grain, and many a knight will win his spurs in this war, and many a brave deed will be done.

“Thus we sit here in our Diet, and hear and listen with great delight, and learn how the princes and lords, with all the other estates of the empire, sing and live so merrily. But our especial pleasure is to see how cavalierly they pace about, whet their beaks, and furbish their armour, that they may win glory and vic-

tory from wheat and oats. We wish them health and wealth, — and that they may all at once be impaled on a quickset hedge!

“For I hold they are nothing better than sophists and Papists with their preaching and writing; and I should like to have these also before me in our assembly, that I might hear their pleasant voices and sermons, and see what a useful people they are to devour all that is on the face of the earth, and afterwards chatter no one knows how long!

“To-day we have heard the first nightingale; for they would not trust April. We have had delightful weather here, no rain, except a little yesterday. With you, perhaps, it is otherwise. Herewith I commend you to God. Keep house well. Given from the Diet of the grain-Turks, the 28th of April, anno 1530.

MARTINUS LUTHER.”

Yet, peaceful and at leisure as he seems, Gottfried says the whole of Germany is leaning now once more on the strength of that faithful heart.

The Roman diplomatists again and again have all but persuaded Melancthon to yield everything for peace; and, but for the firm and faithful words which issue from “this wilderness,” as Luther calls the Coburg fortress, Gottfried believes all might have gone wrong. Severely and mournfully has Dr. Luther been constrained to write more than once to “Philip Pusillanimity,” demanding that at least he should not give up the doctrine of justification by faith, and abandon all to the decision of the bishops!

It is faith which gives Luther this clearness of vision. “It is God’s word and cause,” he writes,

“therefore our prayer is certainly heard, and already He has determined and prepared the help that shall help us. This cannot fail. For he says, ‘Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. See, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands.’ I have lately seen two miracles,” he continues; “the first, as I was looking out of my window and saw the stars in heaven, and all that beautiful vaulted roof of God, and yet saw no pillars on which the Master Builder had fixed this vault; yet the heaven fell not, but all that grand arch stood firm. Now, there are some who search for such pillars, and want to touch and grasp them, and since they cannot, they wonder and tremble as if the heaven must certainly fall, for no other reason but because they cannot touch and grasp its pillars. If they could lay hold on those, think they, then the heaven would stand firm!

“The second miracle was — I saw great clouds rolling over us, with such a ponderous weight that they might be compared to a great ocean, and yet I saw no foundation on which they rested or were based, nor any shore which kept them back; yet they fell not on us, but frowned on us with a stern countenance, and fled. But when they had passed by, then shone forth both their foundation and our roof which had kept them back — the rainbow! Truly a weak, thin, slight foundation and roof, which soon melted away into the clouds, and was more like a shadowy prism, such as we see through coloured glass, than a strong and firm foundation! so that we might well distrust that feeble dyke which kept back that terrible weight

of waters. Yet we found, in fact, that this unsubstantial prism could bear up the weight of waters, and that it guards us safely. But there are some who look rather at the thickness and massy weight of the waters and clouds, than at this thin, slight, narrow bow of promise. They would like to *feel the strength* of that shadowy, evanescent arch, and because they cannot do this, they are ever fearing that the clouds will bring back the deluge."

Heavenly Father, since one man who trusts thy word can thus uphold a nation, what could not thy word do for each of us if we would each of us thus trust it, and Thee who speakest it!

XXXIII.

THEKLA'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, 1540.

THE time I used to dread most of all in my life, after that great bereavement which laid it waste, is come. I am in the monotonous level of solitary middle age. The sunny heights of childhood, and even the joyous breezy slopes of youth, are almost out of sight behind me; and the snowy heights of reverend age, from which we can look over into the promised land beyond, are almost as far before me. Other lives have grown from the bubbling spring into the broad and placid river, while mine is still the little narrow stream it was at first; only, creeping slow and noiseless through the flats, instead of springing gladly from rock to rock, making music wherever it came. Yet I am content; absolutely, fully content. I am sure that my life also has been ordered by the highest wisdom and love; and that (as far as my faithless heart does not hinder it) God is leading me also on to the very highest and best destiny for me.

I did not always think so. I used to fear that not only would this bereavement throw a shadow on my earthly life, but that it would stunt and enfeeble my nature for ever; that missing all the sweet, ennobling relationships of married life, even throughout the ages I should be but an undeveloped, one-sided creature.

But one day I was reading in Dr. Luther's German Bible the chapter about the body of Christ, the twelfth

of First Corinthians, and great comfort came into my heart through it. I saw that we are not meant to be separate atoms, each complete in itself, but members of a body, each only complete through union with all the rest. And then I saw how entirely unimportant it is in what place Christ shall set me in his body; and how impossible it is for us to judge what he is training us for, until the body is perfected and we see what we are to be in it.

On the Düben Heath also, soon after, when I was walking home with Else's Gretchen, the same lesson came to me in a parable, through a clump of trees under the shade of which we were resting. Often, from a distance, we had admired the beautiful symmetry of the group, and now, looking up, I saw how imperfect every separate tree was, all leaning in various directions, and all only developed on one side. If each tree had said, "I am a beech tree, and I ought to throw out branches on every side, like my brother standing alone on the heath," what would have become of that beautiful clump? And looking up through the green interwoven leaves to the blue sky I said, —

"Heavenly Father, thou art wise! I will doubt no more. Plant me where thou wilt in thy garden, and let me grow as thou wilt! Thou wilt not let me fail of my highest end."

Dr. Luther also said many things which helped me from time to time, in conversation or in his sermons.

"The barley," he said, "must suffer much from man. First, it is cast into the earth that it may decay. Then, when it is grown up and ripe, it is cut and

mown down. Then it is crushed and pressed, fermented and brewed into beer.

“Just such a martyr also is the linen or flax. When it is ripe it is plucked, steeped in water, beaten, dried, hacked, spun, and woven into linen, which again is torn and cut. Afterwards it is made into plaster for sores, and used for binding up wounds. Then it becomes lint, is laid under the stamping machines in the paper mill, and torn into small bits. From this they make paper for writing and printing.

“These creatures, and many others like them, which are of great use to us, must thus suffer. Thus also must good, godly Christians suffer much from the ungodly and wicked. Thus, however, the barley, wine, and corn are ennobled; in man becoming flesh, and in the Christian man’s flesh entering into the heavenly kingdom.”

Often he speaks of the “dear, holy cross, a portion of which is given to all Christians.”

“All the saints,” he said once, when a little child of one of his friends lay ill, “must drink of the bitter cup. Could Mary even, the dear mother of our Lord, escape? All who are dear to him must suffer. Christians conquer when they suffer; only when they rebel and resist are they defeated and lose the day.”

He, indeed, knows what trial and temptation mean. Many a bitter cup has he had to drink, he to whom the sins, and selfishness, and divisions of Christians are personal sorrow and shame. It is therefore, no doubt, that he knows so well how to sustain and comfort. Those, he says, who are to be the bones and sinews of the Church must expect the hardest blows.

Well I remember his saying, when, on the 8th of August, 1529, before his going to Coburg, he and his wife lay sick of a fever, while he suffered also from sciatica, and many other ailments, —

“God has touched me sorely. I have been impatient; but God knows better than I whereto it serves. *Our Lord God is like a printer who sets the letters backwards, so that here we cannot read them. When we are printed off yonder, in the life to come, we shall read all clear and straightforward.* Meantime we must have patience.”

In other ways more than I can number he and his words have helped me. No one seems to understand as he does what the devil is and does. It is the *temptation in the sorrow* which is the thing to be dreaded and guarded against. This was what I did not understand at first when Bertrand died. I thought I was rebellious, and dared not approach God till I ceased to feel rebellious. I did not understand that the malignant one who tempted me to rebel also tempted me to think God would not forgive. I had thought before of affliction as a kind of sanctuary where naturally I should feel God near. I had to learn that it is also night-time, even “the hour of darkness,” in which the prince of darkness draws near unseen. As Luther says, “The devil torments us in the place where we are most tender and weak, as in Paradise he fell not on Adam, but on Eve.”

Inexpressible was the relief to me when I learned who had been tormenting me, and turned to Him who vanquished the tempter of old to banish him now from me. For terrible as Dr. Luther knows that fallen angel to be, — “the antithesis,” as he said, “of the

‘Ten Commandments,’ who for thousands of years has been studying with an angel’s intellectual power, “how most effectually to distress and ruin man,” — he always reminds us that, nevertheless, the devil is a vanquished foe, that the victory has not now to be won; that, bold as the evil one is to assail and tempt the unguarded, a word or look of faith will compel him to flee “like a beaten hound.” It is this blending of the sense of Satan’s power to tempt, with the conviction of his powerlessness to injure the believing heart, which has so often sustained me in Dr. Luther’s words.

But it is not only thus that he has helped me. He presses on us often the necessity of occupation. It is better, he says, to engage in the humblest work, than to sit still alone and encounter the temptations of Satan. “Ofi in my temptations I have need to talk even with a child, in order to expel such thoughts as the devil possesses me with; and this teaches me not to boast as if of myself I were able to help myself, and to subsist without the strength of Christ. I need one at times to help me who in his whole body has not as much theology as I have in one finger.” “The human heart,” he says, “is like a millstone in a mill: when you put wheat under it, it turns, and grinds, and bruises the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat it still grinds on, but then it is itself it grinds and wears away. So the human heart, unless it be occupied with some employment, leaves space for the devil, who wriggles himself in, and brings with him a whole host of evil thoughts, temptations, tribulations, which grind away the heart.”

After hearing him say this, I tried hard to find myself some occupation. At first it seemed difficult.

Elsè wanted little help with her children, or only occasionally. At home the cares of poverty were over, and my dear father and mother lived in comfort, without my aid. I used discontentedly to wish some times that we were poor again, as in Elsè's girlish days, that I might be needed, and really feel it of some use to spin and embroider, instead of feeling that I only worked for the sake of not being idle, and that no one would be the better for what I did.

At other times I used to long to reclude myself from all the happy life around, and half to reproach Dr. Luther in my heart for causing the suppression of the convents. In a nunnery, at least, I thought I should have been something definite and recognized, instead of the negative, undeveloped creature, I felt myself to be, only distinguished from those around by the absence of what made their lives real and happy.

My mother's recovery from the plague helped to cure me of that, by reminding me of the home blessings still left. I began, too, to confide once more in God, and I was comforted by thinking of what my grandmother said to me one day when I was a little girl, crying hopelessly over a tangled skein and sobbing, "I shall never untangle it;" "Wind, dear child, *wind on*, inch by inch, undo each knot one by one, and the skein will soon disentangle itself." So I resolved to wind on *my* little thread of life day by day, and undo one little knot after another, until now, indeed, the skein has disentangled itself.

Few women, I think, have a life more full of love and interest than mine. I have undertaken the care of a school for little girls, among whom are two

orphans, made fatherless by the peasants' war, who were sent to us; and this also I owe to Dr. Luther. He has nothing more at heart than the education of the young; nothing gives him more pain than to see the covetousness which grudges funds for schools; and nothing more joy than to see the little ones grow up in all good knowledge. As he wrote to the Elector John from Coburg twelve years ago: —

“The merciful God shows himself indeed gracious in making his Word so fruitful in your land. The tender little boys and maidens are so well instructed in the Catechism and Scriptures, that my heart melts when I see that young boys and girls can pray, believe, and speak better of God and Christ than all the convents and schools could in the olden time.

“Such youth in your grace's land are a fair Paradise, of which the like is not in the world. It is as if God said, ‘Courage, dear Duke John, I commit to thee my noblest treasure, my pleasant Paradise; thou shalt be father over it. For under thy guard and rule I place it, and give thee the honour that thou shalt be my gardener and steward.’ This is assuredly true. It is even as if our Lord himself were your grace's guest and ward, since his Word and his little ones are your perpetual guests and wards.”

For a little while a lady, a friend of his wife, resided in his house in order to commence such a school at Wittenberg for young girls; and now it has become my charge. And often Dr. Luther comes in and lays his hands on the heads of the little ones, and asks God to bless them, or listens while they repeat the Catechism or the Holy Scriptures.

December 25, 1531.

Once more the Christmas tree has been planted in our homes at Wittenberg. How many such happy Christian homes there are among us! Our Elsi's, Justus Jonas', and his gentle, sympathizing wife, who, Dr. Luther says, "always brings comfort in her kind pleasant countenance." We all meet at Elsi's home on such occasions now. The voices of the children are better than light to the blind eyes of my father, and my mother renews her own maternal joys again in her grandchildren, without the cares.

But of all these homes none is happier or more united than Dr. Luther's. His childlike pleasure in little things makes every family festival in his house so joyous; and the children's plays and pleasures, as well as their little troubles, are to him a perpetual parable of the heavenly family, and of our relationship to God. There are five children in his family now; Hans, the first-born; Magdalen, a lovely, loving girl of thirteen; Paul, Martin, and Margaretha.

How good it is for those who are bereaved and sorrowful that our Christian festivals point forward and upward as well as backward; that the eternal joy to which we are drawing ever nearer is linked to the earthly joy which has passed away. Yes, the old heathen tree of life, which that young green fir from the primeval forests of our land is said to typify, has been christened into the Christmas tree. The old tree of life was a tree of sorrow, and had its roots in the evanescent earth, and at its base sat the mournful Destinies, ready to cut the thread of human life. Nature ever renewing herself contrasted mournfully

with the human life that blooms but once. But our tree of life is a tree of joy, and is rooted in the eternal Paradise of joy. The angels watch over it, and it recalls the birth of the Second Man — the Lord from heaven — who is not merely “a living soul, but a life-giving spirit.” In it the evanescence of Nature, immortal as she seems, is contrasted with the true eternal life of mortal man. In the joy of the little ones, once more, thank God, my whole heart seems to rejoice; for I also have my face towards the dawn, and I can hear the fountain of life bubbling up whichever way I turn. Only, *before* me it is best and freshest! for it is springing up to life everlasting.

December 1542.

A shadow has fallen on the peaceful home of Dr. Luther: Magdalen, the unselfish, obedient, pious, loving child — the darling of her father’s heart — is dead; the first-born daughter, whose portrait, when she was a year old, used to cheer and delight him at Coburg.

On the 5th of this last September she was taken ill, and then Luther wrote at once to his friend Marcus Crodel to send his son John from Torgau, where he was studying, to see his sister. He wrote, —

“Grace and peace, my Marcus Crodel. I request that you will conceal from my John what I am writing to you. My daughter Magdalen is literally almost at the point of death — soon about to depart to her Father in heaven, unless it should yet seem fit to God to spare her. But she herself so sighs to see her brother, that I am constrained to send a carriage to fetch him. They indeed loved one another greatly. May she survive to his coming! I do what I can, lest after-

wards the sense of having neglected anything should torture me. Desire him, therefore, without mentioning the cause, to return hither at once with all speed in this carriage; hither, — where she will either sleep in the Lord or be restored. Farewell in the Lord.”

Her brother came, but she was not restored.

As she lay very ill, Doctor Martin said, —

“She is very dear to me; but, gracious God, if it is thy will to take her hence, I am content to know that she will be with thee.”

And as she lay in the bed, he said to her, —

“Magdalenchen, my little daughter, thou wouldst like to stay with thy father; and thou art content also to go to thy Father yonder.”

Said she, “Yes, dearest father; as God wills.”

Then said the father, —

“Thou darling child, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Then he turned away and said, —

“She is very dear to me. If the flesh is so strong, what will the spirit be?”

And among other things he said, —

“For a thousand years God has given no bishop such great gifts as he has given me; and we should rejoice in his gifts. I am angry with myself that I cannot rejoice in my heart over her, nor give thanks; although now and then I can sing a little song to our God, and thank him a little for all this. But let us take courage; living or dying, we are the Lord's. ‘Sive vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus.’ This is true, whether we take ‘Domini’ in the nominative or the genitive: we are the Lord's, and in him we are lords over death and life.”

Then said Master George Rörer, —

“I once heard your reverence say a thing which often comforts me — namely, ‘I have prayed our Lord God that he will give me a happy departure when I journey hence. And he will do it; of that I feel sure. At my latter end I shall yet speak with Christ my Lord, were it for ever so brief a space.’ I fear sometimes,” continued Master Rörer, “that I shall depart hence suddenly, in silence, without being able to speak a word.”

Then said Dr. Martin Luther, —

“Living or dying, we are the Lord’s. It is equally so whether you were killed by falling down stairs, or were sitting and writing, and suddenly should die. It would not injure me if I fell from a ladder and lay dead at its foot; for the devil hates us grievously, and might even bring about such a thing as that.”

When, at last, the little Magdalen lay at the point of death, her father fell on his knees by her bed-side, wept bitterly, and prayed that God would receive her. Then she departed, and fell asleep in her father’s arms. Her mother was also in the room, but further off, on account of her grief. This happened a little after nine o’clock on the Wednesday after the 19th Sunday after Trinity, 1542.

The Doctor repeated often, as before said, —

“I would desire indeed to keep my daughter, if our Lord God would leave her with me; for I love her very dearly. But His will be done; for nothing can be better than that for her.”

Whilst she still lived, he said to her, —

“Dear daughter, thou hast also a Father in heaven; thou art going to him.”

Then said Master Philip, —

“The love of parents is an image and illustration of the love of God, engraven on the human heart. If, then, the love of God to the human race is as great as that of parents to their children, it is indeed great and fervent.”

When she was laid in the coffin, Doctor Martin said, —

“Thou darling Lenichen, how well it is with thee!”

And as he gazed on her lying there, he said, —

“Ah, thou sweet Lenichen, thou shalt rise again, and shine like a star; yes, like the sun!”

They had made the coffin too narrow and too short, and he said, —

“The bed is too small for thee! I am indeed joyful in spirit, but after the flesh I am very sad; this parting is so beyond measure trying. Wonderful it is that I should know she is certainly at peace, and that all is well with her, and yet should be so sad.”

And when the people who came to lay out the corpse, according to custom, spoke to the Doctor, and said they were sorry for his affliction, he said, —

“You should rejoice. I have sent a saint to heaven; yes, a living saint! May we have such a death! Such a death I would gladly die this very hour.”

Then said one, “That is true indeed; yet every one would wish to keep his own.”

Doctor Martin answered, —

“Flesh is flesh, and blood is blood. I am glad that she is yonder. There is no sorrow but that of the flesh.”

To others who came he said, —

“Grieve not. I have sent a saint to heaven; yes, I have sent two such thither!” alluding to his infant Elizabeth.

As they were chanting by the corpse, “Lord, remember not our former sins, which are of old,” he said, —

“I say, O Lord, not our former sins only, nor only those of old, but our present sins; for we are usurers, exactors, misers. Yea, the abomination of the mass is still in the world!”

When the coffin was closed, and she was buried, he said, “*There is indeed a resurrection of the body.*”

And as they returned from the funeral, he said, —

“My daughter is now provided for in body and soul. We Christians have nothing to complain of; we know it must be so. We are more certain of eternal life than of anything else; for God who has promised it to us for his dear Son’s sake, can never lie. Two saints of my flesh our Lord God has taken, but not of my blood. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.”

Among other things, he said, —

“We must take great care for our children, and especially for the poor little maidens; we must not leave it to others to care for them. I have no compassion on the boys. A lad can maintain himself wherever he is, if he will only work; and if he will not work, he is a scoundrel. But the poor maiden-kind must have a staff to lean on.”

And again, —

“I gave this daughter very willingly to our God. After the flesh, I would indeed have wished to keep

her longer with me; but since he has taken her hence, I thank him."

The night before Magdalen Luther died, her mother had a dream, in which she saw two men clothed in fair raiment, beautiful and young, come and lead her daughter away to her bridal. When, on the next morning Philip Melanchthon came into the cloister, and asked her how her daughter was, she told him her dream.

But he was alarmed at it, and said to others, —

"Those young men are the dear angels who will come and lead this maiden into the kingdom of heaven, to the true Bridal."

And the same day she died.

Some little time after her death, Dr. Martin Luther said, —

"If my daughter Magdalen could come to life again, and bring with her to me the Turkish kingdom, I would not have it. Oh, she is well cared for; 'Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.' Who dies thus, certainly has eternal life. I would that I, and my children, and ye all could thus all depart; for evil days are coming. There is neither help nor counsel more on earth, I see, until the Judgment Day. I hope, if God will, it will not be long delayed; for covetousness and usury increase."

And often at supper he repeated, "Et multiplicata sunt mala in terris."

He himself made this epitaph, and had it placed on his Magdalen's tomb: —

*"Dormio cum sanctis hic Magdalena Lutheri
Filia, et hoc strato tecta quiesco meo."*

Filia mertis eram, peccati semine nata,
Sanguine sed vivo, Christe, redempta tuo.*

In German, —

“Here sleep I, Lenichen, Dr. Luther’s little daughter,
Rest with all the saints in my little bed;
I who was born in sins,
And must for ever have been lost.
But now I live, and all is well with me,
Lord Christ, redeemed with thy blood.”

Yet indeed, although he tries to cheer others, he laments long and deeply himself, as many of his letters show.

To Jonas he wrote, —

“I think you will have heard that my dearest daughter Magdalen is born again to the eternal kingdom of Christ. But although I and my wife ought to do nothing but give thanks, rejoicing in so happy and blessed a departure, by which she has escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk, and the devil; yet such is the strength of natural affection, that we cannot part with her without sobs and groans of heart. They cleave to our heart, they remain fixed in its depths — her face, her words — the looks, living and dying, of that most dutiful and obedient child; so that even the death of Christ (and what are all deaths in comparison with that?) scarcely can efface her death from our minds. Do thou, therefore, give thanks to God in our stead. Wonder at the great work of God who thus glorifies our flesh! She was, as thou know-

* A friend has translated it thus: —

I, Luther’s daughter Magdalen,
Here slumber with the blest;
Upon this bed I lay my head,
And take my quiet rest.

I was a child of death on earth,
In sin my life was given:
But on the tree Christ died for me,
And now I live in heaven.

est, gentle and sweet in disposition, and was altogether lovely. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, who called, and chose, and has thus magnified her! I wish for myself and all mine, that we may attain to such a death; yea, rather, to such a life, which only I ask from God, the Father of all consolation and mercy."

And again, to Jacob Probst, pastor at Bremen —

"My most dear child, Magdalen, has departed to her heavenly Father, falling asleep full of faith in Christ. An indignant horror against death softens my tears. I loved her vehemently. But in *that day* we shall be avenged on death, and on him who is the author of death."

And to Amsdorf —

"Thanks to thee for endeavouring to console me on the death of my dearest daughter. I loved her not only for that she was my flesh, but for her most placid and gentle spirit, ever so dutiful to me. But now I rejoice that she is gone to live with her heavenly Father, and is fallen into sweetest sleep until that day. For the times are and will be worse and worse; and in my heart I pray that to thee, and to all dear to me, may be given such an hour of departure, and with such placid quiet, truly to fall asleep in the Lord. '*The just are gathered, and rest in their beds.*' 'For verily the world is as a horrible Sodom.'"

And to Lauterbach —

"Thou writest well, that in this most evil age death (or more truly, sleep) is to be desired by all. And although the departure of that most dear child has, indeed, no little moved me, yet I rejoice more that she, a daughter of the kingdom, is snatched from

the jaws of the devil and the world; so sweetly did she fall asleep in Christ."

So mournfully and tenderly he writes and speaks, the shadow of that sorrow at the centre of his life overspreading the whole world with darkness to him. Or rather, as he would say, the joy of that loving dutiful child's presence being withdrawn, he looks out from his cold and darkened hearth, and sees the world as it is; the covetousness of the rich; the just demands, yet insurrectionary attempts of the poor; the war with the Turks without, the strife in the empire within; the fierce animosities of impending religious war; the lukewarmness and divisions among his friends. For many years God gave that feeling heart a refuge from all these in the bright, unbroken circle of his home. But now the next look to him seems beyond this life; to death, which unveils the kingdom of truth and righteousness, and love, to each, one by one; or still more, to the glorious Advent which will manifest it to all. Of this he delights to speak. The end of the world, he feels sure, is near; and he says all preachers should tell their people to pray for its coming, as the beginning of the golden age. He said once — "O gracious God, come soon again! I am waiting ever for the day — the spring morning, when day and night are equal, and the clear, bright rose of that dawn shall appear. From that glow of morning I imagine a thick, black cloud will issue, forked with lightning, and then a crash, and heaven and earth will fall. Praise be to God, who has taught us to long and look for that day. In the Papacy, they sing —

'Dies iræ, dies illa;'

but we look forward to it with hope; and I trust it is not far distant."

Yet he is no dreamer, listlessly clasping his hands in the night, and watching for the dawn. He is of the day, a child of the light; and calmly, and often cheerfully, he pursues his life of ceaseless toil for others, considerately attending to the wants and pleasures of all, from the least to the greatest; affectionately desirous to part with his silver plate, rather than not give a generous reward to a faithful old servant, who was retiring from his service; pleading the cause of the helpless; writing letters of consolation to the humblest who need his aid; caring for all the churches, yet steadily disciplining his children when they need it, or ready to enter into any scheme for their pleasure.

WITTENBERG, 1545.

It seems as if Dr. Luther were as necessary to us now as when he gave the first impulse to better things, by affixing his theses to the doors of Wittenberg, or when the eyes of the nation centred on him at Worms. In his quiet home he sits and holds the threads which guide so many lives, and the destinies of so many lands. He has been often ailing lately, and sometimes very seriously. The selfish luxury of the rich burghers and nobles troubles him much. He almost forced his way one day into the Elector's cabinet, to press on him the appropriation of some of the confiscated church revenues to the payment of pastors and schoolmasters; and earnestly, again and again, from the pulpit, does he denounce covetousness.

"All other vices," he says, "bring their pleasures;

but the wretched avaricious man is the slave of his goods, not their master; he enjoys neither this world nor the next. Here he has purgatory, and there hell; while faith and content bring rest to the soul here, and afterwards bring the soul to heaven. For the avaricious lack what they have, as well as what they have not."

Never was a heart more free from selfish interests and aims than his. His faith is always seeing the invisible God; and to him it seems the most melancholy folly, as well as sin, that people should build their nests in this forest, on all whose trees he sees "the forester's mark of destruction."

The tone of his preaching has often lately been reproachful and sad.

Elsè's Gretchen, now a thoughtful maiden of three-and-twenty, said to me the other day, —

"Aunt Thekla, why does Dr. Luther preach sometimes as if his preaching had done no good? Have not many of the evil things he attacked been removed? Is not the Bible in every home? Our mother says we cannot be too thankful for living in these times, when we are taught the truth about God, and are given a religion of trust and love, instead of one of distrust and dread. Why does Dr. Luther often speak as if nothing had been done?"

And I could only say, —

"We see what has been done; but Dr. Luther only knows what he hoped to do. He said one day — 'If I had known at first that men were so hostile to the Word of God, I should have held my peace. I imagined that they sinned merely through ignorance.'"

"I suppose, Gretchen," I said "that he had before

him the vision of the whole of Christendom flocking to adore and serve his Lord, when once he had shown them how good He is. *We* see what Dr. Luther has done. *He* sees what he hoped, and contrasts it with what is left undone."

XXXIV.

THE MOTHER'S STORY.

I DO not think there is another old man and woman in Christendom who ought to be so thankful as my husband and I.

No doubt all parents are inclined to look at the best side of their own children; but with ours there is really no other side to look at, it seems to me. Perhaps *Elsè* has sometimes a little too much of my anxious mind; but even in her tender heart, as in all the others, there is a large measure of her father's hopefulness. And then, although they have, perhaps, none of them quite his inventive genius, yet that seems hardly a matter of regret; because, as things go in the world, other people seem so often, at the very goal, to step in and reap the fruit of these inventions, just by adding some insignificant detail which makes the invention work, and gives them the appearance of having been the real discoverers.

Not that I mean to murmur for one instant against the people who have this little knack of just putting the finishing touch and making things succeed; that also, as the house-father says, is God's gift, and although it cannot certainly be compared to those great, lofty thoughts and plans of my husband's, it has more current value in the world. Not, again, that I would for an instant murmur at the world. We have all so much more in it than we deserve (except, perhaps, my

dearest husband, who cares so little for its rewards!) It has been quite wonderful how good every one has been to us. Gottfried Reichenbach, and all our sons-in-law, are like sons to us; and certainly could not have prized our daughters more if they had had the dowry of princesses; although I must candidly say I think our dear daughters without a kreuzer of dowry are worth a fortune to any man. I often wonder how it is they are such house-wives, and so sensible and wise in every way, when I never considered myself at all a clever manager. To be sure their father's conversation was always very improving; and my dear blessed mother was a store-house of wisdom and experience. However, there is no accounting for these things. God is wonderfully good in blessing the humblest efforts to train up the little ones for him. We often think the poverty of their early years was quite a school of patience and household virtues for them all. Even Christopher and Thekla, who caused us more anxiety at first than the others, are the very stay and joy of our old age; which shows how little we can foresee what good things God is preparing for us.

How I used at one time to tremble for them both! It shocked Else and me so grievously to see Christopher, as we thought, quite turning his back on religion, after Fritz became a monk; and what a relief it was to see him find in Dr. Luther's sermons and in the Bible the truth which bowed his heart in reverence, yet left his character free to develop itself without being compressed into a mould made for other characters. What a relief it was to hear that he turned, not from religion, but from what was false in the religion then taught,

and to see him devoting himself to his calling as a printer with a feeling as sacred as Fritz to his work as a pastor!

Then our Thekla, how anxious I was about her at one time! how eager to take her training out of God's hands into my own, which I thought, in my ignorance, might spare her fervent, enthusiastic, loving heart some pain.

I wanted to tame down and moderate everything in her by tender warnings and wise precepts. I wanted her to love less vehemently, to rejoice with more limitation, to grieve more moderately. I tried hard to compress her character into a narrower mould. But God would not have it so. I can see it all now. She was to love and rejoice, and then to weep and lament, according to the full measure of her heart, that in the heights and depths to which God led her, she might learn what she was to learn of the heights and depths of the love which extends beyond all joy and below all sorrow. Her character, instead of becoming dwarfed and stunted, as my ignorant hand might have made it, was to be thus braced, and strengthened, and rooted, that others might find shelter beneath her sympathy and love, as so many do now. I would have weakened in order to soften; God's providence has strengthened and expanded while softening, and made her strong to endure and pity as well as strong to feel.

No one can say what she is to us, the one left entirely to us, to whom we are still the nearest and the dearest, who binds our years together by the unbroken memory of her tender care, and makes us young in her childlike love, and brings into our failing life

the activity and interest of mature age by her own life of active benevolence.

Elsè and her household are the delight of our daily life; Eva and Fritz are our most precious and consecrated treasures, and all the rest are good and dear as children can be; but to all the rest we are the grandmother and the grandfather. To Thekla we are "father" and "mother" still, the shelter of her life and the home of her affections. Only, sometimes my old anxious fears creep over me when I think what she will do when we are gone. But I have no excuse for these now, with all those promises of our Lord, and his word about the lilies and the birds, in plain German in my Bible, and the very same lilies and birds preaching to me in colours and songs as plain from the eaves and from the garden outside my window.

Never did any woman owe so much to Dr. Luther and the Reformation as I. Christopher's religion; Fritz and Eva's marriage; Thekla's presence in our home, instead of her being a nun in some convent-prison; all the love of the last months my dear sister Agnes and I spent together before her peaceful death; and the great weight of fear removed from my own heart!

And yet my timid, ease-loving nature, will sometimes shrink, not so much from what has been done, as from the way in which it has been done. I fancy a little more gentleness might have prevented so terrible a breach between the new and the old religions; that the peasant war might have been saved; and somehow or other (how, I cannot at all tell) the good people on both sides might have been kept at one. For that there are good people on both sides, nothing

will ever make me doubt. Indeed, is not one of our own sons — our good and sober-minded Pollux — still in the old Church? And can I doubt that he and his devout, affectionate little wife, who visits the poor and nurses the sick, love God and try to serve him?

In truth, I cannot help half counting it among our mercies that we have one son still adhering to the old religion; although my children, who are wiser than I, do not think so; nor my husband, who is wiser than they; nor Dr. Luther, who is, on the whole, I believe, wiser than any one. Perhaps I should rather say, that great as the grief is to us and the loss to him, I cannot help seeing some good in our Pollux remaining as a link between us and the religion of our fathers. It seems to remind us of the tie of our common creation and redemption, and our common faith, however dim, in our Creator and Redeemer. It prevents our thinking all Christendom which belongs to the old religion quite the same as the pagans or the Turks; and it also helps a little to prevent their thinking us such hopeless infidels.

Besides, although they would not admit it, I feel sure that Dr. Luther and the Reformation have taught Pollux and his wife many things. They also have a German Bible; and although it is much more cumbrous than Dr. Luther's, and, it seems to me, not half such genuine, hearty German, still he and his wife can read it; and I sometimes trust we shall find by-and-by we did not really differ so very much about our Saviour, although we may have differed about Dr. Luther.

Perhaps I am wrong, however, in thinking that great changes might have been more quietly accomplished. Thekla says the spring must have its thunder-

storms as well as its sunshine and gentle showers, and that the stone could not be rolled away from the sepulchre, nor the veil rent in the holy place, without an earthquake.

Elsè's Gottfried says the devil would never suffer his lies about the good and gracious God to be set aside without a battle; and that the dear holy angels have mighty wars to wage, as well as silent watch to keep by the cradles of the little ones. Only I cannot help wishing that the Reformers, and even Dr. Luther himself, would follow the example of the archangel Michael in not returning railing for railing.

Of one thing, however, I am quite sure, whatever any one may say; and that is, that it is among our great mercies that our Atlantis married a Swiss, so that through her we have a link with our brethren the evangelical Christians who follow the Zwinglian Confession. I shall always be thankful for the months her father and I passed under their roof. If Dr. Luther could only know how they revere him for his noble work, and how one they are with us and him in faith in Christ and Christian love!

I was a little perplexed at one time how it could be that such good men should separate, until Thekla reminded me of that evil one who goes about accusing God to us, and us to one another.

On the other hand, some of the Zwinglians are severe on Dr. Luther for his "compromise with Rome," and his "unscriptural doctrines," as some of them call his teaching about the sacraments.

These are things on which my head is not clear enough to reason. It is always so much more natural to me to look out for points of agreement than of dif-

ference; and it does seem to me, that deep below all the differences good men often mean the same. Dr. Luther looks on holy baptism in contrast with the monastic vows, and asserts the common glory of the baptism and Christian profession which all Christians share, against the exclusive claims of any section of priests or monks. And in the holy Supper, it seems to me simply the certainty of the blessing, and the reality of the presence of our Saviour in the sacrament, that he is really vindicating, in his stand on the words, "This is my body." Baptism represents to him the consecration and priesthood of all Christians, to be defended against all narrow privileges of particular orders; the holy Supper, the assured presence of Christ, to be defended against all doubters.

To the Swiss, on the other hand, the contrast is between faith and form, letter and spirit. This is, at all events, what my husband thinks.

I wish Dr. Luther would spend a few months with our Atlantis and her Conrad. I shall always be thankful *we* did.

Lately, the tone of Dr. Luther's preaching has often been reproachful and full of warning. These divisions between the evangelical Christians distress him so much. Yet he himself, with that resolute will of his, keeps them apart, as he would keep his children from poison, saying severe and bitter things of the Zwinglians, which sometimes grieve me much, because I know Conrad Winkelried's parish and Atlantis' home.

Well, one thing is certain: if Dr. Luther had been like me, we should have had no Reformation at all. And Dr. Luther and the Reformation have brought peace to my heart and joy to my life, for which I

would go through any storms. Only, to leave our dear ones behind in the storms is another thing!

But our dear heavenly Father has not, indeed, called us to leave them yet. When he does call us, he will give us the strength for that. And then we shall see everything quite clearly, because we shall see our Saviour quite clearly, as He is, know his love, and love him quite perfectly. What that will be we know not yet!

But I am quite persuaded that when we do really see our blessed Lord face to face, and see all things in his light, we shall all be very much surprised, and find we have something to unlearn, as well as infinitely much to learn; not Pollux, and the Zwinglians, and I only, but Dr. Philip Melanchthon, and Dr. Luther, and all!

For the Reformation, and even Dr. Luther's German Bible, have not taken all the clouds away. Still, we see through a glass darkly.

But they have taught us that there is nothing evil and dark behind to be found out; only, much to be revealed which is too good for us yet to understand, and too bright for us yet to see.

.

XXXV.

EVA'S AGNES'S STORY.

EISLEBEN, 1542.

AUNT ELSÈ says no one in the world ought to present more thanksgivings to God than Heinz and I, and I am sure she is right.

In the first place, we have the best father and mother in the world, so that whenever from our earliest years they have spoken to us about our Father in heaven, we have had just to think of what they were on earth to us, and feel that all their love and goodness together are what God is; only (if we can conceive such a thing) much more. We have only had *to add* to what they are, to learn what God is, not to take anything away; to say to ourselves, as we think of our parents, so kind in judging others, so loving, so true, "God is like that — only the love is greater and wiser than our father's, tenderer and more sympathizing than our mother's (difficult as it is to imagine). And then there is just one thing in which he is unlike. His power is unbounded. He can give to us every blessing he sees it good to give.

With such a father and mother on earth, and such a Father in heaven, and with Heinz, how can I ever thank our God enough?

And our mother is so young still! Our dear father said the other day, "her hair has not a tinge of grey in it, but is as golden as our Agnes's." And her face is so fair and sweet, and her voice so clear and full in

her own dear hymns, or in talking! Aunt Elèsè says, it makes one feel at rest to look at her, and that her voice always was the sweetest in the world, something between church music and the cooing of a dove. Aunt Elèsè says also, that even as a child she had just the same way she has now of seeing what you are thinking about — of *coming into* your heart, and making everything that is good in it feel it is understood, and all that is bad in it feel detected and slink away.

Our dear father does not, indeed, look so young; but I like men to look as if they had been in the wars — as if their hearts had been well ploughed and sown. And the grey in his hair, and the furrows on his forehead — those two upright ones when he is thinking — and the firm compression of his mouth, and the hollow on his cheek, seem to me quite as beautiful in their way as our mother's placid brow, and the dear look on her lips, like the dawn of a smile, as if the law of kindness had moulded every curve.

Then, in the second place (perhaps I ought to have said in the first), we have "the Catechism." And Aunt Elèsè says we have no idea, Heinz and I, what a blessing that is to us. We certainly did not always think it a blessing when we were learning it. But I begin to understand it now, especially since I have been staying at Wittenberg with Aunt Elèsè, and she has told me about the perplexities of her childhood and early youth.

Always to have learned about God as the Father who "cares for us every day" — gives us richly all things to enjoy, and "that all out of pure, fatherly, divine love and goodness; and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

that he has redeemed me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, to be his own—redeemed me, not with gold and silver, but with his holy, precious blood;” and of the Holy Spirit, that “he dwells with us daily, calls us by his gospel, enlightens, and richly forgives;” — all this, she says, is the greatest blessing any one can know. To have no dark, suspicious thoughts of the good God, unconsciously drunk in from infancy, to dash away from our hearts — Dr. Luther himself says we have little idea what a gift that is to us young people of this generation.

It used to be like listening to histories of dark days centuries ago, to hear Aunt Elsè speak of her childhood at Eisenach, when Dr. Luther also was a boy, and used to sing for bread at our good kinswoman Ursula Cotta’s door — when the monks and nuns from the many high-walled convents used to walk demurely in their dark robes about the streets; and Aunt Elsè used to tremble at the thought of heaven, because it might be like a convent garden, and all the heavenly saints like Aunt Agnes.

Our dear Great-Aunt Agnes, how impossible for us to understand her being thus dreaded! — she who was the playmate of our childhood; and used to spoil us, our mother said, by doing everything we asked, and making us think she enjoyed being pulled about, and made a lion or a Turk of, as much as we enjoyed it. How well I remember now the pang that came over Heinz and me when we were told to speak and step softly, because she was ill, and then taken for a few minutes in the day to sit quite still by her bed-side with picture-books, because she loved to look at us, but could not bear any noise. And at last the day

when we were led in solemnly, and she could look at us no more, but lay quite still and white, while we placed our flowers on the bed, and we both felt it too sacred and too much like being at church to cry — until our evening prayer-time came, and our mother told us that Aunt Agnes did not need our prayers any longer, because God had made her quite good and happy in heaven. And Heinz said he wished God would take us all, and make us quite good and happy with her. But I, when we were left in our cribs alone, sobbed bitterly, and could not sleep. It seemed so terrible to think Aunt Agnes did not want us any more, and that we could do nothing more for her — she who had been so tenderly good to us! I was so afraid, also, that we had not been kind enough to her, had teased her to play with us, and made more noise than we ought; and that that was the reason God had taken her away. Heinz could not understand that at all. He was quite sure God was too kind; and, although he also cried, he soon fell asleep. It was a great relief to me when our mother came round, as she always did the last thing to see if we were asleep, and I could sob out my troubles on her heart, and say —

“Will Aunt Agnes never want us any more?”

“Yes, darling,” said our mother; “she wants us now. She is waiting for us all to come to her.”

“Then it was not because we teased her, and were noisy, she was taken away? We did love her so very dearly! And can we do nothing for her now?”

Then she told me how Aunt Agnes had suffered much here, and that our heavenly Father had taken her *home*, and that, although we could not do anything

for her now, we need not leave her name out of our nightly prayers, because we could always say, "Thank God for taking dear Aunt Agnes home!"

And so two things were written on my heart that night, that there was a place like home beyond the sky, where Aunt Agnes was waiting for us, loving us quite as much as ever, with God who loved us more than any one; and that we must be as kind as possible to people, and not give any one a moment's pain, because a time may come when they will not need our kindness any more.

It is very difficult for me who always think of Aunt Agnes waiting for us in heaven, with the wistful loving look she used to have when she lay watching for Heinz and me to come and sit by her bed-side, to imagine what different thoughts Aunt Elèsè had about her when she was a nun.

But Aunt Elèsè says that she has no doubt that Heinz and I, with our teasing, and our noise, and our love, were among the chief instruments of her sanctification. Yes, those days of Aunt Elèsè's childhood appear almost as far away from us as the days of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, who lived at the Wartburg, used to seem from Aunt Elèsè. It is wonderful to think what that miner's son, whom old John Reineck remembers carrying on his shoulders to the school-house up the hill, here at Eisleben, has done for us all. So completely that grim old time seems to have passed away. There is not a monastery left in all Saxony, and the pastors are all married, and schools are established in every town, where Dr. Luther says the young lads and maidens hear more about God and

Christianity than the nuns and monks in all the convents had learned thirty years ago.

Not that all the boys and maidens are good as they ought to be. No; that is too plain from what Heinz and I feel and know, and also from what our dear father preaches in the pulpit on Sundays. Our mother says sometimes she is afraid we of this generation shall grow up weak, and self-indulgent, and ease-loving, unlike our fathers who had to fight for every inch of truth they hold, with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

But our dear father smiles gravely, and says, she need not fear. These three enemies are not slain yet, and will give the young generation enough to do. Besides, the Pope is still reigning at Rome, and the Emperor is even now threatening us with an army, to say nothing of the Turks, and the Anabaptists, of whom Dr. Luther says so much.

I knew very little of the world until two years ago, and not much, I am afraid, of myself. But when I was about fifteen I went alone to stay with Aunt Chriemhild and Aunt Elsè, and then I learned many things which in learning troubled me not a little, but now that they are learned make me happier than before, which our mother says is the way with most of God's lessons. Before these visits I had never left home; and although Heinz who had been away, and was also naturally more thrown with other people as a boy than I was, often told me I knew no more of actual life than a baby, I never understood what he meant.

I suppose I had always unconsciously thought our father and mother were the centre of the world to every

one as well as to us; and had just been thankful for my lot in life, because I believed in all respects no one else had anything so good; and entertained a quiet conviction that in their hearts every one thought the same. And to find that to other people our lot in life seemed pitiable and poor, was an immense surprise to me, and no little grief!

We left our old home in the forest many years since, when Heinz and I were quite children; and it only lingered in our memories as a kind of Eden or fairy-land, where amongst wild flowers, and green glades, and singing birds, and streams, we made a home for all our dreams, not questioning, however, in our hearts that our new home at Eisleben was quite as excellent in its way. Have we not a garden behind the house with several apple-trees, and a pond as large as any of our neighbours, and an empty loft for wet days — the perfection of a loft — for telling fairy tales in, or making experiments, or preparing surprises of wonderful cabinet work with Heinz's tools? And has not our Eisleben valley also its green and wooded hills, and in the forests around are there not strange glows all night from the great miner's furnaces to which those of the charcoal burners in the Thuringian forest are mere toys? And are there not, moreover, all kinds of wild caverns and pits from which at intervals the miners come forth, grimy and independent, and sing their wild songs in chorus as they come home from work? And is not Eisleben Dr. Luther's birth-place? And have we not a high grammar-school which Dr. Luther founded, and in which our dear father teaches Latin? And do we not hear him preach once every Sunday?

To me it always seemed, and seems still, that nothing can be nobler than our dear father's office of telling the people the way to heaven on Sundays, and teaching their children the way to be wise and good on earth in the week. It was a great shock to me when I found every one did not think the same.

Not that every one was not always most kind to me; but it happened in this way.

One day some visitors had been at Uncle Ulrich's castle. They had complimented me on my golden hair, which Heinz always says is the colour of the princess' in the fairy tale. I went out at Aunt Chriemhild's desire, feeling half shy and half flattered, to play with my cousins in the forest. As I was sitting hidden among the trees, twining wreaths from the forget-me-nots my cousins were gathering by the stream below, these I did pass again. I heard one of them say, —

"Yes, she is a well-mannered little thing for a schoolmaster's daughter."

"I cannot think whence a burgher maiden — the Cottas are all burghers, are they not? — should inherit those little white hands and those delicate features," said the other.

"Poor, too, doubtless, as they must be!" was the reply, "one would think she had never had to work about the house, as no doubt she must."

"Who was her grandfather?"

"Only a printer at Wittenberg!"

"Only a schoolmaster!" and "only a printer!"

My whole heart rose against the scornful words. Was this what people meant by paying compliments? Was this the estimate my father was held in in the world — he, the noblest man in it, who was fit to be

the Elector or the Emperor? A bitter feeling came over me, which I thought was affection and an aggrieved sense of justice. But love is scarcely so bitter, or justice so fiery.

I did not tell any one, nor did I shed a tear, but went on weaving my forget-me-not wreaths, and forswore the wicked and hollow world. Had I not promised to do so long since, through my godspponsors, at my baptism? Now, I thought, I was learning what all that meant.

At Aunt Else's, however, another experience awaited me. There was to be a fair, and we were all to go in our best holiday dresses. My cousins had rich Oriental jewels on their bodices; and although, as burgher maidens, they might not, like my cousins at the castle, wear velvets, they had jackets and dresses of the stiffest, richest silks, which Uncle Reichenbach had sent for from Italy and the East.

My stuff dress certainly looked plain beside them, but I did not care in the least for that; my own dear mother and I had made it together; and she had hunted up some old precious stores to make me a taffetas jacket, which, as it was the most magnificent apparel I had ever possessed, we had both looked at with much complacency. Nor did it seem to me in the least less beautiful now. The touch of my mother's fingers had been on it, as she smoothed it round me the evening before I came away. And Aunt Else had said it was exactly like my mother. But my cousins were not quite pleased, it was evident; especially Fritz and the elder boys. They said nothing; but on the morning of the fête, a beautiful new dress, the counterpart of my cousins', was laid at my bedside before I awoke.

I put it on with some pleasure, but, when I looked at myself in the glass — it was very unreasonable — I could not bear it. It seemed a reproach on my mother, and on my humble life and my dear, poor home at Eisleben, and I sat down and cried bitterly, until a gentle knock at the door aroused me; and Aunt Else came in, and found me sitting with tears on my face and on the beautiful new dress, exceedingly ashamed of myself.

“Don't you like it, my child? It was our Fritz's thought. I was afraid you might not be pleased.”

“My mother thought the old one good enough,” I said in a very faltering tone. “It was good enough for my home. I had better go home again.”

Aunt Else was carefully wiping away the tears from my dress, but at these words she began to cry herself, and drew me to her heart, and said it was exactly what she should have felt in her young days at Eisenach, but that I must just wear the new dress to the fête, and then I need never wear it again unless I liked; and that I was right in thinking nothing half so good as my mother, and all she did, because nothing ever was, or would be, she was sure.

So we cried together, and were comforted; and I wore the green taffetas to the fair.

But when I came home again to Eisleben, I felt more ashamed of myself than of the taffetas dress or of the flattering ladies at the Castle. The dear, precious old home, in spite of all I could persuade myself to the contrary, did look small and poor, and the furniture worn and old. And yet I could see there new traces of care and welcome everywhere — fresh

rushes on the floors; a new white quilt on my little bed, made, I knew, by my mother's hands.

She knew very soon that I was feeling troubled about something, and soon she knew it all, as I told her my bitter experiences of life.

"Your father 'only a schoolmaster!'" she said, "and you yourself presented with a new taffetas dress! Are these all your grievances, little Agnes?"

"*All*, mother!" I exclaimed; "and *only*!"

"Is your father anything else but a schoolmaster, Agnes?" she said.

"I am not ashamed of that for an instant, mother," I said; "you could not think it. I think it is much nobler to teach children than to hunt foxes, and buy and sell bales of silk and wool. But the world seems to me exceedingly hollow and crooked; and I never wish to see any more of it. Oh, mother, do you think it was all nonsense in me?"

"I think, my child, you have had an encounter with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and I think they are no contemptible enemies. And I think you have not left them behind."

"But is not our father's calling nobler than any one's, and our home the nicest in the world?" I said; "and Eisleben really as beautiful in its way as the Thuringian forest, and as wise as Wittenberg?"

"All callings may be noble," she said; "and the one God calls us to is the noblest for us. Eisleben is not, I think, as beautiful as the old forest-covered hills at Gersdorf; nor Luther's birth-place as great as his dwelling-place, where he preaches and teaches, and sheds around him the influence of his holy daily life.

Other homes may be as good as yours, dear child, though none can be so to you."

And so I learned that what makes any calling noble is its being commanded by God, and what makes anything good is its being given by God; and that contentment consists not in persuading ourselves that our things are the very best in the world, but in believing they are the best for us, and giving God thanks for them.

That was the way I began to learn to know the world. And also in that way I began better to understand the Catechism, especially the part about the Lord's Prayer, and that on the second article of the Creed, where we learn of Him who suffered for our sins and redeemed us with his holy precious blood.

I have just returned from my second visit to Wittenberg, which was much happier than my first — indeed, exceedingly happy.

The great delight of my visit, however, has been seeing and hearing Dr. Luther. His little daughter, Magdalen, three years younger than I am, had died not long before, but that seemed only to make Dr. Luther kinder than ever to all young maidens — "the poor maidenkind," as he calls them.

His sermons seemed to me like a father talking to his children; and Aunt Elèsè says he repeats the Catechism often himself "to God" to cheer his heart and strengthen himself — the great Dr. Martin Luther!

I had heard so much of him, and always thought of him as the man nearest God on earth, great with a majesty surpassing infinitely that of the Elector or the Emperor. And now it was a great delight to see him in his home, in the dark wainscoted room looking on

his garden, and to see him raise his head from his writing and smile kindly at us as he sat at the great table in the broad window, with Mistress Luther sewing on a lower seat beside him, and little Margaretha Luther, the youngest child, quietly playing beside them, contented with a look now and then from her father.

I should like to have seen Magdalen Luther. She must have been such a good and loving child. But that will be hereafter in heaven!

I suppose my feeling for Dr. Luther is different from that of my mother and father. They knew him during the conflict. We only know him as the conqueror, with the palm, as it were, already in his hand.

But my great friend at Wittenberg is Aunt Thekla. I think, on the whole, there is no one I should more wish to be like. She understands one in that strange way, without telling, like my mother. I think it is because she has felt so much. Aunt Else told me of the terrible sorrow she had when she was young.

Our dear mother and father also had their great sorrows, although they came to the end of their sorrow in this life, and Aunt Thekla will only come to the end of hers in the other world. But it seems to have consecrated them all, I think, in some peculiar way. They all, and Dr. Luther also, make me think of the people who, they say, have the gift, by striking on the ground, of discovering where the hidden springs lie that others may know where to dig for the wells. Can sorrow only confer this gift of knowing where to find the hidden springs in the heart? If so, it must be worth while to suffer. Only there are just one or two sorrows which it seems almost impossible to bear!

But, as our mother says, our Saviour has all the gifts in His hands; and "the greatest gift" of all (in whose hands the roughest tools can do the finest work) "is *love!*" And that is just the gift every one of us may have without limit.

XXXVI.

THEKLA'S STORY.

WITTENBERG, 23d January 1546.

DR. LUTHER has left Wittenberg to-day for Eisenleben, his birth-place, to settle a dispute between the Counts of Mansfeld concerning certain rights of church patronage.

He left in good spirits, intending to return in a few days. His three sons, John, Martin, and Paul, went with him. Mistress Luther is anxious and depressed about his departure, but we trust without especial cause, although he has often of late been weak and suffering.

The dulness and silence which to me always seem to settle down on Wittenberg in his absence are increased now doubtless by this wintry weather, and the rains and storms which have been swelling the rivers to floods. He is, indeed, the true father and king of our little world; and when he is with us all Germany and the world seem nearer us through his wide-seeing mind and his heart that thrills to every touch of want or sorrow throughout the world.

February.

Mistress Luther has told me to-day that Dr. Luther said before he left he could "lie down on his deathbed with joy if he could first see his dear Lords of Mansfeld reconciled." She says also he has just concluded the Commentary on Genesis, on which he has been working these ten years, with these words —

"I am weak and can do no more. Pray God he may grant me a peaceful and happy death."

She thinks his mind has been dwelling of late more than usual, even with him, on death, and fears he feels some inward premonition or presentiment of a speedy departure.

So long he has spoken of death as a thing to be desired! Yet it always makes our hearts ache to hear him do so. Of the Advent, as the end of all evil and the beginning of the Kingdom, we can well bear to hear him speak, but not of that which if the end of all evil to him, would seem like the beginning of all sorrows to us.

Now, however, Mistress Luther is somewhat comforted by his letters, which are more cheerful than those she received during his absence last year, when he counselled her to sell all their Wittenberg property, and take refuge in her estate at Zöllsdorf, that he might know her safe out of Wittenberg — that "haunt of selfishness and luxury" — before he died.

His first letter since leaving Wittenberg this time is addressed —

"To my kind and dear Käthe Lutherin, at Wittenberg, grace and peace in the Lord.

"Dear Käthe, — To-day at half-past eight o'clock we reached Halle, but have not yet arrived at Eisleben; for a great anabaptist encountered us with water-floods and great blocks of ice, which covered the land, and threatened to baptize us all again. Neither could we return, on account of the Mulda. Therefore we remain tranquilly here at Halle, between the two streams. Not that we thirst for water to drink, but console ourselves with good Torgau beer and Rhine wine, in case

the Saala should break out into a rage again. For we and our servants, and the ferrymen, would not tempt God by venturing on the water; for the devil is furious against us, and dwells in the water-floods; and it is better to escape him than to complain of him, nor is it necessary that we should become the jest of the pope and his hosts. I could not have believed that the Saala could have made such a brewing, bursting over the causeway and all. Now no more; but pray for us and be pious. I hold, hadst thou been here, thou hadst counselled us to do precisely what we have done. So for once we should have taken thy advice. Herewith I commend you to God. Amen. At Halle, on the day of the Conversion of St. Paul.

MARTINUS LUTHER."

Four other letters she has received, one dated on the 2d of February, addressed —

"To my heartily beloved consort Katherin Lutherin, the Zöllsdorfian doctress, proprietress of the Saumarkt, and whatever else she may be, grace and peace in Christ; and my old poor (and, as I know, powerless) love to thee!

"Dear Käthe, — I became very weak on the road close to Eisleben, for my sins; although, wert thou there, thou wouldst have said it was for the sins of the Jews. For near Eisleben we passed through a village where many Jews reside, and it is true, as I came through it, a cold wind came through my Baret (doctor's hat), and my head, as if it would turn my brain to ice.

"Thy sons left Mansfeld yesterday, because Hans von Jene so humbly entreated them to accompany him.

I know not what they do. If it were cold, they might help me freeze here. Since, however, it is warm again, they may do or suffer anything else they like. Herewith I commend you and all the house to God, and greet all our friends. Vigilia purificationis."

And again —

EISLEBEN.

"To the deeply learned lady Katherin Lutherin, my gracious consort at Wittenberg, grace and peace.

"Dear Käthe, — We sit here and suffer ourselves to be tortured, and would gladly be away; but that cannot be, I think, for a week. Thou mayest say to Master Philip that he may correct his exposition; for he has not yet rightly understood why the Lord called riches thorns. Here is the school in which to learn that" (*i. e.*, the Mansfeld controversies about property). "But it dawns on me that in the Holy Scriptures thorns are always menaced with fire; therefore I have all the more patience, hoping, with God's help, to bring some good out of it all. It seems to me the devil laughs at us; but God laughs him to scorn! Amen. Pray for us. The messenger hastes. On St. Dorothea's day.

M. L. (thy old lover)."

Dr. Luther seems to be enjoying himself in his own simple hearty way, at his old home. Nobles and burghers give him the most friendly welcome.

The third letter Mistress Luther has received is full of playful tender answers to her anxieties about him.

"To my dear consort Katherin Lutherin, doctress and self-tormentor at Wittenberg, my gracious lady, grace and peace in the Lord.

"Read thou, dear Käthe, the Gospel of John, and

the smaller Catechism, and then thou wilt say at once, 'All that in the book is said of me.' For thou must needs take the cares of thy God upon thee, as if He were not almighty, and could not create ten Doctor Martins, if the one old Doctor Martin were drowned in the Saala. Leave me in peace with thy cares! I have a better guardian than thou and all the angels. It is He who lay in the manger, and was fondled on a maiden's breast; but who sitteth also now on the right hand of God the Almighty Father. Therefore be at peace."

And again —

"To the saintly anxious lady, Katherin Lutherin, Doctorin Zöllsdorferin at Wittenberg, my gracious dear wife, grace and peace in Christ.

"Most saintly lady Doctress, — We thank your ladyship kindly for your great anxiety and care for us which prevented your sleeping; for since the time that you had this care for us, a fire nearly consumed us in our inn, close by my chamber door; and yesterday (doubtless by the power of your care), a stone almost fell on our head, and crushed us as in a mouse-trap. For in our private chamber during more than two days, lime and mortar crashed above us, until we sent for workmen, who only touched the stone with two fingers, when it fell, as large as a large pillow two hand-breadths wide. For all this we should have to thank your anxiety; had not the dear holy angels been guarding us also! I begin to be anxious that if your anxieties do not cease, at last the earth may swallow us up, and all the elements pursue us. Dost thou indeed teach the Catechism and the creed? Do thou then

pray and leave God to care, as it is promised. 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.'

"We would now gladly be free and journey homewards, if God willed it so. Amen. Amen. Amen. On Scholastica's Day. The willing servant of your holiness,

"MARTIN LUTHER."

February 17th.

Good news for us all at Wittenberg! Mistress Luther has received a letter from the doctor, dated the 14th February, announcing his speedy return: —

"To my kind dear wife Katharin Lutherin von Bora, at Wittenberg, —

"Grace and peace in the Lord, dear Käthe! We hope this week to come home again, if God will. God has shown us great grace; for the lords have arranged all through their referees, except two or three articles — one of which is that Count Gebhard and Count Albrecht should again become brothers, which I undertake to-day, and will invite them to be my guests, that they may speak to each other, for hitherto they have been dumb, and have embittered one another with severe letters.

"The young men are all in the best spirits, make excursions with fools' bells on sledges — the young ladies also — and amuse themselves together; and among them also Count Gebhard's son. So we must understand God is *exauditor precum*.

"I send to thee some game which the Countess Albrecht has presented to me. She rejoices with all her heart at the peace. Thy sons are still at Mansfeld. Jacob Luther will take good care of them. We have

food and drink here like noblemen, and we are waited on well — too well, indeed — so that we might forget you at Wittenberg. I have no ailments.

“This thou canst show to Master Philip, to Doctor Pomer, and to Doctor Creuzer. The report has reached this place that Doctor Martin has been ‘snatched away’ (*i. e.*, by the devil), as they say at Magdeburg and at Leipzig. Such fictions these countrymen compose, who see as far as their noses. Some say the emperor is thirty miles from this, at Soest, in Westphalia; some that the Frenchman is captive, and also the Landgrave. But let *us* sing and say, we will wait what God the Lord will do. — Eisleben, on the Sunday Valentini.

“M. LUTHER, D.”

So the work of peace-making is done, and Dr. Luther is to return to us this week — long, we trust, to enjoy among us the peace-maker’s beatitude.

XXXVII.

FRITZ'S STORY.

EISLEBEN, 1546.

It has been quite a festival day at Eisleben. The child who, sixty-three years since, was born here to John Luther the miner, returns to-day the greatest man in the empire, to arbitrate in a family dispute of the Counts of Mansfeld.

As Eva and I watched him enter the town to-day from the door of our humble happy home, she said, —

“He that is greatest among you shall be as he that doth serve.”

These ten last years of service have, however, aged him much!

I could not conceal from myself that they had. There are traces of suffering on the expressive face, and there is a touch of feebleness in the form and step.

“How is it,” I said to Eva, “that Elselè or Thekla did not tell us of this? He is certainly much feebler.”

“They are always with him,” she said, “and we never see what Time is doing, love; but only what he has done.”

Her words made me thoughtful. Could it be that such changes were passing on us also, and that we were failing to observe them?

When Dr. Luther and the throng had passed, we returned into the house, and Eva resumed her knitting, while I recommenced the study of my sermon; but

secretly I raised my eyes from my books and surveyed her. If time had indeed thus been changing that beloved form, it was better I should know it, to treasure more the precious days he was so treacherously stealing.

Yet scarcely, with the severest scrutiny, could I detect the trace of age or suffering on her face or form. The calm brow was as white and calm as ever. The golden hair, smoothly braided under her white matronly cap, was as free from grey as even our Agnes', who was flitting in and out of the winter sunshine, busy with household work in the next room. There was a roundness on the cheek, although, perhaps, its curve was a little changed; and when she looked up, and met my eyes, was there not the very same happy, childlike smile as ever, that seemed to overflow from a world of sunshine within?

"No!" I said; "Eva, thank God, I have not deluded myself! Time has not stolen a march on you yet."

"Think how I have been shielded, Fritz," she said. "What a sunny and sheltered life mine has been, never encountering any storm except under the shelter of such a home and such love. But Dr. Luther has been so long the one foremost and highest, on whose breast the first force of every storm has burst."

Just then our Heinz came in.

"Your father is trying to prove I am not growing old," she said.

"Who said such a thing of our mother?" asked Heinz, turning fiercely to Agnes.

"No one," I said; "but it startled me to see the change in Dr. Luther, and I began to fear what changes

might have been going on unobserved in our own home."

"Is Dr. Luther much changed?" said Heinz. "I think I never saw a nobler face, so resolute and true, and with such a keen glance in his dark eyes. He might have been one of the emperor's greatest generals — he looks so like a veteran."

"Is he not a veteran, Heinz?" said Eva. "Has he not fought all our battles for us for years? What did you think of him, Agnes?"

"I remember best the look he gave my father and you," she said. "His face looked so full of kindness; I thought how happy he must make his home."

That evening was naturally a time, with Eva and me, for going over the past. And how much of it is linked with Dr. Luther! That our dear home exists at all is, through God, his work. And more even than that: the freedom and peace of our hearts came to us chiefly at first through him. All the past came back to me when I saw his face again; as if suddenly flashed on me from a mirror. The days when he sang before Aunt Ursula Cotta's door at Eisenach — when the voice which has since stirred all Christendom to its depths sang carols for a piece of bread. Then the gradual passing away of the outward trials of poverty, through his father's prosperity and liberality — the brilliant prospects opening before him at the university — his sudden, yet deliberate closing of all those earthly schemes — the descent into the dark and bitter waters, where he fought the fight for his age, and, all but sinking, found the Hand that saved him, and came to the shore again on the right side; and not alone, but upheld evermore by the hand that rescued him, and

which he has made known to the hearts of thousands.

Then I seemed to see him stand before the emperor at Worms, in that day when men did not know whether to wonder most at his gentleness or his daring — in that hour which men thought was his hour of conflict, but which was in truth his hour of triumph, after the real battle had been fought and the real victory won.

And now twenty years more had passed away; the Bible has been translated by him into German, and is speaking in countless homes; homes hallowed, (and, in many instances, created) by his teaching.

“What then,” said Eva, “has been gained by his teaching and his work?”

“The yoke of tradition, and of the Papacy, is broken,” I said. “The gospel is preached in England, and, with more or less result, throughout Germany. In Denmark, an evangelical pastor has consecrated King Christian III. In the low countries, and elsewhere, men and women have been martyred, as in the primitive ages, for the faith. In France and in Switzerland evangelical truth has been embraced by tens of thousands, although not in Dr. Luther’s form, nor only from his lips.”

“These are great results,” she replied; “but they are external — at least, we can only see the outside of them. What fruit is there in this little world, around us at Eisleben, of whose heart we know something?”

“The golden age is, indeed, not come,” I said, “or the Counts of Mansfeld, would not be quarrelling about church patronage, and needing Dr. Luther as a peacemaker. Nor would Dr. Luther need so continually to warn the rich against avarice, and to denounce the self-

ishness which spent thousands of florins to buy exemption from future punishment, but grudges a few kreuzers to spread the glad tidings of the grace of God. If covetousness is idolatry, it is too plain that the Reformation has, with many, only changed the idol."

"Yet," replied Eva, "it is certainly something to have the idol removed from the Church to the market, to have it called by a despised instead of by a hallowed name, and disguised in any rather than in sacred vestments."

Thus we came to the conclusion that the Reformation had done for us what sunrise does. It had wakened life, and ripened real fruits of heaven in many places, and it had revealed evil and noisome things in their true forms. The world, the flesh, and the devil remain unchanged; but it is much to have learned that the world is not a certain definite region outside the cloister, but an atmosphere to be guarded against as around us everywhere; that the flesh is not the love of kindred or of nature, but of *self in these*, and that the devil's most fiery dart is distrust of God. For us personally, and ours, how infinitely much Dr. Luther has done; and if for us and ours, how much for countless other hearts and homes unknown to us!

Monday, February 15, 1546.

Dr. Luther administered the communion yesterday, and preached. It has been a great help to have him going in and out among us. Four times he has preached; it seems to us, with as much point and fervour as ever. To-day, however, there was a deep solemnity about his words. His text was in Matt. XI., "Fear not, therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed,

and bid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." He must have felt feebler than he seemed, for he closed with the words —

"This, and much more, may be said from the passage; but I am too weak, and *here we will close.*"

Eva seemed very grave all the rest of the day; and when I returned from the school on this morning, she met me with an anxious face at the door, and said —

"Is the doctor better?"

"I have not heard that he is ill," I said. "He was engaged with the arbitration again to-day."

"I cannot get those words of his out of my head," she said; "they haunt me — '*Here we will close.*' I cannot help thinking what it would be never to hear that faithful voice again."

"You are depressed, my love," I said, "at the thought of Dr. Luther's leaving us this week. But by-and-by we will stay some little time at Wittenberg, and hear him again there."

"If God will!" she said gravely. "What God has given us, through him, can never be taken away."

I have inquired again about him, however, frequently to-day, but there seems no cause for anxiety. He retired from the Great Hall where the conferences and the meals take place, at eight o'clock; and this evening,

as often before during his visit, Dr. Jonas overheard him praying aloud at the window of his chamber.

Thursday, 18th February.

The worst — the very worst — has come to pass! The faithful voice is, indeed, silenced to us on earth for ever.

Here where the life began it has closed. He who, sixty-three years ago, lay here a little helpless babe, lies here again a lifeless corpse. Yet it is not with sixty-three years ago, but with three days since that we feel the bitter contrast. Three days ago he was among us the counsellor, the teacher, the messenger of God, and now that heart, so open, so tender to sympathize with sorrows, and so strong to bear a nation's burden, has ceased to beat.

Yesterday it was observed that he was feeble and ailing. The Princes of Anhalt and the Count Albert of Mansfeld, with Dr. Jonas and his other friends, entreated him to rest in his own room during the morning. He was not easily persuaded to spare himself, and probably would not have yielded then, had he not felt that the work of reconciliation was accomplished, in all save a few supplementary details. Much of the forenoon, therefore, he reposed on a leathern couch in his room, occasionally rising, with the restlessness of illness, and pacing the room, or standing in the window praying, so that Dr. Jonas and Cœlius, who were in another part of the room, could hear him. He dined, however, at noon, in the Great Hall, with those assembled there. At dinner he said to some near him, "If I can, indeed, reconcile the rulers of my birth-place with each other, and then, with God's permission,

accomplish the journey back to Wittenberg, I would go home and lay myself down to sleep in my grave, and let the worms devour my body."

He was not one weakly to sigh for sleep before night; and we now know too well from how deep a sense of bodily weariness and weakness that wish sprang. Tension of heart and mind, and incessant work, — the toil of a daily mechanical labourer, with the keen, continuous thought of the highest thinker, — working as much as any drudging slave, and as intensely as if all he did was his delight, — at sixty-three the strong, peasant frame was worn out as most men's are at eighty, and he longed for rest.

In the afternoon he complained of painful pressure on the breast, and requested that it might be rubbed with warm cloths. This relieved him a little; and he went to supper again with his friends in the Great Hall. At table he spoke much of eternity, and said he believed his own death was near; yet his conversation was not only cheerful, but at times gay, although it related chiefly to the future world. One near him asked whether departed saints would recognise each other in heaven. He said, Yes, he thought they would.

When he left the supper-table he went to his room.

In the night, — last night, — his two sons, Paul and Martin, thirteen and fourteen years of age, sat up to watch with him, with Justus Jonas, whose joys and sorrows he had shared through so many years. Cœlius and Aurifaber also were with him. The pain in the breast returned, and again they tried rubbing him with hot cloths. Count Albert came, and the Countess, with two physicians, and brought him some shavings from the tusk of a sea-unicorn, deemed a sovereign remedy.

He took it, and slept till ten. Then he awoke, and attempted once more to pace the room a little; but he could not, and returned to bed. Then he slept again till one. During those two or three hours of sleep, his host Albrecht, with his wife, Ambrose, Jonas, and Luther's son, watched noiselessly beside him, quietly keeping up the fire. Everything depended on how long he slept, and how he woke.

The first words he spoke when he awoke sent a shudder of apprehension through their hearts.

He complained of cold, and asked them to pile up more fire. Alas! the chill was creeping over him which no effort of man could remove.

Dr. Jonas asked him if he felt very weak.

"Oh," he replied, "how I suffer! My dear Jonas, I think I shall die here, at Eisleben, where I was born and baptized."

His other friends were awakened, and brought in to his bedside.

Jonas spoke of the sweat on his brow as a hopeful sign, but Dr. Luther answered —

"It is the cold sweat of death. I must yield up my spirit, for my sickness increaseth."

Then he prayed fervently, saying —

"Heavenly Father! everlasting and merciful God! thou hast revealed to me thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Him have I taught; Him have I experienced; Him have I confessed; Him I love and adore as my beloved Saviour, Sacrifice, and Redeemer — Him whom the godless persecute, dishonour, and reproach. O heavenly Father, though I must resign my body, and be borne away from this life, I know that I shall be with Him for ever. Take my poor soul up to Thee!"

Afterwards he took a little medicine, and, assuring his friends that he was dying, said three times —

“Father, into thy hands do I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, thou faithful God. Truly *God hath so loved the world!*”

Then he lay quite quiet and motionless. Those around sought to rouse him, and began to rub his chest and limbs, and spoke to him, but he made no reply. Then Jonas and Cœlius, for the solace of the many who had received the truth from his lips, spoke aloud, and said —

“Venerable father, do you die trusting in Christ, and in the doctrine you have constantly preached?”

He answered by an audible and joyful “Yes!”

That was his last word on earth. Then turning on his right side, he seemed to fall peaceably asleep for a quarter of an hour. Once more hope awoke in the hearts of his children and his friends; but the physician told them it was no favourable symptom.

A light was brought near his face; a death-like paleness was creeping over it, and his hands and feet were becoming cold.

Gently once more he sighed; and, with hands folded on his breast, yielded up his spirit to God without a struggle.

This was at four o'clock in the morning of the 18th of February.

And now, in the house opposite the church where he was baptized, and signed with the cross for the Christian warfare, Martin Luther lies — his warfare accomplished, his weapons laid aside, his victory won — at rest beneath the standard he has borne so nobly. In the place where his eyes opened on this earthly life

his spirit has awakened to the heavenly life. Often he used to speak of death as the Christian's true birth, and of this life as but a growing into the chrysalis-shell in which the spirit lives till its being is developed, and it bursts the shell, casts off the web, struggles into life, spreads its wings and soars up to God.

To Eva and me it seems a strange, mysterious seal set on his faith, that his birth-place and his place of death — the scene of his nativity to earth and heaven — should be the same.

We can only say, amidst irrepressible tears, those words often on his lips, "O death! bitter to those whom thou leavest in life!" and "Fear not, *God liveth still!*"

XXXVIII.

ELSE'S STORY.

March 1546.

It is all over. The beloved, revered form is with us again, but Luther our father, our pastor, our friend, will never be amongst us more. His ceaseless toil and care for us all have worn him out, — the care which wastes life more than sorrow, — care such as no man knew since the apostle Paul, which only faith such as St. Paul's enabled him to sustain so long.

This morning his widow, his orphan sons and daughter, and many of the students and citizens went out to the Eastern Gate of the city to meet the funeral procession. Slowly it passed through the streets, so crowded, yet so silent, to the city church where he used to preach.

Fritz came with the procession from Eisleben, and Eva, with Heinz and Agnes, are also with us, for it seemed a necessity to us all once more to feel and see our beloved around us, now that death has shown us the impotence of a nation's love to retain the life dearest and most needed of all.

Fritz has been telling us of that mournful funeral journey from Eisleben.

The Counts of Mansfeld, with more than fifty horsemen, and many princes, counts, and barons, accompanied the coffin. In every village through which they passed the church-bells tolled as if for the prince of the land; at every city gate magistrates, clergy,

young and old, matrons, maidens, and little children, thronged to meet the procession, clothed in mourning, and chanting funeral hymns — German evangelical hymns of hope and trust, such as he had taught them to sing. In the last church in which it lay before reaching its final resting-place at Wittenberg, the people gathered around it, and sang one of his own hymns, "I journey hence in peace," with voices broken by sobs and floods of tears.

Thus day and night the silent body was borne slowly through the Thuringian land. The peasants once more remembered his faithful affection for them, and everywhere, from village and hamlet, and from every little group of cottages, weeping men and women pressed forward to do honour to the poor remains of him they had so often misunderstood in life.

After Pastor Bugenhagen's funeral sermon from Luther's pulpit, Melanchthon spoke a few words beside the coffin in the city church. They loved each other well. When Melanchthon heard of his death he was most deeply affected, and said in the lecture-room, —

"The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins and of faith in the Son of God, has not been discovered by any human understanding, but has been revealed unto us by God *through this man* whom he has raised up."

In the city church, beside the coffin, before the body was lowered into its last resting-place near the pulpit where he preached, Dr. Melanchthon pronounced these words in Latin, which Caspar Creutziger immediately translated into German, —

"Every one who truly knew him, must bear witness that he was a benevolent, charitable man, gracious in all his discourse, kindly and most worthy of love,

and neither rash, passionate, self-willed, or ready to take offence. And, nevertheless, there were also in him an earnestness and courage in his words and bearing such as become a man like him. His heart was true and faithful, and without falsehood. The severity which he used against the foes of the doctrine in his writings did not proceed from a quarrelsome or angry disposition, but from great earnestness and zeal for the truth. He always showed a high courage and manhood, and it was no little roar of the enemy which could appal him. Menaces, dangers, and terror dismayed him not. So high and keen was his understanding, that he alone in complicated, dark, and difficult affairs soon perceived what was to be counselled and to be done. Neither, as some think, was he regardless of authority, but diligently regarded the mind and will of those with whom he had to do. His doctrine did not consist in rebellious opinions made known with violence; it is rather an interpretation of the divine will and of the true worship of God, an explanation of the word of God, namely of the gospel of Christ. Now he is united with the prophets of whom he loved to talk. Now they greet him as their fellow-labourer, and with him praise the Lord who gathers and preserves his Church. But we must retain a perpetual, undying recollection of this our beloved father, and never let his memory fade from our hearts."

His effigy will be placed in the city church, but his living portrait is enshrined in countless hearts. His monuments are the schools throughout the land, every hallowed pastor's home, and above all, "the German Bible for the German people!"

WITTENBERG, April 1847.

We stand now in the foremost rank of the generations of our time. Our father's house on earth has passed away for ever. Gently, not long after Dr. Luther's death, our gentle mother passed away, and our father entered on the fulfilment of those never-failing hopes to which, since his blindness, his buoyant heart has learned more and more to cling.

Scarcely separated a year from each other, both in extreme old age, surrounded by all dearest to them on earth, they fell asleep in Jesus.

And now Fritz, who has an appointment at the university, lives in the paternal house with his Eva and our Thekla, and the children.

Of all our family I sometimes think Thekla's life is the most blessed. In our evangelical church, also, I perceive, God by his providence makes nuns; good women, whose wealth of love is poured out in the Church; whose inner as well as whose outer circle is the family of God. How many whom she has trained in the school and nursed in the seasons of pestilence or adversity, live on earth to call her blessed, or live in heaven to receive her into the everlasting habitations!

And among the reasons why her life is so high and loving, no doubt one is, that socially her position is one not of exaltation but of lowliness.

She has not replaced, by any conventional dignities of the cloister, God's natural dignities of wife and mother. Through life hers has been the *lowest* place; wherefore, among other reasons, I oft think in heaven

it may be the *highest*. But we shall not grudge it her, Eva and Chriemhild and Atlantis and I.

With what joy shall we see those meek and patient brows crowned with the brightest crowns of glory and immortal joy!

The little garden behind the Augustei has become a sacred place. Luther's widow and children still live there. Those who knew him, and therefore loved him best, find a sad pleasure in lingering under the shadow of the trees which used to shelter him, beside the fountain and the little fish-pond which he made, and the flowers he planted, and recalling his words and his familiar ways; how he used to thank God for the fish from the pond, and the vegetables sent to his table from the garden; how he used to wonder at the providence of God, who fed the sparrows and all the little birds, "which must cost him more in a year than the revenue of the king of France;" how he rejoiced in the "dew, that wonderful work of God," and the rose, which no artist could imitate, and the voice of the birds. How living the narratives of the Bible became when he spoke of them! — of the great apostle Paul whom he so honoured, but pictured as "an insignificant-looking, meagre man, like Philip Melanchthon;" or of the Virgin Mary, "who must have been a high and noble creature, a fair and gracious maiden, with a kind sweet voice;" or of the lowly home at Nazareth, "where the Saviour of the world was brought up as a little obedient child."

And not one of us, with all his vehemence, could ever remember a jealous or suspicious word, or a day of estrangement, so generous and trustful was his nature.

Often, also, came back to us the tones of that rich,

true voice, and of the lute or lyre, which used so frequently to sound from the dwelling-room with the large window, at his friendly entertainments, or in his more solitary hours.

Then, in twilight hours of quiet, intimate converse, Mistress Luther can recall to us the habits of his more inner home life — how in his sicknesses he used to comfort her, and when she was weeping would say, with irrepressible tears, “Dear Käthe, our children trust us, though they cannot understand; so must we trust God. It is well if we do; all comes from him.” And his prayers morning and evening, and frequently at meals and at other times in the day — his devout repeating of the Smaller Catechism “to God” — his frequent fervent utterance of the Lord’s prayer, or of psalms from the Psalter, which he always carried with him as a pocket prayer-book. Or, at other times, she may speak reverently of his hours of conflict, when his prayers became a tempest — a torrent of vehement supplication — a wrestling with God, a son in agony at the feet of a father. Or, again, of his sudden wakings in the night, to encounter the unseen devil with fervent prayer, or scornful defiance, or words of truth and faith.

More than one among us knew what reason he had to believe in the efficacy of prayer. Melanchthon, especially, can never forget the day when he lay at the point of death, half unconscious, with eyes growing dim, and Luther came and exclaimed with dismay, —

“God save us! how successfully has the devil misused this mortal frame!”

And then turning from the company towards the

window, to pray, looking up to the heavens, he came (as he himself said afterwards), "as a mendicant and a suppliant to God, and pressed him with all the promises of the Holy Scriptures he could recall; so that God must hear me, if ever again I should trust his promises."

After that prayer, he took Melanchthon by the hand, and said, "Be of good cheer, Philip, you will not die." And from that moment Melanchthon began to revive and recover consciousness, and was restored to health.

Especially, however, we treasure all he said of death and the resurrection, of heaven and the future world of righteousness and joy, of which he so delighted to speak. A few of these sayings I may record for my children.

"In the Papacy, they made pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints — to Rome, Jerusalem, St. Jago — to atone for sins. But now, we in faith can make true pilgrimages, which really please God. When we diligently read the prophets, psalms, and evangelists, we journey towards God, not through cities of the saints, but in our thoughts and hearts, and visit the true Promised Land and Paradise of everlasting life.

"The devil has sworn our death, but he will crack a deaf nut. The kernel will be gone."

He had so often been dangerously ill that the thought of death was very familiar to him. In one of his sicknesses he said, "I know I shall not live long. My brain is like a knife worn to the hilt; it can cut no longer."

"At Coburg I used to go about and seek for a quiet place where I might be buried, and in the chapel

under the cross I thought I could lie well. But now I am worse than then. God grant me a happy end! I have no desire to live longer."

When asked if people could be saved under the Papacy who had never heard his doctrine of the gospel, he said, "Many a monk have I seen, before whom, on his death-bed, they held the crucifix, as was then the custom. Through faith in His merits and passion, they may, indeed, have been saved."

"What is our sleep," he said, "but a kind of death? And what is death itself but a night sleep? In sleep all weariness is laid aside, and we become cheerful again, and rise in the morning fresh and well. So shall we awake from our graves in the last day, as though we had only slept a night, and bathe our eyes and rise fresh and well.

"I shall rise," he said, "and converse with you again. This finger, on which is this ring, shall be given to me again. All must be restored. 'God will create new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' There all will be pure rapture and joy. Those heavens and that earth will be no dry, barren sand. When a man is happy, a tree, a nosegay, a flower, can give him gladness. Heaven and earth will be renewed, and we who believe shall be everywhere *at home*. Here it is not so; we are driven hither and thither, that we may have to sigh for that heavenly fatherland."

"When Christ causes the trumpet to peal at the last day, all will come forth like the insects which in winter lie as dead, but when the sun comes, awake to life again; or as the birds who lie all the winter

hidden in clefts of the rocks, or in hollow banks by the river sides, yet live again in the spring."

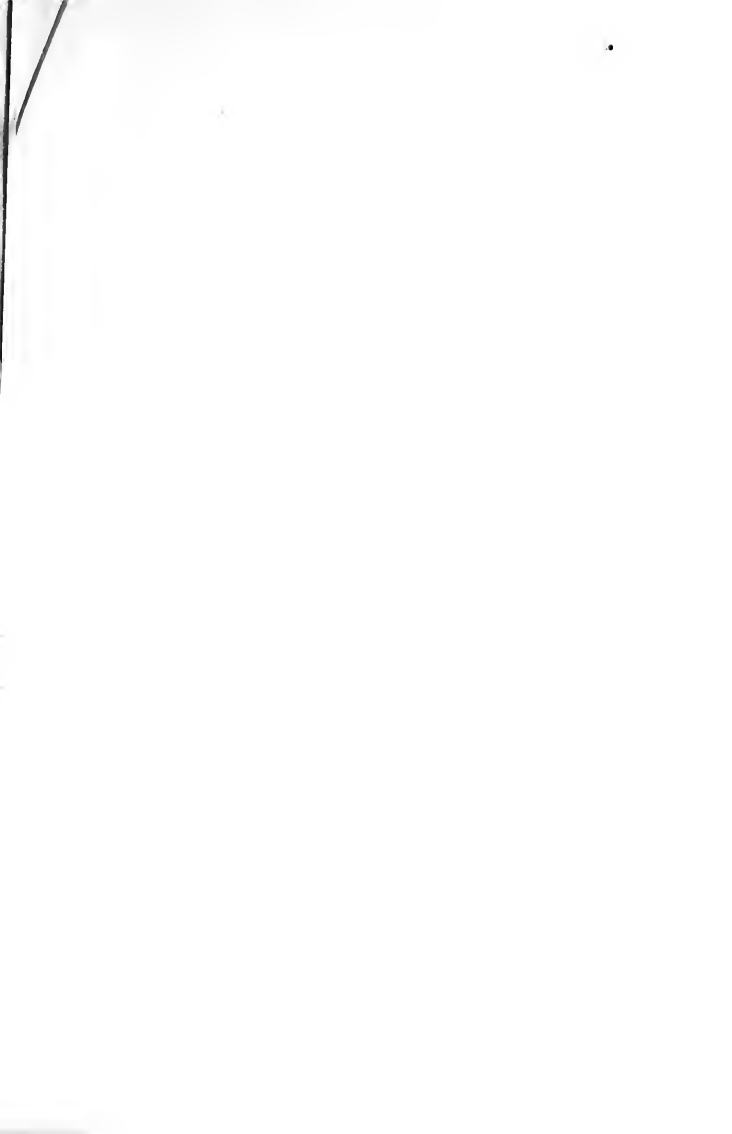
He said at another time, "Go into the garden, and ask the cherry-tree how it is possible that from a dry, dead twig, can spring a little bud, and from the bud can grow cherries. Go into the house and ask the matron how it can be that from the eggs under the hen living chickens will come forth. For if God does thus with cherries and birds, canst thou not honour him by trusting that if he let the winter come over thee — suffer thee to die and decay in the ground — he can also, in the true summer, bring thee forth again from the earth, and awaken thee from the dead?"

"O gracious God!" he exclaimed, "come quickly, come at last! I wait ever for that day — that morning of spring!"

And he waits for it still. Not now, indeed, on earth, "in what kind of place we know not," as he said; "but most surely free from all grief and pain, resting in peace and in the love and grace of God."

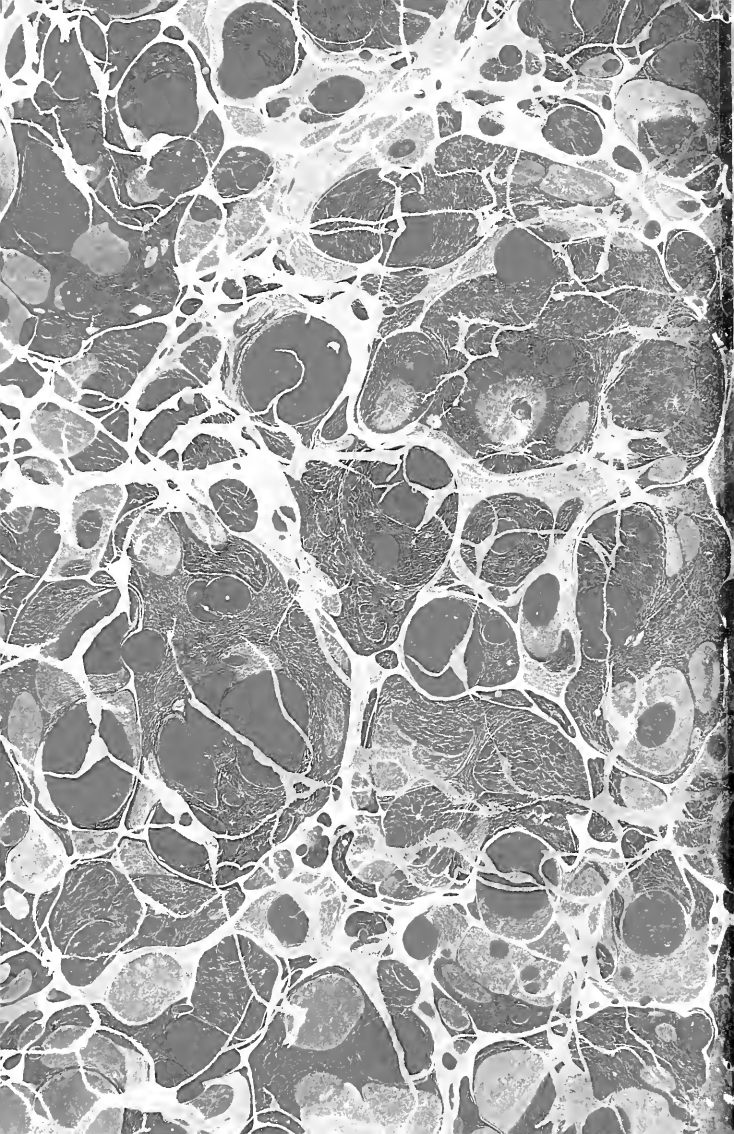
We also wait for that Day of Redemption, still in the weak flesh and amidst the storm and the conflict; but strong and peaceful in the truth Martin Luther taught us, and in the God he trusted to the last.

THE END.



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
LOS ANGELES, CAL.





1146

1a v 2

THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 365 572 7

