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AMELIA WILHELMINA SIEVEKING.

LONDON
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NEW-STREET SQUARE





H. Adlard sc

*Yours truly and affectionately.
Amelia Seweking.*

LIFE OF
AMELIA WILHELMINA SIEVEKING.

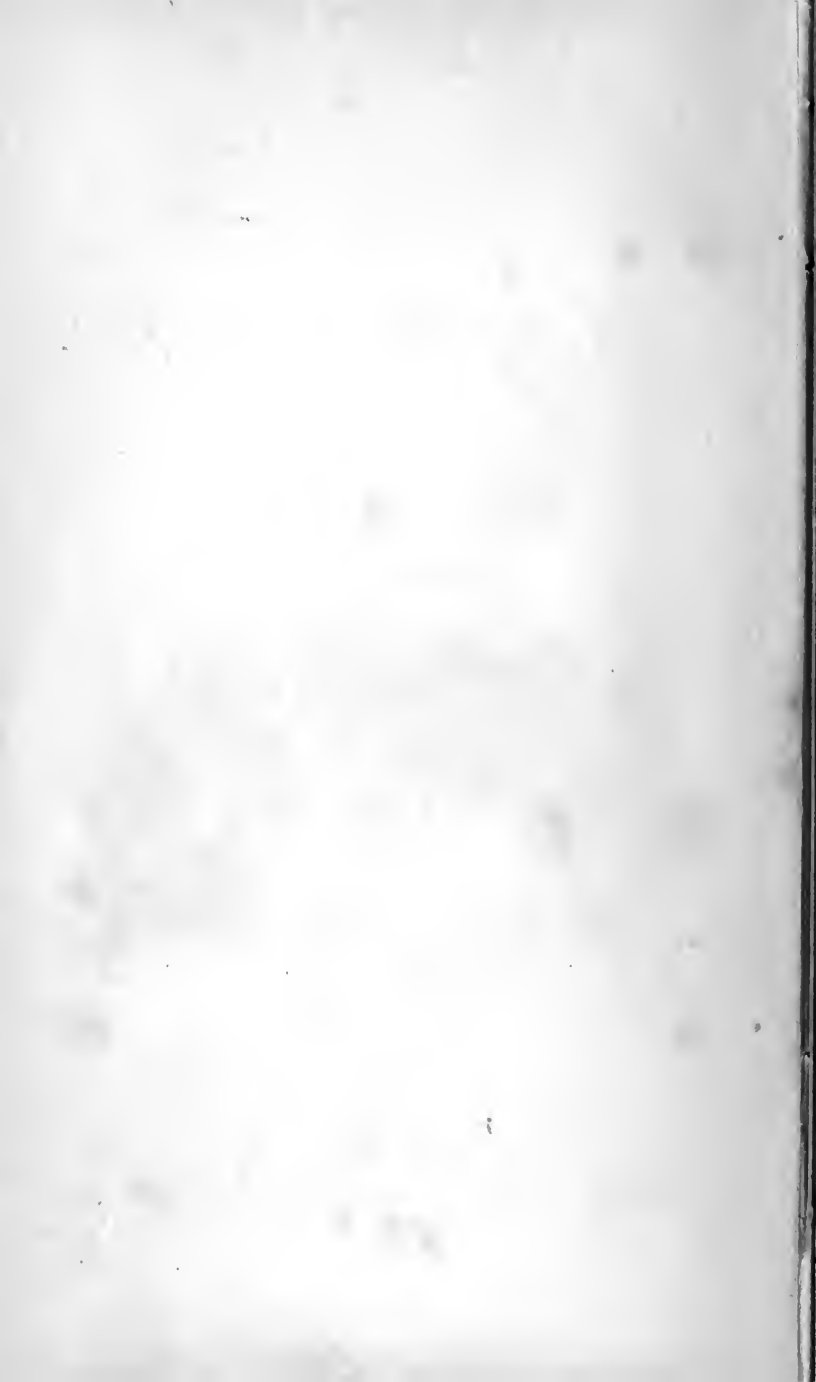
FROM THE GERMAN.

EDITED, WITH THE AUTHOR'S SANCTION, BY

CATHERINE WINKWORTH.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & GREEN.

1863.



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S57P75E

TO

EDWARD HENRY SIEVEKING, ESQ.

THIS VERSION

OF A WORK INTENDED TO PRESERVE

THE BLESSED MEMORY AND CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE

OF HIS MOST BELOVED AND LOVING

SISTER

IS INSCRIBED WITH SINCERE RESPECT

BY THE

ENGLISH TRANSLATORS.

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PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

THE following Memoir was written by a lady, an intimate personal friend of Miss Sieveking, who was commissioned by the latter, some time before her death, to undertake the task, and was entrusted with the necessary letters and papers. It has had a very large circulation in Germany, where Miss Sieveking's name was already well known and deeply honoured, and has passed through more than one edition in French.

We believe that it will have no less interest for thoughtful readers in our own country, since the practical questions which occupied so large a portion of Miss Sieveking's life are stirring in so many minds and hearts among us. How the powers of women may be turned to their best and highest account; how far charitable work, in its many branches, is a right and natural employment for them; and by what kind of

organization it may best be carried on, are problems which are pressing on us from all sides. They pressed on Miss Sieveking with the added force of novelty, for until her time it had scarcely been admitted in Germany that such questions had a right to exist at all. It cannot but be good for us to learn what a noble practical solution she found for them in her own life, notwithstanding many difficulties and much early discouragement.

That this solution was in the truest sense of the word a Christian one, makes it but the more valuable to us. Doubtless in this, as in all other similar cases, many readers will find individual points of disagreement between themselves and Miss Sieveking, nor would the translators undertake to endorse all her separate opinions. But there would seem to be a peculiar usefulness, in these days, in this picture of one who, through much conflict and with little outward help, attained to so firm a grasp on distinctively Christian doctrine; and for this very reason could face the worst forms of evil with so brave and hopeful a spirit, and afford to give such a ready and fearless appreciation to all excellence and truth, in whatever quarter it might be found. None can fail to recognise in her whole life the deepest root of all Christian organization,

and therefore of all true Church principle, in the spirit that sees and loves Christ in the least of our brethren, and for His sake is willing to be lowest of all, and servant of all.

It will be seen that Miss Sieveking published several works. These were for the most part merely transcripts of the religious instruction given to her pupils. The most valuable part of her writings is to be found in the annual reports of the charitable association of which she was the foundress, and for many years the president. These contain a very remarkable amount of practical wisdom and judicious suggestions on the whole subject of charitable work, and organizations of women for this purpose. A volume compiled from them, and uniform with the present work, is now just published under the title of ‘Principles of Charitable Work—Love, Truth, and Order—as set forth in the Writings of Amelia Sieveking.’

It should be stated that the first half of the present work has been translated, and the whole carefully revised, by myself; the latter half has been translated by a friend, the lady who had already undertaken the other volume just mentioned. A very few passages have been condensed, to avoid the repetition of which English readers are less patient than German, and in

one instance a few lines have been added from the original letter to complete the sense of an extract.

It only remains for the translators to dismiss their work with awe, as all must do who speak of the dead, but with good hope that God will bless this endeavour to animate Christian hearts in England by the example of one to whom it was given in no common degree to exemplify the true idea of the Christian life — that we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

C. W.

CLIFTON:

March 1863

PREFACE

TO THE GERMAN WORK

BY DR. WICHERN, OF THE RAUHE HAUS, HAMBURG.



WHILE endeavouring by this Preface to meet the often-expressed wish of the honoured friend to whom we owe the following graphic picture of our beloved Amelia Sieveking, I would also avail myself of this opportunity to fix the attention of the wider circle of readers on that rich and striking background to her life formed by the surrounding circumstances of her position, without which, I think, this unique character could scarcely have attained the form it actually assumed. By her name and the closest ties of relationship, Amelia Sieveking was linked to a great Hamburg family, and to a circle of friends which, for the last seventy or eighty years, has mirrored in a very distinct and remarkable manner nearly all the deeper intellectual movements which have affected our German people. Throughout this period there has been, I imagine, scarcely any tendency of importance

in our national life—whether literary, artistic, political, or ecclesiastical—which has not found in these circles of our native city its personal representatives or more or less active promoters. Let us hope that ere long a hand may be found, fitted at once by original capacity and literary and scientific culture for the work, to give us a complete historical picture of the society and intellectual life of Hamburg, as it has developed itself since the first outbreak of the French revolution. Some of its aspects have, no doubt, been presented to the general reader in a masterly manner by the recent biographies of Frederick Perthes and Matthias Claudius. But in these, much that was best and most characteristic could be but slightly indicated, much remained altogether untouched. It is, indeed, still a question whether the family archives, in which a great portion of these treasures lie concealed, would be adapted for publication at the present time. The little that has been already given from them to the world extends just beyond the opening of the present century, and the work before us, therefore, coming down to our own days, furnishes an entirely new addition to our stores. But its authoress, though more intimately acquainted with these circles than most persons, has adhered firmly to her resolve

of maintaining a wise reserve, and limiting herself to the object specially in view: throughout her work she has never lost sight of that self-control and discretion which have become, unfortunately, but too rare in such cases. All the more, therefore, do we feel it desirable to dwell for a moment on the less private aspects of this society; for we cannot doubt that the peculiarly rich combination of its varied elements exerted a powerful influence on Amelia Sieveking's life and character; since she had learnt from the Spirit of Truth willingly to receive and appropriate all truth, in whatever form it might approach her.

If the book itself assumes that such information is unnecessary to the readers for whom it is more immediately designed, the preface, which has a wider public in view, may serve to remind us that, as we follow the steps of our authoress, we shall be led across the threshold of that Hamburg society in which such men as Lessing and Claudius formerly met, and where a Frederick Jacobi and an Elisa Reimarus formed the friendship which must have preceded their correspondence on Spinoza. And the name of this lady, again, recalls that of the author of the 'Wolfenbüttel Fragments,'*

* This work was written by Reimarus of Hamburg, but was discovered in MS. and edited by Lessing, who was long supposed to be its author.
—ED.

who indeed had disappeared from this family circle in yet earlier days, but with whom Amelia Sieveking was no less connected by relationship. Up to the present day—we fear, indeed, we may not long be able to say so—this house, in its way truly classic ground, is yet standing on the banks of the Elbe, just beyond Altona.* There, at the opening of this century, and until Hamburg felt the sufferings of a foreign yoke, certain families, linked in the closest friendship, exercised a munificent hospitality, and gathered round them persons from all parts of the world, and representing all the various political movements and all the higher interests of that remarkable age. Among them moves Amelia Sieveking, as a young girl just growing up into life, interested in what she sees, yet no more finding her deepest needs satisfied there than did the sage of Pempelfort, who christened Neumühlen, under the shadow of whose gigantic oaks was assembled perhaps the most varied and interesting society of these days—‘The paradise of youth and the inferno of philosophy.’ It would be a mistake to suppose that these family

* Since this preface was written, this old house, rich in so many associations with the choicest intellectual society of Germany, has made room for the palatial residence of an Altona merchant.—ED.

traditions, and the mode of thought to which they gave rise, had not a powerful effect on Miss Sieveking's after life. Though the diaries and correspondence from which this book is almost exclusively compiled seldom gave occasion for any reference to them, a witness of their power over her may be found in the very strong and well-marked family feeling which was shown with consistent affection through her whole career. And for the very reason that she herself, in her own mental progress, had gradually forced her way through all mere figures, presentiments, and shadows of truth and love and freedom to the primal crystal fountain of the Eternal Truth and Love and Freedom manifested in a Person, and had found in Christ the solution of the enigma of her own life and of all life; for the very reason that she witnessed a similar transformation of the spiritual life in those around her; she was the better able correctly to appreciate the change that had come to pass since those family traditions took their rise. And while she acknowledged the new tendency impressed on all these minds by the hold they had now gained on Christian faith, she would be least of all inclined to deny—nay, would maintain with peculiar energy—that, amid all their previous wanderings, battles, and storms, they had been single-

mindful, faithful, and pure-hearted in their quest after Truth and Love. No one was farther from an unchristian judging spirit than Amelia Sieveking; but on this account she was the more ready to acknowledge the especial hand of God in these peculiar and solemn leadings of His Providence. I have myself more than once been present in that home with which she was most closely connected, when a retrospect of the past history of the family has called out from its members a joyful acknowledgment of the compensating mercy of our God, in repairing the losses that the cause of true faith had sustained in former days by a previous generation, through the revival and practical exemplification of its power now witnessed among its present members. The recent biography of Frederick Perthes makes us acquainted with some very noble characters among the circle of friends of whom we are now speaking. The perfect truth and profound earnestness, the inward freedom, clearness, and independence, and above all that strictness towards herself, combined with affection and indulgence towards others, through which Miss Sieveking made her way at last to a faith that opened a new life to her, were characteristic, not of her only, but of the whole society (to speak only of those already departed) whom we have now in view. This tone of

mind enables us to understand how a man like Merle d'Aubigné (then persecuted and exiled from his native place) could find a home in this city, and how the newly awakened Christian life in the great Church of our country should have secured its first anchorage in Hamburg, and afterwards found in this city support of many kinds, and a centre whence to extend its operations to other regions. The following work shows very clearly what an eminent position Amelia Sieveking held in this movement in its relation to women; what it was that she speedily recognised to be her own comprehensive and peculiar mission; with what clearness and truth and energy she fulfilled it; what a wide sphere it embraced among both the upper and lower classes of society; and how strict were her demands both on herself and others. Thus she soon ceased to belong exclusively to her native city, and henceforth the whole of our Protestant fatherland may feel a right in her. Nay, even beyond its limits, without any effort on her part, she has become an instrument in God's hands for the elevation of her own sex, by leading them to embody the life of faith in works of love. To a far greater extent than would be gathered from the following memoir, the character and labours of Amelia Sieveking have furnished at once the powerful impulse and the living

prototype which have called into being those numerous institutions, through which a wondrous tide of wise and Christian female activity pours its comfort and help into the deep necessities of our poorer classes. Her yearly reports will remain to all time a rich treasure of wisdom for the Christian deaconess; while monuments of her love for the poor, and living witnesses to the vitality of our Protestant churches, are to be found in the associations founded by her example in so many cities of Northern Germany, in Switzerland, in the Baltic provinces of Russia, in Sweden, Denmark, and Holland. Her life is a trumpet-call to the women of our day to awaken to a full sense of the vocation of their sex at the present time and in the future, and to fulfil it with all the energy of faith. It is no imaginary ideal of excellence for which we are speaking here, but an actual life, that speaks for itself with that force of conviction which pierces like a purifying fire to the conscience, and demands of everyone who hears its voice an answer, not in words but in deeds.

Though I feel that I must abstain from much that a preface might be justified in bringing forward to illustrate the present work, there are two points which I cannot leave quite untouched.

The first is this: It cannot escape any attentive reader of this book what a wealth of Christian family life, of simple, upright, unostentatious, domestic feeling has been preserved in our old Hanse town to this day. Such an example as that of our Amelia Sieveking shows how silently and unmarked the Christian life of a large city may spring into fresh growth from this foundation, the true basis ordained for it by God; nor does it need any detailed proof to make us believe that the same seed has flourished and borne fruit on this good soil, in circles that did not fall within the sphere of her labours. Our free cities seem peculiarly fitted to nurture this family life which is our highest social blessing, since they do not possess those endless class distinctions and social gradations of rank which are to be found in the cities of larger states, and whose influence is far more often adverse than beneficial; and so far (and God grant it may long be the case) do not suffer from that violent party spirit, either in politics or religion, which is so apt to dissolve all ties, and destroy all charity and truthfulness. It was the consciousness of this privilege which often led Miss Sieveking to rejoice in being the inhabitant of a free city. Such expressions from her were not the utterance of political preferences or of a local patriotism, but the thankful recognition of a great

social and Christian blessing which rendered her native place the proper home and nursery of her great work.

The second may be comprised in this question: Where in our Protestant Church is the mouth, where the hand that should bid such efforts welcome in the name of our common Mother; that should assign them their proper place in the organic life of the congregation; that should afford them guidance and protection, with the possibility of fruitful co-operation in the Church's labours for the kingdom of God? But the Romish Church would have been equally, nay, far more, incapable of offering to an Amelia Sieveking what we now have in view; for that Church is without the *congregation*, which is the peculiar and precious jewel entrusted to our Evangelical branch. A Protestant order of sisters or deaconesses, however valuable these new creations may be in themselves, would not have adequately supplied what was needed; and we cannot regard it as anything less than the guiding hand of Providence which withheld our departed friend from embodying in a practical shape the ideal of which she often speaks with such kindling enthusiasm. But something was granted her that far transcended all her own schemes; it was given to her, in fuller measure than to any woman since the beginning of our Church, to furnish the practical proof of what

an amount and variety of female energy is at the command of the Christian congregation, whenever the Church shall display the courage, or rather the faith, no longer to resist her Lord, but to suffer the congregation to attain an organic life and become in truth the body of Christ.

And now let our Hamburg Tabitha go forth among our women with this testimony of her love and her life. The more the number has increased among them of those who rejoice in such love as hers, the more does the same Spirit who guided her seek for others who, like her, will show by their deeds that this love is the great truth and reality of life. May this book, as the last utterance to us of a disciple who has already passed through death into life, awaken among us many such witnesses to the power of a living faith!

RAUHE HAUS:

September 1859.

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DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.



PORTRAIT OF AMELIA SIEVEKING *To face Title*

THE AMALIENSTIFT „ 279

The small house to the left is the Children's Hospital; the house in front of that is the first house of the Amalienstift; and the two large white houses to the right are the buildings which were incorporated with the Amalienstift after the great fire of 1842.

THE FAMILY GRAVE OF SYNDIC SIEVEKING *To face page 493*

In the churchyard of Hamm, near Hamburg, in which Miss Sieveking's remains were deposited.



THE LIFE
OF
AMELIA WILHELMINA SIEVEKING.

FIRST PART.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

(1794—1817.)

My fairest child, I have no song to give you,
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey;
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long,
And so make Life, Death, and that vast For-ever
One grand sweet song.

KINGSLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1794—1809.

BIRTH — CHILDHOOD.

ALTHOUGH many isolated details concerning the life and character of Amelia Sieveking have become known to the public through the medium of her own writings and those of others, yet such particulars have hitherto remained mere fragments, without connection or unity. But now that she herself is gone to her rest, it would seem that the time is come to collect and supplement these scattered notices, and to present, so far as may be possible, a complete picture of a woman whose name has become a familiar and cherished word, not only throughout her own land, but in other Protestant countries; of one whose character has exerted so stirring and awakening an influence on the women of our day, and has been destined by God's grace to call into life an idea, the full bearing and consequences of which are not even yet to be discerned. A sketch of her life would appear peculiarly adapted to

exert this strengthening and ennobling influence on other minds, especially on those of young women; and perhaps may kindle in some well-prepared hearts a spark of that fire which will not die out like the crackling flame of mere earthly enthusiasm or youthful romance. For Amelia Sieveking was what she was, and her works were crowned by that blessing without which no human effort prospers, not so much in consequence of any extraordinary natural gifts or powers, as by virtue of that consecration of heart, that singleness of purpose and harmony of operation which is imparted to all natural gifts by the entire and unreserved surrender of the soul to the service of God. Simple and unassuming as her nature itself, must be the story of her very simple life; and just as a remarkable sincerity and love of truth, with an early developed and earnest desire to work and to be useful, are striking traits in her own character, so a certain sobriety and the most conscientious truthfulness ought no less to guide the pen which undertakes this sketch of her career. Thus the following narrative, it will be observed, is compiled chiefly from the letters and papers of its subject. The kingdom of God is not in word but in power, and it is precisely this power of God, as it renders its instruments serviceable and mighty for good, that is most evidently and strikingly manifest in the life of Amelia Sieveking.

AMELIA WILHELMINA SIEVEKING was born at Hamburg on the 25th of July 1794. Her family was of Westphalian origin, and she was fond of mentioning that one of her ancestors was a schoolmaster, so that the love of teaching might be said to run in the blood. Her father, Henry Christian Sieveking, was a merchant, subsequently also a senator of the city, and seems to have possessed more literary cultivation than was usual with his class in those days. He had two brothers, one of whom was a Syndic, and the other a very intelligent and well-known merchant, the father of the late much-respected Syndic, and of the present senator of the same name in Hamburg. The beautiful country-seat of this gentleman at Neumühlen, on the banks of the Elbe, was celebrated for its hospitality, and during the troublous times at the close of the last century he collected around him a numerous circle both of Germans and foreigners. Her grandfather was a cloth-merchant, and his wife must have been a great invalid, as her grandchild could not remember ever to have seen her move from her chair. Her maternal grandfather's name was Volkmann; he was also a man of cultivation and highly respected, and it was from his daughter that her niece received the name of Milly or Amelia.

Of her mother, Caroline Louisa Sieveking, whom she lost before she had completed her fifth year, Amelia retained no distinct recollection. She is said to have been a highly educated woman, of an extremely mild

and gentle disposition; she died of consumption, after giving her husband four sons (one of whom died in infancy) and a daughter. Amelia was the youngest child but one, and not the most winning; she cried a great deal, and her mother once told a friend that she could not help loving her gentle little Gustavus, the youngest child, better than Amelia. Her friend excused this fretfulness on the score of ill-health, and in fact a disease soon afterwards showed itself in the bones of the hand, of which the traces never entirely disappeared. After medical advice had been tried in vain, a bricklayer's wife undertook to cure the complaint, and succeeded, but Amelia could never recollect what means she used.

During the illness of Madame Sieveking, Miss Hösch, a niece of her husband's, entered the family, and, after their mother's death in 1799, carried on the house-keeping and took charge of the children. Miss Hösch, who was then but nineteen years of age, had doubtless excellent intentions, and devoted herself to her difficult task with zeal and conscientiousness; but she possessed neither sufficient cultivation nor judgment to educate the orphan children well, in the true sense of the words, least of all the little girl; and the absence of a mother's care and tenderness was deeply felt by Amelia throughout her childhood, though she might scarcely herself be aware what it was that she missed. In after life she often used to say that, unlike many

people, she could never look back to her own childhood as to a sort of vanished paradise, and thus had never been able properly to enter into the laments of the poets over the lost golden age. But God had His own method of educating this soul; and no doubt this remark of hers may be explained in great measure by the fact, that her natural disposition inclined her little to vague dreams or the idle play of the fancy, and led her rather to find her chief enjoyment, as she grew older, in clear connected thought and active usefulness. Thus she early showed what we call a very practical turn of mind; but it may be a question whether this tendency of her character was not greatly developed and strengthened by the very circumstance, that her early years were wanting in those pleasures and charms which naturally grace the life of childhood in large and happy families.

In the year 1800 her father became a senator, an event which made a great impression on her elder brother, Edward, but to which Amelia was very indifferent. Her chief and favourite companion was her younger brother Gustavus, who was the nearest in age to herself, and was a very gifted and amiable boy, whose evenness of temper and steadiness of purpose often proved a wholesome check to the eager restlessness of her own nature. Many little traits of their common childhood remained in her memory—how they used at night to cover up their heads with the sheet, and tell

each other fairy stories about crystal palaces, &c. These two youngest children always sided with each other against the elder ones, whenever they deemed their rights infringed by them ; still the eldest brother, Edward, a quick-tempered, ambitious, but really good-hearted boy, seems also to have exercised great influence over the developement of his sister's mind and character. At their country house outside the gates of the city, where the children were often left to themselves for days together, they carried on what they found most interesting games, in which they pretended to be Robinson Crusoes and worked in the garden, or poor children who had to earn money for their parents.

But while this play went on, the time came for the little Amelia when lessons must begin ; and she seems to have had a succession of very dry instructors in writing and arithmetic, French, drawing, and music. For the latter art she was wholly destitute of talent, and although the love of learning awoke early in the child, under these circumstances there was no proper external stimulus to quicken it. When she was old enough to enter on a more regular course of instruction, Mr. Sieveking gave his daughter her choice between two rationalistic theologians, who were both personally unknown to him, but had been recommended to him as tutors. As she really had no means of making a choice between them, she had recourse to drawing lots, and the gentleman on whom the lot fell gave her lessons

henceforward in German grammar and literature, history, geography, and religion. His method of teaching, however, was at once so stiff and so indifferent, that he soon forfeited the affection and respect which the intelligent child had at first been ready to offer him, and she took a strong dislike to him. At his lessons on religion the Bible never appeared on the table, but was replaced by a meagre compendium of doctrine, in which single passages, taken apart from their context, were made to serve the rationalistic views of the compiler. History was taught according to Becker, and was, therefore, also regarded exclusively from the rationalistic point of view; while the lessons in geography were confined to Europe, and of that presented only the barest outlines. This miserable course of instruction had, however, one good effect upon Amelia's mind,—the consciousness that she could easily do better herself early became an incentive to her to teach others, and to take all possible pains to acquire a more lively and awakening method of imparting information. Often did she long to be allowed to go to school, like her elder brothers; but she never expressed her wishes to her father, for though ambitious, there was also a fund of bashfulness in her character. Meanwhile her home education gave her a certain independence and originality of mind, while it also preserved her from the self-conceit which is so great a danger to ambitious children when they succeed in obtaining distinction.

Her reading at this time was very various, including among other things Campe's 'Travels,' Weisse's 'Children's Friend,' Kotzebue's plays, and, as already mentioned, Becker's 'Universal History,' which at a later period proved a great hindrance to the development of that religious life which as yet lay dormant within her. In the evenings her eldest brother read aloud the Iliad and Odyssey, and the children also practised composition. Amelia wrote romantic dramas and robber tales, composed the preface to a book of dreams which they projected, and in her eleventh year she and her brothers founded a literary academy, in which each member of the family was to write on a given theme, and every fortnight the essays were to be read aloud and the palm adjudged to the most meritorious. On one occasion Amelia chose Diogenes as the subject of a panegyric, for even at that early age she could admire a philosopher of so few wants and so much independence; another time she discussed the advantages and disadvantages of an amateur theatre, and wrote a Praise of War which, child as she was, displays very clearly her acute understanding. Their youthful governess never interfered with any of these pursuits—indeed she herself enjoyed hearing their papers read aloud, and encouraged them more than a more experienced teacher probably would have done. Besides her regular course of study, Amelia acquired various small accomplishments, such as making wax-flowers and fruit, &c.;

and though under Miss Hösch's superintendence any systematic mental training was out of the question, the children were always taught the most strict regard to truth, and the duty of kindness and consideration in their conduct towards others, especially servants. Still it was inevitable that a mother's tender care and helping hand should be wanting in her life, and the little girl seems often to have had a yearning for it, though, as we have said, never clearly conscious herself what it was that she craved. At times she would shed tears without apparent cause, and once when asked by Miss Hösch why she wept, replied, 'I am so unhappy, because nobody calls me *dear* Milly, and nobody cares for me.'

In her tenth year the child was suddenly attacked by a nervous affection, to which, in after life, some strange recollections attached themselves, strongly characteristic of her nature. During one of the convulsive attacks, in which it was often necessary for two persons to hold her, she heard her father's voice saying — 'If you make this pretence again I will give you a dose of poison;' and her fright at these words — which, of course, could not have been really spoken in the way she imagined — suddenly put an end to the whole illness. Certain it was that she retained a sense of guilt in connection with this morbid condition — a feeling of its being in some sense voluntary, or, at least, of having yielded to it, which perplexed and

oppressed her for years; the more so as she did not dare to mention the subject to any one, for fear of the contempt she would draw on herself if others became aware that her whole illness had been merely assumed. Not till she was thirty did she speak of it to her eldest brother, who at once tranquillised her by saying she had had St. Vitus's dance. Still this feeling remained strongly impressed on her memory, and appeared to her indicative of the presence of a demoniacal element in such complaints.

In the year 1805, her second brother, Peter, was attacked by a disease of the hip-joint, which obliged him to pass most of his time on a couch. During his illness he employed himself in many little handiworks, and was extremely gentle and patient; but at the end of two years he fell into a consumption and died. Amelia felt no particular compassion for his sufferings, but rather annoyance, because they interfered in many ways with her pleasures. During the summer she and her youngest brother occasionally used to spend the day at their uncle Sieveking's beautiful country seat, Neumühlen, where a large assemblage of visitors kept the house in a whirl of gaiety, while troops of children might generally be found there, engaged in all manner of games and sportive tricks. But little Gustavus and Milly, who did not, after all, visit Neumühlen very frequently, never felt at home among the other children, and often stole away from the rest together,

sometimes even in tears; indeed they much preferred playing with each other at home by themselves. Their father also saw a good deal of company at his own house. One of his most frequent guests was a brother of his wife, named Peter Volkmann, who had sunk into extreme poverty, and had left his wife and children behind him in America. He was a very good story-teller; but his tales were frequently so horrible that Amelia attributed her fear of ghosts and other spectral phantoms to the terrors they used to inspire in her. The desire of helping others, which was her most prominent characteristic in after life, was first excited by hearing of the privations endured by her uncle's family, and she set herself to make various articles of clothing to send to them. There was also a poor carpenter's wife for whom she did a great deal; but she was discouraged by finding how little gratitude she received, and that though the distress was not so extreme as she had fancied, yet she was not the less unable to conjure it away by one magic stroke.

About this time a little girl was taken into the house as a playfellow to Amelia; but the experiment was not successful, for she found her brothers much cleverer and more entertaining than her little companion, who was therefore, before long, sent away to make place for another. This second playfellow submitted entirely to Amelia, who liked her much better than the former one. Amelia was extremely fond of animals, especially

of dogs, and her first verses were on the death of a horse. Her second poem was on the theatre, for which, however, she had no particular love; the opera, indeed, was positively distasteful to her, from its wearisome repetitions, and the entire absence of any feeling for music in herself.

At a later period she gives a melancholy description of her mental condition at this time. The study of Becker's 'Universal History' and of Tiedge's 'Urania' had filled her mind with doubts and unbelief; the latter work had even awakened doubts of the existence of a God and the immortality of the soul, which the arguments of its latter portion were powerless to remove. At the same time, her dislike of her tutor almost amounted to hatred; she was seeking for truth, and within and without she found only discord.

In the summer of 1808, her father took a house and garden on the Alster, where the children were allowed to keep a boat and manage it for themselves, and Amelia, in company with her brothers and some neighbours' children, played many wild freaks in the effort to drown a certain deep-seated disquietude within. But that her conscience early asserted its prerogative, is shown by the following passage in a book that she published in 1855, under the name of 'Conversations on Certain Passages of Scripture,' in which she says (p. 84)—
'When I was still but a child, and had not as yet learnt to know Christ as the Son of God, as my

Redeemer and the only source of happiness, there nevertheless awakened in my soul a strong desire to become good and virtuous. I kept a moral diary; I imposed on myself small punishments of my own invention, such as walking with pebbles in my shoes, as penances for my faults; I wished also to perform good works, and secretly gave away some of my pocket-money to the poor. But I was surprised to find that the remembrance of former punishments very seldom had any power to arm me against temptation when it next approached, and that the good works I did in secret afforded me very much less pleasure than those for which I received the praise of men.'

CHAPTER II.

1809—1813.

DEATH OF HER FATHER — SEPARATION OF THE CHILDREN
 — MADEMOISELLE DIMPFL — AMELIA'S CONFIRMATION —
 MADAME BRÜNNEMANN — AMELIA BEGINS HER CAREER AS
 A TEACHER.

WE now arrive at a turning-point in Amelia's life, caused by the death of her father. The loss of his wife had almost crushed him, and when this was followed by the loss of fortune, occasioned chiefly by the melancholy political state of Hamburg at that period, his health gradually gave way. He had been slowly failing for some years, but it took his children by surprise when, as they were all assembled together on New Year's Day in 1809, he prayed aloud with them in the evening. The unusual occurrence, however, does not seem to have made any further impression on his daughter's feelings, but no doubt he already had a presentiment of his approaching end, which took place on the 30th of the same month. As he left no property, a family council was held to decide what was

to be done with the children. The arrangements made involved their immediate separation. The eldest son was put into a situation in a counting-house, and was received into the family of one of their aunts. Gustavus was placed with the widow of a clergyman, an excellent person, who kept a boarding-house for boys. Amelia and Miss Hösche were put to board with a Mdlle. Dimpfel, an elderly lady, the sister-in-law of Klopstock, a very pious but not a well-educated person. The instruction which she imparted to her new pupil was very defective, but Amelia was at all events delivered from her detested tutor, Mr. H. The only thing Mdlle. Dimpfel taught well was Scripture History, of which Amelia as yet knew little or nothing, and which she had the art of narrating in a very attractive manner, as she knew her Bible from end to end. Amelia, however, never ventured to mention her religious doubts to her new instructress, fearing that they might be utterly novel and shocking to her, and feeling sure that at any rate she would not properly understand them. The family also included a little niece of Mdlle. Dimpfel's, about ten years old, who had been treated by her aunt with so much weak indulgence that she was a thoroughly naughty spoilt child; and here Amelia's peculiar talent for the management of children first showed itself, for though herself only fifteen at this time, she soon acquired complete authority over the child, who became to her perfectly respectful and obedient. On the whole,

Amelia found herself very happy in her new home, and was only sometimes disturbed by the discontent of her sister-like cousin, Miss Hösch, who, having been accustomed to perfect independence, could not reconcile herself to the habits of submission necessary in her new position, and used to pour out her grievances to Amelia.

A far heavier sorrow was the separation from her brothers. Gustavus often came to see her, but Edward was soon placed in a merchant's office in London. They carried on as frequent a correspondence as was possible at that period, when the continent was closed to England, and Amelia kept her brother informed of all that was going on, both in his native city and in their own circle. These letters show the warmest affection towards him, and also the deep, but as yet undefined longing that was making itself felt in her own heart for some fuller and more improving exercise of her powers and a more serious and worthier purpose in life than she then knew. More freedom than formerly she certainly had, but, from the extreme stiffness that then prevailed among them, she found little satisfaction in the intercourse with her relatives which gratitude imposed on her. We may form some idea of the constraint and formality of the manners in certain families at that period, from the fact that, in many houses, the children were not permitted to visit their father without previously announcing their intention by

a note, which must be written in French. Very different was the more intellectual circle gathered round her Aunt Sieveking in Neumühlen, which Amelia now first learnt to appreciate. There she passed many happy hours in the society of her aunt, for whom she had a sincere esteem and affection, but she was never able to acquire any great taste for the acquaintance of good Mdle. Dimpfel.

All paid instruction had now to cease, and the lessons of which Amelia most regretted the loss were those in French, English, and drawing. She read, however, a good deal by herself, but much of her time was spent in embroidering for money—an employment which her relatives considered suitable to her position. Her trials at this time were not aggravated by any false pride; she did not feel that there was any degradation in fetching work from the shops and taking it back when done; but she did find the expenditure of time to so little purpose almost intolerable, and she pours out her heart on this subject to her brother Edward in a letter, which is most characteristic of her whole tone of thought. ‘It is something frightful,’ she says, ‘to have toiled as hard as I can for a whole day, and to know at the end that the only thing I have accomplished is that some one will possess an embroidered pillow-case who would sleep just as well upon a plain one. All I want is to spend my strength upon things that have some worth and use in them.’ Still vanity and ambition sometimes put in their

claims : the musical skill of other girls inspired her with acute regret that she had never learnt to play, and thus found herself placed at a disadvantage compared to others. Her younger brother once caught her shedding tears over this deficiency, and being very musical himself, proposed to teach her the piano. She joyfully accepted the offer, but was so completely destitute of talent, that in spite of great pains on both sides the attempt had little success. In after years she lamented that she had wasted on the piano so large a portion of the time spent with her beloved brother, from whom she might have learned many things that would have been more valuable to her. Though her reading at this time was extensive, it was less select than formerly, when her brother Edward chose her books, and would not allow her to read novels. She now devoured all works of fiction with avidity, spending whole Sundays over them, until she became completely satiated with this class of reading, and of her own accord sought more solid mental food elsewhere.

About this time Amelia was prepared for confirmation by a much esteemed and orthodox clergyman, but she received his instructions in a class of eighty children, so that there was little opportunity for any close personal intercourse, and she was once more deterred from bringing forward the subject of her yet remaining doubts. She had learnt, it is true, by this time to believe in the immortality of the soul, but it still jarred on

her feelings to hear prayer addressed to Christ. On the whole, this course of instruction passed over her almost without impression, which was, no doubt, chiefly owing to the state of her own mind at the time. The clergyman took the Gospel of St. John as his text-book, and undoubtedly taught well, although in a somewhat dry manner. Amelia was told afterwards that he had pronounced her essays to be the best of the class. As, however, each girl was left free to choose her own subject, she had naturally chosen those which were most familiar to her, and probably, too, may have expressed some things which did not spring in her case from a real inward conviction. The day of confirmation itself passed over without awakening any special emotion — indeed it was only by an effort that she was able to maintain a certain amount of devotional feeling. It was while attending these confirmation classes that she first tried her powers as a teacher. At the first lesson all were required to read aloud, and those who could not do so fluently were rejected. Among the number was a peasant girl, and as she went home Amelia found her standing under a tree, weeping bitterly. Pitying her grief, she offered to teach her to read, to the great joy of the girl, who for some time came regularly to her for lessons, but after a while, probably finding the distance from her home too great, she appeared no more; so that Amelia had not the chance of gaining much credit by her first pupil.

About this time she was obliged to part from her dear friend and governess, Miss Hösch, who left Miss Dimpfel's to enter on another situation; but though Amelia naturally felt this separation from the companion of her childhood, yet it was no slight addition to her comfort that henceforward she had only one authority over her instead of two. She was enabled to visit her Aunt Sieveking more frequently, and acquired a growing taste for the genial and cultivated society of Neumühlen; while the stiffness and narrow-mindedness of the more restricted circles in which she had hitherto moved failed any longer to satisfy the awakening intellectual demands of the young girl's mind, and in them she felt herself continually thrown back on her own resources.

About this time Madame Sieveking's only daughter died, after a protracted illness. She was older than her cousin; and her amiable character, her affectionate disposition, her sweetness and resignation under lengthened suffering, made a deep impression on Amelia, who writes to her brother on this loss in a strain of deep sorrow, and whose thoughts seem to have been occupied for a long time with her cousin's memory. But life asserted its ordinary claims; and as Amelia now passed still more time with her aunt, it is probable that her susceptible and eager mind would have been more engrossed by the social excitements around her than was good for her, had it not been for her dependent position

and a change that soon took place in her outward circumstances.

A wealthy widow lady, Madame Brünнемann, a cousin of her mother's, proposed that Amelia should come to live with her. Her children were married, and she was living alone with a son, a youth of twenty years of age, who had been an invalid from his childhood, and was frequently so ill that he could neither hear nor see, and required constant attention and amusing. Amelia was to share these cares with his mother, and to be treated by her as a child of the house. The family in general regarded this offer as a great piece of good-fortune for the lonely girl, but she herself extremely disliked the idea of the occupations proposed to her. She writes to her brother, saying how much rather she would qualify herself to be a governess, and that she is quite resolved to leave Madame Brünнемann's house so soon as the recovery or death of her patient should set her at liberty. Madame Brünнемann was an excellent and kind-hearted woman, but somewhat stiff and formal, and everything went on in her house according to rule, to which, however, Amelia soon accommodated herself. Her duties consisted in reading aloud to the invalid, amusing him, and assisting his mother in the household, but she still had some hours at her own disposal. It was in the beginning of the year 1811 that she first went to live with Madame Brünнемann.

In her 'Conversations on Certain Passages of Holy

Scripture,' she says, in reference to her residence at Mdle. Dimpfel's: 'There were many things in my new home which I *could not*, and still more which I *would not*, bring myself to like; but this I am sure of, that my residence there brought me *one* great blessing. My dear old friend's whole life and being were pervaded by a youthful cheerfulness, and whoever wished to know whence she drew her brightness, need only once hear her narrate stories from the Bible, or speak of any of the great truths of religion, to see what it was that filled her heart, and that her joy was truly a joy in the Holy Ghost. No doubt her religion was more a matter of the heart than of the head; and hence, in the pride of my intellectual culture, I regarded her as only an amiable enthusiast, and never dreamt that I could come to share in the feelings that moved her so powerfully. I left her house without having attained to a true evangelical faith; but I carried with me a precious seed of truth, which she had sown in my heart. An interest in the Word of God was awakened in me, such as I had never felt before, and with it a desire, though its fulfilment indeed seemed unattainable, that I might one day be able to believe like her, and like her be a partaker of the *great joy* of believing.'

During the following years she kept up a regular correspondence with Miss Hösch. These letters present a picture of her daily life in the most simple and unaffected language; while they display, not only the

constancy and truthfulness which formed the groundwork of her character, but also a sound understanding and a conscientious anxiety to fulfil her duties thoroughly. With regard to social intercourse, she was still limited for the most part to the stiff family circle which she had disliked so much at Mdle. Dimpfel's, to which, however, the married daughter of Madame Brünnemann and her husband formed an agreeable exception. But she was occasionally allowed to join the more congenial society at her Aunt Sieveking's; she saw her brother Gustavus from time to time, and in general she seems to have been contented with her position. Madame Brünnemann's son, however, became gradually worse, and, after long and agonising sufferings, which were most deeply trying to his poor mother, he died in September of the same year. Amelia now felt it impossible to carry out her former resolution, and to forsake the poor mother in her bereavement, from whom, too, she had received much kindness. It was settled that an aged aunt of Madame Brünnemann's should also take up her abode with them, but she fell ill, and died before this plan could be carried into effect. She was faithfully nursed by Amelia, who thus first exercised what afterwards proved so important a part of her vocation, and for the first time passed a night beside a dying bed. From this lady, and afterwards from Madame Brünnemann, Amelia inherited a small sum of money, the interest of which, together

with a pension from a public fund for the daughters of deceased senators, was sufficient to supply her modest requirements and insure her independence.

In summer Madame Brünnemann lived in a country house, surrounded by a large garden, beyond the gates of Hamburg. In the town house, where she resided during the winter, the upper story was occupied by a distantly-related family, who had three little daughters and a governess. Amelia, who was naturally very fond of children, spent much time with these little girls, of whom the youngest was just able to walk; while for other social intercourse she was still thrown on the circles in which her adopted mother moved. Madame Brünnemann now began to enter into society again, but the family parties which she chiefly frequented lacked the stirring and vivifying element which the young girl, with her yet unsatisfied longings for some worthier aim in life, was constantly though half-unconsciously seeking. She looked round in vain for some congenial girl-friend, who could share her tastes and views, and on whom she could bestow her affectionate heart. Meanwhile she read a good deal with her adopted mother, principally travels and history; took lessons in French, and for a short time in English; and even attempted to learn singing, but failed for want of ear. Her singing-mistress was Louisa Reichardt (the well-known daughter of the *maître de chapelle* Reichardt), for whom Amelia conceived a strong affec-

tion. At a later period their common faith formed a bond of union between them, but at this time Amelia had not become a decided believer in Christianity; still the manifestation of its influence in her singing mistress—who combined much intellect with a gentle, self-collected, almost awe-inspiring, bearing—had a peculiar attraction for her. Mdlle. Reichardt was rarely satisfied with her as a pupil, yet Amelia was inwardly convinced that she could really appreciate her true value far better than other girls who did her more credit, and used to repeat to herself Goethe's words—‘If I love thee, what is that to thee?’ When Mdlle. Reichardt was leaving for England, she presented some of her most intimate friends with a little volume of sacred poetry, consisting chiefly of hymns by Tersteegen. When Amelia heard of this she begged for a copy, saying afterwards, ‘Then perhaps she might see that I have something in me besides want of taste for music.’

The year 1812, which brought so many losses and calamities on Hamburg in consequence of the French occupation, obliged Madame Brünnemann, like everyone else, to retrench her expenditure, though not to alter her whole mode of life. Amelia, too, considered how she could save expense, and fell upon the idea of doing her own washing. It is characteristic, both of her conscientiousness and energy, that she really carried this apparently rather unpractical notion into execution, and for a whole summer washed all her own clothes

in secret. The opportunity of learning something new was always an attraction to her, and no doubt reconciled Madame Brünnemann to the proceeding when she discovered it. Thus she also encouraged her to learn dressmaking and cooking, but Amelia had not the least talent for either of these arts.

Besides these household accomplishments, her adopted mother was equally anxious to see her acquire others of more use in society, and therefore gave her lessons in dancing, and allowed her to join in acting in private theatricals, in which she had much difficulty in preserving her gravity. A letter from Amelia to Miss Hösch, in the summer of 1812, will best show how her time was spent at this period of her life—much, indeed, like that of other well-brought-up girls:—‘I rise about six; I meant to get up at five, but do not often manage it, though I ought to be able to do it, with my health. After dressing and coffee, I take a little time for devotional reading; for I like to consecrate the day to what is good, though I do not make it an absolute rule. Then I take an hour for writing, or arranging my work for the day. At eight I go downstairs, practise on the piano for an hour, and sing for another. At ten we breakfast, when Madame Brünnemann drinks tea; but I follow your example, and only take milk. Then we have a little walk, or if the weather is hot, we go out before breakfast, and then do needlework and reading together till three. As to sewing,

I must tell you that I now really take great pains to do it neatly, and keep to the thread, &c.; not that I think such little pedantry in work exactly necessary, but I think it is good practice for me, and will keep me from the danger of very untidy sewing when I have some day to work more, and more quickly. At three we dine. From four to half-past five I sit quietly in my own room, where, for the first half-hour, I generally read something really instructive. I am now reading a very interesting historical work that Gustavus has sent me. The rest of the time is filled up with things that I cannot do with Madame Brünnemann. The evening is spent, when we are alone, like the morning, in walking, working, and reading; but we often have visitors, or go out.' . . . 'Milly K. is a nice good girl, and yet I cannot honestly say that I miss her company when I do not see her. The truth is, I believe, that I feel pretty much the same towards nearly all my acquaintance. Whose fault is it?—I fear mine; because my sympathy with others is not so warm and wide as it should be.'

Some reflections written in her diary on the day of her first communion have been seen by the writer, which show the most earnest self-examination, and firm resolve to conquer her faults and to strive after 'virtue.' These pages exhibit the struggles of a vigorous and sincere mind thoroughly in earnest, and unable to find satisfaction in half-convictions, but which has not as yet found Him who alone can show the issue of this

labyrinth, and end the strife of self-accusing and self-justifying thoughts, because He is Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To this date also refers the following passage from Miss Sieveking's last work before quoted : 'Indolence was the vice of my nature, from my possessing a phlegmatic temperament. What will you say when I tell you that, as a young girl, even after my confirmation, I would dream away, not merely single hours, but half days, idle on my bed, and that when I was neither fatigued nor ill, but simply from a positive dislike to employment. It is true that after these fits of laziness I was ashamed of having so disgracefully wasted my time, and felt clearly enough that if I was not to go to ruin, morally speaking, I needed some stronger spur to regular activity than I found in the home claims upon me at that time. I looked around for some vocation that should satisfy both my intellect and heart, and the Lord suffered me to find it in the instruction of youth, which furnished me henceforward with the best weapon against my natural propensity to indolence.'

Yet, on the other hand, the impulse to work and to make herself useful never altogether slumbered in Amelia's heart. She used often to fetch the little daughter of the family who lived in the same house into her room to teach her knitting, and when, not long afterwards, the governess was leaving, she asked very modestly if she might be allowed to undertake the education of the second girl. This was permitted, and

she began; but soon finding that she should get on better if she had a larger number of pupils, and that no one had any objection to make, she took six others from families of her acquaintance, and thus at the age of eighteen began her first little school. In later years she thus pronounces on this first attempt: ‘My secular teaching was very tolerable, but my religious teaching very insufficient. My own position was far from being that of a believer, and my views in matters of faith were completely rationalistic. My text-book for the religious lessons was Lange’s “Doctrine of the Soul,” which Madame Brünnemann had recommended to me. Scripture History I did not teach the children at all, because there was so much in it that was either offensive or unintelligible to me, that I could not bring myself to enter on the subject with them. I was at least determined not to give them anything which I did not possess myself; and I may, I think, apply to myself the passage: “The Lord giveth success to the upright.”’

‘Before their confirmation, I explained to my pupils the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, telling them at the same time, however, that I did not myself believe it, but did not consider my own views mature as yet on these subjects, and therefore begged them to take no account of my opinions. After their confirmation, too, I used even at this time to gather them round me once a week, and talk to them of divine things. Nor did

they remain in unbelief through my fault, for as soon as light had dawned upon my own mind, I did all I could to bring them also to the faith, and, thank God, succeeded in every case. And although I had continually to learn something first myself in order to teach it to them, this plan had its advantages, for my own mind remained fresh and thoroughly possessed with the subject in hand. My education had certainly been extremely defective, and now I was forced to sketch out a plan of instruction entirely for myself. But the having to strike out one's own course, though many errors may be committed, is often preferable to following the dry routine of a method which may be excellent in itself, but is lifeless to the teacher who took it up ready-made; and again, the defective knowledge of a young girl may often be more profitable to her scholars than the mass of information which young men bring back from the university, and which leads them to presuppose an amount of previous knowledge in their pupils that is most probably entirely absent.'

CHAPTER III.

1813—1815.

STORMY TIMES — AMELIA'S SCHOOL — PARTING FROM HER
BROTHER GUSTAVUS—INWARD CONFLICTS.

THE year 1813 brought the agitations of these stormy and passionate times even into the still course of Amelia's uneventful life. The entrance of the Russians under Tettenborn, which threw Hamburg into a tumult of joy, was followed by bitter mourning. Amelia's eldest brother, with whom, during the French occupation of the last few years, she had been able to correspond only very seldom and quite by stealth, now left England, and returned to take up arms for his native country, which he loved with ardent enthusiasm. With unspeakable joy she saw him once more in Hamburg. Those were indeed days when all hearts were stirred to their depths by a common joy and a common sorrow. Amelia poured out her patriotic feelings in her letters to Miss Hösch, whenever the necessary precautions would permit, and in the darkest times maintained her own courage and faith unshaken. We give the following very

characteristic passage from one of her letters, dated April 2, 1813, which reminds us of similar sentiments of hers at a much later period: 'All the young ladies are now busily engaged in making shirts or knitting stockings and socks for the volunteers. I, too, join in the work, but more to avail myself of this opportunity of learning, once for all, how to make a shirt, than because I think it a very meritorious employment. For this coarse sewing is eagerly sought by numbers of poor women who can do nothing else, and would be most thankful to earn an honest penny a-day; and I think the ladies would do better to let them get this trifle, which, after all, would but very slightly increase the cost of the shirts.'

Now came the re-occupation of Hamburg by the French under Davoust, when the poor city was made to pay a heavy price for the brief rejoicings over her liberation. The scarcity of food amounted almost to famine, to avert which, as is well known, the merciless commandant, on a bitter Christmas eve, drove out multitudes of the defenceless inhabitants, including the sick, lame, and blind. Numbers died of cold and hunger; the survivors gradually found asylums in Altona, or the more distant Lubeck and Holstein. All these horrors, and the multiplied calamities of the times, exercised so depressing an influence on Gustavus Sieveking, who was too young to enter the army himself, as he wished, that his health gave way, and his

relatives for a time felt great fear that he was falling into a decline, but with the better times he gradually revived. During the siege of Hamburg, when many persons left the city, Madame Brünnemann went to a friend at Altona for a fortnight, while Amelia and Gustavus found a refuge with their other Aunt Sieveking in that city. Their elder brother accompanied the Hanseatic Legion, and at length came the memorable 31st of May 1814, when the French evacuated Hamburg, and General Benningsen's army entered the city amidst similar rejoicings to those which had greeted the approach of Tettenborn. Edward arrived a month later with the Hanseatic Legion. The young maidens went out to meet their brothers and relations on their return with crowns of laurel; and at a performance given in the theatre on occasion of this festival, Amelia, overcome by all the emotions of the day, fainted away for the first and only time in her life.

Events now returned to their wonted course. Edward Sieveking left the army, remained till the following winter in Hamburg, and then settled as a merchant in London. Madame Brünnemann took a country-house a little beyond Altona, where she spent every summer, up to the time of her death in 1839. The old family meetings began again, and were as unsatisfactory as ever to Amelia, especially filling up, as they often did, the whole of the Sunday, from early in the morning till the closing of the city gates at night. But the intellect

must often hunger, that the character may ripen and the soul awaken into its true life.

Of her intercourse at this time with those of her own age, she thus writes in after years: ‘ Among other young girls I could never find my right place; what interested them, and seemed to them most important, was generally uninteresting and indifferent to me; the things which made them agreeable I could not acquire, and the consciousness of this did not tend to make me the more agreeable. I was often out of humour and inwardly restless, and then others had to suffer for it. But external nature had a strong and soothing influence over me. I used frequently to slip out after dinner and roam far, far away into the country; and then, behind a bush in a wood, unseen by human eyes, I made my peace with God, and seldom came home from such rambles without bringing with me fresh energy for good. A book of Salzmann’s, called “Heaven upon Earth,” made a great impression on me at that time. Although it was quite opposed to my later views, and thoroughly rationalistic in tone, its leading idea was a true one; namely, that it is possible for us here below to attain a foretaste of our future bliss in heaven, and that, to be partakers of it hereafter, we must be capable of entering into its imperfect phase here on earth. Thus, it says, “We imagine in heaven an intercourse with angels; but what are angels? — messengers of God. Are there not here below messengers of God to us? Is not every human

being such a messenger, if we will but hear his message?" I now tried honestly to find out what was the message that this or that person was charged to bring me, and when anyone seemed to me particularly tedious or disagreeable, I thought to myself, "he is still, in some way, a messenger of God to me; what has he to say to me? why is he sent to me?"'

During the summer, Amelia went to town three times a week to teach her school, and returned after the lessons were over. In her diary for 1815 occurs the passage:—'Some one reproached me to-day with taking no lively interest in anything that did not concern my little school. If the reproach was not *quite* deserved, was it quite unfounded? I must be upon my guard.' This little school, her darling project, did indeed give her much to think of and to do. With what earnestness and delight she set to work at it from the first is shown in numerous letters to Miss Hösch. Thus, for instance, she writes, in October 1813, soon after she began to teach little Augusta Woltmann: 'Every morning, precisely at nine o'clock, my little darling comes into my room. The time is given to reading on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and, as Augusta has got into an indistinct way of pronouncing, I let her read aloud a great deal, reading often a few pages myself, which I think is the best way to correct that defect. On Mondays and Thursdays we learn geography, and I always make her write down her recollections of what I have told her, partly to

impress what she has heard on her memory, and partly to exercise her in writing and in composition. I do the same with natural history, which I teach her, however, without any fixed system, which often, I think, makes this subject unnecessarily dry. After I have taught my little pupil the general divisions of each branch, I let her choose for herself the subject on which she wishes for further details. With natural history I combine technology, which seems to me to render the former much more interesting, and in which I find the many picture books I possess of great use. I cannot tell you how all this interests and delights me. I know very well that mere intellectual instruction forms the smallest part of education, and that one can do much more for children by constant superintendence and by setting a good example. But still, I think I may be able to sow the seeds of much future benefit, even in these lessons of a few hours only, by heartily encouraging every impulse to good, and directing the attention at every suitable opportunity to the greatness and goodness of God. It is thus I hope to win the pure open heart of my little Augusta to the love of duty, and of all things noble and beautiful.'

In November 1814 she writes thus of her little school, which had now come into existence: 'The children come to me three times a week, from half-past eleven to three. The last half hour I give to play, in order that they may get to know and love each other,

while it also gives *me* the best opportunity for becoming acquainted with their different characters. I do not find the lessons a toil, as I never give one without preparing for it beforehand, and limit myself to the first groundwork of our subjects. Indeed I get on better with several children than with only one.' . . . 'Imagine my indulging in such a wild fancy; old and stiff as I am, I have actually put myself in the hands of a dancing master! I will at least do my very best to learn what I can, that I may not look so peculiar among the merry, dance-loving young people of my own age. But if I cannot succeed this time, then I will once for all solemnly renounce all these ill-natured fine arts that are so obstinately ungracious to me.'

Soon after, Amelia went to a great ball for the first time in her life, and writes to her brother Edward: 'I feel that I too am susceptible of that vivid pleasure in the mere sense of life that others speak of in dancing, and which I have often wished to experience. Listen—I know you will laugh at me—but I cannot tell you how it has often depressed me when I have heard others, especially you, my strong agile brother, speak so warmly of such moments of vivid enjoyment. Such a strange melancholy feeling would come over me, to think that I, whom my years still entitle to all the pleasures of youth, was so entirely set apart by my nature from those of my own age; I felt myself, as it were, old and withered before my time. It was not the

pleasure itself that I envied you, but the youthful blood that could flow quicker in your veins at the thought of the pleasure. Do you understand me, dear Edward? It was no doubt very foolish of me, and only another instance that, when we have no real troubles we always set to work to make some for ourselves. But now it is different. The feeling that I, too, can enjoy what others of my age find delight in, is uncommonly pleasant to me, even if I should never again join in this sort of amusement. I can do without it very well; quiet daily happiness is the best and truest.'

Amelia did not dance well, and she was quite aware of it, but that from her want of personal attractions she was little fitted to shine at a ball troubled her no longer. Being perfectly clear in her own mind on this point, she was on her guard against all self-delusion, and the pretensions that it might cause — pretensions that, if they remained unsatisfied, might easily disturb her peace of mind, and leave a sting in her soul. Still she possessed a good deal of ambition, and with all her reasonableness, was by no means unsusceptible to censure, whether it might fall on real faults or merely trifling mistakes. Thus she writes after this ball in her diary: 'I did not waltz, though the sight of the others gave me a great longing to do so, and I am glad now that I resisted the temptation. I should have been just a little remarked upon for waltzing, and this would have

embittered all my pleasure at the time, and all my recollections afterwards. It is odd what a deep sting is left in one's heart by the feeling that one has exposed one's self to remarks. Is it not really almost as painful as the feeling of positive guilt?'

In the spring of 1815, Amelia's dearly-loved brother Gustavus went to the University at Leipsic, and she writes in her diary: 'A dreary time for me! I seem to feel the absence of Gustavus only through its influence on everything else; my heart is so heavy, so dead to all enjoyment—I might almost say to all feeling. What is this? I do not know, but it is indescribably painful, and *must* be altered. I must find courage for life!'

But it was no outward trouble that thus oppressed her, and often weighed down her soul with a burden that she did not understand; it was not even, as might be supposed, the ever-recurring fluctuations of a naturally melancholy temperament. On the contrary, in later life, notwithstanding all the toils of her occupation, she constantly preserved that unruffled serenity and contentment which springs from a thorough harmony between the outward and inward life, and she wrote as her motto beneath her portrait, the words: 'Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice.'

She once told her young pupils that some one had called her life a thorny path, and added: 'But it was not so; and if I were to publish my own history, it would be under the title of "Memoirs of a Happy Old

Maid ;” and my object would be to prove that true happiness is to be found even outside the Eldorado of matrimony. No ; my life was not a thorny one, or at any rate only in so far as no life can be quite free from troubles. Naturally, there were thorns in my path too, but there were many roses as well ; and many a time a fear has come over me, when I have thought of those words, that “through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.”’

At this time, however, Amelia had not yet found what she was seeking with all the energies of her thirsting, struggling soul : redemption through Christ, and through Him alone. She wore herself out in fruitless efforts ; a mere outward form could not satisfy her, and the inner substance she could not yet grasp ; she could not fulfil her duties as she wished ; she could not give her life the reality and value she longed for. The following more frequent extracts from her letters and diaries in the years 1815 and 1816 furnish us with a picture of the course of her inner life up to a period which she herself describes as a crisis in its progress. She was seeking for Truth ; she had entered into habitual communion with God, and ‘the Lord is nigh unto all such as call upon Him, even unto all those that call upon Him with their hearts.’ He was nearer to her than she knew.

CHAPTER IV.

1815—1816.

OPINIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS FROM HER LETTERS TO
GUSTAVUS — SCHOOL FOR POOR CHILDREN — ON BIBLE
LESSONS.

IN the course of this summer Amelia's eldest brother Edward had married a very amiable young lady, a native of Hamburg, whom Amelia had long known and valued, and had taken his young wife back to London. When the news arrived of Napoleon's escape from Elba and landing in France, her second brother, Gustavus, the young Leipsic student, went to the field, and marched for France with his Hamburg friends as a volunteer in the cavalry. She saw him in Hamburg on his way, and sent her prayers and blessing with him. The battle of Waterloo, however, soon put an end to the war, and in November Gustavus returned to Hamburg, stronger and browner for his campaign, and ere long went back to Leipsic to begin his theological studies. He was a very gifted young man, of great purity and depth of character, more inclined to

ideal dreams and aspirations than his sister, and hence often exposed to painful disenchantments in every-day life; thus, during the campaign, his enthusiastic patriotism was often wounded by the low and selfish views that were from time to time betrayed by those around him. Amelia writes to him in September: 'Have faith, do good; this is the only consolation I have for you. None but a noble heart will find it availing, and for this very reason I offer it to you. Let us be indulgent to other people, dear Gustavus; we do not know what their powers may be, but from each other we will demand great things, for much was given to us, and therefore much will be required. We will aim at what is best and highest; only do not let us despise the lowest, and let us do whatever we do with all our might.'

Somewhat later she writes again to him: 'The want of certain natural capacities has given me sorrow enough in life already: now that I have at last attained a calm and quiet view on this matter, I will hold it fast and not let it go again on any consideration.'

In December he left Hamburg and returned to his studies in Leipsic, and Amelia writes in her diary after this separation: 'Parted from him for four years! What a length of time! How everything, everything, must change in these four years! How shall we meet again! — alas! and can we tell whether we *ever* shall?'

Towards the close of this year she says in a letter to her sister-in-law: 'Could we ever be really called to

something, and not at the same time find strength given us from above to obey the call unreservedly?' . . .

'In Sweden it is still the universal custom for women and girls, not only to spin, but to weave all their clothing; embroidery, therefore, must be quite out of the question there. Here one new kind of fine needlework is invented after another, which is always admired the more, the more troublesome and destructive to the eyes it is. I am once for all stupid at all these things. But when I find I really can no longer retain the respect of my friends here, I know now there is a country in the world where plain spinning and weaving are still in fashion—and I shall go to Sweden!'

In January 1860 she writes to Gustavus: 'The true, real life of a man lies in *working by love*, and his life is fuller and more blessed, the more freely, joyfully, and beneficially he can thus work.'

Again in another letter: 'We ought never voluntarily so to extend our sphere of labour that our activity becomes an unharmonious disorderly struggle, in which we constantly lose that power of calm reflection and clear mastery over our life on which so much of our own best happiness and usefulness to others depends. In the golden rule of *moderation* lies undoubtedly the essential condition of all stable human happiness.'

Madame Brünnemann's married daughter had no children, and she had adopted a little girl, whom she was most anxious to place under Amelia's tuition. As,

however, the child was much younger than her other pupils, Amelia found herself obliged to open a second set of classes, consisting also of six children. Not without hesitation did she undertake this new responsibility, and we see from her diaries that she sought strength to meet it in earnest prayer.

In January 1816 she writes to her brother: 'For some time past my mind has been troubled by a most disquieting doubt whether my present occupation might not be leading me too much away from my proper sphere as a woman. I felt that there was much to be said on both sides, and the conflict of opposing thoughts troubled me greatly, for above all things it is necessary to my peace to have a clear and satisfactory conception of my whole life before my mind's eye. At last I have attained it. I am peaceful and happy again, and I owe this to a solitary hour when I took the courageous resolve to think over my whole position without reserve—from which I had always recoiled before—and then to take my stand on whatever I might come to see to be my duty. I laid three principal questions before myself: whether with the present extension of my undertaking I could preserve my womanly character quite uninjured? what were the obligations I owed to my aunt? what to the parents of the children entrusted to me? and then I came to the following conclusions:—The education of children—in which light, and not as mere instruction, I wish my occupation to be regarded—belongs of right,

according to my ideas, to the proper sphere of woman ; still it forms only a portion of her sphere, and perhaps I devote too much time in proportion to this part of the whole. With the housekeeping I confess I have little concern—that is, I take little active part in it—but the whole arrangement of the house is not calculated to admit of my doing so. But in general, I think that house-keeping, as it is carried on in most Hamburg houses, scarcely deserves the name; at least I can see nothing in it but giving out things and writing them down. * As to other feminine occupations, no doubt I have still much to learn, but I know enough to manage them all in some way ; and if I am still far from perfection, I am certainly above mediocrity. Only about embroidery and other such little finikin handiworks, I am fairly stupid ; but these I have never reckoned as part of my business, and I always find time to keep my own linen and clothes in order. But it is not merely in particular acts, but in the whole manner and tone of feeling, that true gentle womanliness should manifest itself ; and might not my present employment, which necessitates some occupation with books and scientific knowledge, have an injurious influence in this respect ? I feel indeed that there is need to be on my guard here ; but in earnest prayer to God, I have attained the conviction that honest endeavour and watchfulness will not be in vain. Love, love is the great power which must give the true womanly charm to my character. I will

learn to love my fellow-creatures more warmly and tenderly than I have done, and for the sake of my affection they shall forgive me, even if some may think that I venture too far out of my proper sphere. That anyone could accuse me of being, in the slightest degree, a learned woman, I do not believe (and indeed a woman's knowledge can never be called *learning* except in mockery); indeed I think I have improved in social qualities in many respects by my intercourse with the children. . . . If at any time my aunt should require my care, it is needless to say that I should at once restrict my hours of instruction. Meanwhile she herself declared to me that it was her particular desire that I should do something for little Henrietta (her daughter's adopted child), and that she would look on all the time I devoted to this object as devoted to herself. But perhaps I ought to have confined myself to the instruction of Henrietta and the other children of her age, and entirely given up my older classes. Even, however, if my kind aunt had not told me that it never entered her head to require this, I should still feel obliged to take into account my duties towards the parents of these children, the children themselves, and indeed towards myself, which imperatively demand the continuance of all my lessons. It is true I did not give a distinct promise to carry the children on to a certain point, but I am deeply convinced that it would be hurtful to them to break off suddenly now,

and in general my opinion is unfavourable to a frequent change of teachers. And what would become of my sweet dream of winning these children's hearts for life? Thus it has now become clear to me, what is the work that God has called me to do at the present time; to Him will I go for strength to fill my sphere of labour worthily.'

Soon afterwards she writes in her diary: 'Let the duties that lie nearest to you be always the most imperative; the members of your own home circle will always have the first claim to your affection and usefulness. I lay this down henceforward as an unalterable rule.' And farther on: 'I must be on my guard lest the pressure of occupations on me just now should interfere with the lovingness of heart in which they ought to be carried on: a loving heart is far more necessary to the children than knowledge.' In letters to her brother Gustavus about this time she says: 'Ah! believe me, I have come to see most clearly that Love is the best, the highest, and the holiest for man, and that nothing else is to be compared to it. I have not always felt this so strongly, and probably there may still be left a certain somewhat of sharpness in my manner, which does not bear witness to my inward conviction. At least, I am obliged to conclude so from the way in which certain persons treat me, and it has made me more than once very sad.' 'I said that it was love which must diffuse the charm of womanliness over my

character, but I know that the dominion of love in me is still too often combated by harsh and hostile feelings, and it may be that this will be the case for a long time yet. But at last! at last! I long and strive after that fair vision of the future! We are all in a state of transition; I am nothing yet, but I grow towards something, and what a heavenly delight lies in this growth!

She writes in her diary about this time: 'I believe, had Providence placed me in other circumstances, I might have been inclined to look down upon others, and to be harsh and arrogant in my judgments. I must be constantly on my guard; love must preserve me from this, and must spread ever more and more gentleness and unassumingness over my whole character.'

Meanwhile new doubts had sprung up in her mind, whether the increased demands of her school on her time might not interfere with the proper fulfilment of her duties; for she writes to Gustavus on the subject, and, after saying that she has overcome these doubts by earnest self-examination, she concludes: 'If the plans I have now laid out for myself are unwise, Providence will find means to bring them to nought; but if they coincide with its wise purposes, it will bestow on me both the needful ability and success.' . . . In the same letter she says, among other things: 'How dead is a mere religion of the understanding! how empty of happiness to most! how cold it leaves the heart!'

About this time, a small circle of ladies, of whom

Amelia was one, founded a school in which twelve poor girls received gratuitous instruction. The number of scholars was afterwards increased to eighteen. A matron had the general superintendence, and taught the children sewing, knitting, &c.; the rest of the elementary instruction was given by the ladies of the committee on their respective days. Amelia took a warm interest in the scheme, drew up a short morning prayer for the children, and, as she usually did, accomplished to the fullest extent all the duties she undertook. But the claims on her time had now become exceedingly numerous, and as she carried her peculiar earnestness and conscientiousness into all her engagements, these accumulated occupations often caused her much secret thought and anxiety. Thus she says in her diary: 'It must be a very different thing to educate one's own children, instead of other people's; how constantly in the latter case one is made to feel the presence of a counteracting influence! Just now I am feeling the want of some suitable mode of punishment; alas! I thought I should never need one! but with B. and A. it often happens that affection and kindness alone will not do. And yet, and yet, it must come right at last; God will succour and support my weakness.'

Again, in April: 'I long so for once to know and feel a true thorough enjoyment of life! I long to convert into a truth of experience the maxim I hold in faith, that peace and joy are to be found, even in this world,

by everyone whose heart is pure and loving. . . . And yet something often steals over me that is very like a weariness of life. But I will bar its nearer approach ; I cannot lack the strength to do so ; the thought of Him who will one day require an account at my hands, shall make me feel every moment to be full of significance !'

In April she writes to Gustavus on the subject of her female friends : ' Several are much to me, the most are something, but not one of them, I must confess to you, not one of them is everything. This frequently makes me melancholy, On the whole, however, I do not lament over it, at least not now ; as indeed I hope to become daily more and more content with every point in my lot that is ordained for me by the Supreme Wisdom. Its counsels have suffered me to pass my childhood in such seclusion, that I had almost no girl-playfellows, and saw those I had but seldom ; have early inclined me to gravity and earnestness ; have seen fit not till a later period to render my heart susceptible of softer impressions ; and have provided for its developement by leading me in a way in which I shall find few companions to sympathise with me. But the position which Providence has assigned to me must be the best for me ; my only care should be carefully to cultivate the powers which it has implanted. My love for my fellow-creatures differs probably from that of many others ; but, after all, has not everyone his own peculiarities ? The most beautiful ideal of love is that which St. Paul has

placed before me in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and this, I tell you frankly, appears to me to be something far greater and higher than the most exalted friendship.'

She asks her brother in the same letter to point out to her some book containing an exposition of the New Testament, and says: 'I am now reading the Gospel of Matthew with the children, for I should like early to kindle their love for the beauties of the noblest among books. But do not imagine that I think it also necessary to present them with any dry theological learning; you will not suppose me guilty of such folly. Everything must be clear to myself, so far as this is possible—obscurities will no doubt always remain—but where I discern any means of procuring light for myself, I have no right, I think, to neglect it, because every new conviction gained brings me also new delight in proving to the children the divinity of our Christian faith.'

It should be remembered, and indeed, throughout the subsequent course of Amelia's mental history, we must never lose sight of the fact, that her opinions, views, and plans, always grew out of her own most individual tone of thought, and the experiences of her deepest life; she never allowed anything to be forced upon her from without, and was by no means submissive to the dominion of external authorities. She must examine for herself, before she could accept or reject; and hence her style and her explanations on many

subjects, when they took the form of communications with others, had a remarkable clearness, but at the same time a certain prolixity, the fruit of thorough investigation of the matter on all sides. But we never find her giving utterance to unmeaning words; scarcely ever does anything rise to her lips or her pen that bears the slightest resemblance to mere fine writing; and even those moods of feeling which in imaginative persons, who do not keep a watchful guard over themselves, exercise so great an influence on their preferences and opinions, could not in her case cloud her sight or bribe her judgement; both because she always maintained a strict self-government, and gave a clear account to herself of her own feelings and impulses, and because she had mostly taken time for reflection before she spoke or wrote. This circumstance gives a peculiar value to the views and opinions here given to the world; they are characteristic of her whole personality; at the same time it must not be forgotten that this personality had not as yet attained its maturity.

Thus she writes on occasion of a duel to Gustavus:—

‘I must confess that I do not understand what sort of thing that honour is, which can be preserved by such a proceeding! I know that you do not agree with me on this point, but you wish that I should tell you openly what I think and feel, and therefore I keep back nothing from you, sure that your brotherly love will not misunderstand me, and that differing opinions on

single points have no power to divide hearts that are in other ways firmly linked together; the real truth is, in fact, often arrived at only through argument. You have several times held up to me, as a defence of duelling, the beneficial influence that it exercises on the refinement of manners. But this is no justification of the practice in my eyes. Can you name to me *one* folly, *one* wrong custom among men, which has not in the hands of the Ruler of all been made to produce some good results to the world at large? But these results are His work; they do not fall within the sphere of us short-sighted mortals, and can never, therefore, be reckoned to our credit.'

About this time Amelia was reading with her aunt the letters of Johann von Müller to his family, and writes with warm enthusiasm to her brother: —

'These letters are pervaded by an indescribably good and affectionate spirit; one sees how the man's heart thirsted to promote the welfare of others, and cannot but learn to love him. If he were still living, if he suddenly stood before me, I could trust him with my all. I think there are few living persons for whom I have felt so much and so strongly as for this dead one, who was utterly unknown to me in this world.'

In his answer Gustavus must have attacked his sister's favourite pretty sharply, for her next letter says: —

'I demand satisfaction from you for the mode in

which you have assailed the honour of my dear and venerated Johann von Müller. If we were living in the old days of chivalry, and I were a knight, I would throw down my gauntlet to you for having so calumniated him to me. The farther I go in his letters, the more worthy of honour and affection I find him. And now I boldly maintain, without knowing the circumstances of the later period of his life, that such a man could not sink; he cannot have become untrue to himself. A man who for forty-eight years had so faithfully listened to the voice within, and watched the indications of Providence—who, like Müller, had kept himself unspotted in so many critical positions, had withstood so many alluring temptations, cannot have swerved from the path of right and duty in his closing days. Or if it did happen, it could be only an error of the judgment, not a perversion of the heart. Oh, what pious, loving, noble feelings inspired that heart! These could never perish; no, doubtless they are even now in a process of eternal and glorious developement, and if I could see my saint, I should see him exalted and glorified. But my unshaken faith in him will not restore yours, so I suppose I must let you off without demanding satisfaction.'

On another subject of great importance to her she writes thus to her brother:—

'Upon one point, dear Gustavus, I am not quite of your opinion: namely, that we ought to set before

children only the most beautiful and exalted passages of Scripture, and spare them whatever is obscure or unintelligible. My present intention is to begin by going through the whole of St. Matthew's Gospel with them, leaving out only a few passages, and these not because of their obscurity, but because they might give them *too much* light on certain subjects (those, for instance, relating to adultery). My idea is this: once for all, we all alike as human beings, but especially my own sex, who are not fitted for abstract research, are called to live by faith, not by sight. Were it not well, then, to accustom the young mind to this from its earliest childhood, when, moreover, the soul is naturally so susceptible to religious faith? You think there are many passages which might prove a stumbling-block to young minds, and awaken perilous doubts. I think so too, if the children see that you are anxiously endeavouring to explain and clear up everything to them. But I have always gone upon this principle with them: "Dear children, the Bible is not man's work, but God's; no wonder that there are many things in it which are a riddle to our short-sighted human understanding. Probably, no human being is capable of fully explaining the Holy Scriptures, certainly I am not. But groping into its dark passages will do us no good; upon all that we need to know, there is shed clear and sufficient light; we must keep to that." Upon this principle I often have to fall back, and would always rather do so, than give them an explanation

which they would see at once was forced, an expedient that in my opinion would be the most direct road to doubt and scepticism. But that I do not keep the children in the dark more than needs be—that, on the contrary, I should be glad to give them every reasonable explanation that is at all within my power to obtain, you may see from my endeavours to extend my own knowledge on such points from all good sources. One thing more I would suggest for your consideration: Do you not think there would be a risk that the Bible might lose something of its sacred dignity in the eyes of a man who in his earlier years had been made acquainted only with a careful selection of what is most powerful, attractive, and intelligible in its contents, when at last, sooner or later, the book itself fell into his hands? Would not the very care with which his teacher had avoided touching on certain points arouse his suspicions concerning them? Would he not, accustomed only to what was at once intelligible, vehemently demand that everything should be so, and feel himself bitterly disappointed when he could not find the explanation he sought? My little pupils, as far as I can read their hearts, are never in the least disturbed by anything which lies *above* their range of thought, but also it would never occur to them to laugh at any unusual expression which they might not understand. They know that the Bible is too sacred to me, for me to

allow such a thing to pass without the most serious reproof, and they seem already themselves to feel a sort of reverence for the Holy Scriptures—at least they say how much they like those lessons when I read the Bible aloud to them, and talk with them about it.’

CHAPTER V.

1816—1817.

JOURNEY TO MAGDEBURG — RETAINS ONLY ONE CLASS OF PUPILS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MINNA HÖSCH—INVITATION TO ENGLAND — HER BROTHER'S FIRST SERMON—YOUTHFUL FEELINGS — EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS — HER RELIGIOUS POSITION.

IN the course of this summer, Amelia accompanied her aunt to Magdeburg, on a visit to an old friend of the latter, married to the President von V., who was at that time in very delicate health. Here she came in contact with a fresh circle, in which she found much to interest her ; for, with her innate love of knowledge and quick interest in human life, she was always pleased to make new acquaintances. She sought society and conversation that stimulated and enriched the mind, especially that of able men, and in this sense her disposition, as soon as her first shyness was overcome, was eminently social, and remained so through life. On a visit to the little settlement of Gnadau, near Magdeburg, she heard the congregational singing of the Moravians for the first time, and it made a stronger

impression on her than any music had ever done before. She writes in her diary: 'Their singing expressed a deep yearning after a life in God, apart from the world, full of piety and love. Ah! how ashamed I felt of my worldly heart! how those sounds stilled its restless throbbing! I longed to be one of those gentle sisters, who seemed to me to be the betrothed of heaven!'

After her return, she writes on her twenty-third birthday to Minna Hösch:—

'I should have been quite, quite happy to-day, but for two things which threw a cloud over my spirits. The first was, that in my serious morning review of the past year, I found so much in my moral condition to grieve me. Just lately I have been so very far from what I ought to be; I felt now most vividly how imperfect is all the good in me, how many bad habits I have to lay aside, how many inadmissible inclinations I have to combat, how slow altogether is my progress on the path which leads us to the goal. Do not try to persuade me otherwise; on this point each knows best for himself how it stands with him—no other can judge for us. But this discovery shall not make me lose courage. Schiller's verse shall be my motto:

And Virtue, it is not an empty dream,
But man may attain it in life,
At least he may strive toward that image divine,
Though his foot may oft slip in the strife.'

The second thing which caused her some anxiety and

pain on that day, she thus relates in a letter to her brother Gustavus: —

‘I am answering your letters backwards, in beginning mine with the reasons which have led me to what you think my sudden resolution to give up my younger class of pupils. It by no means, however, deserves this epithet: I have long balanced the reasons for and against in secret, and my decision has slowly formed itself in my mind. Do you not remember that I wrote to you about it as long ago as last spring? What I chiefly dwelt upon at that time, if I do not mistake, was the feeling that I had undertaken more than I could fully carry out, and that I was thus forced to leave first one thing, then another, incomplete — a feeling which then came over me vividly at times, but grew much stronger in the course of the summer, when the necessity of going backwards and forwards every day to my teaching greatly increased its laboriousness. But I remained true to the resolution I had formed in the spring, that until the autumn I would go on in the path marked out for me, looking neither to the right hand nor the left; perhaps, I thought, practice will make my work easier, make it possible for me to continue as I am and accomplish it satisfactorily; any fickleness about that to which our nature inwardly calls us, is to me so utterly distasteful. But it would not do; in spite of the most exact arrangement of my time, I was obliged to slur over so much of what I did, that it seemed to me at last

most clearly a *duty* to give up some portion of my teaching. Next came the question, whether I should keep the older or younger children, and this choice troubled me not a little. My heart indeed spoke loudly for the former ; with them I must have renounced one of my fairest schemes for the future, on the execution of which I laid much stress—I mean the hope of forming for myself friends for life out of those children. True, I might have worked towards the same aim with the younger ones, but I must have begun again at the beginning, and to how much more distant a future must I not have looked forward ! Yet there was much to be said on that side —above all, that my aunt so much wished Henrietta to remain with me. You may imagine how much this weighed with me, and how my own secret preference made me suspicious of every reason which seemed to favour it. It would take too long to tell you all the *pros* and *cons* which kept me for some time undecided ; while my doubts filled me with a sort of dread, the more as I could say little about them to anyone else, being convinced that in certain cases the decision must be wrought out in one's own mind, if one is afterwards to rest in it, be the result what it may. In short, at last the feeling preponderated that in this case inclination and duty were in harmony, and so it is decided — I keep the elder children. My decision is not disapproved by the others ; my dear kind Aunt and Hanna Schlingemann have quite entered into

my feelings, and at last all is arranged, and yesterday I gave my last lesson to the little ones. And now it is all right again, I am cheerful and contented. I look forward with real pleasure to the coming winter, and especially to the opportunities of social intercourse it will afford me, which I shall now be able to enjoy. The having undertaken too much remains as a blunder in my life, but it shall be a warning to me for the future.'

In August of this year Amelia writes in her diary:—

'Again the tenderest letters from my Gustavus; in truth I have much to do to be fully worthy of so much love. What troubles me is, that I know I always seem much better in my letters to those whom I love, than I really am. On paper it is so easy to express any right or admirable feeling, but this by no means guarantees its proper influence on one's life.'

In autumn she writes to Minna Hösch:—

'Nowadays I would rather see a good comedy than a tragedy. The latter affects me too powerfully, and it seems to me almost wrong to spend so much of our best feelings and sympathies on an empty delusion, when real life so constantly demands them from us in their fullest strength. My disposition is certainly rather grave than mirthful, and for this very reason I make it a principle to seek sources of brightness and mirth out of myself, lest my gravity should degenerate into gloom. I would not be untrue to myself: I make no painful efforts to seem gay among the gay; such

counterfeit graces are rarely becoming; but quietly to enjoy the gaiety of others, I do like, and it imparts fresh cheerfulness to our own heart. And to look out on life cheerfully, deeply and thoroughly to enjoy all the good that it offers, and to meet the evils it may have in store for us with a serene and open brow, is to my mind the highest philosophy. May it be mine! I strive after it earnestly.'

Besides writing constantly to her brothers, Amelia still carried on a punctual correspondence with the lady mentioned above as her former governess, and in this relation the constancy and affectionate gratitude of her character were strikingly displayed. In addition to the household duties she had undertaken in a pastor's family, Miss Hösch, at Amelia's suggestion, had opened a little shop for small-wares, with which Amelia provided her from Hamburg, and almost every letter contained accounts or lists of purchases, made out with the utmost care and exactitude, while her assistance to her friend was not confined even to such words or acts, but included occasional advances of money. With regard to money, it is impossible to imagine a more generous nature than hers. Herself of few wants, she was always ready to come to the aid of others with the small sums she now received as interest on her little property; and where she owed gratitude or affection, it seemed to her a mere matter of course, scarcely worth mentioning, that she should repay a debt — which indeed her noble heart

felt to be incapable of real discharge—in this inferior sort of exchange. Her purse, as far as she had the power and right to dispose of its contents, was always open to her friends, and this trait showed itself in a hundred little ways. Perhaps it is necessary here to remark, that she never received money for her courses of instruction either at the present or any after period, and even presents which the grateful parents of her pupils felt impelled to offer her were but reluctantly accepted if they were of any considerable value. It often cost much pains and contrivance, especially in later years, to place within her reach objects which were deemed really essential to her comfort, and if she herself did not share this opinion she would make no use of them. This was no false pride in her: things which she really needed, and which came to her from wealthy friends who felt that they owed her a deep debt of gratitude, she did not decline, but accepted, as she gave, with generous frankness. Her true delight, however, was in the gifts she received for others, especially for her poor people, and this form of showing gratitude to herself was always the direct road to her heart.

Her brother in England had pressingly invited her to spend some weeks with him there, and she replies in January 1817:—

‘What a pleasant picture I often make to myself of the journey, of our meeting, of the life in your home circle! But then, again, the thought of all I must lose

here casts a shadow over it. My kind aunt would readily give her permission—indeed she has implied as much already; but I know that she would miss me very much. And then—will you scold me?—then, I must own that the thought of giving up my little school for so long costs me a good deal. Not that I think my post so very important in itself, but must I not think it important to *me*, since it is that which God has entrusted to my care? He will demand an account, and dare I, quite voluntarily and unhesitatingly, leave it for so long a time? Ought we not to devote our powers with untiring zeal to the work God has laid upon us, be it small or great? Where we cannot certainly see God's finger in the summons that beckons us away, I think it is always safest to remain in the spot that has once for all been assigned to us. And so I think it will be best for me, at any rate for the present, to remain where I am. A year or two hence the chief part of my difficulties will probably be removed. My present course of classes will then be concluded, and if God blesses my endeavours, some of my pupils will be able by that time to take turns in supplying my place with my dear aunt. It does, indeed, seem a bold thing to reckon in one's plans on a future of some years; but, after all, are we any more certain of to-morrow itself? It often seems to me a very beautiful and enviable fate to be called away from earth in the full strength of youth and the fresh bloom

of life. This is no presentiment of death, no satiety of life, in my case; but who has not moments of longing after a better and more abiding world? But to return: in spite of all I have said, I would not give an absolute negative to your question. If a particularly good opportunity of making the journey were to offer itself, with the chance of returning here in a month, I will not answer for anything!’

Her brother in Leipsic, the young student of Divinity, had just preached his first sermon from the pulpit of a neighbouring village, and now sent her a copy of it. She writes to her brother about it:—

‘What a beautiful gift have you sent me, dearest Gustavus, in this copy of your sermon, and what pleasure it has given me! I was especially pleased by your choice of a subject—that you should have taken Christian humility for your first theme. Yes, my brother, let this be both to you and me our chosen virtue above all others. We will never cease to strive after it; and this very humility will most clearly testify that we have risen above what is earthly and low, and are allied to the divine. But how I fear that I am yet *far* from this Christian heavenly-mindedness! No; I am not humble at heart, as I ought to be; there is great tendency to pride in me. But your sermon has done me much good, and I will wrestle for the prize that it holds up before me.’

In her diary she says, on the same subject:—

‘His style is full of life and warmth, and is, at the same time, more simple than I had expected. If only — if only — he may not be inclining to mysticism! True, are not the mystics capable of the loftiest enthusiasm for all that is good and noble? Are they not happy, and full of assured hope? Yet I cannot feel myself at home in their mode of thought; and I think, too, that mysticism may easily become a snare to moral virtue. But God will guide my Gustavus.’

Shortly afterwards she writes to Minna Hösch, who had misunderstood a passage in her letter, and referred it to a possible betrothal:—

‘Do not let it grieve you if your hopes have deceived you. Am I not very happy in my present position? Why should we be impatient for a change? Should I meet with the ordinary destiny of my sex, then I shall doubtless thank God for it, and know how to prize the joys which that path of life offers. But I am firmly convinced that the All-wise Director of our course has other ways, besides this, by which He can guide us to the true destination of humanity—usefulness to others, and the developement of our own character, combined with the happiness which springs from these sources. My faith in the wise leadings of this Providence grows stronger every day; shall I not, then, cheerfully leave myself to them? I have often thought over this point, quietly and alone; and the result of my meditations is the hope that even a single life, should God call me to

it, will not be a joyless one to me. In that case, I have a plan ready in my head, from which I promise myself many hours of purest happiness. Do you not think it would be well if every young girl were at times to occupy herself with such reflections? To me, at least, it is grievous to see a girl incapable of imagining any other object in life than to marry as early as possible; in attaining which, prudence in her choice is often so utterly forgotten, that her supposed happiness is soon transformed into bitter sorrow.'

Here, perhaps, will be the proper place to remark that Miss Sieveking, according to her own confession in later years, had experienced a silent inclination of the heart; indeed, on two occasions, had cherished in secret those wishes and dreams which probably no young girl's life is wholly without. In both cases the object was worthy of her regard, and the feeling never assumed in her the stormy character of passion, and thus could never become seriously dangerous to her happiness and peace of mind. She was too much on her guard, and held too tight a rein over herself, ever to lose her mental balance, or to give way long to hurtful delusions. At a later period she declined an offer of marriage from a worthy man, because he did not possess that superiority which was, in her eyes, the necessary condition of a happy marriage. God had reserved her for another career.

Amelia feared that her brother Gustavus might with-

draw himself too much from general society to live only for his beloved studies; and hence she writes to him in February 1817:—

‘Is not the knowledge of man one of the first conditions of usefulness, especially in your vocation, which is devoted to the exercise of influence over the human heart? Doubtless this great art and science may never be entirely mastered; but least of all can it be acquired in the study, nor even in familiar intercourse with a few in whom human nature shows itself precisely in the form that you most love. Is not such limited intercourse, when long continued, likely to render the young man, who is forced at last to enter a wider sphere, exacting and self-willed in his demands on society? Will he not take the peculiarities of his own small circle of intimates as the standard by which every other is to be estimated, and thus necessarily undervalue much that is really excellent in opposite characters or modes of life? Something good and beautiful exists, I think, everywhere; and he who knows how to look for it—who enters society with open mind, fearing God and loving man,—will find it, even in those smoking, beer-drinking students’ parties, even in those fashionable circles whence all nature and heart seem utterly banished. (Of course, I know that you could never feel *satisfied* in such assemblies; but here I have named the two extremes—how much lies between them!) Truly this “knowledge of the world” is a precious thing

when it bears its proper fruits, which I believe to be these — readiness to discern whatever is good in men, in whatever form it may show itself; a good-humoured smile for their follies; a compassionate sorrow for their errors, that seeks to embody itself in active help. There is a sort of mock wisdom, also, calling itself the true “knowledge of the world,” that sees or supposes evil everywhere; but this, again, implies a very perverted, one-sided judgment, which I have certainly no reason to fear from your generous heart. But that other jewel you must not carelessly overlook, and you will gain it only by mixing with various classes of men.’

In the same letter she gives an account of a ball at which she had been present, and adds:—

‘That I played no grand rôle on the occasion you will conceive, but what does it signify? If one does not go with expectations unduly raised, one can be very well satisfied with a subordinate part, and can find a great deal of pleasure in it, too.’

In April she writes in her diary:—

‘I am dissatisfied with myself—uncertain whether I do not too much excite a spirit of emulation in my children. This is a great snare to a teacher, for in many cases it seems to afford such a ready means of attaining our end. But that end ought to be, not only to instruct the outward man, but, far more, to form the whole inner being. May God direct me in the right way!’

Again, on Easter Tuesday : —

‘Fixed, I might almost say pressing, and regular occupations are a necessity to me. I have felt this anew during these holidays, when my ordinary employment with my children was suspended, and no particular social engagements have come to fill up the gap. There was indeed plenty that I *might* do ; but when my choice is so absolutely free, I find it difficult to decide what to begin with ; moreover, any work loses half its charm for me when it is not *necessary*. Needle-work especially I always find most interesting when I have, so to speak, to steal time for it. But it ought not to be so ; for a time may come when no such regular occupation would be open to me. Must I then sink into inactivity ?’

About this time she writes to her sister-in-law, in England : —

‘My aunt and I are still busy with Shakespeare’s historical dramas, and continue to find much enjoyment from them. But may I venture, very, very softly, to whisper to you one word of censure on this great and much-lauded man ? One great thing I miss in his writings — a thoroughly noble type of humanity (a Christian type, perhaps, I ought rather to say) in his characters. Does it not at last become wearisome to watch this endless conflict of wild rough natures, that vie with each other in cunning and cruelty ? How rarely do any beams of Christian virtue shine out ?

Can this picture of life be faithfully drawn from nature? Oh, no! I cannot and will not believe it: in far fairer colours does humanity present itself to my mind, and no Shakespeare shall rob me of this sacred image. I know not why it is, and I am almost ashamed to say so, yet it is the fact, that reading scarcely ever affords me unmixed pleasure. Perhaps I have been satiated with it, or am too fastidious. I will read but little in future, so far as it depends on myself.'

Her brother and sister in England continued to wish her to visit them, but she still hesitated, scrupling to leave her aunt and her pupils. 'The more I am left free to choose, the more careful I feel I ought to be,' she writes; 'I often wish for less freedom rather than more.' But an external impulse to this journey was soon to be given. We insert here one more extract from her correspondence with her brother Gustavus. It is from the last letter but one that she ever wrote to him:—

'I promised to send you a more detailed opinion on your sermon, but soon repented my promise when I was struck with the difficulties of carrying it out. So you must be content with my touching on one topic only, in which I perceive that my faith differs somewhat from yours. At first, I own, I shrank from voluntarily pointing out this difference, through a fear that it would lessen your good opinion of me. But then I reflected that so close and dear a relation as that be-

tween us two must be founded, if it is to be stable and permanent, on perfect truth and the unrestrained interchange of thought. And so here, too, I will explain myself frankly and openly. I must confess to you — oh, do not love me less for it! — that I have never been able to accept the doctrine of the Atonement of Christ in the form given to it by the Lutheran expositors, and in which you also hold it (unless I am much mistaken). I have been unable to reconcile it with those conceptions of the Highest through which I can otherwise most truly reverence Him. Often, when I have observed the firm faith of so many excellent persons on this point, I have become uneasy at my own unbelief; but I have comforted myself with the knowledge that I could not help its springing up within me, while I was honestly striving after that truth which *must* honour God. And thus I can joyfully trust that if I err, my God will not impute to me as sin this involuntary error, but will bless me with ever-increasing light. Religion does, indeed, shape itself differently in every human heart, though outwardly many may be united in one bond. And ought it not to be so? Enough, methinks, if each heart can truly make the heavenly essence its own — if it can bring forth from its own depths, under a fostering influence from on high, something which is not a mere reflection of other men's minds. Enough? Nay, there is something more needed ere we can say enough. That this heavenly

essence should be the living, never-failing source of action in life, of comfort in sorrow, of hope for the future. And my faith—I may say it gladly and boldly—does not lack this blessed and life-giving power; it is not dead in me, though I feel and strive that it may attain a higher life. Perhaps for me, too, a time may come when I may lay hold of the meaning of that mysterious doctrine; perhaps—but perhaps it may not. Tell me, will you then be able to love me still as dearly as now? The conviction of the reason and heart is to me a necessity. Not that I would confine everything within the narrow limits of our human understanding. No, thank God! I am not so cold that I could not rise to a heartfelt faith in something *above* our human reason; it is only what is *contrary* to it that I know not how to embrace.’

SECOND PART.

CONTINUED DEVELOPEMENT, AND PREPARATION FOR AFTER WORK.

(1817—1831.)



Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
I call thee : I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
O let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of Truth thy Bondman let me live !

WORDSWORTH'S *Ode to Duty*.

'I may compass earth and heaven, the sea and the dry land,
and nowhere shall I find Thee, save in the Cross. There
Thou retest, there Thou feedest Thy flock and makest them
to rest at noon. In that Cross art Thou found, of whomsoever
findeth Thee.'

ST. BERNARD.



CHAPTER VI.

1817.

DEATH OF HER BROTHER GUSTAVUS — JOURNEY TO LONDON
 — RETURNS — MADAME BRÜNNEMANN TAKES A LITTLE GIRL
 INTO HER HOUSE.

AT Easter 1817, Gustavus left Leipsic for Berlin, to continue his studies; he wrote with pleasant excitement of the new and varied life which met him there, and his sister followed with lively sympathy every step of this promising and highly-gifted young man. Formerly delicate, the campaign and an excursion on foot which he made with some friends to Halle seemed to have greatly strengthened him, and he reached Berlin in perfect health. There he was most suddenly attacked with serious illness, which increased with alarming rapidity, and inflammation coming on, terminated his life in a few days. He was nursed by several of his friends, especially a young student of theology, named Rautenberg, and died, conscious to the last, and full of joyful submission, in the arms of a truly Christian attendant on the sick. When, a few hours before his death, he asked for something to drink, and then

observed that it tasted bitter to him, this man replied that all on earth would taste bitter to him now, but all would be sweet with his Saviour in that heaven whither he was going; and the dying man smiled his perfect acquiescence.

The news of his severe illness reached Hamburg, and Amelia wished to hasten to him at once; her boxes were packed, but she was persuaded to await the arrival of another letter, which brought the tidings of his death.

When we remember how close had been the relation between this early-orphaned brother and sister, how from the first they had been, in the true sense of the word, *everything* to each other, we may understand how powerful was the effect of this sudden stroke. Amelia herself says at a later period: 'I had not felt so deeply the death of my father, still less that of my elder brother. This profound grief became a turning-point for my life.' In her diary all we find is: 'There are feelings which are too sacred in my eyes for a diary. Or what need for any memorial of that which is burnt into my heart in indelible characters? Oh! but to follow him!'

To Minna Hösch she writes:—

'You will not expect much from me to-day, my beloved Minna; but I cannot help sending a few words to you, whose true heart has also suffered from this blow. You knew and helped to guide his early years;

you know that all the glorious promise which then showed itself was unfolding in his youthful manhood into the most lovely blossom; and that with all his eager aspiring intellect, he had preserved the child-like purity of his heart. You know all this, and may thus measure the greatness of my loss. But do you know also how entirely I could call him *mine*—how his brotherly love was so overflowing that it seemed as if his whole nature exhausted itself in it? But no! his nature was so rich in heavenly love, that he could lavish his kindness and affection on all sides, and yet be none the poorer. Alas! my noble, my incomparable brother! But it is in the very excellence of his life, and especially in the blessedness of his last hours, that we must find comfort in our grief for him. On earth he lived as though in heaven, and therefore was he permitted so early to enter that higher kingdom of his Father, toward which he here often looked with ardent longing. His departure has left a blank in my earthly life that can never be filled up, but my sorrow for him shall make me holier. His angel form shall shine before me in ever brighter and sweeter radiance; the thought of his approving smile shall kindle my zeal towards all that is fair and good.'

On the 25th of May she writes again to the same:—

'It costs me an effort now to sit down to write, now that the thought strikes so heavily on my heart that I shall never again write to *him*, that my eyes may never

again rest on his dear face. Oh! if but the inward eye might more clearly behold his spiritual form! May it be ever before me to raise me from earth! Ah! how I long after his perfection! but I often despair of reaching it in the gloomy course of this earthly life. Upwards, oh upwards! where all is so infinitely fairer and better! Yet do not fear that this longing will consume my health; I feel myself far, far from being pure enough to enter yet the Communion of Saints in glory. I feel the calling in myself to live and do some work for the world ere I leave it. How much is there for me to do! and should I already take my rest? Nay, earth may yet have pleasures in store for me. My wealth of happiness is gone — my most precious treasure is taken from me—is laid up in heaven. Poor and needy am I now, but God's mercy hath still left me much. All that love and friendship could do to supply in some measure my loss, has been done in such abundance, that I shall never be able to repay these kind people for their sympathy. Yes, this is a blessing which he has bequeathed to me, that over his grave all those who loved him in life have been more closely than ever united with me. From London I have received letters which, though they reawakened my grief, were yet inexpressibly soothing. They contain the most pressing invitation to go thither; my friends here had already spoken of it, and now, no doubt, it will be accomplished.'

· In June this long projected journey, now more de-

sirable than ever, was brought to pass. Amelia saw once more her beloved, now her only, brother, her sister-in-law, and her little new-born nephew, and found refreshment for her own heart in the sight of their domestic happiness. Sorrow and joy were still battling within her, but she could open her mind to all the new impressions of the great capital, and thankfully enjoy the affection of her relatives. In company with some German friends she saw the sights of London, and made many excursions in its neighbourhood; she had the opportunity of practising a foreign language, which to her, with her eager delight in practical acquirements, was always a source of pleasure; and she found time and leisure for quiet conversations with her busy brother, and for happy interchange of thought with her sister-in-law, who was a youthful friend of her own. This period was peculiarly important for her mental life, as it was here that she began to read Thomas à Kempis, whose works found the soil in her heart well prepared by the recent experience of deep suffering. She remained nine weeks with her family, and then hastened back to the arms of her adopted mother, alarmed by the news that the daughter of the latter, who had long been ailing, was now seriously ill.

She writes soon after her arrival in London to her aunt:—

‘I lay on some ropes near the helm, and thought of my dear ones at a distance, and enjoyed the grandeur of

the scene around me, so new to me. In the afternoon, the clouds cleared off and the sun shone brilliantly down. The contrast of the restless sea below, with the clear still heaven above, had something in it that touched me. These wild tossing waters, I thought, are the dark and stormy life of earth; the clear ether that vaults itself so gloriously above our heads is that higher and most blessed rest into which my Gustavus has entered; the beaming sun is the eye of Divine Love that looks with blessing on both worlds.'

She writes in a letter to Minna Hösch: —

'Half my stay here is already flown, and the last few weeks have offered me many pleasures. Sometimes, indeed, I was angry with myself, that so soon after such a loss I could enjoy so much—nay, feel almost merry at times. But then I think that these instinctive movements of innocent pleasure cannot be displeasing to Him who made His creatures for happiness, nor to my dear saint who loved so much to see his sister cheerful. Hours of sad memory and earnest longing will indeed never be absent from my future life. But if we reflect, have we any ground for gloomy and incessant mourning, for self-willed clinging to a gnawing grief? Yes, if we were not Christians! But since this privilege has been conferred upon us, since all things are brightened for us by the heavenly light of religion, such an end as that of my Gustavus stands before us in a light so far above aught of earth, that wonder and adoration must mingle with all our grief.'

On the 25th of July, her birthday, her grief breaks out more violently, and finds utterance to her aunt. She writes —

‘Deeply agitated by very mixed emotions, my heart longs to open itself entirely to you, my dearest aunt, if it could but find words to give vent to its feelings! Another period of my life is gone, and deep sorrow overwhelms me; my tearful eye looks back on the past as through a veil of gloom. Ah! my great, my infinite loss! A year ago so rich, now so fearfully bereft! Once his cordial good wishes used to bring me rich blessing; now I shall never, never hear them again. True, death has not wholly separated us. I doubt not he loves me and prays for me still, and if I become pious as he was, his prayers will be fulfilled, my last end will be like his, and will reunite me to him. But earth has no Gustavus more for me — how the thought crushes my heart! I ought not to lament and grieve you thus, but it masters me; I know that your ear is always open to my griefs, and it does me good to weep out all my pain for once. But I will conquer myself; I will turn away from that which so wounds my heart; I will rise to thankfulness toward God for His wonderful guidance through my past life. Adorable are ever His leadings; it is only that we do not yet understand them.

All things at last shall stand revealed in light:

Then shall God’s darkness too be praised aright —

are lines from a poem by my Gustavus which has often strengthened me during this season. But what leading

of Providence, dearest aunt, ought I to praise more thankfully than that which has led me to you, to your motherly love that sheds so soft a charm over my life, that first kindled my naturally cold heart into true affection?'

During Amelia's absence a friend had partially undertaken the instruction of her school-children, and the following passage, which occurs in a letter to her aunt, probably refers to some expression of censure from this lady: —

'However rapidly my time has passed here, however many pleasant enjoyments it has brought, and regretful resemblances it may leave, I yet feel, and have in nowise concealed it from my brother and sister, that I could not be quite happy here for any length of time without some definite sphere of action appropriate to my peculiar taste. The letter of my excellent Louisa allows me to divine rather than tells me that she finds several things to blame in my treatment of the children. It is hard to give up preconceived and cherished notions, but if it must be so I can do it. Louisa shall find that her hints and instructions meet with a candid reception. One thing I know—and I do not believe anybody can see it more clearly than I—that all I do is a mere fragment of what I intend, far, far below the fair ideal in my mind. But when this knowledge would depress me, then the love of my work urges me forwards, and I find strength in my conviction that faithful zeal, with God's help, must accomplish *some* good.'

Among the impressions of this residence under her brother's roof we may name a little trait, related afterwards by Amelia herself, which is too characteristic to be omitted. She once fell asleep in church, and when her brother charged her with it, denied it out of shame : but her consciousness of the untruth left her no peace until she came to confession, and acknowledged the fact. And so it always was with her in small things as in great—with so-called white lies, or even evasive answers ; she was always obliged to set matters straight afterwards, to make her confession and to do homage to the full and entire truth.

On her return to Othmarschen, her aunt's country-house, she unreservedly pours out her feelings towards the kindred she had just left. In her first letter she writes :—

‘Favourable winds, my dear brother and sister, have borne me from you more rapidly than I expected, and have carried me from the arms of those I love in England into the arms of affection awaiting me here. I arrived safe and well so soon as last Thursday, August 28th, and could have sent you word of it the very next day, but I thought it as well to wait till I had had time to collect myself a little and could write quietly and rationally. It is a great pity, but when I go over my recollections of the last few weeks, one of the least pleasant is that of the time we spent at Gravesend ; it was not only the natural quiet sadness of parting which filled my soul when—I was altogether depressed. This did not escape

you, but I can hardly even now explain the reason. One thing I felt clearly—I thought how much in me during the nine weeks we have spent together must have been disagreeable to you, how poorly I had thanked you for all the affection and kindness you had shown me, and how impossible it was for me now to make up for my omissions. The thought—it is over now—whatever I have done wrong I cannot repair—filled me with a sort of apprehension, and added to the sullen melancholy already weighing on me—a mood in which I certainly could give you no pleasure. So it is with our human cares: as soon as they assume the character of *anxiety*, they become, not merely useless, but actually hurtful; I wish I could get rid of them for once and for ever! That clouded mood did not last long: my usual calmness soon returned, and the past again looked very bright. However much you may have observed in me that you would like to see otherwise, one thing at least you must have seen—that I love you with all my heart; and love, you know, covers a multitude of faults.’

Soon afterwards she writes about the friend of her departed brother already mentioned, M. Rautenberg:—

‘Rautenberg is certainly a most excellent young man, and has shown great cordiality of feeling towards all the nearer friends of our dear lost one. The death of Gustavus has evidently been a crisis in his life, and has in-

spired him with new ardour in his sacred calling. And thus it ought to be. What I say to his most intimate friends is, that what he promised to the world and could not fulfil, they must now carry out, that so his spirit may not have passed wholly away from among us. Let a noble and sacred covenant be thus made over his grave. I would fain hold out my hand to all who were near to his heart, and bid them join with me in this bond! Upwards! upwards!’

About this time Amelia's adopted mother took into her house a little girl, the elder sister of her daughter's adopted child. The little one was to sleep in Amelia's room, and was, to a great extent, her charge. She writes to Minna Hösch: —

‘It is a serious thing to find one's self placed in a new position, in which one may exercise perhaps decisive influence for good or evil over a fellow-creature. Clotilda's education certainly is not exclusively committed to my hands, but a very important portion of it is. I feel beforehand the responsibility of that account which I shall one day have to give on her behalf, but this feeling shall not take away my courage. No; trusting in God's help, I will gladly and hopefully begin my delightful work. Ah! how much cause have I to thank my kind Father in heaven that He has led me to find precisely such an occupation as my heart desires! When I consider what is the thing most needed to enable us to educate others well, it seems to me to be

that we should constantly educate ourselves. The neglect of this great point is often, I think, the reason why some parents who study many really excellent works on education, yet turn out their children such perverted beings; while others, who perhaps never dreamt that there is such a thing as an art of education at all, live to have great satisfaction from their sons and daughters. But these latter must have been trained by religion, carefully to watch over themselves and avoid every shadow of evil; for most true it is that example is stronger than precept.'

She writes again soon afterwards : —

'A tendency to indolence, untidiness, and general carelessness is probably somewhat more deeply rooted in Clotilda than I fancied at first; but these, after all, are not faults of the heart, and daily serious admonition to diligence and order will doubtless overcome these bad habits. The worst of such faults is, that they give occasion for almost hourly fault-finding. I am so very much against this practice; reproofs often repeated lose all their effect, and yet it cannot be right to allow instances of carelessness to pass by quite unnoticed. Sometimes Clotilda has irritated me to real impatience; but I mean to keep a strict watch over myself on this point, for it has always seemed to me that nothing so lowers our influence over children and the respect they have for us, as temper, and that calmness and a kindness which shines through her most serious re-

proofs, are those qualities which a teacher must most strive to attain.'

In the same letter she says : —

'Thank God, that the true dignity of man does not consist in his power of setting other people to work for him, but in something quite opposite. Truly, he who can best minister to others is the most honourable. But even in this vocation of serving others, there is a limit set which we may not overpass. An entire sacrifice of our freedom and of our own enjoyment can very rarely indeed, I think, be our duty. Often, by resisting individual unreasonable or capricious demands upon our time, we find ourselves enabled in some other way to render far more essential services to those around us.'

CHAPTER VII.

1817-1818.

TERRIBLE LOSS OF LIFE FROM FIRE: ITS EFFECTS ON
AMELIA—HER MENTAL PROGRESS—FAREWELL TO EARLY
HOPES AND DREAMS—INWARD CONFLICTS.

ABOUT this time a terrible occurrence produced a deep and peculiar impression on Amelia. The next house to the one where she lived in the city was burnt down, and after a night of the most restless anxiety, she heard that five persons, the wife and three children of the proprietor, with a servant-maid, had perished in the flames. She writes to England — ‘How much this mournful news has agitated us all, you may well conceive. For the first few days it seemed to have taken away all my courage and pleasure in life. I think and think over all that might have been done to rescue these poor creatures, and what a heavenly joy it would have been to have borne even the smallest part in doing it; and when I have pictured it all out to myself, these awful words, “Too late! too late!” toll in my ears, and I gaze with heavy heart on that happiness, the opportunity for which is now lost to me for ever.

Ah, Edward ! if my soul had possessed the true energy of faith and love, who knows what honour God might not have granted me ! but I will be humble. I had often dreamed that one day I should surely do some great thing ; but now I have been made conscious of my weakness, and since I want strength to rise to the extraordinary, I will turn with redoubled diligence to the little, commonplace, daily-returning duties of my life, and find my comfort there.'

Amelia recognised, as we see, the discipline and rebuke of the Lord : the thought of distinguishing herself, the impulse to do some great deed, to achieve some extraordinary work, had ever been the heart and core of the unspoken dreams and wishes of her childhood and youth ; and these dreams which had always revolved round the centre of self, had sometimes made her inattentive to the little unobtrusive duties and demands of quiet daily life : she, like many others, overlooked the small things to dream of the great. This error, a rock on which many noble and gifted hearts have foundered, was now seen by Amelia in its true light, and henceforth bravely combated. Her soul was not made for an abiding slavery in the chains of Self ; she yielded to the drawings of Providence, and so broke through these fetters into the free kingdom of grace and love. The original impulse, ennobled and enlightened, was to render her hereafter an efficient instrument of the compassionate love of God.

How deeply this event impressed her from this point

of view is shown also by the following extract from her diary:—

‘Never have I felt so vividly as now, that only with God’s help can any deed be done. I felt a powerful impulse urging me on to venture some great thing to save those lives, but I felt deeply in my heart at the same time that it was not pure love of God and man that impelled me, but alas! still more the longing to seem great in the eyes of the world. This consciousness made me mistrust myself, and I thought I had no right to follow the inward voice. Had the impulse which inspired me been purely from above, I should have obeyed its call without stopping to think; and who knows whether God might not have granted me success? But I need so much discipline to make me humble, and therefore this has come on me.’

A play of Kotzebue’s that she saw about this time reminds her again of her favourite day-dreams; and she says in her diary:—

‘The piece attracted me by virtue of a part which, in the romances that used to wander up and down in my brain, was always one that I drew with peculiar predilection—the part of a noble character misunderstood. And now, when the moment came where his nobleness was revealed, and the general contempt was transformed into admiration—ah! then I saw before me, with a vividness which for the moment carried me away, what I had often dreamt of as the highest happiness! But

such a moment will certainly never fall to my lot in life, for it would give too much nourishment to my most dangerous enemy, pride. Yet one thing is still left me and cannot be taken away—to do much, very much good in secret, that it may be seen on that Great Day that my real inward being was at any rate something better than my outward seeming.’

From this time, as we follow in Miss Sieveking’s letters and diaries the farther developement of her inner life up to the period at which her activity assumed more decidedly a public character, we remark two things: on the one side, a growing knowledge of herself, and a stricter habit of self-examination, which led to a deepened consciousness of her own insufficiency and sinfulness; and on the other, an ever clearer recognition and firmer grasp of the redeeming love of God in Christ. She was not to reach the goal by means of any sudden illumination, but, in accordance with her nature, by a slow course of preparation. With persons who are so completely, as we say, cast in one mould as Amelia, the individual character is not so much transformed, as raised and purified, by the influence of Divine grace. To the very last we shall find in her the same traits constantly recurring which have met us in her youthful years; but those who knew her saw and felt that her whole being was rooted henceforward in God, and His Spirit had become in her a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.

The following passages from her diary refer to the renunciation of earlier hopes and wishes, to which we have above alluded. It says, on the 22nd of March, 1818:—

‘Oh, in what a fair and sunny light shines out that evening in my memory! My heart swelled with a delightful hope, that shed once more an unspeakable charm over all this earthly life. But could anything of earth ever give full satisfaction to the immortal spirit? Father! if in the counsels of Thy love I am to be trained for the heavenly life through the surrender of what I hold dearest here—Father, Thy will be done! Let me only become Thy pious child, free and strong in spirit, and filled with Thy love—it is for this I long; towards this, O lead me!’

And again, on the 15th of November:—

‘My heart has been forced to tear itself away from a sweet hope. . . . This sacrifice has cost me much. . . . there have been hours when life has seemed to me so utterly empty and dreary. But I have taken heart again. What is denied me by the poverty of my outward life, shall be made up to me by the fullness and completeness of the life within. Heavenly Father! guide me as it pleaseth Thee to those heights where the glorified spirit of my Gustavus already dwells.’

In November 1817, we find one more allusion in her diary to one of her small difficulties in society that was mentioned above:—

‘My awkwardness and want of lightness in dancing vex me. I had always thought I should conquer these difficulties in time; but now I see only too well that it will not do — dancing will never be my forte. It is a pity, for I think it so pretty; and I feel like such an old grandmother, not to be able to join in it as well as others. But even in this I can see God’s fatherly hand over me for my good. It is doubtless very good for me to find myself often left in the background, I need so much the discipline of humility.’

About the same time she writes:—

‘On the 31st of October, we celebrated, with very general participation of the nation, the tricentenary of the Reformation. Ten or twenty years ago the anniversary would hardly have been so kept. Thank God, another spirit is now everywhere astir — a spirit of faith and pious zeal. Far and near there is life and movement in men’s minds. I believe the period of a crisis for good is at hand; I look forward to its issue with desire. A golden age I certainly do not expect; where the spirit of the age brings good, it also strews unmarked the seeds of ill. The incompleteness of our present state is in itself a condition, as I think, of its excellence; and thus I can never believe in an uninterrupted advance of the whole human race; but in times of general upheaving the powers of individuals are awakened to a fairer activity, and ripen visibly for eternity.’

In November she says :—

‘A glorious book, this “Imitation of Christ,” by Thomas à Kempis, so soon as one knows how to seize the true spirit of it. Humbling and elevating, comforting and sanctifying — such has it proved itself to me, and shall do yet further.’

Then, on the 13th December, after the little Clotilda, now twelve years old, had come to reside with her aunt, she writes :—

‘By degrees I shall learn, no doubt, so to combine the new obligations that I have undertaken with my old ones, as to be able fully to discharge both. As yet I feel that this is not the case. Can it be that I have again overstepped too far the boundary line of a right and judicious activity? Oh, that there were some one who could draw this line for me precisely! But my heavenly Teacher will train me for self-government, and willingly should I submit to all that He ordains for my education. If I have erred, it has been—my Father! Thou knowest it—more in judgment than in heart or intention; and in this case my error itself must work for my benefit, my improvement. All depends on the faithful use I make of it, on careful watching for the indications of God’s will.’

And on the 14th :—

‘According* to our present ecclesiastical arrange-

* It is the custom of the Lutheran Church to confess to the pastor before receiving the Holy Communion; but the confession is in most cases a mere matter of form.—TR.

ments, the tie which binds the confessor to his penitents is so slight that the choice of one has never appeared to me of any great importance. If it were but otherwise — if the confessor could but be a real guide to us in practical life! I have often longed to be guided by some firm manly will, to which I could feel myself in every respect subordinate.’

Then, early in 1818 :—

‘ Oh, how all that is good and beautiful is destroyed by self-conceit! and woe, woe to that self-conceit which especially feeds on what is truly best and purest! Alas! against this kind of self-love I can never be sufficiently on my guard. Does it not rob all good qualities of their preciousness? Is it not exactly this which closes the hearts of others against their entrance? And may it not be the cause why so many people who do not refuse me their respect, still feel themselves at a distance from me? Oh, Gustavus, Gustavus, could I but learn from thee the sweet art of winning not only the respect of others, but their love and confidence also! That saying is never out of my mind: “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” ’

In February she writes :—

‘ I do not dread a great sorrow so much as that life should become barren and uninteresting to me. There is in me so much cold reason, there are so few sparks

of the living quickening spirit! It must be possible, however, to fan these to a brighter flame: and, meanwhile, clear calm reflection is not without its pleasures. Yes, indeed, if there are certain gloomy moments when life looks to me dead and worthless, it is not without, but deep within, that I shall ever find the true source of this discouragement.'

In the beginning of 1818, Miss Sieveking once more refers to the impression made on her by the fire, in a letter to Minna Hösch:—

'My grief on account of the fire is now happily overcome; I had no time to brood over it, and so it was obliged to give way. God has kindly implanted one healing quality in my nature—it rarely retains a deeply painful impression for any lengthened time. Either friendly hope steps in at once, or when the grief is such as to exclude hope for this life at least, its gloomy images are yet gradually thrown into the background, or suffused with milder light, by the occupations and demands of the present. I must own I do not always like this; I often wish for a greater keenness of feeling, which would be more deeply affected both by joy and sorrow. But no one has made the kernel of his nature for himself, and however great may be the disparity of human capacities, doubtless each may be cultivated so as to attain a certain degree of perfection.'

Her brother in England had expressed his appre-

hension that his sister's new task, the care of the little Clotilda, might concentrate her thoughts and powers too much on this one subject of education, and render her one-sided; and she thus answers him:—

‘Dear Edward—This new occupation cannot *make* me one-sided; I feel vividly that I *am* so. I have felt it most painfully in the very circle which seems to offer me the highest enjoyment that social intercourse can give, that of my Aunt Sieveking. But I cannot myself see the root of this one-sidedness in the nature of my occupation; it lies deeper, in a certain slowness and awkwardness of mind. I remember very well a passage from a beautiful letter of our Gustavus, in which he meets an objection I had made to his calling as a minister. I had been speaking of the lifeless monotony which seemed to me inseparable from many duties connected with this office. “Believe me, dear sister,” was his answer, “it is the spirit that giveth life. The man who carries out his vocation, be it what it may, in the spirit of joy and love, will doubtless shed life and variety over what seems to others empty and dead.” It shall be my endeavour, dear Edward, to verify these words. And in what occupation could I do so more readily than in the training of children, that in itself offers so much variety, and is constantly opening my eyes to the deficiencies in my own education? And nothing can do me more service in this way than such continual companionship in my own room as I have in Clotilda.

You speak of intellectual powers, dear Edward, which you think might carry me in the field of knowledge far beyond anything that I have to teach. At present I find myself far within this boundary, and why should I strive after such a distant object? You cannot wish me to try to become a learned woman? The standard by which I estimate the value of these acquirements, for myself at least, is their applicability to practical life, or their power to quicken that divine spark in us which we call intellect. This latter object, however, is often, as I think, as well attained by active life as by study and learning. Social intercourse is very dear to me; more so, I fancy, than you are aware—more, perhaps, than is right. Here my new duties certainly require frequent sacrifices at my hands, and these I do not always find it easy to make. So let my sociable turn of mind be a guarantee to you that I shall never quite neglect society!’

CHAPTER VIII.

1818—1819.

DEATH OF MADAME BRÜNNEMANN'S DAUGHTER — ILLNESS
OF THE CHILDREN — PASSAGES FROM LETTERS — ILLNESS
OF HER ADOPTED MOTHER — AMELIA'S REFLECTIONS ON
THIS OCCASION — MENTAL CONFLICTS.

THE tranquil course of Miss Sieveking's outward life was broken, about this time, by a very sorrowful event. The amiable daughter of her adopted mother had long been ailing, latterly in a manner to cause alarm, and many of Amelia's letters express the varying emotions of anxiety, hope, and fear, awakened by her condition. Meanwhile the invalid's weakness increased, and in the night of April 1st, 1818, she died in her husband's arms, and in the presence of her mother and Amelia. The latter writes five days afterwards in her diary:—‘O God! that the tenderest mother should be thus bereaved of her child, the husband of the wife whom he so deeply loved—all, of our friend! God, give us strength to bear what Thou hast laid upon us; from Thee comes all strength, but Thou wilt give it to those who ask Thee.’ Then she describes to her brother the

last illness and end of the departed, praises the pious resignation of her excellent adopted mother and of the bereaved husband, and concludes—‘Yes, it is here, indeed, that one recognises the truly divine nature of Sorrow, which, according to the will of Him who sends it, is meant to draw us toward heaven, where it shall be transformed into celestial joy.’

About Whitsuntide, Clotilda and her little sister Henrietta were attacked by the measles. Amelia slept in their room, nursed them day and night, and writes to her brother in England:—

‘I cannot tell you with what tender care my excellent aunt watched over the little ones, still less put into words the faith, and love, and hope, that shine out continually through her whole life. You are right, indeed, in praising the happiness of my lot. In the arms of such true maternal love (I may really use the word here), surrounded by almost none but good persons, many of them unusually good, placed in a sphere of action which occupies mind and heart alike pleasantly,—how easy is it made for me to preserve peace and cheerfulness within! And yet, Oh! Edward,—yet there come many wicked, wicked hours—hours when my whole heart rises up with a hostile feeling against all that is better than itself! So I beg you, dear brother, do not think me so much better than I am, do not make my struggle after a submissive humility more toilsome, by expressions of admiration which are only

too gratifying to my vain heart. I always choose those hours for my correspondence when all within is brightest; then I write; but how far am I from carrying out faithfully in practice what has hovered before me so clearly in thought! And thus, my brother, do you also go forward steadfastly in your busier career in the great world. The endless diversity of nature has always been to me its greatest wonder — a diversity which reigns in every part, and yet unites all parts into one whole. Doubtless the moral is as rich as the physical world; goodness may manifest itself in a thousand human beings in ever varying forms, and yet is the same in essence everywhere. So, dear Edward, it is no doubt one and the same spirit which impels you to energetic action, and me to quiet meditation. God help us both onwards!’

In August she writes to Minna Hösch about her departed brother, on whose memory she dwells constantly in thought: —

‘Oh Minna, how his image still floats before me! What noble traits it possesses! His deep earnestness, softened by such a kindly cheerfulness, his glowing zeal for all that is noble and good, his tenderness in all the relations of life that are knit by the love of nature and kindred; his many-sided mental cultivation; and, above all, that perfectly unassuming modesty which seemed scarcely conscious of his great gifts. His character is my model: shall I ever be able to come up to

it in some points? It fills my thoughts at present more vividly than usual. Ah! I can so well understand, now, how those who have seen most of their loved ones depart before them can no longer feel at home upon this earth. If that solemn summons were to reach me now, that to-day calls one, to-morrow another hence, how much easier should I find it to obey the signal from my Heavenly Father, when I might think that I also saw in it a token from him I loved so dearly.'

In November she writes:—

'Since that one hope no longer mingles with my life, I feel much less disposition to society, and am inclined to retire more into a quiet home life. It is only now and then that I care to spend an evening in a mixed social circle. I think it is wholesome to do so sometimes, lest my naturally grave disposition should acquire a gloomy cast. Yet I must learn how to guard against this danger without external help; true Christian love is cheerful, and this precious flower will bloom only from within.'

Then on the 6th of December:—

'Oh, how precious it is to have such a Father in heaven! I often feel Him so near to me; and when my life seems joyless, I have but to come before His face, and He once more pours out joy and peace upon His child. Yes, my Father, I often feel Thy blessed hand; Father, draw me ever nearer to Thyself!'

And on the 13th:—

‘Many will accuse G. of want of feeling; I will not. I will never venture to set myself up as the judge of the feelings of others, except where they are unmistakeably indicated by their actions. Feeling is in itself something so changeable that we are scarcely able always to give ourselves clear account of our own; then, again, the way in which it shows itself differs as much as each human being differs from another. Such moderation of judgment is especially demanded from me, as I am conscious that I often differ much from others in my feelings. If I were to use my own as my standard, I must of course concede a similar right to others in judging of me, and I am afraid I should not come off well in that case!’

On the 20th of December she writes:—

‘When I speak of the spirit which pervades my little school, I may include in it, honesty, cheerfulness, pleasure in learning, and tolerably correct judgment; but I wish I could see also somewhat of softness, modesty, affection, and geniality. Whence this want? Ah! I need seek the cause of it only in myself. If my own nature were more deeply imbued with the all-kindling glow of love to God, doubtless these young souls would catch more of its quickening beams. O Father, shine Thou in my spirit, that I may glorify Thee in those whom Thou hast given me!’

In December she writes to Minna Hösch on a particular occasion:—‘Alas! for rash judgments on the

faults of others! How many a weakness, that might yet have been healed by the tender touch of affection, has been converted by such rashness into an incurable wound! Alas, if there were not the One great Physician of souls, who will at last, we may yet hope, guide both the harsh judge and the condemned of human opinion alike into *one* way of peace!’

Early in the year 1818, Madame Brünnemann became seriously ill, and for some weeks Amelia was obliged to relinquish her teaching in order to nurse her. It was at this time that this excellent woman, whose feelings towards her adopted child were truly maternal, first proposed that Amelia should give her the name of mother, and the mode in which the latter received the proposal was most characteristic. To her the name was one of grave significance, and her great conscientiousness made her fear that it might involve possible consequences, and impose on her obligations which she might be unable fully to accept, for dim visions of a very different future vocation were floating in her mind. She herself, speaking afterwards of this occurrence, says:— ‘My hesitation, I believe, gave her pain, yet I could not regret afterwards that I had spoken as I did at the very first moment. There is something peculiar in the name of *mother*, and although I never knew my own mother, there was something in me which resisted the thought of giving her name to another. The relation of a daughter implies a closer and more dependent connec-

tion, and against this especially a voice rose up within me. I had not entered the house originally as an adopted child, but as the nurse and companion of the invalid son; and to carry out the projects which then just began to occupy me, I needed greater freedom than the relation of a daughter would allow. I therefore accepted Madame Brünnemann's offer only with a certain definite reserve.'

On the 14th of February, she writes in her diary:—

'How beautifully the character of my excellent mother (I may indeed call her so now) shines out in this illness! How poor, how barren is my sort of goodness in comparison! But may I speak of my goodness at all? No, indeed, I feel deeply that I cannot. When there is so much uncertain wavering within, so much of mere external show without, there is no true goodness as yet! Ah! when shall I attain this precious jewel? When shall I labour to "work out my salvation" with undivided powers, and untiring energy? Well do I know the two great hindrances to goodness in me—if I only knew as well how to conquer them! they are an immoderate desire of enjoyment, and the wish to be something in the eyes of others.'

And in March:—'I am not at all satisfied with my way of treating the dear invalid; I do not at all understand how to manage nervous weaknesses. What is the reason? Is it not pride, an overvaluing of intellect? When I am conscious of a superiority in judgment, do

I sufficiently take into account, on the other side, my inferiority in power of affection, and that cultivation of the heart which is worth so much more than the other? But I often long to find myself connected with some one whom I should be compelled to recognise as my superior on all sides, and who could judge me at once strictly and truthfully. I feel painfully that my aunt's endless indulgence, her undeservedly high opinion of me, exercise an injurious influence on my moral character. How shall I preserve the precious jewel of humility? I often feel downright afraid of myself; I should like to have a confessor, after the Roman Catholic fashion. Auricular confession may have given rise to innumerable abuses, but if the priest were the man he ought to be, it might be a splendid thing!

Again:—‘I contradict too much, and often without sufficient self-diffidence. Two opinions may differ, and yet they need not be sharply opposed; often on certain points they might be brought nearly to concur. Why must I always take them up precisely at their opposite ends, and pull them as far asunder as I can?’

In March she writes to her brother Edward:—‘I see in my Bible and in my “Thomas à Kempis” how utterly worthless is all human knowledge in comparison to one spark of Divine love, and I am ashamed to think how often I have preferred that empty show to the one thing needful. “Thomas à Kempis,” for whose acquaintance I have to thank you, is still one of my favourite books.’

Again, in her diary :—‘ I believe I have a natural disposition to real despotism. What a dangerous inclination for a woman, whose vocation it is to accommodate herself lovingly to the wills of others, and who ought to find her sweetest freedom in obedience. . . . Ah, how shall I ever learn the difficult task of forgetting self! I wish some grave, reproving teacher were ever at my side! I find too much lenience everywhere, and I am not strong enough to resist the temptation to be too lenient with myself. But is it not the very truth that a strict judge is over one at every moment? Oh that this thought might every day gain power and life in me!’

Of Kotzebue’s murderer she writes in her diary :—‘ I cannot bear to hear the unmerciful condemnation poured out on that poor deluded wretch. The man who stakes his life on his conviction of truth is no common despicable creature, however perverted his judgment may be.’

In April :—‘ Is not every new awakening of nature, in the spring time, like a new creation? What richness, what beauty everywhere! But I felt as if I could not take in all the boundless exultation of nature; and then, again, it awoke the longing for heaven. What is earthly, even in its greatest glory, can never satisfy the human spirit.’

At times we now catch a glimpse of that thought which, in the secret depths of her heart, was cherished as her possible future vocation. She writes in her

diary :—‘ Has not God different vocations for his different creatures, and has not each its own joys? May I not find in mine some compensation for what is denied me elsewhere? To be a happy wife and mother is not mine—then foundress of an order of Sisters of Mercy!’

Again :—‘ It is strange how often I feel drawn towards those who have but a poor opinion of me, or almost entirely overlook me; and yet I am really proud! Perhaps the charm lies in the difficulty of winning the respect of persons whose superiority I recognise; and then, too, there is an elevating feeling of independence in laying our reverence at the feet of those who show no special esteem for us.’

Again :—‘ I have not love enough in me, I am so often cold and dead. But I trust myself to the leadings of God. He who is Himself Love will surely draw me to Him; have I not often such an intense longing for union with Him? Surely he will kindle the flame of love in me, though it may be through the storms of adversity. I have prayed God from my heart to send me trial, if it would bring me nearer to Him, and this prayer has given me tranquillity. What thought can torment us, when we have once opened all our heart to God?’

CHAPTER IX.

1819—1820.

REST IN FAITH — EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS — VISIT OF
RELATIONS FROM ENGLAND — MENTAL PROGRESS — SECOND
COURSE OF CLASSES.

ABOUT this time Miss Sieveking worked her way out at last into a settled faith. At a later period she wrote to one of her scholars, speaking of this part of her life :—

‘I told you that a change had taken place in my mind from the time of my brother’s death, and I will now relate more particularly how I attained to true belief. When beginning my second course of classes, I felt the necessity of giving the children something more in the way of religious instruction than I had hitherto done. Thomas à Kempis led me to the Bible itself, but I sought anxiously for explanations of its meaning, and took up everything that came in my way, such as the Commentaries on the Gospels and Epistles for the Sundays of the Year, by Stolz, and others by Niemeyer and Bless, which were all, however, rationalistic in tone. At last Francke’s Preface to the Bible fell into my hands, and there I found what taught me how

the Bible ought to be read ; for he tells his readers to compare the different passages one with another, and to apply all they read to themselves with prayer. Then I put away all my books and turned to the Bible alone, and the Lord suffered Himself to be found of me. I can, therefore, most truly affirm that my faith does not rest on human authority, but on the Lord. I stood very much alone, for the whole circle in which I lived, even my dear adopted mother, knew but little of truly evangelical religion. At a later period, Schubert's book, "Old and New," made a deep impression on me, for it set before me the true faith, not as a set of lifeless dogmas, but as a life acted out by real human beings. For awhile I still had doubts with regard to the doctrine of the Atonement, but later they too were solved. At this time I frequently conversed with Rautenberg, a dear friend of my departed brother, and with the good Pastor Mützenbecher, and found much help from them.'

It was in this stage of her mental progress that many of the preceding and following extracts from her diaries and letters were written. So in June 1819 she says :—

'How much would I give to read the Bible with Rautenberg or Pauli ; I think I should learn a great deal in that way. Especially do I wish for a conversation with one of them on those passages which refer to the Atonement of Christ ; I feel myself now strongly inclined to adopt the orthodox doctrine which I have so

long rejected, but I must have clearer light on it first.' And again:— 'How does the Lord now suffer me to experience His tenderness and love; how can I thank Him for so much grace!' And later:— 'It grieved me to hear S. talking of death as of a spectre that had filled her with terror when she was ill. Poor girl! How little does the true spirit of the Gospel seem to be known, which indeed makes us find life beautiful and gladdening, and yet teaches us that death to the Christian must always be gain.'

In August:—

'I know from my own experience only too well to what dangers a lively mind is exposed in intercourse with people of a certain refined and elegant cultivation, with which somewhat of worldliness is combined. One's judgment is so easily beguiled by it, and we learn gradually to lay great stress on certain external advantages, which in the balance of eternity will be found of very little weight.'

One observation will seem most striking to all who knew her in after life. On a particular occasion she writes:—

'Such a constitution as mine promises me in all likelihood a vigorous old age; but what will become of me then, if I already love my own comfort so much?'

In August:—

'A strange feeling comes over me, when I look back into the past that I have already lived through.

At times I find it hard to believe that I can be the same person who once went through this and that, and felt and thought so and so — very differently often from what I should now feel and think under the same circumstances. But, in a certain sense, I am not the same. Amid the manifold outward changes of circumstances, the germs of the inner life of the soul are unfolding, almost imperceptibly, yet not the less surely, and thus the inward man assumes another aspect as the outward does. Ah! if this inward form did but grow ever brighter and holier! What might I be, if all my powers could retain unwaveringly the upward tendency once given to them? What might I be, and what am I now?’

Again, later :—‘ Let us turn away our eyes from all that outward circumstances only can bestow, but in that which we can attain for ourselves, let the highest be ever our aim!’

At last, on the 29th of August, we read :—

‘ O what a foretaste of heavenly blessedness pervades my heart! I see the dawning of a lovely light, a light that will, I believe, shed brightness over all my earthly existence. I was uncertain in my belief; I felt the need of coming to some clear view of that doctrine of Atone-ment which had long been foolishness to me. Happily, I resolved to seek an answer to my difficulties from Rautenberg, and now he has been with me. I have told him freely all that lay on my heart, and he has told me with much affectionateness precious things,

which seem to me to have opened a new vista of truth before me, and to have brought me much nearer to God, and to Christ, whom I can now look on as truly God. Much yet remains to ask and to hear, but he has promised to come again, and my mind is looking forward with strong desire to further blessed disclosures. Shall I then, too, at last attain a childlike faith in that most comforting doctrine of Atonement? O my God, Thou dost show Thyself very gracious to me, that Thou dost draw me thus with gentle force to Thyself, often as I have carelessly turned aside from Thee! Ah! how I shudder when I think that I might ever again forsake Thee!’

Later :—‘I have found, by repeated experience, that if through idleness I have got behindhand with my work, the only way is to bring up all I have lost as soon as possible by giving up a night to it. Then I get into the right channel again. Otherwise the consciousness of all that remains yet to be done makes me dispirited and irritable, and it easily happens that fresh neglects accumulate.’

Soon afterwards, when a friend warns her against enthusiasm in her new religious belief, she writes :—

‘The cold reasoning faculty which predominates in my character secures me, I think, against mere enthusiasm; and that my newly-won faith should plunge me into idle reveries I cannot believe, from the experience I have already had of its power to kindle and occupy every faculty of my soul. But your friendly

warning shall not have been given in vain ; I will watch and try myself more closely, and especially mark whether my moral conduct keeps pace with my spiritual knowledge. I have had a second religious conversation with Rautenberg. In some points it was not so entirely satisfactory as the first, but I must, as he told me, work out still a great deal for myself. Much he has indeed given me, whence I may draw true joy and courage for my onward progress. Do I not feel the Redeemer and Saviour far more truly mine than formerly ?’

Again, soon afterwards :—

‘What a wealth of affection there is in my dear aunt’s disposition ! I often think I have tasted it in all its fullness, and then new treasures open before me ! Must not my own heart be kindled by such love ? Is it not an emanation from Thee, O Thou Eternal Love, whose depths remain for ever unfathomable, even to the deepest and tenderest soul ?’

In the winter of 1819–1820, Miss Sieveking had the great pleasure of seeing her brother and his family in Hamburg. They spent some months there, and her brother and his wife left their two little boys with her during a journey on business into other parts of Germany. They spent their Christmas together, and Amelia strove anxiously to divide her time aright between this precious intercourse and her usual occupations. Meanwhile the inner life of faith was unfolding itself steadily. She writes to Minna Hösch, in January 1820 :—

‘ Ah ! that I were more worthy of the countless tokens of divine grace and goodness that I daily receive ! My love to Him is so imperfect, and yet the kindness and compassion of my Heavenly Father surround me on every side. What would it not be, if I were but through and through good and holy ! As yet I am so far, far distant from this point, that I often fall into discouragement, but one upward glance comforts me again. The All-powerful will uphold my feeble strength, and He who has begun a good work in me will not leave it unaccomplished.’

In April she writes to the same about a mutual acquaintance : —

‘ We see in him, very strikingly, how little natural light-heartedness avails a man under the pressure of serious misfortune ; how nothing will then give true courage, but a submissive, trustful raising of the heart to God. But for the most part we never learn this truly till the actual hour of trial comes ; our pride must first be brought down ; the supports on which it relies must give way beneath us ; then, then only do we flee into the open arms of that Father who alone is mighty to help, and find in His endless compassion our peace and blessedness.’

In May she writes in her diary : —

‘ My inner life has received a mighty impulse. The impression of those conversations with Rautenberg is still vivid within me, and is strengthened by reading

several valuable works, which seem to me to have opened more and more the gates of the kingdom of heaven to my soul, to have given me a growing perception of its divine glories, and quickened all my upward aspirations. And I hope now that the excellent Pastor Mützenbecher will not fail to lead me nearer to the Source of our Salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ.'

After reading an account of the last days of Count F. L. Stolberg, she writes:—

'How it elevates and expands the heart to read of such a deathbed! That he became a Roman Catholic does not with me weaken the impression. The difference between Catholicism and Protestantism does not appear to me nearly so great as it did in earlier years, and I firmly believe that probably as many Catholics as Protestants may belong to the invisible Church which our Lord gathers for Himself on earth. The spirit of the Gospel is not bound to any external forms, not even to particular opinions on this or that subject.'

And again, later, on another topic:—

'I yielded too much to the feeling of physical fatigue, and yet I have often so little indulgence for those who are more weighed down by weakness than myself. O, my Father, if the consciousness of my strength makes me hard, let me rather become weak and helpless!'

On the 21st of May:—

'It was a beautiful moment, when the poor man stood before me shedding tears of joy. How must I

thank Thee, my God, for the great blessing Thou hast bound up with my lot, in enabling me to be of use to so many! But I must try to make my own wants more simple, lest I should narrow this blessing through them. And then, too, does not my pleasure in doing good to strangers sometimes make me forget the good I might do in the nearer circle of home? I often feel myself more strongly impelled to the former than the latter; probably because in the former—as in everything which cannot be, strictly speaking, *required* of me—my vanity finds more room for gratification than in duties whose fulfilment is, as it were, a mere matter of course. But is not this the very point, above all others, where St. Paul's words apply: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," &c. I need greater charity where the individual peculiarities of character differ from my own.

'How remarkably have I found help from God, where many would have thought it foolishness to look for it! How does His presence make the toilsome way easy! Yes, our God is indeed a great God, and yet He does not disdain to listen to our lightest request. Father, I will henceforward turn to Thee in all things; whatever oppresses or annoys me I will lay before Thee with childlike confidence. But that God condescends to show forth Himself even in such small things, shall put to shame my proud heart, which finds first one thing, then another, in my daily vocation too mean and trivial.'

The old enemies do indeed return from time to time,

but she now has the true weapons at hand. Thus she says in her diary:—

‘I must absolutely keep my imagination under a tighter rein. Have not the fancied romances working in my head these last two days, made me once more discontented and incapable in my every-day life, and slothful in the fulfilment of my duties? Not that I possess a very vivid imagination in general; the poetical tinge which this faculty can impart to common life is quite wanting in all that I attempt or accomplish. It is only occasionally, when I come upon certain romantic ideas which lie far enough from my daily work, that this power shows itself very active in my mind, and knows how to paint the pictures it then brings before me in colours so attractive, that all the representations of reason are thrust aside, and I know not how to escape from my dreams. But for the future, with God’s help, I will make a stand at the very beginning.’

On the 11th June:—

‘I am sorry that the relation in which I have stood for some time to Pastor Mützenbecher must now cease. Yet it may be for my good, and may teach me how to distinguish the thing itself from the persons who hold it—the essential from the non-essential. Does not self-love creep in everywhere, and have I not traced its influence even here? . . . I cannot say that I have as yet experienced in all its warmth and power that faith which breathed through his sermon on the Atone-

ment, but I have come much nearer to it of late. O this consoling, joy-bringing faith! I feel it will root itself ever more deeply in my heart—it will approve itself ever more the power of God unto salvation. Yes, it is indeed a sweet and blessed thing, to believe; and if that were gone, how desolate and dark this world would be! Where reason shows us nothing but the night and chilling frost of death, faith kindles a cheering brightness, and breathes over us the warm breath of life.'

Soon afterwards she writes:—

'It is a strange and mighty thing, this spirit of the age! How wonderfully has it altered before our very eyes, within the last few years! Many older persons look on it with uneasiness, and cannot thoroughly enter into it. To me it is very dear, and I thank God for its ameliorating influence. Under it the preaching of faith, faith in its simplicity and power, has sprung into renovated life. But we must take great heed, I think, lest what is good in us should be the work merely of the spirit of the age, or it might easily deprive us again of what it had once bestowed. The Holy Spirit of God is something far higher. Oh! that my progress might be wrought by Him; then I should indeed be founded on the Rock.'

In June she writes:—

'My garden, and the arrangement of my flower-beds, gives me so much pleasure that when I am once at work there, I do not know how to tear myself away

It reminds me of my childhood, when one of my favourite schemes was to be a gardener when I grew up. And a gardener I should like to be now, though perhaps not so much a labourer in God's natural garden, as in that higher one in which the flowers never fade, but blossom into eternal life.'

Another time she has again been overcome by weakness :—

'Lately I had been so successful in my battles, and now the courage to resume the warfare seemed gone. I let myself go, worked carelessly, lay down at night without prayer, and gave myself up the next morning to idle dreams. And when one has once yielded to sin, how hard it is to break loose from it again. For three whole days I was, as it were, utterly dead to the higher life: all love was quenched in me, the thought of God had no power—I was given up to the desires of my own heart. True, I have now, by the grace of God, worked my way back again; but how different would it be with me now, had I never entered the path of transgression. My Father, give me more faithfulness in future; accept my feeble vow; Thou, my Saviour, help me to keep it! During these days, too, I have incurred a debt towards my mother, the discharge of which might well make me blush at the Last Day. Do Thou, O Jesus, discharge it for me; I shall never be able to do it.'

Soon afterwards :—

‘That day I was filled with a most wholesome sense of my poverty and unworthiness before God, which repressed the usual demands of vanity. Oh! that I could persevere in this spirit of humility! I have tasted and known that the sweet peace, the tranquil enjoyment of life, which may be drawn from the wells in the valley of humiliation, are never to be found on the heights of pride and fame. Father, Thou knowest how proud and vain this heart is! Humble it, O Father, that it may be healed; let it grow through humility!’

Again: ‘As a friend I am far below H. My heart is colder, is not capable of that quick sympathy which seems peculiar and natural to her. My God, Thou hast made this heart, Thou hast formed it of harder stuff than that of many other better people. But if it could but devote itself wholly to Thee, it would grow large and tender. Thou canst make vessels of different clay, yet all vessels to Thy honour.’

Once more:—

‘What is it in me that makes me restless when I see others enjoying pleasures which I have renounced, partly from a conviction of duty, partly,—and perhaps chiefly,—because I do not feel myself susceptible of them? I grudge others a mere phantom of happiness, that to me would scarcely give a moment’s amusement. Ah! Lord, how weak and vain is my heart! Oh that it might be wholly filled with the Highest Good! Then would these restless impulses

cease. The endeavour to put the best construction on everything may be carried too far. Where it loses perfect truthfulness, it becomes unmeaning, and is likely to call out still sharper contradiction from others. My Father, Thou hast repaid me a thousandfold for the effort a good deed cost me, by the precious consciousness of having accomplished something useful! For the future I will look around me most carefully, that no opportunity of doing good may pass by unused. My meat shall be to do the will of God.'

In a letter to Minna Hösch about this time, Amelia says of her Aunt Sieveking, in Altona, with whom she always had much intercourse :—

' In mind she is the same as ever, though somewhat aged in body ; her whole manner still expresses the same indescribably attractive kindness towards all who come in contact with her, and her conversation shows the same vivid interest in every topic that is brought forward. People often take much anxious pains to form children for society, to render them generally pleasing ; they try to teach them accomplishments, talk much of politeness and dignity, and give them a thousand rules of behaviour. Would not one very simple one be enough—think more of others than of yourself? Does not everything else flow out of this naturally? Ah ! if we could be satisfied to educate, not by trying to add from without, but to draw forth from within, the results would possess far more gracefulness.'

In September 1820, she writes in her diary :—

‘ If I may trust my own presentiments, my vocation is to single life ; my character, my whole nature has assumed a type too decided for married life, in which a man loves in some sense to form his wife ; and I think too that my Heavenly Teacher sees that the comparative quietness and obscurity of a single woman’s position is better for my pride. Lord, as Thou wilt ! Thou canst fill every lot with overflowing blessings ; faithfully and humbly will I follow Thy hand wherever it may lead.’

Soon after she says :—

‘ When I look into my heart I see an abyss of evil in it, from which I should recoil in discouragement if I had to work my way out of it by my own strength. But I rely undoubtingly on the promise of my God, that He will sustain me in the work of inward satisfaction ; and often I do actually feel His purifying influences from above. How should I then lose courage, and despair ?’

Amelia had a strong wish that her revered pastor, Mützenbecher, who had done so much to enlighten and fortify her mind, should entrust his little daughter to her care, and ventured at last to express her desire in a letter. With what ardour she threw her whole soul into this and similar occurrences, may be seen from the following passage in her diary :—

‘ I took the answer with a trembling hand, and for some time did not venture to open it. Meanwhile, I

sought to compose myself, and to resign myself beforehand to the will of God in case of disappointment. And then I read it, and found the complete fulfilment of my long-cherished hope. Overcome by the divine goodness, I could only express my thanks by tears. It was a moment of pure and holy joy!’

On a letter received about this time from her brother, she remarks :—

‘He praises me because, he says, I have the power of withdrawing from the attractions of a busy and engrossing outward life, into quiet meditation on the highest truths. But what advantages my position offers me in this respect! Am I not much more of a spectator than an actor in the whirl and tumult of the world? How much leisure and solitude is granted me, in which I can meditate unhindered on that which is eternally true, and how intimately is my whole calling connected with what is most cheering and elevating to the mind.’

An arrangement was now made by which Miss Sieveking resigned the instruction of the elder children in religion, geography, and history, to two tutors, while still giving them some lessons weekly in reading, arithmetic, and natural history; and at the same time she began a new course of study with a class of ten younger girls. She writes on this point, on the 27th October:—

‘Dear Father! I thank Thee for the peace and joy which Thou dost permit me to experience: the delight-

ful calling which Thou hast opened to me gives me both. I often feel such a sense of happiness that I cannot put it into words; and I have a presentiment of a yet higher blessedness when my soul shall have become purer from pride and self-will. The power of God is mighty in weakness! A clear firm will does much—may it never be diverted from its true aim by my vanity! Temperance and early rising will also, I think, give me more strength and time. . . . The number of my children is raised to ten. Eight had been promised, when it was proposed to me to take the two little C.'s. I hesitated long, and could not come to a decision: suddenly, like a ray of light, came the suggestion to ask God for a decision by means of the lot. I asked earnestly, and cast lots. The answer was that I should take the children; and I felt myself at once raised with the most happy assurance above all my perplexities. Was this an over-excited fancy? Was my prayer presumptuous? I cannot think so, for I was very calm and composed. I must have a growing confidence in my Heavenly Father's condescending pity, for He shows Himself ever tenderer towards me. Oh, my Father, if I did but wholly love and thank Thee as I ought!'

Soon afterwards she says:—

* It does not appear that Miss Sieveking continued the practice of the lot in after-life. Doubtless, like many others, she was led to feel that we have no right to ask for a sign in circumstances which are sent to train us in the use of our judgment.—Tr.

‘My religious instruction is given at present in the form of lessons on the Bible histories. Here I shall meet with many difficulties. Send me, O Father ! Thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, that I may overcome them. I hope to gain much for my own religious life from a more intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament. The time for my lesson is always too short ; I can never get through so much with the children as I intended.’

In the course of this year Madame Brünnemann’s son-in-law married again, quite in accordance with the wishes of his late wife’s family, so that their relation continued on the same footing as before. About January 1821, Amelia writes :—

‘Just before Christmas I had a bad fit of lukewarmness ; I turned away from my God, sought after outward pleasures and worldly amusements, found bitterness in them, and yet could not tear myself away. Then my faithful Shepherd, Jesus Christ, sought me and fetched me home from my wanderings, and more deeply than ever do I now feel that true happiness is only to be found where He is ; and that without Him the world is but a dreary desert. . . . Several sermons lately have deeply touched and moved me. I felt so much at home in the house of the Lord, that what is said of Hannah, “She was day and night in the Temple,” acquired to me a very sweet and cheering meaning. Once it was not so with me ; it was a long time before I had any real taste for going to church.’

CHAPTER X.

1821-1822.

INCREASING ACTIVITY IN HER SCHOOL — THE DIARIES
CEASE — JOY AND PROGRESS IN THE INNER LIFE— ON
THE SUFFERINGS AND EDUCATION OF DELICATE CHILDREN—
CONFIRMATION OF FIVE PUPILS.

IN the years we have now reached, Miss Sieveking's Sunday conversations with herself,—the meditations which we have quoted under the name of her diary,—come to an end, and her letters are written at longer intervals. Her other engagements filled up more of her spare time, and assumed more distinctly the character of a definite occupation. Her newly-won faith, and all the blessed experiences of the inner life that it brought with it, filled her mind with joyous aspiration, and the tone of her letters at this time tells us that she is in the period of the 'first love,' and often cannot find words to express her gratitude and happiness. More deeply than ever does she feel her own deficiencies, for she feels them now with the pain of love; but she has found her Redeemer, who hath conquered sin, and drinks in from communion with Him the powers of the

world to come. Thus, on the 25th of December 1821, she writes to Minna Hösch : —

‘To-day has begun the glad and glorious feast of Christmas. I rejoice in it as I never did before ; for never before did I see so clearly into the meaning of this festival. I know well, indeed, that this clearness is but a twilight as, yet that I am not able to comprehend the thousandth part of all the Divine blessing which this holy night brought, eighteen hundred years ago, to our race—then so poor, now so rich. But this twilight, this dawn, is the pledge of a glorious day ; this earthly life, once so gloomy, grows brighter and brighter in the beams of a divine splendour. I feel myself blest in the possession of what I have already received, and in the hope of that which my Saviour, according to His promise, has yet in store for me. I am often filled with wonder when I reflect with what faithfulness, what pitying grace, the good Shepherd of my soul has at last led me, notwithstanding my long resistance, to the fountain of living waters, to the knowledge and love of Himself. Oh that all, all our brethren were even now drawing from this well ! Why are there so many who will not come, who will not follow the voice of that Redeemer who longs to set them free from the misery in which they are held captive, and to make them sharers in His glory ? It is so good to be near Him ! But at last, at last, His grace must conquer ; the time will come—yes, surely

come—when every knee will be bowed to His name—of all that are in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, and every discord will melt into one harmony of gladness. . . . If you will remember me before our God, let your prayer be that, in the coming year, my life may grow more and more like my faith.’

In a letter of February 1822, to her English friends, she complains of a certain slowness and awkwardness in the transaction of business, which often prevents her from mastering all her household and social duties in addition to her classes, and makes letter-writing a trouble to her. She adds :—

‘But it may be as well that we should feel at times the pressure of our earthly bonds more painfully, to keep awake in us the desire for our heavenly freedom. Yes, my dear brother, let it be so. I will be ready to bear, as long as it is needful, these leaden weights, that so often drag me down, against my will, to earth ; for I know the time approaches when the wings of the soul will expand more freely, when thought will no longer need the inadequate expression of words, when our work will be less toilsome, yet richer in results.’

About a certain gentle and pious sufferer, she writes to Minna Hösch :—

‘Is not such quiet endurance something harder and greater than the most strenuous activity? Lately, she began speaking to me of the merit of the occupation I have chosen, but her praise made me feel ashamed, as

I thought how much higher in God's eyes was this good gentle soul, with the hours of loneliness she must struggle through, with the tears she must shed before Him alone, unregarded by the world, than I with all my activity, which already meets so rich a reward in the approbation it earns for me, that I know not what further claim I could found upon it.'

In March she is writing to England of her hope that, in the next life, the whole earthly past will lie clearly spread out before the gaze of the glorified spirit, and adds:—

'No, no oblivion of our earthly life! However poor and barren it may have been, it was yet the school of our higher being; least of all, oblivion of our conflicts and sorrows, for in them more especially is the new man, the citizen of heaven, born into life.'

Soon after, she is writing on the mysteriousness of the sufferings of sick children, and tries to divine the hidden purposes of God for them, in these words:—

'We know most certainly that to this poor child, whom even we, in our weak love, would gladly spare every unnecessary pang, the great Physician of souls will not apportion one drop from the bitter cup of suffering, that He does not see needful to heal it from the taint of sin, and make it live for eternity. Many talk much of the necessity that the individual must suffer for the whole, but this is wretched comfort. The Deists, whose God, as Schubert says, is too grand

to trouble Himself about what is poor and insignificant, may see how they can get on with it; but it is not the way of our God. He does, indeed, make the suffering of the individual a source of blessing to the whole, for all His creatures are most wonderfully and beautifully linked together. But all suffering is ordained, in the first place, with reference to the welfare of the individual; and so we may be assured that the illness of your darling, though it may be *also* intended to confirm your hearts in faith and submission and self-denying love, is *primarily* intended for the good of your child. . . . Only take care that you do not counteract from without what the Lord is working within. Oh, it is indeed difficult to train an ailing child! But woe to those parents who evade the difficult task altogether, under the vain pretext that sickness makes every sort of discipline inapplicable, and under this sad delusion seem to do their utmost to make their poor child as unhealthy and wretched in mind as it is in body. If ever a teacher needs a firmness springing from the truest affection, it is in the case of an ailing child; and I am convinced that such firmness exerts a wholesome influence on its physical no less than its moral health. Is it not most striking how attacks of illness are aggravated by self-will and unchecked passions? May the remembrance, how often the loveliest and tenderest minds have been formed by early struggles with suffering, comfort and strengthen you!’

At Easter 1822, five of Miss Sieveking's pupils were confirmed—among others her first, Augusta W., and also Clotilda, who, however, continued to live some years longer with her and her aunt. She writes to Minna Hösch:—

‘To give them some mark of my sympathy which they might preserve, I addressed each of them in writing. You cannot imagine with what pleasure I now look back on my girls, knowing them to have entered into a closer bond with their Saviour, and trusting that His grace and truth will draw them ever nearer to Himself.’

CHAPTER XI.

1822.

FOUR SCHOOL-DAYS A WEEK IN THE CITY — INCREASING PLEASURE IN HER WORK — POSITION TOWARDS THE OUTER WORLD — ON THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

DURING this summer Amelia gave lessons four days in every week in the city, and therefore spent two nights there. On Wednesday her ten little pupils came to her from nine to half-past twelve; at two she went to her school for poor children, where she first gave a writing lesson, and then read and explained the Bible to them until four. For dinner she took only coffee and bread, as this gave less trouble, and made her feel lighter for her work. She then prepared for the next day's lessons, and later in the evening probably visited some friend. On Thursday the children came as early as half-past eight, and when they were gone at noon, her elder girls met, with whom she lunched, read and conversed, till three o'clock. 'These hours,' she writes to Minna Hösch, 'you may regard as a time of complete recreation, though indeed I can hardly call the time spent with my little ones

anything else, so easy and so dear is this occupation to me. If I am once properly prepared, I do not see how teaching can possibly fatigue me. The children's world is my element, and I never feel happier than among them. The preparation is certainly the hardest part of my work, yet that too gives me much pleasure on the whole; and I should never find anything else but pleasure in it, if I could quite throw off a certain indolence of mind and dislike to trouble that comes over me at times. What does tire me is looking over the children's exercises. But if I were but a more faithful servant I should never feel weary. If I ever find my strength insufficient, I can always discover the cause in my own coldness and indifference. Just in so far as I honestly apply my powers to the work that my Heavenly Father has given me, do I receive strength and refreshment.' On Friday afternoon she returned to the city, and assembled her children from six to nearly eight in the evening, and again on Saturday morning from half-past eleven to three.

On the choice of reading for them, she says, about this time:—

'No mental food satisfies me but the most simple, which can be assimilated and converted into nourishment without further artificial processes. Subtle speculations are quite out of place.'

Soon afterwards she writes to Minna Hösch:—

'Must it not seem inconceivable to anyone who has once had the slightest foretaste what the glory of heaven

may be, and so learnt to feel the smallness and poverty of everything that is merely earthly, that all men do not experience the same aspiration heavenwards? Ah, Minna, how my heart burns within me with the wish to become, one day, all true and all holy!’

Again, some weeks later : —

‘The feeling of my own impotence draws me ever closer to Him whose power manifests itself so mightily in the weak. To His guidance I resign myself, with the joyful confidence that He will perfect the work He has begun in me, will raise again His poor stumbling child, though it stumble a hundred times a day. . . . Sometimes I feel as though I must disclose all my heaped-up burden of sin to others, that they may unite with me in wonder at the riches of the Divine long-suffering. Dear Minna, I am very happy.’

On the 27th of September she writes : —

‘I certainly am not one of those who would condemn all who believe differently from themselves; I went through too long and trying a course of doubts, in my own case, ere that firm religious faith could form itself in me which is now the very life of my life; and so clearly am I conscious that the grace of God alone led me to it, that I cannot boast, I can only give thanks for it. And lastly, I believe most firmly, that the Eternal Love will sooner or later fetch back all those who have gone astray from the Truth, and guide their feet into the right way. But no doubt, as long as two

persons are still travelling on different paths in different directions, they cannot attempt to walk hand in hand.'

Miss Sieveking found increasing refreshment in her intercourse with those of her children who had been confirmed, and she strove to share with them whatever she thought would promote and develope their mental life. During the winter months, when she lived in the city, they came to her on Saturday afternoons, and the hour before tea was devoted to reading the Bible and religious conversation; after taking tea in her room, they all joined her aunt and spent the evening in reading aloud, generally from the German poets, Klopstock's 'Messiah' and others. Amelia also frequently read to them passages from the letters of the brother whom she had lost, and while this brought his image vividly before her mind, she rejoiced in the close communion it gave her with his thoughts, and in the possession of such a treasure of affection in heaven. The two pupils who lived in her house, Augusta and Clotilda, were already valuable assistants to her in the instruction of the younger children. Thus her work in life assumed daily a more definite character, both towards the world without and in her own mind.

She writes on the 4th of December to Minna Hösch:—

'That I am one of those who must be formed for heaven by the discipline of self-denial, becomes daily clearer to me,—if indeed one may call that self-denial for which one receives such rich compensation.' Doubt-

less it is sweet to be loved by a truly good man with his whole heart, and to give one's self to him in return; I can understand this, and I am not unsusceptible to the happiness of the wife and mother; on the contrary, their joys seem to me among the sweetest and highest on earth. Yet I know one happiness that is higher still—I mean that of being a Christian. Is not to belong to Christ the best and highest aim that any human being can strive to reach? and ought any outward relationship to hinder him in its pursuit? Yes, I believe myself clearly convinced that, with my peculiar character and position, the single state is a great aid to me in this pursuit: and at an earlier period, when for awhile I surrendered myself to dreams of the future, and pictured it full of domestic bliss, I started back in alarm at the manifold hindrances to the religious life which I thought I could detect in such a career. In this point of view the thought that St. Paul expresses, in 1 Cor. vii. 32, has long been very dear to me. Oh that it may be so with me! that I may give my heart wholly to Him, whose love so far transcends that of any human being!’

In a letter to her brother about this time, we meet with a very characteristic expression of her opinion about novels. She writes:—

‘Novels are neither a principal nor a very favourite part of my reading; on the contrary, I rarely take them up, and when I do, I seldóm find them much to my

taste. These fictions, in which the author acts the part of Providence, and entangles the threads of human lives or severs the knot at his pleasure, appear to me so poverty-stricken beside the simple, truthful, manifestations of the Divine Providence that we see in the fate of nations, the lives of individuals, and especially in the stories of Holy Writ. If the former touch me, my emotion has always something painful, overstrained, oppressive in it; but if I am moved by any true narrative in which I cannot fail to perceive the Finger of God, I feel myself raised and drawn towards Him, more open to the influence of His Holy Spirit. And if we yield to them too much and too often, those emotions which are artificially kindled by the imagination are apt to close the heart, I think, against the wholesome impressions of unadorned truth — we learn to prefer a mere dream to reality — and this, to my mind, is the true danger of much novel-reading.'

In this letter she opens her whole heart to her brother, and praises that leading of God's Providence which has brought her to her present post. She again refers to the secret apprehension which had seized her among her former dreams of earthly happiness, that this path was, after all, not the right one for her. She continues: —

'See, it grieves me that He whose love is the most faithful meets with the poorest return, and an ardent desire burns within me to devote myself in faith to Him alone, even though I fear I may not attain to

keep wholly unbroken His covenant with my soul. But surely that beautiful name which the Roman Catholics bestow on their nuns — brides of Heaven, the betrothed of Christ — expresses the most cheering and most elevated view of a cloistered life ; and where the reality answers to the name, there I think the kingdom of God may be truly found within the quiet convent walls. But our brethren err in limiting, to a certain degree, that invisible and universal kingdom to the narrow circle of a convent. The same Holy Spirit reigns everywhere, and wherever a soul opens itself to Him willingly and without reserve, He suffers it to become the betrothed of the Lord, be its outward circumstances what they may. Nor do I believe that the single state is in possession of a peculiar privilege which might give it a claim to nearer union with God. No ; I doubt not that among pious Christian husbands and wives many a holy soul is devoted to its Saviour with a pure and entire affection, and loves in its earthly beloved the image of its heavenly Friend. . . . With many, the natural love of the creature becomes the stepping-stone to the love of the Creator ; with me it was not so—I first learnt to love the creature in the Creator. I cannot say that any love was natural to me —except self-love, which was strong enough in my heart. O, Edward, how poor was my heart, how cold and desolate, how filled with doubt and darkness, ere He came and dispelled with His rays this mournful

night of the soul! Yes, He has saved me from death; He has granted me to feel that communion with Him which is eternal life. Therefore to Him who hath done such great things for me be thanks and praise for ever! . . . My heart is light and full of gladness; this little earthly life looks bright before me—brighter yet the heavenly life beyond it. Thither my path leads, and it is not far.'

This serene and active faith could not, in the nature of things, fail to manifest itself in Amelia's whole life, actions, and conversation; and while it won for her the approval and increased confidence of some, to excite the disapprobation and suspicion of others: thus there were parents who doubted whether it were advisable to leave their children's instruction in her hands, considering the more decided position she had now taken up. At this time, too, many minds were greatly excited by a dispute which had arisen in the French Calvinistic Church at Hamburg; the young, fiery, gifted preacher, Merle d'Aubigné, whom the congregation had called from Geneva, was preaching distinctively Christian doctrine with great zeal and earnestness, and thus aroused opposition from the rationalistic party, to which in the end he was obliged to yield. From his residence in her Aunt Sieveking's house, Amelia had learnt to know and esteem him, and naturally took up his cause with much ardour. Many of her letters written about this time are full of this subject. She defends him, as she does

herself, from the unjust charge of religious enthusiasm or pietistic morbidness, which is so often urged by the ignorant as well as the conscious opponents of Christianity against the life of faith, and proceeds oftener, perhaps, from misconception than from a wrong intention. Still, where Christ is formed in the heart and life of any one, offences will surely come, and Amelia could not wholly escape this conflict; but she never sought it, or thoughtlessly aroused it.

About this time she writes to Minna Hösch:—

‘Time-consuming visits, that are made only to get them done, and leave the heart and mind alike empty, I try more and more to avoid. My hours of solitude are far too dear to me to be given away for nothing, and less than nothing. But do not fear that I should thus become gloomy and misanthropic. I assure you that it is seldom that a gloomy thought passes through my mind; and though I certainly find less pleasure now in mere aimless intercourse with others, yet my fellow-creatures are not less dear to me—nay, I enter their circles with more affection and enjoyment when I have spent a previous interval alone with my God. How much does my dearly-loved circle of children, both elder and younger, add to my happiness! I feel so thoroughly and heartily at home among them. And their society seems to me the best protection against a too predominant seriousness, which I would avoid, not for my own sake—for I find it very good for me—but

for the sake of others who are easily repelled by too strict an outward appearance. I can still be heartily amused by children's fun, and take an active part in it myself.'

Her brother and sister had consulted her on the kind of religious instruction which should be given to little children, and she answers :—

'In general, whatever is strictly systematic in religious instruction I do not like for children. I think the living spirit is very apt to die out in hard and narrowing forms. For the rest, I would advise you to give your little one as much of the heavenly manna as it desires. When in an unspoilt child the love of higher things is once awakened, its own desire for further knowledge furnishes, in my opinion, a tolerably correct standard of its wants. Least of all need you fear that a ready satisfaction of its desire should lead to satiety, and blunt the keenness of the religious feeling. No ; that blessed hunger and thirst after righteousness (after moral perfection, of which faith is at once the foundation and the summit,) only gathers fresh strength from its gratification. Earthly desire drives us restlessly from one object to another, because it ever seeks and never finds ; heavenly desire finds, and finds full satisfaction ; but amidst the fullness of pure enjoyment, there is disclosed to its view other and yet deeper good, and it drinks afresh and yet never exhausts, for the source from which it receives grace for grace is of unfathomable depth. Happy the child that is early led to this source !

Like all other life, the child's life also is raised and glorified by faith. And let no one tell me that the objects of faith are too high and too far off for the child. Ah! no; it is not our ignorance but our wickedness that separates us from God; and in so far as the childish mind is yet freer from sin, in so far the Highest lies nearer to it and is embraced by it with a warmer love, than in the case of wiser people who hold a demonstration of the faith for the faith itself. The germ of faith is latent in every child's soul, but beside it lies the poisonous seed of sin. Is it not senseless to suffer a field which is meant to bear one day a noble crop, to be overgrown first with every kind of weed? Yet such is the course of parents who allow self-will and evil desires to strike firm root, before they think of implanting the seed of the word of God.

‘But besides the child's own wish, the greater or lesser power of the awakening evil principle also gives a measure of its wants. If this principle shows itself early and strong—as selfishness, for instance—the contrary principle of faith must be the more heedfully roused and cherished. When nature is once tamed, and grace has become mighty, this same energy which at first served the poor miserable Self will turn to a noble purpose, lay hold on God and Christ, and take the kingdom of heaven by storm. But I should like to see how those wise pedagogues who expunge entirely the old-fashioned faith in Christ from their theories of instruction, can

master that root-evil of human nature — selfishness. Probably they may be able to clothe self-love in a decent mantle, so that it may appear with decorum in society, but they will have to give up the hope of transforming its very nature. My deepest conviction is, that all education which has not for its primary object that faith should become the very life of its life to a child, is but a miserable patchwork and makeshift.

‘But as the body is nourished only by that which can be taken up into its flesh and blood, so the spirit, too, only grows by that which it inwardly assimilates. A mere reception by the memory is far from being enough, the noblest and deepest powers of the soul are needed here. These powers are, to a great extent at least, still slumbering in the child’s soul, and thus do not show themselves actively. Before giving the child a creed, therefore, you must awaken the faculties which are to receive it. Even then you will find much that will remain foreign to the child’s soul, as yet untried by temptation, however you may try to render it comprehensible to him. There are mysteries in Christianity unfathomable even to the sharpest understanding and the most believing heart, but these may gaze into them without growing dizzy; they recognise in such depths the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of God, and burn with desire to be led farther into them by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and love. But the child’s weak eyes could hardly gaze

into these abysses without a sort of frightened awe, which might easily estrange it from the true, divinely serene and cheerful spirit of faith. Whoever leaves all this unconsidered, and presses on the child's mind a number of religious doctrines, without reflecting whether they can form part of the child's thoughts and life, whether they can be assimilated, will almost inevitably find that he has called up disgust and weariness when he meant to awaken a love for holy things. Does not Scripture itself teach us to treat the weak as weak, and give milk to babes? This analogy between physical and spiritual food holds good, to my mind, in yet another point. With young children it is thought better to give them food often and in small quantities, rather than seldom and much; and the same caution should be observed in their spiritual instruction. They should not be wearied by long lectures, which accustom them to listen to holy things with but half attention. To lead their minds frequently, if but with a word, to the one thing needful, is, I think, the best mode of teaching a child to feel that, which is the central point of every Christian heart, to be the most important concern of its own life. . . . Bible stories, told in the spirit, and, as nearly as possible, in the words of the Bible, are, I think, the best means of arresting the attention of quite young children. No one who has not tried it would believe how exactly these childlike narratives from the pri-

meval world, these mighty revelations of the wonder-working God, these divine traits from the life of the Son of God and Man, are fitted to the uncorrupted childish mind. Of course, a practical application must not be lacking. Next to these, I think good hymns are most adapted to awaken the religious feelings of the child.' .

CHAPTER XII.

1822-1823.

PUBLICATION OF HER FIRST BOOK — ON ENTHUSIASM —
 CONSEQUENCES OF PUBLICITY, AND REFLECTIONS UPON IT
 —DEATH OF MADAME W.— VISIT OF HER SISTER-IN-LAW
 FROM ENGLAND — THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

IN this same letter of the 21st of March, Amelia informs her brother of something which had long been occupying her thoughts. She says:—

‘Now I must tell you something which I doubt not will astonish you not a little. What will you think of your sister allowing herself to appear in print? Believe me, I have felt all the causes for hesitation involved in such a step, and have asked the advice of an intelligent and thoroughly honest man. Pastor Mützenbecher has carefully examined my work, and in his simple cordial manner has warmly encouraged me to publish it. And now I think I may venture to follow his counsel without fear; for see, dear Edward, both when I put this question to him, and afterwards, I earnestly prayed that God would reveal to me, through the lips of His faithful servant, whether my

undertaking was pleasing to Him or not, and I felt an inward certainty that I was heard. Before I opened M.'s answer, I again proved my own heart, and found that it could acquiesce in the Divine will in whichever direction it might be manifested. This peace *before* the decision makes me now feel tranquil and cheerful after it. Not that I will affirm that I feel myself utterly single-minded in every respect, or secure against all danger of wish for praise; but I hope with confidence for the purifying grace of God, and that since I am conscious that I have not entered this path from mere inclination, but am really, to the best of my conviction, following the voice of my God, He will guide and uphold me in it, and not suffer me to be quite overcome by its dangers. . . . The title of my little work is 'Meditations on Certain Passages of the Holy Scriptures.' These Meditations are not spread over a whole passage at once, nor attached to single verses taken separately from each other, but they form a running commentary on each verse of a passage complete in itself. This method was suggested to me by the great Francke's excellent Essay on the best manner of reading the Holy Scriptures, prefixed to the Halle edition of the Bible, in which all Christians are recommended to follow this plan of accompanying each verse with prayer and meditation. . . . And now, I have nothing more to add on this subject than the entreaty that you will not expect too much from my work. If

I were to say that I did not think it good myself, I should not keep to the strict truth; but it is not the less possible that you may not find anything in it to suit you. Do not forget that it is intended primarily for beginners in the faith—for those who still need a guide in their reading of the Bible. To such, I think, my little book may probably be of some use. But to those who understand how to draw for themselves from the depths of Holy Writ, all that I have written may appear very superfluous.’

We shall return at a later period to Amelia’s books, the origin and objects of which she herself describes in her letters, and here give only a few extracts in which she refutes various misconceptions of her meaning and aim. Thus she writes to her brother:—

‘I am no fonder of romantic enthusiasm than you are; the question is, what are we to include under the term? It is so vague in itself, and is used for such different things, that the first thing in speaking of it always should be to come to an understanding on this point. I see romantic enthusiasm in those cases where feeling *alone* is called into play, to the exclusion of the other faculties of the mind; where the person dallies with mere vague emotions, instead of bidding them pass into action—instead of giving them a practical influence on both our deeds and omissions. I have brought my faith to this touchstone, and think I have a right to say that the reproach of enthusiasm does not

apply to it. Whatever power and energy for good I possess, I owe to my faith; and if, unhappily, my life is but barren in good deeds, this must be ascribed, not to the deficiencies of my religious belief, but rather to my want of faithfulness in living up to it. An idle self-surrender to vague emotion is not naturally a temptation to me, as there is no doubt that in my disposition the understanding is predominant over feeling and imagination. And I am still further secured against this danger by the instruction I give my little ones. I start from the conviction that religion does not address itself to one faculty, but to the whole nature of man; that a judicious cultivation of the understanding is a help, not a hindrance, to faith; that without a certain clearness of conception, no true, deep, powerful feeling is possible; and that we must not first try to excite this feeling in order to build upon it, but must leave it to develop itself as the necessary consequence of a living knowledge. Guided by these principles, my great endeavour is to open my children's minds to understand the Bible, and to penetrate them with its holy truths, confidently hoping that the rest will spontaneously unfold itself in their souls afterwards. And where I sometimes perceive with joy the signs of real emotion, I scarcely show that I have observed it, lest they should fancy that feeling alone had something meritorious in itself.'

Writing to Minna Hösch of a young girl who had altered much to her advantage, she says:—

‘And what is it that has done away with those distorted views and feelings that a misdirected education had implanted? What is it that has awakened in her an earnest endeavour, not to be always chattering about her faults and her duties, as she used to do, but to overcome the one and fulfil the other? What else than that living faith in Christ, without which no new birth is possible for man? And the chief instrument whom God employed for this purpose was our excellent Merle D’Aubigné, whom the unbelievers have now driven away on the pretext that he was so taken up with preaching faith, that he forgot good works. That is the unfortunate mistake of our day: faithful Christians are accused of undervaluing good works in general, whereas they do but reject such as spring from self-love rather than love to God, the only motive which can lend any value to human actions.’

Amelia’s book was read in many circles, and met with very different receptions; and at a later period she tells her pupils:—

‘Although the book came out anonymously, the name of the author was soon whispered about, and I was obliged to bear consequences that I had not foreseen. It opened the eyes of many parents for the first time to my supposed mysticism; and though most of them allowed their children to remain with me until

their confirmation, hoping after that soon to see them forsake my serious errors, yet they withdrew them from me when it was over ; and in none of my classes have I gone through so many unpleasant experiences as in that. One young girl even declared to me afterwards, in writing, that she renounced my errors ; she was one of those who had made least progress, and I never heard any more of her. On the other hand, this class produced my dear Caroline Fliedner. In my first set, all my children had gradually and almost unconsciously come to a true faith in Christ ; in my second, a more marked distinction made itself felt. Such were the external results of the publication of my work ; but for myself I dreaded far more its internal consequences—the possible injury to my soul ; but the Lord saved me from this danger, as with much praise I also received much censure : and I soon learnt to look on the book as something no longer belonging to myself, something foreign to me, which had ceased to be a special concern of mine.’

To Minna Hösch she writes :—

‘ Though I have many a battle with spiritual pride, I do not regret the step I have taken. It may cost me some labour and struggle, but at last I trust to come out victorious, to attain true and complete humility, to learn to look wholly away from myself, and see only the work of divine grace in the little I am able to do for the kingdom of God. Some Christian souls have

approached me more closely than before; and ah! if but vanity can be held aloof, what a wonderful help in one's inner progress is the communion of saints!'

And again:—

'That my little book from time to time brings me into contact with other kindred hearts is the sweetest blessing that it has conferred on me. On all sides I see nought but blessing from above! Would that I could offer worthier thanks!'

'For some time past,' she writes again, 'I have become a member of a society for distributing short religious treatises among the poor. They are distributed gratuitously, and are meant to make the most ignorant acquainted with the great truths of Christianity, which are here exhibited in the simplest language. But do not speak of this, as there has been much foolish gossip about it.'

About this time death had once more made a breach in Amelia's home circle. Madame W., the mother of her first pupil, and sister of Madame Brünnemann, who lived with them in the winter, had at last departed, most peacefully, after a long period of ill-health, and those who were left felt themselves the more drawn to each other. In April 1824, Amelia's sister-in-law came to Hamburg with her eldest boy, and Amelia accompanied her to Lubeck, where she made the acquaintance of Pastor Geibel and others, whose society gave her much pleasure. Her brother fetched his wife home in May, and Amelia greatly enjoyed his flying visit.

In May she writes to Minna Hösch about these visits : —

‘ Christian fellowship is in truth a very precious thing ; it needs but few words ; and when we had been together but an hour, we felt more sure of each other, I believe, than worldly hearts can ever feel, if their relation had lasted as many years as ours did minutes. If I only know of anyone how he stands towards Christ, I know also how he will stand towards me.’

And soon afterwards : —

‘ I spent Whit-Sunday not quite as I could wish, in company whose tone was not congenial to me on that day. But in such cases I often think of a beautiful saying of Pastor Geibel’s to me that last morning, “ We go abroad and take pains to find nourishment for the inward man, and do not reflect that it is to be found most abundantly where we are most obliged to deny ourselves.” ’

CHAPTER XIII.

1823.

FIRST CONCEPTION OF A PROTESTANT ORDER OF SISTERS OF MERCY — CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR HARTMANN, AND LETTERS TO HIM AND TO HER BROTHER ON THIS SUBJECT.

AMID these various experiences and labours, and all this rapid growth of mind and heart, one thought was ripening in Amelia's soul that had occupied her as early as her eighteenth year. We will here prefix what she imparted to her pupils at a later period concerning the outward and inward impressions which, as time went on, gave this thought its more definite shape. She said :—

‘It may have been about the year 1818 that I first began to reflect on the true destiny of woman, and that my own inward vocation began to grow clear to me. Campe's book, “A Father's Advice to his Daughters,” made a great impression on me at that time, and was of essential service to me, though I did not find out what it had done for me until later years. Marriage was there represented as the only proper destiny for a

girl, and something within me secretly protested against this view. In novels, too, with very rare exceptions, I found marriage held up as the highest happiness. In one of these books, certainly, the self-sacrifice of a girl was pourtrayed, who gave up her own wishes in favour of a sister; but as she afterwards took up her residence with the married pair, her sacrifice seemed less great and disinterested. In one other, the possibility of happiness apart from marriage was advocated. To me, however, it constantly grew clearer that our bounteous God could not have given His blessing to one state of life alone, but must have a blessing for each, even for that so despised class of old maids. But when I looked round on this class, such as it then was, I must own I understood why it was often a theme for ridicule; yet for this very reason I felt the stronger impulse to do something towards raising it in the general esteem. I learnt to know that there is, in truth, an inward calling to it; and you will, I am sure, understand what I mean when I speak of this to you.

‘Certainly, the individual old maids whom I knew at that time were not calculated to inspire me with much preference or respect for a single life. There was old Miss A., who, though very poor, would have everything *à quatre épingles*; she kept no servant, and spent nearly all her day in the preparation of her own little meals, which seemed to me a great and by no means enviable waste of time. Miss W. was a great talker,

but cared for no subject in which she herself was not concerned, and represented everything that happened to her, even the most trivial circumstance, as something wonderful and extraordinary. Two others, who lived with an old lady of rank, appeared to be merely the echo of all her opinions. One indeed I knew who spent her life in a more useful manner. Miss I. did much good, and founded at a later period a sort of free school for girls who were going into service; but she was one of a thousand.

‘Now about this time I read a little French book, in which there was much said of the Sisters of Charity among the Roman Catholics, and it awakened in me a strong desire to found such a sisterhood in the Protestant Church. From my adopted mother I heard that she, too, in her youth had been much occupied with similar thoughts on the employment of young women, and she gave me a paper to read which she had once written on the subject. It described the efforts of a young girl who, feeling herself in want of employment, sought and found the opportunity of doing much good through a neighbouring parsonage. Soon afterwards I made the acquaintance of Professor Hartmann—a man of highly cultivated mind and very ardent disposition. At our very first meeting, when he took me into dinner, he advised me to enlarge my sphere of action; and when I, misunderstanding him, referred what he said to my school, he added that I must found a charitable

sisterhood. This was the word I wanted, and it made a wonderful impression on me that a perfect stranger should thus have uttered my most secret thoughts; it seemed to give them a more definite form and life.'

And this idea was no mere play of the imagination, the pastime of idle hours, or the dream of an ambitious heart longing to do some great and surprising thing: some of this there might have been at first, in her very young days; but what now filled her whole soul with earnest, burning zeal, we must acknowledge to have been a calling and commission from above. He who receives such must follow it, and woe unto him if he do not! In him the sacred flame once kindled becomes the consuming fire.

She writes to Professor Hartmann immediately after this first conversation: —

April 19, 1823.

'I cannot tell you, my dear Sir, with what joyful surprise I received the earnest admonition you gave me last Sunday. The spark you threw into my soul has kindled to a flame thoughts and wishes that have long been silently smouldering there. Yes, ever since my eighteenth year, the foundation of an Order of Sisters of Mercy in the Protestant Church has hovered before my mind as the most beautiful ideal of my life, towards which I have been impelled with sometimes more, sometimes less, of eager longing. More than once the noble conception of what it might become has risen

before me with such startling vividness that, lost in contemplation, I have forgotten my sleep : then again, I own, there have been long periods when it has been kept in the background by the thronging affairs of the present moment ; but it has never been wholly obscured, nothing could expel it from the inmost sanctuary of my soul. I seldom spoke of my thought, and when I did, it was stared at for a moment as the work of an excited imagination, which might furnish the amusement of a few minutes, but was good for nothing more. And yet I am so deeply conscious that it *is* more ; that it is not the product of my imagination only, but of my whole mind and heart ; that it cannot delude me, for its origin is of heaven, not of earth. Now you can picture to yourself how indescribably grateful your words were to me. You were the first, who not merely could appreciate the object of my aspirations, but yourself spontaneously urged it on my attention. And what unusual pleasure it gave me to find in the course of our conversation that your ideas of the whole matter had sprung up and unfolded themselves in almost exactly the same manner as my own ! Your last words to me were to bid me not lose sight of the project. I will indeed keep it in mind. On this point I think no instability of purpose need be feared from me : what has become part of my mind itself I cannot so easily let go again. But I confess, that for the present I have nothing to give beyond this assurance ; but I trust

you will be satisfied with this for a time ; do not urge me to put my hand to the work at present. Believe me, the natural vivacity and impatience of my character inclines me in all my undertakings to over-haste. If, therefore, I am in no hurry to carry into execution the dearest of my schemes, the delay arises only from a most vivid conviction of its necessity, founded on my knowledge of myself. A good work requires a fitting instrument, and that I am not as yet. You said lately, and doubtless with deep truth, that only a certain sacred fire of enthusiasm could successfully carry out such an undertaking. Now there glows indeed in me something to which I could fain give this name, but the pure flame from heaven is as yet mingled with earthly fire, the love of God with the evil, evil love of self. Ah no ! how should I be as yet fit to lead, who have not learnt to obey ? How should I, in whom there is yet so much harshness, so much untamed self-will, so strong a spirit of contradiction, dare to take up a work that requires so much humility, self-renunciation, disinterested love ? No, believe me, it would be laying profane hands on holy things if I were to begin as I am now : and you cannot and ought not to contradict me on this point, as you cannot know me as well as I know myself.

‘But what I put aside for the moment I do not renounce for ever, no, it remains my dearest hope that one day I may venture with confidence to say,—it is permitted ! And why should I not hope ? Through

the grace of God I am what I am; wherefore should it not accomplish yet greater wonders in me? The whole of our Christian life is a constant growth. If the Holy Spirit has suffered the lovely dawn of faith to break upon the dark night of doubt within me, if He has been able to kindle any spark of love to God in a heart grown so cold and rigid in self-love, wherefore should He not be able to strengthen this faith and love, to give more light and warmth? Listen—I will look on these next coming years of my life as a school in which I am training for my future calling. Something higher than human art and science must be learnt here; but my Master is higher than the wisest of the wise on earth. Oh that He may but find in me a teachable disciple! Now, at this moment, my heart does indeed vow to Him complete, willing submission; but how will it be the next hour? I may well fear my own weakness; but my fear is still outweighed by my trust in the might of Divine love, which has placed my goal before me in such a radiant light that it seems impossible that I should wholly miss my way.

‘But if I am tempted to think the way too long—if my impatience longs to see the time of probation shortened—then I will think of my Saviour, who did not deem it unworthy of Him to live thirty years unknown in silent obscurity, ere He entered on His divine office of Teacher and Mediator. There seems to me a deep lesson here for all those who press forward

with vain and restless endeavour to accomplish some great deed, before the true power has matured itself within, or the proper time and hour has arrived. All eager anxious restlessness is alien, as I believe, to the activity of the truly godly man. Such an one waits in silence for a token from his Lord: he will not raise a finger but at His bidding; when He calls him he is ready, and quietly sets himself to the appointed daily task; his work is noiseless and yet mighty, for it is done in the power of the Lord. So let me calmly await the summons of my God. It will be granted me, I doubt not, when I myself have become what I ought to be; when my nature has been purified from the dross of self-love; when my faith has become stronger, my love for the brethren more self-forgetful, my humility deeper and truer; when I have learnt thoroughly with my whole heart to yield my own will to God's will;—then, then I may hope that my heavenly Father will satisfy the longing of His child's soul, the longing that He Himself has awakened there. Then—Oh how my heart bounds with joy at this prospect!—then He will place me in the sphere I desire, be it by suffering my outward circumstances to assume another shape, be it by giving me an inward certainty that I am permitted to leave my present position for the sake of my higher vocation. Thus do I picture to myself the plan of my God: but it may be that I am mistaken; it may be that my thoughts in this matter are not His thoughts; it

may be that I am *not* destined to reach the goal of my endeavours in this span of Time; it may be that He will call me home from the scene of all earthly labours ere I have begun the part which I have believed myself intended to fill. Well, my work seems fair to me and lies very close to my heart, but to go home to our Father is sweeter still, and He who calls me will know how to loosen all earthly ties so as to give me a joyful departure, like that granted to my early-lost Gustavus, who in the beginning of a splendid career, just opening on him with the brightest prospects, and amid the full consciousness of youthful vigour, yet found in the solemn hour of death that he could turn away his eyes from all these little earthly schemes, because the glories of heaven were already dawning on his inner vision. The Lord's will be done, whether for life or death, whether in the accomplishment or disappointment of my plans! If the success I hope for does not crown my efforts, still they will not have been wholly unblessed; and our merciful God regards even an unfulfilled purpose with favour. For the rest, this reference to death is no definite presentiment on my part, but the contingency lies so close at hand at all times, that I do not see how one can make any plans of importance without including it in one's calculations. But if it should really come to pass that my life-journey should find an early close before my project is ripe for execution, then, dear Professor, in

case you survive me, I leave the care of this great work as a precious legacy to you. Do not think it is frustrated because the great Master has broken an instrument which He had found unserviceable. He possesses others and better ones; it is only necessary to seek them out and set them to work. I will make an arrangement that, in case of my death, my little property, which amounts to about 18,000 * marks, shall be devoted wholly or for the most part to the object which was the most sacred in life to me. Then do you look around among my sisters to find one who has strength and will and love enough in her, to build upon the foundation I have laid.

‘Most precious, dear friend, is the Communion of Saints; without it, whence could I have drawn courage to speak out so freely to you, whom personally I scarcely know? But since I know that one thing of you, that you are a true disciple of the same loving Master to whom I also would so fain do some good service, I know not why I should be timid and reserved towards you; I can be sure that you will not misunderstand me, or make any wrong use of my frankness. However different our paths may be, our goal is the same, and the same our Leader thitherwards.

‘I do not expect any answer to this letter, or at most only two lines to acknowledge its receipt. It does not need more; and I know you are so overwhelmed with

* About 1,050*l*.

business that every unnecessary demand on your time is a sort of robbery of your wife and children. But if you do answer me, I trust I may rely on your doing so in that spirit of Christian earnestness which abstains from all exaggerated praise, because it knows what a dangerous pitfall lies hidden there for the weakness of its brother. Do not forget that too flattering a confidence in me, which at present at any rate I do not deserve, may easily strengthen the worst enemy of our good cause in my heart—self-love. If only this letter may not deceive you, may not lead you to think me more penetrated and glowing with sacred ardour than I truly am! Remember that I have written it in tranquil solitude, where other passions have no sway; there my heart may indeed be filled with the thought of the one thing needful: but when I return to the world, how easily is it divided and drawn away by the manifold interests around me!’

A letter to her brother in October 1823 treats of the same subject, and for the first time lays before him what had been so long cherished in the writer’s most secret thoughts. The most important passages are those which follow:—

‘Do not treat my beautiful ideal as the offspring of mere fancy, born one hour to be forgotten the next, and never destined to be realised in actual life. Fancy was never a ruling faculty with me, and I know most deeply that this idea belongs to my highest self, and is rooted in my inmost heart. And could a mere fancy last ten

years? Yes, it is as long as that—ever since I was eighteen—that this scheme has hovered before my mind's eye, sometimes with such distinctness as to rob me of my nightly rest, sometimes indeed for weeks or months thrown into the background by more pressing interests, but never forgotten.' . . . She now speaks of her former day-dreams of possible happiness in love and marriage, and the inward voice that always combated them at the time, and then narrates her meeting and conversation with Professor Hartmann, adding —

'These startling words flashed through me like an electric shock. I felt as one who, awakening from a dream of happiness, finds it suddenly standing before him in very deed as a reality. Not that my beloved ideal had ever seemed to me a dream—no, I had always believed with more or less confidence that it must one day step forth into real life, but that this very hour seemed to me at last to have come. Hartmann's words were like a sign from heaven to me saying, "Now hast thou authority from above to put thy hand to the work." . . . Since then I have passed many hours of great enjoyment with my newly-won friend and his wife. At times we get upon my favourite scheme, but not often, and when we do I generally soon break off the subject myself, lest my longing should overpower me before the time. For, alas! I feel very clearly that the time for beginning the execution of my project is not yet come. And when will it come? I

hear you ask. I know not; for this I must await some clearer sign from my God. And is it allowable for you to think of it at all, you perhaps ask further, so long as your good Mother lives? I have weighed this question much and anxiously, and I think I may answer with a good conscience—yes, I may think of it. Do you blame the priest who leaves his aged mother to obey the call of some distant congregation? Do you condemn the daughter who forsakes her parents' house, though she may be an only child, to unite herself to the man whom she loves, and who may perhaps carry her to a distant country? If not, then I think you have said what justifies me. Or would you prove to me that the vocation which floats before my mind is less holy, less beautiful, than that of the priest or the wife? No, you will scarcely succeed if you attempt this: it stands before me in too noble and solemn an aspect. Or should I never be permitted to think of the highest object of my life apart from the death of my beloved Mother? Must its attainment be possible to me only when that heart shall have ceased to beat, which of all human hearts beats most tenderly for me now? Have I not her blessing on my undertaking, a blessing not wrung from her by importunate entreaty on my part—it was only that I neither was able nor willing to hide from her my secret desire, and her truly maternal love prizes her child's happiness above her own. But what convinces me that I am justified in accepting such a sacrifice from

her is, above all, the certainty that in this matter I am not following the will of flesh and blood, but rather a call of the Holy Spirit. For my natural man this project has in truth few charms; nay, deeply as I long for its fulfilment at times, I will not conceal from you that I have hours of weakness, in which the contemplation of the many sacrifices and renunciations that it must entail fills me with such dread that I am tempted to cry like Moses, at his first call, "Lord, send whom Thou wilt, only not me." But then if I try to put the whole matter out of my mind, the same happens to me as of old to the prophet Jeremiah. The word of the Lord had become a derision and reproach to him daily; then he said (Jer. xx. 9), "I will not make mention of the Lord nor speak any more in His name; but His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

'But as yet I feel myself an unworthy instrument, not ripe for the carrying out of my beautiful scheme. How much is yet wanting in me! How much hardness—how much pride, which dreams that it can command ere it has learnt to obey—how much more or less disguised self-love! And should I, as I am now, dare to lay hands on a work that requires so much love, so much self-renunciation, so much humility? No, never; I should profane the Holy Place. At times I fancy that things would go better if I first entered some con-

secrated community, if I might but withdraw completely from that world which lays so many snares for my weak heart. But I soon perceive the vain delusion of this notion—perceive that it must be possible to attain holiness in the world as well as out of it, and that there is something suspicious in the holiness which will not stand this test. So long as I am not a Sister of Mercy outside a community, how should I be fit to found such a community? . . . But when again I reflect how much the Divine grace has already wrought in me, and how it is doubtless a greater thing to awaken the first sparks of life in one wholly dead than to strengthen the vital energy where it once exists, and how the Christian life is always a process of growth, and most precious on this very account—then I can hope once more, and accept with joyful confidence the desire which the Lord has already awakened in my heart as a pledge of what His future purpose for me may be.’ She then develops her ideas of the shape that such a body might possibly assume in the Protestant Church, and of the higher degree of freedom required in it, by virtue of which the life-long vows, for instance, must disappear; weighs the difficulties to be encountered, and continues: ‘It is a joyful belief to me that the hour is no longer far distant when our Lord will adorn His Protestant Church also with such a communion of charity instituted in His name. If it does not sound arrogant in my mouth to speak of signs of the times,

I would say that much seems to me to point in this direction. It can scarcely be denied that for the last ten years there has been a movement and an ardour in the kingdom of God such as had not been seen for a long period. I do not indeed overlook the vehemence of the opposition which it has called forth in the kingdom of darkness. But is not everything gained if that Divine life has been once awakened to activity? Must it not at last win the victory over the deadness of this world? But will it manifest itself only in words? Does it not urge incessantly to deeds? Yes, the kingdom of God is not in word only, but in power. . . . And is not this period, then, especially adapted to develope in our Church also that heavenly blossom which in Catholic Christendom, where there is on other sides so much mouldering decay and corruption, yet diffuses around the quickening odours of eternal life — a blossom so lovely, that even those who are not Christians may find refreshment to their souls in its contemplation, although its origin must remain inexplicable to them, since it has sprung from no common earthly seed, but from the sacred stem of the cross, which to such appears but dead wood, and yet in very truth possesses so heavenly an energy that all true spiritual life can spring from it alone?’

CHAPTER XIV.

1823—1824.

FIRST CONCEPTION OF THE FUTURE ASSOCIATION FOR THE RELIEF OF THE SICK AND POOR — ACQUAINTANCE WITH PASTOR GOSSNER; HIS INFLUENCE — INCREASE OF VOLUNTARY LABOURS FOR EDUCATION — CHANGE OF RESIDENCE.

IF it was not fated that Miss Sieveking should found a sisterhood in the manner and shape that at this time floated before her mind, she was destined at least to see it come into existence during her lifetime, and her definite presentiment on this point did not deceive her. In the sketch we are now about to give, we recognise, however, the ideal picture of those free associations of which she was actually the foundress, and which possess a living energy and a capacity for growth only when they rest on the ground which she acknowledged. The more nearly such an association approximates to its original idea, the more immediately will it derive strength and nourishment from above, and become partaker in that blessing which first called the

original thought into life as a deed. Every society for the aid of the sick and poor which does not rest on a Christian basis is abnormal; this we may learn from contemplating the image which first revealed itself in the mind of the foundress of these institutions.

She continues :—

‘No doubt, a mind wholly occupied with secular things would scarcely be attracted to my sisterhood; but how many a poor soul bears within itself the germ of the Divine life, and yet is scarcely conscious of the precious gift? it knows not how to cherish and develop it, and so it fades and perishes amid the trivial interests of every-day life to which such a soul may be surrendering itself completely. But if such an one could enter our circle of devoted sisters, she would then become aware what a fair and heavenly plant might spring from this neglected seed, and would begin to care for it more heedfully. Lifted out of the magic circle of the world, with its deluding phantasms, she would learn in this quiet sanctuary that a man is truly rich only by virtue of that portion of his life which he lives for eternity. She would learn to guard carefully the treasure which we bear about in earthen vessels, and to take thought how it might be increased. Those who have more would add to her of their store, and in the act of giving enrich themselves. And thus, dear friends—suffer me to rejoice in this prospect—thus many a life that had begun to grow dry and empty

because the springs of earthly affection had failed, would draw fresh powers from the exhaustless well of Heavenly Love. Once that life was poor and sorely oppressed, narrowed and misunderstood, now it would become rich, and rise to free activity, and a quiet dignity to which not even the worldling could refuse his secret reverence, though outwardly he might at first visit it with contempt. Ah, tell me—must not such a society, in which each should be ever striving to aid the other's progress in the faith that worketh by love, be a heart-gladdening sight? And let none say, that the individual, if but inspired with the right spirit, can accomplish equally blessed results working alone. How closely do most persons find themselves fettered by limited means, by dependence on the will of others, or if not, at least by the judgment of the world around them, and a thousand burdensome conventionalities! Believe me, in hundreds of instances we unmarried women are not permitted to do the good to which our hearts impel us, because we want the settled position which would be given us by a definite sacred calling, recognised as such by the world without. The consecrated community would be to us a protecting ægis, under whose shelter we might more courageously withstand malicious reports, and the question that makes so many timid—What will people say? Lastly, though undoubtedly the highest blessing of such a society would rest on itself, let me still direct your attention to the

precious fruits it would bear in those wider circles, into which it sends forth its members to carry help and comfort and refreshment to the poor and suffering. What feeling heart can look out into the world, and not quail at the sight of the incalculable sufferings both of body and mind under which our poor fallen humanity is groaning? And how little comparatively is done for their alleviation, and how poor is all paid perfunctory service of the sick and poor, compared to the voluntary labours of love?

‘Can, then, a society which devotes itself exclusively to such objects, be deemed superfluous and unnecessary? And must not our sex be allowed to be especially adapted for its working, as we are of more tender nature than men, and not bound by settled occupations or professions? In the primitive Christian Church this view found advocates; maids and matrons of good report were permitted to give themselves to the service of the Church, that is, to visiting the poor, nursing the sick, and teaching the female catechumens. Education—you will easily believe that I have no mind to renounce one of the greatest interests of my mental life when I enter my sisterhood, but that my scheme would embrace, in addition to what constitutes the chief work of the Roman Catholic sisterhoods, also the education of youth.

‘But the great point of all, the true life and soul of all our endeavours, must be to glorify Him who has

lived and suffered and died for us, who loved us first with surpassing love, who has thus Himself awakened the first spark of Divine love in our poor cold hearts. The love of Christ must constrain us in all that we do for our brethren, that so they too may learn to praise His holy name. We will carry the Gospel to the poor man's hut, that he, however sorely weighed down by life's burdens, may yet rejoice and sing for joy; beside sick and dying beds we will proclaim the word of eternal life, that the soul of the sad sufferer may be refreshed by the blessed hope of heaven; in the child's heart we will plant the mustard seed of faith, that it may grow into a mighty tree to give shadow amid the sultry days of trial and temptation yet to come. The prospect overpowers me, my eyes are dazzled by the boundless fields that are even now white unto harvest, rich with such overflowing harvest blessings. But where are the reapers? With tears I fall on my knees and cry, "Lord, send me into Thy harvest."

In the autumn of 1824, Miss Sieveking made the acquaintance of Pastor Gossner, a Bavarian by birth, who had been brought up in the Roman Catholic Church and become a priest, but by deep study of the Holy Scriptures had been converted to the evangelical doctrines, and had found himself obliged, in consequence, not merely to resign his office, but to leave his country. He went soon afterwards to St. Petersburg, where he preached for four years with great success,

and gathered a congregation round him, out of the various churches of that city, which was distinguished by the most remarkable zeal and enlightenment. This, however, awakened envy and hostility, and the intrigues of his opponents succeeded in persuading the Emperor that he was a dangerous man, and effecting his banishment. With a sorrowful heart he tore himself away from his beloved congregation, and went first to Berlin, then to Altona, where he lived for some months in complete retirement, with an aged female relative and a pious maid-servant, who had also been converted from Romanism by him, awaiting a summons from his God to some new sphere of activity. Amelia was introduced to him by mutual friends, and passed many precious and happy hours in his society.

She writes of him : —

‘ His own favourite thought, “ Christ in us,” so pervades his whole being, that personal intercourse with him furnishes, in truth, the best commentary on his writings. Always self-collected, his whole soul always fixed on the one thing needful, and breathing only love and gentleness, one feels in his presence as if in a sanctuary, even when he does not speak. In mixed society he says little, and often appears reserved. He dislikes mere discussion for amusement, even of spiritual things; but where he sees that a soul is really craving spiritual sustenance, no one can be more ready than he to minister to its needs. I have to thank him for open-

ing to me the meaning of many passages of Scripture ; but he has done far more for my inner life than increase my knowledge—he has taught me to feel, with the deepest shame, how faint is the spirit of Divine love in me as yet, and has fanned to a somewhat brighter flame the spark that is but too ready to die out altogether.

‘He is a man of about fifty years of age ; but never have I met any person with whom the individuality of the speaker is so entirely thrown into the background, and who at the same time so little flatters the individuality of the person addressed. . . . My acquaintance with Gossner has given a new and powerful impulse to my aspirations after what now floats before me as the future vocation of my life. He received my communications on this subject, as I expected, with approbation, even with joy that the Lord should have awakened such a thought in me, nor did he seem disinclined to believe that I might really be chosen to be the instrument of this work ; but he did not omit to add the most earnest admonitions that I should consecrate my whole soul more entirely than I have ever done yet, by prayer and love and self-surrender, unto Him without whom we can accomplish nothing, least of all a work that must inevitably meet with so many hindrances from the world without. Every word he spoke went straight to my heart, often humbling me to the ground by disclosing to me how much alloy there is in my endeavours, how much seeking my own honour as well

as the glory of God. But if my dear pastor has thus humbled my proud heart, he has not taken away my courage; no, the higher he places my goal, the more he has enkindled my zeal to strive for its attainment. The day before yesterday, in the solemn hour of parting, I knelt before him and made a vow of faithfulness to my calling, and received from him his blessing and consecration to it. Oh, if you knew what a fire often burns within me! I believe this inward glow would consume me, if my Lord did not provide that its fervour should be moderated by the daily demands of ordinary life on my fully taxed powers.

‘But do not fear that I shall be over hasty; no, it is clear to me that I must wait some years at least yet. Gossner requires it from me, and I will do it, whatever it may cost me; for you may believe me, that it is no easy thing to sit still with so mighty an impulse urging me within. But the more a fire is repressed the keener it burns; I *will* repress myself. St. Vincent de Paul, whom I have chosen for my special saint, shall be my model in this respect also. Stolberg says of him: — “He had one peculiar custom. This man, who undertook and executed such an astonishing amount of work, used to begin very slowly, slowly laid his foundations, examined long what the will of God might be; but when he was once convinced what it was, he went forward with irresistible power, and God bestowed on him results as rapid as they were fruitful.”

‘But when I shall have waited for years, and at last have attained the conviction that the moment is come, that action is permitted—then let none meet me with glances of contemptuous pity, and accuse me of being carried away by enthusiasm to neglect the duties near at hand for others at a distance to which I am not called. Or rather, if I am met with such objections—for I cannot prevent people from saying and thinking what they please—they shall not mislead me. This matter is indeed not a duty at a distance; but truly *how* near my God has brought it to me by His inward and outward Providences none can tell, nor can I put it fully into words. If it is objected to me, “the matter is not of the Lord, it is but thy own work,” I cannot indeed justify myself by any process of reasoning; I can only appeal to a mighty inward consciousness which to others will be an insufficient proof. Such a feeling cannot in its very nature be convincing to others, it is so only to ourselves; yet I think, for this very reason, a judicious mind will abstain from all depreciatory judgment on this point. And should any one attempt to make me doubt what I have felt with the greatest clearness in the holiest moments of my life, it would be difficult for him to succeed . . . Gossner has not yet been able to procure the Roman Catholic rule for me; but as Hartmann expressly desired that I should draw up my own scheme quite independently of any existing form, I have waited no longer, and by

God's help have prepared a rule of sixty-nine articles for my dear sisterhood. Gossner, to whom I have also communicated it, is satisfied with it, though he drew my attention to what I had indeed already said to myself, namely, that experience alone could determine whether and what modifications might be necessary from time to time . . . When I had completed my rule, the vision of Ezekiel came strongly into my mind (Ez. xxxvii.); try to feel with me the intense longing with which I look for the word of the Lord: "Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say unto the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these bones that they may live." Yes, when at last I may thus speak, and my word, because it is spoken in the name of the Lord, does not remain a dead word, when the breath in truth rushes down from above, when the lifegiving Spirit of God breathes a soul into this lifeless form,—then, then I shall be troubled no longer about the justification of my enterprise, its progress or its permanence. Then I can refer everyone to the words of Gamaliel:—"If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it;" and the Lord, who ever does immeasurably more than we can ask or understand, will not allow my confidence to be put to shame. But I well understand why my God suffers me to wait so long. The best workman can do nothing properly with a bad

tool, says Gossner, and therefore his first care is always to set his instrument in good order. If the axe is well-sharpened you can cut with it twice as easily. This is therefore my Saviour's present purpose with me, He will prepare me, and make me suitable for His work; and I, what then shall I do? I will be still before Him, and suffer Him to do His will. Yes, and He will accomplish it for His mercy's sake.'

Later in the same letter she says:—

'Humility appears to me to be the crown of all the Christian virtues, and therefore I strive after it, but by nature my heart is gifted with immense pride and the most aspiring ambition, and you cannot imagine what trouble this gives me, and how hard it is for me to maintain a spirit of true humility for one day, nay for one hour. One means of attaining it, doubtless, is to speak as little as may be of one's-self altogether, whether it be for good or evil. But can we quite abstain from it in letters of true friendship? I, at any rate, cannot conceive of any frank outpouring of the heart which does not bring our individual inner life into contact with that of the friend addressed.'

In December Amelia writes to Minna Hösch:—

'I find great enjoyment in teaching in the free school. That at least I am not yet tired of it, you may conclude from this, that I have lately begun something fresh of the kind; that is, I allow a number of poor children who cannot attend our free school to come to me on

Sunday afternoons, when I read them a portion from the Bible, explain it, and pray with them. Ah, you cannot imagine what a mighty pressure and longing I often feel within me to impart to other poor souls that Word of Life which so fills my own life with happiness and blessing!’

About this time Madame Brünnemann, who felt an increasing need of rest and quiet, withdrew entirely from her late husband’s business, and as this necessitated some retrenchment of her expenses, she sold her large house in the city, and hired another in another quarter of the town, which she shared with some relations, and in which Amelia had two small rooms to herself on the ground-floor. As her whole life in this period of strengthening faith and trust had received a new and higher impulse, so the same influence was apparent in the instruction which she now imparted to her children. She was eagerly reading Church History with a view to these lessons, and writes, ‘You would not believe what a fresh and beautiful significance all this wears to me, when I think that it may become the means of blessing to the souls whom our Saviour has entrusted to my charge, and such blessing I think we have a right to expect from a faithful delineation of what the Holy Ghost has wrought in the Church until the present day. I think this study is too much neglected among us, and often postponed to other researches of far less importance.’

CHAPTER XV.

1824—1826.

CLOTILDA LEAVES THE HOUSE — HOW THE DOCTRINE OF THE SINFULNESS OF HUMAN NATURE SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO CHILDREN — RULES FOR A SISTERHOOD OF NURSES — REMARKS ON THIS PROJECT — SHAKEN HEALTH, AND DIFFICULTY OF INDUCING AMELIA TO ACCEPT ASSISTANCE— AIMS AS AN AUTHOR—HER ADOPTED MOTHER'S IMPAIRED EYESIGHT.

THIS spring her beloved Clotilda left the house, to enter on a situation as governess in a noble family in Germany. Amelia, with the conscientious faithfulness which she showed in every relation of life, had made the most careful previous enquiries, and placed herself in direct communication with the family. During the following summer, Miss Sieveking went into the city from her aunt's country house every week on the Tuesday, remaining until Thursday, and going again on the Saturday, to fulfil her constantly increasing engagements as an instructress; while she was no less careful that her adopted mother should suffer no want of companionship during her absence. All her

thoughts and feelings took more and more one definite direction, and every event in life, great or small, that befell her or those whom she loved, could now serve only to confirm that faith which became ever more truly the very life of her life. At the end of April, she comforts Minna Hösch, who had lost a tried friend by death, and concludes—

‘Think that your friend has but bid you a somewhat longer farewell than usual; think that a parting awaits all earthly love, but that there is something eternal in love, which belongs of right to heaven, and is faithfully treasured up for us there.’

About this time she writes to her brother on the necessity of making the sinfulness of our human nature intelligible to children. ‘It is, in my opinion,’ she says among other things, ‘the indispensable task of an instructor to make the child comprehend the true nature of sin,—how it does not consist in this or that special outbreak of passion, but in man’s aversion to the Divine, in his separation from God,—and then to point this out to the child in his own heart. From this conviction of sin proceeds, as I believe most earnestly, all right knowledge and true appropriation of the salvation offered to us in Christ. But this task is certainly not an easy one; one chief part of the corruption of our nature, self-conceit, is a most mighty hindrance in a child’s heart, but with patience and constancy we may reach our aim in time.

We must know — and I hold this to be a most essential thing in all education—we must know how to wait for the often late-ripening fruit, without growing weary in sowing and planting. He who would pluck the fruit too soon, is apt to find it cankered. Woe to those who teach children to assume a penitential mien, to strike upon the breast and say “God be merciful to me a sinner,” without feeling true contrition of heart. Oh, how repulsive is every outward form of piety to me when the heart is wanting! . . . With my children I do so; I speak to them often, and with strong expressions, of the corruption of our nature, but I do not require them to repeat after me what I say; on the contrary, I say some day: “Tell me, do not you think this a hard saying, do not you find it hard to believe that things are as bad with you as I say? Well, it does not surprise me at all. True, searching self-knowledge is a great matter, and I cannot require it as yet from you, who have but just begun to tread the paths of grace. And I will not ask you either to take all this on *my* word alone; but search the Scriptures, search your own hearts, and I am convinced the hour will come when you will testify to me that I have not said too much.”’

‘But when I thus lament over the wretchedness of our fallen nature, I am accustomed not merely to include myself in what I say, but to lay most stress on my own state; which I can do without affectation, for in truth I am nowhere more deeply conscious of this wretchedness

than in myself. And I do this not merely in general terms, but on particular occasions; thus I seldom scold a child for any fault of consequence, without blaming myself too, for I feel most vividly that none of the souls committed to my charge can fall into sin without my having in some way or other a share in the fault. And certainly, the higher we stand in their opinion in general, the wholesomer effect will an honest voluntary humility in us have on them; at least, in my own experience, I know no better means of rousing them to an earnest striving against sin, and a conscientious search after the hidden evil of their own hearts. Yes, I may say that in this manner I have succeeded, or rather, it has pleased the Spirit of God by this means to lead some of the souls entrusted to me to a thorough knowledge of their own wickedness, and thus to true holiness. For where the former is, the latter will not be wanting. For could it be possible to behold our sins in their true form, without hating them in our deepest heart, without battling to the very death against them? No, it is impossible, impossible! But I am clearly convinced that not I, but the very Spirit of God, has wrought this work in these souls, and only made use of me as a poor instrument in its first beginnings, because some of them have far outstripped me in their progress.

‘No doubt, many persons, if they heard of what I have here laid down as my great principle in education, would conclude that my poor children must have a very

melancholy air, and show no trace of the joyousness of youth. But this is far from being the case; on the contrary, I would challenge any one to point out to me a school where there is more freedom and merriment than in mine, except when we are talking of divine things. . . .

‘For the rest, I am by no means of the opinion of those who refuse to believe in any complete conversion which has not been preceded by an almost or quite despairing agony of penitence. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Why, then, are we always so inclined to confine the mysterious work of the New Birth within certain fixed forms? What right have we to demand that every soul should pass through the same process of purification that we ourselves perhaps may have undergone? Has not the Lord a thousand means and ways, and does He not lead every soul by its own path? . . . Fairer and easier was the path by which He led me, and along which I now seek to guide my children. I cannot say, with truth, that my sins drove me to seek the Saviour; no, the Saviour first drew me by the inexpressible power of His love to His cross, and there, in the holy light that streams from Calvary, I first learnt how deep was the night of my sins, and the longer I contemplate His divine glory on the cross, the blacker does this

night appear to me. But though it has sometimes made me anxious and fearful, it has never plunged me into utter hopelessness. *I know Him who will raise me out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, and I believe that most precious Word, that "Christ has been given for our sins and raised again for our justification."*

Amelia had sent her first sketch of a rule for a Sisterhood of Mercy to her brother; he made several objections to it, as he mistakenly supposed what was a mere sketch to be intended for print in the form it then had. She corrects this mistake, and on this occasion we learn that her health had suffered a shock about this time. She writes:—‘Shall I be permitted to bring my work to its longed-for completion? This question presses on me more vividly just now than ever before. My health, usually so strong, has been a little shaken; I coughed, felt some pains in the chest, grew rather thin, and found myself at times oppressed by languor; but the Lord granted me the mercy of never once being obliged to omit my lessons. That my good mother was not quite without anxiety, that I myself accepted my state as a warning to think more earnestly than usual of the possibility of an early departure, you will understand. But this thought has not alarmed me; even the remembrance that thus my darling project must thus remain unaccomplished did not make me uneasy; if He, my Saviour, will have me in His heaven,

He will know how to complete through others what I have left behind me unfinished, if indeed it be His will that it should be carried out. . . . My firm conviction is, however, that my Saviour will come to my aid in every conflict, and lead me out at last to victory, and with this confidence I cannot deny that an *early* completion of my course often seems to me a blessing to be much desired. . . . It is indeed sweet and pleasant here on earth, but infinitely sweeter to be with Christ, and in my deepest heart I feel that this is not my home. . . . However, I can assure you that you need be under no anxiety whatever about me at present. The water of Ems, which I am now drinking, has been very beneficial to me, my cough is gone, my old strength and fresher looks are returning, and if the Lord has appointed me a longer, or even a really long life, I am very willing to live. Let Him do with me as it pleaseth Him. All that we receive from His hand is blessing, and does He not already bestow on me so rich a measure of happiness here? At last, at last, the most beautiful, most blessed hour of all must come, when we shall see Him as He is; yes, it will surely come !'

In October of this year, Amelia at last found time to send her brother a defence, and more minute explanation of the sketch of a rule for her sisterhood, which she had communicated to him six months before. The institution which she had in her mind's

eye at this time was not destined to come into being, but it cannot be without interest to consider more closely the form which it assumed in her thoughts; and we shall therefore give several passages from this letter, which bears almost the character of a treatise. She says, among other things:—

‘To settle every detail beforehand seems to me, in such a case, not merely unnecessary, but positively prejudicial. On this point, as on so many others, I recur to the example of St. Vincent de Paul, of whom Stolberg writes:—“For more than thirty years, his missionary Order had been in existence without any written rule. The wise and modest Vincent was far removed indeed from the foolish delusion of those persons who imagine that their understanding will be sufficient to comprehend and determine, at the very commencement of some great enterprise, all its future relations, to obviate all difficulties, and to draw up, without the aid of experience, a constitution, untested as yet by practical trial.” It will easily be perceived, I think, that the rule which he drew up—after he had had the practical teaching of thirty years’ experience, and when the society had become convinced of the wisdom of his guidance, and of the Divine blessing which visibly rested on his work—would be far more perfect, and more joyfully accepted by the community, than if he had set out at first with the dead letter. Such an institution as I long to found would be no lifeless machine, whose parts could

be calculated out beforehand, and put together by the skilful hand of a mechanist; it is rather an organic being that, under the Divine blessing, must develope itself from within, and assume forms of growing beauty and usefulness. It seems to me, therefore, to be sufficient, at first, if only those elements are present which are to regulate the growth of the whole, and above all, that principle of life which, wherever it manifests its activity, will of itself bring light and order into the dead masses of matter.'

Farther on, speaking of the vocation of a Christian nurse, she says:—

'Our whole nature revolts against the sight of physical suffering in its manifold, and alas! often terrible forms; and what heart not yet steeped in coarseness, and capable of more refined susceptibilities, could endure to witness such suffering day and night were it not raised by faith to that height whence all bodily suffering is seen to be a benefit, a sharp remedy for the yet far sadder sickness of the soul. When I lose this point of view, the sight of the sick person only fills me with painful feelings, excites in me a secret dislike and aversion, and I should turn away from him as soon as possible; but when I keep this view steadily before me, my aversion changes into tender compassion—yes, into compassion in the truest sense of the term, *feeling with* the sufferer; I feel in myself the same spiritual disease on account of which the Lord is visiting

the poor sufferer with such heavy strokes, and I am ready willingly to accept my share of the suffering, if so I may also partake in its healing and purifying powers. Then I seek to behold in the sufferer the heir of future glory, for which his very sufferings are a preparation. In this hope, is it not natural that my heart should burn with desire to assist the purpose of the Divine Love, and do as much as God has placed in our power, that the ore should not have been committed to the purifying furnace in vain? To prepare such helpful instruments for the Divine Purifier is, in truth, the desire which consumes my soul with its ardour. If you choose to call these instruments missionaries, I have nothing to say against it; and I myself wish that they should regard themselves as such, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ sent to proclaim to the poor and wretched the most comforting and joyful of tidings, the lovely and glorious Gospel. But your fear is, that they will forget the earthly in the heavenly part of their mission, neglect the care of the body for the care of the soul. If they did, they would take up the whole thing by the wrong end, and I should say of them, that they were not only bad sick-nurses but bad missionaries. For he who would see fruitful and blessed results from his labours in the kingdom of God, must above all things, I think, accustom himself to use all outward matters as means for the attainment of spiritual objects. He who does not give due heed to the means is

either not in earnest about the cause, or must be labouring under a strange perversion and confusion of ideas. When I speak of the Christian spirit that ought to animate the sisters, and promise myself such good effects from it on the souls of their patients, I do not mean that it should show itself only in edifying speeches, admonitions, and prayers, but that it should be manifested no less—and this is my deepest conviction—in loving care for the outward wants of the sufferers, in untiring faithfulness in watching over them, in readiness to bear the greatest privations and make the heaviest sacrifices for their sakes. And if any sister sought to separate these two portions of her work, I should say to her : Dear Sister, do not you know that the kingdom of God standeth not in words but in power ? Go and learn first what that means, “the love of Christ constraineth us ;” learn to enter into the spirit of that command, “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Learn from this that the most trivial office in the service of the poor sufferer may become a sacred function in the service of God, and that so long as you feel yourself ashamed of these offices, or think yourself above them, or discharge them with a reluctant loveless heart, all your fine speeches, though you may speak with the tongues of men and angels, are but empty phrases, and yourself no better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.’

She now proceeds to justify, and expound more

minutely, her meaning and purpose in particular parts of the sketch. All is well thought out, and has been weighed with the soberness, clearness, and reasonableness so striking in her; but to insert the whole here would lead us too far, and the letter does not admit of being given in fragments, as one portion grows naturally out of another. It was reserved for a later period of her life to furnish a practical field for that remarkable talent for organization which is already indicated by this sketch.

Touching and characteristic at once is another circumstance mentioned in this same letter. The account that Amelia herself had given of her shaken health had evidently alarmed her brother, in spite of the encouraging assurances she had added, and had led him to request her to appropriate a small sum of money from him to drives, which would spare her the long and fatiguing walks between Hamburg and Othmarschen. On such points, however, Miss Sieveking was not an easy person to deal with, and things must be very bad before she could be induced to adopt measures of this kind for her own comfort. She writes now :—‘ It was ten dollars* that I took, in order, as you wished, to pay for a carriage when I might need it. Twelve schillings (Hamburg)† I have really spent in this way, having driven part of the way one day when it was very hot and I was very tired. The rest—do not be angry with me—has been spent in

* Thirty shillings.

† One shilling English.

another manner. You see it was the midsummer quarter, there was school-money to pay for several children, and my purse happened to be very low. Now it is filled again, and if you do not like your money to have been laid out in this way, I can easily pay it back again. But I know you too well, you will not desire it,' &c. She then assures him that the physician had recommended exercise in the open air, and, moreover, she is now quite free from any derangement of health.

In December she writes to Minna Hösch:—‘Do you know that I could already appear in print a second time? I have enough by me to furnish a larger volume than I have published yet, and it shall be printed some day, but not just at present. The outcry about my enthusiastic views would become too loud, and however little I may dread this for myself, I have other considerations to bear in mind — partly on account of my mother, partly and chiefly on account of the parents of my children — which make it my duty to be silent for the present. May the Lord teach us both to be silent and to speak in His own time; both require no little wisdom, and where we do not suffer ourselves to be led by His Holy Spirit, we shall fall into more errors, both in the one and the other respect, than we can number.’

The malady in the eyes from which her venerable adopted mother was suffering had now much increased; cataract threatened her with entire blindness, and an

operation for its removal at her period of life—her seventieth year—was a doubtful and anxious measure. She was already forbidden either to read or write, and was obliged to sit in a half-darkened room, as a strong light gave her pain. She bore this trial with much patience, and Amelia writes to her brother in March 1826:—
‘Possibly the Lord may have ordained that the end of her pilgrimage should be yet afar off: perhaps she has yet a series of years to live through here in blindness and helplessness. What must we say? The will of our Father in heaven be done! If He has ordained it thus, it will be for a blessing, and as the outward man decays He will renew the inner man day by day; if He closes her outward eye, it will be only to open before the inward eye a clearer insight into eternity. The Eternal Love can never take away without giving in return, and giving something fairer and higher than has been taken.’

CHAPTER XVI.

1826.

DEATH OF TWO PUPILS; REFLECTIONS ON THIS OCCURRENCE — VIEWS ON THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS — ON THE DISSENTERS — ACQUAINTANCE WITH PROFESSOR TSCHARNER — PLEASURE IN HER VOCATION — PUBLICATION OF HER SECOND WORK ON THE APOCALYPSE — REFLECTIONS BEFORE AND AFTERWARDS — REVIEWS AND CRITICISMS.

IN the autumn of this year Amelia lost by death two of her young pupils who had been lately confirmed, and had the happiness of knowing that the conduct of both during a long period of failing health, and amid the sufferings and close of their last illness, bore testimony to the reality of their faith. Of course she frequently visited both on their sick-beds, but in the case of one she was obliged to avoid every allusion to the great crisis which she was slowly approaching, and, indeed, all conversation on serious subjects, in deference to the decided wishes of her relatives. Amelia writes afterwards to Minna Hösch:—‘Such people seem to think that the highest aim of those who are around the sick-bed should be to *amuse* the invalid by endeavouring

to direct her attention to indifferent subjects, but such amusement seems to me a pitiable makeshift. Is it not better to give her truth for falsehood; instead of fixing her gaze always on this outer world alone, which cannot in reality any longer have charms for her, to turn it rather into the depths of her own nature, and to show her there a Divine energy, the power of faith, which can raise us above all earthly pain, or at least give us strength to bear our pain with dignity and gentle composure? And on a Christian sick-bed should death be regarded as a spectre from which we would fain avert our eyes as long as possible? Where then is our faith in Christ, the conqueror of death, if it does not enable us to cry with St. Paul, "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

In a letter to her brother about this date, she expresses her thoughts on a subject which lay very near her heart, and utters an opinion, that she maintained firmly through her whole life, with reference to the final restoration of all things:—

‘It is a necessity to me, to believe in the progressive education of man after death. Yes, my faith leads me even further, it gives me the joyful and confident hope that the great Educator above will not withdraw His hand from His work until it is completed, until the whole human race presents itself before Him as *one* glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and incorruptible; nay, my daring hope

stretches beyond our own race to include even the fallen spirits, resting in unshaken trust on those words, that "God shall then be All in All" (1 Cor. xv. 28). Let this "Then," if you will, belong to the remotest future, let thousands of years, nay, let eternities go by — let the ungodly have to pass first through a thousand judgments, and all the pains of hell — yet at last, so my faith rejoices to believe, at last it must arrive. . . Nor have I drawn this belief from the writings or conversation of like-minded men; no, not from the broken cisterns of human opinion, but from the living spring have I drawn it; for it is a careful meditation on the Scriptures and their many and great promises which has led me to this firm conviction.'

Later on in the same letter she writes: —

'When with regard to some article of faith I myself can say—I have light here, all the light I need, I do not mean thereby to say to others—you must find this light sufficient also, and take good care that you do not kindle a brighter one. I believe strongly, that as in every other matter, so especially in the sphere of religious belief, the wants of different minds are the same in essence, and infinitely various in detail; and thus one mind finds itself impelled to make this point, another that, the subject of its deeper research. But when, in such research, a man keeps himself within the boundaries of a true humility, accepts the conditions laid down in Holy Scripture, and is ready to renounce

any opinion of his own invention as an error, so soon as it can be clearly proved to be contrary to the revealed Word of God; then I think such inquiries cannot be without profit and blessing for him, even though he should find in the end that his conjectures and conclusions had in a hundred instances failed to hit the mark.'

She proceeds to speak of the English Dissenters in Hamburg, and thinks that their relation to the Episcopal Church is as fire to water; she had been present occasionally at their services, and received profit from them, but there was much that repelled her, chiefly their strict Calvinistic views on Election, and a certain rigid outward formalism, as, for instance, in the observance of the Sabbath.

Perfect freedom and tolerance, combined however with great decision in her own views, were at all times an essential element of her religious faith, and thus she writes with regard to such forms:—'I am by no means so decidedly averse to these rules as many are; as far as I myself am concerned, the greater part of them would be no irksome restraint, but pleasant and welcome to me; and I think, too, that for the mass of the Christian community, a stricter Church discipline, which should offer a contrast to the almost unlimited licence that now prevails among us, would be of great advantage. But when, as certainly is the case with many members of this English congregation, external rules of conduct are made the great point, and their

strict observance is allowed to excite a pharisaic pride, and a pharisaic love of condemning those who bear the same seed only in another vessel, then the whole thing becomes odious to me, and I can as little recognise the spirit of Christ in it, as in the opposite extreme.'

Amelia came into contact with many foreigners who were making a passing or a prolonged stay in Hamburg, and towards whom she felt herself drawn by common Christian interests. Thus she became acquainted about this time with a society of Quakers, and found great pleasure in intercourse with them. She also spent a good deal of time with a Professor Tschärner of Berne, who had been imprisoned in his own country on political grounds, and finally deprived of his property and exiled; and who was now giving lectures in Hamburg on natural philosophy that were much sought after. While undergoing great hardships in prison, he had been awakened to a living Christian faith by the study of the Bible, and had experienced the most remarkable instances of direct answers to prayer, and of inward and outward leadings of Providence, which are narrated in detail by Amelia in her 'Conversations on Certain Passages of the Holy Scriptures.' She saw much of him, and spent many happy hours with the little family, which consisted of himself, his wife, and his son. In a letter to her brother, in which she mentions the extraordinary answers to prayer that Professor Tschärner had received, she adds:—

‘I have rejoiced to hear of them, because I have found in them the confirmation of one of my favourite ideas, namely, that the age of miracles ought not to be confined to the apostolic period, or even the first centuries of the Christian era, but rather continues even to our own day, and that the Lord still here and there, where He discerns the *want* and the *faith*, reveals Himself in His wonder-working power.’

In this letter she returns to her projects for the future, and says:—‘The times and seasons the Lord hath kept in His own power. Next Easter twelvemonth I look forward to dismissing the children whom I am now teaching, and that would be the period that I had at first fixed in my own mind for the beginning of my work. But if things do not shape themselves very differently from what they are now, I doubt whether I shall find courage and hopefulness enough in myself to make a commencement. To undertake any *extraordinary* work one needs an inward certainty raised above all doubt, not only that it is in truth the Lord that calls us, but that He calls us *now*. To begin such an enterprise on one’s own presumptuous decision, or even in the question of time only, to step in before the limit fixed by the Eternal Wisdom and Love that suffers all truly noble and beautiful things to ripen slowly, would bring no blessing, but plunge me, as it has done many others, into bitter trouble. To wait for our God, with silent care to watch for His leadings, to will nothing

more and nothing otherwise than He wills for us—this is to me a Christian's highest wisdom; towards this wisdom I strive.' She then explains how her dear mother's increasing helplessness, her probable loss of sight, and the diminution of her fortune, bind her more closely to her with ties that must be gently loosed, not broken by force. 'My God can loose them,' she says, 'in one way or another, but I will not prescribe aught to Him; the how or when, or whether they shall be loosed at all, I commit wholly to His hands.' She then expresses her pleasure in the children who are already promised to her for her next course of classes, and whose parents were all personal friends, or belonged to her own way of thinking, and adds: 'I cannot tell you with what delight I picture to myself my work with this new set of children, and yet the one which now surrounds me has grown very dear to me, and I wish heartily I need not yet part from it. Is not my life, in truth, over-rich? What a rare happiness do I not possess, if only in this one point of having a vocation whose daily exercise opens to me daily new sources of enjoyment; what many persons cannot find even in the hours specially devoted to pleasure and amusement, is brought home to me by my everyday work; and while others sigh beneath some imposed employment which weighs down all free mental movement and impulse, I find that mine facilitates in every way what is the great task of all our lives—the development of all the powers with which we are entrusted. Yes, I

am often forced to contemplate, with thankful wonder, the mercies of my God, who, so utterly without desert on my part, has decked my life with a thousand, thousand flowers. True, there are some thorns among them, but shall I not learn to prize the thorns also? Do I not know that they are placed there only to guard the more safely the blossom and the fruit?’

Then follows a new confession. She writes : —

‘The Second Part of my “Meditations on Certain Portions of the Holy Scriptures” is now in the press. It was finished, indeed, a long time ago, and the printing has been postponed until now only in consequence of my good mother’s fears and doubts. Now at last, however, I feel at liberty to proceed to publication, as against these doubts I may set the decided sanction of Geibel, Harms, and J. F. Von Meyer. As you, dear Edward, were better pleased with the latter half of the First Part than with the beginning, I venture to hope that you will be in the same proportion better satisfied with the Second Volume than with the First. But tell me, are you satisfied with my printing at all? My mother says, I ought first to have waited for your opinion. My dear brother, your opinion has very, very great weight with me; but will you take it amiss if I say that, in this matter, I could not concede an absolutely decisive value to it? You see, when I have laid the matter before my God in prayer, as I have done in this case; when I have weighed all the reasons for and against with calm mind in His presence, and as I

have looked up to Him an inward clearness has been given me from above; then I dare not allow myself to be decided by a mere human opinion any more. . . . Is this clinging to my own conviction pride or obstinacy? Oh, my beloved friends, I feel well enough how easily such impurities glide in, and therefore my daily prayer to God is, that He would make me humble. But to submit to the judgment of others, where our inward conviction does not go with it, I cannot regard as genuine humility; I can regard it only as unfaithfulness to ourselves, unfaithfulness to the loving voice of God, which speaks audibly enough in every soul that will but watch for it. Oh how terrible if it were not so, if we were driven to rely on man's judgment alone! What uncertainty, what wretched indecision would be the inevitable result! Where should we dare to take our stand firmly, and with a good courage?'

To Minna Hösch she writes on the same subject: —

'We must work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work. Bearing in mind this saying of our Lord's, I have resolved on the publication of my book. . . . Of course I can foresee that a fresh outcry will be raised by some about enthusiasm and spiritual pride; but let them talk and exclaim as they will, they shall not rob me of my peace of mind; nor, if there be but the smallest spark of the Divine Spirit in my book, can they quench it, but it must and will

make its way silently, in spite of all contempt, to some hearts here and there, where it will enkindle a kindred flame, or brighten the fire already burning. My only care will be to prevent any unfavourable comments from reaching my good mother, who takes them to heart much more than I do for myself; and with her present secluded mode of life, I think this will not be difficult to manage.'

Amelia had added to this second work a preface, inscribed 'In the name of Jesus Christ,' in which she enumerates the reasons which had decided her to publish it, in spite of disapprobation from some quarters, and gives at the same time a history of the gradual growth of her faith, as we have already seen it in her life. In conclusion she explains the choice of her text from the Revelation of St. John, and guards her selection of a subject from possible objections, by pointing out that her expositions are confined to the opening portion of the Apocalypse, which treats of earthly things and had always had a peculiar attraction for her; while she has not entered on the second, which leads into the future and the depths of Divine mysteries. 'In the name of Jesus Christ,' then, she fearlessly sends forth the fruit of her meditations to the world. At a later period she gives her pupils the following account of her experiences at this time:—

'After a time I could listen to judgments on my book as if they concerned the work of another, but

I never renounced the offspring of my brain, and if I had occasion I should write just the same to-day, or at most only alter some collateral points; and thus I cannot, as many do, confess that I have ever repented of what I had written, or found cause to change my opinions about it. As the views of my friends had differed beforehand on the question of my writing at all, so the reviews of my book varied much: one by Hengstenberg, in the "Evangelical Church Journal," censured, not my work only, but all authorship on the part of a woman, to whom he would not concede any right of expression in print. I could not abstain from defending this right, and accordingly despatched an epistle on the subject to Hengstenberg, which however neither appeared in the journal, nor received any other notice. At first I was somewhat offended, but afterwards I owned to myself that it really would be asking too much of the poor editors, if they were obliged to answer every letter that was sent to them. In another journal the book was greatly praised, and a few years ago I made acquaintance with the author of this praise; Mr. Göschel of Magdeburg. But I had one letter from a certain 'Candidat M.'* which was absurdly rude. He took me to task, that I, a woman, should permit myself to write on the Apocalypse: a woman should concern herself with her

* An ordained minister waiting for a charge is a 'Candidat.'—Tr.

household, and make her husband's life pleasant, &c., quite in the style of Campe's "Father's Advice to his Daughters," entirely omitting all consideration of the women who have no husbands. Of course this letter was left unanswered.'

She returns to these events in some of her subsequent letters.

CHAPTER XVII.

1826—1828.

DEATH OF LOUISA REICHARDT—MISS SIEVEKING'S METHOD OF WORK — VISIT FROM HER ENGLISH RELATIVES — JOURNEY TO LÜBECK: SOCIETY THERE — PREPARATION FOR HER THIRD COURSE OF CLASSES—VISIT TO LÜBECK—EXPRESSION OF OVERFLOWING HAPPINESS IN A LETTER TO HER BROTHER—PLEASURE IN HER NEW PUPILS—ACQUAINTANCE WITH NEANDER — PUBLICATION OF HER SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION—REFLECTIONS ON IT.

IN November of this year, Miss Sieveking lost another friend, who was very dear to her, her former singing-mistress, Louisa Reichardt. She watched by the death-bed, and writes afterwards to her brother: —

‘Blessed are those who suffer from home-sickness, for they shall be brought home. Oh, dear friends! at such a moment something stirs in my soul, that I would fain call home-sickness, and that fills my eyes, as I gaze after my departed friend, with the tears of longing desire. Yes, I long to follow her into the land of purer love and higher freedom; but my hour is not yet come; and when I look on the manifold impurities of my deceitful heart, I feel that it is not likely to come soon,

that I must have many a chastening conflict to pass through first. Courage! I will not let cowardice make me shrink. Shall we not, dearest, cease to will aught for ourselves whether to go or stay, content to leave all to Him who alone doth all things well, all whose ordinances for us are goodness and mercy.'

In February 1827, she is describing to Minna Hösch her method of getting through her labours, for at this time the preparation of her manuscript and the correction for the press of her new book had greatly increased her already numerous occupations. She says :

'Notwithstanding all this, you need not suppose that I am in a constant hurry of business. Although my engagements have now so much increased that I scarcely know how to get through them, yet I have accustomed myself to preserve a certain quietness of mind amid them all. First, I raise my thoughts to God, and ask Him as I go to my work for right judgment and strength : "Lord help me, I am Thine!" Then, when I have thus assured myself of assistance from above, I take up one thing in order after another, or if several things are of equally pressing necessity, I sometimes decide by lot which I shall attack first; next, I try to fix my whole thoughts on the one thing which lies before me as if I had nothing else to attend to. In this way I get on very well : what is done is done systematically; my mind remains clear, and does not feel oppressed by a multitude of demands on

its attention, and in the end I get through tolerably well, so that it is very rarely that anything of real consequence is left undone.'

In May of this year, her English relatives came again to Germany on a visit, and Amelia accompanied them to Lübeck for a week, where the life and the free interchange of thought among Christian friends, especially in the house of Dr. Pauli where she used to stay, always brought her great pleasure and refreshment. This time she again found peculiar gratification in her conversations with Pastor Geibel, and could not dismiss the feeling, that more frequent intercourse with him must necessarily be of the greatest assistance to her spiritual life. She writes, however: —

'But as it is not practicable, it must be better for me to be without it; perhaps his personal influence might incline me to lean too much on man, for I often feel that the Lord suffers me to stand alone, that I may accustom myself to turn immediately to Him on every occasion, and thus enter into closer fellowship with Him, the true Fountain out of which the greatest and holiest of men must draw all that renders them either great or holy.'

Minna Hösch had now seen Amelia's second work, and, as it seems, had expressed some differences of opinion, for she answers in August: —

'With regard to your remarks on my book, they are not unexpected to me, and I am very glad to find that

you know me well enough to be sure that your outspokenness would not displease me. I feel too strongly that my faith both raises me and makes me happy not to be impelled to spread it, so far as the Lord gives me strength and opportunity. But far be it from me to wish to infringe any fellow-creature's sacred right of free thought on these highest of all subjects, or perchance to condemn those who do not share all my own religious views. He who strives after truth honestly and earnestly, and walks in the truth so far as he has recognised it, must always receive my honour and esteem, even if his views should assume in many points a different form from my own.'

Meanwhile Miss Sieveking was preparing for her third course of classes with much quiet thought and enjoyment, and she writes to Minna Hösch in December :

'In thought I am already very often busied with this new little circle; I ponder over new methods, improved arrangements; I entreat my God for a new measure of His Spirit, for new wisdom and love in my new work. Ah! if you did but know the deficiencies in all I have done hitherto — I will not say, as God knows them — but even as they stand before my own judgment, so biassed by vanity, you would probably wonder that I could have courage longer to continue such an imperfect work. And, in truth, my courage would fail me, if I looked only to my own powers; but I have set my hope in the mercy of my God, and He will — this

is my glad confidence — He will at last fashion Himself a useful instrument out of this unserviceable one; and until then, I trust, this same grace will cover over the thousand defects of my labours, and repair the many faults I have committed. This confidence cheers me when I am cast down by the thought that the children may, in one way or other, have received some injury to their soul's welfare through my shortcomings. I wrestle with the Lord in prayer, that He would heal such mischiefs, that He would spare me that one sorrow to have been the cause of condemnation to any one of them, that He would suffer no single one of the souls committed to me to be lost through my sin; and, behold, sometimes I feel as if the Lord Himself spoke to me and said: "What thou hast asked shall be! thou shalt find them all, all, gathered around my throne."

In the Spring of 1828 her Lübeck friends had again cordially and pressingly invited Miss Sieveking to spend another week amongst them, a visit which was always a true rest to her. Yet she writes to her relations in England: —

‘Still I hesitated a long time whether I ought to comply with this kindly-repeated invitation. It seemed to me no small thing voluntarily to forsake the post assigned to us, if only for a week, and such a step I think should be very seriously weighed before God. Is this a formalistic scrupulousness? I know not; but I do know that it is only in proportion as I am strict

with myself in deciding on any course of action that I can carry it through cheerfully afterwards.'

However, Clotilda B—— happened just to have arrived for a lengthened visit, and could therefore supply her place with her mother; her elder scholars had been dismissed before Easter, and her new course of classes was not to begin until May. The moment seemed thus peculiarly favourable for a short absence, and Amelia allowed herself to be persuaded, and went. The conscientiousness and strictness towards herself with which she acted on this, and indeed on all occasions, small as well as great, deserve especial notice, and ought never to be lost sight of in passing judgment on any part of her conduct.

A letter addressed to her brother in England in December of this year, and written, like so many others, out of her inmost heart, contains much that is characteristic. She says:—

'When I look back on my past course, the first feeling that rushes over me is again, how much cause I have to thank my God for my whole position in life. Yes, my dear brother and sister, if all my fellow pilgrims could accurately reckon up the sum of their blessings, I believe but few would be found who could stand a comparison with me. And ought I not to proclaim this with joy? There are so many laments to be heard in this world, with cause and without, should not there sometimes resound a song of exultation? Truly the

name of the Lord may be glorified in lamentations, nay, here below is sometimes most glorified in this way of all others ; but our Father in heaven, doubtless, also has pleasure when His children rejoice before Him, and tell aloud the thousand causes for gladness that He has bestowed. But who should sing for joy if I were mute ? Think over all the rich blessings which my Saviour has showered on me ; daily hours of stillness and solitude when I can exercise myself in communion with Him ; abundance of the means of grace, by which I may obtain growing clearness in the knowledge of His word, and thus a firmer hold on the faith and trust once won through His grace ; health so unbroken that I scarcely know what physical pain or physical weariness means ; relations with so many dear friends, among whom there are not a few who, though much farther advanced in the spiritual life than I am, yet have much friendship and regard for me, and gladly give me aid in my own progress ; lastly, my daily occupation, which is to me an ever new source of pleasure. And this source is flowing now in a richer stream than ever before. I cannot tell you, in words, what a fresh vivid charm my work has acquired in this fresh circle of children. It seems to me that every one whose business it is to train childish minds for heaven, and to whom it is not mere taskwork, but a labour of love, must inevitably find his view of life growing freer, brighter, and more beautiful as it goes on. At times,

when I thus contemplate the thousandfold blessings with which my God has crowned the outward as well as the inward relations of my life, what Satan said to Job occurs to me: "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." Oh how little cause have I, or others, to think highly of a Christianity which has as yet been so little tested by trial! If now it should please the Lord to take from me all, or a great part, of that to which my heart clings beside Himself, if He were to send me sickness and loneliness, ah! and incapacity for all active work and service, should I then remain true to Him? My heart trembles at the question, yet I venture to hope it might be so, not through my own strength, but through the grace of my God, who will not suffer the work that He has begun in me to remain unfinished. Do I not know with heartfelt conviction that with all my imperfection I love my God not *only* for the sake of His gifts, but truly love *Himself*, because He has drawn near to my soul, and suffered some rays of His glory to shine into it. But *how much* admixture of alien elements my love has contained, will probably never be fully known to me until I see it in the clearer light kindled by affliction. There are moments when I

could wish for this higher proof of my love by suffering, but I should never venture to pray for it. No child is sent to the high school before he has been duly prepared in the elementary one. I would leave myself wholly in God's hands; when He sees that my strength is sufficient and the time is come, purifying trials will not be wanting.'

And in truth, the spring of this happiness, this overflowing joyfulness, was, in Amelia's case, a yet deeper one than could be supplied by satisfaction with her calling, or by a position in life that answered to her own wishes and wants. She herself, at a later period, bears testimony to this in writing to her young friends: *

'See, my dear ones, for this reason I have always chosen that beautiful saying of the Apostle, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice," as my favourite motto; and I can fearlessly call on all those among you to whom I am personally known, to say whether I have not always avoided all gloom and melancholy of thought or manner. As a guarantee that I have hit the right mark on this point, I cannot but wish to tell you what was once told to me on good authority about one of my pupils, then a girl of twelve years old,—that she had asserted with much animation her resolution to "grow up exactly like Aunt Milly," in order that she might be "just such a happy old woman." Ah dear child, thy

* Conversations on Certain Passages of Holy Scripture. 1855.

outward life has taken a very different form from mine ! Thou art now a happy wife and mother ; but is it not true that the deepest ground of thy happiness is no other than this, that the living God has become the God of thy salvation ? ’

It was by her present set of pupils that Amelia first had herself called ‘ Aunt,’ and she writes : —

‘ You cannot think how sweet this name is to me, and I believe, in fact, that I partly owe to it the more clinging and childlike love of these little ones, which makes me so very happy.’

About this time Miss Sieveking was greatly interested by a more intimate acquaintance with Neander, who had come from Berlin to Hamburg on a visit. She says in the same letter to her brother : —

‘ Neander’s whole appearance indicates a man who troubles himself little about the common concerns of life, but lives apart, as it were, in a higher world of faith and knowledge. His eye, overshadowed by its black bushy eyebrow, is almost closed, only when something interests him more vividly than usual it opens a little wider, and then his glance has both fire and intellect. In general society he would never lead the conversation ; he is monosyllabic in his replies, and speaks so low, that one must be very near him to catch what he says. Even in more familiar conversation, he seems to me no friend to superfluous speeches ; despising all rhetorical ornaments, he brings forward the

deepest thoughts in short, almost disconnected sentences, then is calmly silent, waiting for the reply, that he may discover how far he has been understood, or whether it is necessary to add further illustrations. Objections, doubts, and opinions opposed to his own he listens to with attention, even when very clumsily expressed. Many might find his manners somewhat cold and dry, but only let an opportunity arise of testifying to the love of God in Christ, and it will soon be apparent, at least to any one who is capable of such perceptions, how his whole being is pervaded by a repressed glow of heavenly ardour, which works, no doubt, but the more mightily, because in him, more than in many pious men, it is concentrated within the inner sanctuary, and is less mingled with strange fire; to me it is far more beautiful than the crackling straw of mere feeling that flames up with passing brightness, breaking out in a show of emotion and in fine sentences on every occasion. I, at any rate, felt myself wonderfully impressed when he was speaking to me on that subject (the nature of Divine inspiration) in his brief and simple manner. With all his calm composure, what depth of feeling there was in his look and tone, what a sense of unmistakeable and profoundly felt truth in every word! This, this, is truly the life of his life, I could not but say to myself; and I felt as if something of the fullness of this good spirit in him infused itself also into my mind. Altogether I must say, that the deep earnestness of his conversation,

at once so simple and unassuming, and yet so powerful to stir up other minds, has something in it peculiarly attractive to me. After his departure — though he never addressed a word of regard to me — I felt as though a gap had been made in the circle of my friends. Every one has his own gifts; precisely what I found in Neander I can find in no one of my friends here. In the spirit of the Apostle, who longed to become all things to all men, he kindly invited me to write to him whatever I wished to communicate; but even if my letter writing were a very different thing from what it is, written intercourse is after all a very inefficient substitute for actual living conversation.'

In compliance with the request of a relative, Miss Sieveking had written out and sent to her an account of her views and experiences with regard to the education of children, and a friend obtained her permission to make use of this letter in an article in the 'Evangelical Journal.' It appeared there under the title, 'Account of a Christian School in Lower Saxony,'* and under a slight veil of fiction, allowed the actual circumstances of the case to become so apparent, that the original author was easily divined. This did not quite please Amelia, and she writes: —

'I had not expected to see it in this form, and had the article been submitted to my judgment beforehand,

* Nos. 403 and 404 of the 'Evangelical Church Journal.'

I should certainly have had some objections to make, though to alter it in any way would have been a ticklish matter. However, this was not done, and now I have no right to make complaints and accusations afterwards, as I certainly did hand over my letter to my friend, for such use as he might see fit. And if I am to speak quite honestly, the affair is not so entirely unpleasant to me as many of my friends imagine. On the one hand, they give me credit for greater humility than I really possess; and on the other, I can see that they have a different view from my own on the subject of publicity in general, to which I cannot concede that extraordinary importance that is ascribed to it by many. The judgment of those individuals in whom I recognise the working of the Spirit of God, does indeed touch me closely, and here my vanity, alas! often comes into play; the judgment of the many, on the contrary, affects me in truth but very little. A number of considerations crowd upon me with regard to this subject, but I will only give you one or two. There is a Day awaiting us all, when even the most secret counsels of our hearts shall be brought to light before the assembly of all peoples and of the holy angels. Compared to this, what is any so-called publicity in Time? He who is truthful and consistent in his inward nature, has no need, I think, to shrink before any human being. Even as regards the children of God, we can

never so arrange our life as that their approbation should rest on *all* our actions; enough, if they recognise the one childlike spirit in us, and therefore approach and greet us as brethren and sisters in Christ. Their censure is very wholesome, even in cases where we cannot, in compliance with it, forsake the path once entered upon. "Let him who buildeth a tower, sit down first, and count the cost, whether he will be able to finish it:" this saying should, I think, be present to every one especially who is about to strike out a new path for himself. The cost to be counted here is, however, before all things, whether you have strength and courage to allow the most various judgments to be passed on you. He who does not feel himself strong enough for this had better, if it be within his power, quit betimes any unusual course, and return to the well-worn paths of the customary and traditional; he will thus spare himself much tormenting disquiet and perplexity. But if it is my own experience that has led me to this remark, I can, thank God, also from my own experience add another: he who has earnestly and carefully counted the cost ere he begins his enterprise, and then takes his resolution with the inward consciousness of a true vocation; he who dares whatever he is called on to dare, not in his own strength, but in sincere reliance on God's grace and in His name,—such an one may follow his own course cheerfully and

fearlessly, and preserve peace within, though thousands blame him for it; and that not merely the thoughtless crowd whom we do not respect, and who generally know not themselves what they mean and what they say, but even those whom we highly esteem and whose good opinion we greatly value.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

1828—1831.

REPLY TO A WARNING AGAINST INTERCOURSE WITH
 DISSENTERS—VISIT IN THE SPRING TO LÜBECK—VISIT OF
 HER BROTHER FROM ENGLAND AND JOURNEY TO LÜBECK
 —SHE TAKES HER NEPHEW TO RATZEBURG—CORRESPOND-
 ENCE WITH THE FREIHERR VON STEIN — OPERATION ON
 MADAME BRÜNNEMANN'S EYES — GREAT PLEASURE IN
 TEACHING.

HER brother in England had warned Amelia against too eager an intimacy with the Dissenters in Hamburg and their minister, Mr. Matthews, fearing that it might endanger the free development of her own religious faith and life.

She replies in April 1829 :—

‘Thank you for your affectionate warning ; but I believe I may quite set your mind at rest on that point. I do not believe it would be easy for any one of my Christian friends to acquire a dominant influence over me, and this for several reasons. In the first place, I never spend more than an occasional hour with them (I scarcely see M. once in five or six weeks, and then only for an hour) ; next, with all their unity on

the main point, there is great diversity of opinion among them in minor matters and in the outward form of their religious life, so that the influence of one would be to some extent counteracted by the others; and finally, I hate, from the bottom of my soul, all human authority in matters of faith, and look upon our gospel liberty as one of the most precious treasures of the Protestant Church. And this deeply-rooted love of liberty seems to me a good protection against precisely that sort of influence which you most apprehend from my connection with these dear English people, namely, that I should allow them to narrow my conceptions of Christianity too much. I can very well put up with this narrowness in others, wherever I see that within its boundaries there exists genuine and active spiritual life; but as regards myself, this limitation within narrow forms is simply impossible — my whole being revolts against it—it would be doing violence to my nature to force myself into it. Thus, I think you need not fear that I should allow them to rob me of my free views with regard to the completion of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. I do truly believe, that as I have made this doctrine the subject of very earnest thought and research, I am now efficiently equipped against all the objections with which it might be assailed. At the same time, I would never of my accord, without some special reason, enter into argument about it; and hitherto I have carefully avoided all controversy in my

conversations with M., without, I hope, any cowardly concealment of my conviction, unless you call silence, where one is not called on to express an opinion, disloyalty to the truth. For my own part, I am no friend to much argument on religious doctrines, nor to vehement controversy, although I acknowledge the necessity of it in many cases — that is, of controversy in general, not of that unholy vehemence and bitterness which are so often and easily mixed up with it. But even where a man is on his guard, I think it too frequently happens that he loses the practical enjoyment of the truth in his very disputes to maintain it; for in defending it against the objections of an antagonist, it must always be treated as something objective, while, in the practical use of it, everything depends on our appropriating it as something subjective, something that we ourselves experience, and it is this of which I should be so reluctant to lose my hold. When, therefore, I see that any one of my friends differs so widely from me on some point, that no approximation is likely to ensue from prolonged discussion, and if he is as settled in his own conviction as I am in mine, I do not readily feel myself called on to make this subject the topic of conversation between us. I would rather keep to those subjects in which we can understand each other, and, most of all, prefer to speak of that element of the Christian life in which I recognise the other to be my decided superior. Learning and teaching, to be alternately scholar and

instructor, is the great pleasure of my life, and I do not know that I could decide in which of the two I find most enjoyment. I cannot but wish, from my own experience, to recommend this method of intercourse with pious persons as calculated to promote love among the members of the body of Christ, both as individuals and as a society. At least I believe that I owe it chiefly to my observance of the rule I have laid down, that I get on so thoroughly well with people of the most opposite tendencies—assuming of course that they are one in the main point—and that I have derived manifold blessing and profit from Gossner and Geibel, Matthews and Neander; learned men and pious artisans and their wives, in whom the *life* rather than the *knowledge* of the faith is to be found; from believers who live in the world, even in the fashionable world, and from others who have chosen an almost conventual retirement.’

About her usual spring visit to her Lübeck friends, Miss Sieveking writes to her brother: ‘Any one who knows with what numerous and powerful ties I am chained to my home and my business, may guess how strong must be the magnet that has power to draw me away for a whole week. It seems to me, however, that an *occasional* holiday is no bad thing, especially where a person’s energies are fully taxed as mine are; nay, is even wholesome and beneficial, however dear and precious, however easy and light may be the yoke of our daily calling. In such hours of leisure one often attains

freer, more elevated, and more comprehensive views of life than fall to our lot amid the pressure of our daily avocations; we are refreshed in mind and body, and return with new spirit and energy to our ordinary employments.'

At Lübeck Miss Sieveking received the communion with her friends of the Calvinistic Church, and experienced in so doing the blessedness of true spiritual and Christian fellowship. Her journey to Hamburg furnishes a striking instance of her uncommon physical strength and health, which was certainly in no slight measure assisted by the force of her will. She writes to Minna Hösch in May:—

'On the Saturday in Easter week I walked with Pauli (her Lübeck friend) from Lübeck to Ratzeburg. We started at half-past two, talked almost incessantly the whole way, walked at a good quick pace, never rested for a moment, and reached the end of our journey about half-past six. At Ratzeburg I had to talk over some business of consequence with the master of the Grammar School, Rector Arndt; and as my time was very limited, I could hardly manage to drink a cup of tea during our conversation. After settling all that was necessary, I got into the post-chaise towards eight o'clock. The regular stage-coach to Hamburg was gone when I arrived, so that I was obliged to follow it in a post-chaise. About one o'clock in the night I overtook it in Hamfelde, and after taking a cup of coffee and a slice of bread and butter,

I seated myself on the stage, which was quite open, was well shaken over those bad roads, and reached Hamburg safe and sound at nine o'clock in the morning. I felt quite fresh and lively, made some visits in the forenoon, and had my usual Sunday class of poor children in the afternoon. Not till evening did I feel any weariness, and an hour's extra sleep the next morning entirely restored my powers. I must add, that I got into the post-chaise with my feet wet through, as we had come upon a marshy meadow in our walk, where the water came over my shoes. You will probably think that such exertions are taking an unwarranted liberty with my health, but I do not think so. I really *can* do without any inconvenience when others cannot, and ought the powers given me by God to be left unused? They certainly wear out more rapidly from want of employment, than from moderate exercise. No doubt I must concede, that there may be an excess of exercise, but at what point the excess begins, can only be determined by each individual for himself, according to his own feelings. As regards myself, I assure you, that I could not conscientiously do less than I do now, for not merely a certain amount of occupation, but positive hard work and as much as I can get through, is as absolutely necessary to my well-being in the ordinary course of life as my daily bread. Nor with a sufficient change of occupation can it easily lead to over-fatigue, and between whiles there are always hours of recreation, among which I reckon above all visits to my

friends. Now-a-days too I sleep more than I used to do. I found, when I did not go to bed until nearly midnight, and rose again soon after four, that an irresistible languor frequently came over me in the afternoons, and made me unfit for any active exertion. I saw therefore that such early rising really saved no time, and that it would be wiser to remain a little longer in bed.'

She writes in July to Minna Hösch : —

'The pleasantest of recreations to me at all times is intercourse with congenial friends, and it is not often that a week passes over without my spending a few hours in the evening with one or another. And I find much pleasure too in making even passing acquaintance with interesting strangers, many of whom I have the opportunity of seeing. Do you remember how shy and timid I always used to be in society? This painful feeling has quite disappeared now, and I think I could talk to a king with self-possession ! But with those whom I know to be as one with myself in that which is now the great interest of my life I quickly become intimate, and have made it a principle never to waste time in mere formalities and empty phrases ; I rather endeavour at once to get at something which may be a real gain to the mind or heart, and in this way it has often happened that I find myself deeply indebted, perhaps for both time and eternity, to persons with whom I have only passed a few fleeting hours, and whom I may never see

again on earth. And one reason among others which makes the prospect of heaven so precious to me is, that I confidently anticipate the resumption there of all these passing relations here, to our mutual and ever-growing profit and blessedness. Thus every parting brings that meeting more vividly before my eyes, and what lies there in the future is for me so closely intertwined with what is round me here and now, that I can scarcely look on any tie once formed as really broken.'

In the same letter she continues —

'Esteem, confidence, and love, especially that love which has its root in Christ, fall to my share from many quarters in far richer measure than I deserve. I respond to it as fully as I can, and am happy in this interchange of feeling. "Let every man," says St. Paul, "abide in the same calling wherein he was called. As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk." And I am well content with my calling. If I do not hold the first place in any human heart, yet in many the second or third or fourth is mine, and there is ever the one heart that may become mine with all the fullness of its love, the heart of my God; and what love is His!'

The spring of 1830 again brought Amelia the pleasure of a visit from her brother, and of spending the Easter-tide in communion with her friends at Lübeck. In August of this year she took her eldest nephew to school at Ratzeburg, and as her engagements with her classes

obliged her to go frequently into the town during the summer months, a young girl was taken into the house as companion to Madame Brünnemann, whose blindness was rapidly increasing. Her wishes and plans for the future Amelia kept silently but faithfully in her heart, and when, in the autumn of 1830, she heard through a friend that the celebrated minister of state, Freiherr von Stein, was much occupied with the thought of founding a Sisterhood of Mercy in the Protestant Church, she believed she saw in this circumstance an indication of Providence. She therefore wrote to him, and sent him some essays on the subject, and received after a time a friendly reply.

From this we take the following extract:—

‘I have but a very superficial knowledge of the various institutions of nursing sisters, whether of the Order of St. Carlo Borromeo, to which the convents in France and Lorraine belong; or that of St. Vincent de Paul, which is followed by those in Germany. But in visiting these institutions of both orders, what struck me most was the expression of inward peace, repose, self-renunciation, and pious cheerfulness on the countenances of the sisters; their quiet unobtrusive activity; their affectionate and successful treatment of the patients under their charge. There was a grievous contrast to all this in the appearance and manners of so many single middle-aged women among us—women belonging to the middle and upper ranks of life, not

compelled by circumstances to earn their own living, whose faces expressed the discontent of eager but disappointed vanity, and whose unsatisfied pretensions and want of occupation filled them with a bitter sense of the emptiness of life, rendering them unhappy in themselves and a burden to others. Naturally, too, this unfortunate condition had an injurious influence on their health. The question seemed natural, why are not institutions similar to those charitable sisterhoods to be found among the Protestant Churches? Your resolution, Madam, to found such an institution, is in the highest degree useful and praiseworthy. I would suggest, however, that you would find it very instructive to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the sisterhood at Nancy in Lorraine. . . . Such an acquaintance with the extensive institutions already existing is most desirable, and, with the present increase in the means of communication, the journey is neither difficult nor fatiguing. It would be easy to procure you letters of introduction to the Superior.'

For the present, however, none of these projects took effect, for the claims of the nearer duties of domestic life became too pressing. In November 1830, Madame Brünnemann submitted to two operations on one of her eyes, and became seriously ill in consequence. Amelia had a bed made on the floor in her mother's room, and slept or watched there for many weeks; yet she did not relinquish the daily instruction

of her children, during which hours her place in the sick-room was filled by the servant or friends; only on a few occasions was she obliged to omit her classes. The double strain on her attention and strength was however so great, that she was forced to give up for the time all intercourse with friends out of the house. Madame Brünnemann lost the sight of one eye completely, and with the other was now only able to distinguish colours. Amelia writes in May 1831, to Minna Hösch, on what she had gone through in the last few weeks:—

‘My dear mother’s state of mind under this new and heavy trial has been, on the whole, such as I could heartily rejoice in; her general mood is one of gentle silent resignation. And how stands it with myself in this respect? Ah! dear Minna, I must own I have found out how much easier it is to preach to others of the blessings of the cross than to perceive and appropriate them when it comes to be laid on oneself. No doubt I might and ought to have done so far more than I did, yet I hope I may say with truth that this period has not gone by without leaving me some blessing.’

Most refreshing to Miss Sieveking, after her long and trying winter, was the summer residence at Othmarschen. On May 22, she writes to Minna Hösch:—

‘As to the enjoyment of nature and this beautiful open country, I am limited almost entirely to our own little garden, for my mother has not strength and I

have not time for longer expeditions. But why should I not be able to take delight in the works of my God even in this narrow space, which is at any rate free from city noise and city artificialness? The God of Nature and the God of Revelation is one and the same God: I could not feel such keen delight in His presence in creation had I not learnt to know Him in the Bible; but, again, when the contemplation of His visible works has led the eye of faith up to Himself, the Invisible Maker, I return with new enjoyment to His Word, and my senses seem opened afresh to the miracles of His grace. Many persons, probably, think me less impressible by the beauties of nature than I really am; partly because I never can say much about these things, partly because such impressions are always the most vivid with me when I am quite alone, and undisturbed meditation can impart a higher consecration to the feelings stirred up within me. At those times there comes over me a feeling of peace, a softened emotion, and often a longing that does not oppress but expand the heart towards the glories awaiting us above, which words are too poor to express.' . . . Further on she says:— 'Among the many pleasures which fall to my lot in life, I must always place my labours for my children at the head. Many other pleasures have no longer the charm for me that they once had, but my vocation grows dearer to me the longer I follow it. True, it makes constantly increasing demands on my powers

and time, and I work harder, very much harder, for my present set, than I used to do formerly. Whenever anything occurs to me, which I think would render my influence on these young minds more beneficial, or my instruction more complete, I feel impelled to try it at once, without hesitating about the augmented expense of time and strength that it may entail. That with all this my method remains *most* imperfect, I feel vividly; at least in my better moments, and if, as I confess not seldom happens, vanity and self-complacency for a while conceal these numerous deficiencies from me, my faithful Heavenly Teacher takes care ere long to point them clearly out anew through humbling failures.'

CHAPTER XIX.

1831.

THE CHOLERA — MISS SIEVEKING OFFERS HER SERVICES
AS NURSE IN THE HOSPITAL—OPINIONS ON THIS STEP—
SHE ENTERS ON HER WORK.

AND now the time had arrived when Miss Sieveking felt herself summoned to take a step which, in the eyes of the world, had something *unusual* in it, and was judged by that world accordingly. The Cholera, that new terror-inspiring spectre of our age, was sweeping over Europe with ever accelerating swiftness, and as it approached Hamburg, a resolve gradually ripened in Amelia's mind which cannot shock, and indeed ought hardly to startle, any one who has followed the progress of her life and character up to this point with insight and sympathy. For those who have seen and estimated the conscientiousness which governed all her conduct, how she examined every action, small or great, before God, how little she consulted flesh and blood or her own wishes and opinions, and how evidently she had been prepared for an emergency of this kind before it arose, will not be able to help reposing full confidence in the

motives that now actuated her conduct. They will not be ready with the blame which was bestowed on this part of her life by many persons who, if they had honestly searched their own hearts, might probably have found there less courage for self-sacrifice, less power of self-control, less earnest self-scrutiny, than they could not but concede to her whom they censured. The world indeed generally blames any action which it does not comprehend, and yet instinctively feels to be contrary to its mode of thought; while it is most lenient in its judgment of all, however harmful in its consequences, that harmonises with its own spirit. But right-minded persons, who acknowledge and strive after a higher life, ought to guard against making common cause with the world; they ought above all things to take into account the character and motives of the person in question, and at least to reserve their judgment, though the step may strike them as unusual and not immediately intelligible. But the very contrary of all this generally happens, and doubtless this habit must have a deep root in human nature. What is presumed to be a wish to 'appear better than other people' is reckoned among the most unpardonable of crimes, and even the most reasonable become intolerant in their judgment of everything that they choose to include in this category. But the over-ruling Love doubtless makes use of the temptations which the misconstructions of its fellow-beings bring upon a soul as a means of discipline and

education, and in the often most painful heat of this trial the noble metal is purged of its dross, and the heart is prompted to deeds done for God's sake alone. Such was the case with Amelia Sieveking, and hence for her there sprang a peculiar reward out of this solemn experience. Concerning her resolution itself, she expresses herself at the time to Minna Hösch in her peculiarly simple manner : —

‘ As I am about to take a very serious step in life, I think it a duty to inform you of it. For the time that the cholera may prevail here, and it has distinctly appeared a week ago, I have devoted myself to hospital service. Mother, my dear good mother, has given her full consent and blessing, and my place with her will be supplied during these weeks or months by a very dear young girl. From the fears of the parents, my school would probably have had but a very small attendance. At all events it seems to me that my position is sufficiently unshackled to justify this resolution. Like everything out of the common course, this step meets with very differing judgments, and while some certainly think more of it than it really deserves, many blame and some despise it. But for this I was prepared, and in such cases, if I once feel clear in my own mind before God, these things cannot make me doubt my decision. I see in them only the chastening grace of my Saviour, who thus prepares me an antidote against the whispers of self-love, which is but too ready to set an over-high

value on one's own deeds. I have not the slightest fear of infection ; and as far as this danger is concerned I can enter the hospital as calmly as my school-room. This absence of all dread is unanimously said by the physicians to be the best preservative against illness, and hence nurses, comparatively speaking, very rarely die from infection. So you see there is no need for you to feel any painful anxiety on my account. Of course I cannot deny the *possibility* that the Lord may summon me from this hospital service here to His service in heaven ; but, dear Minna, would not that in itself be a certain sign that I had lived *enough* on earth ? and do you not believe that if my God thus called me to death He would also prepare me for it, and that through my Saviour's grace it would be only the beginning of a higher life ? Yes, I stand fast here : if we live we live unto the Lord, and if we die we die unto the Lord : whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's ; and with this certainty the thought of death in the hospital has no power to shake me.'

That Miss Sieveking saw in this voice within at such a time the long-expected token from above that the moment had come when she might put her hand to the work, and believed herself to be taking the first step towards the establishment of her Sisterhood of Mercy, needs hardly to be said. She inserted in a journal, the 'Bergdorf Messenger,' an appeal to other Christian persons to offer themselves with her for this pious office,

but her letter found no response, or at least no audible one, for no one else came forward. Amelia meanwhile put her own services at the disposal of the Board of the lately-formed Cholera Hospital of St. Eric on the Holländisch Brook in Hamburg (there was a second in the suburb of St. Paul), and was summoned when the first female patient was brought in, on the 13th of October, 1831. She packed up her things and took leave of her nearest friends and her beloved mother, who at first had felt little dread of the disease, but now, disturbed by the suggestions of others, was almost repenting the consent she had given. This naturally rendered the parting much harder to both; but Amelia had no longer the power or the right to draw back, and confident in a still higher sanction, she went to her work with a composed mind and firm courage.

The letters which she wrote from the hospital to her friends were first fumigated and then copied out by other hands, and her isolation from the outward world during the earlier part of her stay was complete. The most graphic picture of her life and labours in the hospital, during the eight weeks she spent there, is given in these letters to her mother, written hurriedly amid a thousand interruptions, and with a simplicity and unostentatious humility which may be called truly magnanimous, considering the circumstances of the writer. They shall speak for themselves, and are given here entire, with the exception of a few quite unimportant omissions.

‘October 14th, 1831.

‘My dear and beloved Mother,—The first moment of leisure that I find here—it is now 10 A.M.—my heart impels me to send you word how I am getting on. The house-steward and the other officials show me every attention that I could possibly look for, and in the housekeeper I have unexpectedly found an old acquaintance, as I used to see her occasionally before her marriage. Two female patients are all that are under my charge at present, yet I and another nurse have been fully occupied hitherto. In the men’s ward there are so far more attendants than patients, and I hear that the physician declares that each sick person properly ought to have two. My patients are both elderly women: one, the wife of a soldier, pleases me extremely by the tenderness she expresses for her husband, her cheerful willingness to follow every prescription, the thankful gratitude with which she receives every little service, the modesty which makes her constantly afraid of giving us too much trouble. This morning, too, to my great pleasure, she expressed a wish to hear a short morning prayer. The other is much more ill, and hence is able to speak but very little, but, I am told, is also a good honest woman. Nor is my under-nurse amiss, but she seems to me to need supervision. As far as I know, two deaths have occurred in the hospital since I came in, but the doctors have good hopes of both my patients. Last night I

was able to lie down on my bed for most of the time between four and half-past six in the morning. My dear mother may be assured that I will not unnecessarily exhaust my strength by night-watching, against which Dr. Siemers also kindly warns me. I have no feelings of disgust or nausea to combat; I eat my breakfast beside my cholera patients with just as good an appetite as usual. Coffee is brought to me in the ward early in the morning, and afterwards, about eleven, some bread and butter; I might have either tea or wine with it, but have declined both, and to-morrow I mean to decline the butter, for the nurses have none, and it is very unpleasant to me to enjoy indulgences in their presence which are not permitted to them; besides, I think the best way of keeping them content will be to take the lead myself in any act of self-denial. On the other hand, I enjoy having my dinner and supper with the other officers of the establishment. There are seven of us at table—the house-steward and his wife, the physician, Dr. Siemssen, the surgeon, the apothecary, and the secretary. Yesterday evening, when the second of my women was brought in, I hear that some disturbance took place in the neighbourhood, the neighbours opposing her removal; however, when some of her relatives came to inquire after her, my soldier's wife assured them that “no lord could be better looked after than they were.”

‘My beloved mother, bless your Amelia in spirit

once more, as you blessed her at parting yesterday afternoon !

‘Madame B. the housekeeper does not enter the ward at all, as she is a very nervous person, and is afraid of the shock it might give her. But enough of this gossip.’

‘Sunday, October 15th.

‘Our hopes of our two female patients have not been fulfilled; the poor soldier’s wife died yesterday evening, the other earlier in the afternoon. As no fresh cases were brought to this ward, I proposed to Drs. Siemers and Siemssen that they should send me to any out-patients they might have, and summon me back when there was something to do here. But both gentlemen refused to hear of it, and maintained that I could be of much more use in the house, if I would consent to take the entire superintendence of the men’s wards. I objected at first that the men would probably refuse to submit to my authority, but the physicians replied that they would take care of that. The ten attendants were then presented to me, and so expressly commanded to obey my orders, under pain of immediate dismissal, that I think I need not fear any open resistance. Here, I believe, I really can do some good, for several of these men seem to me very inexperienced nurses. Last night of course I had no need to sit up, but I rose twice to make the round of the wards and see that the night-attendants were doing their duty.

This morning about half-past six another woman was brought in, but she was already so far gone that Siemssen considered the case hopeless from the first. She suffered so terribly, that she sighed for death as a release, and after about five hours her desire was granted. The nurse in the women's ward has already had enough of this work, and this afternoon gave up her post, so that I am now alone. This evening another woman is coming, for if any very severe case is brought in during the night, it is absolutely necessary to have two nurses on the spot, to do what is required; with the best will possible one cannot manage it alone.'

'Sunday morning.

'Before the new nurse arrived a female patient was brought in, and soon afterwards another; both, however, were so ill, that they could not be saved. With one of them, a native of Vierlanden, her sufferings, which lasted the whole night, reached a point that I had never seen yet.

'My new nurse is a very stupid woman, but as soon as a second is required Dr. Siemers has promised to send me R., who I have been told by one of the best attendants in the men's ward wishes for the post. My relation to these men is as pleasant as I could wish. As all of them properly belong to some other business, they are the more willing to accept any suggestions from me, and since I am of course always ready to meet their wishes in any

reasonable matter, and have procured some changes in their favour, I seem to have gained their confidence; at any rate, they prefer to bring all their requests to me. At the same time I let them see that I have made myself acquainted with every detail of their duties, and that the least deviation that comes under my eye is reported to the physician. In the men's wards there are several convalescents.

‘From the nature of the disease, any introduction of religious topics is quite out of the question in most cases; where there is any scope for it, however, it is not merely allowed, but in one special case I was expressly requested by Dr. Siemers to converse with a patient, &c.’

‘Monday evening, 6 P.M.

‘I will try whether I can now send my dear mother some report of myself, if only in a very fragmentary way. All to-day I have not had a quarter of an hour when it was possible. But before relating anything of my life here, thanks, warmest thanks, to my beloved mother for her lines, which gave me such great pleasure. Several more female patients have died, and at this moment a poor old woman of seventy-four, who lies opposite the table on which I am writing, is dying. If I am not mistaken, she has been a very bad, wicked woman, and she has given us very great trouble, but now the strength which showed itself only in riotous outbursts of passion is quelled for ever; she is lying

quite quiet, and I am watching by her for her last breath, as I have to report any death immediately to the physician.'

'Two hours later.

'The old woman is dead, and now again we have but two patients in the women's ward. One thirty-two years old, who had led I fancy not a very respectable life, still seems not to have lost all sense for better things; the other, between fifty and sixty, is I am sure an excellent woman, and interests me exceedingly by her modesty and thankfulness. She is a laundress, and the disease was brought on probably by a violent chill. Dr. Siemssen assures me that he fully expects to bring her through, and has hopes, though less confident, of the other. If it prove so, these will be the first recoveries among the women.

'My occupations are very various and full of interest for me, but are not easy to write down.'

'11 P.M.

'I share the night-watching with the two nurses, and find very little inconvenience from it. When I feel fatigued I lie down for an hour in the day-time, which is better than taking a whole night to myself, for as superintendent of the men's wards I have to make my rounds there every few hours by night as well as by day.'

'Tuesday.

'In the morning I have to see that, before the physician's visit, all the wards are cleaned, the beds made,

and that everything is in proper order. Three times a day, morning, afternoon, and evening, I visit the sick-beds in company with the physician, the surgeon, and the apothecary, when Dr. Siemssen gives to each the directions belonging to our respective departments.

‘ In the women’s ward, of course, I have to pay particular attention to all the medical orders, as I am responsible there for their exact fulfilment.

‘ In the men’s wards my special duty is only to observe what diet is prescribed, according to which I draw up the daily bill of fare for the housekeeper. Not unfrequently, too, I have to send the necessary notice of his admission to the relatives of the sick man, as the patients are often brought in unknown to their family. The linen of the wards is also under my charge. At present I also occasionally take part, where I see any need for it, in the actual nursing of the men, but if the number of our patients should greatly increase, I should be obliged to do less of this even in the women’s ward, as the general superintendence would be of more importance, and would give me full occupation; but it would then be of great use to me that I have thus acquired experience in the treatment of the patients.’

‘ Noon.

‘ I told you before of our social meals, but we rarely all meet now, as first one, then another, is hindered by

business, and at dinner both the physician and surgeon are generally absent, as both have autopsies at half-past one. The young Dr. Siemssen is, as far as I can judge, an excellent hospital doctor, decided, firm, vigorous, kindly and attentive. He always listens readily to my suggestions about the patients, and meets my wishes as far as he can; indeed his whole conduct towards myself is all that I could desire.

‘From all that goes on in the outer world we are quite isolated—at least I am. I hear scarcely anything but what comes to me in letters, which I am often unable to read for some time. Of new faces I see plenty, especially doctors who come to inspect the hospital, but conversation with them is quite out of the question—at most we may exchange a few words about the patients. When the great fire happened lately in the city I observed it at once, as I was sitting up at the time, but I forbade the nurses to mention it before the patients, lest it should excite or alarm them. At dinner I asked the gentlemen where it was, and not one of them had heard that there had been any fire at all.

‘Since yesterday I have a small sitting-room and bedroom to myself, close to the ward, which were not ready when I came. Of course I cannot spend much time there, but it is pleasant to have a place of refuge where it is possible to be alone for a few moments, &c.’

‘October 21st.

‘I have not been able to write to my dear mother for these few days; for though I sometimes had half an hour to spare, it was always when I was feeling very tired and in great need of rest, and then I remembered my dear mother’s warning against over-exertion, and lay down on my bed instead of writing.

‘Of course I cannot be relieved from the night-watching, as so far, contrary to my expectations, I have been more engaged in the men’s wards than in the women’s, and there my supervision is most needed when the other officials are sleeping. In order not to carry the watching too far, however, I have now arranged that I sit up till half-past twelve, then lie down till three, when I am called to make a round of the men’s wards; this takes about an hour or more, according to circumstances, and then I go to bed again until six.’

‘October 22nd, morning.

‘Last night by the doctor’s order, and as there were no cases requiring peculiar care, I slept somewhat longer, and contented myself with making my three rounds. I feel quite strong and refreshed, and shall need no sleep in the course of the day; so I shall employ every spare moment in writing to my dear, dear mother, whose kind note has made me so happy this morning. . . . A few days ago I received a strange request. A woman, who was quite a stranger to me,

asked to speak to me alone, and adjured me, if I really cared to save human life, to employ a remedy for the patients which she would entrust to me gratuitously for that purpose. It had been discovered by a Professor Muth about a hundred years ago, who, during a desolating attack of pestilence in Frankfort-on-Maine, had saved many hundreds from death by its means, and she had tried its efficacy against cholera both in her own case and that of a grandchild. Of course I told her that I could do nothing without the consent of the physician; and then, in the hope, no doubt, of inducing me to comply with her entreaty, she confided to me that she belonged to the family of Professor Muth, and was the mother of that unhappy journeyman painter who was condemned to twenty-three years' imprisonment for murder, and that she, in her inexpressible misery, had placed her last hope on this remedy, by the use of which she hoped to lay the city under an obligation to her which might bring about a commutation of the sentence. I pitied from the bottom of my heart the grief which was deeply imprinted on her countenance, but of course I could not accede to her proposal on this ground, and so at last she gave me permission to lay the matter before Dr. Siemssen. He entered into it very kindly as far as he could, and said at last that he would allow the use of the remedy in cases where all other means had failed. In one such it was tried, but unfortunately, as might be expected, without effect.

‘I spoke yesterday of odd quarters of an hour that I meant to employ in writing to my dear mother, but I was scarcely able to find one available for this purpose. In the odd *minutes* of leisure that I sometimes have, I feel the most pressing need of turning to my God in prayer, otherwise amid all this outward turmoil I might drift away from what is the true anchorage of my life. The day before yesterday I went out for the first time, partly to make some purchases, partly to make enquiries for a new nurse, and Dr. Siemssen also thought it would do me good to breathe the fresh air for once. . . . For the rest, I endeavour to give myself up entirely to the duties of my present position; I find satisfaction in them, and meet the future with calmness. And what are a few weeks! How soon will they be past, and I shall be permitted once more to embrace my beloved mother with a heightened consciousness of all that I possess in her affection!’

‘October 29th.

‘Though I got almost no sleep at all last night, as we had several very bad cases, one more especially whom four persons had to hold constantly, yet I feel no particular weariness, and my heart urges me to avail myself of a leisure moment to send my dear mother some news of my progress. In truth the Lord strengthens me physically for my work in a remarkable manner. In my earlier days here, when I had much to

struggle with in my own feelings, I felt myself much exhausted, but now that entire serenity, clearness, and calmness have returned to my mind, I am also fresh and strong in body. For some days I was very hoarse, but this has also passed over. I have an excellent appetite, and eat more than at home; it almost seems as if what I lose in sleep were made up to me by the larger quantity of food I take. You know I am not fond of talking about health in general, but under the present circumstances I know that such details are of value to my dear mother. On Wednesday our good doctor, who had been suffering for some days from a severe cold, was obliged to keep his bed, and was seized with sickness, &c., so that some began to fear that it would prove to be an attack of cholera; a young Dr. Möller, who undertook his visits in the wards for him that morning, became so unwell towards noon that he was obliged to go home; one of the male attendants began to suffer in the same way, and several to complain more or less, hoping, perhaps, thus to obtain some alleviation of their heavy duties. The number of these attendants now amounts to sixteen, that of the nurses to four; and all the fresh arrivals are placed formally under my orders by Dr. Siemssen, as the first were, so that I have quite a new kingdom now. I do not rule my kingdom with a rod of iron, however; I should not know how to manage it if I wished, and should not wish it if I could. My orders are generally

given as requests, and for myself I make as few demands as possible, that I may be able the more authoritatively to demand all I need for the patients. Any neglect of them, of course, I never overlook; but, on the other hand, I am always glad when I can in any way lighten the work of the attendants, and show myself ready to meet their wishes. In this way I have succeeded so far in maintaining a good understanding with them all, and not one has caused me any annoyance by opposition to my orders. Among the duties of my post is the charge of all the linen belonging to the attendants, which needs no little care to give each his own, as scarcely any of the things are marked. In general, as I remarked before, this hospital work is a capital school for order. So far, thank God, I think I have never forgotten anything of consequence; twice I put down one diet of food too few in my list for Madame B——, but fortunately something had been added in the kitchen, so that what was required was easily furnished from the rest. Another time I lost the key of a store-closet, but happily I discovered that it was missing, in time to have another key ready before any stores from that closet were required. I have occasion here to learn much that I think will be of great value to me hereafter. On the whole, I am certainly at present called to the work of Martha rather than Mary, but this is quite right. It is enough if the Lord will but employ me in His service, the mode I

leave entirely to Him. If I could but perform the labours of Martha with the quiet mind of Mary! but I am far from attaining this at present. Now and then, too, I find an opportunity for practising something of Mary's work: when it is suitable—which certainly happens very rarely—I read aloud portions of some religious work to my nurses and patients; and in the convalescents' ward I have been requested by some to procure them something to read. I gave them various little collections of prayers, and sent to the Christian Circulating Library for some other works of a more entertaining character. The following day I was greatly pleased at being voluntarily asked by some of the readers for a Bible, that they might look out the texts referred to, and I immediately procured two for them. Besides this, it is possible from time to time to say a few words to a patient; but it must be owned that many pass away, who have been from the first seizure too much overwhelmed by the pains and the exhaustion of illness, to be capable of directing one earnest thought to God or eternity.

'The day before yesterday we dismissed the first convalescents from the women's ward; two servant-maids, good creatures, who took leave of me with tears in their eyes. On the same day a poor emaciated lad of perhaps twelve years old was brought into the men's ward. I declared, however, that all children belonged to the women's ward, and my request was immediately

granted by the physicians, which pleased me the more, as the little fellow has really a very amiable and affectionate disposition. This morning I offered him a fresh biscuit; he would not take it, but said he could do very well with half an old one, which had been lying beside his bed from the day before. When I pressed him to take it, he told me that he wanted to be allowed to keep the fresh biscuit for a younger sister, and only by assuring him that I would take care she should not miss it, could I prevail on him to eat it.

‘The gentlemen of the Special Commission are almost too kind to me, for, in spite of all my protestations, they have insisted on furnishing my little private-room completely. This rather oppresses me, for in such an institution as this every expense not absolutely necessary seems to me wrong; and this arrangement for my room really is unnecessary, as I cannot live in it, but am obliged to be almost incessantly in the wards.

‘I have had the daily refreshment of receiving several letters from my friends, which are my only link at present with the outside world, as I cannot find time even to look over the weekly papers.’

‘November 3rd, 11 P.M.

‘As night closes in, after a very busy day, I turn to my dear mother, with whom I long to converse a little in spirit as I sit here with one nurse, watching our patients who are just at present unusually quiet. How much I

was touched by your lines of yesterday, and how I should have liked to send a few words in reply at once ! But to be matron of an hospital and write letters in a morning, are two things that cannot go together.

‘I continue very well in health, and it is really remarkable what a degree of physical strength is given me from above. In this point at least my opinion of myself has been fully justified. Thus, last night, when a sick woman was brought in who required close attendance, I did not get to bed until four o’clock in the morning ; at half-past six I had to rise again, and at seven my coffee was brought, but at eleven I had never yet found a moment in which I could drink it ; and, with the exception of the time when I was writing out the list of diets, half an hour at dinner, half an hour in the afternoon when I had a cup of tea in my own room, and half an hour in the evening when I read aloud from a devotional work in my ward, I have never sat down ten minutes together in the whole day, and yet I feel no trace of fatigue. And my dear mother must not imagine this to be the result only of excitement : my mind is perfectly quiet and composed ; indeed I feel better when there is a great deal to do ; an inactive life in an hospital would be indeed something terrible. No doubt what helps to keep me well in spite of my great physical exertions is the amount of exercise I take in passing from one ward to another, which takes me out of the close atmosphere of the wards into the fresh air of the

corridors. This enables me to do perfectly well without walks in the open air, and without the "Hofmann's Drops" to which my nurses often have recourse.'

'November 5th, evening.

'Surely my dear mother knows that I often long to see her, often wish for the moment when we shall meet again! and I almost think that this moment may not be so far off now. I certainly have not seen the official reports of yesterday and to-day, but fewer patients have been brought in here, and the disease seems to be assuming a milder character.

'The number in the women's ward varies from five to seven. My little Johann Linder is in the way to recover, while a little boy of eight years old who the day before yesterday was placed in the next bed to his died after a few hours. Hannes was asleep, of which I was very glad, as the death of his little neighbour might otherwise have made a dangerous impression on his tender mind. He is really a dear little fellow; whenever I come near his bed after he has had his breakfast or dinner, he never forgets to thank me for his nice meal, and he often repeats his thanks to the doctor as well. He takes his medicines with the greatest willingness; only once, when I was obliged to wake him from his sleep and he was still half dreaming, he resisted strongly, declaring that I wanted to poison him. Just as I was getting him to take it, a nurse came up and said,

“Hannes, don’t you know the Mamsell?” Rubbing his eyes he said, “Oh, now I see it all!” and added in the most entreating tone, “Ah, please forgive me!” He clings to his mother with great affection, and counts the hours to the next visit he may hope for; yet he told her yesterday that he would rather be here than at home, for he got enough to eat here. But I fear that, even if the poor boy does recover completely from the cholera, he carries the seeds of death within him in a strong hereditary predisposition to consumption. The only chance of saving him, Dr. Siemssen says, would be to place him in some more favourable position where he would have sufficient nourishment. If this could but be managed! I have some hopes of it.

‘I have been obliged to dismiss one of my nurses. I was very sorry, for the woman had been taken on my recommendation. She was very willing, and was not indifferent to me for the sake of old recollections. It was Mrs. H——, who for several years used to take care of my father’s house in the summer, and nursed him in his last illness. It is to be hoped she was then younger, quicker, and at least somewhat fitter for a nurse than she is now. Thus, for instance, she cannot read the labels on the medicine bottles; if a draught is to be given every two or three hours, she cannot calculate the time, and if she is told the hour she cannot remember it,’

‘November 8th.

‘Now, my dear good mother, it really does seem as if this period of separation were not to last so very much longer. The epidemic is manifestly on the decline, neither yesterday nor the night before had we a single new case brought, and all our present patients are more or less on the road to recovery. Doctor, surgeon, and apothecary are beginning to complain of want of work; I find less difference in this way, as the convalescents require almost as much of my attention as those who are very ill. Only the night-work I can take more easily, and last night I so far availed myself of the improvement as to sleep the whole night through, the first time I have done so since I came here; to-day I feel much refreshed in consequence.’

‘Later.

‘My work has not, properly speaking, diminished, but only assumed another shape. I have more rest at night; I go to bed about half-past one, and sleep without getting up once until half-past six. The number of our patients has not yet decreased, but as most of them may be considered convalescent, and require as such less waiting on, we dismissed six attendants yesterday. But the time I have gained in this way has been claimed on another side by a commission that I have very gladly undertaken at the request of Dr. Siemers; namely, he

has wished me to send for the relatives of those who have died in the hospital, to make minute inquiries into their position, and to draw up a report on the subject for the use of the Society for the Relief of the Poor. Some members of our Special Commission belong to this society, and joined it only on the stipulation that especial regard should be had to those persons who had sought the help and shelter of the hospital for their relatives. I am also to inquire into the condition of the patients who are about to be discharged from the hospital of St. Eric, and if they should be in need of clothing or other assistance, to recommend them to our Special Commission. Thus I have succeeded in arranging that our little Johann Linder should be put to board in some family where he would have a proper sleeping place at night, and enough to eat by day, and the choice of the family is left entirely in my hands. The friendship and kindness of Dr. Siemers are of great value to me ; he visits our hospital daily as chairman of the Special Commission, and shows them in the manner I prize most highly, by constantly giving me the opportunity of doing real good.

‘For the rest, my beloved mother, the time of our reunion is now certainly approaching with rapid strides. The Lord has dealt very, very graciously with our city, and I doubt not that the Cholera hospitals will soon be given up. To ask Dr. Siemssen about precautions

against carrying infection with me, would be of no use, for I know his answer beforehand, he does not consider that any are necessary. At the worst period of the epidemic he used to meet his own family, both in and out of the hospital, without taking any peculiar precautions.'

' November 19th.

' No doubt my dear mother will be very glad to hear that I have felt some ennui and want of occupation these last few days ; indeed the thought had occurred to me that about the end of this week or the beginning of the next I might leave my present post, as I fancied they could get on very well without me. But when I spoke to Dr. Siemers about it this morning he would not hear of it, but expressed a very decided wish that I should remain for the present, and urged it upon me seriously as a duty, since I had once begun the work, to carry it through completely to the end. When I asked whether the other gentlemen of the Special Commission shared his views, he offered to procure an official letter for me in which I should be formally requested by the whole Commission not to lay down my present post, which of course I declined as quite unnecessary. Now it certainly is not my way to do things by halves, or to leave my proper business unfinished unless I am obliged ; and so I have promised to postpone indefinitely the time of my quitting the hospital. I certainly think I can say with truth, that though I cannot pretend to be the most

important, I most undoubtedly am the busiest person on the official staff at this moment. And if I complained above of ennui, anyone would think that I must have so much to fill up what spare time I find, that there could be no room for such a feeling. But the thing is, that I have scarcely any time quite to myself, but am interrupted or called away at every moment; then my private room adjoins the female ward, and is only separated by a boarded partition, so that I hear every noise and every word: lastly, I am often tired and disinclined to any kind of work that requires thought and reflection, for as I have only one nurse now, I have again more night-watching on my hands.

‘A subscription paper is being circulated on behalf of little Linder; if we get enough he will be put to board with a schoolmaster, and brought up for the same profession. Dr. Siemers feels sure of our success.

‘I have grown really fond of these good honest B.’s (the steward and his wife). I was afraid at first that my peculiar position might easily bring me into unpleasant collision with them, but this apprehension has proved wholly unfounded, and our good understanding has never been interrupted for a moment.’

‘November 24th.

‘I am sorry to say I cannot yet, as I hoped, fix the day for my return home. Since my last letter several female patients have been brought here, and among them one who was very ill indeed, but is now

likely to rally. But I find it easier to be patient now than some days ago, partly because I have again more to do, partly because I confidently hope that the epidemic is altogether drawing to a close, and I need not fear therefore that my perseverance will be exposed to too severe a trial. It is six weeks to-day since I saw my dear mother's kind face, but ere the seventh is over I hope, please God, to be with her once more. And I shall no doubt very quickly feel myself at home again in my old life, which is so heartily dear to me.

‘I cannot but acknowledge with gratitude the friendly behaviour of my fellow-workers here towards me, and especially the respectful attention I have always received from Dr. Siemssen ; but of course these relations cannot afford me what I find in the friendship of many years' standing, and am here obliged to relinquish.

‘The woman I mentioned above as very ill has given us a great deal of trouble by an insubordination which no doubt lies in her character, and was only aggravated by illness. The night before last she made so much noise, using abusive language and striking at all around her, that the patients were aroused by it, and one good soul crept trembling and shivering out of her bed to come to my help, fearing this woman might do me some harm. But in this case I had another instance of what I have frequently seen in the last few weeks, the power of a calm and determined will, even on such a mind

and under such circumstances. Without having recourse to any coercion, simply by repeating, with quiet but unmistakeable decision, that resistance was of no avail, and I must persist in my intentions, I brought her at last to submit, and allow us to do what the doctor had ordered. On the whole, I must own that the increased knowledge of human nature acquired in a Cholera hospital is not of the pleasantest kind; yet there may be a great advantage, I think, in seeing our common nature for once on its darker side. It could not enter my thoughts to assume the office of a judge over these poor fallen creatures, when I contrast the unfavourable circumstances in which they have grown up, with those wherein I have been placed by the free grace of my God. And in such scenes I find endless comfort and encouragement in my firm belief in the ultimate restoration of all sinners. I know not whether I could have fulfilled with so willing a heart all the menial offices of a nurse towards some of these drunkards and fallen women, had not the happy thought been always in my mind,—the time will yet come when even these souls will join with me in worship before the throne of God, and perchance will praise His name for these very offices of love shown them now. And with all this I must say, that there were some among both the male and female patients for whom I could feel regard, or who at least showed themselves not destitute of capacity for higher impressions.’

‘November 29th.

‘How grieved I am, my dear mother, to have awakened so vivid a hope in you which now cannot be fulfilled. But I flattered myself with it too! When I awoke yesterday morning my first thought was, the day after to-morrow certainly! I even wrote to Dr. Siemers about it. But in the meanwhile circumstances have changed, and at the present moment I certainly cannot myself think of leaving the hospital to-morrow. Five new patients have been brought in, and among them an Englishman who cannot speak a word of German. Mr. B., the steward, kept his bed yesterday, and is very unwell to-day, which of course takes up his wife’s time very much. I was not able to take off my clothes last night, and now at six in the evening it is the first opportunity when I could steal a few minutes to write these lines in the ward, surrounded on all sides by groaning and chattering patients and convalescents.

‘My dear mother, if the Lord hears my heartfelt prayer, this delay will not be of long duration, and I really think there are good grounds for hoping that it will soon be at an end. Eight weeks, you know, was the shortest term that we thought our separation might last, and if our meeting is not postponed beyond this period I shall be very thankful. Let my desire to return to my old sphere of activity be a safe guarantee to my dear mother that I shall not prolong my stay un-

necessarily. But most unwilling should I be, on the other hand, to leave my post prematurely: I should dislike it for many reasons, but particularly because I have a prospect now that some permanent good may grow out of my residence in the hospital, and I think that much of this depends on my persevering to the end. I cannot as yet explain myself more clearly.

‘The subscription for little Linder has prospered so well, that we have procured a yearly sum for his board of about 11*l.*, for which an excellent schoolmaster will take him into his house.’

‘December 3rd.

‘This morning I spoke to my good kind Dr. Siemssen about my leaving the hospital. He requested me to remain until next Wednesday, by which time he hopes to have discharged six or seven of his present patients, and among them the two Englishmen. After that time, however, he will not detain me longer, as he acknowledges the importance of the reasons which make me now wish to retire from my present post. Even should fresh cases be brought in, it need make no difference, as the experience of our most recent cases shows that the disease is assuming a far milder character, and thus requires less nursing. We can now manage fourteen patients with five attendants, whereas at first we had to reckon at least one nurse to every patient.

‘One great joy I have had in these days, in seeing how

our faithful God, who never lacks wondrous means for working out the purposes of His wisdom, could turn even the Cholera into an instrument for saving a soul from the most imminent peril of utter ruin. A young girl of two-and-twenty was brought to us from a house of ill-fame where she was living as servant. As soon as I saw her fairly on the way to recovery, I questioned her about it, and found that she was a native of Lübeck, and had been hired there, without knowing what kind of house she was coming to. Afterwards a false shame held her back from saying anything about it to her relatives; indeed she sent them word that she was quite content with her situation, and this very untruth naturally rendered it more difficult for her to leave her place and return to Lübeck. I soon succeeded, however, in impressing on her so strongly the wickedness of remaining any longer in that house, that she resolved not to return to it. Her plan was to hire a bed somewhere, and look about for a better service, but I could not feel easy with this arrangement, as I knew well the dangers of such a position in her circumstances. At last, by earnest representations and the promise of paying the expenses of her journey and giving her a letter of recommendation to my friends at Lübeck, I succeeded in overcoming her dread of returning home. On Monday, if it please God, she will set out on her journey, and thus she will be restored, still innocent, to her aged mother. Now that she has once taken this resolution,

she tells me a load seems to have been lifted from her heart.

‘Through the mercy of our Lord, I was able to do a similar service for another poor girl, who on account of an early error, had been so completely cast off by her only relative, a married sister, that she had lost all trace of her, which was the worse because she was at present out of place, and had got into debt at her lodgings. By the help of the police, I have succeeded in discovering the residence of her brother-in-law; a good understanding has been restored in the family, and the ardent gratitude of the poor soul drew tears of joy from my eyes. The name of the Lord be praised!

‘If those persons who like to represent my undertaking as something *unnecessary* could only know how many opportunities the hospital affords of doing something more for the patients than merely affording the temporary benefit of physical care, I think they would give a rather different verdict.

‘Next Wednesday, then, my school will be held for the last time in M.’s house. I should like it very much, if as soon as the classes are over, the school-table, &c., could be brought over to us, so that I might find all once more in good order on my return. I hope about six o’clock in the evening to enter my dear, dear mother’s room with her tea, and at last to enjoy the long-wished-for happiness of a personal conversation. Of course I should like best to find you quite alone.’

‘ December 6th.

‘ I shall make my appearance to-morrow afternoon at six o’clock precisely. I am very glad that not a single fresh patient has been brought in for some days. I leave none behind me who are not in a fair way to recover entirely, and thus I may look on the task that was set before me as completely accomplished.’

Undoubtedly she had accomplished her task, and in so doing, she had done something far harder than her quiet, unaffected narrative would lead us to suppose. There was a strong prejudice against her, not only in the outside world, but in the hospital itself; and it required no slight measure of wisdom, self-control, and self-denial, to take up her right place, and maintain it as she did from the first. She had met and overcome painful attacks and serious obstacles, by what seemed the most simple means; but the most simple actions are often the hardest and greatest, and where enthusiasm and blind zeal, or that restless desire for notoriety of which Miss Sieveking was freely accused for taking this important step, would inevitably have given offence, and restricted her usefulness, she conquered by virtue of that gentle and quiet spirit which flows from the teaching of the Spirit of God, and proves the divinity of its source, by its power to overcome the world, in small matters or in great. With that touch-

ing frankness which was peculiar to her, she tells her pupils in after years when speaking of this passage in her life : —

‘ While in the hospital I received many letters telling me of the judgment pronounced by various people on my conduct, and though a few praised me, for the most part I was blamed. I was particularly sensitive to blame in this case, for though I certainly did seek the glory of God in the first place, yet I cannot deny that sometimes the thought had glided into my mind, that people would admire my self-sacrifice. Instead of that it was, “she wants to do something remarkable, she wants to set up for a martyr ;” and all this was very good for me. But if I was humbled by the censure of men, I was but confirmed in my resolve to persevere until I had overcome all hindrances, and fairly solved the problem before me. I was called an enthusiast, but it was by prayer that I conquered, and never have I regretted the step I then took. From that time, too, I determined never in future to stand in dread of the opinions of men, or to allow them to destroy my peace. . . . It had been feared, and even Dr. Siemssen, I believe, said before my entrance, that a lady like me would make a bad nurse, “that she would be full of fine sentimental speeches, and think of nothing but talking religion to the patients.” But they soon saw that this was not my line ; on the contrary, the care for the

physical wants of the sick occupied me completely from morning to night; only once one of the men wished to receive the Holy Communion, and Dr. Siemers himself thought it would be well for me to try to prepare his mind for it, which I very willingly did. But it was the only case of the kind.'

THIRD PART.

PUBLIC LABOURS.

(1831—1858.)

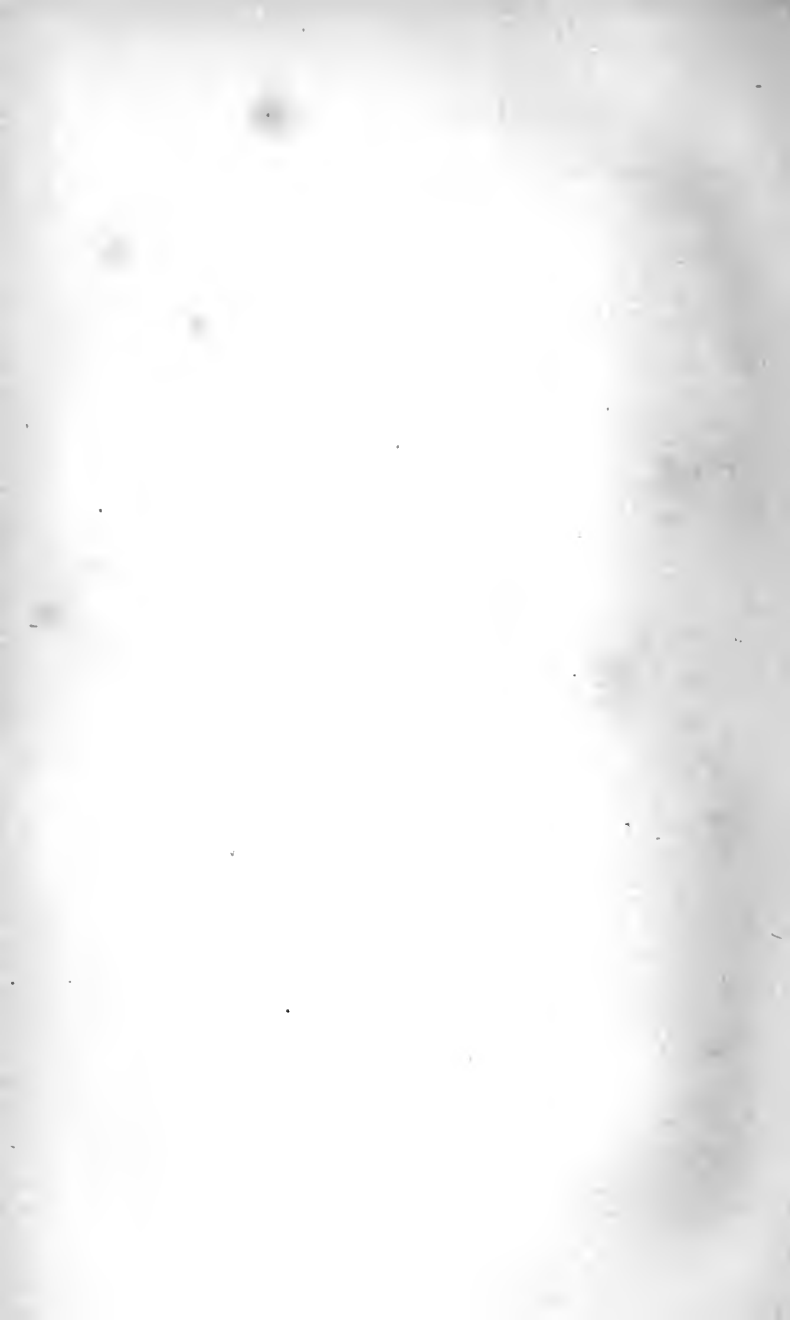


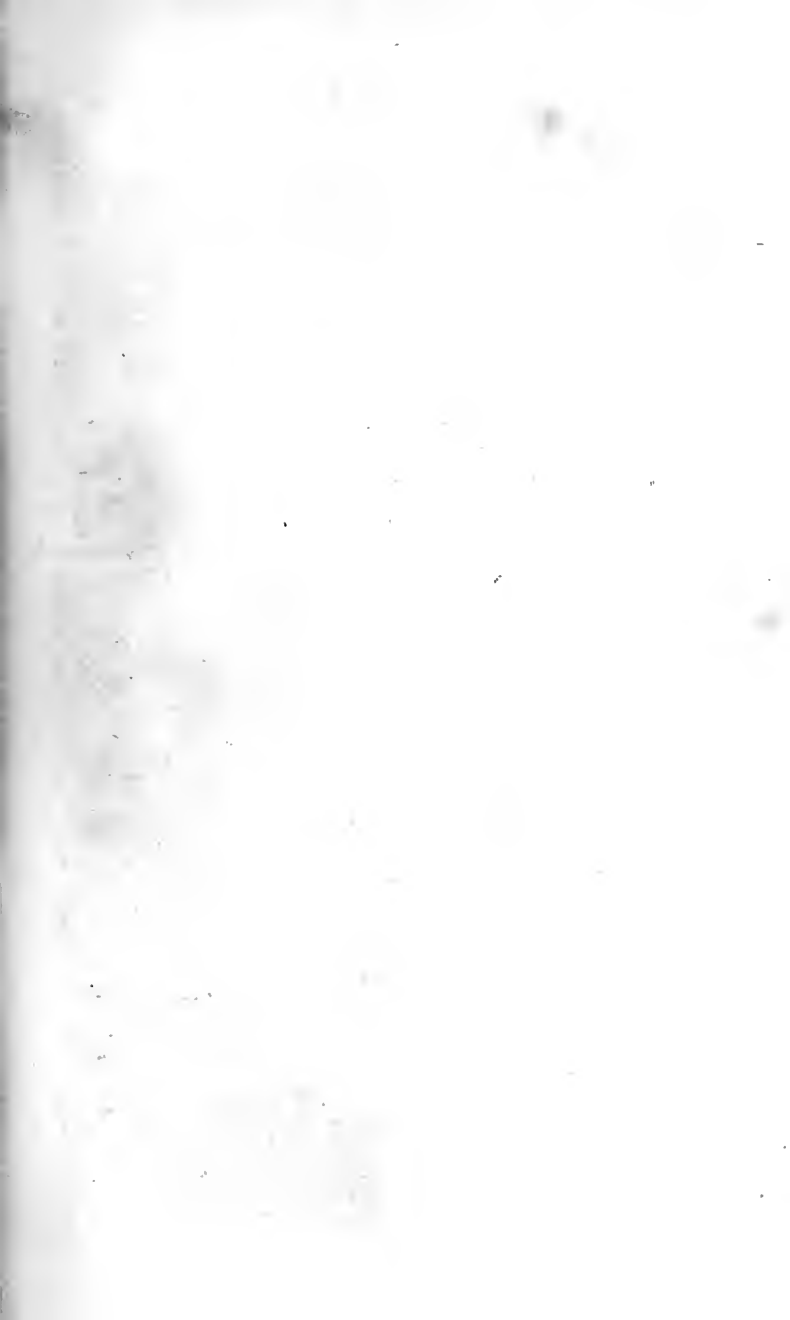
Largely Thou givest, gracious Lord,
Largely Thy gifts should be restored;
Freely Thou givest, and Thy word
Is, 'freely give.'
He only who forgets to hoard
Has learn'd to live.

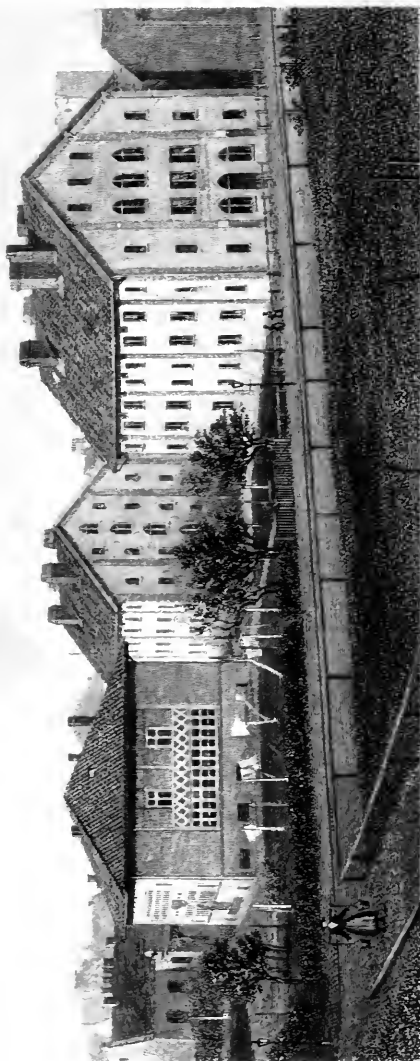
Wisely Thou givest,—all around
Thine equal rays are resting found,
Yet varying so on various ground
They pierce and strike,
That not two roseate cups are crown'd
With dew alike.

Even so, in silence likest Thee,
Steals on soft-handed Charity,
Tempering her gifts, that seem so free,
By time and place,
Till not a woe the bleak world see
But finds her grace.

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*







CHAPTER XX.

1831-1858.

SKETCH AND FIRST FOUNDATION OF THE ASSOCIATION —
 DIFFICULTIES AND HINDRANCES—HER RELATIONS TOWARDS
 THE DOCTORS OF THE POOR—DEATH OF HER AUNT SIEVE-
 KING—RELATIONS TOWARDS HER — DEATH OF A PUPIL —
 THE NEW ASSOCIATION.

WHEN Miss Sieveking returned to ordinary life, cheerful and in good health, having obtained the regard and respect of the whole staff of the hospital and fulfilled all the obligations she had undertaken in entering upon her duties there, the general opinion changed, and underwent a complete revolution in her favour. What had been blamed at first was now praised, only because it had been successful, and Miss Sieveking added this experience, new to her, but indeed as old as the world itself, to the others which these weeks had brought her. These experiences were most serviceable to the progress of her own mind, but beyond this, they impressed on her the conviction that the time had not arrived for her to come forward with so unusual an undertaking as the foundation of a Sisterhood of Mercy.

Already, during her period of service in the hospital, which, according to her original intention, was to have been the starting-point for this institution, another idea had taken life and form in her mind, a plan for the foundation of an association of women for the care of the sick and poor. This scheme is at once definitely and comprehensively handled in a letter which she addressed to Miss Hösch in March 1832. This letter says : ‘ You seem to think, that before I returned home from the hospital, I made some stay elsewhere and took holiday, but this is a mistake. The fear of infection, which at first was almost ridiculously strong amongst our friends, gave place in time to a reasonable calmness of mind, and so I was able to walk straight home from the hospital to the Holländischen Brook at 6 o’clock on Wednesday evening, December 6th, after having spent eight weeks there, all but one day. The next day I assembled my little children once more in school. How could I have needlessly postponed, even for a day, the return to my accustomed calling which I so heartily love ! The parting from my children had been the hardest sacrifice I had to make in carrying out my resolution, and the little ones too were longing to see me again and to return to the usual routine of their school life. Their instruction indeed had not ceased altogether, as at my request Lotte Graeve had undertaken it for two mornings at least in the week. The affection which my little pupils expressed in their letters had been a real

refreshment to me, at a time when my heart was wounded by the severe censure I met with from many other quarters. I had told them at parting that it would be a pleasure to me to hear from them sometimes, and they were unwearied in writing, so that scarcely a day passed in which I did not receive one or more letters from them, though they never got a line in answer from me.' She then gives a general outline of her hospital life, and proceeds, 'I must thankfully acknowledge that I met with the most friendly attention from all the gentlemen with whom I had to do, and they did all in their power to lighten the difficulties of my position. My relations with young Dr. Siemssen became particularly agreeable, although I learnt afterwards that he had been by no means particularly edified by the prospect of my coming into the hospital, or rather I may say, had a decided prejudice against it. But when he saw that I was thoroughly in earnest, that I set to work diligently, and knew what I was about, he showed me a degree of respect which encouraged me, because I soon learned highly to respect him, as an honest, thoroughly sincere young man, who had it at heart to fulfil the duties of his calling with faithfulness and in a humane spirit. He listened readily to all my wishes for the sick, and did all he could to meet them. On the morning of the day that I left the hospital, I received a formal visit in my little room (only fancy!) from him and Dr. Siemers, accompanied by three other gentlemen of the

Special Commission, when Dr. Siemers, in the name of the rest, made me a speech, and then handed to me a written address of thanks, and another of a similar kind was sent to me in the afternoon by the General Board of Health. You see, that on their part there has been no lack of acknowledgement of my services ; indeed, I cannot conceal from myself that they are very much overrated by many — feeling so keenly as I do, that I have a thousand causes to humble myself in respect of my hospital work before the Lord my God, who knows all the imperfection of it, and from whom the many impurities that cleave to it cannot be hid. Yet I will not deny, that the honourable testimony borne to my work by the majority of our physicians, of whom very many visited the hospital, was most encouraging to me. Among these very men several had made a joke of the resolution I formed, in which they saw nothing but romantic excitement, and fancied they could foretell that nothing practically useful could come of it. I certainly was glad to have brought these gentlemen to see and acknowledge that neither what they called mysticism nor literary employment must necessarily render a woman useless in practical life, and that such care of the sick as springs from a spirit of real Christian love is something higher and better than can be expected from the ordinary class of paid nurses of either sex. That this is now pretty generally allowed, and that confidence is reposed in me in this particular, is especially

important for the carrying out of a new plan, which has occupied me very seriously since I have been in the hospital — namely, the foundation of an association for the care of the sick and poor. The object of it is, more frequent and regular visiting of the sick poor in their own dwellings, and a closer supervision of them than is possible for the General Poor's Board, with care to promote order and cleanliness, and whatever else may be helpful to them either in body or in soul. The project was put on paper by me during one of the last days of my residence in the hospital, and submitted to Dr. Siemssen and Dr. Siemers, who gave it their approbation, and promised me their support as far as I might need it. Similar assurances have been sent to me by other friends, and especially by several gentlemen who are thoroughly acquainted with our system of out-door relief, its advantages and deficiencies, and are themselves actively at work in the matter.

The principal difficulty lies in finding the needful number of helpers to carry out the plan, and here I find more obstacles in fact than I had anticipated. In the first place, the number of those whom I myself should think fit for such an undertaking, and whose cooperation I should desire, is not very large, although I should require nothing beyond sound sense, a certain amount of bodily strength, and knowledge of domestic matters — except love to the cause and a *living principle of Christianity*, which last is, I am well convinced

the only source from whence can flow a true and enduring influence for good to those who need our help. But even in this limited circle I met with many refusals. One considered herself too much tied by her household duties, another had to fear the objections of her family, a third was terrified by the difficulties of the undertaking. After knocking at so many doors in vain, my own heart would have failed at last, but the Lord has strengthened me, and by degrees he has led me to find seven companions, who have formally bound themselves to take part in my work. Besides these I know of four or five more, whose assistance I hope for, and so next week I mean to take, in God's name, the first steps towards opening our work. Wish me a blessing from God upon it !'

She afterwards described this beginning to her pupils: 'I had entered the hospital with the thought that my service there should become the commencement of a new kind of labour for the good of the poor, and it had in fact brought me into much closer contact with the lower class; what they lacked, and how much consequently might be done for them, had become clearer to me, and all this experience was not to pass by unused. On the last Sunday of my residence there, I wrote down the scheme of an Association for the care of the sick and poor, founded on the principle of a Sisterhood of Mercy, and certainly very different from that which was ultimately carried out. For instance, I had chiefly

in view, the cooperation of women of the lower middle class, because, repelled by the disapprobation I had met with among the higher classes, I did not venture to approach them. I also thought that this class of persons were nearer to the poor, and could better judge of their necessities. Originally I had several of these in the Association, yet there is much to be said against such a plan, because as a rule higher cultivation creates a sounder judgment, which is often wanting in this middle-class; nevertheless, no institution of the kind should be without some of these women, and the mixture of ranks appears to me to make it more truly a type of a real Christian community. My scheme at that time required of the members of the Association that they should take part with their own hands in cleaning and setting in order the dwellings of the poor, when it should seem desirable; that they should undertake to watch by the sick, &c. &c. In practice these things took another shape. The first principles of the plan however remained the same; personal intercourse with the poor, and the exhibition of a love towards them manifested by action and rooted in faith; nor do I believe that a work founded on any other principles could endure.

My plan being complete, I left the hospital and sought to win some to take part in the undertaking. Among many refusals, I met with a cheerful response from several, and so on the 23rd of May, 1832, thirteen of us met for the first time in my mother's house. I made

them a short spoken address (of which some fragments are to be found in later reports*), especially warning them against many dangers to be avoided, and laying down the principles of our association. The room in my mother's house soon became too small for our increased numbers, and the use of a room in the town-hall was afterwards granted, by favour of the authorities, for our weekly meetings.'

In later brief communications to her pupils it appears very clearly with how much of skill, discretion, and moderation Amelia must have acted from the first, to avoid the many perils which threatened the young institution, and to secure for her enterprise the respect and confidence which were already paid to her own personal character. She goes on to relate:—

'The first difficulty was in our position with regard to the medical men. I had learnt to know them well while in the hospital, and now it was proposed that they should recommend their poor patients to us. Several made me a friendly promise to do so. Dr. M——, however, decidedly refused, on the ground that in his opinion our labours would destroy the one good and admirable thing which he still found among the poor, namely, their readiness to help each other. Afterwards however I received some indirect recommendations from him, and wishing to get to the bottom of the affair, I

* It is printed in full in the Tenth Report.

inquired whether these had been really given with his knowledge and good-will. He replied in the affirmative, and has since continued our steady friend and helper. Only once he was very angry, because one of our ladies had recommended homœopathic remedies to one of his patients, thus intruding into a province of which she knew nothing. I went to him again, and said I was ready to take all the blame upon myself, and promised for the future that we would never meddle in matters that did not concern us; and at the next meeting I took occasion to find fault with what had been done.

‘I had another little battle to fight with Dr. R——. We were visiting a man who was nearly recovered from the small-pox, and also his wife who was much more seriously ill. I lent him some books which he received with thanks, and promised when he should have read them through, to send him some more. The nurse came punctually to me, but without the books: the physician had taken them away, and had said they were not fit for the patient. I went to the doctor, and saw my books lying on his table, but talked first of other matters, until he himself asked me what sort of books I had given to his patient. I replied they were intended for the convalescent, who was not in the habit of reading aloud to his wife; and inquired whether he really thought they could do the man any harm. He had not read them, was the answer, but he knew there was seldom anything good in those little blue stitched covers. And

then he lauded to me a most wearisome book, called "Moral Instruction," as very fit for the purpose in hand, and I promised to take it to the sick man. I was very willing to give way in this case, that I might keep my freedom in a hundred others, and so I trotted off most obediently with my "Moral Instruction," and explained to the patient that we acted entirely in concert with the medical man, and wished to conceal nothing from him.

'My friend Dr. Siemssen once took away a book from a patient, which led me to pay him a visit. On my inquiry he was almost angry that I could believe that he would have so acted without first speaking to me, if he had objected to the contents of the book; but the patient must not read at all, that had been his only reason for taking it away.' On this occasion Amelia adds, in speaking of her dear friend Dr. Siemssen: 'He always treated me with the same frankness and openness, and it was this very truth and straightforwardness that always pleased me so much in him. I think, too, that such men as he are nearer to the kingdom of God than many who are fond of using its language. And in general I hold it to be good that believers and unbelievers should be brought into contact with each other, and I believe that such intercourse is far more wholesome than the harsh judgments passed by each upon the other, without any close acquaintance.' Miss Sieveking's friendship with this gentleman, which had arisen and gained strength at a time of such grave

interest, was not long to be her portion. Being invited to his marriage, she was struck by his looking wretchedly ill; he fell sick immediately after, and in a fortnight he was a corpse. She mourned for him deeply and earnestly.

In August of the same year, 1832, she wrote to Minna Hösch, after an apology for her long silence,—‘I feel, indeed, that it will not be easy probably to justify myself in your eyes on this point, although I have a thorough conviction that I am truly called from above to this new kind of activity, and hence feel myself obliged to make many sacrifices for its sake that really cost me something: thus, for instance, I give up many hours of intercourse with my friends, which has always been my favourite recreation. Friends who are really very dear to me I often do not see for months together. I made two rules for myself when I entered on my new sphere of work—one, that my school was not to suffer from it in any way; and the other, that my mother was not to be cut short of any part of the time when, according to our established arrangements at home, she reckons on my companionship. That many other things claiming my occasional attention, especially letter-writing, are often laid aside for a time, I cannot deny; though I must own, that by greater faithfulness on my part my new duties might be fulfilled without neglecting former obligations. Might I but succeed in attaining this higher capacity

for usefulness in the service of my God! He knows that the deepest desire of my soul is to attain it.'

At this time Amelia lost her beloved and revered Aunt Sieveking. She describes her last days in the above letter to Minna Hösch, and adds: 'This death cannot, I think, call forth any other feelings than those of a peaceful, gentle sadness. Does it not seem a beautiful ending to a life in many respects so beautiful? And if it be in general to be regarded as a blessing to mortals to escape the infirmity, the many sufferings and privations, incident to a very advanced age, it was doubly so to her, to whose lively spirit a stirring and varied life seemed a necessary condition of happiness.'

Not always, nor in all points, had Amelia harmonised with this remarkable woman, to whom, from her earliest youth, she had looked up with so much reverence. It was indeed scarcely possible that she should have done so, totally unlike, as they were, in natural disposition and in the character of their lives. Madame Sieveking was one of those persons who, brought up in an unbelieving age, yet, happier than many others, have embraced religion under the form of a pious rationalism, and during a life rich in every way, in noble enjoyments as in ennobling sufferings, and passed amidst the most remarkable people of her time, she had unconsciously formed in her heart and borne in her conduct the image of the Christian character. She possessed a strength and fulness of love

leading to continual self-denial, united with a most child-like humility, while everything that was little, egotistic, and narrow-hearted, was contrary to her generous nature ; but just because all this lived and worked unconsciously within her, and was in some sense naturally developed by her circumstances, she could not sympathise in, nor even fully comprehend, the struggles and travails of a soul, which had had to fight its way through both inward and outward difficulties, and by severe and earnest self-examination had learned to see clearly its own helplessness, and the need of divine assistance. The character of her niece, who had never been a young girl like others, appeared to her unamiable, her activity not always feminine ; and not in a fault-finding spirit, but from real conviction, she disapproved altogether of her entering on the hospital service, which seemed to her a wilful and enthusiastic step, to the prejudice of nearer duties, while she misconceived, rather than condemned, the motives which made the step a moral necessity to her niece. Both expressed themselves plainly on the subject to each other, and painful as it was to Amelia to be unable to win over her aunt, her love and respect for her suffered no diminution ; while that high-minded woman, on her part, would not refuse to her a degree of respect, which might probably have risen to a full approbation, could she have lived to follow her niece's further course, and witness that future, with its new elements of Christian

development, to which, by the whole bent of her character, she already belonged. Meantime, the relation between them was of that description which brings, particularly to the best and most decided characters, much of peculiar pain and struggle, while we recognise in it a special means of training in the school of Divine love. Above, in the land of vision, where we shall know even as we are known, the veil which parts us here will fall away, and all who have honestly sought truth will find themselves united in Him who is the truth Himself.

In the letter which described her aunt's last days Miss Sieveking says of their conversation respecting the hospital: 'Her simple, thoroughly sincere and benevolent disposition always appeared to me most loveable, and often exercised a wholesome influence upon me. Although she did not share my convictions on many subjects, I never felt afraid to speak freely with her, even on the highest and holiest matters. I can never forget one morning when I found her not yet risen. She had just heard of my resolution to go into the hospital. She decidedly disapproved of the step, and gave me to understand as much, almost with harshness. Afterwards, though I remained quiet, she perhaps feared that she had given me pain, and without recalling what she had said, she became quite tender, more so than she had ever yet been towards me. We parted with tears in our eyes, and I felt myself nearer to her heart than I had ever stood before.'

Respecting the Association, she writes in this letter : ‘ It consists of thirteen members, six married women, and seven unmarried, partly from the higher, and partly from the middle class, who seem to be especially suited for the purposes of our society ; all, I hope, are animated by a loving zeal, founded on a simple faith in the Gospel. To set the thing going has been sufficiently difficult, but now this is once done, I am not anxious about its permanence. It is especially gratifying to me, that all the members find such pleasure in our work.’ She then corrects some mistakes of Miss Hösch with regard to the nature of their employment, and continues : ‘ Our undertaking meets with many objections from different quarters. But I am so accustomed to this in all my doings, that it does not unsettle me ; indeed it would be quite strange to me, in bringing forward anything new, not to find it objected to. On the other hand, zealous friends are not wanting to support our cause ; among them is one of our cleverest and most diligent doctors of the poor, and, would you have thought it ? the old Baron von Voght,* who has interested himself about my plans with all the ardour of a young man : by his desire I am to communicate to him in detail my written accounts of the poor, and he has lately, without the slightest prompting on my part, published his favourable opinion of our scheme in one of the *Miscellanies*.’

* The well known philanthropist.

In February, 1833, Miss Sieveking writes to Minna Hösch of the death of one of her little scholars: ‘The beginning of the new year has carried off a dear child from my little school. Louisa S——, scarce thirteen years old, has died of scarlet fever. On Christmas Eve she was with me quite well and cheerful, and two days after Christmas she was gone. The disease attacked the brain immediately, so that she had scarcely a quarter of an hour of clear consciousness during its whole course. Almost all her fancies were about me and her little school-fellows, and it was very touching to me, as I watched by her one night, to hear her call me every moment, and not to be recognised by her. In the last hours before her end, the image of little Mary H—— was constantly before her mind, — this was a sweet, good child, formerly her schoolfellow, who, two years before, had passed into eternity. At last our little sick child began with a voice already failing, the song often sung in her father’s house, ‘How brightly beams the Morning Star.’ She finished the last verse, though the end was scarcely audible, and these were the last sounds which her father and mother heard from her lips; a few moments later they were closed for ever.’

She then recurs to her Association, and says: ‘There is a growing interest in the matter, even among the general public. There is an increased confidence in the sensible management and carrying out of our scheme, as I may conclude from the readiness with

which people come forward with supplies, both in money and in other ways. Several have volunteered to place their names on the subscription list; fifteen ladies who do not belong to the visiting members, have engaged to cook for the poor on certain days: a wealthy butcher has promised us 4 lb. of meat weekly; bedding and clothing, old and new, have been sent to us, &c., and besides all this, since I wrote last, four working members have joined us. I rejoice especially in the good understanding that prevails among my colleagues, which hitherto, so far as I know, has been perfectly undisturbed, while their zeal and delight in their work seem at present to increase rather than diminish. They cannot, indeed, fail to perceive, that a great blessing does rest on personal visiting of the dwellings of misery, and this quite as much for ourselves as for the poor and suffering persons to whom we bring the little helps and alleviations at our command. These are, indeed, in a much higher sense, real benefits, than many of the richest gifts which people lavish, without making themselves acquainted with the actual condition of the needy, or caring about the disposal of the money they give. The poor, for the most part, feel this themselves, and while they often receive help from the City as a rightful tribute, without any thanks and even with murmurs that more does not fall to their share, we on the contrary, who come to them purely out of goodwill, often find ourselves overpaid for our exertions and fatigues

by their tears of gratitude, by their hearty blessings, by their confidence in us, and the influence on their moral and religious condition which this alone can give us.'

In the spring of this year, Miss Sieveking had to remove to another house in Hamburg with her adopted mother and her family, and the change threatened some discomfort, as the situation of the house, and of her future schoolroom, was noisy. Of this she says in conclusion, 'I am not left to busy myself with fears and anxieties for the future: perhaps it will all turn out better than I now think, and what can't be cured must be endured. If all things work together for good to them that love God, assuredly we must not grumble over the little contradictions and vexations of daily life.'

CHAPTER XXI.

1833—1837.

VISIT OF HER BROTHER AND SISTER—FIRST REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION — THE BURDEN OF BUSINESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES — THE ORIGINAL WISHES AND THOUGHTS CONTINUE — GROWTH OF THE ASSOCIATION — VISIT TO HER BROTHER — PROJECTED FOURTH COURSE OF CLASSES — THIRD REPORT — FURTHER THOUGHTS OF A SISTERHOOD OF MERCY—RETROSPECT OF HER LIFE.

IN the summer of 1833, Miss Sieveking enjoyed a visit from her brother and sister from England. At this time she published her first Report. It contained no printed rules, but the leading principles of those which she afterwards established were developed in it, and an account of the first year's working of the infant institution rendered to her fellow citizens. She had begun the work without possessing a single shilling for the purpose, but at the end of a year she recorded the receipt of 1,332 marks, 10 schillings.* The second year brought in 4,044 *m.* 20½*s.*, and more slowly, but quite as

* About 103*l.* English money.

surely, the number of working members also increased, from fourteen to twenty in the first year, in the second to twenty-five, although several were compelled by circumstances to retire. The enterprise gathered strength and shape, which can surprise no one who considers on the one hand the need that existed, and on the other the spirit which animated the foundress and head, of which a lasting memorial remains in the series of her printed Reports. These Reports will ever remain a pattern for all who concern themselves deeply with the care of the poor; for they contain, not idle abstractions or beautiful theories, but rather the practical results and experiences of an activity whose strength lay in the depths of Christian love, and was ever renewed and freshened from that living spring. There may be learnt the true character of the Christian visitor, and also how the voluntary Christian care of the poor must be regulated in order neither to overpass its aim nor to fall short of it. The moderation and ability, the reasonableness and sobriety, which were combined in the author in a peculiar degree, are here clearly brought out in their bearing on the circumstances of the poor; and the faith which worketh by love, in other words, the faith of Christ, is unhesitatingly and firmly laid down as the fundamental principle, though with all freedom and toleration of opinion. In these papers nothing is concealed, embellished or idealised, but neither is anything drawn in gloomy colours, or regarded from a desponding

point of view. The maxims of Christian wisdom appear clothed in the most modest dress, and we may see how clearly she understood how to use her remarkable talent for organization in the natural development of her institution, how to avoid dangers, prevent misunderstandings, make use of experience, and bide her time. Self-control was her strength; she watched for guidance from God, and never went beyond her appointed bounds, and therefore she never desired and strove for more than she could accomplish. This is shown in the history of her life, as well as in these Reports, the practical value of which will be best understood by those who have themselves attempted any similar work. The rules of the Sieveking Association have continued to be the model for all the institutions which have grown out of it, and its Reports have exactly expressed all that can be said of general interest respecting the working of public Female Associations.

She announced to Miss Hösch her intention of publishing her first Report, on the 15th July, 1833, and on this occasion remarks, after mentioning the immediate reasons for the publication, 'My views are shared by old Baron von Voght, Dr. P. Dr. A. and Dr. L., to whom, as zealous patrons of my undertaking, I showed the manuscript before printing. In fact, I believe that the thing speaks for itself, and that greater publicity cannot fail to obtain more general sympathy. Among the doctors of the poor it is already in good repute, however much

some of these gentlemen were at first set against it. Many of their unfavourable expressions early reached my ears : I took no notice of them, however, but went my way quietly, only taking diligent care that nothing should be neglected on our part to establish friendly relations with the medical men, and especially that nothing should happen which should give them any ground to complain of us, and justify their apprehensions. I have attained my aim. Only a few days since, one of these gentlemen told me of his own accord, that we had succeeded in overcoming the prejudice of himself and his colleagues against our work, and that now they had but one opinion amongst them as to its usefulness. My full name is to be attached to this little book. It would seem to me a sort of affectation to try to maintain my incognito, because my name must be known as the president to any one who takes an interest in the matter.'

The pressure of business naturally became more considerable with her new vocation, and only by degrees did she recover the necessary balance between her inward and her outward life. In describing this period to her pupils Miss Sieveking says—

‘How fared it, then, with my other duties apart from and beyond the Association? I must confess that all together they often became very toilsome. My mother had, indeed, many other companions, but the school itself, and the long walks to and from it, were often hard work.

At seven in the morning, I walked with a great basket of books to the city, (more than an hour's walk,) and paid visits to the poor; then I had school for three hours. Besides this, on every alternate Tuesday, I collected my former scholars about me, and at half-past six I had always to be back at Othmarschen. Four days in the week I generally went without any warm food. One of the children used to fetch me a pennyworth of buttermilk, which I took with a piece of bread. I had often declared that I did not know what nerves were, or how they should cause suffering: but at this time I learnt to understand it very well. I visited my friends indeed as often as I could, but there was not time for this every day. Meantime my mother had become totally blind, and needed more help and companionship; in particular she liked to hear reading, and I often read aloud to her in the evening from six or half-past till eleven. I never read so much in my life as at that time.'

In August she writes to Miss Hösch:

'You will see by the Report, that the duties of the President, which I have undertaken, require no small outlay of time, and that I deserve some little indulgence for my tardiness in letter-writing on this account. Meantime, amidst all this strain of exertion, I am very well. Last summer, I must own, I often felt a little overburdened with work. I could not always get through it, I felt at times quite unstrung,

and as if I were losing myself amidst such a crowd of external objects,—that is, I could not find the necessary time for quiet reflection and prayer, and to collect my mind in meditation on the Eternal. But now all this is different. I cannot indeed say, that I have less to do; on the contrary, as our work extends itself, I necessarily have more, but the business is more easily despatched, partly by help of practice, and partly because of the new impulse given to my mind by the pleasant experience of success. In short I feel cheerful and happy in my busy life. Among the enjoyments of it, I reckon the varied relations into which it brings me with people of the most diverse characters, and of all ranks in life. The observation of mankind in their different aspects, seems to me the most attractive of all studies.’

The blessing of God was visibly with her, and in August, 1834, she could say, in writing to her relatives in England, with her second Report, ‘I know you will rejoice that our enterprise goes on so well. Since the publication of this second Report, I have received many really astonishing proofs of sympathy and confidence from the most various quarters, subscriptions have been sent to me wholly unsolicited, and from time to time considerable sums placed at my disposal. There is indeed a noble amount of public spirit in our good city. Manifold as are the calls upon the benevolence of the public, every new institution may be sure of support, so soon as it shall be acknowledged to have a really

beneficial tendency. Indeed, I never felt so warm an affection for my fellow-citizens as now, when of course I feel bound by gratitude to so many who are personally unknown to me. And as I look on every trust as a great and sacred obligation, I feel myself a general debtor, and one who is scarcely likely ever to be able fully to pay all that I owe. But far from being oppressed by this feeling, it rather acts as a powerful spur to strive, by the devotion of all my powers, to realise that fair ideal of Christian care for the sick and poor, which has fired my mind ever since my eighteenth year. But if you ask me whether a secret vanity does not mingle in this feeling; alas, I cannot but admit it. The view of myself under this aspect often frightens me! But I trust in the correcting grace of God, that He will preserve me both by inward and outward guidance and humiliation, and not suffer me so shamefully to fall before the enemy which of all others I have most to fear. And will the Association one day make a way for me into the wards of our Infirmary? A presentiment of this, sometimes dim, and sometimes bright, makes me always look on it as the goal of my earthly course. There are hours when I cannot suppress a deep longing for its attainment.'

In the course of this month she accompanied her second nephew to Lübeck, where he was to attend the high school, and placed him to board with a family of relations. After giving her brother and sister on the

spot a true and particular account of all that had happened, she finishes her letter in Othmarschen and adds: 'You may well think it incomprehensible that I could not find time to finish this letter at Lübeck, and I must blame myself for my idleness. But I gave up my days so entirely to your sons and my friends that it was almost impossible to get a quarter of an hour to myself. Yet if I had gone to bed as late and risen as early as I usually do, I should have had the time I wanted. Such occasions prove to me how great is my natural indolence. I am convinced that had not God in His special mercy made my whole condition and the calling He has given me a mighty spur to earnest and diligent exertion, I should have been in great danger of sinking into disgraceful inertia.'

In the midst of the full and blessed activity of her new employment, the old thoughts and wishes still lived on in Amelia's heart. She closes a letter to her brother and sister on the 8th of September this year with these words: 'But there is something more which I would ask of you. I count strongly on the power of intercessory prayer. Will you, then, strengthen my poor prayer with your own, and help me to wrestle out from the throne of Grace the blessing which, since my eighteenth year, has been the object of my deepest desire, that the Lord would make me first inwardly and spiritually, and then in my outward condition, a sister of mercy, in the true sense of the fair ideal which floats

before my mind, and even now lends to my life its highest charm. Do not think me so ungrateful as not to acknowledge what my Saviour has done for me already, in giving so visible a blessing to our Association. But this is still not what I think of and aim at; that is something far nobler and fairer. I will gladly wait and be further trained for it. But — at last! at last!’

In a letter of October in this year, Miss Sieveking remarks, speaking of a child who had been somewhat severely reproached for a supposed want of feeling:— ‘Can then feeling be prescribed and controlled by another? I am convinced that in this matter the use of any authority, even that of parents, requires the most careful circumspection, and that, in most cases, complaints of a want of deep and warm feeling do not tend to excite warmth of heart, but have a directly contrary effect. And, then, what is to be the measure? Do we not always make it to be that of our own individual feelings, which never can be an unerring standard? Never let us forget how easy it is to mistake in judging of the feelings of another, and forming conclusions as to their real strength from their varying modes of expression.’

In a letter of March 1st, 1835, she says:—‘Of all other pleasures which the world has to offer, I have long taken a willing leave; but the society of people who are dear to me, and social intercourse with those who, though by no means agreeing with me in opinion, have yet some

weight with me by their individual character; animated conversation, and interchange of thought, all these things are to me, in a sense, a real mental necessity; they help to keep me from becoming worn out, and maintain a freshness of feeling which I would not willingly lose.'

She goes on to relate the increasing industrial activity of the Association, which in the following month was about to undertake the public sale of things made by the poor people:— 'In a week's time I hope our shop will be empty—the value of this little stock is about 1,000 marks.* You see that I reckon confidently on the public interest in this matter. Many details of the arrangement must be first discussed in our council-meeting. This council-meeting is a new arrangement, introduced in the course of this year; it is quite independent of the weekly meetings, and takes place once a month.

'Among our poor themselves, I must ever repeat it, the sum of our pleasant experiences far exceeds those of an opposite kind; and after all, the blessing and the gain which we bring home to our own life from the dwellings of the poor, is something which, in its full compass, those only can know who have experienced it themselves. Similar associations are about to be set on foot in St. George's, and in Altona.' Both these began this year.

Miss Sieveking again this summer enjoyed a visit from her beloved brother and sister from London. She

writes of it in September to Minna Hösch :—‘Both they and I feel that each opportunity of personal intercourse brings us into closer union with each other.’ About this time, as already mentioned, she lost her friend, Dr. Siemssen, by death, and she says in the same letter :—‘There was quite a peculiar charm in my friendship with him, begun at such a remarkable time, in the Cholera Hospital; it was something so unlike the common every-day course of things; my heart has bled painfully. Well, these ties will one day be knit again, and then in a holier and purer form.’

A letter to Miss Hösch, of April 10th, 1836, describes the close of one course of classes, and the expected beginning of another, and was written in the interval of greater leisure, which leisure would itself have seemed to many persons an over-abundance of business. She says :—‘My holidays have come to pass thus. A few days before Easter I dismissed, as being now ready for confirmation, the set of girls to whose instruction for the last eight years I have devoted so large a part of my time and strength; but I have no idea of giving up this branch of my employments. No; that would deprive me of an essential part of the happiness of my life; but I have for several reasons determined to postpone the beginning of a new course till after Ascension Day. I shall not want for occupation in the interval; besides the continual work for the Association, for the free school, for my former pupils, &c., there

are preparations to be made for the new course of classes, many arrears of business which must now be made up, and a double change of abode to be gone through—going into the country, and changing our town-house. Then the fourth Report has to be written, and lastly, I have determined at this time to set in order all my books, papers, correspondence, &c. ; and this is indeed no trifle. Then, when I shall have cleared my path in every direction, I shall return with quickened zeal to the circle of little ones, which I have newly formed around me, and devote myself with fresh love and interest to their education. My spirit rejoices in the thought of it, and I think to be a child again among the children, and with them and in them to renew my youth.'

In the same letter she says:—'And so you like my third Report; I am glad of it. I think I may say that it has made a favourable impression pretty generally. Whether the next will equal it in this respect, I know not, but I much doubt it. It is in the nature of things that it should become more difficult every year to treat such a subject in a really interesting manner, and it must in time be exhausted. It is only by bringing forward special cases that new life can be continually brought into it, but this plan too has its great difficulties. Well, for this time I am not afraid, for I have already collected more than a sufficient amount of matter, and possibly for the next ten years it may not fail me. Hitherto I have found no ground for the anxiety which

I felt when I wrote my first Report, lest there should be nothing left to say another time. I would gladly avoid the dry and tedious style, which has often annoyed me in reading similar accounts. It is an especial joy to me that my reports have done some good even abroad, and have excited people to imitate the work. Associations of the same kind have been formed, not only in St. George's and Altona, but at Zell, at Potsdam, and at Bonn; and another is projected in Bremen. . . . Here in our own town the thing is spreading; we have now thirty-two members. That my work grows too you will easily understand; and sometimes I am almost frightened at its amount. Imagine, that I must reckon at least seven hours in every week only for receiving the poor people, who come to me with their different petitions. And this is but the smallest part of my business; the poor must be visited in their houses, and I have many long walks on their behalf to the doctors, the guardians, and other authorities; and lastly, what takes the largest outlay of time, is the quantity of writing required for the conduct of the whole affair, not to mention the general meeting every week, and the special council-meeting once a month. I have been advised by several people to make a greater subdivision of the work, but hitherto I have not found this practicable. Assuredly it is no part of my plan to do all myself, and leave the talents of my colleagues unemployed. On the contrary, I make use to the utmost of the ability

and zeal I find in them. The maxim on which I have acted, and which hitherto I have found verified, is, that in such societies the individual members will only take an interest in the working of the whole body in proportion as they feel that they themselves contribute to it, and that not without exertion and self-sacrifice. Many branches of the administration — for instance, the management of the funds, the giving out of spinning and knitting-work, &c.— I have entrusted entirely to different members, only reserving to myself the right of requiring occasional accounts of them. But it appears to me that I cannot give up anything that concerns the conduct of the affair as a whole, without injury to the needful unity and order. And yet, if our sphere of labour should enlarge in any important degree, some help for this must be found, for to do much more than I am doing already seems to me really impossible, unless, indeed, God should either increase my strength, or find an opening for me in some other way. All this will adjust itself, although at present I see not how. I have experienced this in like cases. I have taken work on myself, or had it put upon me by others, which at length has become too much for me. Then I go quietly on, putting out all my strength, and often I have found that it has increased under the strain. But if the burden really grows too great, then there always comes some way to lighten it. Thus, at first, when our work was much more limited than it is now, I was almost weighed down

with the labour imposed upon me of receiving verbal reports from all the members, and afterwards reducing them to writing myself. I complained of this difficulty to a friend, and he advised me to make the visitors themselves give in their reports in writing. I saw great difficulties in this; but at length these were all thoroughly set aside, and the most important advantages soon developed themselves from the new arrangement, while an amount of work was taken off me, under which I must have sunk at last, had things continued in the old way.'

Miss Sieveking's eldest nephew had chosen the profession of medicine, and she writes to her brother on this subject in September 1836:—'What has been my own aim in life, ever since my eighteenth year, has naturally led me to take great interest in the medical profession. Latterly I have been brought into contact, in a variety of ways, with men who belong to it, and this nearer acquaintance has in no degree lessened my interest; yet, indeed, I cannot be ignorant of the many dangers by which it is beset. The greatest of these seems to me to be, the prevailing inclination not merely to deistical, but even to purely materialistic opinions. God grant that our Edward may be preserved from such a danger, and may keep firm hold on the true faith of the Gospel! Let him but remember that the physician in many cases but half fulfills his high and noble mission to be the helper and comforter

of suffering humanity, if he looks only to the bodily sickness of his patients, if he knows not how to prescribe healing medicines for the wounds of their soul : and where shall such a medicine be found, save in a living faith ? Inestimable, in my opinion, is the amount of good which may be effected by a really believing physician (alas ! that we so seldom see such an one), even in the cure of souls. Certainly, in many cases, he can do more than the clergyman himself.'

The financial affairs of the society were now rearranged by Miss Sieveking, in a more complicated, but also more business-like form : in this she had two points in view—one, so to divide the business, as that none of her ladies should be overtasked ; the other, to secure the most exact supervision of the whole : for this purpose she obtained the co-operation of two gentlemen. After relating the particulars to her brother, she continues : — ' But what will you say when I tell you that I have quite decided to make public my ideas regarding the foundation of a Sisterhood of Mercy ? What seems a most fitting opportunity now presents itself, so perfectly unsought-for, that I think I ought not to neglect it. The matter is as follows : the Medical Association, to which most of our best and most respected physicians belong, proposes to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its foundation by the publication of a Medical Topography of Hamburg and its territory. The celebration will not take place till the year 1841. But

as the work is intended to be very thorough and comprehensive, they are already beginning to collect materials, and the five persons who are entrusted with the editorship are looking out for assistance. These five gentlemen have proposed to me to undertake that portion of the work which is to treat of societies for nursing the sick. I have willingly accepted the proposal, because it will give me an opportunity to throw some light on the subject, from a purely medical point of view; about which I think there is a good deal to be said, which cannot find so fit a place in the Yearly Report. And then it will come in so naturally, to speak of that of which my heart is full,—of the blessings which the establishment of a Sisterhood of Mercy would bring with it. And precisely in this place I think that a word so spoken would not be altogether without result! No doubt, in order to give a true impression of the want, we must dwell on the defects of the paid nursing in our General Infirmary, and many disgraceful incidents, which are, alas! too common there, must be brought to light; and the question then comes, will the editors allow of this? Well, we shall see; in any case the attempt must and shall be made. From the first, it has been my principle to do nothing of my own will, but step by step to follow my Saviour's guiding sign. But does it not seem, indeed, that He is verily leading me to the goal? * The time I must quietly leave to His wisdom

* This proposal was never carried out.

to determine, and indeed it needs no special goodness to wait His season patiently. I am so deeply happy in the employment which my God provides for me in the meanwhile. Yes, dear ones, I feel myself anew so closely linked to the pleasant world of happy childhood, that I often fear I should prove too weak to tear myself away from it, if I should be called to something higher. Then, however, He Himself would loosen these ties. Oh, if you could but see the joyous life we lead in my schoolroom! Then you would rightly prize the amount of happiness that is renewed to me every day.'

The next letter despatched to her brother, in March 1837, though begun long before, is a remarkable one, because she there takes a retrospect of her whole life, and being now in the fulness of her strength, and in the midst of the duties of her calling, raises a song of thankfulness and praise. Although the letter naturally refers to many things already mentioned here, the essential parts of it cannot fail to be valuable. She begins on the day after Christmas: — 'I should like to tell you, that you too may rejoice and give thanks with me, how deeply my heart is stirred, when I look back on the year which will soon be passed away, and call to mind the many thousand blessings which have fallen to my lot during its course. Certainly, if my calling were a burden to me, my life would be a slavery indeed, since nearly every minute is occupied by it; but now that in that very calling the fairest fountains of

happiness are opened to me, my days afford an almost unbroken succession of pleasures and enjoyments. No doubt this has not always been the aspect of my life.' (Then follows a description of the sadness and troubles of her childhood and early youth, while she was yet seeking and found not.) 'It was at that time that, in a dramatic piece which I never finished, I put into the mouth of the great villain of the story the words: "There are two ways to distinguish oneself: the way of good and the way of evil: and he who hesitates between the two is a weakling and a coward." The exact words have remained in my memory, because I was pleased with myself at the time for having found so striking an expression for a powerful thought. But will it not seem strange to you, if I say that at that time the doubt sometimes pressed upon me, which of these two ways would prove to be mine; and that the question never shaped itself within me, as one whose decision depended on my own choice—it seemed to me as if the decision must come from without, and did not lie within the power of my will? And was I then deceived in this presentiment? Is not the question, as I assuredly hope, decided for my weal in time and in eternity, by the victory of faith over unbelief? And did this decision depend on my own will? Such a will was altogether wanting in me. No, it was the work of Divine Grace, working through manifold inward and outward providences on my resisting heart, until it drew me to itself.

But this was a very gradual process, and many an instrument was made to conduce to this end, which the short-sighted wisdom of man would have rejected as quite unfit.' (She mentions here the rationalistic work of Salzmann, 'Heaven upon Earth.') 'The thought there expressed, that it is folly to expect a heaven beyond the grave, unless we have in a certain sense found it here below, took hold upon me, and from that moment I determined that I would never rest till I had found it. I subjected every rule of faith or practice which I received to this test,—whether it would help to build up a heaven upon earth for me; and yet there were not wanting persons who blamed my religious views, as tending to melancholy and gloom! Now, truly, a heaven *only* upon earth was not what I desired; mine must have a further scope, and then I perceived, that many things which others called delights and pleasures, would not fit in with it, at least not in my case. This caused me many peculiar discomforts in my relations with others, because things in which they took a lively interest excited none in me. In a certain sense I may well say that I was never young; but now that I have found the proper element of my life, I feel such a spring and freshness within me, that I could almost boast that I shall never be old. Paul Gerhardt's verse, which many years ago took such a wonderful hold on me, and seemed to penetrate my very soul, when I

heard it sung at a Christmas festival, might now be the motto of my life :

My heart within me springs,
It can no more be sad,
For very joy it laughs and sings,
Sees naught but sunshine glad.
The sun that glads mine eyes
Is Christ the Lord I love :
I sing for joy of that which lies
Stored up for me above.

It is true, dear ones, that the chief part of all that gladdens you and me still belongs to earth; and yet is it not equally true that there runs through all a clue which attaches it to that which is above, and it is this connection only which preserves all enjoyment from becoming hollow and empty? To bind heaven and earth together, seems to me to be the innermost core of the most cheerful philosophy of life, but without the Gospel, how can this ever be accomplished? — As many as are the members of my large family of children and poor people, so many ways seem to me to be opened for me to the throne of mercy of my God, and how rich and joyful are the experiences granted to me by His compassion! I recollect that on the last Christmas eve in my father's house, I felt vexed with myself because I could not enjoy the presents, as I used to do in earlier days. More than Christmas joy is now my portion, when such rich gifts for my poor people flow in, often quite unexpectedly, and often without the names of the givers.

The joy of the little ones round the lighted fir-tree may be louder—deeper and sweeter it certainly is not. And yet these gifts form but a small part of the happiness which falls to my lot as President of our Association. How many other things occur to afford me a sweeter pleasure still! Now it is a tear of joy in the eyes of a sick man comforted by the Gospel, now a blessing from dying lips; then the sight of a poor family permanently rescued from destitution, or a good character of some poor person employed at our recommendation: I cannot count up all these things—but I can assure you that my heart often runs over with thankful joy. But people frequently say to me, on the other hand, “Surely the sight of so much misery must be very trying, and you must also experience much that is very bitter.” But I cannot honestly say that I find it so. To begin with, you know that, thanks to my strong bodily constitution, I am not so easily affected in health as a person of weak nerves might be by the sight of so much misery, and even physically I am steeled against painful impressions by my cheerful religious faith. I can weep with them that weep, but never shall a murmuring “Wherefore?” rise to heaven on their account from my lips. I see in all suffering, not the rod of chastisement only, but the Father’s hand that wields it; not only the bitter cup, but the loving careful Physician by whom it is administered. And what of the experience of ingratitude or other unworthiness among the poor?

In the first place, we have to set against this a far larger amount of pleasant experiences: and what there are of the bitterer kind, are sweetened to me by that hopeful faith, which is always a ruling and living principle in my heart. I mean, that I firmly believe in the existence of something Divine in man, even in his lowest state, and as firmly I trust in the power of God's mercy, which at some period or other,—though perhaps far off in eternity, but still certainly at some period,—will quicken into a clear flame the spark that now glimmers deep under the ashes; and then will it be plainly seen, that every work of love attempted towards such a soul, though seeming utterly in vain at the time, has yet contributed to its eternal salvation in the end. —In October last the finances of our Association were in a bad condition; we had a deficit of from 700 to 800 marks.* Some of the members were quite in despair. For myself; I can assure you, the thing never cost me a quarter of an hour's painful anxiety. I knew, indeed, that we must spread all our sail, to set the little vessel of our finances afloat again if possible, but I kept up a good heart, that it would come right, that God would not withdraw His hand from His own work, and behold! it is even so, and far beyond my expectations. I sent round a subscription list from house to house in several streets, and in a short time the deficit was filled up. But even here I learnt something of the deceitfulness of human

* About 45l.

calculations. Persons, of whom I had fancied that they could not refuse a subscription, put nothing down ; while others, to whom I should never have thought of applying personally, partly because I did not know them even by name, helped our work in the most generous manner, and with the kindest readiness. As soon as we had once more a couple of hundred marks in our treasury, I stopped the collection of subscriptions : I adhere firmly to the principle of never going begging to people, unless we are driven to it by the most pressing necessity. I have no pleasure in it or courage for it else. "Give us this day our *daily* bread," is said in the Lord's Prayer, and I think that the comment on these words in our Hamburg Hymn-book is in the spirit of our Saviour —

Not for distant days we plead,
Give to-day our daily bread ;
To-morrow shall another call
See to-morrow's manna fall.

Of course the case is different when a large gift comes unsought-for, as it happened in the beginning of December, when permission was given us, on occasion of the opening of the Johannis-Kloster, to have a collecting box for the benefit of the Association held at the doors. The produce of this collection surpassed my utmost hopes, for within a week it brought us in a sum of more than 1,000 marks,* and so, by the last account sent in to me, we have still more than 1,200 marks † in hand.

* About 60%.

† A little over 70%.

CHAPTER XXII.

PROPOSAL OF PASTOR FLIEDNER — MISS SIEVEKING'S REFUSAL, AND THE REASONS FOR IT — PRESS OF BUSINESS — FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE THEN CROWN PRINCESS OF DENMARK — HER OWN ILLNESS — DEATH OF MADAME BRÜNNEMANN — REFLECTIONS UPON IT — INSTRUCTION IN THE SEMINARY — GIFT OF A SITE FOR THE BUILDING OF DWELLINGS FOR THE POOR — ARRANGEMENTS AFTER THE DEATH OF HER ADOPTED MOTHER — PECUNIARY POSITION — SOCIABILITY AND HAPPINESS.

IN the midst of her happy and fruitful labours as the foundress of a work which unfolded itself every day into fuller and fairer results, and together with the instruction of her beloved children filled up her whole time, and satisfied every want of her heart and mind, Amelia could not receive a call which came to her at this period quite as she might have done some years before ; unless she would depart from her fixed principle, always to attend first to the nearest duties, and seek in them the signs of God's providential guidance. The above mentioned letter to her brother, begun at Christmas 1836, was not continued till the end of March, Easter Tuesday 1837. On resuming it, she says :—‘ I could not

devote to my dear brother and sister even the little leisure which the first two days of this festival season offered. They belonged to a person who six weeks ago was a total stranger to me, but may, perhaps, in consequence of a proposal he has made to me, exercise an important influence over the whole course of my life. Oh! how much, how very much I have to tell you about this! But I *must* write briefly. In the middle of February I had a letter from Pastor Fliedner, of Kaiserswerth, near Düsseldorf, as secretary of the "Evangelical Association for Christian Nursing in Rhenish Westphalia," in which he gives me an account of the foundation of this Association, which is no other than—a Sisterhood of Mercy in our own Evangelical Church! The thing has been actually in existence since the 13th of last October. A suitable building is purchased, in which twenty patients are now under the care of four nursing deaconesses; three school deaconesses, and one prison deaconess, have already offered themselves. The rules, which have been communicated to me, appear to be drawn up with great judgment. The administration of the whole is in the hands of a most respectable body of directors, of whom the Regierungs-Präsident Graf Stolberg is the head. Everything promises good success; but one essential matter is still wanting. Among the nurses there is not one who is suited to be the head, and this post is only partially and temporarily filled at this time by Pastor Fliedner's wife, who

cannot of course even reside in the institution. And now they come to me with the enquiry whether I could be willing to undertake the place. Need I describe to you, at length, how this proposal has stirred my heart to its innermost depths? Oh, you have known its longing desire for so many years, that I need not. For a whole week it cost me much pains so far to quiet my mind, as that I might hope to hear clearly the voice of God within me. With Him the decision must rest. Now I think that I have received His bidding, and have framed my answer accordingly. I long much to hear your opinion upon the whole affair; though I must candidly say beforehand, that I cannot unconditionally rest the final decision on any human counsel. It is one of those things which must be finally determined alone with God. Only thus far for the present: my answer is neither a decided acceptance nor refusal; it is coupled with certain conditions, and thus the decision is placed in higher hands, because the fulfilment of these conditions rests neither with Pastor Fliedner nor myself at our own choice. To one wish of the Society I would at once accede, as it thoroughly coincides with my own. It is that I should personally visit the Institution, and this, I think, it must be possible to manage in the course of the summer, however great may be the difficulties in the way of my leaving my present post for six weeks. The Society has offered to pay the expenses of my journey; but of course I do not mean to avail myself of

this, although, thanks to the many wants of my poor folks, I am never burdened with too full a purse.'

In a letter to Minna Hösch of August of the same year, we see how the matter further developed itself. After speaking of this first proposal from the Administrative Council at Kaiserswerth, she continues:—'I promised in my reply to pay a visit to the Institution in the course of the summer, but begged them in the meantime to seek diligently for another Superior: only if all their efforts should prove fruitless could I possibly entertain the call, in the fear lest my refusal should then occasion the failure of so good a work, and one which lies so near to my heart. But now, although I have received a second letter about six weeks ago, telling me that as yet no one is found to be at the head, and earnestly pressing the call on me, my view of the matter has altered, and I think I shall send a decided refusal. Not that my interest in the cause is abated; but partly because I have come to the conviction that I am not necessary to its permanence, and partly because the motives which require me to remain here have strengthened in my eyes. The accounts of the progress of the Institution sound so encouraging, that there seems to me no doubt that the Lord will continue His blessing to the work, and assuredly He is not tied to do so through my individual instrumentality. . . The reasons that keep me here—which, as you may suppose, are chiefly connected with my aged adopted mother, my circle of children, and the Association founded by me—

have gained strength from the wish expressed in the most various quarters, and certainly with the greatest earnestness and sincerity, that I should remain. All the members of the Association especially seem more or less of opinion, that the work to which they so cheerfully and lovingly devote a part of their powers will be ruined by my absence, or at least will suffer a very great blow. Certainly at the present moment I do not know of anyone in whom the outward and inward qualifications necessary for a President are so united, as that I could in full confidence name her to succeed me, and in fact I believe that it will be on the whole an easier thing to find a suitable person for the situation at Kaiserswerth than for the one which I now fill. It must be remembered, that there the Superior will have a powerful support and stay in the administrative body, which with us is altogether wanting. Without any such defence I had to fight my way, in the beginning, against a most decided opposition and real enmity in many quarters, where our religious influence was especially an object of suspicion. Now I think I may say that this hostility is almost entirely removed, but how easily might it revive under altered circumstances. And then I cannot but acknowledge in the confidence with which many of my neighbours have met me, and in the liberality with which they support my schemes, a kind of sacred obligation towards them which I can no otherwise discharge than by continuing the work begun under their patronage. And

who can tell whether it may not, at some future day, be granted to me to establish a similar institution to the one at Kaiserswerth, here in our dear native city? I have availed myself of the proposal which has been made to me, for the purpose of sounding people's minds on this subject, and I have found the medical men especially most favourably disposed; several of the most respectable and influential men of that profession have promised to give me a helping hand, in case I should ever undertake a work of this kind. Under these circumstances, I have given up the thoughts of a journey to the Rhine, although Edward made it much more tempting by his suggestion that I should connect with it a visit to England. I was afraid of raising false hopes by appearing at Kaiserswerth, and of making it harder to myself to say no: and, besides, I could not expect so much good to come of a mere visit, as would outweigh the sacrifice that must be made in breaking away from my home avocations, though but for six or eight weeks. . . . Perhaps many people would see, in the way I write of all this, a foolish kind of self-exaltation. But to affect to think less of one's own services than one really does, seems to me no true humility; the essence of that, as I think, lies in a lively sense that it is in very truth God's grace only which works by us.'

To what extent Miss Sieveking's time and strength were engrossed by her present employments, the following short description in the same letter to Miss Hösch may

serve to show. She writes, in excuse of the increasing infrequency of her letters:—‘Let me, for instance, describe to you how, as a rule, I spend three days in the week—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—during the summer. On Tuesday I get up at half-past four, and am employed for the children till six. I take my breakfast while I am at work. At six I set off for the city, and arrive at the Town Hall about a quarter after seven. Here there are generally about twenty or more poor people waiting to speak to me. This lasts till half-past eight, when I go to our own house, and look through any notes that have come for me, or prepare something more for my school, and if there is any time left before lessons begin, I take another walk, either to call on some of the poor people, or go on their errands to the doctor for the poor, the guardians, and the like. At ten o’clock my little ones come to me, and stay till near two. At half-past two, I go to the Free School, where I give religious instruction till half-past three. The time from half-past three till five is filled up with errands or writing for the Association. At five some of my former scholars assemble, and I first have a regular Bible lesson with them; then we drink tea and converse, and towards the end of our time I generally tell them anything likely to interest them in the way of literature or general subjects. At eight o’clock they separate. Meantime the visiting reports from the ladies of the Association have been sent in. These reports,

much more than a hundred in number, must now be looked through, many things taken note of, and the visits newly apportioned. This work employs me as long as I can keep awake ; but I cannot finish it before bed-time. Next morning up again at half-past four, and then I set to work to correct the children's exercises. At a quarter after seven to the Town Hall again, to see the poor people. From a quarter past eight to twelve, school. Work for the Association generally fills up the time till three. Precisely at three I go again to the Town Hall for the weekly meeting of the Association, which lasts till half-past four. About five o'clock I return home, and find a troop of poor children, from sixteen to twenty in number, to whom I give religious instruction. After they are dismissed, at six, I have either compositions to correct, and so forth ; or, more usually, I visit the poor till about nine. Then, for the last hours of this day, I generally go to some of my good friends, to refresh myself a little with their society and conversation. Thursday morning it is just the same, except that the children only stay till a quarter past eleven, instead of twelve. But then at half-past eleven come my former pupils dismissed last Easter, and I employ myself with them in the same way as with the older girls on Tuesday afternoon. First a Bible lesson, then luncheon, and last, the reading of some good poetical work ; we are now employed upon Herder's "Cid." At half-past two they separate. Then there is always

much for me to arrange. When that is done, I set off for Othmarschen, visiting some poor people by the way, and arrive about half-past six at my good mother's house, to whom the remainder of the evening belongs; and when I have fortified myself with a meal, I read or talk to her. You will see there is no mention of any dinner-time on these three days, and, in fact, I take none. An occasional slice of bread and butter, a hard-boiled egg, or a bit of cold meat, generally eaten standing, I find quite sufficient. Saturday, when I walk to the city at 6 A.M., and about half-past six return to Othmarschen, passes just in the same way. On the other days which I spend quietly at Othmarschen, the time when I am not with my mother is so entirely filled up with preparation for my school, writing for the Association, and so forth, that although I am regularly at work by five o'clock in the morning, many days I cannot manage to set foot in the garden. Besides the regular course of business, there are always extra matters; such as preparing the very minute quarterly reports of the children, the composition of the yearly reports of the work of our Association, answers to enquiries from a distance, &c.'

In the summer of 1838, Miss Sieveking was once more gladdened by a visit from her relations from England, and she writes of it to Miss Hösch in the beginning of 1839:—‘My brother and sister's visit stands out as a bright spot in my summer life,—they

were so especially affectionate and hearty in their behaviour to me, and I mixed with them in so many circles of friends, of which I have much more enjoyment now, in my riper years, than I had in my youth. The reverse is generally the case; but for the pleasure which young people find in social life I had scarcely any natural taste, and then I was extremely shy; I understood neither how to give nor to take. Now that my mind is more open, and I have more power of receiving impressions from others and communicating my own, almost every company affords me the opportunity of interesting conversation or observation.'

On occasion of a visit of the Crown Prince and Princess of Denmark to Hamburg, Miss Sieveking became personally acquainted with the latter, with whom she had already had some intercourse, in consequence of having sent her the First Report; the intimacy was afterwards kept up and strengthened by correspondence, and by Miss Sieveking's visits to the noble lady at Sorgenfrei, after she became Queen, and subsequently Queen Dowager. On this occasion, when she first met her at the Rauhe Haus, at Horn, near Hamburg, which their Highnesses were inspecting, she was greatly attracted by her, and expresses it thus in the above quoted letter to Miss Hösch: — 'The Crown Princess spoke to me quite in a friendly manner, asked for my Reports, &c. You know that she takes a warm interest in philanthropic schemes. I felt very quiet and un-

constrained. The time of shyness, and fear of the face of man, is over for me; and rank and dignity have lost too much of their dazzling light in my eyes, for me to feel confused by the honour done me. But the morning was a most interesting one. The observation of persons of the most varied position in society has always had a peculiar charm for me; but our own situation in life certainly loses nothing of its value or its attraction by being compared with that of these great people. I would not exchange with any one of them.'

In the last days of this year, Miss Sieveking was attacked with sickness, a very unusual visitation for her. A severe cold, accompanied with gastric fever, obliged her, much against her will, to submit to her physician's orders, and keep her bed for a week. Sooner than he desired, she rose, and returned to her wonted labours, her bodily frame yielding to the energy of her will, and itself gaining strength under the exertion. Meantime her blind and aged adopted mother had been growing gradually weaker, and in June 1839 the long expected event took place, and Amelia lost her truly motherly friend by a blessed and peaceful death. She writes to her brother in July, describing it:—'Scarcely was I recovered when my good mother's bodily and mental suffering assumed an increasingly serious character. For the two last months of her life, she rambled almost constantly in her talk, which, as I have experienced, is peculiarly trying to the bystanders. Yet of two things

I was very glad—first, that she was always satisfied with those immediately about her, that she knew me to the last moment of her life, was always affectionate and tender to me, and that I was almost the only person she asked for when absent; and secondly, that even on this last darkened path the light of faith shone upon her. If I had read the newspaper to her, she certainly could not have understood it; but I often succeeded in tranquillising her with a chapter of the Bible, or a hymn. Through all her fancies, which were wild enough at times, she still rested in the conviction that, after all, nothing could happen but as God pleases. On the last day of her life, when she could scarcely speak intelligibly, she called me to her and said, “All bondage is at an end now: nothing but joy and thankfulness!” and about an hour later: “He has verily appeared to me; my Saviour stands before me, and mercy! nothing but mercy!” Soon after she was dead.’

Miss Sieveking afterwards told her pupils, ‘It made my heart shrink to see my dear mother grow weaker and weaker in mind, but then too I learnt that our earthly garment is *but* a garment, and that the hidden germ of everlasting life beneath it may increase and grow while the earthly life is vanishing away. When I first came into my mother’s house, her principles were completely rationalistic, but now, perhaps helped by my companionship, she had become much more impressed with the truths of the Gospel.’ To the above account

of her last days she added, 'She fell asleep in my arms, and I am certain that our Lord has received her to His mercy.'

Amelia naturally looked upon this death as a serious turning-point in her own life, and in writing to her brother she goes on to say:—

'Although it is not in the nature of the case that her departure should fill me with deep grief, yet it is a call to most serious reflection. A relation of twenty-eight years' standing is dissolved, a connection to which, though I will not deny that latterly it brought me much that was burdensome, I yet owe many rich blessings, and which would doubtless have been much more blessed to me if I had done my part with more faithfulness and love. The sense of many faults presses on me, for which indeed I hope for free forgiveness, but yet for which perhaps *penance* must be done.

'It is a peculiar feeling, and one I never knew before in my whole life, to stand so utterly alone—not in the world, thank God! I cannot say that—but in my own house. For so many years past, let me come home when I would, I was always wished for and welcomed; so long as I was out of the house, I must always measure my time exactly. Now I may come and go, no one asks a question about it—and to me this is something very melancholy.

'Thank you for your affectionate invitation to come to England, which certainly I cannot altogether refuse;

only I do not think it will be advisable to take the earliest time for it. For one thing, you see, I think it right, before I allow myself so pleasant a diversion, to get used to my solitude, and to set my own heart in order in respect of many things that belong both to the past and the future. I do not like the custom of those who, when they have a burden laid upon them, seek to find ease by throwing it off for a while; when the time comes for taking it up again, it seems doubly hard and oppressive. No; I must first attain to such a point, — and I have no doubt that I shall attain it, — that whatever now seems hard in my situation shall be easy and even dear to me. Then, and not till then, I may change it for another for a little while.

‘Another weighty, though purely external reason, there is against it. Before I leave Hamburg I must have it settled where I am to be next winter. The house which I now inhabit is let from next Ascension term, but it is of course the interest of the heirs to let it, if possible, until Martinmas. I should be very glad to see it so let that I could retain the lower rooms, which in every respect suit me so well. . . . From what I have said, you will understand that I do not (at least at the present moment) contemplate an entire change of my position, such as entering on the Infirmary service, or the like. In such a matter, dear and important as it is to me, I would undertake nothing of my own will. I hold it to be a very doubtful thing to give an altered direction

to one's whole course of life only at the suggestion of one's own mind, and without a distinct indication of Providence. And hitherto I do not think that I have received any such guiding sign. I enjoy in my present situation a happy, and I think I may say, a continually enlarging sphere of work. The confidence reposed in me by my neighbours, which really makes me very happy, secures me full play for all my powers, so far as they can reach. I find a sweet satisfaction in having my assistance claimed by all sorts of people, for all sorts of purposes, and feeling that I am pretty generally looked upon as one who does not belong to herself, but is called of God to be the servant of all who need her help or counsel.

‘A new undertaking has been added to my former principal ones; namely, the foundation of a seminary, as I may call it, for governesses. Little girls will be trained there for this employment whose parents belong to the higher classes, but are reduced in circumstances. They will be received without payment. All the appointed teachers, male and female, will work without pecuniary recompense, simply for the sake of doing good; and I have succeeded in securing some very fair talent for the purpose. Besides Pastor Mönckeberg, and a very good writing and ciphering master, several young ladies of the first families will take part in the Institution, and some of my own former scholars. The lady at whose house the children assemble is a foreigner, Madame Lichtenberg,

from Cassel, whom a remarkable ordering of Providence brought hither; she is a very sweet woman, who has attached herself very closely to me. The school opened last Tuesday; to-day I am to give my first lesson there, on religion and the exercise of the understanding. Miss Lotte Graeve, who formerly had a well-established school of her own, is the directress of the whole. The entire arrangement gives me great pleasure.

‘I have another happiness just now, in the granting of our petition for the gift of a site for building our proposed model lodging-houses. Details on this subject will be found in my Seventh yearly Report.’ She then asks her brother to send her any accounts he can of existing institutions of the same sort in England, and adds:—‘I must own, that if you could open to me a pleasant prospect in this respect during my visit to London, it would be a great spur to me to hasten my journey.’ She was not yet clear as to her future pecuniary position, and therefore thankfully accepted her brother’s offer to pay the expenses of this journey; and after expressing her uncertainty as to what she had to expect, she ends with the words:—‘This circumstance causes me very slight anxiety. I have learnt to manage with a little, and what I really need will be sure to come to me in some way or other.’

She now succeeded according to her wish, in letting Madame Brünneemann’s town house, with the exception of two lower rooms which were necessary to her for her school,

which she had at a moderate rent. There was no longer any hindrance on this account to her visit to England : but there were difficulties enough besides. She thought she could not stay away more than three weeks, and she writes to her brother on the 10th of August : ‘ In any case it costs some trouble to get away for so long : but for the next week or so it cannot be done ; there are so many things that require my presence just now. For instance, there is the final contract to be drawn with the builder to whom we have entrusted the erection of our model lodging-house, and also the one with Dr. Moraht for the Children’s Hospital, which is to form part of it. Here at home there has been as yet no regular inventory taken of the property left by my good mother ; and as I consider myself now a sort of steward for her heirs, I would not willingly leave my post until I had provided for the account I may one day have to give of these things.’

Her brother had announced his readiness to furnish any help which might be wanting in a pecuniary point of view, and her answer is too characteristic to be omitted here. She writes :—‘ I cannot indeed accept your proposal in its full extent ; that would be far too much for me. But neither will I quite refuse what your brotherly affection so kindly offers me, especially as I wish to have my school-room painted and carpeted afresh before winter, and I shall want to buy two or three things to complete my future arrangements. Moreover, I may

tell you that several of the parents of my pupils have urged me in the kindest manner to make a call upon their purses. I have answered that I can hardly make up my mind to receive payment in any sense for my instruction, but that if I should want it, if I should find myself in difficulty, I would frankly apply to them. It is not difficult to me to ask, and thankfully receive, help. Owing to the carelessness with which I have always allowed myself to treat my material interests, I cannot really say with precision how much I shall require; but having since I was very young always acknowledged the truth of the Platonic maxim, "To want nothing is divine, to want little is to approach to the gods," it is my fixed principle to consume no more than I really want. Not that I mean to reduce myself to the minimum of absolute necessity—only to the minimum of that which my position in the world requires, and which is above all needed for free and unimpeded activity in my appointed sphere of employment. You, dear ones, may be satisfied for the present with the assurance that as far as money is concerned I am thoroughly content with my position, and that I find it much more comfortable to have rich friends than to be rich myself; and I thank God for saving me from the "embarras des richesses."

In September of this year she writes to Minna Hösch:—

‘Among the things which occupy more of my time

than they used to do, I must reckon my social engagements. I have more claims of this kind made upon me, and I will not deny that I am very willing to admit them. Don't you remember what old Miss Dimpfel used to say of herself — "I am a gregarious animal?" I think I must reckon myself one of the same race. Every fortnight she paid a visit to her cousin, Mr. Sieveking, the Syndic, and his family, at their country-seat at Ham, near Hamburg, where she felt much at home and very happy. He was the son of that remarkable person, her aunt Mrs. Sieveking, so often mentioned, and she possessed in this distinguished man a friend and counsellor in the true sense of the words. Foreigners and natives assembled at his house in unrestrained and spirit-stirring companionship, and the best interests of humanity were there discussed with the freedom and intelligence which result from a high cultivation both of heart and mind. Dr. Wichern, of the neighbouring 'Rauhe Haus,' was here a valued friend and guest. The progress of the Home Mission excited the warmest sympathy, and the great ideas of the newly-awakened Christian life which were contemporaneously stirring in many of the deepest minds found the truest response in a circle whose soul and centre, the master of the house, combined in himself the advantages of varied mental culture, great knowledge of the world and of mankind, with a singularly unprejudiced understanding and most active intellect. This intercourse proved very

animating and helpful to all active minds who took part in it, and Miss Sieveking was vividly conscious of the advantage of such a recreation. She had offered to give religious instruction to the eldest daughter, an offer which had been joyfully accepted; and after describing these pleasures she breaks out again with the words, ‘My dearest Minna, I am very, very happy! With this assurance, with which I fain would give glory to my God and Saviour, let me end my letter.’

CHAPTER XXIII.

1839—1842.

VISIT TO HER RELATIONS IN LONDON — ATTACK OF ILLNESS — SUCCESS OF THE ASSOCIATION — REFUSAL OF A PROPOSAL FROM THE HAMBURG INFIRMARY — BUILDING AND ARRANGEMENTS OF THE MODEL LODGING-HOUSE, AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL—ENLARGEMENT AND ENRICHMENT OF HER WORK — JOURNEY TO BREMEN.

IN October 1839 the long-projected journey to London took place, and Miss Sieveking enjoyed a few weeks of intercourse with her brother and sister, full of interest and refreshment both for mind and body. She visited many benevolent institutions in London, and became acquainted with several well-known personages in this particular line—Mrs. Fry, Lady Bentinck, and others—mentioned in the interesting journal which she kept at this time. When she returned to Hamburg, such a rush of business of the most various kinds came upon her that it was a hard matter to get through it, and perhaps in consequence of this she was attacked by a strange fit of illness, which she mentions in her first

letter to her brother, bearing date November the 8th. 'On the 28th of October,' she there says, 'we had an auction in our house, which was to be continued on the 29th. In the morning I had risen at my usual early hour, without feeling at all unwell. I breakfasted, read and wrote as usual, when suddenly there came upon me, not a fainting-fit, but a total loss of consciousness. I have since looked at what I had written : the last word was finished, in the proper connection, and with a perfectly firm hand, but it broke off in the midst of a sentence. As I was all alone in the room, I cannot exactly say how long this unnatural state lasted. At half-past seven the maid came in, and perceived by my staring look and unconnected speech that something strange had happened to me. I could not in the least remember that we had had an auction the day before ; but perhaps it was a sign of returning sense, that I myself concluded from this loss of memory that I must be ill and desired to have the doctor ; when he came I was able to speak and answer his questions. He ordered me to go to bed at once, and impressed upon the people that I must be kept perfectly quiet and allowed to see nobody. As soon as I lay down my mind became perfectly clear ; but I did not feel the smallest inclination to get up, nor even to employ myself in bed, by which I perceived that I was really ill. The next day I returned to my occupations, only the children were not allowed to come, nor was I permitted to attend the

weekly meeting—prohibitions to which I submitted willingly, because I had some pain in my head and felt somewhat weakened. The third day it was all gone off; I could give my lessons without the least exertion, and I have never had the smallest return of the same kind of illness. As a possible cause for this strange accident, I can only mention a very serious annoyance which had been occasioned me the day before—not, however, by my children nor any of my poor people. I had been deeply indignant, and had expressed my indignation in a manner which, on the calmest reflection, I cannot think to have been unjust, and then had felt deep compassion for the pain of the individual whom I had thus brought to shame. Immediately before the attack I had been busy with very different things; but with the first dawn of returning consciousness that dismal history was again before my mind. I could not have believed that anything of the kind could have had such an influence upon me. My dearest, the doctor declares that the whole thing is of little importance, and I believe he is entirely right, and I write with anything rather than the wish to make you anxious; but you will not wonder if I say that it has impelled me to ask myself—how if it were an admonition from the Lord of life and death, warning me that a more serious summons will soon come? Thank God I may say that I am not afraid of the question. Life is dear to me, as you know, and how should it not be so? Is not my life bright with a thousand blessings? You know I

have always been opposed to that dreary kind of piety which thinks it needful to slander our pilgrim life upon earth in order to magnify the glories of heaven. No, I can never set heaven and earth in such opposition to each other: it is my deepest conviction that earth has within it the germ of heaven, and if in no other way, at least in the hearts of believers. "The kingdom of God is within you," and "whosoever believeth in me *hath* eternal life"—these are sayings from the lips of our Divine Master of the deepest and most glorious import. And because through the mercy of my God I have experienced something of it in myself, therefore I go on my pilgrim path so joyfully; at times I really cannot express how deeply I feel that all is well with me. But if the journey be fair, shall the home we are seeking have no charms for us? Is not everything there better and fairer still? Now I am once more at work with pleasure and gladness and with undiminished strength, and I will work as long as it is day, but the time will surely come when I shall feel weary with the burden of my labour. Then may it be with me as with a child that has played merrily and learnt many things too, and now tired out, goes smilingly to sleep in his mother's arms, to wake next day to still happier play and better learning! We know the Eternal Love passeth the love of mothers: must not their rest be sweet who slumber in His arms? I cannot tell whether I shall retain to the end of my life the spirit of gladness which now

pervades my whole existence ; it comes from Christian faith no doubt, but it is not purely and entirely the offspring of it, and there may well be dark hours in store for me, when I shall be deeply taught the humbling lesson of my natural helplessness. Only of this my conviction stands firm as a rock, that the sun which has risen upon me may be hidden for a while by clouds and mist, but they cannot quench it, and ere long all darkness shall be scattered by its beams. A long-continued disturbance of my powers of thought does indeed seem now very melancholy ; and if I should venture to entreat anything for myself from my God it would be that he would preserve me from this, and I think he will do so ; but *if not*, if He should deem even this needful for me to keep me from the pride of intellect—should I desire to bind His loving hand ? Is not that hand a Father's hand, even when it chastens ? And would such disturbance of the mind be more than a passing cloud ?

‘Once more I must repeat, the physician's expressions by no means warrant my taking the matter so seriously. But I always think it is prudent to make up one's accounts betimes, and I think you would be glad, in case of anything that may possibly befall me, to know that I had beforehand contemplated it as possible.’

Large subscriptions had come in for her Association immediately after her return from England, and on the very first day that goods of the poor people's manufacture were offered for sale they had sold to the amount

of 700* marks. She observes here:—‘All these are indeed only outward means, and if the right spirit be wanting to use them they will be of little avail. But still they are necessary; and so far as love for the cause can testify to a right spirit in such work, I have reason for nothing but thankfulness and joy. I was really touched by the affection with which the members of the Association received me on my return; and still more so this winter, the first time I attended their meeting after my illness, when Mrs. Orthmann in the name of the other ladies bid me welcome in a few cordial words, and handed me a sum of 70 marks,† for my own special free disposal in gifts to the poor. They had collected this money amongst themselves as a testimony of their joy at my recovery, although many of them have really almost nothing to spare for themselves. Alas! what have I done to deserve the love I meet with on all sides? Do not take this expression for mock humility: it springs from a genuine conviction that many people think me much better than I really am. People are easily dazzled by my outward and visible work.’

About this time an offer was made to Miss Sieveking, which like the proposal of Pastor Fliedner would have seemed to her ten years ago to be a call from heaven, but which she now no longer felt to be such, partly for the same reasons that were mentioned on that occasion,

* 41*l.* sterling.

† 4*l.* sterling.

and partly on grounds connected with the particular institution now under consideration. The proposal was that she should undertake the superintendence of the women's division of the Hamburg General Infirmary.

She announces this proposal and her refusal in a few short lines addressed to her brother on the 3rd of April 1840, and mentions at the same time the death of Madame Brünnemann's son-in-law. She says:—

‘I lose in him one of my oldest and truest friends. I do not think that in the thirty years that I have been connected with him he ever gave me the smallest cause of complaint, while he had a thousand claims upon my gratitude. Although we were by no means agreed in all our views in life, I think I may say that we reposed confidence in each other to a degree which is not common among mankind.’

The building plans which now occupied Miss Sieveking's attention have been repeatedly mentioned in her letters, and out of these arose the Amalienstift, with its Children's Hospital.

The want of suitable homes for the poor had led the Association to devote to the erection of a small number of dwellings of this description a sum of 10,300 marks banco,* which had been given them in 1837 by an old man residing in another part of the country. The city

* 792*l.* sterling.

authorities had upon their petition granted the necessary ground for a site: but the capital was not yet sufficient, and Miss Sieveking proposed to Dr. Moraht, who had long been planning a children's hospital, to join with him in carrying out their respective schemes. It was arranged that he should hand over to the building fund of the Association a contribution of 1,500 marks banco,* in return for which they should bind themselves to allot to him in the new building the rooms required for his purpose, and also to provide the attendance necessary for the children from their own resources. The care of their board and the lighting and warming of the sick wards was also undertaken by the Association for a moderate remuneration. To this 1,500 marks other gifts were afterwards added, so that the total sum amounted to 13,496† marks 13 schillings banco; and at Michaelmas 1839, when the site was granted, the building was begun. The new institution comprised nine dwellings, each with an ante-room, sitting-room, and bed-room, with several large apartments common to all; and for the Children's Hospital two large wards with from fourteen to sixteen beds, and two smaller ones for baths, linen, and other stores. As early as the autumn of 1840 it was occupied by the poor families, and on the 15th November it was solemnly opened for the purpose. After the singing of a hymn, Miss Sieveking

* 115%.

† 1,038%.

made an address to the inmates, who were assembled together with a few friends of the institution, and in simple and hearty words explained to the people the aim and object of the undertaking, pointed out to them their own duties, and drew a picture of Christian household economy and Christian fellowship. This address is printed in the Ninth Report. The rooms set apart for the Children's Hospital were first inhabited somewhat later. Thus was a new work called into life, on which the foundress of the institution might look with joy and pride, and which indeed she afterwards called the pearl of her Association.

Her own life became more and more full: but she knew how to set the necessary limits to the ever-enlarging sphere of her activity. On the 28th of September 1840 she writes to Miss Hösch, after speaking of the newly-erected seminary for the instruction of girls, where she occasionally gave lessons:—‘And then I have been elected a member of an Association for the care of discharged convicts. The president of this body is the superintendent of police, the vice-presidents are several inspectors of prisons and other gentlemen; I am the only lady who belongs to it. Another field of usefulness was lately opened to me by a request that I would establish an association for the regular visiting of female prisoners. Much as a proposal of this kind attracts me, I have as yet not definitively accepted it. I must once more carefully take the measure of my powers;

I would not willingly undertake what I might not be able to carry through, or only at the expense of the duties already undertaken by me.'

In the same letter she says :—

'That I should go oftener into company than I did in my good mother's lifetime is but natural. I have so many claims of this kind made upon me, that I must be on my guard not to multiply such engagements quite too much. If I chose I might be out every day. The best of it is that everybody knows how precious my time is, and so nobody requires of me to stay longer than is convenient to myself. I therefore dine with my friends in the middle of the day, and go away directly after; or I go in quite late, about nine o'clock in the evening. In this way I often invite myself as a guest to my distant acquaintances, particularly when I have business with them, which owing to the many affairs I am engaged in very often happens, and thus I secure a threefold advantage—the despatch of the business, a pleasant recreation for myself, and an economical arrangement. If I wish to dine at home I have only to tell the people of the house, and I have a good meal for six schillings,* which certainly is an important saving of time, for the whole thing is despatched in ten minutes.' My whole position is such that I have urgent cause for daily and hearty thanksgiving to my God. Good health, a

* Not quite sixpence English.

competent income, numerous friends, and above all a calling which is a daily well-spring of joy to me — what can one wish for more in this earthly life?’

In a letter of May 1841 she describes to Miss Hösch one of her solitary Sundays in town: —

‘A little before five o’clock this morning I rose, jumped out of bed, and washed from head to foot in cold water, then breakfasted at six, and was busy writing till about ten, partly for the children and partly for the Association. I then attended service at the French Reformed Church. With shame I must confess that on the whole I am but a bad church-goer, and that the task of listening to a sermon from beginning to end with undivided attention is one that I have perhaps never accomplished. As one always likes to find the cause of a fault in something external, when perhaps it lies entirely in oneself, I have various objections to make to the arrangements of our service, and I fancy that I should be more interested in it if this or that were differently ordered. Of course I truly feel that the opinion of faithful and attentive church-goers must be allowed more weight than mine: but in one point I think I could really make good my opinion—that is, that the sermons of evangelical preachers ought always to be homiletic, and that they should limit themselves to explaining a portion of Holy Scripture, verse by verse, and bringing it home to the hearts of their hearers in its bearing upon their daily life in a simple and inartificial manner. I find that

in almost all sermons the Word of God is lost in a throng of man's words. When I return from church I usually take a little luncheon; but on the days when I keep school I have no time for this, and then I never feel the want of it. I often take nothing for nearly twelve hours, from half-past five in the morning till five in the evening. I hold that eating and drinking are very much a matter of habit, and that one may limit oneself in them far more than is usually done. After luncheon on Sundays I generally return to the work that occupied me before church. The accumulation of this is so great and so continually growing, that it is scarcely possible really to keep up with it; and so it is very seldom, indeed, that I can put it aside for half an hour, as I have done to-day, to give myself to letter-writing. At three o'clock comes my dinner, which, now that old Mr. L—— (an old bachelor) is become my landlord, is fetched from a neighbouring cook's shop: but the manner in which I take it would to most people seem very uncomfortable. Even as a child I had a great admiration for Diogenes, who drank out of a wooden cup, and when he saw a boy drink from the palm of his hand threw away the cup as a superfluity. To limit one's wants to the smallest compass, and to do everything for oneself without requiring help, seemed to me something fine and admirable. Although a nearer acquaintance with the requirements of social life has greatly modified my views in this respect, yet I must confess that a certain amount

of cynicism still attaches to me where my own person only is concerned. Many things which other people reckon among the comforts of life seem to me an unnecessary burden, and much which other people weary themselves to procure so little effects my enjoyment that I would not move a finger to secure it. For instance, I think it quite too much trouble to set out a table for my dinner, and it tastes quite as good when I eat it, so to speak, out of my hand; I hardly sit down to it, and it never takes more than ten minutes at most; so that dining with friends is always a considerable sacrifice of time, which, however, I am willing enough to make three or four times a week, because their society is always a pleasant refreshment to me, which at times I really require. On Sunday afternoon I generally visit some of our poor families, and when I return home from this walk I drink either tea or coffee and look at the newspaper. I can never allow myself time for more than this cursory news-reading, but I do not feel any need of it. I do not want for entertainment, nor for food for heart and mind, for my employment as a teacher requires of me some acquaintance with many branches of knowledge. After tea I go to work again, as in the morning, till about nine o'clock, when I make holiday and usually visit some of my good friends, from whom I come back about eleven o'clock and go to bed, and am almost invariably fast asleep in a few minutes. So here you have the picture of one of my solitary

Sundays. Occasionally I dine with friends in the country. On working days things are not so uniform, and I think you, accustomed as you are to quiet and solitude, would almost turn giddy to see the drive and throng in which I live, and the number of affairs that claim my attention.'

This year she accompanied her cousin Mr. Sieveking on a visit to Lübeck, and made use of the morning hours during her stay with her friend Mr. Pauli to write her Ninth Report.

This arrangement, by which she gained undisturbed rest and leisure, together with the refreshment and recreation of a visit to such dear friends, was often repeated in after years ; and Miss Sieveking was also able to employ the time of her visits to the Queen of Denmark at Sorgenfrei in writing her Reports or in other labours of the pen, for which her ordinary life afforded no leisure, so much was collectedness of mind a habit and a necessity with her, and so thoroughly had she brought her whole life and her mental powers under rule and order. Most persons would have found their attention distracted by the excitement and unquiet of such unusual circumstances ; but she remained true to her inward habit of order, and although by no means insensible to the distinction shown her, and the many enjoyments connected with it, her mind remained calm, clear, and collected, and never for a moment did she lose her mental balance.

In October 1841 Miss Sieveking went to Bremen, and in March 1842 she describes this expedition to her brother: 'I accepted a most friendly and pressing invitation from that excellent man Pastor Treviranus to pay him a visit at Bremen, and thus also to meet the wish of a number of ladies, who shortly before had met together to establish a visiting association on the plan of the Hamburg one, and now were anxious to make acquaintance with me and take counsel with me upon many subjects. A journey to Bremen takes less time than many less distant places, because the diligence always goes at night. So I set off one Wednesday after holding our meeting, arrived at my destination early on Thursday, and stayed till the following Tuesday evening. On the Friday I had two hours' friendly conversation with the Committee of Management, consisting of eight ladies, one clergyman, and a Mr. B. as Treasurer. They asked me to hold a meeting, at which all the members might attend. I replied that I should much like to attend one of their meetings, at which the younger members of the Association would be present, and so to become better acquainted with their manner of doing business. But they all replied, No, that was not what they meant: they had scarcely arranged their order of business, so few of their associates were yet at work. What they desired was, that I should help to excite more interest in the cause, and meet some objections which had been raised. At first

I was doubtful about consenting to this; not that I was afraid of speaking to a larger number of persons, but that it was not clear to me what I should have to say, I had already pretty thoroughly expressed my opinion upon so many points. The chief part of what I could recommend for consideration on the subject was to be found in my Reports, and it goes against me to be the mere echo of my own sayings or writings. But when they explained more exactly what they really wished for—namely, a history of the origin and progress of our Association, with a refutation of the objections made to it, I perceived that this was really a new subject which I had never handled, and I expressed myself ready to do what they asked. I also assented to their request that a few other ladies who were interested in the cause might be invited, besides the members of the Association. At the appointed hour Mr. Treviranus took me to the place of meeting; his good wife was obliged by illness to remain at home. As I sat by her bed-side for a few minutes before starting, she pitied me for what I had to go through: but I could assure her I was not in the least afraid. I considered the thing no such grand affair of state, but on the contrary it seems to me a very natural and reasonable proceeding to communicate to others what I know, and as I had simply to speak of what I thoroughly understood I did not believe that I should want for words. Nor did this calmness forsake me when I saw the company assembled,

although they were far more numerous than I anticipated. Instead of the fifty or sixty ladies who were expected there were nearly three hundred persons assembled, so that it was found necessary to change the place of meeting to a much larger room. Pastor H. began by the reading of the 112th Psalm, and a short prayer, after which he said in few words what there was to say of the scarcely yet established Bremen Association, and in a manner introduced me to the assembly. Then I made my address, and I may say that throughout I did not feel the least embarrassment. Pastor Mallet wound up with a few kind extempore words of reply, and then offered up a short prayer. When the meeting broke up he was introduced to me, and expressed a wish that I would give him the manuscript of my address, to be printed in the "Church Messenger," of which he is the editor; but this I was obliged to put off, for I had no manuscript, only a sheet of paper, on which I had shortly noted the principal points to be touched on. And here I found the confirmation of what I had so often maintained, that preachers little understand their vantage-ground when they never preach anything but discourses committed to memory, and so make the sermon a work of art, in which they are apt to forget, that the principal thing is not the beauty of the language, but the demonstration of the spirit and of power. That my simple address effected its purpose, I had many pleasant proofs. As the least of these I may

mention that a lady came the next day and brought me part of her ornaments, begging me to sell them in Hamburg for the benefit of our Association ; but better than this, the members of the Association here have been animated by it to set to work heartily and with good courage — a feeling which was sadly wanting before. In other places, too, the spark has kindled, as for example in Osnaburgh, from whence the rules of an association like our own have been sent to me for approval. So, my dearest, my life becomes in a manner multiplied, and an ever richer and fairer monument of the superabounding mercy of God, which can effect great things through the feeblest instruments. I am feelingly enough reminded of my own weakness by these appeals from other places, and I am often quite unable to meet the claims thus made on my exertions. . . . Meantime you need have no fear that I should be tickled with the fancy of hearing myself speak, and look out for opportunities of doing so. If such an occasion should offer I would not shrink from making use of it; but if it never occur again I should not trouble myself, and I hardly think that it can do so, because I should certainly never speak again on the same subject, as I dislike everything that is stereotyped, and I cannot easily see what other I could propose to myself.*

* This Address was printed in the Tenth Report.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1842, 1843.

THE FIRE OF HAMBURG — ENLARGEMENT OF THE AMA-
LIENSTIFT — ILLNESSES OF MISS SIEVEKING AND HER
BROTHER — PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH PASTOR FLIED-
NER — JOURNEY TO DENMARK AND VISIT TO QUEEN
CAROLINE — AMELIA AT SORGENFREL.

AND now began the year 1842, when the fearful calamity of the great fire fell upon the city of Hamburg. The following extract from a letter to her royal friend at Copenhagen gives the truest picture of Miss Sieveking's personal experience during those days of terror. The Queen had pressingly requested a detailed account of the circumstances, and she says in reply: 'Where shall I begin and where conclude my history? Your Majesty truly remarks that the demands upon my time are greatly multiplied, and in your great goodness you will make allowance for these hasty lines; and as you especially enquire how these days passed with me, I venture to believe that a short history of what I went through and witnessed in person may not be uninteresting to you. On points of great and general

interest the newspapers give sufficient details. This day week about this time I was sitting quietly in my room. I had heard no alarm of fire in the night. In the morning I was told that some houses in the Deichstrasse had been burnt down. I thought this a sad, but by no means unusual, occurrence, and with which I had no particular concern. I went quietly to church, and quietly busied myself with writing after church till about three o'clock in the afternoon, when I heard that the tower of St. Nicholas was burning; and then I perceived that the thing was taking a very serious turn. I hastened to the Town Hall, which is very near my own house, and there saw with astonishment that the people were busy packing up. Although I saw the tower burning, this precautionary measure seemed to me a proof of unnecessary alarm. Not to omit any proper care, however, I went to Mr. Repsold, who has the management of our city fire engines. I could not speak to him, although he was at home. Blinded by the fire, he had been compelled to leave the scene of danger, and was now lying in a dark room with a cold bandage over his eyes. His brother however explained to me, to my no small consternation, that he could answer for nothing; he could not say how much of Hamburg might be left standing on the morrow if the wind did not change. He thought there was no fear for the Neuenwall, but wherever the wind drove the flames it seemed no power of man could stop them. For fourteen hours the fire

brigade had done their utmost, but now their strength was exhausted, a great many of the engines were damaged, there was a want of men, and so forth. As for the present my own dwelling seemed safe, I ran off to some friends in the Neuenburg to help to save what I could. It had already come to the terrible but necessary measure of blowing up whole buildings. Even into the very house where I was powder was brought. We could no longer go out in front. We climbed down into a boat that was lying at the back of the house, and went by the canal along the burning rows of houses, a sight of whose terrible beauty no one who has not witnessed it could form a conception. As soon as I reached home I ran out again. The fire had by this time extended to the Mönkedamm, where many poor families live; here I offered my assistance, but to my grief many refused it. The good people, who did not know me by sight, perhaps thought that I should take away their valuables and not bring them back: however, I was able to help some of them. At length, as the fire continued to spread, I was obliged to look to the safety of my own property. First I packed up some things, which if consumed by the fire could never be replaced — my papers, letters, and writings connected with the Association, and with my method of teaching. One of the first things which I thought of saving was the portfolio containing your Majesty's letters. My kind cousin, Mr. Sieveking the

Syndic, had told me he was ready to receive me and my goods. But where was I to find the means of transport? The Syndic's people did what they could, but with all their pains there was nothing to be had but a little cart, which must be drawn by men. Several of my poor people offered to do this: they had thronged around me as soon as they heard of the danger threatening me. With their assistance I succeeded in carrying the greater part of my things to the Syndic's house in the Neustadt Fuhlentwiete. I myself carried as much as I could, and was by no means remarkable. Gentlemen and ladies of far higher position than mine were doing the same. So it went on all through the night. The glow of the conflagration made it as light as day, only our eyes were dimmed by the flying ashes: sparks were whirling about, and from time to time came the frightful explosions of the houses that had to be blown up, from which the shattered fragments of glass fell around us. I saw one poor lady fall into the most frightful convulsions from the shock of one of these explosions; she was obliged to be forcibly lifted into a carriage. Throughout there was a constant running and driving in all directions, and continual cries for help: my pen is too weak to describe the manifold horrors of the scene. Your Majesty's own imagination must complete the picture. I cannot say that I had any strong feeling of personal fear: a naturally very calm temperament makes it easy to me to keep off such feelings; parti-

cularly when I am not unemployed, but by exerting all my strength can do something to lessen the mischief. By nine o'clock in the morning the greater part of my goods were in safety, but by that time I felt more wearied and exhausted than I had ever done before in my life. I have little that is interesting to tell about Friday, the 6th of May, from personal observation. The conflagration made continual progress, and already the Neustadt, where the Syndic lived, was no longer considered safe. Every one fled: even my cousin, who long kept up heart and hope, at length gave leave for the necessary measures to be taken to secure his effects. So this day went by: I was compelled to be almost totally inactive from extreme exhaustion. Towards evening the house was nearly cleared, and most of the movable effects, not of the Syndic only but of the fugitives whom he had received (I was not the only one), were in safety at Ham and Harvstehude. My cousin was fortunate in having a number of carts from Ham at his command: many were obliged to turn their backs on their well packed-up goods and leave them to burn for want of the means of transport. The tumult in the streets was indescribable. Yet I must say that among the majority of those stricken by the calamity a certain outward calmness prevailed, here and there almost bordering on apathy. The apathy, no doubt, is explained by their utter bodily exhaustion, the external calmness by the very greatness and universality of the

calamity. The press of circumstances drives people at such times to extreme exertion, and no doubt this is the best preservative against idle laments: and in a misfortune which falls upon so many, each individual is ashamed to rate his own loss too high. With thousands this outward calm is only apparent, and will give way to deep depression when the excitement is over. Oh that with very many it may rise to true Christian resignation, which can say with Job, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

'As there were no beds left in the Syndic's house I sought quarters for the night in the house of some friends beyond the Dammthor. And so I wandered out of my own dear native city, without knowing whether I had a dwelling left in it or not. The fire had already reached the Neuenwall, but I did not know whether it had extended to my own dwelling. Not till the next day I learnt that it had been spared, and that among so many thousand sufferers the Lord had protected me. Arrived at my friends' house outside the city, I went at once to bed, and though the glowing red sky shone into my eyes as I lay, I fell asleep almost immediately from weariness, and did not wake till after several hours of refreshing sleep. Finding myself restored next morning, I could not doubt as to the use to be made of my time and strength. The evening before I had witnessed a sight that had made my

heart bleed,—a crowd of poor families, with the little they had saved of their possessions, bivouacking under the open sky. My exertions would naturally be devoted to these unfortunate people. I went first to the Syndic; he dissuaded me from setting to work alone, and advised my joining the Relief Association, which was just forming. The gentlemen who had met for this purpose at Dr. Abendroth's house received me kindly, and since then I have been employed under their direction, in the distribution of the large amount of things placed at our disposal for the mitigation of the general misery. On the occasion of our first consultation on this subject, we saw from the window of the room where we were at work the tower of St. Peter's, which had now caught fire. Some of those present broke out into exclamations, when one of the party said, "Let that be, gentlemen; we can be of no use there; that is not our concern; let us keep to our own business." I was delighted with the vigour which was expressed in these words from the lips of a man who had lost his own beautiful house, with all that it contained. Several more who had been themselves burnt out offered us their services. I was now sent first to invite the poor families who were encamped on the ramparts and outside the gates to return into the city. As the wind had changed, the Neustadt was considered safe, and several large warehouses were placed at our disposal for the reception of the houseless. In these perambulations,

where the badge of the association, a leaden shield with the words "Relief Association" upon it, attached to my girdle, secured me free passage everywhere, I witnessed, I can assure your Majesty, many a scene of wretchedness. The wind, which was blowing a gale, drove the hot vapour over to the part where we were. And now the suburb of St. George's was threatened, and whole rows of houses were abandoned by their inmates. Many of the poor families who were encamped upon the ramparts were obliged to be driven away from this place, on account of the measures taken for security, and suffered greatly in this second flight, which naturally took place with much confusion. A quantity of things were thrown at once into the Alster, by order of the authorities, because it was feared that they might take fire from the sparks which were everywhere flying about. Then at such times, alas! there are always bad people, who make the misery of their brethren an occasion to rob and steal. On the first day only a comparatively small number of families accepted my invitation. I was empowered to offer a temporary refuge to all the children at the Orphan-house, but I must say to my satisfaction few of the parents could make up their minds to part from their children in this hour of need and danger; and in the same way most of the women when we offered them shelter, while their husbands had to stay to watch their goods, answered, "No, where my husband bides, I bide too." Many perhaps

did not thoroughly trust our assurances that there was no more danger in the Neustadt, and were afraid to return to the burning town. It was not till the following days, when God at length put a stop to the desolating fire, and we were enabled to receive whole families with their goods in large rooms allotted for the purpose, and when, rain having come on, they felt painfully the discomforts of encamping under the open sky, that they showed more willingness to avail themselves of our offers, and at this moment I believe all have found at least a temporary asylum. Food is provided for them even in superfluity. The sympathy with which persons have come forward to help from far and near has been touching, and they have put us in a position to ward off the most urgent destitution by their generous contributions of provisions, bedding, and clothing. . . . My great anxiety now is to check as far as possible the demoralising influence that the whole affair may easily have upon a certain class of the poor. Many who have hitherto been ashamed of the name of beggary may, now that they certainly have no cause to be ashamed of the name, acquire some taste for the thing, and for the future find it more convenient to let other people feed them than to provide their own living by their own great exertions: to others, I fear, this fire will furnish, for years to come, matter for very credible romances with which to find a way to the purses of the rich. Food and shelter must of course at first be given to all

without distinction. With regard to bedding and clothing we are more cautious, and do not give without enquiry. We make it a principal object to procure workmen's tools; there will soon be plenty of work, and I really believe that for the labouring class the time of need will be but a passing one. On this occasion I pity the poorest less than the more wealthy. Those who have lost little can soon have that little replaced, but the ruin of a prosperous condition is not so easily repaired. Oh that the Lord's gracious will may be fulfilled in all on whom His chastening hand has been so heavily laid! may they through this trial learn to heed His word, and may they suffer that word to lead them to Himself, and in thorough abnegation of their own will, humbly and joyfully submit themselves to His holy purposes!'

Miss Sieveking's tenth yearly Report touches on those results of this catastrophe which affected the Association, the disadvantages of which were soon made up by the blessing which so visibly rested upon it. The number of members now amounted to fifty-three, and they met in two divisions, which she presided over alternately. The receipts of the Association in this year amounted to 11,842 marks $7\frac{1}{2}$ schillings.* The Amalienstift was prospering, and in October 1841 the first child was received into the Children's Hospital; in the course of the year ten more came in. During the terrible days

* 696*l.* 12*s.* sterling.

of the fire the institution had afforded a welcome temporary refuge to nearly a hundred houseless persons. The members of many associations, which in a certain sense considered themselves the offspring of the one at Hamburg, had come forward at that dreadful time with gifts and expressions of personal affection for Amelia Sieveking, and thus she first learnt the existence of several of them. In this Tenth Report she publicly thanks her sisters in Lübeck, Ratzeburg, Stade, Bremen, Zell, Hanover, Juliers, Stolberg-Wernigerode, Weimar, Gotha, Osnaburgh, Göttingen, Stuttgart, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, Berne, St. Gall, and Zurich.

The fire also gave occasion in an indirect way for the enlargement of the Amalienstift. Soon after it took place, Syndic Sieveking made a proposal to the Board which had been established for the distribution of the funds received for the relief of the sufferers, which proposal, being zealously supported by several persons who approved of it, led to the following agreement. The Association bound itself to erect two buildings, each comprising twenty-four tenements, by Martinmas 1842, and to place these tenements at the free disposal of the Board of Relief, for the space of three years. The Board, on the other hand, promised to deliver all the bricks that should be required free of cost upon the place, to pay 30 per cent. of the remaining expense of the building, and 4 per cent.

interest on the 20,000 * marks courant which were to be borrowed on mortgage, and also to meet the cost of any repairs which should be required during the three years. At Martinmas 1845, the Association was to enter on the enjoyment of its full right of property in the buildings, which were henceforth to be put to the same purpose as the one already existing as the Amalienstift. The ground necessary for the site was at the same time granted in free gift by the Senate.

In the spring of 1843, Miss Sieveking's beloved brother in England had a severe illness, and his recovery was very slow. She writes to him on the 30th of May: 'I must tell you that out of sisterly sympathy I have been ill in imitation of you, though in a much slighter degree. It was a gastric fever, beginning with an attack of spasms, followed by a state of unconsciousness which lasted nearly an hour. For two or three days I felt really ill, and I remained confined to bed for ten days by the imperative command of my physician. The complaint took its regular course, and is now pretty well over.'

About this time Miss Sieveking made the personal acquaintance of Pastor Fliedner, of Kaiserswerth, who came to Hamburg on purpose to find out whether she would be willing to undertake the situation of President of an institution on the model of his own, which the King of Prussia was desirous to establish at Berlin.

* 1,176*l.* sterling.

She declined this position, but proposed, as peculiarly fitted for it, one of her own former pupils, who, at her recommendation, had for three years occupied the post originally offered to herself in the Hamburg Infirmary. This negotiation ended differently, by the marriage of Pastor Fliedner, now a widower, with this dear and valued friend of Miss Sieveking, who henceforward lived and worked most usefully in the Institution at Kaiserswerth. On this occasion she remarks: 'Had any one told me, ten years ago, that I should refuse such a call as this which has been made upon me, I should scarcely have believed it possible. But I am quite clear in my own mind that, being what I am, I am best where God has placed me, and where He has granted me so many blessings. In particular, I am too much accustomed to an entirely independent development of my own religious life, not to feel cramped by being subjected to forms prescribed by others. Another reason is, that owing to the peculiarities of my position it would not be easy to find a fitting substitute here, while I do not fear any difficulty in finding a suitable person to fill the other post, so powerfully and so generally is the necessity for such employment now stirring in the hearts of persons of our sex. I meet with numerous proofs of this, to my great delight.'

This was indeed one chief reason which satisfied Miss Sieveking as to her own peculiar task: her idea had been called into life; her wish was fulfilled, though in another

manner than she had formerly desired ; the Sisterhood of Mercy was founded in the Protestant Church ; the institution grew and worked for good, and no longer needed her assistance. She herself had found her place, and was convinced that the Lord had chosen for her this, and no other.

Her brother, on receiving the above account of her illness, had entreated her to take more care of her health, and she replies to him on the 9th of June : ‘ This is a subject which I have now to hear handled with many variations, yet I must confess that no reasoning can deprive me of my indwelling conviction, that I have a certain power over my own body, and so far as this power extends, I think it an indisputable duty to make use of it. That I do not carry this too far, the fact must bear witness, that I allowed myself to be confined to my bed for ten whole days, by my doctor’s orders, although I thought them unnecessarily strict. When on the third day after I got up, the children assembled once more around me, he shook his head indeed, but he did not put a decided veto upon it, and the result proved that I had not given myself too much credit. I could teach without any unusual exertion, and since then my strength has increased daily, and I consider myself now quite restored. That I received many proofs of sympathy and friendship at the time of my illness, I scarcely need tell you. Yes, indeed, much affection has been shown me, and there lies a rich blessing in this experience

also, to be able for awhile *only* to receive and have nothing to give in return.'

Late in the autumn of this year, 1843, Miss Sieveking accepted a pressing invitation from Queen Caroline Amelia of Denmark, and spent a few weeks with her at Sorgenfrei. About a year before she had met the noble lady at Plön, where the King and Queen were then staying, and since that time she had been studying the Danish language, in order to be prepared for the promised first visit to Copenhagen. The study of foreign languages was always a peculiar pleasure to her, and she pursued it, as she did all her avocations, with zeal and perseverance, and always with an eye to practical usefulness. This visit to the royal residence was to her an abiding gain in memory, and she preserved the impressions derived from her daily intercourse with the Queen in a journal kept on the spot. She liked to keep such records of all her journeys, whether long or short; partly to retain a lasting picture of passing occurrences, partly that she might share them with her pupils and friends, and, true to her innate love of teaching, communicate to others her new impressions in her own manner.

From this journal of her first visit to Copenhagen, we shall extract a few characteristic passages. Among other matters it relates the foundation of an Association in that city for the care of the sick and poor. On the 1st of October she travelled to Kiel in the diligence, and remarks:

‘To travel only for travelling’s sake, without a special object in view, would never afford me any pleasure. So I have often thought, but I was strongly reminded of it yesterday in the diligence, although I had the good luck to travel in very pleasant company. But to sit in a carriage a whole day, with nothing to do, is very tedious to me, and therefore extremely fatiguing. The greatest exertion in doing my own proper work tires me less than such forced idleness.’

Rooms were provided for Miss Sieveking at an hotel in Copenhagen, and at Sorgenfrei she had a stately apartment, and was treated with the greatest attention as the honoured guest of the Queen. But as she had come, according to her own expression, with a serious determination to behave quite naturally, and not to appear anything but what she was, she remained just the same in this new and unaccustomed sphere, and soon found her right place. She had the most confidential conversations with the Queen, and the attraction she had felt from the first towards that distinguished lady grew into a feeling of respectful and tender friendship by the interchange of their varied experience and views, and the many interests common to both.

‘This morning,’ says the journal, ‘we had a theological conversation on the subject of the final restitution of all things, on antichrist, and the millennium. These two last topics especially interest the Queen, but I could only acknowledge that I have never made them

the subject of any serious enquiry and meditation, and so my opinions respecting them are anything but fixed.'

She writes, on occasion of another conversation : 'The tyranny of a despot seems to me less terrible than anarchy, the tyranny of the people, i.e. many thousand tyrants in place of one.' 'I think,' she says, soon after, 'that we should not be too ready to lay the blame of all our defects upon those who brought us up. No doubt all human education leaves much to be desired; but then, in each case, it is linked to that education which continues through life, under the immediate guiding of God Himself, and which, if only we use it aright, is fitted to compensate all those early deficiencies, and to help us to the harmonious development of all our spiritual capacities, which I regard as the one true purpose of our earthly existence.'

On visiting a school which the Queen had established for little children of the lower classes, she found much to praise, but blamed the bodily restlessness and want of regulation in their movements. 'I know,' she writes, 'that in this respect we cannot expect so much from such little children as from older ones; and I know, too, that it is a necessity to them to move their limbs; but I should like to see all these movements regulated by a kind of military discipline. The time when entire stillness is required should be exceedingly limited, but the children should know how to be still as soon as the

teacher gives the word of command. What may be attained in this respect, and how much is gained thereby, I learnt in the English schools on the Lancastrian plan.'

She quotes from another conversation with the Queen: 'We talked of how important it is, for the advancement of the kingdom of God, that the disciples of Christ should constantly show in their whole manner and conduct how good and pleasant a thing is His service. Yet we agreed that much which the world condemns as gloom and austerity is not really so. On this account I think it important that we should learn to maintain a certain reserve before the world in the expression of the truest and holiest feelings, and to avoid all exaggeration which so easily awakens mistrust. We are all only too liable, if we do not keep a careful watch over ourselves in this respect, to make our own individual feeling the standard for everybody else, and think everything overstrained in another which we do not feel as he does. It might have seemed as if I had brought forward this last remark in my own defence, for—I can scarcely tell why—I was in such a tender mood that my eyes repeatedly filled with tears. The presence of the Queen almost always has this kind of softening effect upon me, though in a less degree; yet I am so sure that I have always acted sincerely by her, that I cannot fear that, even should she not always understand my feelings, she would charge me with any affectation.'

Seven ladies had been named to Miss Sieveking as

peculiarly fitted to form the commencement of an Association for the care of the sick and poor in Copenhagen. She had unfolded to the Queen her views and thoughts respecting the relations of the latter to the newly-formed institution; had conferred with many influential men and women who showed an interest in the subject, and for this purpose made many visits in Copenhagen; and now the ladies in question, and some gentlemen who offered their support, came together to her hotel, and she made them a short address, which is thus described in the journal:

‘When all had taken their places, I greeted the assembled company as brothers and sisters in the Lord; and alleged the wishes of the Queen and the confidence she placed in me, as the justification for my boldness in coming amongst them as a stranger, and wishing to establish some new thing. Yet (in some such words as these I continued), not in her name alone do I stand here, but rather in the name of One infinitely greater—in the name of Him who has said that what we do for the least of His brethren He will regard as done unto Himself. Your excellent Queen—who is more than a Queen, a humble follower of Christ—shares my deep conviction, that a true and entire blessing can rest on any benevolent work only when it springs from a Christian soil; and therefore she will enter into no direct personal relations with the new society, lest it should prove a temptation to any of the weaker-minded

to do that for her sake which ought to be done to please God. "In the name of Jesus!"—let this motto be the basis on which our Association rests. . . . Let us do whatsoever we do sincerely unto the Lord, and He will acknowledge our work. Yet, let me bear testimony to you, for the glory of His name, how he has magnified His mercy among us, during the eleven years that our Association has lasted. The same happy experience will be yours. There will be difficulties, He will help you to overcome them: your treasury will be emptied, but He will fill it again; many seeds will seem to have been sown in vain, but then He will suffer you one day to reap a rich harvest, where you least expect it; and in the end it will be seen that, in His kingdom, even the smallest grain of really good seed is never wholly lost.'

She then describes the blessing which the workers themselves derive from such works as of the very richest kind, and continues: 'But though every Christian work is founded on the same Christian faith, each one has naturally its own peculiar character; and here, it is the constant personal intercourse with the poor which, in a certain sense, is intended to fill up the gulf which now separates them from the rich. . . . And now one word concerning the essence of united action, as such, which I think is not rightly understood in many societies, particularly in associations of women. No aggregate of various powers brought together without rule or order deserves to be described as united action;

this can only subsist where all these powers form an organic whole, which develops itself spontaneously from within, through the necessary connection of its separate parts. But to maintain this connection the strictest organisation and regularity in business are necessary, and I entreat you to direct your earnest attention to this point from the first.' She then went through the rules with the ladies, and promised to meet them again, in order to give some explanations and advice upon particular questions. Thus was the affair commenced, and it has gone on prosperously. Miss Sieveking made the first visits with the presiding lady, and was able to converse with the poor people in the Danish language.

She also visited a prison in Copenhagen, in company with a lady who devoted much of her time to the poor prisoners.

'It was said beforehand, as a matter of course, that such a visit must be peculiarly interesting to me, and so I did not like to object to it, although, in fact, the interest is to me but very secondary, partly because my own vocation in the field of benevolent work is so totally different; but, chiefly, because I find that so very little comes of these single official visits, if one wishes for anything more than simply to collect statistical notes. It rarely happens that you can get a real insight into the spirit of the institution; you see, as a rule, only what the managers choose that you should see.'

The following note of a conversation with the Queen occurs in the journal:—

‘The subject of our conversation was ennui. The right to be dull we would not concede to anyone, at least not to any awakened Christian; although we were obliged to own that, even among sincerely believing people, there often is such a narrowness of mind as makes it very difficult to find any interest in their conversation. I here took occasion to recommend a specific against ennui, which seems to me the only really efficient remedy—to do everything as unto the Lord. This, I think, it is which will give a certain significance, and therefore a certain interest, to everything, and so preserve such an elasticity of mind as can resist the pressure of wearying influences from without. And then, as my excellent aunt, the Syndic’s mother, once said to me, when I was quite a girl: “You must not be ennuyée; I can allow no young girl to be so, even in company; it is only necessary to know how to take people, and you will always find some interest in them.” And of this opinion I found the fullest confirmation in the way that my good aunt herself knew how to converse with people. Not seldom I have observed with astonishment how the driest and apparently dullest natures were, so to speak, electrified by her, and in her presence showed sparks of intellect for which no one would ever have given them credit.’

Miss Sieveking had been with the Queen to a picture

gallery, and remarks in the journal: 'I certainly saw many beautiful things, but unfortunately I have no proper taste for art, and as I do not care to exhibit my deficiencies in this respect by passing judgment at haphazard, and as little to dress myself in borrowed plumes, by repeating the remarks of others, I prefer to be silent altogether.'

She had taken a long walk in the town, in spite of the remonstrances of the black servant whom the Queen had appointed to wait on her, and came back wet through. 'I know,' she writes, 'that the Queen was not pleased at this; but I cannot play the great lady here any more than in Hamburg, and do not choose to draw on the royal purse for more than is really necessary for my wants.'

The question had been discussed between her and the Queen, in what relation the spiritual and secular powers ought to stand to each other. 'I declared myself,' she writes, 'for the principle of a perfect independence of the two powers, and as regards the government of the church, for a synodal constitution; nothing, however, seems clearer to me in history than the rise of the hierarchy, since I must confess, that I know but few among Protestant clergymen in whom a strong disposition to tyrannise over the conscience does not appear, which I account for partly by the natural inclination of all mankind to rule, and partly by the effect of what is called in England "the

one man's system," by which our clergy are accustomed to be the only speakers, and at length learn to endure less contradiction than the king himself, who must often at the council-board hear more opinions differing from his own than the preacher in the pulpit. As things now are in the world, I remarked, it is certainly a great advantage to the people, that the spiritual and secular powers stand side by side, each keeping a jealous watch to prevent any encroachment on the part of the other. In the same way I believe that it is a blessing for Christendom, that Catholicism and Protestantism should subsist side by side within the Church; in this world of strife, that which is true and wholesome for mankind most often proceeds from the conflict of opposites.'

The Queen had allotted a certain sum from her privy purse to the newly-established Association, and Miss Sieveking advised her not to give the whole at once, but by instalments, because if the society's purse were too well filled at first, it might easily lead to a want of due economy in the disposal of the funds. If two hundred reichsthalers* were placed at their disposal, it would be considerably more than the Hamburg Association possessed at its commencement. 'On the Queen's inquiring,' she continues, 'whether I thought this sum still too large, I answered in the negative; adding, that I believe we must always make a distinction between those with whom an idea first originates, and those who

* About 35*l.* sterling.

only adopt that of another; from the former we may expect a degree of enthusiasm, which will overcome all difficulties; from the latter we cannot look for this, at least not in an equal degree; and therefore, so far as we can, we should always make their way a little smoother for them.'

Miss Sieveking also made one of a hunting party at Frederiksborg, whither, by the King's desire, she had accompanied the Queen. Describing a conversation with a gentleman, she says:—

'We agreed that it is not really so very difficult to move freely even in the sphere of court-life, the forms of which, when once one is accustomed to them, are not altogether to be styled inconvenient. They are oppressive only to awkward people, who in their want of tact stumble at everything;—but they become destructive where, being raised to the dignity of essentials, they stifle intellect and life.'

On occasion of a conversation with a Danish clergyman on the text 1 Cor. xi. 27, Miss Sieveking remarked: 'There is, I believe, a primeval language, the type of all other languages, which was spoken by the dwellers in paradise, and perhaps will be spoken by the inhabitants of heaven. In every language in the world there are echoes of this primitive speech, which may help towards the understanding of it; but a full and clear comprehension thereof can only be attained here below in those hours of holy exaltation, when a man is,

as it were, lifted above the limits of our earthly condition. Whoso is incapable of such spiritual exaltation, cannot perceive what the Spirit of God speaks by the mouth of those whom He inspires. Such an one says, like some of those who witnessed the first Christian Pentecost, "these men are full of new wine." And because to understand inspiration a certain degree of inspiration is needful in the hearer, and this is not always present in an equal measure, as then at Jerusalem it became necessary that whatever was spoken with tongues should have an interpreter.'

A young girl, in whose inward and outward life Miss Sieveking thought she found much that resembled her own, had opened her whole heart to her at Copenhagen, and she remarks on this subject : —

'She has hitherto been repelled from that which I should call the true Christian life of faith, but which the world calls pietism, by the narrow-mindedness and harshness of some persons who have chosen this mode of thought as the badge of their profession. Perhaps with them it may be more than a mere profession, but in any case their rigidity and one-sidedness unfits them to win over a young and lively mind that yet rejoices in life; and I feel that it would have been with me as it is with her, gloom and asceticism always repelled more than they attracted me'

And so Miss Sieveking's fortnight's sojourn at Sorgenfrei came to an end : she had not gone thither in vain ; in

her modest way she had sown many seeds of good in the various departments suggested to her by the confidence of the Queen, had advised her with tact and discretion on many points, and, as an experienced and independent counsellor, had opened her eyes to some special evils. The relation between them was a noble and a beautiful one, which did honour to both, and certainly was not without a blessing. Miss Sieveking herself had laid up during this visit an enduring treasure of animating recollections. Naturally there are many particulars with regard to her visits to Sorgenfrei and her intercourse with her royal friend which it would not be right to give to the world; but her relations to the Queen formed undoubtedly too important an element in her life to allow their more prominent features to be passed over in silence: and now, in conclusion, part of the last conversation between them recorded in the journal will find here its appropriate place.

‘I told her,’ she says, ‘that when a few days hence I should have returned to my very simple and narrow home circumstances, I might, perhaps, feel like the prince in Calderon’s “Life a Dream”—only with this great difference, that I hoped I had not misused the brief splendour of my court life, and moreover, that I should certainly feel it no misfortune to return to my former position, but should be at once at home and comfortable there. In the long run, I certainly should not be fit for a court life: but for this week or two,

besides the higher interests which my intercourse with her affords me, I have found much entertainment in it, as it has always been a great pleasure to me to become acquainted with entirely new situations in life. I also said to her, that as every good man, and especially every believing Christian, is in a certain sense a representative of God Himself, so in a peculiar manner is the Christian ruler. She had been such to me: for as the humble love that abases itself seems to me the highest that we know of God, so it is also in man, and this I had found in her; and therefore I hoped that the happy hours passed with her would shed a hallowing influence on my whole future life. She replied, that she too had to thank God for having brought us together, &c. Something like this was the tenour of our conversation in that last hour.'

On returning to Hamburg she closes her journal with these words:—

'And so here I am again, among the long-proved home associations. The duties of the old-accustomed callings urge their claims upon me. I look back with pleasure on the time just passed, and with pleasure I look forward into the future—with pleasure, and with the earnest resolution to show myself worthy the confidence of this noble Princess, by devoting myself with a more burning zeal to the service of Him whose love has knit the band of love which binds my soul to hers.'

Miss Sieveking writes to her brother in December about this visit:—

‘The recollections of these last weeks are among my brightest pictures of the past. I look back with especial pleasure to the happy hours spent in the Queen’s cabinet, and I know that she too will like to remember them. I there received many hallowing influences, to which I hope my future life will bear witness. You must know that I have added to my knowledge of languages by the acquisition of Danish, and that I found it of very great use to me. I foresaw that Her Majesty would wish to have an opinion from me on many of her institutions, and I had too often blamed as folly and rashness the pretension of the English, who fancy they can form right judgments of foreign institutions without knowing the language of the country, not to take pains to avoid falling into a like mistake. I could, indeed, spend but little time upon the language, and I have as yet never written a line in it. But fortunately Danish is so nearly allied to German that it costs but little trouble to learn it, and doubtless I was helped by something of our family talent for acquiring languages. In a sleepless night during my illness I first made the discovery that I could read a Danish book in prose tolerably well, with very little difficulty, and from that time many hours in my bed were given to reading Danish. An association on the model of ours has also been founded in Copenhagen, but quite quietly, without coming before the public.’

CHAPTER XXV.

1843—1847.

HER NEPHEW'S RESIDENCE IN HAMBURG—PREPARATIONS FOR A FIFTH COURSE OF CLASSES — SECOND JOURNEY TO COPENHAGEN — REMARKS ON HER INTENDED BOOK — INQUIRY FROM BERLIN—OPENING OF THE NEW CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — SEPARATION FROM HER NEPHEW — DEATH OF THE SYNDIC—ACTIVE LABOURS.

AT this time and during the next few years the happiness of Amelia Sieveking's life was enriched and augmented by the presence of her eldest nephew in Hamburg. She felt herself drawn to this young relative, not only by her strong family affection, but also by many points of sympathy between them, both in individual and inherited character, in which they resembled each other more than either was perhaps fully aware. He began his medical career in the birth-place of his parents, where he led a social life in the midst of many friends and relations, but gladly accepted his aunt's invitation to pass an evening alone with her once a fortnight, when they drank tea together, and read English or conversed in that language. Besides

these family interests and studies, another tie soon connected them—their common work in the Children's Hospital. An attempt to procure deaconesses for this new institution from Kaiserswerth came to nothing, owing to the failure of the negotiations for the purpose between Pastor Fliedner and Miss Sieveking. She then betook herself to her old friend, Pastor Gossner at Berlin, and he readily sent her a young deaconess from the Elizabethstift, who, with another sister to help her, took excellent care of the sick children. The institution flourished more and more, and her nephew, who for his aunt's sake was much interested in it, voluntarily undertook the surgical practice, thus affording her the added pleasure of working hand in hand with her young relative.

On the 26th of May 1844, she wrote to her brother on the evening of the first day of the Whitsun festival, which she had spent alone in town:—

‘Such a day of rest and solitude contrasts not a little with the bustle and variety of my usual life, and I confess to you that at first, after my mother's death, I was a little afraid of Sundays and holidays. One who has been from her youth a member of a family circle can hardly know what it is to spend a whole day in almost entire solitude, and that in the city, which on summer Sundays and holidays seems so dead. But do not suppose that I think I have any cause to complain. Oh, no: I soon learnt to subdue the

disagreeable feelings which at first often crept over me. I might have avoided them by inviting myself to the house of this or the other friend — for I have many with whom I might do so without fear of being thought intrusive—but it seemed to me to be unworthy to find company on such days a *necessity*: and now I have arrived at the point of really enjoying the day's loneliness. But certainly it must continue to be the exception; as the every-day rule, the throng of children and poor people, friends and strangers, with whom I am brought into contact in such various ways, suits me much better.'

Many foreigners, some of them of high rank, who were alive to the need of united Christian action in the most varied departments of practical life, sought Miss Sieveking's acquaintance in passing through Hamburg, and asked counsel and help from her, thereby making greater demands upon her time than she would have yielded to the claims of mere society. Thus about this date she made acquaintance with an unfortunate Russian lady, Princess Galiizin, who had endured some persecutions on account of her conversion from the Greek to the Lutheran communion: she remained a week in Hamburg, and visited all its benevolent institutions. Miss Sieveking had gradually become celebrated for her labours in this department, and she considered it part of her duty to show herself ready to be useful to all such inquirers. She preferred giving information personally

to doing it by letters, which required more thought and attention, and thus formed a greater interruption to her busy life. The questions that were constantly sent to her from Female Associations in many other places, she often answered in her yearly Report, but occasionally gave a direct reply when the matter was of importance or pressing necessity. But here she was obliged to observe certain limits to avoid neglecting any of her ordinary duties, and thus became more and more averse to letter-writing in general; so that she often laughingly accused herself of many sins of omission in this particular. How much she understood the art of stretching time has been already sufficiently described; and it must indeed appear incredible to many who waste this precious treasure to see what a mass of work she contrived to compress into the short space of twelve hours.

In order to write her Twelfth Report she accepted a friendly invitation from her relations at Ham, which seemed even more convenient for this purpose than a journey to Lübeck. At Easter 1846 she proposed to begin a new course of classes; and it may be looked on as a proof of the increasing confidence which she enjoyed in her native city, that even parents who made no profession of religion, or at any rate in no way shared her own religious views, expressed a strong wish that their children should have the benefit of her instruction.

‘When I point out this difference in our religious

opinions,' she writes to her brother, 'they admit it, but at the same time declare that they consider it a *happiness* to be able to believe on conviction as I do, and such a happiness as they would gladly procure for their children. I have been many times afraid that people may think me more "rational" in their sense of the word than I really am. But on this point I will soon enlighten them. Next summer I hope to print something which at any rate shall bear the true impress of my belief. Then people may see whether they will take offence at it or not.'

In December 1844 she writes to her brother: 'I have had friendly invitations from many places, but to get me to move requires something more than a mere invitation, however friendly. I must be certain that I have a call to go here or there, and I cannot look on a mere pleasure trip in this light. For recreation I do not require, and above all I dare not be hindered in anything which seems to me a necessary preparation for the work that belongs to my immediate station in life: this one thing lies clear before me, all the rest I can contentedly leave to shape itself as the Lord may direct.'

She enjoyed her English studies with her nephew, and remarks upon them: 'I have a strong wish to speak nothing but English with him at these times, and so to be initiated in the niceties of the language, and I must own that the charm of these evenings is much heightened by the practice. It is always an enjoyment

to me to converse in a foreign tongue, because the effort to master correctness of expression requires a certain activity of mind which gives an interest to the most trivial talk. But this, I may venture to say, is not in general the character of my conversations with Edward. I like best to discuss with him matters of general social interest, scientific subjects, and especially the interests of his own art.'

Miss Sieveking had so arranged her social engagements that she frequently visited her friends on certain fixed days, either at noon or in the evening. She writes of this: 'I will not deny that I set a high value on cheerful social intercourse, and I also think that I do right to devote as much time to it as I do, in order to procure the needful refreshment and relaxation from my work. I require no other; and then there are many opportunities in social circles for sowing good seed, were it only that one cures people of the fancy that all "mystics" must look dismal and melancholy. But I can still be just as thoroughly content, thank God, with the solitude of my accustomed homely little room. I was at home quite alone on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but the time never seemed long. Indeed, were it otherwise, it would be a sign that I had been out too much. Things are not as they should be if, after being out, one does not feel heartily glad to have the latch of one's own door in one's hand again.'

In the summer of 1845 Miss Sieveking accepted

another friendly invitation from the Queen of Denmark, and spent a happy fortnight at Copenhagen. After her return she again received a visit from a Prussian princess who devoted her large means to objects of Christian philanthropy, and had now come to Hamburg to make herself acquainted with the arrangements of the Women's Association in detail. 'Is it not delightful,' writes Miss Sieveking to her brother, 'that this practical charitable work goes on extending itself in ever-widening circles, and especially that so much that has long lain fallow in women's gifts and powers should find employment in a field so appropriate to them?'

She now took lessons in French and taught it to her cousin's children at Ham—another addition to her pleasures. 'I cannot help laughing at myself,' she writes to her brother, 'when I find myself looking forward to these lessons as eagerly as a young girl does to a ball or a play. I have a regular passion for teaching; few people delight in it in the degree that I do. Fancy, even when I was with the Queen I ventured to give a sort of Bible lesson. But, tell me, can anyone ask of God a greater blessing than such a natural temperament as renders one's daily work the highest enjoyment?'

She had fixed an interval of half a year between the completion of her former course of classes and the beginning of the new one; and she writes to her brother on the 26th of May 1846: 'What I have said from

time to time, that I should never feel thoroughly well till I should return to my daily intercourse with the children, has proved quite true: even strenuous exertion in this employment does not easily affect me. The thing that does vex me, is that I am not yet ready with the book which I meant to have brought out in the course of this summer. I have much at heart the finishing of this little work, from which I really expect some good. I believe that I have succeeded in introducing something which is generally lacking in most of the ordinary religious books, as well as in those I myself have published formerly—a union of faith and practice, a visible exhibition of the power of faith, partly in narratives concerning the kingdom of God, partly in isolated facts which are matters either of my own experience, or observation in the world. However, you know well to vex and worry myself about what cannot be altered is not my habit. So long as I cannot work at my manuscript without neglecting more immediate duties I lay it quietly aside. But one thing I would take this opportunity to ask of you. If God should call me away from the scene of my earthly labours before I have finished my book, do you take care that it should be published, incomplete as it is, for the benefit of our Association; for many, I know, would like to have it as a legacy from one whose good endeavours they have requited in her lifetime with so much true affection, confidence, and friendship. There

are new claims on my exertions for the Association. We are enlarging the Children's Hospital, and erecting a building on purpose for it; your son takes a lively interest in the matter, which, indeed, he first set on foot. You may easily believe how much this zeal gratifies me; although I must admit that he impelled me to this new undertaking half against my will, for I was a little afraid to burden our funds with such heavy fresh expenses for an institution, which is, after all, only a collateral branch of our Association. At one time I thought to refuse to make myself personally responsible for the expenses connected with it, in order not to multiply my obligations; but after mature consideration it seemed an unavoidable duty to give my assistance, lest the Christian principle on which the whole should be founded and maintained might be endangered.'

Her brother, who was afraid of over-exertion for his sister, had sent her a small sum of money, with a promise that it should be followed by a donation to her Association, on condition that she should have first spent this money in coach-hire, or any other comforts for herself. He knew his sister well, and was aware that these compulsory measures were necessary to insure her obedience on such a point. She now writes:

'I no longer use my legs for going to Ham or Altona, but always go quite grandly in the omnibus; and I must tell you in confidence that I find it very

pleasant, and that I not only spare myself by the saving of exertion, but actually gain strength by the *dolce far niente* to which I resign myself during the journey. The expression is, indeed, scarcely sufficient. I not only do nothing, I do not even think of anything, and am half asleep. But you will be clever enough to perceive that, with the best intentions, all my omnibus drives have not sufficed to dispose of the sum of money which you put into my hands. Although I have used it to pay my doctor's bill, and had an egg for breakfast every day, there still are, alas! about thirty-two marks* in my purse; and how to get through it before the 1st of August I really do not see—provided, that is, you insist on your limitation remaining in force. Otherwise, where I have *plein pouvoir* to dispose of money, I know as well as anyone else how to put it in circulation.'

In reference to another subject she says, in the same letter: 'As to myself, I feel so rooted, as I may say, with all the fibres of my being, here in my own city, that I cannot admit the thought of leaving it; otherwise I might perhaps have gone to Berlin, to be at the head of the new infirmary which is to be erected there, under the name of Bethany, where all the nursing is to be in the hands of deaconesses. A preliminary unofficial inquiry came to me, and had I been willing I should probably

* About 1*l.* 18*s.*

have been chosen, and my nomination confirmed in high quarters. But I had quite decided to give a negative answer; there are a thousand ties which keep me here. Yet if the call had come to me twenty years ago, and I had then been free to follow it, I should have done so with the greatest joy, although the giving up of my teaching would always have been a great sacrifice. Now, however, I consider myself appointed by the Lord of the vineyard to another kind of labour, which I dare not leave of my own will; and I rejoice that He has chosen a younger woman for this other work, and one who seems to me very fit for it—above all, that more and more of my sex are won to such employment. Truly, in relation to the want, the numbers are still far too small, especially from the higher and more cultivated class. Oh, if girls and their parents did but know what infinitely greater happiness is to be found in such a calling than in the hollow shallow life of the world!’

Miss Sieveking kept a minute character-book for each of her scholars, which she communicated quarterly to the parents and the children. ‘On the 1st of April,’ she says in this letter, ‘the first grand publication of the quarterly character-book for my present set of scholars took place at my house. I thought it advisable, this time, to invite the mothers; not so much for the children’s sake as for the sake of the mothers themselves, that they might form a true judgment respecting their little ones by a comparison between their doings

and those of others. I only hope maternal vanity will not play me a trick, and perhaps even without meaning it, awaken jealousies. Well, I will try the plan once or twice more; but should I perceive that the enemy takes occasion by this arrangement to sow tares among my wheat, I must make a change.'

In the meantime the building of a new Children's Hospital, containing thirty beds, had been accomplished by voluntary contributions, and it was occupied in the spring of 1847; but Dr. Sieveking, who had worked so zealously for this undertaking, and had attended to the surgical practice with so much interest and punctuality, left Hamburg in the course of this year, and returned to London, his native place, to the great grief of his aunt, who could scarcely endure the parting from a nephew who had become so peculiarly dear to her. The year 1847 brought her another severe loss, by the death of her revered and beloved cousin the Syndic, which occurred in the summer. 'Surely,' she writes to her brother on the 26th December, 'the blessing of a good father rests upon the children; and how worthy of all love was he in all his relations with them! Everyone who was capable of perceiving real intellectual power and had the opportunity of observing him in his public and social relations, must have recognised in him a noble man, possessing unusual mental gifts, and a character raised far above all that is common or ignoble. But the whole

worth and loveliness of his character could only be known to those who saw him in his every-day garb — among his children, in his own family, with his dependents; and though it has been said that no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre, I may venture to say of him that never was a master more honoured and heartily loved than he was by his faithful servants.'

In every trouble, difficulty, or uncertainty, Amelia Sieveking had been used to have recourse to this departed relative, and to find in him a faithful counsellor, helper, and friend. Her connection with the excellent widow and her children continued to be of the most affectionate kind; but this loss could as little be repaired as that of her intercourse with her nephew, and the great blank made itself felt even in her busy life.

In a very confidential letter to her true friend the Queen of Denmark, she writes of the Syndic, whom the Queen had formerly known: 'His piety was upright and sincere; it was deep, but not much on the surface. Hypocrisy and spiritual pride were hateful to his inmost soul, and what he called the preaching style of religious people suited him but little. But his earnest endeavour was bent to let the light of Christian truth shine through his whole walk in life, and whenever there was a call to defend that truth with courage and manliness one might always depend on him.'

The letter goes on to speak of the departure of her

nephew for London, whom she had so earnestly hoped to see permanently settled in Hamburg, after his four years' stay there, but who had decided on fixing his residence in London. After dwelling with deep but discriminating affection on the qualities which especially endeared him to her, she adds: 'Besides this, there was the attraction of relationship. There is a special charm in the ties of blood which no other connection can altogether supply. . . . It had been to me so sweet a thought that he, with his loving, hearty sympathy, would one day be the physician and friend who would stand by his aunt's lonely bed of sickness and of death. Well, this staff of earthly hope is broken by my Heavenly Father, doubtless in order that I may learn, more truly than ever, to cast all my cares on Him, and to seek in communion with Himself the richest compensation for every earthly loss. Oh, that His gracious purpose may be fulfilled in me! My nephew has left us a happy memorial of himself, in the new building and organization of the Children's Hospital, which, in its present altered form, is in a certain sense to be regarded as his own creation. Any one who now sees the institution must be pleased with the efficiency of the arrangements, and feel the happy influence of the atmosphere of Christian love which surrounds the deaconesses, and by which the sufferings of the poor little patients are so greatly alleviated. But though, on the one hand, I sincerely rejoice in this

work of my nephew's, I cannot deny that, owing to his departure, it burdens me with a fresh anxiety. The cost of the undertaking is naturally increased in proportion to its extension; and, as President of the Association for the Relief of the Sick and Poor, I can only regard it as a branch of our institution which must not figure in our budget for a disproportionately large sum. So long as Edward remained here, the access he had to the first families, and the enthusiasm with which he urged on the matter, always enabled him to find special funds for the special object; this, as a matter of course, will now cease.'

She writes to her brother on the 26th December, excusing herself for her long silence: 'Whenever there seems to be an interval in my busy life, it is only like throwing a stone into the water, the waters flow together again from every side, and the hole is instantly filled up. I certainly know one plan, by which I could win many more hours for my work: that is, by giving up society, which now occupies a not inconsiderable portion of my time. But I scarcely think you would advise my doing this. Many hours are now devoted to social enjoyment, in which I am too much exhausted for serious business, and these occasions afford many opportunities of awakening interest in those higher subjects which lie nearest my heart. People often forgive the serious religious bent of my disposition, only because they see

that it does not hinder my sharing in their enjoyments. And it is not unimportant for my whole position, that I should give no offence by a degree of seclusion, which the world always imputes to an affectation of strictness.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

1847—1849.

DEFICIT IN THE FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION—THE YEAR 1848—ADDRESS AT MAGDEBURG—VISIT TO HER RELATIONS IN ENGLAND—SIXTEENTH REPORT AND ‘LETTER TO THE POOR’—HER RELATION TO POLITICS—JOURNEY TO BERLIN—AUDIENCE OF THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA—REMARKS ON PATRONAGE.

ABOUT this time Miss Sieveking changed her dwelling; she remained in the same street, but occupied another house, and took a married couple without children to live with her. The man followed his own business, and the wife, in return for houseroom and a small remuneration, undertook to wait on her, which arrangement she adhered to in future as on the whole the most suited to her requirements.

On another subject, she says, in writing to her brother: ‘You will be alarmed when I tell you, that in December we had a deficit in the Society’s purse of nearly 2000 marks.* In fact I did feel myself more than usually oppressed by this want of money, and thought anxiously

and long in vain how the thing could be remedied. At last, not without misgiving, for I expected to meet with general opposition, I proposed at the council meeting in December that the ladies should make personal application from house to house, and of course I did not exclude myself from an employment so time-consuming and so far from agreeable, but undertook two streets for my own share. To my great satisfaction, six ladies volunteered to join me, and to collect in other streets. And the six have continued steady to their purpose, although the opposition I expected has arisen in many quarters, even within the Association itself. In consequence of it, however, the thing is for the present postponed, though by no means given up. At Christmas several considerable donations came in, which greatly lessened our deficit. Of course we shall not take such a step without necessity; but if the necessity is real, — and I am sadly persuaded that without some strong measures our finances cannot be set straight, — then the above course, whatever may be said against it, does seem to me the most simple, dignified, and effectual method. It is the simplest, because the gift passes without any deduction to the poor, whereas in lotteries, bazaars, &c., to get fifty thalers for them, you must often spend a hundred; the most dignified, because we appeal directly to the benevolent feelings of our fellow citizens, instead of attempting to make our profit of their vanity, their ostentation, or their love of pleasure;

and lastly, it is the most effectual, because I am convinced that in this way many are induced to give who would otherwise never have thought of it, and that without any officious urging on our part, against which I should of course give a serious warning, if I were not certain that there is nothing of this sort to be apprehended from my ladies.

‘The funds are still the defective point in the Children’s Hospital, which makes that otherwise delightful institution very often a heavy weight on my mind. However, as you well know, I am not one of those faint-hearted people who lose all their courage and enjoyment of life under the pressure of such cares: but have accepted and believed the cheering words of the Apostle: “Cast all your care on Him, for He careth for you.”’

The troubled year 1848 brought its burden of cares and conflict to Amelia Sieveking also, although, on the whole, she was less directly and personally affected by them, than by the losses of the preceding year. Still she could not but be deeply distressed by the spirit of hatred, envy, discontent, and rebellion against both human and divine law, which the convulsions of the times discovered and developed among the lower classes. To one who felt so warmly for the people, whether in weal or woe, and so readily believed in the existence of a spark of divine life even in the most degraded, these things were very sorrowful; but she did not therefore lose heart or hope even for the earthly future, and

above all never gave way to a gloomy or despairing temper.

In May she had given an address at Magdeburg, where an Association had requested her help and counsel, and had taken occasion to appeal to the loyalty of her hearers, and to impress upon them her own conviction, that such works of love among the poor were the best means of combating the discontented and insurrectionary spirit of the lower classes.

In July she accepted the invitation of her brother and sister in England, and during this visit she wrote her Sixteenth Report, in which she embodied an excellent 'Letter to her Friends among the Poor,' which was also printed and distributed in a separate form. In this she endeavoured, as far as she could, to combat the evil influences of the times, which were poisoning the moral atmosphere in the circles with which she lived in immediate contact. Politics for their own sake were not her concern. She took no lively interest in matters of which she could not take a comprehensive view, and so form a clear judgment; it went against her sincere and practical nature to play with things which she only half understood. Too clear-sighted to yield herself blindly to the guidance of any human authority, she allowed no passing impressions, no impulses from the passions and opinions of the time, to exercise a fettering influence on her judgment; and therefore she not only remained a stranger to the party

strife which ran so high at this period, and by which most people were carried away, but was even annoyed by it, and when present at those eager discussions and disputes on politics, which were then of daily occurrence, she was generally silent, and would have preferred to avoid them altogether. Some passages in her letters, particularly those to the Queen of Denmark, express her thoughts and opinions at this period. Thus she writes in November: 'I am well aware that there is much talk about faith in humanity in a very un-Christian sense of the words, that there are philosophers who would place poor diseased human nature on the throne, and then bow the knee before this idol. Of course this is not what I mean. But I do believe that there is something Divine in man, even in those who have sunk the lowest; that the breath of God, whereby man became a living soul, possesses, like every immediate emanation of the Divinity, a portion of His own eternal essence, and that the spark of divine life which it enkindles may be indeed deeply buried under the waste of sin, but can never be wholly extinguished. I cannot say how comforting this belief is, how it seems to throw a mild and cheering light on many phenomena in the world, whose mysterious darkness would else deprive us of all courage and gladness. In the course of more than half a century of life, spent in close contact with persons of the most various classes, I have seen abundance of wrongdoing; and as from my youth up the observation of

mankind has been my favourite study, I think I have seen more deeply into many hearts than the mere superficial observer. Thus I have been forced to become aware of much evil, not only below the varnish of superior culture in the upper ranks, but also beneath an outward show of piety and honesty in the lower. But along with the evil I saw also what explains and excuses it, and how it punishes itself: and in this punishment I seem ever to see the means of correction, in the hand of the All-wise Instructor, who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. So, even in looking on the hardened sinner, I willingly admit the hope that I may one day welcome in him a brother in Christ. Nor have I ever met with a human soul in which I could say that the Divine element of life—love—was altogether dead. And, on the other hand, who shall find one altogether pure? Where is the human soul in which the love of God is so fully shed abroad that every stain of sin is consumed by its holy fire? Therefore, I must confess that the difference between the bad and the good seems to me more in degree than in kind, and because I venture to believe that I myself have a share in the mercy of God in Christ, I cannot despair of the salvation of any soul of man. And again, with regard to the enmity of men to one another, I think that in very many cases there is more misconception than real ill-will at work. I believe there is often right and wrong on both sides, and that

many things which, in the eagerness of party strife, heated minds have reproached each other with as wickedness and baseness, will in the light of eternity appear as error and misunderstanding. Still that ungodliness does rear its head boldly in many places, and alas ! here in Hamburg also, cannot and must not be denied. Yet this I think has always been so at any great crisis in the history of mankind. The sultry heat brings out a multitude of noxious vapours : but the storm clears the air in the moral as well as in the natural world.' . . .

‘On the socialistic and communistic tendencies of our time, I have thought it my duty to express my opinion publicly, they touch so nearly the interests of the poor, whose advocate I consider myself once for all to have become. I have given my views on these subjects in the “Letter” which forms part of the Sixteenth Report. This was written in England, where, amongst other things, I enjoyed a renewal of intimacy with Bunsen, and made a new and interesting acquaintance in Lord Ashley, one of the leading Christian philanthropists. . . . With the exception of this excursion to England, my life has passed as usual, quietly, yet with plenty of active employment. There are a great variety of claims made upon me, and if I thank God for this at all times, I seem to have a special mercy to acknowledge in it just now. I consider it one of the great advantages of my position, that I need not trouble myself much

about politics. I read only what is absolutely necessary, and in the midst of my children, and by the sick-beds of the poor, I have not much to do with the concerns of princes and nations. Then if from time to time I cast a glance at the confused and restless strife, it is with fresh and clear eyes; for with children and poor people one must needs look upwards a great deal, and that keeps the eye in health.'

In a letter of a later date she says: 'Of political matters I say nothing, as my opinion on their present entanglements would be little better than a blind man's judgment of colours. I turn away from them, more perhaps than is right, since they so seriously affect the interests of mankind. But there is so much in the subject which is unpleasant to me, and then, in order to gain any deep insight into the real nature of such relations, how much time I must spend on a study which in my position must always be barren of results, while my time and strength often fall short for the work to which I believe myself appointed. So I am content on the one hand to contemplate political events from the general Christian point of view, and on the other hand, although I take an interest in general politics, my chief sympathies are concerned with the questions that affect the welfare of individuals.'

As we have said, Miss Sieveking was apt to be silent when the conversation turned on politics, with its heating and exciting questions; it was indeed generally

her habit to be silent when any topic was discussed on which she herself did not feel quite clear, or about which she could not expect any elucidation or assistance from such interchange of thought as the occasion offered. Owing to her usual custom of conversing and expressing her opinion in an open and lively manner, her very silence betrayed a certain uneasiness, a secret censure, which however she was not trying to conceal, but which was probably too indefinite a feeling in her own mind to find expression in words. She never gave utterance to a hasty or thoughtless judgment. Contradiction, especially of her favourite ideas, occasionally roused her to impatience, a fault she had had to struggle with in her youth; but she was never sullen or capricious, and her silence had always a reason, and sprang from her conscientious love of truth.

In the year 1849, Miss Sieveking visited Berlin, and spent some days in the house of the court chaplain, Mr. Snethlage, who had married a Hamburg lady, a former pupil of her own. Here she delivered a public extempore address, which is printed in her Seventeenth Report. She writes on this subject to the now widowed Queen Caroline Amelia :

‘The subject treated in my address, the emancipation of our sex, in a Christian sense of the term, seems to me among the most urgent questions of the day. I had long had it in my mind, but never yet.

ventured to speak out distinctly, as I thought the time not ripe for it. I feared the strength of the prejudice that holds all work for the general good to be incompatible with a woman's peculiar calling in her own home, never considering whether that calling suffices to occupy all her powers, and to satisfy the wants of her heart and mind, which I am deeply convinced, by manifold observation, that in hundreds of cases it does not. I feared too, if I should speak out upon this point, and directly indicate what seems to me the great defect in girls' education after their confirmation, that I might lose the confidence of parents who have entrusted me with the instruction of their children, and so close the door against my own exertions in the very line that I prefer to all others. The great majority of people are alarmed at once when the old traditional routine is in any way overstepped. Another consideration restrained me : I could not satisfactorily answer to myself the question, what kind of employment I would propose for young women and girls. But now I have ventured to bring forward my views on this subject, and it is the signs of the times that have encouraged me to do so, for I think I see in them the dawn of a new era for my own sex. There are certainly many germs of evil and corruption in the present state of things, but this should not prevent our acknowledging the existence of many fair seeds of good, which promise a harvest rich in blessing. Among these I cannot but account the increasing desire

among women for a worthier employment of their time, than has hitherto been generally permitted to them, and what especially pleases me is that the reasonableness of this desire is more and more acknowledged by thinking men. The form which their work should take I cannot yet distinctly sketch out, but I trust that the impulse, when once seriously awakened, and no longer checked by the veto of conventionalism, will soon strike out the right road for itself. It seems to me all the more important that this necessity should meet with full recognition within the Christian Church, because the antichristian spirit is seeking to make its own advantage thereby. Here in Hamburg a college has been opened for the female sex, founded by an association of ladies, some of whom belong to the new Jewish Synagogue, and some to the so-called "Free Church." Girls are to enter this institution after their confirmation at about sixteen years of age. Its principal aim is clearly set forth in the prospectus: namely, to fit the female sex, by a more scientific training, for exercising a higher influence upon civil society, and also to elevate them above the prejudices of revealed religion to a purely philosophic view of all the great questions of life, and to a belief in—humanity!

‘In Berlin, I had the honour of an hour and a half’s conversation with Her Majesty the Queen. As well in her expressions towards myself, as in many things which have been told me by those more immediately about

her, I thought I could trace a certain likeness; the most decided Christian faith, that highest truthfulness of character which is not content only to hate a lie, but aspires to be clear and consistent with itself; a great love of simplicity, and a warm interest in all really philanthropic efforts—these were the traits I thought I recognised in her, and which so vividly reminded me of my dear Queen of Denmark. And, alas! they resemble each other also in this, that both are suffering under the pressure of recent events!’

These intimacies in the highest ranks of society did not for a moment deprive Amelia Sieveking of her clear and rational views of her own position and its requirements. She had formerly written to the then Crown Princess of Denmark, to tell her that she had thought of saying a word in her forthcoming Report of the notice which that distinguished lady had taken of the Association, one of the meetings of which she had attended in Hamburg, but that for two reasons she had not done so: ‘First, I was afraid, not so much of being thought vain on this account, as of some lurking feeling of vanity really being hidden under it, for I know that I have need to be especially on my guard against this temptation; and then, I also think that a work like ours ought to recommend itself, and not require the adornment of any name, however honoured, to win friends to it. Perhaps to many persons this would appear the expression of republican pride. I *am* a republican,

and am glad to be so, because I have long learned to estimate rightly the blessings which are developed in a small state like Hamburg from a free constitution. But I am no way averse to the monarchical principle, which appears to me the most suitable for the government of larger states, and certainly the remarks I am now making do not spring from any such dislike. But I am, if I may so express it, jealous for the purity of motive in the exercise of Christian benevolence; and if, for instance in England, as we are told, no subscription for charitable purposes can well succeed, unless the names of some persons of rank figure at the head of the list, can anyone blame me, that I cherish a wish to vindicate for my own German fatherland, and especially for my native city, a character of greater simplicity in the fulfilment of Christian duties towards the poor and needy?’

CHAPTER XXVII.

1849—1851.

LETTER TO THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA—BETROTHAL OF BOTH HER NEPHEWS—THE ADDRESS DELIVERED AT BERLIN—‘BETHANY’—METHOD OF TEACHING LANGUAGES—CONTROVERSY WITH THE PREACHER OF THE ‘FREE CHURCH’ IN HAMBURG—LETTER TO THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA—THE ‘APPEAL’ IN THE SEVENTEENTH REPORT—DEATH OF A FRIEND—FOURTH VISIT TO ENGLAND—NINETEENTH REPORT—REMARKS ON ENGLISH LIFE.

MISS SIEVEKING sent her Seventeenth Report to the Queen of Prussia. It contained the address she had delivered at Berlin, and she writes with it:

‘As this discourse treats of the interests of suffering humanity, interests to which your Majesty devotes so large a portion of your time and strength, I venture to hope that, should you cast a glance over these pages, they will not be read by you without sympathy. The chief idea which is here unfolded includes, indeed, more than the wants of the poor and the sick; it embraces also the wants of the female sex, for which I know of no sufficient remedy except regulated employ-

ment in works of love. If I am not wrong in my belief, that there are a great number of women, both married and unmarried, who pine away only for want of a sufficient employment, such women belong, in a certain sense, however rich and respected they may be, to the class of those who need assistance, and a princess will not think it beneath her to turn her attention to their wants. I might easily have made mention in this address of the beloved Mother of her people, as I did at Magdeburg, I may venture to say, with warm feelings of enthusiasm. In the place of your residence, and under the altered aspect of things, I omitted it, although I knew full well that your Majesty's name would excite the warmest sympathies of my hearers. I omitted it designedly, because, in such cases, the sincerest praise is easily supposed to proceed from vanity, and to bear the stamp of flattery &c.'

To a lady in Berlin, who had spoken in high praise of her 'Instructions to Christian Visitors,' * Miss Sieveking writes in 1849 :

'You rate me indeed too highly, and see much in me which is not there, or, at least, not in the degree that you suppose. I often feel completely terrified by the thought how poor and bare I shall appear in the day when all false glories will be stripped off, before the eyes of many who now laud my doings up to the

* Printed in the Seventeenth Report.

skies. In truth, we all carry our treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. Thus much, at least, I may cheerfully admit — that the ‘Instructions’ contain my sincere convictions of that which ought to be; but alas! there is a mighty difference between holding such convictions and really having one’s life penetrated through and through with the divine truths which they involve. It is gratifying to me that you recognise the true features of Christian charity in these notices, and that you have so expressed yourself. In fact, much as I desire the distinct expression of our convictions, I equally abhor that kind of harsh and narrow exclusiveness which many consider to be essential to any strong conviction. Even in your own Berlin, I met here and there with something of the kind. My motto will always be Faith, Freedom, and Love: courage to acknowledge the truth when it appears to us as truth, whether it please the world or the Christians around us or not; humility, which does not insist on impressing the stamp of a man’s own individuality and the opinions natural to himself, upon everybody else, so robbing them of their inalienable right to free mental development; and lastly, love, and faith in the Eternal Love, that we may never despair of the salvation of a sinner, however deeply fallen.’

In the same letter she further remarks: ‘Reports of benevolent institutions &c. form now so considerable a

part of literature, that I often fairly take fright at the quantity which I ought by rights to read of this kind, —but do not read, to own the truth, because I find much of it so tedious. Indeed, I read but little of any sort. Hence it seems very unreasonable, even to myself sometimes, that I should expect people to read a yearly account of our work, a good many pages long. I comfort myself, however, with the reflection that, besides the writing public, there is also a reading public (may we not so divide the great mass of people?); and then, that everybody is at full liberty to read as much or as little of my writings as he pleases, or to leave them alone altogether. But if any general review of what we have done has fallen into your hands, it is probably the work of some other pen. Two volumes of extracts from my Reports have appeared in Switzerland — one in German, the other in French.’

In the year 1849 Miss Sieveking’s nephews were both betrothed to Englishwomen, and, in the fulness of her heart, she writes to wish them joy. In another letter to the elder, written in May, she tells him of her address at Berlin :—

‘I had to speak, à la Mrs. Fry, before a numerous assemblage of ladies, who were invited by printed cards sent round by Mr. Bethmann-Hollweg. Gentlemen were only admitted by favour. Among these were Snethlage, Bethmann-Hollweg, Count Schlippenbach, Herr von Bulow, Professor Stahl, and a few Lutheran

clergymen. My address, which lasted rather more than an hour, was entirely extempore, as, like you, I much prefer this method. Towards the end, I invited any present who might wish it, to put questions to me, which some of them did. By God's grace I trust that some good will result from this evening's work. I was afterwards requested to hold two or three meetings of a more private character, and in consequence three new associations for the benefit of the poor have been formed. Among many valuable additions to my circle of acquaintance, which I owe to this journey, I prize most highly that of Mr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, and I shall rejoice very much to see him again in Hamburg.'

She then speaks of the infirmary at Berlin called Bethany, which the King had endowed, and remarks:

'The patronage of a King must, of course, offer many advantages to such institutions; but yet, I think, that undertakings of this kind generally thrive better when private persons take them in hand, and when they only grow and extend themselves in proportion to the actually existing demand. There is much to be said on this point, and perhaps we may one day discuss it in detail.'

She adds in the same letter: 'Your praise of my English style in my letters flatters my vanity more, perhaps, than is reasonable. You ask whether I still pursue the study. That is a matter of course, and also that I should do it in a way that suits with my innate

passion for teaching; that is, that I myself teach it to some young ladies who can get no better instruction. My plan is one of my own devising, and perhaps not quite the usual method. It consists in so minute an analysis that sometimes a single phrase of an English writer will occupy us during the whole lesson. First, we fix the exact meaning of every expression; I require the analysis of the commoner words, such as *weather* for instance, the explanation of which is often more difficult than that of more precisely scientific expressions. Then we search for synonymes, or for words of the exactly opposite signification; we examine the word in all its various senses, both literal and figurative, search out its derivation, or its combinations with others, &c. You will easily understand that this method requires very careful preparation on my part, and that I should be quite at a loss without Webster's excellent dictionary. But the method itself I hold to be good, and very well adapted for acquiring the real mastery of any language, whether it be one's own or a foreign tongue. I have long used it in my German lessons on language; and if my own style has the credit of a certain degree of clearness, I attribute it mainly to my habitual practice of weighing every word; and, in fact, I cannot understand that, once having acquired such a command over words, any person should ever find a real difficulty in communicating his own thoughts to others.'

In a most affectionate letter to her second nephew,

who was thinking of bringing his bride to introduce her to her Hamburg relations, she says :

‘ There is no one to whom the acquaintance of your bride will be more welcome than to me. The smaller the number of blood-relations whom God has left me, the more closely do I feel myself linked to those few. Since the first deep anguish of my life, the death of him whose name you bear, how many, alas ! have followed him ! Yet I do not feel myself lonely, and I hope never to feel so. My employment connects me by strong ties with a younger generation, and, though many of these ties are loosened by death, by distance, and other circumstances, I yet think that the remaining ones will suffice to deprive my old age of the sting which in my youth I used to look forward to with most dread, as belonging to an old maid’s lot — I mean the melancholy feeling of having no one to love and to care for one. I used to be terrified by the almost universal assumption that such *must* be the lot of unmarried women ; and I may truly say that, ever since that time, I have more or less distinctly felt it to be my vocation to give the world a proof to the contrary, to show that the single state may be for my own sex a hallowed condition and full of blessing, and therefore also may be rendered a very happy one. . . . You are certainly right to take your young wife to Norway ; that country seems to me the only spot in Europe which is not disquieted by internal dissensions. What times we live

in ! They read us, I think, a solemn lesson on the perishable nature of earthly things, and on the melancholy state into which men fall as soon as they break loose from God and His holy laws. Yet I do not see things in so gloomy a light as many do. It was always my philosophy to hope the best, and the great preservative of this philosophy is my trust in God. The condition of mankind in the part of the world which we inhabit seems to me a state of fermentation. The whole mass is in unquiet movement; but let us only have a little patience, the dregs will sink again, and the wine that will remain will be nobler and sweeter than before. This is naturally the hope of all who confide in the eternal wisdom of the Divine Ruler. For my own part, I do not imagine that these better times are so far off that I may not hope to live to see them. Perhaps I should speak differently if I were better acquainted with the great political questions of the day; but, in fact, I do not trouble myself much about them, and in my happy position in life I find no call to do so. Whom could it profit for me to torment myself with things which lie beyond my reach, and which I can so confidently leave to the care of the Highest? I consider cheerfulness an essential element to my influence in my own sphere, especially as regards the children; and on this account, as far as in me lies, I would certainly do nothing which could sadden my whole tone of mind, and make this sadness perceptible in my manner.

‘My twelve days’ excursion gave me great pleasure, and especially in Berlin and Leipsic I rejoiced to perceive the noble and high-minded reaction which the activity of the powers of darkness has called forth. Much good is doing in the province of Christian philanthropy, and I believe stedfastly in the growth of every grain of mustard seed in the kingdom of God.’

However modestly and unpretendingly Amelia Sieveking might follow her own path, however candid and cautious she might be in her public conduct towards persons of different opinions, she could not altogether escape that conflict which every open profession of faith must encounter, in so far as it is opposed to another belief. In the course of the year 1849 she was drawn into a public controversy with Mr. Weigelt, the preacher of the Free Church in Hamburg. She would certainly have avoided this if she could, but she was obliged to undertake and to carry it through. Mr. Weigelt had felt himself aggrieved by a passage in her Sixteenth Report, which he applied to himself and his flock, and he wrote to her in respectful terms, yet with the request that she would recal her words, as otherwise he would feel obliged to publish his letter. She thanked him in her answer for the openness of his conduct, endeavoured to prove to him that to a certain degree he had misunderstood her, but explained that to recal what she had written with deliberate thought and care was impossible. His letter was printed; then followed her clear,

calm, and brief reply, with which the matter was laid before the public.

As already observed, persons of celebrity who visited Hamburg frequently sought Miss Sieveking's acquaintance. She thus relates to Miss Hösch a visit from Frederika Bremer, the novelist:

‘I was obliged to meet her with the confession that, much as I had heard of her works, I had as yet read none of them, to which she answered very composedly, that she could easily believe that I had no time to read novels. She made altogether a most favourable impression upon me: there is something remarkably simple and unpretending in her whole manner, and in many essential points her views seem very much the same as my own. The occasion of her first anonymous publication was the wish to procure a small sum to buy the necessary medicines for some poor sick people on her father's estate, for which her little pocket-money was not sufficient. Her own father, who died not long after, never knew of her authorship. She found more and more pleasure in the act of composition; but in all her tales the thought was always present to her mind of showing by example how those powers in our sex, which now lie idle, might be used to their own profit and that of others, and especially in the case of unmarried middle-aged women. She seemed to take a lively interest in my Association. I was obliged to give her all my Reports, and if I mistake not, she is thinking

of establishing something of the same kind in Stockholm.'

Miss Sieveking writes to the widow of her cousin the Syndic in September 1850:

'I have to send you a hearty greeting from the Duchess of Wurtemberg, who lately brought to visit me a Princess of Hohenzollern, and a younger lady, the Princess Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst; the latter afterwards spent a whole evening with me, and interested me very much. Among other foreigners whom I have seen, I may mention a M. Cerfbère, who is travelling in the employ and at the expense of the French Government, in order to make himself acquainted with the organization of the benevolent institutions of Germany. He spent two evenings with me. We had much pleasant conversation, and I found him a very sensible man, with one serious exception—namely, that he had undertaken a journey for such a purpose without knowing one word of German.'

Miss Sieveking had been often pressed to write a history of her life, of which some fragmentary notices had already appeared in her books and addresses, and in a number of the German Ladies' Illustrated Almanack for 1848. This was originally written by herself for a French periodical work. She replied to a fresh invitation of the same kind as follows:

'I will not deny that there is a certain attractiveness in the idea of writing an autobiography. It would not be

uninteresting to myself to call up the whole imagery of my past life before my mind, to renew its faded colours, and above all to recognise the Master Hand which planned the whole. And since my life has shaped itself not quite in the ordinary way, and I have been brought into contact with many distinguished persons, I might hope that a well-written account of it would afford some entertainment to others, and would not be without its value in giving weight and currency to the ideas which lie at the heart of my work. However, there are many objections to my acceding to the request; above all, that which decides me against it is the want of time. My Yearly Report is always, in a certain sense, a trouble to me; it is so hard to find the necessary leisure for writing it. I usually go away for a fortnight to seek at a distance the quiet which is prevented in Hamburg by unavoidable interruptions.' She then refers to the fragments already published, and concludes: 'I could no doubt communicate much more on the same subject, and it is possible that I may do so at some future day, if the Lord should give me rest in the evening of life from my work; but for the present, as I said before, it cannot be.'

She writes to the same lady who had made this request, and who was personally unknown to her:

'It would indeed give me great pleasure if we could meet for once in this life. Our lives are in essentials governed by the same principles, and we have similar

reasons to praise God for His mercy in directing us. But there is evidently a greater completeness in your work than in mine. Your institution affords an admirable centre in which all your strength may be even locally concentrated, which is in many respects a great gain. The circumstances of a great city require that my work shall be differently modified; in particular, the strength and energy of the other ladies, who have placed themselves at my disposal, have so many other claims upon them from their social and domestic relations, that often it is but the crumbs that are left for my poor. However, it is only required of stewards that they be found faithful. Oh that everyone of us might but be in earnest to work for the kingdom of God, with whatever is entrusted to us, be it much or little, so that we might one day hear from the Judge of the world that word of mercy—"Well done, good and faithful handmaid; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

On sending her Eighteenth Report to the widowed Queen Caroline Amelia, she returns again to the subject of the 'Appeal to Christian Women,' published in the Seventeenth, which had now been printed separately for distribution; and, after mentioning the antichristian Female Association, which about this time was founded at Hamburg in opposition to her own, she says:

'Where such efforts are astir, a bold and energetic

testimony to the glory of God appears to me to be by no means out of place. Far less do I care for any praise whatever in this case than to see one practical result from my address—namely, that many women's powers, hitherto devoted to vanity and frivolity, or at best to the hireling tasks of the needle, should be set free from these, and won for higher purposes. And the sphere which my appeal pointed out to my sisters I consider decidedly the fittest for them, because it is best suited to develope harmoniously the powers of a noble feminine nature. But, indeed, real womanhood is in my eyes something very different from that which many describe as such, which seems to me scarcely more than a compound of weakness and vanity. I believe in the powers of woman as I do in those of man, although they are differently modified. All that is required is, first, that woman should know her own faculties, and then that they should be guided aright, so that in their proper field they may take the form of real practical activity. Besides the tendency to frivolity already alluded to, which is by far the most prevalent error, there are two others that I specially fear for my own sex—that of an idle religion of sentiment which is often connected with a strong inclination to unfruitful speculations, and leads to enthusiasm or narrow-hearted exclusiveness: on the other hand, that of a restless desire to be doing, which under mistaken guidance intrudes itself into some province for which it has neither vocation nor ability,—such as I

particularly consider politics to be. In saying this I have especially in view the case of women of the middle class; but I believe that even for ladies of the highest rank the greatest possible caution is advisable in any interference with politics.

‘May I venture to name one thing more, which seems to me a great hindrance to real well-grounded progress in our sex. It is the immoderate love of talking which prevails, I may say, among the majority of women. You will perhaps think I am too severe upon my own sex, and it is possible that I deserve such a reproach; but at least I am convinced that this severity of judgment does not lessen my love for them. I know the evils of my own heart. I look on the whole earth as a Sanatorium for mortals sick of the disease of sin, and if my calling summons me to try to remedy some evil here and there, it is most necessary that I should search out the causes which explain its origin; finally, I derive from my faith the joyful hope that the great Physician of souls will at length find help, even for those desperate cases where human skill and human wisdom can do no more.’

In the summer of 1851 she writes to the Queen, who had lost a faithful friend by death:

‘Well, she is gone from all the emptiness of earth into the land of peace, where doubtless many of the mighty movements of our times will seem to her only as the wild confusions of a dream. She is gone before; we

follow—who knows how soon ! Oh that among all the dreams and shadows of this present life we might strike deep root into that which alone is real and enduring—the life of God in love !’

Somewhat further she says in the same letter —

‘The want of leisure for my correspondence is sometimes a real trouble to me. Sometimes, however, it is a not unwelcome excuse with which to cloke my idleness about writing. I am the worst correspondent in the world.’

In September of this year Miss Sieveking paid her fourth visit to her brother and sister in London, and there wrote her Nineteenth Report. About this Report she writes to the Queen in April 1852 :—

‘Its principal subject is the defects which I think I have observed in associated work in general, and in particular in associations of Christian women. The disclosure of such defects is always a somewhat ticklish business, but, with your Majesty’s love for plain truth, you will certainly not blame my having attempted it. Alas ! it is only too natural that self-love, when it cannot bring forward its own personal pretensions, should conceal itself under the semblance of zeal for the party, the society, or the brotherhood to which it belongs. One flatters another, and they lull each other into a dream of the general excellence of the body, until they think it quite a wonder that they are so humble ; while on the other hand there can be nothing good in

the party that is opposed to us, or in the Society which is conducted in a different spirit from our own. Alas ! how much mischief has arisen in all ages from such harsh, one-sided party spirit, and does arise even at this very time ! . . . For the clergy to mix themselves up with the party strife of politics seems to me a total misapprehension of their glorious vocation to bring peace on earth ; and I think that in the late conflicts of opinion, many things would have taken better shape, if the servants of the Lord had better understood their own peculiar mission in times like these.'

Returning once more to the subject of her English visit, she says :

'There is certainly much that is interesting to be found in a closer acquaintance with the emporium of the world, the land of industry, and of freedom under the rule of law, as the English love to describe their country ; and I felt this more than ever before, on visiting the proud island kingdom for the fourth time last autumn. But I could not settle permanently there, at least not in the mighty capital, where one sometimes feels so lonely and forlorn amid the vast throng of people. At my age, indeed, almost anyone who knows the happiness of home, becomes so firmly rooted there, that he could not think of changing his place of abode, until the summons come to him to seek his home above. But this decided feeling, that I could not live in England, dates from my younger days, as early as 1817, when I first

paid a visit to my brother there : and yet I am so truly alive to the many excellences which are to be found among the English, that my pupils often accuse me of too great a partiality for them. But there are two things which to me individually would make it difficult to live comfortably amongst them. It seems to me, that though they value themselves so much upon their civil liberty, they make themselves, in what I think a most inconvenient manner, the slaves of custom and fashion. The question whether a thing is "genteel," or not genteel, is, to my thinking, far too prominent in all their social relations; especially as this gentility often depends on entirely arbitrary rules, at least I cannot detect in it any connection with that higher idea of fitness, whose laws I fancy are much the same for cultivated persons of all nations. Then, too, the number of their "comforts" appears to me very uncomfortable, and in many cases quite a burden. It has always seemed to me to be a folly to make one's self dependent on so many trifling outward things, and I very early tried to carry out in practice the maxim, that the fewer wants a man has, the greater his freedom. The other point which decidedly would not suit me in England, is the rigidity of the religious life in that church. I most certainly could not get on with the majority of pious people in England, even with those who are thoroughly sincere and earnest. At a certain distance, I can fully acknowledge and enjoy the real beauty of their lives. But

if we lived close together, we should mutually offend each other. Many of my religious views, although I think I have scriptural grounds for them, they would describe as arrant heresy; they would think me half lost if they saw how I spend my Sundays, and yet it would be almost impossible to me to bind down my free spirit in the fetters of what seems to me their unspiritual mode of keeping the sabbath, without loss to what it is meant to further, the inward religious life.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1852—1854.

JOURNEY TO COPENHAGEN—LETTER TO THE QUEEN—
 PREPARATION FOR A SIXTH COURSE OF CLASSES—REMARKS
 ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF THE LOWER CLASS—
 FOURTH VISIT TO COPENHAGEN.

IN September 1852, Miss Sieveking again spent a few weeks with her royal friend at Sorgenfrei. In December of the same year she writes, on occasion of sending her Twentieth Report: ‘Does your Majesty know which of the expressions in your letter gave me the most pleasure? It is the passage where you say, that my visit has had a kind of electrical effect upon you, by which you feel stirred to greater active usefulness. May it please God, by the grace of His Holy Spirit, to give real and enduring effect to such an impression! I do not overlook the many hindrances in your Majesty’s position: for most assuredly the notion that any human being must necessarily enjoy greater personal freedom of action in proportion to the elevation of his rank, is a great mistake. Yet, after all, everyone has a certain amount of hindrances to overcome, and the greatest of all to each one of us is his indolence

or some other corruption of his own nature. Now it is especially in the act of combating outward hindrances that indolence is conquered; and the more faithfully we set ourselves this task, the more successful will our Lord enable us to be in making a way for ourselves, and the promise to Cyrus will be fulfilled even to us: 'I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron . . . and I will open before' thee 'the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut' (Isa. xlv. 2). And can anything more blessed be imagined for us, than that the Lord's gracious purpose should be attained in us, and we become really instruments of blessing in His hand? And if the fruit of our work is often hidden from us, what does it matter? We can rest in the conviction that if we really allow ourselves to be made use of according to the will of God, the seed we sow will surely some day bring a harvest of blessing here or in the world to come. As Tersteegen says —

Do thou thy work, the best that thou canst do,
As to the Lord, with willing heart and true;
If thou please Him, whate'er may be thy lot,
Success or failure, let it vex thee not.

The mistake that many persons make with regard to their work is, I think, that they seek their stimulus not so much in the inward voice of duty, as in the interest which the external circumstances of the case

may have to offer. Thus, for example, many ladies who belong to visiting societies are for ever looking out for new and *interesting* cases, and of course, are very often disappointed. I think, on the contrary, that if we look on the most apparently thankless case as a difficulty which God has bidden us to exercise all our powers and faculties to surmount, we shall always find a certain degree of interest in it, as the scholar does in a hard problem, and that all the more in proportion as we heartily endeavour to accomplish our task. With this object, we shall never rest content with a superficial knowledge of the case in hand, we shall investigate it thoroughly, and shall then find that every case has its own physiognomy. To a superficial observer, a hundred cases appear to have all the same features, and he wearies of the everlasting monotony, while the attentive enquirer perceives distinguishing traits everywhere, which provide an interesting subject for study ; just as to the ignorant all grass is simply grass, while the devout student of nature sees in the infinite variety of different grasses, a call to adoring admiration of the Creator. In this way, I believe faithfulness to the voice of duty within will impart a growing interest to the work we have in hand, an interest which will be heightened by the manifold combinations of circumstances, which will occur spontaneously in any work which has some variety of scope : one opportunity of doing aught for our brethren always leads to another.'

In December 1853 she writes to the Queen, on occasion of a death which had touched her nearly: 'It is indeed a deeply sorrowful feeling, when those who were young with us are one after another called away before us, and thus our path in life becomes in a certain sense ever more and more lonely. And yet this sorrowful experience is a powerful incitement, to look up from the land wherein we are strangers to our everlasting home above, and to cling more closely to that Mighty One, who can be to us more than father or mother, brother, sister, or friend, and in whose presence we shall one day meet all our beloved ones again. And that festival of reunion which will be solemnised above, how different, how far happier will it be, than the happiest meeting upon earth; which is always followed by a fresh parting, and in which we are so often pained by this or that, which secretly separates us in heart from those who are near us in the body! There, where misunderstanding is impossible, where every dissonance melts into clear and perfect harmony, because all sin is done away and every heart re-echoes the pure full notes of the Divine love,—there it is that we shall, for the first time, fully apprehend the blessedness that our relations with each other ought to afford. Meantime we have, even here on earth, many hours whose happiness has been drawn from the society of others, for which to thank our God; indeed, when we look back on our past lives, are not the brightest spots in the retrospect, for the most part, those

times when we have enjoyed communion with noble souls? And even now how much blessing flows to us constantly through our social relations ; and how much more might we not derive from them if we were more careful to consecrate them all to God, if we looked on each one of them as a lesson set us by our heavenly Master, from which we might learn something for the kingdom of heaven.'

Somewhat later she says in the same letter: 'I cannot allow myself any journey this summer, because it is the last year of my present course of classes. Next Easter the greater part of this set of children are to be confirmed, and this will bring my fifth course of instruction to an end. Yet I feel courage and strength to begin a sixth course, at Michaelmas 1854, under the proviso naturally of St. James (iv. 15)—“If the Lord will, and we live.” The thought of a fresh circle of little scholars of from six to eight years old, already gives me delightful pleasure in anticipation. But ought I not to praise the mercy of my God, who has granted me a vocation in life, which in my sixtieth year has still the same interest for me, which it had when I first selected it in my eighteenth? When my present pupils are gone, I shall enter on a few months of comparative leisure, which I intend to employ partly in the publication of my “Conversations on the Holy Scriptures,” partly with preparations for my future scholars: for precisely because we have been

for many years employed in any work, we should be especially on our guard against slipping into a mechanical routine, and falling behind the continual progress of the age.'

It was then in contemplation to found a little orphan-house in Copenhagen, under the patronage of the Queen, for twelve children whose parents had died of the cholera; and Miss Sieveking expresses her opinion respecting the principles on which such an institution for the lower class should be founded, as follows:

'The most essential part of their education seems to me to be, that a sound Christian knowledge, immediately drawn from the Word of God itself, should be the basis of all the instruction given to the children: but that this Christian doctrine should really pervade the life of the whole institution, and not be a mere outward show, by which children may easily be trained to hypocrisy. We must also carefully avoid satiating young minds with spiritual things; it occasions secret disgust. Further, in the whole plan of education, the future destination of the children must not be forgotten, and they should not be educated above their station. How much of their life's happiness may be destroyed beforehand, if children are early taught to look too high, and to make demands, which the future before them cannot satisfy! In this respect I think that some caution is required in bringing the children of poor parents into very frequent contact with persons of the higher classes, unless

the latter possess the sound judgement and tact requisite for the judicious management of such intercourse. It should be understood, that we must treat the children of the lower class differently from those of the higher, not only in respect of the more limited range of their instruction, but in the whole tone of our intercourse. Much which seems allowable in dealing with children of the higher classes appears to me clearly unsuitable when we have to do with the children of the poor. Doubtless the element of love should as little be absent here, as in the education of the richest and the noblest. But the mode and manner of its expression must for their own sake be different. It is easy to spoil them with too much tenderness, and make them too sensitive to the roughnesses they must meet with in after life, particularly in their relations with other persons, and from which we cannot shield them. In our intercourse with grown people among the poor, there is not the same danger, and here I should wish to multiply the points of contact. The danger is not so great, because, on the one hand, the people know already from experience what they have to expect in life, and especially in their relations with the rest of the world; and we, on the other, are not so apt to forget the difference between them and ourselves. On the contrary, it often appears to the upper class of persons, to be greater than it really is, and they are only too much inclined to consider the poor as altogether different from themselves. But this

is manifestly prejudicial to the sympathy which one human being ought to feel for another, and I think it a good thing, therefore, that the various classes should be amalgamated by means of frequent intercourse. Yet I am so far opposed to the levelling principles of the democrats, that I consider it a decided mistake, in persons of higher rank, to try to put those of the lower class exactly on the same footing with themselves. It does them no good, and will probably embarrass them, or make them presuming. The aim of the Christian philanthropist, in his intercourse with the poor, should be, I think, to render them content with the station God has assigned them in society; by making them feel that were their own position the very lowest, we respect them if they fill it worthily, and that, where they stand in need of our help, it is a pleasure to us to give it them. If we endeavour, in an unnatural manner, to lift them above their station, we sow the seeds of discontent, which are sure to bear fruit, when they fall back from the false elevation in which they cannot maintain themselves, into their former condition.'

In June 1853, Miss Sieveking congratulated her eldest nephew, who had previously lost a little child, on the birth of a son, on which occasion she writes:*

'Very much have I been pleased with your pedagogical ideas, and I subscribe to them all in their full

* In English.—TR.

extent. With satisfaction I recognise in you the true Sieveking's race, which issued, as you will remember, from a worthy Westphalian schoolmaster. Till now I should have thought that the good old schoolmaster's blood flowed in all its purity only in the veins of the female descendants. In no way, however, am I jealous for the female line of our family, so as to grudge the most valuable talent of education to anyone of the male one, and last of all to you. Most sincerely do I wish that you may find on your path as few disappointments as possible. Alas! what young parents should not like to set before their eyes the fairest prospects for their darlings upon their knees! And how should they not have in readiness a plan of education which scarcely can fail to realise those prospects; a plan so full of wisdom and beautiful harmony, that it needs must lead to a most happy result, if there was not—a single *if not*, but a most weighty one it must be owned—if there was not so much sin and fragility on the part of the teachers themselves, and in them on whom the experiment is to be tried, enough to derange, even perhaps to subvert, the most elaborate and best combined plan. With all that, I feel bold to augur you success. The general sober tenour of your mind will preserve you from the danger of being led astray by vain chimeras: you don't even wish for a phenomenon in your child; you have not raised your standard above your reach; you will be satisfied if you see your boy grow up to become a

sound-thinking and strong-acting man. . . . Parental love is the tutelar angel of the child ; but, as other holy angels, he is to take his commission, not from nature's altar only, but from before the throne of the Most High. To variate the same theme, you will certainly agree with me in three cardinal points, as forming the basis of every sound pedagogical theory—truth, activity, and obedience. At the bottom of all this must be a loving faith: a painted image floating on the surface will not do. Woe to them who systematically engraft the lie into their pupil's heart, in teaching the infant lips to pronounce words in which the teachers themselves do not believe, and which for the child are void of sense and genuine feeling !'

In the same letter Miss Sieveking recurs to a subject which was very near her heart, and respecting which she could not listen to an opposite opinion without emotion, so closely was her own view entwined with her whole habit of thought, namely, the question of eternal punishment. 'In a former letter,' she says, 'you ask me to explain the apparent contradiction there is between parents consoling themselves with the conviction that their babies who die young are partakers of heavenly bliss, and between their devotion to their children, which would induce them to do anything to prevent their dying. To follow out (you add) the former conclusion legitimately, is to act as the mad-woman who slaughtered her children in order that they

might be saved the peril of their souls. My dear Edward, let me tell you my mind freely: if the promises are right, if the new-born babe after his decease, without any intermediate state, immediately enters the abode of heavenly bliss: if, on the other hand, every soul that dies in his sins is to be condemned to never-ending torments; then, indeed, I can see in that poor woman's proceeding, not madness, but rather the highest abnegation of motherly love. However, it is precisely the enormity of such a position that appears to me a striking argument against the melancholy doctrine of never-ending perdition. It often puzzles me how its adherents, among them so many pious and in other respects enlightened men, can adapt to it their notions of supreme Justice and almighty Love. What, the new-born child in possession of eternal, unspeakable bliss, without any struggle, without any trial, only because it has pleased God to call him from a world of sin, before his sleeping propensity to it was developed—and the poor wretch, the offspring of vice and shame, in the midst of mighty temptations left without a spiritual guide, he, for not having overcome his evil passions, he should be devoted to never-ending eternities of woe! No, no; till my last breath I shall protest with all my might against a view of things which, in my eyes, leads to blasphemy. In my opinion, heaven and earth are not reft asunder, the earth not isolated from heaven, but both in the nearest combination, as

beginning and continuation are annexed one to another. Thus I see in the life of every mortal a vast plan of education, whose first rudiments only are thrown into the space between his cradle and his tomb, but whose complete developement will take eternities to come. Should I in this rob you of a consolation with regard to your dearly beloved first-born? Oh no, I don't think so. You have resigned your dear little Edward into the hands of your heavenly Father, who loves him better than even you could love him. When he had been spared you, what tender cares would you have lavished upon him! Now you would surely not have taken him from a good nurse, except in the one case that you had found another, better still. So when the Lord has taken your darling from you, you may safely trust His love that it was only to transfer the young plant to another climate more favourable to its growth and developement.'

In April 1854 she writes to her nephew, again in English: 'Your letter has given me very much pleasure in the genuine expressions of the justly appreciated happiness which is fallen to your lot. . . . But now let me render you the like in the acknowledgement of the many inappreciable privileges of my situation. The abundance of Divine grace is not indeed confined to any particular sphere of human life. Matrimonial and parental happiness stand very high in my estimation; and still I could almost defy any married woman and

happy mother, whether not, on the whole, the sum of gladness I have enjoyed equals hers, though probably my life is more deficient in hours of high ecstasy. But I think, that in an average estimate of human felicity, a general tenour of quiet satisfaction falls heavier in the scale, than those periods of all over-towering bliss, which in the nature of things can be but of short duration. My dear Edward, my dear Jane, if Providence grants you a daughter, let her learn early, that the essential conditions of a woman and happiness are no others than faith, and charity, and hope; and if perhaps her old aunt does not live to see her blooming youth, let this be my legacy to her—the solemn assurance, that also a single state may be glorified by unspeakable blessings, if it is filled up by a vocation of charitable love.’

Speaking of her Children’s Hospital, she tells her nephew, that she has added a fourth to the three working deaconesses, in order to divide the burthen of care and labour, which had become too heavy. ‘As to the increase of expense occasioned by this new arrangement, we were emboldened to encounter it by a fine legacy of above 100 marks in ducats,* successively laid by for our institution by a poor solitary woman. . . . In melancholy and almost misanthropic seclusion from the world, she passed her last years at Ham, almost forgotten, I daresay, by most of her former acquaintances. Poor

* 59*l*.

soul ! how much more happiness would these pieces of gold have yielded to her, if, instead of hoarding them up, though for a charitable purpose, she herself had applied them to the mitigation of human misery, adding her heart's sympathies to the gift of charity, and thus enjoying the sweetness of loving and of being beloved.'

In August 1854, Miss Sieveking accepted another invitation to visit the Queen at Sorgenfrei, and she writes after her return home : —

'I feel well and cheery, and look back on the three weeks' episode of my sojourn at Sorgenfrei with thankfulness. If one could not rejoice to return home, in my opinion one had better not travel ; and I heartily pity any one to whom travelling has become such a necessity, that he is continually longing to see new places and countries, and cannot stay quietly at home for a single summer. When things are as they should be with us, it seems to me that the circle to which we immediately belong must always be the dearest to our heart. But with all this I should be most ungrateful not to acknowledge how much I have often gained by travelling. I am sure it does one a great deal of good to get out of harness occasionally, and be free from one's every-day business ; and it certainly is not a good thing for a man to be bound to the habits of his own house and home, like a snail to its shell. And if from such an occasional excursion over land and sea, we

bring no blessing back to our own home, it is surely our own fault, for not knowing how to make use of new impressions. No doubt however there is a more and a less, in all this, which does not altogether depend upon ourselves. . . . Once more a thousand thanks for the beautiful token of remembrance which I received from my dear Queen at our parting hour. It will be to me a symbol of deep significance. The rings, linked one within the other, to which I can find neither beginning nor end, remind me of eternity. The glowing red stone in the middle is to me an image of love, that love of God which will bestow on us the blessedness of eternal life, and does bestow it now, when we suffer His love to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Your Majesty's hair entwined with a golden chain will remind me to show myself worthy of the favour which a noble princess has vouchsafed to me, and the chain suggests the ties which ought to unite all mankind, from the throne down to the lowest condition of social life, but which indeed, to make them firm and enduring, require to be linked to a higher throne than that of any earthly potentate.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

1854—1856.

THE SIXTH COURSE OF CLASSES BEGUN — THE TWENTY-SECOND REPORT, AND HER LAST BOOK, 'CONVERSATIONS,' ETC. — POLITICS — LETTER TO THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA — FIFTH VISIT TO ENGLAND — THE BATHS OF LIPPSPRINGE.

IN December Miss Sieveking sent her Twenty-second Report to the Queen, and with it her last book, just published — 'Conversations on Particular Passages of Holy Scripture.' She writes at the same time:—' Since I have begun my sixth course of classes with fifteen little girls, I am obliged to portion out my time very carefully, in order not to be hindered in my current employments. The last set of pupils claim their rights, and I could very well use one or two more mornings than there are in the week. However, all is now regularly fitted in, and I always think that it is a much happier thing to be at a loss often how to find time enough, than not to know what to do with it. I consider it a great advantage to have a fixed employment which occupies the larger portion of one's time. Where this is not the case, I think it is well to supply the

want by making for ourselves as regular an apportionment of our time as possible. But this plan must be arranged as under the eye of God, seriously weighing the means and faculties for doing good which He has entrusted to us, and remembering also the account which He will one day require of the conscientious disposal of them. But I think it requires much more energy to carry out such a plan of life, of which the ordering is more or less in our own power, than to attend to the duties of a prescribed calling.'

She expresses her sentiments on another subject in this letter, on which she remarks :—' Your Majesty is at this time, no doubt, much occupied with political interests ; this is most natural for princes, and perhaps entirely right : yet you will not take it amiss, if I wish to lay a counterbalancing weight in the other scale : namely, the interests of poor suffering humanity. Your Majesty, at least in your present position, is not called upon to take an active part in the entangled maze of state affairs ; but to distribute the means of blessing—not money only, but of real blessing—among the poor and needy is, according to St. Paul, the especial mission of Christian widows in general. Must it not then be recognised by the widow of the father of his country, as peculiarly her own ? So many political questions seem to me to have no moral importance for individuals, except at the moment when they arise. Whatever in these political relations belongs to history, whatever contains a pro-

mise of future good for the nations, we must leave to a higher hand, which will know how to arrange all the tangled threads, and form them into a tissue of beauty. To him to whom it is given, as it were, to see that Hand at work, there may well be a joy in doing so. Only, I think, there are but few who do not see things through a coloured medium, and then everything appears different from what it really is. I for my part—but then indeed the literature of newspapers is now-a-days almost entirely a *terra incognita* to me—I would rather study the policy of the great Ruler of the world in the past, which has already become history, than in the wild agitation of the present.’

Miss Sieveking sent her new book to the Queen of Prussia about this time, and wrote to her with it. In the summer of 1853 the King and Queen of Prussia, during a visit to Hamburg, had visited the Children’s Hospital, and had left it a liberal gift in money. She returns her thanks for this, excusing herself for not having done so before, and continues :—‘ Since then two yearly Reports of our Association have appeared, both of which were composed during the leisure of a three weeks’ visit to the Castle of Sorgenfrei in the summer of 1852, and again last summer ; each time I had the pleasure of showing the manuscript to the excellent Queen Caroline Amelia. I ventured also to read my “ Conversations on the Holy Scriptures ” to her before printing, and indeed, it is principally her approval

which has emboldened me to send a copy of this work to your Majesty, for I fancy that there is a certain kindredness of spirit between yourself and her. No doubt, however, your Majesty must often be overburdened with the quantity of books sent to you in this way, and it is impossible you should read them all, so that it could not surprise me if my book were left unread, especially as it is intended for quite young women. Should you, however, cast a glance at it, and should you be satisfied that its tendency is agreeable to your views, then I would ask you to look around your circle for any young lady to whom my reflections — and especially the last portion, the “Legacy to my Young Friends” — would be suitable, and who might make a good use of them. Indeed I am very anxious that the ideas there expressed should find acceptance and response in many circles, because I think I see in them a remedy for the frivolity and vanity to which unhappily so many of our sex are given up, and which leave the heart so empty, and life so barren. One of my nephews lately wrote to me at some length on the plan of study which, in his opinion, I ought to pursue with my pupils, advising me to endeavour, as next in importance to Christian principles, to awaken in them a certain exclusive feeling of German patriotism. But I cannot admit the suggestion; the field of politics is almost foreign to myself, nor can I concede to women and young girls, especially of the middle class, any right to busy themselves with political

questions, save in a very limited measure. They are clearly not called to take an active part in such affairs, and idle speculations, as I think, can neither really satisfy their own minds, nor be any good to those around them. If we are but true servants of our Lord we shall be of as much service to our country as it lies within the sphere of our powers and duties to be. It may be the duty of the highest of our sex to venture themselves into the labyrinth of state affairs; but I cannot hold it to be the business of the middle class to do so. But *one* mission, I think, is common to all women, be they of high rank or of low, although the variety of position will modify its form. It is the mission of humble ministering love, grounded on faith, whose gentle magic interposes with a softening influence amidst the hard contrarieties and passionate agitations of the world, and brings heaven down to earth, making a paradise within the heart, if it cannot always succeed in doing so in the outward world. That the Eternal Love may make us all, from the princess on the throne to the lowest peasant girl, ever more truly instruments of blessing in His Hand, is the deepest wish of my heart.'

She expresses her profoundest convictions on the same subject in a letter to Queen Caroline Amelia, of June 1855. She there says:—

'It seems to me a tremendous responsibility for a Christian ruler to risk the life and well-being of so

many thousands of his subjects in any war which could possibly have been avoided. I myself know of but one point of view for all political questions, that of the Gospel, and there are scarcely any in which I do not find sin and error on both sides, and that in the very question itself, not merely in the opposing leaders. In the eyes of many, political passions and the love of our country are identical: but in my estimation this is a false view, and I hold that many are excellent patriots who know nothing about politics. I would define patriotism as the love of the country wherein by God's appointment we were born, beyond all other countries; the love of the nation with whom He has placed us in connection, beyond all other nations. A feeling so deeply rooted in our nature must be a sign of the will of our Maker in this respect, and when hallowed by Christianity, the love of our country must undoubtedly be reckoned among the Christian virtues. But one thing I must maintain, which perhaps would scandalise many warm patriots: the feeling of national hatred I hold to be wholly incompatible with the spirit of Christianity; and even at the time of the War of Liberation, I could not well bear to hear the French spoken of as a nation of rascals, against whom anything was allowable in the way of vengeance, for the wrongs they had done to us. I know that cosmopolitism is often a mere mask for selfishness; under pretence of aiming at the good of the whole human race, people neglect the interests of

their own country, and even of those who are united to them by the holiest ties. But the false pretence cannot do away with the reality. All Christians should in a peculiar sense be cosmopolites, because they acknowledge a Redeemer, who is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and who willeth to gather all the races of men into one flock. But I am deeply convinced that this Christian cosmopolitism, though it enlarges our hearts, in no way lessens the depth and fervour of our feelings. The old Germans were often fired to the shedding of blood by the wild outcries of their women: but this can never be the part of Christian women. What other mission can theirs be than one of mediation, of long-suffering, self-sacrificing love?’

In the same letter she observes:—

‘I think that, as we grow older, we have need to be on our guard against a certain stagnation in our views of life and the world, and the thoughts and feelings connected with them; and the change of all the objects around us which is found in travelling seems to me a very appropriate remedy.’

She replies to her nephew on the subject which he had brought forward:—

‘I am very much against women meddling much with politics, and what I have actually seen in this way strengthens my objection to it. For what does it all come to? In place of thorough knowledge you have empty declamation, all the more vehement in proportion

as the disputants are unable to support their side by sound reasoning ; and instead of the clear standard of fixed principles, you have hasty judgments, evidently not based on the nature of the case, but springing from personal feeling.'

In September 1855, Amelia accepted another invitation from her brother, and spent four weeks in England, first with her nephew and his family at Brighton, where she took a course of sea-bathing, and then with her brother in the neighbourhood of London. She writes of this visit to the Queen of Denmark in March 1856:—

‘It was a delightful, enjoyable time, but I caught a cold on the journey home, which was obstinate enough to make my friends somewhat uneasy, and which has not yet quite passed off. My physician seemed to fear a consumptive tendency, and especially recommended a nourishing diet. He seems to have found the right treatment, for I am now almost well and strong again. Kind Dr. Von Düring, who treats me as a real friend, has laid me under a special obligation, because, on careful consideration of my individual case, he has not insisted on my giving up my active habits. I have been allowed to go on with my teaching, committee meetings, and visiting my poor people ; and if at times I feel a little over tired, yet I am firmly convinced that the exertion of all my powers has helped to overcome the disorder. To give way too much to feelings of bodily

illness seems to me to be always the infallible way to make them worse.

‘In England, I had for the first time the opportunity of attending the service of the Episcopal Church; I could hardly ever ask my brother to accompany me there,* as I know that he does not at all like it, and most decidedly gives the preference to our Lutheran Church. I must now say that I entirely feel with him, and it is almost incomprehensible to me how spiritual life and devotion can be maintained in a congregation,—and still more how the clergy do not lose both,—with this English Liturgy. A certain participation of the people in the service by means of the responses is really beautiful: but then those eternal repetitions! At each service, and there are two or three every Sunday, the Lord’s Prayer is repeated five times, twice the Apostles’ Creed, once the Ten Commandments with responses by the people, two tolerably long Psalms (always the same), and besides these as much as twenty fixed prayers, which however are by no means long. I must confess that such stereotyped devotion goes contrary to my whole nature; and that a true love and delight in God’s word would hardly have been awakened in me, if in my childhood people had insisted on cramming me with the Bible, as is the usual practice in England. There, children of from six to eight years old are often sent to the Sunday school from nine till eleven; then from eleven till one they are at church, from two to three Sunday school

again, and then immediately follows another two hours' service. I cannot say that I agree with the English principle of keeping Sunday; it seems to me almost unavoidable that the spirit should be lost in the letter. But I must confess that in visiting the poor, which I frequently did at Brighton, I found more knowledge of Scripture (and it seemed to me not to be a mere lifeless knowledge) in these lower classes in society than would be found among ourselves. Indeed, in Germany, and particularly with us in Hamburg, the contrary is the case, and a spirit of opposition to the Church is spreading more and more. . . . As to our Association, your Majesty will see by our Twenty-third Report how it goes on. . . . My "Conversations on Holy Scripture" have found good acceptance in many places, which is a pleasure to me, and now a second edition is in the press, larger by half than the first.'

About this time she writes to her nephew (in English as usual):—

'You overrate by far my spiritual attainments, and so do many of my friends here. That certainly ought to lead me to sincere self-humiliation, but at the same time it shall prove to me a stimulus to aspire in good earnest after a degree of perfection you think I have already come to. In one thing, however, you are quite right: if you call my life a happy one, I must fully acquiesce, and it would be shameful ingratitude, indeed, if I did not. A sphere of activity which corresponds

with the innermost tendencies of my being, and love, friendship, confidential regard, meeting me from so many quarters, are indeed invaluable benefits, and of how many more have I to boast of in my situation in life! In my in the latter months somewhat enfeebled state of health, I have received a great many marks of sympathy, which really touch me to the heart; above all from your dear papa, to whom I beg you to repeat my warm thanks for all he has done, and intends further to do for me. Among my other friends I must single out the dear Theresa Pehmöller, the kind and unwearying agent of your father's bounties, and the good Dr. Von Düring, whose visits have more the character of a friendly interview than a professional stamp, though at the same time he is very careful, and who steadily refuses to take any fee from me, though I must own that I am not always a very docile patient. I think that many people would feel their delicacy hurt in not being allowed to pay their doctor; it is not so with me. In most of my labours I myself have volunteered, and on the other hand, I think it not degrading to receive gratuitous services from others, and thus I am bound by the ties of gratitude to a good many persons. . . .

‘With all due acknowledgment, however, of the kind regard paid to my person and to my work, I must however say, that in one respect, where it would be the most gratifying to me, this regard is often withheld. The great object of my life, at least since my twentieth

year, has been to raise my sex, and especially the single women, to a higher sphere of activity, to an efficient and practical furtherance of the kingdom of God, to an useful though subordinate co-operation with men in the same labours which are to benefit the poorer classes. Now, I have met with much approbation of my ideas, praises have been lavished on my efforts, much more than they deserve in the all-searching eye of the Lord; but what avails all that, when the acknowledgment by fact and practice is wanting? My "Conversations on Passages of the Scriptures" have been read by many with interest; a new and enlarged edition is now leaving the press. All that is very well, but now the mother of one of my pupils, a lady who certainly is not of weak intellects, compliments me on my book, and assures me that she scarcely ever has read anything so much to her edification, and the same lady denies to her daughter the permission to read occasionally to a poor blind man. Must I think, then, her compliment a mere unmeaning flattery? I would not tax her with that. It is only one of those so often occurring instances of incoherence between a man's theory and his practice. Another case: another of my former pupils has an earnest longing after an useful vocation beyond the needlework which now fills up the greatest part of her time. A most favourable opportunity is afforded to her: she may stay at the paternal house, only four times a week she is to help me in

my class, plenty of time for her little household duties. She is quite happy in this prospect; her own mother declares she can wish no better for her, being at a loss how to provide the necessary occupations for three grown daughters, and still the whole plan has come to nought, by the obstinate opposition of the papa, who cannot bear the idea of his girl being bound to any regular labour out of the house. Another husband of my acquaintance will not allow his wife to pay a visit to the poor in the morning, lest the servant-maid should want the proper superintendence, not in her work (she is sufficiently clever in that), but in her morals. If, however, he is to go out with his lady to any party, leaving the house for many hours together, his tender fears for the servant's morals are dismissed. You will easily conceive that such incongruities and prejudices sometimes grieve and vex me very much. However, I don't renounce the hope to see the power of these prejudices at last abolished, though perhaps my earthly eye may long be shut before that be done; and if I have been, as I think I have, in some degree instrumental in this result, I shall deem it a blessing for which I'll thank God in eternity.'

Although Miss Sieveking for a while felt stronger, the old vigour did not return; and an obstinate cough, which had its seat in the trachea, and was continually irritated by the overstrain of teaching and reading aloud, made her physician think it needful to prescribe

a visit to some baths, which would at the same time involve an interruption of her usual occupations. He chose the Baths of Lippspringe, and she most unwillingly submitted to the necessity. In August 1856 she writes to Queen Caroline Amelia, whom for the second time this summer she had missed on her way through Hamburg: —‘ Here I am again at home, after passing five weeks at Lippspringe; I am not indeed fully recovered, but still I hope for a recovery. My cough, and to some extent my languor also, continue, but I am said to look better, and whatever is still wanting is expected from the after effects of the treatment. Well, we shall see. If things do not mend, as I still hope they will, I shall at least have the comfort of having done my part. The results are in Higher hands, and there they will remain, however much we may trouble ourselves about them. But this is the believer’s privilege, that he may bid farewell to all disquieting care. . . . “ East or west, Home’s the best,” is a German proverb, and I pity any one who cannot say so heartily. At Lippspringe I needed all my philosophy not to give way to home sickness.’

And yet the diary which she kept there, and which, true to her old habit, she read to her pupils and friends at home, shows how well she understood how to invest even the idle life of a watering-place with some kind of practical interest, by her connection with the different individuals who came there, and her readiness to

receive and communicate information of various kinds. Although all that concerned the interests of Christian philanthropy was what she chiefly sought and gave in conversation, it was never her custom, as the saying is, only 'to greet those of her own trade.' On the contrary, she took especial pleasure in free intercourse with people of a different way of thinking, and sought the society of persons of various classes and opinions. She wasted no time even on the promenade, or at the table d'hôte; that is, she understood how even there to give a definite object to any conversation, and, as she used to say, half in jest, but not without a serious meaning, tried at any rate to get something out of it for her diary. She especially enjoyed her intercourse with the wife and daughters of General von Thiele, of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, with Miss Suringar, the daughter of a well-known Dutch philanthropist, and with Superintendent Dirksen, from Aurich, and from their acquaintance she derived much advantage. Very unwillingly did she devote these five weeks entirely to the pursuit of health; she indeed fulfilled her task of drinking the waters, walking, &c., punctually enough, but if she kept to the letter of her physician's orders, she probably departed greatly from their spirit, as was apt to be the case with her whenever the necessity of the rule was not clear to her own mind. 'To wear oneself out in the service of others,' is, in the closest sense of the words, the appointed work and fate of all

whom God has chosen to be His especial instruments ; it was Amelia Sieveking's task and her destiny, and only in fulfilling it could she be true to herself.

At the close of 1856, she writes again to the Queen : ' During the last few months, I have been idler than ever in my correspondence, because I could make my physical weakness an excuse. I cannot say that I have been in a particularly suffering state. I have had scarcely any pain, but I felt weary and exhausted, so that I often fell asleep in the day, and could literally only *creep* along the road, and I was visibly growing thinner. My physician considered the case serious, and did not conceal his opinion from me. Of course this was a solemn admonition to think on death and eternity, but I must own that I felt so much life in me, that I could not fully believe that the illness was to end fatally ; and with this feeling I could not resolve to yield unconditional obedience to the doctor's advice, that I should spare my strength by lessening my work. My nephew, the physician in London, actually wished me to give up the whole of my work for six months ; but I thought I understood my own constitution better than he did. Entire leisure would only have made my ailments worse, and I should have become intolerable to myself by constantly dwelling upon them, so I broke through these rules, and, with very few exceptions, have contrived to fulfil all my engagements, including the conduct of the Association, the instruction of the

children, and the Bible-classes with my elder girls. I certainly found it a little hard sometimes, but I got through, and the result has shown that my plan was not so mistaken as some people would make out. I held to the maxim of the physician at Lippspringe, whom I like on many accounts, but especially because I often heard him repeat, that the power of the mind over the body is much greater than people are generally inclined to admit. I think that there would be much less illness in the world, if physicians were more diligent in teaching this doctrine, and patients more willing to believe it than they now are. At present, I may consider myself almost recovered, although the cough is not quite gone, nor my old strength quite restored. I cannot decide whether to ascribe this recovery wholly to the after effects of the Lippspringe waters; no doubt they were helped by very warm clothing, very nourishing diet, cod-liver oil, and steel drops. One task, which really did oppress me very much at this time, was the composition of the Twenty-fourth Report. At Lippspringe I had not the necessary materials: after the journey I could not give my children fresh holidays, and so I was obliged in a manner to steal time for this work, the worst of which was, that in many hours that I might well have reserved for it, the disposition for writing so entirely failed, that I could not even make the attempt; for though one can force oneself to many kinds of effort

by conquering one's inward dislike, there really is no true way to do *such* work when the inward impulse is entirely absent. I have made the Report somewhat shorter than usual, and I only wish it may not be too manifest that the composition was such weary work.'

CHAPTER XXX.

1856—1858.

PAINFUL DOMESTIC OCCURRENCE — THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION — JOURNEY TO THE SODEN BATHS — THE COMMERCIAL CRISIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES — DEATHS IN THE FAMILY — REMARKS ON HER FUTURE BIOGRAPHY — PHYSICAL STATE.

IN the autumn of this year Miss Sieveking was obliged to change her residence, which was attended with some difficulty, on account of the space required for her school, and the high rate of house-rent in Hamburg. She rented a house standing alone, with a little garden round it, at the end of an open space, beside a canal; the upper rooms she let off, and moved into it with her servants, a good honest couple without children. In spite of the simplicity of her domestic arrangements, her few wants and requirements, she had latterly had some unpleasant experiences in this quarter, as her maid had robbed her of a considerable sum of money by means of a false key. The interval during which she kept this person on trial between her first feeling of suspicion (a feeling contrary to her whole nature), and the moment, when, having obtained unquestionable

certainly, she forced the thief to confess her guilt in the presence of a concealed officer of justice, was to her a period of real misery, full of most painful emotion. After the dismissal of these unworthy persons, quiet returned, and now she felt happy and contented in her new and pleasant dwelling, attended by faithful and grateful servants. But she was not recovered, and although it is very probable that she might have sunk altogether, had she given up all the bodily exertion connected with her calling, yet on the other hand, the enfeebled organs could not gain strength under such unceasing and excessive use. The spring of 1857 brought increased cough and greater loss of strength; accustomed as she had been for many years to rise at five o'clock, summer and winter, and never to go to bed till eleven at night, she was often overcome by weariness in the middle of the day. Her good constitution helped her to sleep immediately, if she only lay down for half-an-hour; but the feet often refused their office, and she was forced to sit down by the roadside on her way to visit her friends or the poor. The warmth of the summer brought some return of strength, but the physicians (two of whom were now called in), were unanimous in advising a journey to some watering-place, and this time Soden, near Frankfort-on-the-Maine, was recommended. She yielded to the necessity, not without an inward struggle, since it put an end to a hope of seeing her brother and sister at Hamburg, in the course of the

summer. Before starting, however, on the 23rd of May, 1857, she kept the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the foundation of her Association in a circle of sympathising friends and acquaintance. It was an affecting festival; the Association had opened a subscription amongst themselves to give all the poor under their care a dinner at their own houses. Dr. Wichern had come by invitation from Berlin, and a speech from him concluded the celebration, which had begun with a hymn and an opening address from Pastor Mönckeberg. Miss Sieveking herself was feeling very weak at the time, but a wish had been expressed that she should say something, and she had promised to do so. 'I have not yet been able to think over what I shall say,' she had told a friend some days before, 'but I think the Lord will give me strength for it.' And it was so. When her delicate feeble frame was seen occupying the principal seat in the room, and she began to speak with an almost inaudible voice, many feared she would not be able to finish, or that it would be impossible to hear her; but the voice soon gathered power, and she spoke with clearness, dignity, and increasing warmth and elevation, of the importance of the day to herself and to the Association, gave thanks for the guidance vouchsafed to her by her faithful God, explained what she had desired and striven for, and how it had been granted to her; and then stated, that now, in the evening of life, and with sensibly diminishing strength, she had

yet no fears for her work, since she cherished a firm conviction that it would survive her, although perhaps in an altered form, because it was built upon the only foundation that ensures permanence — the faith of Christ. The idea which filled her whole soul, the raising and ennobling of her sex by works of saving, serving love, was indeed become a fact and a reality, though not yet in the full extent and development in which it floated before her mind. She then ended with the words of the hymn, ‘Abide among us with thy grace,’ and certainly left in the hearts of most of her hearers a feeling of tender, yet elevating emotion.

On the 17th of July, she set out on her journey to Soden, and the diary which she kept there with her usual exactness affords some traits on which we must linger a little, since this remarkable life is now drawing to a close. Her feeling of weakness was often great, and it diminished her enjoyment of nature and of social intercourse, the only things that could to her lessen the sacrifice of a journey taken merely for health. Then, too, the society at Soden suited her less than the smaller circle at Lippspringe, and, except in intercourse with a few friends from Hamburg, some former watering-place acquaintance, and a few remarkable personages, she found here, especially at first, less of intellectual interest.

On the 20th of July, she writes in her diary : —

‘To-day for the first time I have done a little work ;

yesterday I only wrote in my journal, and that was tedious, for lack of interesting matter. I began with some work connected with my teaching, and felt while doing it some little return of the power of mental tension, which latterly I have found so painfully wanting. Certainly, whoever wishes to condemn me to total inactivity knows but little of my mental or bodily requirements, which in my opinion stand in the closest connection with each other.'

The day after she writes: 'Miss Hösch has been telling me about a Sewing Society for the benefit of the poor. I only hope these sewing societies will not be looked upon as a substitute for visiting associations. I cannot help thinking them of very doubtful value, as long as there are so many poor women and girls to whom one can do no greater kindness than to find them work. I am convinced that all higher kinds of benefit to the poor are connected with personal intercourse with them.'

'The conversation turned,' she says on the same day, 'on a remarkable phenomenon, that in Prussia there is scarcely any class among whom more awakened Christians are to be found, than among the superior officers of the army, and this naturally suggested the subject of war, which always seems to me a psychological riddle, and so incompatible with the spirit of Christianity, that I could zealously and joyfully join in the efforts of Elihu Burritt, if I could see any hope of their success.'

An incident, such as often troubled her, calls forth

the following remarks : ‘ It always makes me impatient to perceive how few people understand a regular discussion, which, in my opinion, requires before all things silent attention, as long as one does not feel called upon to bring forward anything of one’s own to clear up the subject, in which case it should be done, so that those present may have the benefit of it.’

Many persons, both men and women, sought an introduction to Miss Sieveking, to exchange ideas upon their common interests and endeavours, and this was sometimes rather oppressive to her in a place where she could no longer look on social intercourse as a welcome recreation from her work, and where she often felt weak and exhausted. ‘ On the whole,’ she wrote, ‘ I have had pretty nearly enough of being sought after as a remarkable person, except when there is anything peculiarly interesting in those who come to me.’ And further : ‘ This constant walking up and down among the company, when one can only exchange a word or two, first with one, and then with another, suits me so little, that I prefer taking the greater part of my morning walks alone, in the pretty lonely paths through the fields. If I did but understand how to make better use of such solitary rambles ! I do know how to take in the impressions of Nature, but how to employ this lovely time in edifying thought and fruitful meditation, I do not understand. The contemplative attitude is too foreign to my mind.’

For entertaining light reading, English novels suited her particularly well, when, as is so often the case, she found in them a Christian spirit and a picture of domestic and social conditions true to nature, combined with the interest of the language. At home she had no time for such reading, and she had brought an English novel with her on this journey. 'Daisy Chain,' she writes, 'pleases me very much. Besides delicate delineation of character, there are so many sound observations. My manner of reading it would indeed seem rather strange to my young friends. I have it lying beside me, and every time I finish a page of writing, while it is drying, I read from two to four pages of the English book, as a reward for my industry; in this fashion I have already got as far as the 272nd page.'

At Soden she again met Miss Suringar, the Dutch lady, whom she had already learnt to know and value at Lippspringe, and she writes, after a conversation with her: 'She told me that she entirely shares my opinion about the endowment of charitable institutions; if the spirit goes out of them, the capital only serves to the conservation of a mummy, while so long as the spirit lives, the Lord will surely grant the outward means.'

The following remarks on the subject of the study of the ancient languages, for young missionary students of the artisan class, appear characteristic of the practical turn of her mind. 'I think,' she says, 'that the necessary outlay of power is not adequately justified by the

advantage to be obtained. I imagine, that the learned gentlemen who have studied these dead languages in early youth, can hardly form an idea of the labour which it would cost men who, up to their eighteenth or twentieth year, have not attained to any just, or at least any profound knowledge of their own mother tongue. And can such learning really be necessary for the conversion of the heathen? It is well, if it do not turn away the missionary student from the simplicity that is in Christ, and fill him with a kind of self-conceit, for which he would have the more excuse, as he would be conscious of the amount of exertion this knowledge of languages had cost him. In any case I should fear lest it might throw into the background other studies and exercises, which seem to me of more importance; for instance, a popular exegesis and the practical care of souls.'

In consequence of an invitation from Frankfort, Miss Sieveking went thither from Soden, and, in presence of the Ladies of an Association for the Home Mission, she held a kind of deliberative discussion with the clergyman who was its founder, in which she especially recommended that the poor should be visited by several of the members in rotation. Some of the ladies then requested her advice on particular cases, which she gave to the best of her power, though not without the remark, that it was somewhat dangerous to give advice in special cases, without particular acquaintance with

the individuals concerned. In the town of Höchst, also, she encouraged an association of ladies, who had hitherto only distributed alms, to pay personal visits to the poor.

A lady from Emden, had described to Miss Sieveking a society which existed there, consisting of both men and women, who were associated for literary and benevolent purposes. 'It seems,' she says in her diary, 'that several very good institutions have arisen from the working of this society, such as infant schools, a lending fund, &c. From time to time questions are proposed for their solution by a society at Amsterdam, and lately the question was put, whether it was allowable to admit Jews to be members of such an Association, which gave rise to much eager discussion. I think one need neither be a clergyman nor a pietist to have doubts on such a subject. For my own part, I must know more of the character of the society before I could give an opinion. If their objects are simply benevolent, Jews might co-operate with them; but where any specifically Christian questions come under discussion, they could have no voice. . . . nor would I myself ever willingly separate these benevolent objects from Christianity. When, for instance, the foundation of infant schools originated with the Emden Society, the question would be of essential importance, in what spirit they were to be conducted; but here, indeed, there might be as great diversity of opinion between

Christian and Christian, i. e. between those who call themselves so, as between Christians and Jews.'

Among the company at Soden, there was a certain society of gentlemen and ladies, principally, but not entirely, consisting of clergymen and their wives, who met periodically and took coffee in the open air, after which one of the clergymen present read a passage of Scripture, and the party conversed upon this and similar subjects. Miss Sieveking readily took part in these Bible classes, as they were called, and on one occasion at the request of the company gave them some account of her childhood and youth, and the history of her religious development. These meetings afforded her some of the pleasantest hours she passed at Soden.

Meanwhile her strength seemed to increase under the course of treatment, but a bad symptom, which appeared in the last few weeks, and doubtless showed the commencement of internal decay, threatened to deprive her of all that she had gained, and added to the fatigue of the whole remaining journey. On the 17th of August she writes in her diary :—

'And here is the happy day of my departure arrived, earlier than when I was in Hamburg, I had ventured to hope, and I believe, that by God's blessing, the treatment has been successful.'

At Frankfort she read her address of the 23rd of May, to an assemblage of about sixty ladies and a few gentlemen, and added some explanatory details in

conversation. She then proceeded by the railroad to Heidelberg, where she lodged in the house of a friend. Her weakness, however, increased so much, from the continuance of the disorder above alluded to, that she was compelled to send for a physician, though she had been treating herself as fully recovered. On the 22nd of August, she writes : —

‘I lay on my bed almost all the forenoon. At one o’clock I got up and sat at table with the others, but could only eat a plate of soup, after which I almost fainted away, and was obliged to be helped to my room, where I rested again upon the bed. Now at four o’clock I was expected to attend a meeting of the Benevolent Society of this place, where I was to give an address, or hold a conference. At three o’clock it was still doubtful whether I could possibly keep my engagement; but I knew that a good many ladies had been invited, and were looking forward with pleasure to hearing me, and expected good to result from it, in the removal of various small abuses in the Society here; then, too, I knew how greatly mental excitement helps me, at least for the time, to overcome the feeling of physical weakness. In short I resolved, with God’s help, to make the venture, and behold it succeeded.

‘Although it was not far from where I was to Pastor H——’s house, where the meeting was held, yet I went in a carriage, and was immediately planted in the corner of a sofa, where, till the people were assembled, I

remained quite still, and avoided all conversation. About eight or ten gentlemen, professors, clergymen, &c. made their appearance, and then a great number of ladies. I read over my address of the 23rd of May, I would rather have given them something else, but for that I had no strength, although it held out for the address, which I was able to read entire without interruption, and in a clear and audible voice. Then I should have been glad to have had questions put to me, and many points treated more in detail. Something of the kind took place, but very meagrely, and I heard afterwards that they were afraid of overtaking me. I cannot deny, that I was glad when at about a quarter past five I was told the carriage was there to take me home; but all the more I rejoiced that I had kept my appointment. This somewhat adventurous undertaking has certainly done me no harm, for to-day, after a quiet night, I feel quite another person.'

On the 23rd of August, she left Heidelberg somewhat strengthened by the remedies her physician had prescribed, and travelled home by way of Hanover. In this latter place she spent an evening at the Friederikenstift, with her friend the superintendent, Miss Arenhold.

'The Friederikenstift,' she writes, 'prosperes as we could wish. It has now about a hundred inmates, reckoning the sick and well together; of these twenty-four are sick children; they all call Ida "mother." My heart burned

within me. Had I known an institution of anything like this extent twenty years ago, the post of such a house-mother would have seemed to me still more enviable than that which I now fill.'

The autumn of the year 1857 brought the terrible commercial crisis, which, originating in America, extended over the whole of Northern Europe and beyond it. In Hamburg it was a heavy visitation, and even in England occasioned much distress. Miss Sieveking's beloved brother was affected by it, and this was a heavy blow to her heart, softened only by the proofs of universal sympathy and regret, which the fall of that respected house called forth from the most various quarters. She soon felt herself comforted and cheered by this consciousness, and she expresses it in a letter to her brother of the 23rd of November. 'The Lord,' she writes, 'will not leave you without witness: as one whom his mother comforteth, so will He comfort you, and will turn your thoughts to that imperishable treasure which is laid up for you above, and which is doubtless receiving increase in this time of sore trial. And besides this great fountain of comfort there are others open to you, most especially in the love of your children, and in the proofs of sympathy, respect and confidence which are shown towards you on all sides.' With a sorrowful smile she said on this occasion to her acquaintance: 'Every misfortune has its good side:

now at least I shall not have to go to any more watering places !’

In the same letter to her brother, she says of her own health : ‘ There is visible improvement in it. Although the cough still continues, I feel stronger, and that is to me the chief thing. I can take longer walks, and move quicker and without difficulty, and my regular work tries me less. My principal remedies are cold-sponging in the morning, sleep, and nourishing diet. I still rise at five o’clock, because I cannot sleep later : but when I feel exhausted in the day, I lie down on the sofa and generally go to sleep directly, and wake strengthened after half an hour or an hour’s rest.’

Although her state was now a very variable one, yet on the whole the weakness gained ground, and the struggle of her energetic spirit with the failing body caused her many trying hours, while other agitating circumstances were not wanting. Her brother’s youngest son had suffered from severe attacks of illness since his early childhood, by which his intellectual growth had been first hindered and then arrested, and subsequently he had sunk into a state of both bodily and mental helplessness. Harmless and gentle, only occasionally feeling the mournfulness of his condition, the object of the tenderest love and care, not only from his parents and brothers, but also from a faithful nurse who had lived with them for many years, he was now, in his thirty-fourth year, attacked by serious illness, and Amelia

writes of it to her brother, in February 1858: 'How earnestly could I join with you in praying for poor Alfred's release! It is indeed a dark dispensation! When men are taken away in the bloom of their strength and from a sphere of useful labour, it seems less mysterious to me: no doubt they are summoned to some higher work in God's kingdom, while the Lord provides that their place on earth shall soon be filled up; and even for the survivors there is something ennobling in the very sorrow. But a state, in which so many years pass by, apparently without any means of furthering the spiritual life! Well, we shall one day see light even here, and perhaps there are wonders to be disclosed of a life of the soul carried on altogether in secret, like seed germinating under the snow.'

The young man died, and his aunt received the news a few weeks after she had commenced the above letter, which she had been prevented from finishing by another death that touched her nearly. The excellent widow of her cousin the Syndic, who had long been in delicate health, yet not so as to excite anxiety, since her activity and liveliness of mind, and her energetic and helpful disposition, would not succumb to the weakness of her body, sank under an attack of heart disease after a few hours' illness, and the blank which this loss occasioned, both within her immediate circle and beyond it, was sensibly felt by Miss Sieveking. She proceeds in the same letter: — 'And so it is, that the Lord has called

away your dear Alfred from his dim earthly life. Oh, that we could but cast one glance into the other world, and see how the buds of his spiritual life are unfolding in the pure air of heaven! . . . Even his mother and that faithful nurse will praise God for his sake that He has called him away, although they must feel a painful void; and the treasure of love that was spent upon him cannot have been lost, but must doubtless have a mighty influence on the shaping of that spiritual being, which will now develope itself in a new and fairer form.—Even on the 12th of March I did not finish my letter; alas! it was the day of a grievous loss to me, which might well throw other things into the background. I had dined with Caroline only two days before, and I believe anyone who had seen us both would most certainly have thought me the weaker of the two, although she was suffering from many infirmities of body, and perhaps exerting more self-control in struggling against them than I was. I have lost in her a faithful and trustworthy friend, and there is always something melancholy in the rapid thinning of the ranks of our own generation.’ The circumstances touched on at the end of the letter are only alluded to here on account of the characteristic way in which she mentions them. She writes:—‘And now I come to a matter about which you have a little distressed me, my dear good brother. What, you thought it possible that I would sink in an annuity the portion of capital which

I may save from the wreck of your fortune, in order that I may not lose any of my usual comforts? That I should take the money, just now, when you can use it, and also lessen your future inheritance? Never! I had already arranged everything to meet the diminution in my income, and indeed, I should have got on very well, and without any great sacrifice. But now I shall hardly have to relinquish anything, for M—— and P—— in their really brotherly friendship, insist upon making good the deficiency. I have had great doubts about accepting this offer, and it seems to me now but half right, that, while all around me are giving up so much, I should go on living exactly in the old way. What principally weighed with me for its acceptance was the thought that, by doing so, I might take a little, if but a little, portion of the weight off your heart, that you would like best to know that I was losing nothing.'

And her life went on in its accustomed course of teaching, association-work, and social intercourse; and although her state varied much, her weakness, on the whole, increased, her gait became slow, and the exhaustion after every exertion was visible; she grew thinner and thinner, and the walks to her poor people, and going up and down stairs, became more and more difficult. For many years she had suffered considerably from pain in the back, but never spoke of it, and was not pleased when any one observed that her movements betrayed it; but this suffering had latterly increased. She continued to

do as much as she could, and only rejoiced to be spared her visits to the baths. The constant feeling of weakness and dependence was no small trial to her strong independent nature, which was so unaccustomed to receive help from others, and she sometimes complained of a want of elasticity of spirit, which was naturally connected with her state of physical weakness. Usually, however, she made no complaints, but kept the even balance of her soul, and retained her clear mental vision and correct perception of both inward and outward things. Many persons had requested her to write her own life, and she explains, in a letter to her brother of the 15th of August, that she has no time for such a work at present, that she would indeed have found pleasure in it, in the leisure of advanced age, but considering the uncertainty of her future, she had made other arrangements, and then adds: —‘ I hope you will not impute it to vanity, that I lay some stress on this being done ; on this point I feel really free from any such weakness. I never set great store by earthly fame, and when we feel as I do now, that there is but a step between us and the grave, then, I fancy, we can hardly fail to recognise the nothingness of all human praise.’

In the same letter she congratulates her brother on the birth of a little grand-daughter, and remarks: — ‘ You are especially pleased that it is a little girl ; I do not know, whether in your place I should share this feeling. I am always fonder of the boys than the girls,

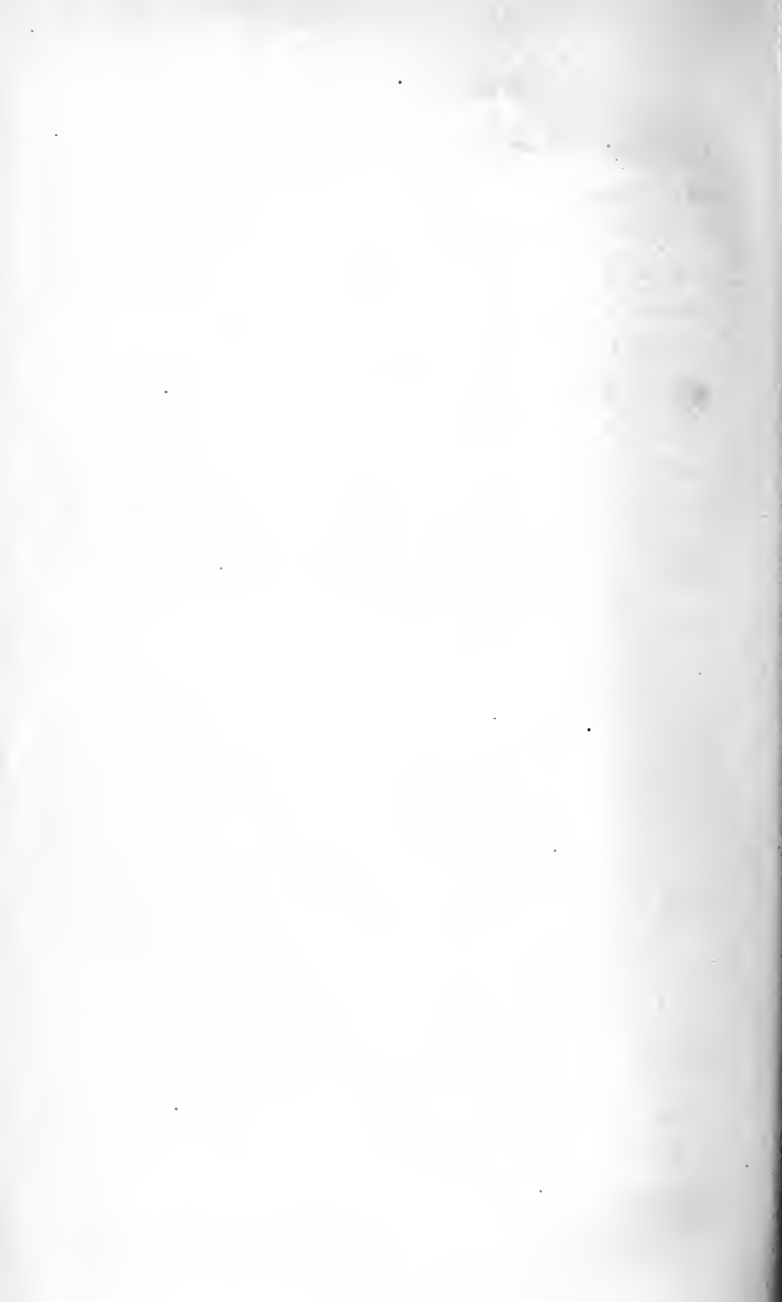
having generally no very profound respect for my own sex, at least in the upper classes. But that I have no desire to depart from the Divine order of things, and make the girls boyish, I think the whole plan of education which I have pursued now for nearly forty years will bear witness: my pupils of various generations are the best proofs of this. I often sigh over many of them, because they so little fulfil my idea of what a noble-minded woman should be, but I do not believe that any one of them exhibits the phenomenon, so especially revolting to me, of a masculine woman.'

Amelia lived to enjoy what to her was a very great happiness, the seeing her brother able to resume his business under favourable circumstances. Her own employments were gradually, but only very gradually, being lessened or withdrawn from her by a Higher Hand. In a letter of November 12, 1858, she tells her brother:— 'In a certain way I have somewhat more leisure just now than usual, as since the 1st of November I have been a prisoner to the house. My present state, which I do not count, as E—— thinks, by months, but rather now by years, is on the whole very tolerable. The principal complaint is weakness, pain I have none, my head keeps perfectly clear, my nights are in general very good, and for the most part I thoroughly relish my meals. Add to this such abundant proofs of love and friendship, sympathising visits, and care for all my bodily wants. . . . Lastly, not to leave the main

point untouched, I feel in general quite fresh and cheerful in spirit, with the exception of some particular days and hours when the sense of bodily weakness has been too oppressive. I do not deceive myself as to my state; but it would be sad, if after so long a life, wherein my Saviour has granted me so many blessed opportunities of occupying my thoughts with things above, I should not have learned to look death in the face without anxious fear. You must not think that I have given up all hope of longer life; it has not come to that yet, and I only try quietly to leave both life and death in the Lord's hand. Once I have been obliged to send away my little scholars, and twice to give up my Bible class. Otherwise my home work goes on without hindrance, and this is to me an absolute necessity, so long as my strength holds out at all; my physician sees this in the same light, and gives me his sanction. The meetings of the Association are also held at my house, and the poor come to me; it is not indeed the same thing as if I went to their own houses, but still it is something. During these few days we are offering our goods for sale, and my Twenty-sixth Report figures among them. Several people have already told me that it bears no signs of diminished mental power.'

This indeed it did not, any more than her teaching, for which she always rallied her best powers, and if her suffering looks, or a sudden attack of weakness and

languor during the lessons, betrayed her condition to the children, the occasional disadvantage of such an interruption was far overbalanced by the advantage of such an example from their beloved teacher of the power of the will and the sovereignty of the spirit, and the salutary memory of that example will ever remain indelibly impressed on the hearts of her scholars.



FOURTH PART.

LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.

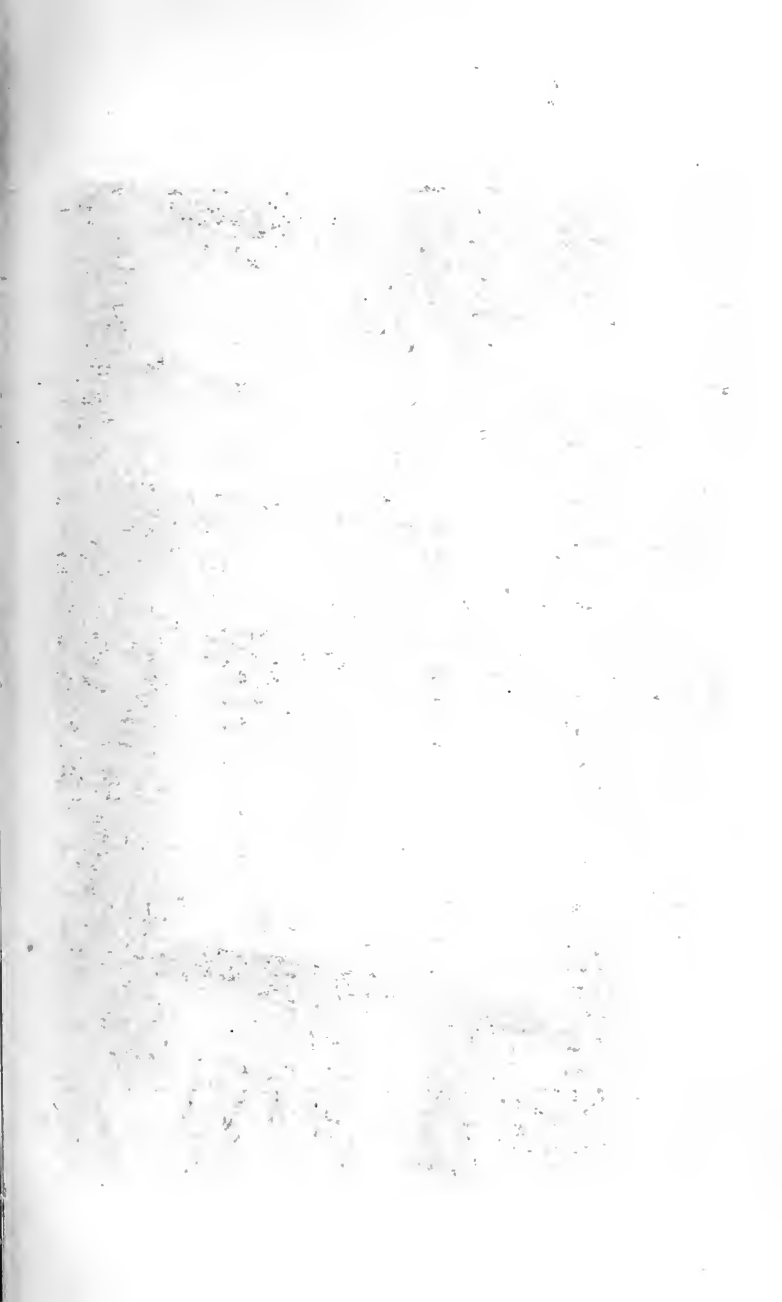
1858—1859.

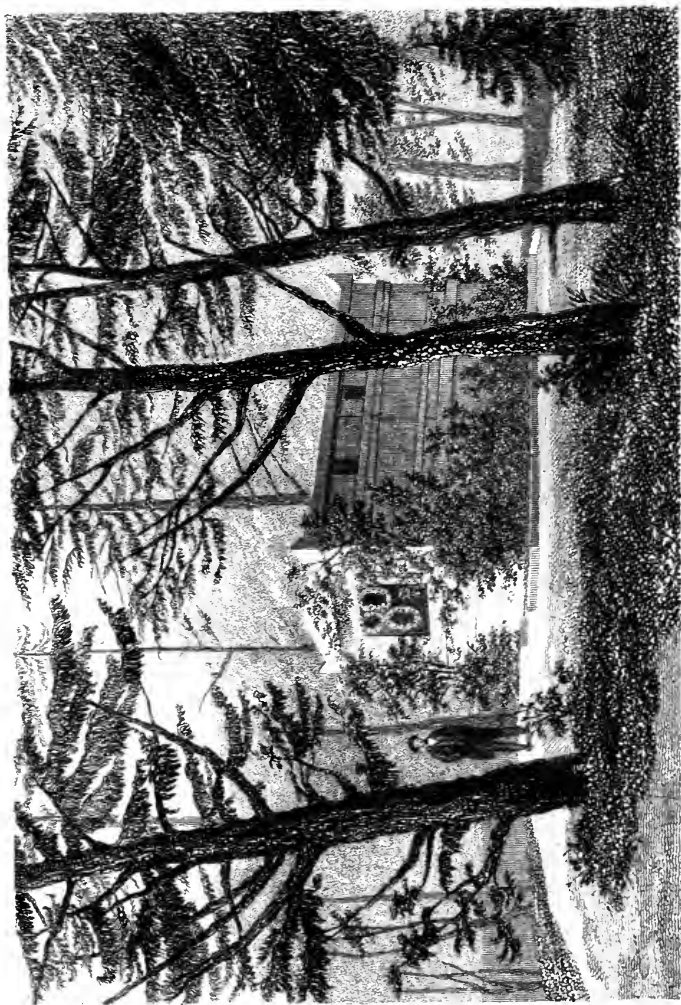


When Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works and alms and all thy good endeavour
Staid not behind, nor in the grave were trod,
But as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on, and Faith, who knew them best,
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge, who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And take thy fill of pure immortal streams.

MILTON.







THE HOUSE, WINTER, BY J. M. W. TURNER, 1840. (Engraved by J. H. P. COLEMAN.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

1858-1859.

LAST BIBLE LESSONS — ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE
OF THE ASSOCIATION — FAREWELL — NOTES OF A PUPIL
CONCERNING HER LAST DAYS—DEATH AND BURIAL.

AMELIA SIEVEKING received the Holy Communion for the last time in church on the 26th of October, 1858, and after the 1st of November she never again left the house. At the end of December she gave her last Bible lesson to her former scholars, adding a prayer which concluded with Lavater's hymn, 'Jesus live and grow in me.'

On the 1st of January, 1859, she felt so ill, that she took leave of her servants with the words, 'We part with tears, but we shall meet again with smiles.' But her strength returned somewhat during the following days. On the 7th she assembled the ladies of the Association around her, and laid before them a clear and well thought out plan for the future management of the Society. After her death, she wished her work to be divided among five assistants, but that one of them should be at the head

of the whole organization, in order to secure internal unity, and that the Society might have a recognised representative in its dealings with other bodies. She then spoke of her death with a calmness approaching to indifference: when the secretary enquired whether her proposals, which had been unanimously accepted, should not be written down and kept back until they should be wanted, she replied, 'No, she wished them to be entered at once,' adding 'should it be God's will that I should live longer, I should incorporate these resolutions in my next report, as they are of general interest.'

From the middle of January a disposition to fever set in, which brought on oppression of the breath and restlessness; and the time when it would be necessary to give up her most cherished employment, the teaching of the children, for which she had reserved her last strength, drew nearer and nearer. It cost her probably the hardest struggle to take this resolve, since it was the severing of her strongest tie to earth! At last she resigned this charge also into the hands of her God. On the 5th of March she gave the farewell lesson to her children, and on being asked whether she had laid aside her teaching only for a time, she answered very distinctly, 'No, it was for ever; she had said so to the children themselves, and that because her physician had assured her that her departure was near at hand. Without this certainty it might have been with her as with the man who, thinking he had only a few years to

live, gave away the largest part of his fortune and came to want, as he lived longer than he expected.'

She had the happiness of leaving her dear little pupils united under the teaching of another. 'I can die much more easily,' said she, 'since I have been able to arrange for the management of the Association, and the education of my children so entirely as I could wish.' The clergyman who, at her request, had undertaken the religious instruction of the children, paid her a visit on the 14th of March, in order to speak to her on the subject. He had expected to find a dying person, and was not a little astonished, when he entered her bright sunny room, and she raising herself on the sofa, greeted him kindly, and then conversed for a full half-hour, describing clearly the characteristics of each individual child.

Now that this care also was removed, she made use of the moments of freedom which her illness permitted to put the finishing touches to the arrangement of her things and her papers, in which she proceeded with her usual conscientious carefulness; she left remembrances of greater or less value to her friends and pupils, her servants, and many of her poor people: she received visits and interested herself in all that her visitors told her; read and listened to reading, which last she had never done before, as, not being accustomed to be a listener, she disliked it: her little pupils came to see her constantly, and a dog, whose company she had allowed

herself for the last few years, was almost always beside her. She lay on her sofa or sat at the table in a clean neat dress, and occasionally dozed when overcome by weariness. Her conversation with friends and acquaintance generally turned on the interests of active life, as in earlier days. She said little of her approaching death, her own inward experience, or the state of her mind, but, on the contrary, visibly avoided anything that would have affected her too much ; yet she took leave quite naturally of all whom she did not expect to see again. She was fully prepared whether for life or death, but remarked, that she would counsel everyone not to put off their preparation to the last, when bodily infirmities commonly allow no free uplifting of the mind, as she herself had experienced. She continued to vary very much, and the strength, which often failed entirely, would still return occasionally for a day. ‘To-day, wrote a friend on the 18th of March, ‘Amelia was very comfortable. She lay tranquilly on the sofa in her cheerful sunny room, enjoying the sight of a number of blooming plants and cut flowers, which had been sent her from every quarter—one cannot fancy a pleasanter sick room. She told me to-day how much she enjoyed feeling better, because the physician had assured her, that it did not make it possible that she should return to life, but that all might at any time be quickly over. For a prolonged life did not seem to her at all to be desired now.’

At length she succeeded in accomplishing a last letter to her brother. It was written in fragments, at intervals of several days. In this letter her state of mind is most distinctly expressed, and we recognise in the very presence of death the same calmness, sobriety, clearness and simplicity, which formed the leading traits of her character through life ; while we are led to acknowledge that only those can die thus who have found that firm reliance which no storm can shake. The very nearness of death sheds a glorifying light upon these simple words of farewell, whose plainness and clearness are more touching than perhaps the expression of the most exalted mood could be. They prove also, what she herself often remarked, that she did not feel that eager and joyful anticipation which affords to many pious persons a foretaste of heaven in the thought that they are soon going home to be with the Lord ; but if she did not exult, neither did she lose courage, but preserved throughout, in this last school of resignation, the trustful peace and collectedness of a soul renewed in Christ.

The following trait is characteristic. Her nephew, Dr. Sieveking in London, had wished that her physician should examine the state of the lungs by the method now usually practised, and send him a report. Dr. Von Düring told her of this request. She consented to it, under condition that he would promise first to inform her of the result. The examination took place, and the

doctor declared that he found things even worse than he expected; one half of the lungs was entirely gone, and only so much left of the other as that, with entire silence and perfect rest, her life might perhaps be prolonged for a short time. Miss Sieveking thanked him, but remarked, 'that could not be : as long as she was still alive, she must behave like a living person, and see and speak to her friends.'

From that last letter, finished on the 8th of March, we are permitted to communicate the following extracts :—

'My dear Brother and Sister — I have long intended to give you some account of myself: particularly after your last letter, the wish pressed on me not to leave long unacknowledged such an outpouring of brotherly love as had done my heart good ; but time and strength always failed. That letter came to me through dear Theresa, and from her I heard that you were somewhat apprehensive that it might over-excite me. I must own, that after this preface I was a little afraid to open the letter. I expected a sermon after your old fashion, containing your peremptory desire that I should now also give up entirely all my work for the children. Had the contents of the letter been of this kind, it might have excited me, as I could only have given a decided refusal. So I was, indeed, very pleasantly surprised to find nothing of the kind, only the expression of the tenderest affection. I should have missed a great delight had it been kept

back from me. And what was there to excite me? Surely not the allusion to my probable departure? It would be sad indeed if that which the Lord has for so many months placed close before my eyes could still fill me with anxious fear. I put off answering your letter, however, until my strength should have risen a little beyond the amount that was necessary for the children's teaching; or else till such time as it should have failed for that, which would give me a little leisure for other employments. You have already heard that it has come, alas! to the latter alternative. On Thursday the 24th of February I gave the children their lessons for the last time, I think I may say with undiminished mental vigour. During their play hour they romped about me unchecked, as I have allowed them to do throughout my illness. As I did not suffer at all in nerves, and my head is not the least affected, this cost me no sacrifice, and even on that day I could enjoy it. But the day after (Friday the 25th of February) I felt so languid, that it seemed impossible to prepare the lessons; and on Saturday morning, when I expected the children again, it was clear to me as soon as I awoke, that the Lord had set a bound to this occupation which has become so infinitely dear to me. Then I resigned it into the hands of my Saviour, and now that this surrender is really necessary, He has made it unexpectedly easy to me. He has granted me a great happiness in this respect. I hope that the little class in which I

have taken such delight during these last few years will still be kept together ; the parents of the children have come into all my proposed arrangements for this purpose in the most friendly manner. So that here, too, my house is now set in order, as it was before with regard to the Association. When the Council meeting was held in January, God gave me strength to lay before the members present a clear statement of my wishes, and I had the comfort of finding the fullest agreement with them. The Association will be divided into five sections, but a certain central superintendence will be maintained. . .

‘ Whatever love and friendship can devise to ease my condition, is provided for me on all hands. It is understood that I value the hearty sympathy shown in all this more than the material proofs of it, more even than the oysters and champagne they send me ! I am nursed like a princess—nay, better, doubtless, than many princesses, who miss the warm kindness of the heart in all the service paid to them as a duty, while I find it even in my hired nurse. My good Mrs. S. indeed, who is so heartily attached to me, is still so helpless from rheumatism in both hands and feet, that she can scarcely do anything for me. So I am obliged to have a special attendant besides, as my weakness makes me pretty nearly helpless. I chose one of my poor women, and now I can really recommend her as a pattern nurse, she is so neat and orderly, so willing and attentive, without talking much ; in short, she suits me exactly. Thank

God ! I am still able to get up. I would not willingly give up doing so, partly because I fear the suffering that often results from lying too long in bed. My sick-room — that is, my favourite sitting and school-room — is most particularly comfortable. The pleasant sun shines right into it, and I am constantly surrounded there with a perfect springtime of flowers. As soon as one plant or bouquet has faded, the kindness of my friends is sure to have provided something fresh. And now, not to forget any of the faithful friends by whom I am surrounded, I must make mention of my little four-footed companion, Prince, who keeps me company so constantly in my sick-room that at times nothing will tempt him to leave it ; and then he looks at me with such intelligent eyes, and so sorrowfully withal, as if he knew we should not be long together. I need scarcely tell you that I am not at all lonely, but have many pleasant visits paid me, which are only abridged on account of my languor. If I chose, I might have a young friend constantly with me ; I know several who have said that they would gladly come ; but you know that occasional solitude is more necessary to me than constant society.

‘By this account, you will see, dearest brother and sister, that anyone who has so many alleviations in a time of sickness as I have has no right to boast of his patience ; particularly if, like me, he do not suffer great and continued pain, which I consider, as you do, to be one of the severest trials to which we are subject, and

one which, knowing my own weakness, I desire to thank God for sparing me. Many of my friends give me much more credit than I deserve, at this time of my illness. They wonder at the calmness with which I make arrangements for matters after my death, as if they concerned only a somewhat longer journey than usual; but if they think this is simply the result of the faith by which I live, they are certainly mistaken. The natural calmness and clearness of my temperament is to be taken into consideration, as well as the exhaustion which to a certain degree blunts the keen edge of feeling at present, so that in much of the composure which is supposed to be the fruit of faith there may be a strong admixture of apathy.

‘The tie which bound me most closely to earth is now loosened. Yesterday (on Saturday the 5th of March) I finally dismissed my children, and took leave of them. I talked to them for about half an hour on the subject of St Peter’s words (2 Pet. 1, 10–17).* The children were naturally much affected, and I myself was once or twice so overcome by emotion that I was obliged to make a little pause. Yet I hope I succeeded in my endeavour, which was to put before them death and our departure from earth, under the happiest possible aspect.

* ‘Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me,’ &c.

‘But when the moment of departure will really come no one can foretel with any certainty. Perhaps it will seem strange to you, at first sight, if I say, that I could almost wish that I might be gone home before you arrive here—that is, I feel that the thought that I had entered into my rest would less overcloud the pleasure of your visit here than the knowledge that I was lying sick and weak, and by my very weakness disabled from enjoying your conversation as I should wish. Well, we will leave this entirely to God. Only I would ask you not to hasten your journey in the hope of seeing me.

‘There, I have written nearly six pages, of course piece by piece, and have hardly spoken of anything but my own illness. That is what makes sickness so tedious, that it is always a temptation to people to dwell unreasonably upon their bodily condition. It is not easy to impart anything interesting from a sick-room, and yet, after all, I believe that it will be not unwelcome to you to have a faithful picture of my invalid condition, in which the mercy of God is displayed in so many ways. But now I must hasten to a close. You will see by this last page that the power of my hand begins to fail, and my writing becomes unsteady; so I will only say how much interest I take in everything you tell me, and how greatly I rejoice in the fair prospects which are again brightening your path in life. . . .

‘Tell my dear, dear Dr. Edward,* with my affectionate

* Her eldest nephew.

love, that I thank him heartily for his last letter. I had gone on thinking that I might answer him, but now I feel that I may not be able. But tell him that his friendship is one of the brightest spots in my retrospect of life, rich as it is in happiness.' Then follow messages to all her other dear friends and acquaintance in England, and she continues :—' And now, my dear precious brother and sister, I must for to-day bid you farewell. Whether this "to-day" includes all the rest of our time upon earth, who can say? It is enough for me that the tie which binds us has been full of richest blessing from the Lord, and now I will only express my thanks—thousand, thousand thanks—for all the proofs of your brotherly affection which you have given me in so long a course of years. God be with you! and pray for me, that in the last solemn hour He may make me feel that He is of a truth very near to me.

'Yours to eternity in faithful love.'

And the last solemn hour was drawing closer and closer. Her physician—whom she heartily esteemed, and in whom she placed unusual confidence because he entered into her way of thinking, and did not require from her what it was scarcely in her power to concede—had treated her during her whole illness with great attention and care, and visited her at all hours of the day. She repeatedly pressed him to tell her how long she had yet to live; and since, each time, her great

weakness and all the signs of approaching dissolution led him to speak of the end as near, and all her earthly tasks were now finished and laid by, she felt she had nothing to do but to wait; and this trial, perhaps the hardest of all to one of her temperament, and which all her friends had dreaded for her, she endured with perfect resignation to the will of her God. Restless nights came on, with oppressed breathing and fever; she was compelled to keep her bed, and to have some one to sit up with her, at first the nurse only, and then some of her friends—a necessity to which by degrees she yielded. As the physician thought that the hope of a peaceful end depended on her having the greatest possible quiet, she received scarcely any visits, but had still a kindly word for everyone that came and went. ‘I can do nothing now but wait,’ she said once: then to another friend, ‘We shall see each other again above!’

And now, in presenting the picture of her latter days, we shall follow the memoranda of a young pupil, who was much with her towards the last, and of another older friend: by which we shall see that she was not altogether spared the discipline of suffering:—‘On the 12th of March, Amelia received me with the remark, “That as the doctor had told her she could only live a few days longer, she must make haste to set in order what was needful, before it was too late.” I had to read to her a good deal through the day, from Besser’s Gospel of St. Luke, as his homiletic commentary suited

her particularly. In the afternoon she was visibly weaker, and asked to have read to her Klopstock's lines on 'Approaching Death,' and "The Consecration of a Dying Person." In the evening she was very much tried with high fever, and asked for the hymn "Yes, there remaineth yet a rest," but fell asleep during the reading.

'The 16th I found Amelia comparatively comfortable. She spoke of Gellert's Spiritual Songs, many of which she liked much, and said she did not approve of their being thought so little of now-a-days. Nor did she think it right that none but the old standard hymns should be admitted into the hymn-books, as people's wants are so various, and many are repelled by the language, and by forms of expression so different from our own.

'On the morning of the 19th her voice became very hoarse, and her weariness and longing for death grew constantly greater. In the evening I found her decidedly worse, and she herself, after giving several orders and making some arrangements, said good-night to all, that she might lie down "for her death-sleep."

'On the 20th, she first remained entirely in bed. She bid me read Psalms 27, 14, and the hymn "Patient waiting is the school."

'21st. — Earnest longing for death. In the evening she fell into a deep, deathlike sleep, which lasted four hours; the cough awakened her. She felt unusually

easy, and said more than once, "Why must I wake up? I was sleeping beautifully." When the physician asked if she had any pain, she answered cheerfully, "No, none at all." She said frequently "Good night," and sent her love to all. When I repeatedly lifted her on account of her cough, she said, "This is the last service of love," and after a while, "Am I cold yet? Well, that will come."

'Tuesday the 22nd, she said to me as she gave me her hand, "The Lord makes it easy to me—very easy!" Then she closed her eyes, and lay with her hands folded—the picture of peace.

'On the 23rd, hearing the servant below give the answer at the door that the night had been very bad, she sent down word that he should say, she was hourly expecting her end. The day before she asked if any one was with me in the room, and on my replying in the negative she said, "You must not think that I am wandering." She desired me to read the hymn, "Then, oh then, how will it be with me." A short time after I was in the next room, and heard her speak. I went in and found her repeating the last verse, and especially the last line, "No more an earthly creature."'

'On the 23rd,' writes another friend, 'I went early to Amelia, and told her that we would send a very good nurse for the night, that her own might go to bed: she thought however that, *as it was certainly the last night*, Mrs. D. would be able to sit up, if she slept in

the evening. As I was going away she called me back, and gave me some messages respecting the Association. I begged her not to make herself uneasy about anything, assured her that we would arrange everything as she wished, and always consider what she had done in similar cases, so as to act in her spirit. She gave me a look of inexpressible kindness, and said "Thank you! thank you!" At night I remained near her, without her being aware of it, as I feared the nurse might not be able to keep awake. Some nights she had latterly consented that a lady should watch as well as the nurse, and even seemed pleased at it. She called me, thanked me for having stayed, and after a quieter night I read to her in the morning the 17th chapter of St. John. When I had finished she repeated: "Thank you! thank you!"

'On the 25th,' continues her pupil, 'she was much more languid, scarcely spoke, but lay with folded hands in a half sleep. At four in the afternoon she asked what time it was, and said, "My God! my God! so late, and I am still here!" She would see no one, not even the clergyman; she only wanted "to go to sleep." At noon there came on such distressing oppression of the breath, that she craved to be taken out of bed: in the evening she desired the greatest quiet in the next room.

'On the 26th, after a terribly unquiet night, the oppression became worse and worse. "Stay by me," she said to the nurse. Later in the day she asked how many days she had been in bed, and counted them

herself upon her fingers. She could no longer rightly distinguish the time of day.

‘On the 27th she suddenly asked for a hymn. I read “Patient waiting is the school,” and then to our surprise we had to give her champagne, which she had not taken for weeks. Then came on great restlessness.

‘28th.—The night had been very restless: and she had asked for all sorts of tisanes and preserves. Towards morning the oppression had risen to such a height, that she said herself no one could imagine her state who had not felt it, it was more terrible than the most violent pain. She said to me, “I cannot understand how I am still alive;” and again, “Only have patience: do not be vexed with me.” In the evening she replied to my enquiry how she was: “Oh, better than I was this morning; then it was hardly endurable, but one still knows it is the Lord, and He will not try us beyond what we are able to bear.”

‘29th.—After a quiet night we were able to leave her for an hour in the morning, to be present at the children’s first lesson. When we returned she asked entirely of her own accord, for we had not mentioned the subject to her for a fortnight, whether, this being the 29th, it was not the day for the class to begin again? And then we had to tell her every particular about it. I read by her desire, “Abide among us with Thy grace.”

‘31st.—She desired me to tell her again all about the children.

*‘April the 1st (her dying day).—*After midnight the phlegm began to distress her, as she had no longer strength to cough. The hands swelled, and became blue; we thought the end was really approaching. Once she sighed out—“How hard! how long!” The oppression on her breath became more extreme: we had to press our hands firmly on her chest, and continually lift her up. When the friend came who was to be with her for the night, she asked for the hymn, “Out of the depths I cry to Thee.” During the reading she clasped her hands. I heard her sigh, “Ah, Lord—I can no more!” When I came to her bedside she said, “Pray God that it may soon be over!” Later she cried out, “Ah! it is hard work, dying!” After the reading of the Psalm, “Like as the hart panteth after the water brooks,” she folded her hands and said, “My Lord! my Lord!” Then the struggle was over. About eleven o’clock the physician was sent for: when he came, he found a corpse: at the last she fell asleep quite peacefully.’

For the next few days there lay the inanimate body strewn with flowers, an expression of the deepest peace on the wasted features and the clear brow. In order to combat the prejudice of the poor people against a pauper funeral, she had desired, both by word of mouth and in writing, to be buried as a poor person, and had often declared that she held it matter of perfect indifference how the dead body was laid in the grave, as

it was in her sight only a worn-out and useless garment, deprived of all its value.

Out of respect to her wishes, the funeral was arranged as follows. On Tuesday the 5th of April, in the early morning before the opening of the gates, the plain coffin, made of four black boards, was carried by the two appointed pauper-bearers, on the pauper's bier, to the churchyard of the parish of Ham and Horn, and set down on the church-path. Here it was soon covered with flowers and garlands, and a troop of friends, rich and poor, streamed out of the city and the suburbs. Pastor Rautenberg, her own friend for so many years, and once the friend of her brother Gustavus, spoke some impressive words, connecting them with the beautiful passage in Jeremiah, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee,' a passage which had been especially precious to her who was gone; through her whole life she had proved its truth. Then eight brethren of the Rauhe Haus, preceded by a choir of children and other members of the institution, singing, 'My life is hid in Jesus,' carried the coffin to the vault of the Sieveking family, and all present joined in the procession. The lightly clouded morning sky of early spring was spread above the fir-trees of the churchyard, and a few birds were twittering their morning song. The minister of the parish, Pastor Mumssen (who was soon to follow his friend), read the history of

Tabitha beside the grave, and uttered the concluding prayer and blessing. Then as if from the depths arose the chant of the brethren and the children, and amidst the sounds of the Doxology and the Apostolic benediction, the coffin was lowered into its bed. Friends and acquaintance, old and young, members of the Association, pupils and poor people, crowded round the stone, to cast one more look after her who had so long pursued her quiet course and work among them, and to strew more flowers upon the coffin. It was a deeply moving, yet elevating solemnity; all were weeping, and yet the mood of all seemed almost joyful amidst their sorrow. Death and life were seen in closest union here, but death was swallowed up in victory; for every one felt, that the good and faithful servant had entered into the joy of her Lord.

CONCLUSION.

SELDOM does the image of a character come out more clearly and distinctly than in the life and letters of Amelia Sieveking: few persons are so exactly what they profess to be, without addition or reserve; and, so far as it can be said of any human being, it may certainly be said of her, that her life was one with her words, she was always consistent and true to herself. It is precisely this unadorned truth and openness, and the genuine Christian humility which ever gave the glory to God; her severity towards herself, combined such great candour and mildness in judging of others; which make it unnecessary, and indeed almost impossible, to recal with blame any of her weaknesses or deficiencies: whatever could be said of them, she herself has expressed with far more severity of censure than could be justified in a biographer.

A Christian in the fullest sense of the word, she desired and strove after nothing simply of her own will; she trusted little to her own impulses, punished in herself every movement of sin, and learned more and more to feel herself a mere instrument in the hand of

her God, which He Himself would make fit and skilful in His service. She was originally of an active, truthful, and diligent nature, possessed much character, and a strong sense of justice and reasonableness, together with an urgent desire to be helpful and useful. An unusual love of learning and of teaching seemed to be born with her; the talent for organization developed itself later from her clear understanding, her moderation, and the order and collected unity of her mental powers. All these gifts and faculties might have turned to evil purpose: she had a great deal of ambition, was not without vanity, and had a strong inclination to carry out her own opinion and will, against the will and the opinions of others. She was neither tender nor yielding by nature, but impetuous and impatient, appeared at times sharp and abrupt, and wanted those graces of sentiment and understanding which often cover over so many faults and weaknesses, and have such irresistible power over the hearts of others. On these accounts it may well be questioned whether she could be always agreeable or acceptable to those around her, or under whose charge she was, in childhood and early youth. But she soon discovered the defect, and sought the cause of it, not in her circumstances, but in herself; she sought honestly, looked for help, advanced step by step, and at length made her way to a full conviction; and when she had once found her Saviour and Deliverer, she clung to Him by

faith, and never let go her hold; by constant communion with the highest Personal Love, she was made worthy to receive of His Spirit, He prepared her for Himself, and then manifested Himself in blessing through her work. Isolated as she was, without means, without influence, without brilliant or attractive gifts, at war with many prejudices and errors, the Lord granted her success, and she attained, not exactly what she had dreamed of and desired, but something higher, which He had appointed for her. And since the consciousness that we are fulfilling our proper task in life may be deemed the most enviable of all happiness, her life — amidst all its labour and toil — was yet a life of joy, of pure, deep, inwardly felt, and thankfully acknowledged happiness!

Amelia Sieveking, as we have seen, was not in any respect a genius, neither do her books evince it; yet they bear the impress of her own character, and cannot fail to exercise some of her helpful, enlightening, and strengthening influence, especially upon young persons of her own sex. That they are not without effect on more mature minds, is shown by the judgment of many distinguished men and theologians: thus, for instance, Harms of Kiel, after reading her works on Holy Scripture, remarked, that she was the first woman whom he could ever admit to have a vocation for writing. Her practical turn of mind brought the study of Holy Scripture to bear upon actual life, and illus-

trated the connection between them by the results of experience. So was it also with her teaching, which has certainly borne, and still bears fruit, though the results of it cannot be counted and measured. Several generations in Hamburg were successively moulded by her, and in her intercourse with the rising generation she continued ever young and fresh, her own spirit seeming to be renewed with each fresh course of instruction. She loved to give the children all possible freedom, and loud and frolicsome was the merry life that surrounded 'Tante Malchen' in play-hours, and to some people might seem almost too little under control. In this point she leaned rather to over-indulgence than severity, and often, when she intended to reprove, she could scarcely repress a smile. Her own childlike nature often played her false: but whatever she might lose by it in fear, and the authority that proceeds from fear, she gained in love and confidence, and the needful seriousness was never wanting in the actual lesson-time. An affecting child's story, read aloud by herself, would move her to tears; and when she, half-ashamed of herself, held the book still closer than usual before her eyes (she was always shortsighted), the mischievous children around her soon knew the reason why, and did not conceal their discovery. Miss Sieveking's mode of instruction may be gathered from her books, which reproduce her Bible lessons. Her great endeavour was to make her teaching a living thing, to avoid every

kind of pedantry and routine, and at the same time to accustom the children to use their own minds and to regulate and define their ideas. Then she tried to restrain the little girls' love of talking, and to teach them to concentrate their thoughts and attention; and, lastly, to awaken in them a taste for really useful occupations, and for the toils and sacrifices of ministering love, even beyond the limits of home. This great task of her life lay at the foundation of her whole method of instruction, and she also carried it into all the relations which she formed with grown-up persons of her own sex. Indeed, as is so apt to be the case with anyone whose life is under the dominion of one idea, the power and blessing of which he has experienced in himself, she would fain have made it the rule for every one else. She certainly did not err in believing that most women underrate their own powers, and that besides attending to the duties most immediately under their hand, they would do well to develope a different kind of activity, in schools, charitable societies, &c.; and thus might obtain generally a wider mental horizon. Yet there are many shades of duty, which the conjugal and filial relations bring with them, which cannot always be clearly expressed in words, and of which Amelia Sieveking, owing to the peculiar development of her own mind and the outward circumstances of her position, knew nothing. Her mode of action in such cases does not command full confidence. She went

somewhat too directly to work; her self-education had been what some may call too logical and masculine, to enable her to perceive and take into account all that network of delicate and fragile threads which are interwoven with the hearts and destinies of so many women. Though possessing a profound knowledge of the human heart in general, she wanted that keen sense of individual character which is often as direct a gift, and as independent of our own will, as genius itself, and therefore she failed to comprehend the inconsistencies which often constitute a large part of the character, and are as inseparable from its strength as from its weakness; and on this point, in spite of her usual tolerance and reasonableness, she might appear at times somewhat one-sided. She was occasionally moved to impatience by contradiction or misunderstanding of her favourite ideas, which were all the more deeply rooted, as they had originated in her own mind, and had grown to be identified with her whole character. With this exception, in her intercourse with others she was simple, kindly, sympathising, and always the same, with a ready sense of wit and humour, and inclined at any time for a merry laugh, though the keynote of her mind was thoughtful earnestness.

She was of the middle height, rather under than above it, sparely made, quick in her movements and very short-sighted. Her well-known figure was easily recognised

from a distance as she walked about the streets, generally with a heavy basket of books and papers. Always clean and neat, she cared little for fashion or elegance in her dress, and adhered faithfully to her favourite maxim, that freedom consists in having few wants, the rather that she had neither time, skill, nor inclination to pay much attention to her toilet. Wherever she recognised a duty even in trifles, she was scrupulous in fulfilling it,—but here she saw no such claim; she wished only that her dress should be respectable, and was thankful to leave the care of it to others.

Otto Speckter's well-known lithograph faithfully represents her features. As she advanced in years the ennobling influence of the soul was perceptible in them, especially in the brow and eyes. She never was handsome or graceful, in the ordinary sense of the words.

Amelia Sieveking, as we have now learned to know her, may serve as a pattern to her sex in more than one respect. Not that all should be exactly what she was; this requires a peculiar vocation, and all callings are not alike. But her truthfulness, her faithful performance of duty, her conscientiousness and self-control, the earnestness which she carried into the smallest matters, the diligence with which she followed every good work, her severity towards herself, and mildness and discretion in judging of others; these are qualities which every one may strive after, although, indeed, they cannot be attained in our own strength, but only by humble faith in

Him who was the Life of her life, by prayer and steadfast looking up to Him, and by the daily renewing of His Spirit, who will lead us into all truth. And He, the great Deliverer, only can break the chains of those petty, narrow, and trifling interests by which the souls of many women are weighed down to the earth. He only can lift them above the turmoil of a despicable vanity, up to those free heights where the great idea of compassionate and ministering love can form itself in their hearts, and unfold its powers of blessing. This was the idea which was embodied in the life and work of Amelia Sieveking, an idea which can and will set woman free—not from the restraints of law and custom, not from her vocation of quiet retirement and domestic virtue, but from the dominion of vanity, of false appearances, and of self-love. This was Amelia Sieveking's desire, and to this she has both shown and opened the way for other women, especially for the unmarried. For the Lord, whom she served so faithfully, gave her success in this also, that she obtained the fullest recognition, not only among those like-minded with herself, but from those who do not profess Christian principles—not from the poor only, but also from the rich and noble. Respect and love surrounded her old age, and Hamburg accounted it an honour and a joy to call Amelia Sieveking her own.



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