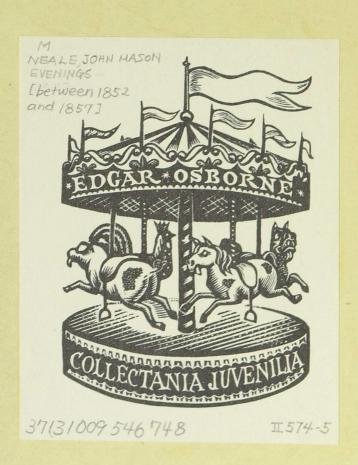
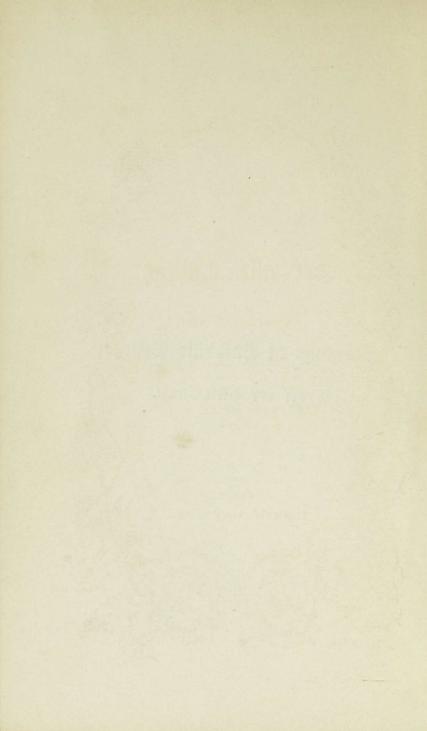
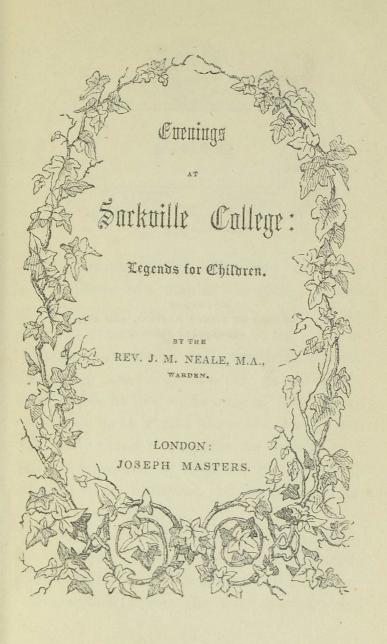


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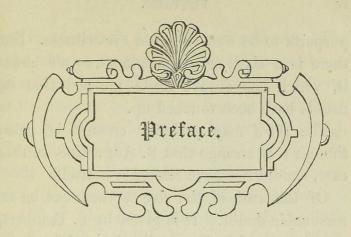


Alice A. Wilshere Christmas 1857. from Papa.





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The following stories differ from my other little volumes of a similar character, in their more legendary nature. There seems to me no good reason why children should not be made acquainted with such, whether, as sometimes they are, allegories, or, as at others, merely without that sufficiency of proof which can enable us to regard them as certain; provided only that a strong line be drawn, as I have endeavoured to draw it, between such miracles as are historical, and such as are allegorical or uncertain.

Of those which the present volume contains, the *first*, from the *Golden Legend*, can scarcely pretend to be more than a beautiful fable.

The second is from the Acta Sincera; and

purports to be written by an eye-witness. But there is a sixth or seventh century air about it, which has always made me feel that its details have been touched up.

The *third* may probably enough be true; though it is strange that S. Augustine, in that case, should not have related it himself.

Of the truth of the fourth there can be no reasonable doubt. It is given by S. Rembert, the disciple of S. Anscharius, in his life of the Apostle of Scandinavia. (Bolland. Februar. tom. i. p. 415 B.)

The *fifth*, though the subject of many a picture in the country churches of Bavaria, seems to rest on no very high authority.

The terrible story of Raymond has, I fear, been well-nigh disproved as a piece of history by Launoy. But the allegory is neither the less true nor the less striking.

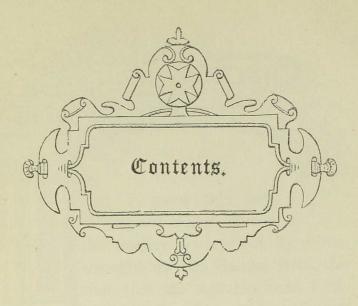
The seventh was written after a visit to North Holland. But some of the details are taken from Beijer's Gedenkboek van Neerland's Watersnood. 1826.

The *eighth* is told for its lovely allegorical meaning.

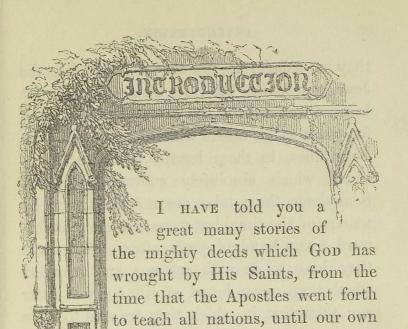
The ninth rests on very good authority. The supernatural character of Prince Maurice's retreat is distinctly allowed by Protestant writers; as for instance by Van der Kemp, in his History of Prince Maurice, Rotterdam, 1843. (Tom. iv. p. 162.) Reference may also be made to the Commentaries of Vander Capellen. (Commentaries, Utrecht, 1777, tom. i. p. 126.) The details are given in the 54th (the recently published) volume of the Bollandist year.

The tenth story is told as a contrast, in certainty, and proximity of time and place, to the others, while it teaches one and the same lesson with all. I may add that, in order to insure accuracy in the details, it was submitted in proof to Mr. Goulstone, who was kind enough to give greater exactness to one or two of the details.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE, June 4, 1852.



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days. They were as true, in all their main facts, as any other pieces of history; and I told them to you, and you heard them, with undoubting faith. But there is another

class of stories of which we read in the History of the Church, which do not come down to us on such clear evidence. The Legends of the Saints which I am now going to tell you, you will hear as beautiful stories, some of them as beautiful allegories; but you are not bound to believe them as facts. And mark why you are not bound. Not because they are wonderful; for that would be like the Jews, who limited the Holy One of Israel: but because we have not the same degree of proof for them as for others which I have told you. Sometimes, in these legends, we find things stated which absolutely contradict history. Sometimes, these tales are not mentioned by writers of the time, but were first brought forward many hundred years after. Sometimes they have to do with customs and manners which were never heard of till a much later age than that in which they are said to have occurred.

How came they to be believed? you will ask. Very innocently, nay very holily. There were three principal ways in which this happened. I will give you an example of each. And the first was from a mistake about words. Here is an example.

The legend tells us that S. Katherine, after gloriously confuting the wise men of Alexandria, was beheaded; and that her body was carried by the angels to Mount Sinai, and buried there. Now that S. Katherine triumphed at Alexandria, and was buried in Mount Sinai,

I believe firmly. But I will tell you why I doubt that she was carried thither by the angels. Not,-God forbid !- because I do not know that those Blessed Spirits, as they carry the souls of the faithful into Abraham's bosom, so they also watch over and care for those bodies which, while living, were the Temples of the Holy Ghost. All this is most true, most beautiful, most comforting. I should have no difficulty in believing, in itself, that the remains of a Virgin Martyr were so cared for. But we do not read of this story for many hundred years after the time when it happened; and besides this, in those ages, monks were said to take the Angelic habit, and were sometimes called angels. The Monastery on Mount Sinai was then, as it is now, famous; its angels, or monks, were no doubt eager to possess such a treasure; and so, what was first said of them was soon understood of the angels which are in heaven. I blame none for believing the story still; I know that it easily might have happened; I know that many more wonderful miracles have happened; but still, I will not dishonour God and those ministering spirits

by professing to believe in this, except as a beautiful allegory, when they know that I do not believe in it.

Here is another example. In some writers, who lived a thousand years after the time of S. Ignatius, we read that, when that blessed martyr was torn to pieces by lions, the name of Jesus was found on his heart. But when I find that the Acts of his martyrdom, written by those who stood by, make no mention of this, I cannot doubt that what was first spoken by way of metaphor, was afterwards understood literally. Some one said, "Ignatius could never so have played the man, unless the name of Jesus had been written in his heart." And so the words came to be taken literally.

Again; many stories were told as allegories, and intended so to be taken, which were afterwards, very naturally, thought to be true facts. For instance. There was a good Bishop who heard that the sun always shone on the cottage of a poor man in a certain valley of his diocese. Thither he went, determined to find out the cause of this wonder. "Is it true," he asked of the poor man to whom the cottage belonged,

"that the sun always shines on your roof?" "It is true, holy Father," replied the peasant. "But what is the reason?" inquired the Bishop. And none could answer. "Do you pray more than others?" "I live by the labour of my hands, holy Father, and have but little time for prayer." The Bishop thought again. "Do you fast more than others?" "My work is hard, and I can fast but little." "Well," he replied, "but perhaps you give more alms than others?" "I have but enough for my family, and can scarcely find any poorer than myself to whom I may give." So the Bishop turned and went away, sorely grieved that he could not explain the wonder. But before he had gone far, a thought came into his mind, and he returned. "One question more, my son. Do you love our Lord Jesus Christ more than others?" The poor man cast his eyes to the ground, and answered, "I trust I do." "Ah!" replied the Bishop: "then now I know why the sun always shines on this house."

Now, I suppose no one will take this for a true story. It is only an allegory, (and a very

beautiful one it is,) to teach us, that in whatever house the Love of our Lord is made the leading principle, there will be true sunshine.

The third way in which legends, which are not fact, came to be believed, was from pictures. A symbolical representation, that is an allegorical figure representing some virtue or action of the Saint, was taken for a representation of something that really happened. For example: S. Margaret is usually represented as treading upon, or leading, a dragon. This served to express her triumph over the powers of evil; according to that saying: "Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet." But hence the legend tells us, that S. Margaret conquered a very dreadful dragon that ravaged Pisidia.

Yet from such legends we may learn much. Many of them enable us to understand Church art, and to enter into the holiness and beauty of the thoughts which filled the great and good men of old, who, like the Blessed Angelico, consecrated all their powers of art to the service of God. Many of them teach us lessons

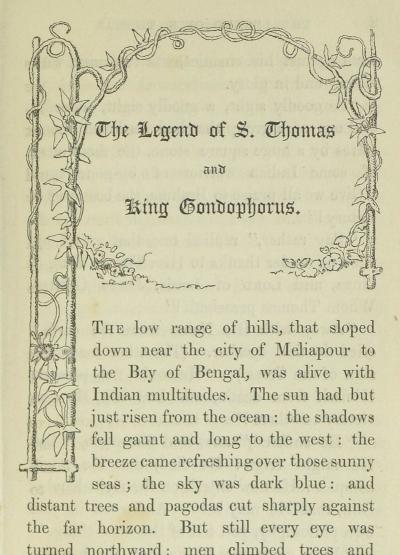
of patience, and trust, and humility, that we shall do well to lay to heart. All tell us how the Church would have us believe in the ever-present help of God, in the closeness of the unseen world, in the loving companionship which knits Blessed Spirits to ourselves.

And the Holy Ghost Himself has youchsafed to teach us heavenly truths from fables, which nevertheless were not at the time known to be fables. For example: David says, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle." For it was believed that eagles, when old and grey, plunged into the sea, and came forth from it with renewed youth. We know that they do not do so. But God was pleased to make use of a false belief in natural history, to teach us a lesson of everlasting truth. So again, David in another place says: "But my horn shall be exalted like the horn of an unicorn." We know, or believe, that there is no such animal as an unicorn. But by a fabulous creature God has been pleased to read us a lesson of wisdom.

A great number, then, of the legends which

have at different times, and in different parts of the Church been believed, although we may reasonably doubt their truth, were invented from very good motives, and most innocently thought to be true. If false miracles have been from time to time devised, (and I believe them to be very few), whether they were invented for filthy lucre, or from the desire to make God's glory abound through man's lie, we can only use S. Peter's words as to their authors: "whose damnation is just."

Understand, then: all the stories in this book may be true. I do not say they are not. But they cannot be proved true; and therefore I do not say that they are. In these, and such as these, if we are not bound to receive them as facts, we may profit from them, if they are allegories. And in cases of doubt, how much better, how much happier, to believe than to disbelieve!



gazed steadily thitherward; for from the north

forth against his enemies, was returning with victory and in glory.

"A goodly sight, a goodly sight, indeed," said one of a group that had stationed themselves by a huge square stone, the monument of some Indian warrior of by-gone ages. "Give we all praise to Brahma, the bestower of victory!"

"Say rather," replied one that stood by, "let us render thanks to Him That is King of kings, and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, Whom Thomas preacheth!"

"Away with His Name from the earth," cried the first speaker. (The other made the sign of the Cross.) "He could not preserve Himself from death; and how can He give victory to others?"

"He suffered," answered Sacontala, "that He might reign: He died, that He might conquer: He now sitteth on the right hand of God, that He may help. And even in your own philosophy, you tell of the same thing."

"How mean you?" inquired the heathen, whose name was Atoor.

"Do you not worship Krishna?" asked the

Christian. "And how do you represent him? First as wreathed about and tormented of a serpent, that gnaws at his heel; and this you call Krishna suffering. After that you set him forth as crushing the head of the same serpent, and this you call Krishna triumphant. Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, in him I see a figure of our Lord and God, Who by death destroyed death."

"I am content," said Atoor, "to be no wiser than my fathers. But, instead of disputing concerning Christ, it were wiselier done of you Christians to consult how you may escape the vengeance of King Gondophorus, when he shall return."

"Why?" asked Sacontala.

"Why?—nas not your teacher, Thomas, most basely deceived him? Did not the King leave with him gold and silver,—gems, such as never were before seen in Travancore, and elephants' teeth innumerable, to the end that he might build him a palace more beautiful than the abodes of the blessed? And has he not squandered them away, I know not whether more wickedly or madly, in feeding

the hungry, and taking in them that are houseless, and the very scum of the land, that ought to be hunted forth into the northern deserts, not fostered and encouraged in Meliapour?"

"I am not careful to answer for Mar Thomas," answered the other. "He hath wisdom from his Lord, Who cannot err: and what he hath done, that, I know well, he will make good. Therefore I patiently await the issue."

"In happy time," cried Atoor. "Do you see yonder cloud of dust in the horizon? That must be the army."

So with pomp and glory, and the sound of cymbals and drums, and the shout of his host, and the clashing of arms, King Gondophorus returned to his palace. And as he alighted from his royal litter, the crowd fell on their faces on this side and on that; his path was spread with tiger skins: the chiefest of his Brahmins burnt incense before him;—the city rang again with the tramp of the soldiers and the shouting of the multitude: and the spoils of gold and silver and purple and diamonds were borne on high among the multitude.

And when darkness came down upon the earth, the sea glowed again with the red glare of the bonfires.

But none dared to tell King Gondophorus about his palace. They waited till he should ask: and the Brahmins rejoiced, because the enemy of their religion was certainly, as they deemed, near his ruin.

On the next day, the king sat on his royal throne, and called for the chief among his Brahmins, whose name was Kemala.

"Now," said he, "that I have returned in peace to my kingdom, and have found Meliapour flourishing in all wealth and prosperity, and have, as meet it was, returned thanks to the immortal gods, I next and chiefly desire to behold the palace which Thomas, who preacheth the sect of Christ, promised to build for me. Send for him therefore, that he may lead me thither. Some distance from the city it must surely be: else, as we drew nigh to it yesterday, I must have taken notice thereof."

"Let the king live a thousand years," said Kemala. "Thomas I will cause to be called hither at once; but as to the Palace——" "What of the Palace?" demanded King Gondophorus.

"If he hath built it, my royal Lord, human eyes have never seen it. But this he hath done: he hath drawn together an abominable multitude of poor impotent folk, aged, lame, and halt, and hath nourished them these two years. How he should have done it but by means of your royal treasures, it passeth my knowledge to conceive: for sure I am that he was poor enough when he first came to this land."

"Surely it cannot be," said the king. "I ever held him a just man, albeit I believe not the doctrine he preacheth. Besides, he would not have so dared to trifle with my vengeance."

"The gods grant it!" said Kemala. "Is it your gracious will that he be summoned hither?"

"Let him be called at once," eried the King. And the Brahmin left his presence.

Shortly after he entered who, twenty years before, had alone of all the Apostles doubted. Now he had penetrated further than any other

into the kingdom of Satan: he had set up the standard of the Cross through half Asia; he had turned many to the light in that land of darkness and of the shadow of death, India. And he had yet to explore, for his Master's sake, the uttermost bounds of the earth, and to preach the everlasting Gospel in China.

After he had made obeisance to the King,—
"I sent for thee, O Thomas," said Gondophorus, "that thou mayest show me the
palace which I doubt not has long since been
finished for me. I have heard much of thy
skill, and thou knowest how great were the
treasures; it ought therefore to be beautiful as
the gates of Heaven."

"Thy palace is finished, O King," replied the Apostle, "and thou sayest truly, it is beautiful as the gates of Heaven; neither can thy fancy conceive how glorious are its founda-

tions, nor how precious are its walls."

"It is well said," answered Gondophorus; and as he spake it he looked angrily at the Brahmin.—" Let us go thither at once; I am impatient to behold it."

"Stay yet, O King," said the Apostle. "I

have built it for thee, it is true; and thine it is, if thou wilt have it; that is true also. But yet thou canst not have it now;—thou must wait His time Who shall call thee to take possession of it."

"What meanest thou?" asked the King. "Built, sayest thou, and I cannot see it? Mine, and I cannot have it? These are riddles that surpass my art."

"Let the King live for ever!" said Kemala.
"May I ask the Christian somewhat?"

"Answer what he shall demand," cried Gondophorus.

"Then I ask," said the Brahmin, "whether you have not laid out all those princely treasures which our gracious liege bestowed upon you, in nourishing that vermin of people whom you have fed and clothed? And do you dare now to speak of a palace built with the sums that you have squandered?"

"It is true, O Priest of Idols," answered the Apostle. "These poor I have supported, for my LORD, when He was on earth, was poor: and the palace I have also built, but not in this world. It shall be the king's, if he prepare

himself for it, when the King of kings calleth him hence."

Then was King Gondophorus full of fury, and he commanded to cast the Apostle of our Lord into prison, thinking with how sore torments he might cause him to be put to death. Now it fell out at that time, while Thomas lay in a noisome dungeon, that the king's brother, by name Oruma, fell sick and died.

There was grievous lamentation through Meliapour, for that prince was much beloved of his people. But the king could not be consoled. Again and again he returned to the bier whereon, after the custom of that land, lay the corpse, cold and still and now soon to return to corruption. His wise men and his principal captains besought him to cease his grief; "The gods willed it so," said they, "and men must not complain. The prince whom we loved hath no doubt, wherever he be, happiness; whatever form his spirit now holds, doubt not that it is such an one as he would have desired. He is not condemned, like the wicked, to the pernicious serpent, or the loathsome ape.

Doubtless he now tenants some bird, with plumage as glorious as the royal jewels of Meliapour;—or he lives in the elephant, the lord of some ancient forest;—or he rejoices in the strength of the roebuck, the swiftest of created things." Thus they ignorantly:—and how could the king receive comfort?

Once more he came, in the stillness of the early morning, to bid his brother adieu. Lords and Brahmins stood around the corpse; but the face was now covered. King Gondophorus stood at the feet, and his tears flowed swiftly and silently.

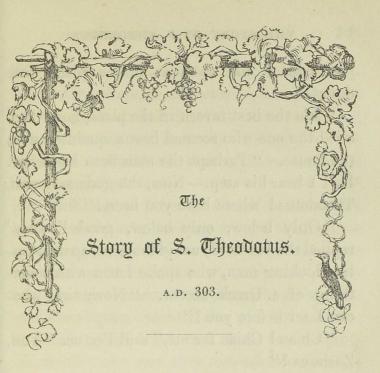
On a sudden, the dead dull atmosphere of the room seemed changed into a breath, as it were, from the Eternal Spring. None knew whence,—none knew how,—but all felt the life and healing of the air. The corpse revived, rose, stood upright. Arrayed in all his princely vestments, Oruma was before them, escaped from the power of the grave. There was life and strength and beauty in his aspect. Some fled,—some hid their faces with their hands; but Gondophorus made good his fame for courage. He clasped his brother in his arms.

And when fear and doubt and wonder were over, Prince Oruma spake on this wise: "When I awoke after death," he said, "I found myself in a meadow, such as surely for loveliness was never seen on earth. There were flowers of immortal beauty, and birds that sang more sweetly than the sweetest voice of man, and fountains of living water, and a light, glorious beyond that of the sun. And there were creatures of such passing splendour as dazzled mine eyes to behold, all peaceful, all happy; and I understood that death and sorrow were banished from that place, and that nothing which defileth could in any wise enter in thither. But in the midst I beheld a palace: its walls were of precious stones, its gates were of pearls, its pavement of pure gold as it had been shining crystal. And while I wondered for whom it might be, for as yet I could behold no king within it, one of the glorious creatures that stood by said,—'Desirest thou to know of this palace for whom it is built?' I answered, 'Surely I would know it.' 'This palace,' he made answer, 'was built by Thomas for King Gondophorus, if he will accept of it for a dwelling."

"Send for Thomas," cried the king. "Let us hear what he saith."

The Apostle came. And he told how we must make friends to us of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations; how we must lay up treasure where moth consumeth not, neither can thief destroy; how we may break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; how alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin.

And King Gondophorus believed and was baptized; and doubtless now dwells in that glorious palace that was reared for him by the hands of Thomas the Apostle.



"Ho! landlord! a sextans of Chian!"

"By Mars! the place is deserted! what, ho! Theodotus!"

"To the crows with the fellow! landlord! ho!"

A party of soldiers had just entered the best inn in the market-place of Ancyra, the capital of Galatia. An inn it certainly was; for there were the chequers on the door-posts, and the bush hung out, just as of old times among ourselves; but yet, as one of the soldiers has just said, it did seem as if the place were deserted.

"It's the best tavern in the place, however," cried the one who seemed best acquainted with the house. "Perhaps the man is in his cellar. Ha! I hear his step.—Now, the gods save you, Theodotus! where have you been?"

"Only below, only below, good Festus," replied the landlord, a middle-aged, spare, resolute looking man, who spoke Latin with something of a Greek accent. "Now, sirs, what can I set before you?"

"Chian! Chian for me," said Festus. "You, Zosimus?"

"It's cold, by Bacchus.—Is there a thermopolium (a place where hot wine was sold) here?"

"The best in Ancyra," cried Festus.

"A quadrans of Lesbian, then," said Zosimus. And the three or four others gave their orders in like manner.

"You shall be served, sirs, directly," replied Theodotus. And he left the room, and descended to his cellar. We will follow him there. A very different cellar, to be sure, from those of our time. It was full of large, two-handled amphoræ, or earthen jars, stuck upright in the ground, and labelled with parchment slips; thus, Chium, Ann. v.,—Chian, five years old, was ticketed on the amphora to which Theodotus first went.

"Andronicus!" he cried: and a slave, (you could tell him to be such by his black coarse exomis, or close-fitting tunic,) came from some dark corner of the cellar. "Andronicus," continued his master, "there are half-a-dozen soldiers above. Serve Chian and hot Lesbian, and take good heed they lack for nothing. Especially take care they don't leave the room till I can dismiss our friends."

"Ay, ay, master; I'll warrant for that. But I pray you lose no time, for such gentlemen are not always over easy to manage."

"I will not," replied Theodotus. And while Andronicus drew the wine, and got the cyathi together, the landlord went up to a corner of the cellar and knocked,—first three times close together, and then once, on a panel that sounded hollow. A bolt was undrawn, and a door thrown back. It was a low dark room;

a rude altar at one end, lighted by two tapers, as with us; a few candles stuck about at the other, where else the darkness would have been total; and about five-and-thirty or forty men and women kneeling on the cold damp mudfloor, while, at the altar, Clement the Bishop is just in the midst of the Christian Sacrifice. As he turns to his people, in the white phelonion even then worn, you may see a deep scar on his left cheek. It is the glorious mark of his confessorship some ten years before. And he makes the solemn proclamation,

"Holy things for holy persons!" And the people answer:

"One Holy Father; one Holy Son; one Holy Ghost; in the unity of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The service went on uninterruptedly. Each, in his turn, rising, and standing reverently in his place (for it was not then, any more than it now is in the East, the use to kneel) had the words, "The Body of Christ;"—"The Blood of Christ;" addressed to himself; each answered Amen, and received the Body that was broken, and the Blood that was shed for him;

and kneeling again, awaited the thanksgiving, the conclusion of the Liturgy. Scarcely was it over, when Theodotus rose.

"My father," said he, "and you, my brethren, you must leave by the secret way: there are soldiers in the house."

"God will preserve us," said S. Clement. "You, my children, disperse first; I fear nothing for myself."

There is some little commotion in the congregation, however. That officer lays his hand on his sword,—and then, as if recollecting himself, withdraws it. That young lady presses nearer to her mother, and draws her palla more closely round her. Those who have wives or sisters in the church, whisper a word or two of comfort; while Theodotus, taking a key from a nail, opens a strong trap door towards the altar end of the building.

Let us return to the soldiers in the wine-room.

"It was vastly good fun, I can tell you," cried Narses, a barbarous half Goth, half Roman. "Not one of the seven, I say, would sacrifice; you must have heard the shouting."

"Why, ay, I did hear something," replied Festus;—"but what was it about?"

"It was a feast," said Narses; "they wash Diana and Minerva in the pool yonder once a year; and this, it seems, was the day. They carried along the seven virgins with them, and a rare hooting the people made. However, they made short work at the place; they got some pieces of millstone; and there they all lie, stones and Christians together, at the bottom of the pond."

"Ah," said Festus, "there are a good many of that sort of cattle here. If you could light on that fellow Clement, it would be as good as

a purse of gold."

"The centurion," said Zosimus, "has sworn to have him,—and, by Hercules, he is the man to keep his word. But, I say, Festus; I don't much like the looks of mine host here."

"Who? Theodotus? Why, he is as honest a man as ever breathed."

"Ah,—I am not speaking of dishonesty, but something a good deal worse. I am sure I heard of him at that village yonder,—to the crows with it! what's its name? oh—Haly-polis,—as a favourer of the Christians."

"What? and he an innkeeper?" said Festus. "Impossible."

"They told me so, however," replied Zosimus. "Let us have him in, and see what we can make out."

But he whom they sought was in another part of the city. As soon as he had seen the last of the Christians safely from his premises, he set forth, through the least frequented lanes, and soon found himself without the walls. A bow-shot from the gate of the Halys there was a small house, standing back in its own garden, then gay with the very earliest of spring flowers. Through this garden passed Theodotus, and laying hold of the hammer that hung by the door, knocked gently. It was opened by an old woman who was the porter.

"Is the lady Thecla to be seen?"

"If you came, she bade me to take you into her. Follow me."

Thecla was an orphan; a Christian from childhood, as her name showed, one of the faithful little band who formed the remains of

the Church of Ancyra. She had even now returned from the Christian assembly, and had scarcely laid aside her palla. She was seated in one of the rooms on the women's side of the house;—a spinning-wheel at some little distance from her, and a book, as books were then made, lying on the table. A valuable book it must be in the estimation of the owner; for the outer skin of the roll has been doubly pumiced, and the ends of the stick on which it is kept have silver crowns. It was the treatise of S. Cyprian on Mortality, - one very suitable for a time of persecution; and Thecla had been educated sufficiently to read a Latin book with almost as much ease as her native Greek.

"Welcome, good Theodotus," she said.
"Have you any news?"

"The best, lady," he replied. "The seven Virgins have confessed Christ gloriously, and are at rest."

"Gop be praised!" said Thecla. "But tell me more."

"I cannot well tell you," said Theodotus, "the cruel mockings through which they passed

to their crown. What need to remember them? They are passed for ever. But the manner of their decease was not fearful. They were cast into the pool, and so rendered up their blessed souls to Gop."

"Was none of the brethren by them?"

"Glycerius, lady; none else. He, it seems, had tidings that in the yearly procession to the pool they would also go; we knew not how soon they were to be called hence. But indeed, he, and I, and others of the brethren continued instant in prayer this morning at the house of Theocharis, that Gop would fortify them for the battle, and esteem them worthy of the crown."

"Then are your prayers answered," said Thecla. "But do they talk of more prisoners?"

"They talk of them, lady. The soldiers of whom I spake an hour ago are bent on mischief; but they are in God's Hands as well as we. I promised to give you the tidings; and therefore I came. Now I must return to see what can be done for the recovery of the bodies of the victorious martyrs; for, as they are pre-

cious in the sight of the Lord, so should they also be to us."

"If you can use this house, I pray you to do so," said Thecla. "Here the martyrs may well rest till it shall please God to give peace to His Church."

"If better it may not be, lady, so it shall be done. But if it might be, I would fain bury them in the church of the Patriarchs."

"Farewell, then; but let me hear if anything more is to be done. I shall be anxious after nightfall; and there is none of my household that you may not trust with your lives. Stay;—have you heard the news from Aspona?"

"No, lady."

"The Bishop Athenodorus has triumphed. This letter I did but receive yesternight. And the man that brought it, a merchant, going to Ephesus, saw him beheaded, and reports that he suffered most constantly."

"But may I hear the letter?" inquired Theodotus.

"Read it," said Thecla. And thus it was.

"P. Y. A. P.*

"Athenodorus, Bishop, to his beloved daughter, Thecla, health in the Lord.

"In your last letter you prayed me to tell you somewhat of my health, which you had heard to be less favourable. You will rejoice then to hear that all that sickness is at an end, and that for ever. For, that I may speak without enigmas, our Lord, Who knoweth that I have served Him, not indeed as I would, but as I could, hath counted me worthy of that honour for which I have always longed, the confession of His name. And I well trust that, before the present epistle can reach you, I shall be with Him. But I exhort you, and all that are in Ancyra, to play the man for Christ's sake; for the trial which is to try your faith will be a fiery trial. And what saith the Brother of Gop? 'Behold we count them happy which endure.' Commend me to my brother Clement, and bid him to gird up the loins of his mind, to be patient, and watch to the end.

^{*} Bishops always began their dimissory, and sometimes as here, their other epistles, with these letters; the Greek initials of FATHER, SON, HOLY GHOST.

My love be with Theodotus and all the brethren. Farewell.

"From Aspona," the Ides of January.

"God be praised!" said Theodotus. "He ever doeth wondrously in His martyrs. But now, lady, farewell. I must not lose more time, if I am to accomplish that I have in hand."

"Farewell," said Thecla. "Let me hear more to-night."

Theodotus went on his way, and in half an hour returned to his inn. He entered without notice, and calling his slave, despatched him for three Christians, by name Theocharis, Glycerius, and Polychronius. In the mean time the mirth of the soldiers above grew furious; and you might have heard them trolling out the old song of Horace:

"Oh, prythee, no more of the siege of Troy-town,
And of Æacus' family tree,
The succession of kings from old Inachus down
To Codrus, who died to be free;
Let the heroes of yore in their sepulchres rest,
'Tis of wine and of pleasure we ask:
Where the baths are the warmest, the cheapest, the best,
And the price of old Chian a cask."

And well, if all had been as innocent as this. But as the afternoon wore away, the talk and the songs grew more and more vile: "it is a shame," as S. Paul said, "even to speak of the things" that were done and talked by such men.

At length, towards five o'clock, as the light was fading, the centurion entered. "Soldiers," he said, "there is some talk that the Nazarenes will try to get the bodies of the sorceresses from the pool to-night. You will therefore be on guard there from dark till midnight;—then you will be relieved. If any pass, the word is *Marspiter*."

Night came on: such a night as old Homer means, when he calls it "swift and terrible." The bitter east wind penetrated men's very bones:—from the snowy mountains of the Caucasus it gathered its intense chill;—the sky was blotted out with one dull grey robe of clouds:—as one of our old poets says,

.... "The drizzling sleet
Chilleth the wan bleak cheek of the numbed earth,
While snarling gusts nibble the juiceless leaves,
From the naked shuddering branch."

And the dark pool roared and moaned above the bodies of Christ's faithful martyrs; and the plane trees on the shore clashed their arms together with a wild sound. But these happy ones, meanwhile, were wandering among the gardens of Paradise, and refreshing themselves from the river of water of life, that is clear as crystal. Winter and night were around their bodies; but everlasting spring, and a day without night, the portion of their souls.

"Courage, friends," cried Theodotus, as through sleet and wind they struggled onward to the pool. "Courage! We shall find none but the soldiers, if indeed them,—for the citizens fear the *lemures* that haunt this place."

"I fear nothing with you, and for them," said Theocharis. "God is with us, and who can be against us?"

They were passing the place where criminals were executed. Heads, in every stage of corruption, grinned from the poles on which they had been set; mangled limbs, skeletons, skulls, lay about their path; a jackall fled, with a wild cry, at their approach. Here many a wretched

man had gone from torments on earth to a more terrible future; it was a place whence hope seemed banished.

They made the sign of the cross, and advanced; and at the same moment a fiery cross rose before them, and seemed to beckon them onwards. And now, through the darkness of the night, two, clothed in white raiment, drew nigh on horseback.

"Be of good cheer, Theodotus!" they said.
"Thy name is among the martyrs; and we are sent to conduct and to direct thee. By the pool is Sosander, who will protect thee against the guards. Go on thy way with a good courage. But wherefore didst thou bring a traitor with thee?"

Still they pressed on. The storm grew wilder:—the sleet drove like the arrows of the Parthians;—notwithstanding, the thunder bellowed perpetually, and wild, unearthly lightnings shot from the clouds. On the border of the pool they saw a form that, clad in complete armour, and glittering with a heavenly light, seemed to guard the precious remains of the martyrs. It was the martyr Sosander. The

guards, terrified by the tempest, and by the appearance, had fled.

They had come provided with halberds, to cut the ropes by which the martyrs had been tied. One by one they gained the bodies,—and bore them in triumph to the house of Thecla.

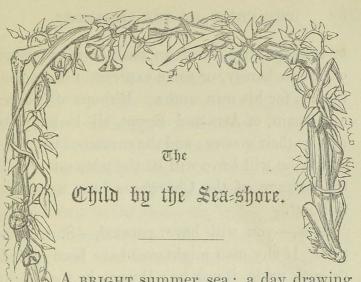
The next day Ancyra was in an uproar. Soldiers were hurrying hither and thither;—examinations were taken;—the prefect was resolved to discover the authors of so bold a deed.

And then the prophecy was made good. For Polychronius, one of the three that had accompanied Theodotus, was seized on suspicion of being concerned in the matter. He resisted the rack for a while. Then his courage failed, and he told all that he knew.

I need not say what followed. Theodotus was arrested; and, after five days' conflict, wherein he endured all sorts of torments that the art of man could devise, he went to his crown.

They buried him in a valley by the side of the Halys; and when the kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of our Lord, they raised a glorious church over his remains. That church is now a mosque, accursed by the worship of the false Prophet. But the day will come when God shall have respect to the blood of His martyrs, and shall say to the suffering Church of the East, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."





A BRIGHT summer sea: a day drawing towards evening: a few long bright clouds like splinters of gold or diamond waiting for the sun to sink among them; the unutterable calm of the green hue of the West; one tall palm rustling its broad leaves on a

knoll hard by. That was the scene.

A venerable old man comes forth, like Isaac, to meditate at eventide. There, on that wild and lonely shore, alone as he seems to stand, the whole Church Catholic looks to him as her great doctor. Not a merchant ship enters the harbour of Carthage without bringing him some question on the discipline of the Church,

or some inquiry about its faith, some account of a new heresy, or some expression of thankfulness for his own works. Bishops of France and Spain, of Asia and Egypt, all look up to him as their master: and the enormous volumes which he will leave will be the possession and the heritage of the Church as long as she is militant.

It is,—you will have guessed,—S. Augustine. If any man might ever have been puffed up with pride, it was he: thus to be the oracle of the Church, thus to be the guide of her who cannot be deceived. But in the history of his own youth, he had enough to make him humble. He could remember when it used to be his prayer, "LORD, make me holy, but not now:" he could remember when he plunged wildly into all kinds of sin; -when he followed the abominable heresy of the Manichees: and no wonder that he, who had known so much of the Grace of God, should dwell so deeply on it in his writings, as to be called The Doctor of Grace. He could remember how, while yet he could not make up his mind to give up the lust of the flesh, the lust

of the eyes, and the pride of life, he was in the garden of the house where he lived,—and heard a voice,—a calm sweet voice,—as from heaven,—Tolle, lege; tolle, lege; "Take up and read: take up and read:" how at a distance lay the Epistles of S. Paul, which some time before he had thrown down; how, not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision, he took up the book, and opened at this verse: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof:" and how that was his Conversion.

But now he had come forth to meditate on a book which he was about to write,—and which we still have,—a Treatise on the Mystery of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. He wished to propound the everlasting Faith of the Church; he wished to show how it was that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;—how it is that we are not to confound the Persons, like Sabellius, nor divide the Substance, like Arius;—how it is that we

are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and LORD; and how, that we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, There be Three Gods, or Three Lords. He longed, with a holy boldness, to explain how it is that the Son is begotten, and the Spirit proceeds, from everlasting: and he was impatient to gird on his armour, and do battle with all the heretics that had denied or corrupted this tremendous mystery.

So he paced backwards and forwards on the strip of hard, white sand that was his favourite walk. The sun sank lower and lower. He had already set on the Eastern lands. S. Cyril of Alexandria was writing by his lamp: S. Jerome at Bethlehem was meditating in the clear starry night: the great church of the Resurrection at Constantinople was brilliant with lights, for S. Atticus was going to preach to the people. The breeze had died away. The broad Mediterranean glittered and trembled in the western path of glory; the southern mountains vested themselves in the purple mantle of their repose. But the Saint saw none of these things. He was rapt into that country where the Sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself, he was meditating of the region where there shall be no more sea: and his mind ranged—not over the lovely Mauritanian mountains, but to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

But now a child was kneeling on the sand, and scooping with his little hands a hole in its soft white bed. Twice or thrice the holy Bishop passed him, and noticed him not. But his love for children—almost all great saints have been fond of children—presently made him glance with a smile at the child-like amusement of this boy. He watched how he scooped out a little pool:—how, taking a bowl in his hands, he went down to the sea—how he filled it from the rippling waves,—how he returned to the sand hole, and poured the water in thither.

Again the Saint pursued his meditation. The sun touched the sea. A cold chill fell on the shore. A grey shade passed over the face of the Mediterranean, like the awful shadow that flits across the face of a dying man. The

birds ceased their song. The twelve hours of the day, wherein a man can work, were at an end.

Again S. Augustine looked up. Still the indefatigable boy was fetching water from the sea, and pouring it into the hole. The thirsty sand sucked it up; and again he went for more.

"My child," said the Saint, "what are you intending to do?"

"I am going," replied the boy, without looking up, "to pour all the sea into this hole."

The Bishop smiled kindly. "That will be impossible," he said.

The boy looked up. The face was still childlike, but glorious in its childishness. It was such a face as the old painters give to S. Pancras or S. Cyriac—or rather to him who bore the roses which S. Dorothea sent from the gardens of Paradise.

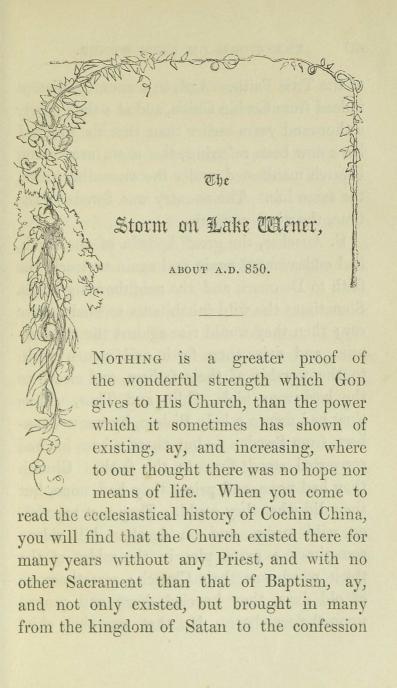
"Impossible?" he answered. "Not more impossible than for thee, O Augustine, to contain an infinite mystery in a finite mind!"

And he vanished.

Then S. Augustine knew that this was one of those ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation.

"'Which things,'" said he, "'the angels desire to look into;' and how shall I, a mortal man, attain unto them?"





of the True Faith. And, in a country, distant indeed from Cochin China, and at a time nearly a thousand years earlier than that to which I have now been referring, the same everlasting Church manifested, under the same difficulties, the same life. The country was Sweden; the time, the ninth century.

S. Anschar, the great Apostle of the north, had endeavoured again and again to teach the faith to Denmark and the neighbouring lands. Sometimes the wild inhabitants seemed to give ear; then they would rise against the missionaries, and drive them forth, and return again to the worship of their fathers, and cleave to the barbarous idols, Odin and Thor. Thus they had driven a holy Bishop, by name Gausbert, from Sweden; -but those whom he had converted stood firm to the faith. Church they had none, and priest they had none, but they did what they could. They met together on wild moors, and on desolate hill sides; sometimes a green plat in the midst of the thick wood was their Church; sometimes, as of old days, they kneeled down and prayed upon the sea-shore. He that was their chief

and their leader, was Herigar. He was of noble blood, he had been a renowned warrior, he was held in great esteem for his wisdom, but he had learnt that the truest nobility was to be the servant of Christ;—that the most glorious war was war against the world and against self;—that the highest wisdom was to be a follower of Him That was crucified. And because he was not of the world, therefore did the world hate him.

Now it fell out on a day that there was a great sacrifice to Thor; and Valdegar, King of Birca, and all his nobles, and his mighty men of valour, were gathered together in the plain without the city. A soft showery April day it was; the brown shadows chased each other lightly over hill and valley; Lake Wener now glowed like a sheet of gold, and anon lay among its woods like an inky abyss;—the Norwegian mountains, far to the left, threw up their snowy heads, for though spring had come down on the plains, it was winter, cold bleak winter, on the Hardanger and Eggedals Fjelds. The young leaves of the birch glistened with the drops of that cloud which is now

speeding away towards the Fiord of Christiania. Poor cloud! It now catches all the brightness and warmth of the spring sun,—it now drops fatness on fields of wheat and barley, on pleasant meadows, and woods that echo with birds;—this afternoon it will be tossed hither and thither by savage winds among icy peaks, and will pour forth hail or snow from its fleecy bosom.

The plain of Birca then was crowded. All came to praise their idol; he, they said, had given them a fair seed-time, he would preserve the grain that now lay under the ground, he would raise it up above the clod, he would swell and fatten the stem, he would brown the ear. The huge ugly figure was in the midst; a rude altar was before him; the priest began the sacrifice;—and that fair scene and that bright day were polluted by the worship of devils.

Herigar, too, had been invited: and he went. His heart yearned for the day when Sweden also should become one of the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. And so now he stood up in the midst of the assembly, in front of the altar, and spake on this wise.

"O King," he said, "and you, lords and

good men of this land, ye have indeed offered sacrifice to this your god, who (for aught I perceive) having eyes, sees not, having ears, hears not, and speaks not through his throat. I, as this multitude knows, worship none such; I adore nothing that is made with hands;—my God dwelleth in the heavens, and thence doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him. What I would ask, O King, is this: how know you that your gods hear and answer?"

"That is well shown," replied Elf, the eldest of the Priests, "by the victories they have in past times, and specially under this our present King, vouchsafed to us. When we have remembered their offerings, they have not forgotten us. It were a foul shame to forsake them now, under whom Erick and Olaf and Sweyn have so often gone out in pride, and returned home with victory. Rather, excellent Herigar, I might demand of you, why you, casting reproach on your ancestors, have given your allegiance to One That, as we certainly understand, suffered death as a malefactor? How know you that you are heard of Him? What proof giveth He of His power?"

"That," replied Herigar, "you shall know,

and all this assembly shall know, this day. Do you see that cloud to windward, even now travelling up over the Lake Wener?"

"By Wodin, yes," replied the king. "There will be a storm anon. But what of that?"

"Do you, O king," said Herigar, "be on one side, and I and my servant Olaf will be on the other. Command the Priests that they call upon their gods, and we will call on our God. Then, if no rain falls upon you, we will be content to return to the worship of our forefathers; but if no rain fall upon us, do you own that our God is He Who hath all power in Heaven and in earth."

"It is well said," answered King Valdegar.
"Proclaim it through the assembly; let all men, save the two Christians, come to the east of the Altar; and let them stand by themselves on the west."

Proclamation was made over the plain. On they crowded, lords, warriors, citizens, and serfs. The rude heralds kept them from transgressing the line, and outstretched heads, and eager eyes, and hushed whispers, alone bore witness to their interest.

"Call on the immortal gods, O priests,"

said the king. "That is your office. Let them not be put to shame by men that profess an outlandish faith."

The Priests looked doubtfully on each other, but began their Runic rhymes. Olaf, in a low voice, said to Herigar, as the servant of old, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?"

"Kneel, and be instant in faith and prayer," returned Herigar, "lest our unbelief bring mis chief on our cause. Hath He not said, Nothing shall be impossible to you?"

They knelt: and called on Him Who had caused the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, Who had sent thunder and rain in the time of wheat harvest, Who had preserved the land of Goshen from the hail that laid Egypt waste, that He would now make bare His holy Arm, and let their country see His salvation.

"How calm they look!" whispered old Horic the fisherman, to his neighbour.

"Ay," replied the other. "For my part, I know not what to think on't!"

"What!" cried Horic; "do you believe that their God can hear?"

"I have heard strange tales," returned Suitbert the bear-hunter, "of what He can do. Gausbert, whom they called their Bishop, told me of one whom He held up and made walk upon the waters. But whatever their God can do, I am sure our gods will not do this mighty wonder. Heard we ever the like, or our fathers before us?"

"Of a surety not," said Horic. "Look ye, how fast the storm is coming up!"

"Ay,—and how old Wener roars; just like a wounded bear among the cliffs."

They watched the storm. First, the long dark line on the horizon; then the broader and woollier cloud, bulging out with its own weight; then, the driving lines of rain, parallel as if ruled with a ruler, that cut across it; then the whole eastern sky arraying itself in the tempest,—the cold chilly feeling of the coming shower.

"It is very near now," said Horic.

"Ay, ay," cried Suitbert. Ha! I felt the first drop!"

Lake Wener lay dark as ink beneath the shower; the big drops began to fall, the sun-

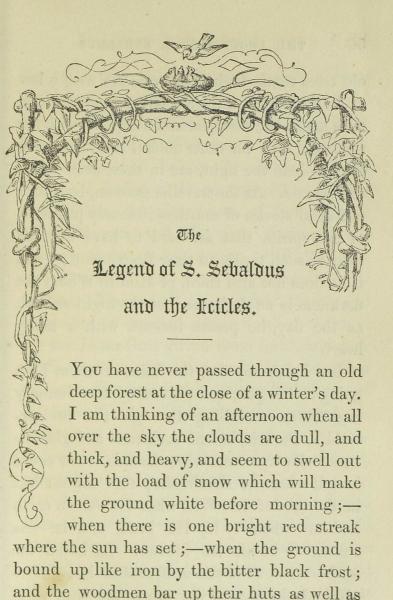
beams fled before the storm over field and wood; faster and faster came the shower, till at length the windows of heaven were opened, and a flood of waters came down.

Little they cared for weather, those Swedish nobles and peasants; but man stood closer to man, as the fury of the tempest swept down; and many a curious glance was turned at the Christians, who still knelt, and still prayed.

The rush of the rain slackens; the clouds began to show drifts of white vapour, and patches of blue sky. The shower lessens and lightens; now it scarcely rains; now a bright sun-gleam comes forth, and the storm is over.

"Be judge, O king!" cried Herigar; "and you, nobles and princes! Feel our mantles, and see if a trace of rain hath fallen upon them! You Priests, what have their prayers availed? But we,—we had but to cry to our God and He has heard us. Choose you this day, then, whom ye will serve!"

And the multitude shouted, as of old time, "The LORD! He is the GOD! The LORD! He is the GOD!"



they can, and throw on their best logs. The

old trees rustle their bare branches with a low wailing sound;—the screech owl every now and then makes the wood, far and near, echo with her mournful cry: for other doleful creatures, even such as hate the light, are in their dens or on their roosts. As the traveller goes on, he thinks of fearful stories of murders in lonely places,—of evil spirits that are said to have tempted men, at such times, to their destruction;—and if he does not also think of Him to Whom the darkness is no darkness, but the night shineth as the day, he passes forward with a heavy heart.

But I dare say that the Saint of whom I am going to tell you, and who on a bitter January night was travelling through the Steigerwald in Bavaria, had no such fears and gloominess. He knew not where he was,—nor could he tell where he should sleep that night: but he thought of One Who when He was on earth had not where to lay His head, and he was content to be like his Master. He heard the long wild howl of the wolf, and he looked forward to the blessed day when the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the ox and the

lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. His foot crushed the crisp leaves of last autumn, and he thought of the leaves of that Tree which cannot wither, and which shall be for the healing of the nations. And now the air was getting thicker and thicker: the huge limbs of the old trees grew dimmer and dimmer: darkness was settling down on the forest. "Well!" said Sebaldus, for that was his name,—"it is written, 'There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.' If we may but attain to that country, it matters little how our lot is cast here." So saying, he grasped his staff more tightly, and keeping as straight a line as he could in the wilderness of trees, stepped forward more briskly.

I doubt not that the servant of God had a blessed company with him, though he could not see them. Else the wolves that were once upon his track would not have turned off at the Count's Oak, and trotted along, baying as they went, through the valley towards Neu-

stadt. Else Sebaldus himself could never have kept straight on, as if he were journeying by line, turning neither to this path nor to that, through ways which it needed an old woodman to thread safely. Even there did Gop's arm lead him, and His right Hand guide him. And to the eyes of angels, though not of men, the forest was full of a more glorious light than on a summer evening, when the slant rays of the sun made it a bower of gold.

At last, when almost wearied out, Sebaldus came forth on to a little clearing, where, by such light as the moon could give from behind the thick clouds, he saw a woodman's cottage. An old, curious place, that seemed all gable and no walls;—with thatch a yard thick, and great rugged eaves overhanging the door and windows. But there was no cheerful line of light over the lintel: no gleam shooting out through some crevice in the shutter. Long clear icicles hung down from the thatch, bright as crystal: sometimes they reached to the ground, like the slim shafts in the Choir of a Cathedral; sometimes they knotted and twisted

themselves into the shape of the strange serpents that dwell in Indian forests, or the stranger fishes that sailors bring up from shallows when their ships are becalmed at the Line.

"What, ho!" cried Sebaldus, laying his hand on the latchet. "What, ho! who is within?"

There was no answer: except the sighing of the trees as the night wind swept more bitterly through them.

"Some one must be within," said the Saint:
"else would not the door be fastened. Good brother, will you give a poor Priest a lodging for the love of Christ?"

"Go your ways," said a voice within: "if you be robber, I have nothing that you can take;—and if you be stranger, I have nothing that I can give."

"You can give me shelter," replied the Priest: "and that will be a merciful deed: for it is a bitter night."

Some words were spoken within;—and then a man's voice said,—" Wait at least till I can strike a light."

Sebaldus waited: but it was long before the dried leaves would catch fire from the flint.

At last a flash of light shot from under the door: another moment, and it shone with a steadier gleam: and then slowly and carefully the bolt was undrawn, and the door opened. A tall strong man, but bent together and chattering with the cruel cold, thrust his rude torch into the night air, and looked at the stranger.

"Come in, sir," he said, "and welcome to what shelter we have:—such as it is, we give it willingly."

"I thank you, my son," said Sebaldus, entering the cottage. A poor place it was indeed; the floor of mud, the walls of rough, unplaistered stone; and a dark, cold, cavern of a fire-place yawning on one side. In the corner of the one room two young children were lying on their mother; sometimes nestling closer to her for such warmth as she could give, sometimes wailing in low sad voices for the cold.

"I could bear it for myself, father, well enough," said the woodman, whose name was Farulf; "but look at them!"

"But how happens it," asked Sebaldus, "that you do not gather wood from the forest?

Surely then you need not suffer from this

bitter night."

"Gather wood from the forest!" cried the mother. "And do you not know, sir, that our Lord is the Count Otto of Uffenheim?—
If we meddled with his wood, we should be but little longer for this world. Our last faggot we burnt out this morning; and tomorrow the good man must buy a mule-load at the castle. For we can do that, God be praised! But it is a weary time to wait; and the poor children can scarcely keep soul and body together."

"If your lord be that manner of man," said Sebaldus, "he shall hear somewhat further of it from me before he is many hours older. But at this present time I would fain do some-

thing for you."

"I thank you heartily, good father," replied Farulf, "but there is no remedy save patience."

"Is it not written," said the Priest, "Sure I am that the Lord will maintain the poor?"

"So He will, and so He doth," answered the woodman; "but we must wait His time." "Even so," said Sebaldus; "but His time may be now. You deserve a recompense for taking in the stranger. Wherefore go forth, I pray you, and bring me the largest icicles that hang from the eaves; bring not a few."

Farulf looked up in amazement, and said,

"To what purpose, my father?"

"Nay," answered Sebaldus, "inquire not for that; but do as I bid you. Nay, then, an you will not go forth, I must go myself," he added with a smile.

"I will go," said the woodman, "but I thought you did but jest with me." And he went forth. They heard the snap of the icicles as Farulf's heavy hand broke them off; and presently he returned with an armful of five or six.

"It is well, my son," said the Priest: "lay them down on the hearth, and go, fetch me more."

The mother and even the young children looked on amazed, as Farulf again entered, and again was sent out. The fourth time he came back, saying, "There are no more, good father."

"Shut the door, then, my son; and you, my daughter, stack these as you would logs for a Christmas fire. Now, my children, you shall have better heat presently."

There was that in the Saint's words which they could not gainsay. Farulf stapled the door, and his wife stacked the icicles. There they lay, pure, white, and glistening, in the midst of the foul and sooty stones that built up the fire-place, like a little company of true servants of God in the midst of an adulterous and sinful generation.

The saint turned toward the chimney. They saw his lips move as if in prayer; he made the sign of the cross over the icicles; and then, turning to Farulf, he said,

"Thrust in your torch, and set them on fire."

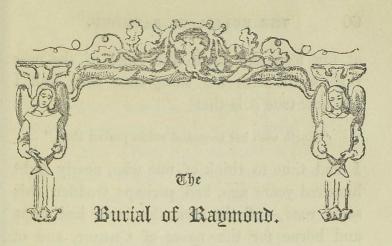
The woodman looked at the priest, and caught faith from his countenance. He held the torch to the heap. Crackling, and snapping, and rushing, the flame leapt up through the mass; the smoke in a thick cloud rolled up the chimney; the cottage glared out brightly, and Count Otto of Uffenheim, that was at the self-same moment drinking in his hall, felt not

such a glow from the carved firedogs that stood guardians of his princely fire-place.

Father, mother, and children,—all fell on their knees before Sebaldus.

"Nay," said the saint, "kneel to God, not to me. It was He that gave us the faith like a grain of mustard seed; and His Name be praised. Come, my children, and warm yourselves by His gift!"





I SHALL never forget the twilight of that May morning when, gladly leaving the heated diligence in which I had been travelling during the sweet spring night, I gave a moment's glance at the little church of S. Etienne, and then began my pilgrimage through the mountains of Dauphiné to the Grande Chartreuse. As the mists that had slept all night in the ravines began to rise, and to hang about the mountain tops like the glory round the head of a saint, and the peaks of Savoy were brightening in the sun, and far below me I heard one deep calling to another where the torrents, each on his own path, went hurrying forward to the great Mediterranean, and the lark sprung up

at my feet, and made the sides of the pass thrill again with her sharp clear song, and I felt how true it is that

"Earth with her thousand voices praises GoD,"

I had time to think of one who, nearly eight hundred years ago, had perhaps trodden this same road,—of the great things he had done and borne for the name of CHRIST, and of the mighty order that he founded, the only order that can take for its motto, Never reformed, because never deformed. Bruno was the Saint; -and the order, gaining its name from the wild desolate place in which it was first set up, was that of the Carthusians. And evermore as I ascended, the gorges became wilder, the passes narrower,—the pines seemed to whisper more solemnly, the snow lay whiter and purer, the sky was more intensely blue, —and I thought of the great and wicked city Lyons, where but two days before I had been wandering, as if it were in another world,—a world with which I had no longer anything to do. And as I drew near to the Desert of S. Bruno, a little province, as it were, girded round with walls of rock, and only to be approached by one of two gates,—and crossing the perilous wooden bridge of Fourvoirie, saw the Carthusian mark and legend on the rock, † Stat Crux, dum volvitur orbis, "the cross stands, while the world rolls," and thus entered the holy ground, I could have said, as Jacob did, "This is none other than the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven."

Do you wish to know why it was that S. Bruno betook himself to so wild a place, and from thence saw how his "brook became as a river, and his river became as the sea?" Thus, then, runs the legend.

A dull gray autumn afternoon had set in over the quaint old city of Paris. Tradesmen were beginning to hang out their lights;—in the narrow alleys and courts it was already twilight;—while it was yet clear day on the towers of Notre Dame, and in the pleasant fields that bordered the Seine. At the west door of the church of S. Nicolas a little crowd has assembled, some few well-to-do citizens,—but chiefly, as you may see from their dress, scholars. They are talking over something in which

all seem to be interested; while the bell of the parish church is pealing for service.

"He was a great man,—a very great man indeed," cried Adam de Lys, the stockfish merchant at the sign of S. Peter. "Ah! what a sermon he preached, two years ago now come next S. Martinmas-tide, about contempt of the world!—it did one good to hear it—how we were not to set our hearts on its pleasures or on its gains, because——Ah! my very good friend Maître Jacques,—how are tunnies in the south? I have not seen you since——."

"Yes," interrupted one of the scholars, "the Doctor Raymond was a very great man. Do you remember, Bruno," turning to his friend, "how only six weeks ago he moderated in the dispute whether there be or be not a difference between the sacramental Body of our Lord and His Body in the Sacrament? how learnedly, how solidly he treated the point? I profess I thought that S. Augustine had again come on earth."

"I doubt not he is with the blessed," said Bruno carelessly. "But, Landwin, this will be a grievous loss to us. He was the making of the school here,—and its reputation will fall with him. I, you know, who have the promise of such rich preferment at Rheims, might indeed content myself with that; but yet, I confess I look for something higher here."

"And well you may," cried Humbert, another of the scholars. "Raymond—God rest his soul!—always spoke of you as his favourite disciple, and prophesied that you would beat your master."

"Well, well," said Bruno, with a satisfied smile, "time will show.—By my faith, they are long in coming. Landwin, tell me what you thought of my thesis that you wot of—that, I mean, that I supported against the bachelor Hugh last Michaelmas eve? To my mind, it was the best——."

But there was a general whisper of "Hush! hush! they are coming!" And from the further end of the street the voices of the priests, as they thundered out the *De Profundis*, grew louder and louder. Tapers glittered round the cross that led the procession; the bier was followed by many of the scholars, and many of the poor, for Raymond in his lifetime had

been very charitable. One of his fellow Doctors was to preach;—and he, in the sacristy, was giving another glance at what he was about to deliver from memory. Loiterers pressed into the church: and now clearer and clearer they caught the words,

"If Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O LORD, who may abide it?

"But there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.

"I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait for Him: in His Word is my trust."

And the arches and vaulting of the church rang out with the strain of the entering procession,

"Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.

"And light perpetual shine upon him."

They set down the bier in the middle of the nave and removed the pall, that all might once more look on the face and on the form that they had loved so well. There, in his priestly robes, lay Raymond, the glory of the school of Paris;—he that had been consulted by the Bishops and learned Priests of far distant countries,—had read all that was to be read in The-

ology;—had sat at the table with Kings, and had astonished them by his wisdom;—he whom his disciples, according to the fashion of the time, had named the *Infallible Doctor*. There was the clear high wise brow, that had made plain such difficult questions, now pale and calm in death; the lips that had taught so many, sharp and white and stony; the hands that had written so learned treatises, and had given such plentiful alms, clasped on the breast, and holding that Cross which had overcome the grave.

The Chancellor of the Cathedral preached. "Know ye not," was his text, "that a great man is this day fallen in the house of Israel?" And he spoke of all the labours and the learning of Raymond,—of the honours they had won him on earth,—of the glory, as he piously believed, they would gain for him in heaven. "Doubt not," he said, "that this great Doctor will there drink from the fountain of that knowledge of which he here gave so many streams to us; doubt not that he who in this world saw through a glass darkly,—and yet how clearly was that darkly! now

beholdeth face to face; doubt not that the LORD hath given him the reward of his labours, a portion and inheritance at His right hand. Thou therefore,"—so after the fashion of the times, he concluded,—"O great and beloved Raymond, more great, more beloved now, than when on earth! forget not the scene of thy former toils, forget not this famous school of Paris, forget not us once thy fellow labourers in the same; that we, who after our poor sort were accounted worthy to share with thee the heat and the burden of the day, may hereafter have a portion in thy rest and in thy pleasures that are for evermore!"

And now came the service. The whole church was crowded; the friends and disciples of the departed Doctor stood closest round the bier; and the choir began the psalms; tossing and trolling them from side to side in the fearful Second Tone. Some of the bystanders looked on as at a show;—some joined heart and voice in the office,—some gazed on Raymond, and thought of the hour when they must be like him. "I know," chanted they, "that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand

at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see GoD." Then again,—"O LORD," they prayed, "when Thou shalt come to judge the earth, where shall I hide me from the presence of Thine anger? For many have been my transgressions in this life. I tremble at my iniquities, and blush before Thee: when Thou shalt come to judge me, condemn me not. Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death in that fearful day, when the heaven and the earth shall be shaken;—that day, that day of wrath, of tribulation and anguish, that great and too bitter day, when Thou shalt come to judge the quick and the dead, and the world by fire."

Forthwith the priest began the lessons: and spoke, in Job's words, of the fearfulness of the Judgment that shall be. "Withdraw Thou Thy face from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid. How many are mine iniquities and my sins? Answer Thou me."

Those that stood round the bier started back. The corpse slowly, and fearfully, and without unclasping the hands or opening the eyes, rose, and said in a low and doleful voice,

"I AM PRESENTED TO THE JUST JUDG-MENT OF GOD."

Priests, scholars, and citizens fled from the church. Books were thrown away, tapers left burning; none dared to stay. The report flew over Paris. Men spoke of it to their neighbours in dread. None knew what it meant; none knew what was to come next; it seemed as if the Hand of God were very night them. A dark gloomy night settled in over the city.

But, with the morrow, men recovered courage. "And after all, my brethren," said the Chancellor to the other doctors, "though it be a fearful wonder, and such an one as neither have we seen nor our fathers before us, still presented to the judgment of God we must all be. And I will not doubt that our brother Raymond is at rest. Wherefore my counsel is that we again begin the service; trusting in the mercy of God, and fortifying ourselves with the sign of the Cross."

To him they agreed; and on that afternoon they began the fearful office again. Nave, aisles, and porch were crowded;—multitudes thronged the little square in front of the church; nobles and serfs, priests and laity pressed together; and King Louis waited anxiously in his palace for the news from S. Nicolas'. The corpse lay peaceful and quiet on the bier. As they gazed on it from a distance, for none ventured to come nigh it,

"Calm and unruffled was the face:
They trusted the soul had gotten grace."

And so with chant, and prayer, and response, the service went on. And now, while a shudder of expectation ran through the church, the priest, with quivering lips and trembling voice, began the lesson: "Withdraw Thou Thy face from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid. How many are mine iniquities and my sins? Answer Thou me."

Again the corpse raised itself: and in a voice, louder and more lamentable than before,

cried,

"I AM ACCUSED TO THE JUST JUDGMENT OF GOD."

The crowd, as before, fled from the church. A horror came over all men. The royal messenger rode off to the king, and there was no feasting that night in the palace. The Bishop of Paris recommended that the corpse should be quietly committed to the ground. "I judge no man," said he: "to his own Master Raymond standeth or falleth; but this is scarce the death of the righteous." But the other doctors gainsaid. "Nay," said they; "we. are not to be disquieted. Even of Joshua the High Priest it is written, that Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. Why not then our brother also?" "You must use your pleasure," replied the Bishop, "only beware lest you hear somewhat more fearful than you have yet heard." But he could not persuade them.

Next morning peasants were pouring in from the villages round Paris; shops were shut; every street and alley leading to S. Nicolas' was crammed, wedged, bursting with pressure; those that could not approach crowded other churches, and besought God for Raymond. As the hour drew on, fearfulness and trembling came upon the crowd, and an horrible dread overwhelmed them. The Priests assembled in the sacristy. In low voices they spoke of the great wonder.

"I dare not read that lesson again," said the Priest, whose office it was. "It is too

fearful."

"Nor I," said another.

"We cannot read it," was the general cry.

"Then, in God's Name," said the Chancellor, "let all the fiends of hell do their worst,—I will read it myself. It shall never be said that the Priests of Holy Church shrank back from any dread. Is it not written, 'Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day?"

The choir is filled. The Priests begin: "The King, to Whom all live,—O come let us worship." One scholar alone stands by the bier, and gazes on his master; it is Bruno. All the rest crowd away from the corpse.

The Psalms are finished. The Chancellor begins the dreaded lesson. Every breath is hushed in the agony of suspense. Those nearest to the bier shrink still further off. Bruno alone remains, and quietly awaits the issue.

And now in clear distinct tones, that penetrated to every part of the church, came the words, "Withdraw Thou Thy face from me: and let not Thy dread make me afraid." Full of faith and trust as he was, the Chancellor paused. Men looked at each other in silent dread. He made the sign of the Cross, and proceeded: "How many are my iniquities and my sins? Answer Thou me."

Once more the corpse rose, and with a loud and lamentable cry, that rang through the church, exclaimed,—

"I AM CONDEMNED BY THE JUST JUDG-MENT OF GOD."

As before, the people were flying, and the Clergy were looking this way and that in amazement,—when the Chancellor spoke:

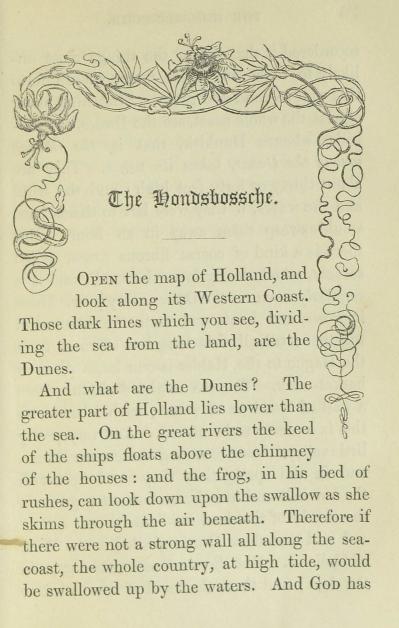
"Stay," said he, in a clear firm voice. "Take the body, and carry it forth from the church, and thrust it into the ground where ye will. That shall have no portion in holy earth which can only come forth to the Resurrection of Damnation."

* * * * *

That night, I walked up and down the cloisters of the monastery,—the bell ringing out amidst the stillness and wildness of the peaks, the brethren gliding past me more like spirits than men, the moon glittering with intense brightness on the snowy mountains and solemn pine-groves. "And did not Bruno do well?" said the sub-prior to me, as we went together to the church. "Did he not do well to resign, after such a warning, earthly learning and earthly honours, his expectations at Paris, his canonry at Rheims, his hopes of a Bishopric, for this Desert?"

"He did indeed," I answered. "He hath chosen the better part which shall never be taken from him."

"He has," replied the sub-prior; "God grant that we do so too!—It is time to go in."



so ordered it that two of the things most unlikely to resist any great force, should form this wall :- sand and grass. Stretching along almost the whole coast, are the Dunes, or sandhills, whence Dunkirk, that is, the Church among the Dunes, takes its name. They are about thirty or forty feet high; and the wind and the waves, if they were left to themselves, would sweep them away in an hour. But there is a kind of coarse fibrous grass, called seabent, which dearly loves the sand: and it is regularly sown on the Dunes every year. There it grows, and knots and mats the loose sand together; till all that long line of coast from the Hague to the Helder is one large piece of basket-work. The sea might dash to pieces a wall of wood or of stone; such a barrier as this is scarcely to be moved. And very pretty little valleys there are among these same Dunes, and in the spring-time they are bright with the harebell and the heartsease that grow in the mould of the dead sea-bent.

I said that these Dunes girdled in the West of Holland. But there are one or two gaps in the dam; and there the hand of man is left to itself. Of these the worst is at a place called the Hondsbossche, near the Helder. Here an enormous embankment is raised; its foundation is of Norwegian granite; its heart is of clay and sand; its sea-face is clay, wattled down with willow twigs. I was told when I was there that, if the whole of this huge dyke had been at first made of gold, it would have cost less than the repairs have cost from that time to this.

Now, look at the map of Europe; or you will not understand my story.

The summer of the year 1287 was wet and stormy. The wind, day after day, was from the south-west. It seemed as if the weathercocks would never shift from the south-west. From May till September, every hour, the clouds and the waves poured in from the south-west.

Now, understand what happened from this. The water of the Atlantic Ocean was driven up, past the coast of Spain, past the bay of Biscay, past Ireland, between Iceland and Scotland; and so, in the Arctic Ocean, and off the coast of Norway, it stood many feet higher than it did in the Mid Atlantic. Ships, in

coming from Portugal to England, were, so to speak, sailing up hill. This was the case all the summer; but, on the 23rd of September the wind suddenly veered round to the north. All this mass of water, then, was driven down into the German Ocean, which thus became too full; for the enormous waves came rolling in from the north, far more swiftly than they could race out through the straits of Calais. Therefore, as you must see for yourselves, when at three o'clock on the afternoon of September the 25th, the wind again suddenly chopped round from the north to the north-west, and rose to a hurricane, all this weight of ocean was driven right on to the dykes of Holland.

Close to the Hondsbossche there was then, and there is now, a little village called Kamp. Let us see what was happening there when the wind, on that twenty-fifth day of September, had shifted for about three hours, and all men began to say that it would be an awful night. Doors were barred, windows were shuttered, fires went roaring up the yawning chimney, and every now and then cast a bright, cheerful gleam into the village street. The clouds

drove over head like a pack of wild horses; the wind grappled with a roof here, dashed through a tree there, shook the well-fastened door as with a giant's hand, roared like a wild beast down the chimney, and then went rioting along over what is now the Zuyder Zee, but was then one long fruitful pasture meadow.

A poor old man entered the village at night-fall. "Friend," he said to a stout-hearted labourer, trudging courageously homewards, "is there any one here who will give me a lodging to-night for the love of Christ?"

"Try at Jan Maarsen's, up yonder, father," he answered. "He is rich enough, Our Lady

knows! but he loves his own too."

"Yonder farm?" inquired the beggar.

"Even so," said the labourer. "God be with you!" And he went on.

A pleasant place was that same farm-house towards the close of a fine summer day. Its huge gables, its thick thatch, and white walls, the three or four elms that sung it a quiet song, as the evening breeze sprang up; the orchard, with its rich promise of fruit; the little garden, with its trim plots of tulips and

roses; the two yews, one cut into a peacock, the other formed into a lion; the red kine feeding in the deep, green meadows; the Flanders horses in the farm-yard, lazily whisking their tails, to scare off the hosts of gnats. But now all was gloomy and desolate; the orchard trees clashed their arms together in the tempest; torrents of water poured from the thatch; now and then a heavier gust caused the spray of the distant sea to mingle with the rain, and pools of salt water soaked here and there in the garden. The beggar unhooked the wicket, passed in, and with a feeble hand struck the door again and again.

"Who's there?" at length exclaimed a gruff voice from within.

"A poor man, that begs a night's lodging for the love of God."

"Then God may take care of you, for I will not," said the farmer. "So be off. There be trampers enough I know, now-a-days."

"Only an outhouse and a bundle of straw,"

pleaded the poor man.

"Be off with you," shouted the farmer, "or I'll loose the dog."

"I give you one more chance, Jan Maarsen," said the beggar. "Will you yield me a night's lodging?"

"Here, Gormo! Gormo!" cried the farmer again. And a fierce growl within showed that the dog had answered his master's voice.

The beggar, without troubling himself to hurry, walked quietly through the garden, out into the village street, and passed on.

Now come with me to another farm-house, half a mile further on, and somewhat nearer the sea. This time we will step into the kitchen, and see who are there.

A cheerful, happy, group. At one side of the fire the *Housefather*, (as the Germans say) Conrad Schoorl, a strong, sunburnt, good-humoured farmer. He is righting a pair of shears that are out of order, and every now and then casting a well-pleased glance on the others,—on his wife, Dame Fleta, who is plying her needle busily on the other side of the fire, and Coletta, who is helping her younger brother Willibald to make a cross-bow, and little Trudchen, who is playing with the great long-haired dog that lies basking before the fire.

"I wish Poppo would come in," said Dame Schoorl at length.

"More like that I shall have to go out," answered her husband. "The Water-staat will want all the hands they can get to-night. It is an awful storm, surely. By S. Willibald, what a gust that was!"

I must stop to explain to you that the Water-staat are the persons into whose charge the dykes of Holland are given. They have a large revenue, and many officers and servants under them; and one of their chief stations is the Hondsbossche, of which I have already spoken.

"I trust, father, that there will be no mischief," said Coletta.

"Ay, child, and you would say so a thousand times as earnestly if you could remember the last great storm—ten years ago come next month. Ay! that was a storm indeed! And yet we had but little of it here."

"I shall go out, wife, if this lasts," said Schoorl. "Last tide only wanted four inches of the highest I ever saw it; and that is near a foot above Great Danger mark. Hark! what is that?" A hand was laid on the door, and an aged voice said,—"Take a poor man in for the love of Goo!"

"Marry, come in and welcome," cried Conrad, starting up. "It is not the night for a dog to be out in." He drew back the bar,—the door was dashed open by the wind,—the squall beat into the house,—the fire glared out, and it wanted the strong man's full strength to close it again. The same beggar whom we saw before, pale, weary, and dripping from head to foot, stood in the kitchen.

"Come in, good man, come nearer to the fire!" cried Dame Fleta. "What's its use, but to warm a body at? Nay, never stand about the tiles. I'll warrant it's easier to clean them than to cure a fever."

"That's true," said the honest farmer. "Or stay;—step this way, man: anything were better than those wet rags."

With many thanks, the beggar followed his host, and presently came back, wrapped up in a thick dry rug.

"Set on supper, girl," said her father to

Coletta: "this honest man is an hungred, I know;—and if he is not, I am."

So the supper was set on: a mighty boar-ham, the bearer of which had fattened himself on the acorns of Oldenburg: a great Purmerend cheese; bread as white as snow, and Alkmaar beer. And now the storm lulled a little. The beggar, seated at the lower end of the long table, that shone like a black looking glass, said little, and ate scarcely anything. The others, and more especially Conrad, commented on the tempest, wondered if Poppo would return that night, and told doleful stories of past floods. Towards eight o'clock the wind rose again.

"I will go out," said the farmer; "it is a shame to leave those men on such a night." And he had just taken down his ponderous stick, when the door was shaken violently, and a voice shouted, "Let me in! Let me in!"

"It is Poppo!" cried Coletta: and she flew to the door.

"Father!" cried the young man, rushing in, battered and drenched with the storm, "come to the Dyke instantly! The water is higher than the Water-warden remembers it in the year of the great flood—all the village is out—old Simon, the sail-maker, has sent us his last yard of canvass: come at once." And father and son were off in a moment.

A wild, fierce scene. A long dyke, steep to the land, sloping more gently off to the sea; its narrow summit alive with strong men, hurrying this way and that; torches glaring out with a horrible brightness; the sea roaring and shouting with a noise far more dreadful than thunder; the long waves licking up the ascent, even to the very top, and every now and then sweeping over, and deluging the land-side with tuns of water; the wind howling and shrieking along the embankment: some hurrying onward with bundles of willow twigs, some in groups of five or six kneeling on the ground, and stitching up sacks of sand; the officers bellowing out their orders; here and there a heap of straw fired for a clearer light seaward; everywhere terror, confusion, cries, the thunder of the captains and the shouting. Old Jan Oosterhout, the Water-warden, had just given orders to raise a work of sand-bags breast-high on the worst defended part of the dyke. Four times the sea had washed over it, and the last time a stream of water, twenty feet broad, poured down into the village.

"I think it's giving below, Captain," said Poppo Schoorl.

"Then God have mercy upon us!" cried the Water-warden. "Can never a one of you lend a hand to peg a sail down?"

"I'll try," cried Poppo; and "I'll try," said Conrad; and "I'll try," cried three or four more of the stoutest hearts.

"Straw here! straw here!" shouted Oosterhout. "Schoorl, look to that. Poppo, have three sail breadths stitched together. We want more hands. Run down, some one, to old Willibald's wife, and tell her to ring the alarm bell. Hold hard, lads! join hands! God a' mercy! Here it comes."

Hands were clasped in a moment. The bellow of the approaching wave—the hissing lapping sound as it rolled up the bank—and then the surge swept over the top, and for a moment none could tell which was water and which land.

The wave swept back again into the great deep. Then came the race for life and death. Barrows of sand rolled up to the place,—the needles flew through the canvass,—the bags were filled,—a hundred hands were busy in piling them, and for some time it seemed as if the waves were baffled in their intent.

Towards nine o'clock that night the gusts drove fiercer, and the rain beat heavier, on Farmer Schoorl's gables. And ever and anon came a sound which none then present had before heard,—a heavy fall and rush on the roof, as the tops of some of the mountain waves were carried right over the embankment, and swept down like a deluge into the village. Mother and children sat by the fire in terror;—scarcely a word spoken;—only now and then a half-suppressed cry as the thunder of the sea, or the roar of the falling spray, was louder than common.

A knock at the door. It opened. The beggar, who had left shortly after Conrad Schoorl had gone forth, again entered.

"Do you wish to be saved?" said he. "If you do, follow me."

"Follow you where?" cried Dame Schoorl, wildly. "And where is my husband?"

"Be of good cheer," he answered. "Your husband shall be saved also. But in an hour, where we are now standing will be deep sea. One house only in the village will hold out against the inundation, and that is Jan Maarsen's. Thither you must go."

They looked at him in amazement. Beggar still in outward appearance, he spoke so that they felt his words were truth. None dared to ask him whence he had his tidings. They knew not who it was that spake; only they felt that he was not of this world.

"Will my husband and my son be saved?" asked Dame Fleta, in a low voice.

"I will look to their safety. Follow me, and at once."

Steadying themselves as well as they could against the blast, the mother and her children went forth into the village street. A pitch-black night. On the sea-wall glaring ghastly fires; and ever and anon a bright cloud of spray bursting up high above them. In the street, women and children hurrying wildly

by. Cries, shrieks, and confusion everywhere.

"Press on, and turn neither right nor left," said their leader.

A louder thunder from the dyke: and such a shower of spray fell as drenched them to the skin, and made them gasp for breath.

"Keep on to Maarsen's," again said their guide; "I go to save the others."

They passed on. At the garden wall, they met Jan Maarsen himself, hurrying out in a frenzy of despair.

"Stay, good neighbour, stay," cried Dame Schoorl. But he rushed past. Thankful once more to be in shelter, the three hastened in at the door that the unhappy man had left open, closed it, and sank down on their knees.

"We have made a good fight, boys," said the Water-warden on the dyke: "but we are beaten. God have mercy on our souls! for our bodies will be for the fishes."

"Can nothing more be done?" said Poppo.

"What is the use of building above, when

the foundations are going?" said Oosterhout, coolly. "Come, my lads, let us all forgive and ask to be forgiven, if we have any matter between us; and then kneel down, and the sea may do its worst."

"Follow me," said a deep low voice at Conrad's side.

"Where?" he cried, starting. "Who spoke?"

"Follow me," again said the voice. And father and son afterwards used to say that neither knowing why nor whither they were to follow, they felt compelled to go. They saw nothing: they only heard a voice before them. Generally it only said, "Follow!" but once or twice it cried more loudly, "Follow me quicker!" Onwards and onwards it led them, till they stood at Jan Maarsen's door.

"In," said the voice; "and take refuge in the upper rooms; and you will be saved."

At that same hour, fifty miles off, Philip Schoorl, the boat-builder of Harderwyck was sitting at supper. A low, quaint, boarded room, leaning out over the canal; the walls ornamented with three or four strange fish, dried, and nailed against the panelling; the

fire, crackling and merry; the rain dashing in floods on the shutters; even the lazy canal rip-

pling against its bank.

"A bad night this," said Philip to himself.

"A very bad night. The Water-staat will have enough to do. Try the dykes, this will." And he solaced himself with another draught from the tankard which stood by his elbow.

A step on the crazy, tumble-down stairs.

"Who can it be at this time of night?" said the old boat-builder. "Why the whole town must be a-bed."

The beggar, whom we saw before at Kamp, opened the door.

"Philip Schoorl," said he, "man a boat for

Alkmaar."

The old man,—he knew not why—trembled.

"A boat for Alkmaar!" cried he. "And why?"

"To save your brother," said the other.

"And how? I pray you," asked Philip Schoorl.

"Half an hour ago," replied his visitor, "the Hondsbossche gave way. In an hour, Lake Flevo and the Zuyder Zee will be one. In two hours both will join the ocean. Do as I bid you, and do it without loss of time." And he vanished.

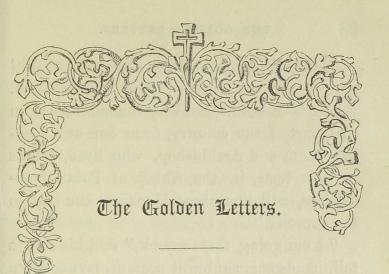
That was indeed a night for Holland. In peaceful little country villages wearied men lay down to dream of the labours of another day; mothers pillowed their little ones on their arms and rejoiced in their sweet sleep; nurses watched the uneasy rest of the sick; evil men awoke to their deeds of darkness, and went stealthily about. Suddenly, a distant hum, like the sound of evening insects round a sunny oak. It grows louder; -now it is like the wind in a distant forest. A strange, cold, sprayey gale. A fearful shaking and trembling as of an earthquake. A rumbling and bellowing, louder, fiercer, wilder; then a roar of water,—a few shrieks,—a few moments' struggles, and the village was blotted out from the world. Between sunset and sunrise eightyeight thousand persons went to their last account.

Two houses only stood where the inundation reached; one the Castle of Bredrode, near Dort; one the Farm of Jan Maarsen, at Kamp.

And a hundred years after, before Maarsen's gate, might be seen a stone, with the legend, in old Dutch letters:

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."





"Can you tell me which is my way to the Church of Voulton?" I asked an old peasant, sunning himself on the stone seat in front of his cottage, while a bright spring morning was look-

ing down on one of the pleasant valleys of

Champagne.

"Monsieur will hardly find it easily," said the old man, "for it lies behind that clump of trees, and the paths are very winding. I would go myself, but I am too old to stir without a great deal of trouble; and every one else is at church. It is the day for First Communion."

"Some of your grandchildren are there, perhaps?"

"One, Monsieur; little Françoise. Ah! here is my son; he will show you the way. Edme,"—Edmund is a very common name in that part of the country, from our own English Saint and Archbishop, who lived, where he now rests, in the Abbey of Pontigny,—"Edme, will you show Monsieur the way to the church?"

"I am going there myself," said his son, a tall, handsome, sunburnt peasant, laying down his pruning-hook, and taking from the cottage the blue frock that had been left for him. So I bade the old man good-bye, and followed my new guide. Through marshy meadows we passed on, bright with the great ox-eye and the rank buttercup; through sandy lanes, and sweet spring copses; past the four solitary ash trees that stood, like a beacon, on the lonely knoll. And still as we went, my guide told me, in his broad Champenois patois, of the numbers that I should see at First Communion in the church, "and my little Françoise too," as he always ended. "But," said he, "we must lose no time; in the first place, because we are rather late; and in the second,

because there is a storm coming up from the west."

We entered the church, a grey old huge church,—a church of the times of S. Anselm and S. Bernard. At the upper end of that long and magnificent nave, so stately and solemn, the children then making their first communion were arranged; the boys on the lowest step of the altar; the girls, dressed in white, and with long white veils, behind them. The choir itself was crowded with fathers and brothers; poor labouring men, in their blue frocks: but making wall and roof ring again with their chant. I stood by my new friend's family, and heart and soul they also joined in the melody. By this time, the sky was black with clouds and wind, the church was gloomy as if it had been twilight; when at once a bright sun-gleam fell for a moment on the altar, and on that only. Then the storm swept down on the building, roaring round the buttresses, dashing torrents of rain on the roof, rattling casement and door, but interrupting not a moment the melody of the chant. No unfit emblem, I thought, of that unconquerable

Church, whom the Prince of the Powers of the air shall so often assault, and shall always assault in vain. The tempest rolled by. The parish priest, going up into the simple pulpit, earnestly exhorted those who had then for the first time received their Lord's Body and Blood to stand fast in the faith and in the holiness whereto they were called.

On the stone seat that ran round the church lay a book which none of those by me had touched, and which, as I guessed, must belong to Françoise. And so, indeed, it did. There were some prayers at the beginning; and bound up with them was the Life of her namesaint, S. Francisca of Rome. No unfit story, no unfit pattern, for any one whose life is necessarily cast in the bustle of this world. I will tell it you now, as I dare say she had often heard it. Françoise, indeed, I never saw at all, -and her father I never saw again. For I had many a long mile to accomplish that day; -and the spire of Voulton was soon far behind me. But I often think of the children that, then and there, had knelt at the altar; and there are few village-churches that I should better like to visit again than that of Voulton.

It was a richly-furnished oratory; the walls hung with wrought silk,—the morning sun burnishing the stained glass of the small eastern window; the ceiling quaintly wrought in many a shield and quatrefoil; while at a simple prayer-desk knelt a lady, her hands clasped, her eyes fixed on the book before her. It was one of those lovely books of Hours which men now buy up, for their rareness, and value for their art. Green leaves and golden fruit clustered down the margin of the volume; the first letters of each psalm glowed with some scene from our Lord's Passion, or some mighty action of one of His Saints. Here you saw S. Margaret trampling on the dragon, there S. Catherine standing by her wheel; and here again, S. Agnes carrying her lamb. It was a book written for its present owner; and the artist had filled it with female saints.

Francisca was the name of the lady; she was living in the world; obliged to take her share in its business and pleasures, though her heart was not in them;—a wife, with a hus-

band to honour and to obey; a mother, with children to care for and to teach. And her one desire was, in all her relations to them and to others, so to use this world as not abusing it. "If I am called off from serving God in prayer," she used to say, "then I must leave Him in His dwelling to find Him in my household work." And so, in the busy morning, and fully expecting to be interrupted, she had yet taken an hour for prayer, and was even now kneeling, with the words of the seventy-third Psalm in her mouth and in her thoughts, and was saying, "Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee: for Thou hast holden me by my right hand." Steps were heard hurrying along the passage, and a servant knocked at the door.

"My lord, madam, prays you to come to him in the great hall."

Francisca arose at once, and came to her husband.

"Ah!" said he—"I hope I have not interrupted you? But the business is this. Rinaldo tells me that there is a fine heron down by the pool towards S. Antoniello:—will you ride a hawking this afternoon?"

"With pleasure," said Francisca.

"Then I will pray you to send such messages as may be fit to Count Ortoli, and the Lord of Salina, asking them of their courtesy to ride with me, and bidding them to supper afterwards: my hands are somewhat overfull."

"I will ask them at once," she answered. And so, for some ten minutes, she gave her thoughts to the hawking party—to the horse she was to ride,—to the tercel gentle that was to sit upon her wrist,—to the invitations and to the supper, whatsoever she did, doing it heartily as to the Lord, and not to men;—and then retired to her oratory again. There for the second time she began the Psalm, "Truly God is loving unto Israel,"—and was just in the act of repeating the very words in which she had been interrupted before, when quick little footsteps came trotting along the passage.

"Oh, mamma," cried Chiara, a beautiful little pet of some seven years old, "Papa says that I may go out hawking with you this afternoon, if you will give me leave: do pray, pray do."

"But who is to take care of you, darling?"

"Old Roberto is to lead my pony, mamma, and he will be so careful."

"Well;—I must go and speak to Roberto first;—and then we will see about it."

So the old servant was consulted, and the leave given, and the pony ordered: and Francisca returned to her Psalm, determined not to feel anything an interruption which gave her an opportunity of doing her duty in that state of life in which it had pleased God to place her.

Again she came to the words, so true in her case, "Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee," when she was again interrupted; and this time it was the steward that wished to speak with her.

"Madam," he said, "my lord is out, and there are three pilgrims, on their way to the Holy Land, that crave a lodging to-day for Christ's sake. Is it your will that they be taken in?"

"Most surely," replied Francisca. "Where are they? I will see them myself."

They were standing in the hall, wayworn and sunburnt, with staff and scrip and scallop shell. And as the lady of the house entered, they did her obeisance.

"Nay, sirs," she replied, "it is I who should rather ask your prayers at the holy places whither you are bound. But now I will pray you to take such cheer as the house provides, and to tarry a night, or two, if ye will. I will give directions to the steward concerning you; and I doubt not, when my lord returns, that he will look to your comfort himself."

And so with a few words more of kindness on her side, and gratitude on theirs, Francisca left the pilgrims, and again went to her oratory. A fourth time she began the psalm; and a fourth time she was called off at the same verse.

"Madam," a servant came to say, "the Count Ortoli waits below, and prays you to honour him by admitting him."

"He is come to speak of the hunting party," thought Francisca. "Well; the time will come when there will no more be these hindrances in the service of God. Till then, thus also we serve Him."

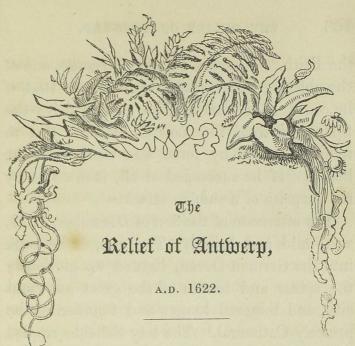
So she went forth, and for some half-hour was entertained by the Count, a fashionable young nobleman of the day, with a history of his own hawks,—an essay on the best way of

feeding them, guesses as to the size of the heron by the pool of S. Antoniello, and the likelihood of fair weather. Francisca spoke of these things with so much seeming interest that his stay was all the longer. At last he departed; and "Body of Bacchus!" he said to himself,—"but I thought till to-day that woman had only been fit for a nun."

Again Francisca returned to her oratory. It seemed, as she opened the door, that a glorious form moved from her prayer-desk, and vanished into the air. One glimpse only she had of it;—and its face, and beauty, and glory, were those of an angel. Marvelling at what such a visitation might mean, she fell on her knees, and cast her eyes on the psalter. And there, no longer written in ink, but blazing in letters of gold, gold, bright beyond all earthly brightness, were the verses which she had so often reached, and at which she had so often been interrupted.

[&]quot;Nebertheless I am alway by Thee: for Thou hast holden me by my right hand.

[&]quot;Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel: and after that receive me with glory."



THE city of Antwerp was, humanly speaking, the bulwark of the Church in the Netherlands. The Dutch had thrown off the yoke of the king of Spain, and, at the same time, had also burst the yoke of the Catholic Church. They were fierce Calvinists and cruel persecutors; but they were brave soldiers. The Spaniards were driven out of one strong place after another; and it was long doubtful whether not only the Seven United Provinces, but the whole of what we now call Belgium too, would not be lost to

the Faith. Maurice, Prince of Orange, one of the ablest generals that ever lived, saw that, if he could gain Antwerp, he should drive the Spaniards from the Low Countries. But to take the place by force was more than he hoped. If he succeeded at all, it must be by the surprise of a sudden attack.

The afternoon of the first of December, 1622, was mild and bright. The sun, as he sank into the German Ocean, lighted up gloriously the spires and towers of the great merchant city, and lingered longer and fondlier on its princely Cathedral. The lazy Schelde rippled onwards in gold; the forest of masts stood out in strong relief against the western sky; on the quays, the business of the day was beginning to cease; the cranes left off clanking, and the winches ceased from creaking; the last hogshead of sugar was rolled into the warehouse; the last barrel of nutmegs was swung into the scales; the merchant with his short cloak, and steeple hat, and silver-hilted dagger, was leaving his counting-house; the clerks were closing their ledgers and locking their desks. In the Cathedral, the Priests

were saying vespers; in the high, quaintly gabled houses of the city, the good wife was busy in making ready her supper; in the citadel the soldiers were preparing to relieve guard, and the governor was giving out the watch-word. All was peace and safety; the merchant came home, and told his wife of his gains; the Priest went to his house and opened the folio that he was studying; the relieved soldiers turned into the guard room, and amused themselves with the song or the dice.

Could we have stood, telescope in hand, at the top of the Cathedral spire, we should have known something more than the burghers or the soldiers guessed. Well, we can stand there in fancy; let us see what we can make out.

A huge flat plain,—fogs curling up here and there,—here and there a spire glistening,—a tuft of trees and the farm hard by,—the long lazy canal,—the German Ocean,—the towers of Mechlin,—and, as we turn, those of Ghent and Bergen-op-Zoom, and Breda and Turnhout. A chilly, comfortless landscape; for the sun is setting and the dykes look grey

and bleak; and the mist seethes up in the polders, and the fallow fields are lonely.

Yes, but that is not all.

Look towards the south-east, on the road to Turnhout. You may just make out a mass somewhat darker than the dusky morass. Those are the picked Dutch troops; the Stadtholder's Lifeguards, the Scotch volunteers, the Swedes; grey-headed generals, veterans that can remember the battle of Zutphen, the French Huguenot chivalry; Marshal Steenwyk and the Count von Haberstoff. They are waiting for night.

Turn towards the north-east. That tall tower is Hooghstraaten. A little to the left of that, do you see a light blue cloud? It is a farmhouse on fire. A North Holland regiment of horse is quartered there. They too are waiting for night.

Now look to the north-west. You can trace where the Schelde falls into the sea. That land to the right of the river is North Beveland; that bulb of a spire to the left is somewhere between Axel and Terneuse:—well—perhaps it is Boschkapelle. Now, in a

straight line with that is there nothing on the broad face of the Schelde? Look steadily. Do you not see a number of black specks, that break the golden path which the western sky flings on the river?

Those are gun-boats. There is the flower of the Protestant army; they are eyeing the spires of the city that they hope to call theirs before morning; those men-at-arms stowed together like sheep; the officers with their Toledo rapiers; the soldiers with carbines and bandoliers at their side, the little leathern bag for bullets, and the nine tin cases covered with leather, each case containing a charge of powder. There they are lazily rippling about on the river. They also wait for night and tide.

On the shore a long, low, barge-house, bright with green and red paint; such a house as you catch sight of every now and then when you glide in the treckschuyt along the lazy Dutch canal. Over it floats the Lion of the Netherlands; in front, (for the evening is remarkably mild,) is a long deal table. On it, maps and plans; round it, seven or eight scarred and grey-headed officers; at the top,

a dark bronzed man, some fifty years of age, with a piercing black eye, a hooked nose, a mouth of singular resolution, and the enormous lower jaw that marks a character of surpassing energy. That is Maurice, Prince of Orange.

And now do you see how that wonderful general and detestable man has Antwerp in his toils? Don Juan de Atocha, its governor, knows no more of the intended surprise, than does Philip the Fourth of Spain, at that very hour sitting down to a banquet in the Escurial.

Yes: Maurice was a general indeed. All things that have made other great chiefs, were united in him. When you come to read history, you will find Vendome famous for the art of exciting his soldiers to almost impossible attempts; Montecuculi, for his marches; Prince Eugene for supplying his troops with provisions where food seemed to fail; Napoleon, for concentrating his forces at a given point; Condé, like our own Wellington, for that eagle way of seizing the exact moment for the decisive charge. All these virtues Maurice united in himself. I speak of them, you will say, as if I were delighted with them. And so I am.

I love to reckon them all up; to think of the number and valour of the troops; the fiery ardour of the French Huguenots, the strong muscular Dutchmen, the self-confident Swedes, the wisdom of all those grey generals, and the surpassing talents of Prince Maurice. For I know that, in a cell in the Carmelite Convent at Antwerp, there is a poor, weak, despised nun, who, without any human means, by the unconquerable power of prayer, shall drive back those gun-boats from the Schelde, shall put the Turnhout detachment to confusion, shall turn the wisdom of Maurice and all his chiefs to folly. Doubt not, therefore, but earnestly believe that if one poor feeble woman could do such deeds, so we, if only we have her faith, may, weak and despised as we may be, move by our prayers an army of more than twelve legions of angels; may confound the schemes of politicians and the great men of this world. If only we have all faith, we have all power.

The Council is over: Prince Maurice arises. "And now, gentlemen, if"—they are his own blasphemous words—"God will only keep

from meddling in this matter, I am as sure of Antwerp as I am that I grasp this lance. Cornet Heinsberg, you with these despatches to Marshal Steenwyk. He is to take notice that nothing will be changed: the signal, one white rocket and two blue ones: the time one o'clock. Sir Conrad of Mühleim, you will ride to Hooghstraaten; the order to prepare with all speed; time and signal as before. Good night; and spare neither of you for spoiling of your horses. My lords and gentlemen, I pray you to honour me by partaking of supper in my poor quarters."

Eleven o'clock. The Dutch life-guards are only six miles from Antwerp: they are pressing forward, silently and swiftly. There is strength, and art and wisdom, and all the power of this world; there are the old veteran serjeants, with their halberds, the pikemen with their morris-pikes, fifteen feet long, and studded with nails to protect them from a sword-cut; the inferior officers with their fourche à crochet to cut the bridles of the horses, if the Spanish cavalry should attempt a charge; the scaling ladders, each managed

by ten men, and attended by two serjeants; there is Marshal Steenwyk, in earnest talk with the old German General Von Haberstoff; and the French Huguenots, burning to revenge injury by injury, and the tough old Swedish soldiers, brethren in arms of them that were to win so many victories under the never conquered king, Gustavus Adolphus.

Eleven o'clock. And, ten miles further north, the North Holland regiments are as eagerly advancing over the wild moor of Loenhout. A still, calm night; and the tramp of the passing thousands echoes through the little village itself, and then dies away on the waste.

Eleven o'clock. And the long sweeps of the gun-boats fall right and left into the quiet river, as they bear right on to Fort Lillo. Scaling ladders, ammunition, pikes, partizans, and even poleaxes; all that may serve in the hand-to-hand fight when the ramparts shall be won.

There is the attack. Now where is the defence of the city?

In one of the cells of the Carmelite Convent

at Antwerp a nun is sleeping. A hard couch, a prayer desk, and a crucifix, that is the furniture. In that room the real battle will be fought.

Eleven o'clock. The nun,—her name was Anne of S. Bartholomew,—awoke, she knew not why. In a moment, a clear sweet voice said, Arise, and pray for the city. The nun started up, looked round the cell,—for the starlight night gave light enough for that,—saw no one,—thought it was fancy,—and lay down again.

Arise instantly, and pray for the city, she heard again.

"It must be a call from God," she said: and hurrying on her simple dress, she knelt, and tried to fix her thoughts in prayer.

The safety of the city depends on your prayers, said the voice. Stretch out your hands, and be instant.

Half-past Eleven. A bitter, biting, cruel wind from the north. The veterans press steadily on, but their very blood is nipped. The road grows crisp, sharp, hard as iron; the breath congeals on casque, pauldron, and

musket-proof breast-plate. The night is pitch dark; black beyond earthly blackness; fearfully, horribly, black.

"All in our favour," said Von Haberstoff.

"What for the boats?" asked Marshal Steenwyk.

"No fear for them," replied the other;—
"the Schelde takes a long time to freeze, and
it was as mild as spring an hour ago."

A long silence; and the tramp, tramp, tramp, of the advancing host. They are entering Zoersel Moor.

"Halt!" was suddenly passed from the front.

"Hundred thousand fiends!" cried Von Haberstoff,—"What is that?" And almost at the same moment an orderly rode up.

"Where is the Marshal?"

"Here," cried Steenwyk. "What is it?"

"The guide, Marshal, has lost his way."

"Order him up here instantly," cried the general.

A few moments, which the German employed in cursing everybody and everything he could think of, and the farmer, who served as guide, was brought up.

"Hark ye, sirrah!" shouted Steenwyk,—
"did you not tell me you knew every step of
the way as well as your own house?"

"So I do, may it please you," said the poor man: "but such a night as this no mortal eye ever saw before. I can lead you no further."

"Sirrah," said the Marshal, "I will give you five minutes to recollect the Moor. Then, if you do not lead, you shall be pistolled now, and if you lead wrong, you shall be hung to-morrow."

Pray, pray now, pray more earnestly, said the voice in the cell.

"This way, then," cried the guide at length.

"To the left about wheel—quick march!"
thundered the officer in front.

God has meddled in the matter, Prince Maurice: your men are pressing on to Mechlin.

Twelve o'clock. The Schelde, but now so lazy, is lashed into fury. The waters roar and foam round the unwieldy gun-boats; masses of ice crash and are crashed around

them; the sweeps play uselessly, though they have set two men to each; the rudders are disabled; the rowlocks snap; the oarsmen are chilled and nipped to the back bone; the wind roars, and shouts, and riots, upon the river; they say that, on the hills, there are ghostly shrieks from the moors and waste marshes. But it was not the storm, it was not the water, it was not the angry sky, that struck dread into their hearts. It was the prayer of a woman that drove them back before the elements. Moreover, as of old time, about midnight the Lord looked out from that darkness, and troubled the host. Men's hearts failed that had never failed before.

"Try again, my lads," cried the Prince, as drenched with the spray, and cut to the heart with the cold, he sat by the steersman of the foremost barge. "Only one half-hour more, and we shall be abreast of Port Philip."

But no redoubled efforts. Sulkiness, and murmurs, and low threats.

[&]quot;It can't be."

[&]quot;It is no use to fight against heaven."

[&]quot; Back !"

"To Bergen-op-Zoom!"

"'Bout barges!"

"In God's Name, your Excellency," said the officer second in command, "give way! Land at Santvliet, and let us try afoot if you will."

"If we put the barges about, all is given up," said Maurice.

"They will mutiny, if you do not," urged the other.

The shouts grew wilder and louder.

"You give the word, then,—I will not," said the Prince.

And a few minutes saw the flotilla driven on by the fierce river towards Beveland.

Half-past Twelve. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Wearied out with her outstretched hands, and with the very intensity of her prayer, the nun has fallen asleep at her prayer-desk.

"If it please you, Marshal," said a soldier, who was marching near Steenwyk, as they came to a place where two roads met, "I have been here many a time when I was a stripling, and I am sure that we are on the road to

Mechlin. This to the right, that we have passed, goes to Antwerp; and a good league still it is thither."

The nun woke. Will you betray the city? said the voice. Stretch forth your hands, and pray.

"I can hold them up no longer," she an-

swers.

I will help you, replies the voice. Pray, pray, pray, if ever, now.

"Sirrah guide," said Steenwyk, "are you

sure of your way?"

"Quite sure, your Excellency."

"He is mistaken, or he is a traitor," said the soldier. "I know that this goes to Mechlin and that to Antwerp."

"You lie," cried the farmer. "This is to

Antwerp, and that to Turnhout."

More earnestly, said the voice.

"It is you that lie," shouted the soldier.
"I am willing to be shot to-morrow if it be not as I say. Ten minutes further on, is Moertsel. Send and see if it be not so."

"Moertsel is two leagues to the left," said the farmer.

"Silence, both," said Steenwyk. "Von Haberstoff, a word with you."

Yet more earnestly, the voice cried.

"Sir Farmer, lead on," at length said the Marshal. "You, sirrah soldier, back to your ranks."

Morning dawns. The Schelde still dashes and foams against its dykes; islands of ice go jostling along its stream; the gun-boats, in wild confusion, are heaving up and down on the surge. All thoughts of the capture are at an end; all that the bravest cares for is his own safety; many a man-at-arms has found his resting place in the bed of the river; many an oar is floating masterless to the German Ocean; many a pike is dashed on the shore to be preserved in halls or museums as a relic of those fierce struggles. Glad are those weary men to make for the quay of Bergen-op-Zoom, and acknowledge that the storm was no ordinary visitation. Maurice, Prince of Orange, is chilled to the very marrow; he calls for wine and brandy, but they do not warm him; he goes to bed, but coverings and wraps are useless. To-morrow he will strive to laugh

the matter off; he will write to the States; he will acknowledge a supernatural interposition; he will devise schemes for fresh campaigns; he will dream of other battles to be won, of other cities to be stormed. But in vain. His time is come to die like men, and to fall like one of the princes. Death laid hold of him in the very bed of the river; and his grasp, though slow, will be sure. In less than eighteen months,—months of misery and sickness,—Maurice will have gone to his account.

Morning dawns. The Convent bell rings to Prime. Pale, exhausted, wearied out, but victorious, the sister Anne of S. Bartholomew

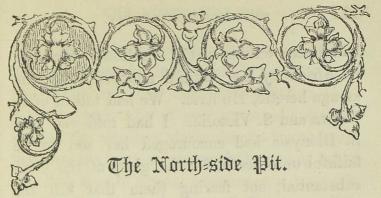
passes to the chapel.

"What ails you, my daughter?" inquired the prioress, as she met her in the cloister.

"I have combated with an army," replied the nun; "this morning we shall hear something."

And that morning they heard—what I have

now told you.



June 20, 1851.

"YES, but these great deliverances that God works for His people do not happen now. They are all gone past; we may remember them and talk of them, but we shall not bring

them back again."

Something like this, I suppose, the Jews used to say, if not with their mouths, at least in their hearts. And therefore perhaps it was that Isaiah's words are: "Behold, the Lord's arm is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." This time I will relate to you—not what happened in another country, and on a far distant shore; but in our own land, and less than a year ago.

Do you remember that Friday night? I do.

I had been telling you of our Lord's victories in Africa by His faithful martyrs under the savage heretic, Huneric. We had talked of S. Dativa and S. Victoria. I had told you how S. Dionysia had encouraged her son to be faithful unto death, for the glory of the Consubstantial, not fearing them that kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do; and how, when the battle was over, and the exceeding weight of glory was won, she had buried his body in her own house, nothing doubting that her prayers would speed the better for the presence of a Martyr.

We knew how God had then, and in that land, stirred up His servants, so that they loved not their lives unto the death. We did not then know at how short a distance from us that One and the self-same Spirit was also mighty in fulfilling His own command: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

We looked out into the evening. How solemn, how beautiful it was! That intensely purple glow on the forest, which I can

never see without remembering the prophecy of "that one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light:" the shadows, darkening in the valleys; the pleasant faint murmur of the woods below us; that kind of crystal brownness, so to speak, that gathers over the face of the sky on the clearest summer evening, about a quarter of an hour after the sun has set. It did not seem a time for an agony of anxiety, and strife, and danger; but so nevertheless it was.

If we could have taken to ourselves the wings of the easterly breeze that just shook the rose bushes, and rustled in the tendrils of the vine, what should we have seen? I will tell you. It would not have been as we travelled on over the wild border land where Surrey and Sussex join, with its solemn fir-groves and heathy knolls, and delicious scent of the golden furze; nor in the sweet valleys and hangers of Godalming, where the steep hill-paths run up and down among tangled woods, among bluebells and dogroses; nor on the wild bleak downs of Hampshire; nor on that wide

waveless sea, gloomy and fearful by the time we reached it, Salisbury Plain; nor among the thousand lights, in crescents and squares, and streets, chequering down, and valley, and river side, at Bath;—still we must have kept on the way. But when we caught sight of the glare and glow of another great city, a little to our right, we might have dropped just on the scene we were hastening to see. The village is Bedminster, the place the North-side pit.

Night: but wild confusion everywhere. A crowd of men and women, torches and lanterns, the clanking of the steam-engine, heaps of coal, the produce of the mines, rising blackly from the midst, the low stone cottages of the workmen, the ground black with coaldust, cries and shouts, a fierce glare everywhere, strong men with picks and spades, mothers weeping bitterly, carpenters at work on a huge framelike erection, blacksmiths clamping and strengthening, and such a hubbub of cries as—

"Get them out! It will take three days to get them out at this rate."

"Why! only three can work at once."

"I believe they are all smothered."

"Hush! hush! she will hear you!"

"Ah, poor thing! she may well take on! She has a father, and husband, and brother, and son, all in the pit!"

I must stop to tell you what is the matter. Attend; that we may understand what shall follow.

Ninety fathoms down the pit is the first vein of coal. Forty fathoms further is the second or big vein, and these two are joined together, besides the large shaft, by a small shaft called the tip. This morning, between ten and eleven. when forty men and boys were below, the iron cart, that carries up the coal, struck against the timber-work which supports the lower part of the great shaft. Down it came. Fifty tons of earth, rock, and timber, fell in, cutting off the workmen from all hope of escape. And the greatest danger is this; the airtrunks were dashed in pieces, and how much air can get in, especially to the big vein, none can tell. In that vein there are thirty-nine, in the upper vein two. But if those two can be first got at, perhaps, by means of the tip, they may have news of the others; and being forty fathoms nearer to the top, their chance of air is much better. The carpenters are hard at work; but what can three men do in repairing such a mischief? and only three can work at once. Moreover, earth and stones keep falling from the sides, so that to go down beyond the repaired part is full of deadly peril. Mr. Knight, of Ashtonvale works, is now in the shaft; and they are waiting for his report.

"Haul up."

The great wheel whirls round—the crowd press close to the pit mouth—the cart runs up—comes out—and

"The two men in the upper vein are safe," said Mr. Knight. "But they want food and lights."

"And the big vein?"

"They cannot say.—The air round the tip is too foul to venture near; and they have shouted and can get no answer. Run up to the Rose and Crown for bread and meat, a quart of ale, and a pint of brandy; and some one bring three pounds of candles from the shop."

While the men were hurrying on their errand,

Mr. Goulstone, one of the proprietors of the mine, who, all through that dreadful night, was foremost in planning and working, took his friend a little apart, and said,

"Tell me candidly, Knight, what you think

of their chance?"

"If you mean in the big vein," replied Mr. Knight, "I fear it is hopeless. The air was foul, perceptibly foul, even where I was."

"Can you suggest anything beyond what

we are doing ?"

"Only to send round for more hands—for these men will not hold out all night."

"I have done that already," said Mr. Goulstone: "and I will send down to Malago Vale. Ah!—that is the poor woman with her whole family in the pit.—I must try to comfort her."

The men had now worked sixteen hours,—but their English hearts, under God, kept them up. I must pass over five hours more.

The distant bell of the cathedral tells three. The same scene: only the sorrow of the women wilder and more frantic; the men, working by relays, but almost exhausted; those in authority graver and more silent;—hope all but over. Torches and lanterns are not wanted now—it is the morning of the longest day of the year. One lark, high over Bedminster Tower, is carolling gaily out—but who listens to her?

Suddenly, the rapid gallop of a horse from the west. It comes nearer, it grows louder; a gentleman rides up,—every one makes way, —he jumps down, and gives the reins to one of the men.

"It is Mr. Reynolds!"

"It is Mr. Reynolds, of Malago Vale,"—was the whisper.

"Now, Goulstone! what has been done, and what is doing? I was on horseback ten minutes after I heard the news."

The whole case was explained to him in such brief earnest words as men use in extremity of danger.

"Listen to me, my lads," said the new comer, turning to the men. "You ought first to think of the men in the upper vein. They have been there now more than sixteen hours;—and the air is getting worse every moment.

This is my plan. Besides a common pit bonnet, fasten on another to the hauling chain above,—put a bucket or some nooses below, and give them the chance."

There was dead silence. The plan was clearly not popular.

"Well,-what do you say?" inquired Mr.

Reynolds, after a pause.

"I say," cried an old pitman, "that the thing cannot be done."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Why, because you must get some one to go down, and that's as good as certain death, with the sides knocked about as they are."

"Besides, you take away the best chance for the poor fellows in the big vein," said another voice.

"And the men would be fools if they tried it," cried a third. "Their best hope is to keep quiet till we can repair down to them."

"I tell you they will be dead before that," cried Mr. Goulstone. "At all events, give them the chance—ask them whether they choose to venture. As to the risk, of course it

is very great. But a double bonnet would keep off a hundred weight of rubbish."

Then followed a short fierce discussion whether the plan should be tried or not. At last it was resolved to make the attempt;—and a messenger was presently galloping off to Ashton Vale for the second bonnet.

The sun was up,—a clear bright cloudless morning,—the Bristol Channel rolling and rippling in light,—the branches on the wild crags of Brockley Combe dancing in the morning breeze for joy, when, round the mouth of the pit,—heated, close, fetid, they were fitting on the second pit-bonnet to the hauling chain.

"Phillips," said Mr. Goulstone, to a pitman near, "you have a brother down,—will you go far enough to ask whether they choose to try?"

"Yes, sir." And he went down.

Presently came the order to haul up.

"They'll try it. They say it's better, if the worst comes to the worst, to die so than to be suffocated."

"Then the question is, who will go down to them? Some one must. Will you, Phillips?" No, sir. I would do anything in reason to save my brother, but not this. I have a wife and family." And he stepped back.

right to call on you to risk your lives. But will no one make the attempt to reach those poor fellows?"

A long pause,

In the circle round the mouth there is a slim, effeminate looking youth; and he steps forward.

"I will, sir."

"God bless you! God bless you, James North!" cried more than one voice.

"You are a noble fellow, North," said Mr. Goulstone, "God will take care of you. Look to the tackle, Phillips!"

The clock struck a quarter past four as North got into the bucket. There was indeed but a step between him and death. One last look at the daylight and at the faces he might never see again,—and he was whirling past the shattered and loosened rocks, any one of which might shiver him to pieces. But He, Who first fixed them in their places, has given them

a charge that they dare not disobey. While His servant is in the shaft, it shall be easier to move Mount Ætna, than to stir the lightest fragment of stone from its bed.

And now that lark's song, which but lately was unnoticed, becomes even painfully loud and thrilling,—such deep silence falls on all men.

There was intense stillness in the crowd. Those nearest to the mouth of the pit listened intently to catch the sound of any falling rock; but all was hushed as death; and yet it was not the stillness of death, but of life. Ten minutes more, and the word was given, "Haul up!" The great wheel revolved,—there was an anxious buzz around, and presently a loud shout of, "Here they are!" And so they were indeed. James North was in a moment among the rest; Brain and Phillips, pale, ghastly, exhausted, could scarcely stagger forward from the bucket. Wives and children rushed forwards,-it was a wild mixture of tears and laughter, and fear and thankfulness. At last Mr. Goulstone interposed. He shook hands heartily with the men; and then said:

"What do you think as to the chance of the poor fellows below?"

"None in the world, sir," answered Phillips.

"The air is so bad that no one could live half-

an-hour, -and no candle would burn."

fancy is, that it is not so bad down in the big vein as where we were. I would send down a windlass and reel,—that could be fixed in the dark,—and some one could go down by a rope into the bottom vein, and call or grope there."

"I'll try again," said North, "if any one will go with me."

Five* offered. One by one they went down. Every breath was held; for, at that depth, it was difficult to catch the signal; and the lives of those below might depend on the engineers answering it at once. Next they sent down a blow-force, bags of canvass, and wooden air trunks;—all to pour in air by means of the tip.

The sun was now high up in the heavens. Fresh helpers, and fresh lookers on poured in.

^{*} Their names ought to be recorded. They were: Francis Smith, Samuel Page, William Smith, Richard Pike, William Cooper.

The bells of S. John's began to chime for matins. The whistle and roar of the first train was heard, as it sped on its up-way.

"I fear it is over with them," said James North, when he again came up. "The air is so foul in the upper vein that we could not carry lights;—I shouted eight or ten minutes at the top, but there was no answer. However there is still just a chance. But you must force in more air."

"Send for hose from the Insurance offices," said Mr. Knight. "Mr. Evans shall ride, if you like. You send a cart as quick after him as possible."

"A capital idea," cried Mr. Goulstone. "You, my lads, get something to take—then will you try again?"

Eleven o'clock: A bright summer noon. The hose have long been fixed: but such a tremendous fall of earth has just happened, that hope was all but over. Still the blowforces were at work; still the hose were taut and stiff with the blast; still the canvass bags bellied out. And now there is the signal from below.

The wheel whirls round;—and there is a shout in the shaft.

"What?" halloos the man at the mouth.

A cry, indistinct to those that stood around.

"All alive! all alive!" he shouts.

That was a moment indeed. Heaviness had endured for a night, but joy came in the morning. Wives rushed hither and thither, frantic with joy; children clapped their hands and cried with excitement; it was all that the workmen could do to keep the mouth clear. Up came the bucket.

"All thirty-seven alive, sir," reported James North; "but they speak very weak and faint like; they have been in the dark since one this

morning."

"Send down food and lights," said Mr. Goulstone. "Stand back, good people. Now, my lads, work away with a will, and by Gon's grace we'll soon have them out. How is it, North?"

For ten hours the men gave themselves up for lost. They were buried, as it were, at the bottom of the mountains; the earth with her bars seemed about them for ever. At the first

fall, one was so nearly overwhelmed by the mass that his tools were crushed by it. They laboured long and patiently in moving the rubbish; tons on tons they had carried away; they sawed timber, they used every effort to set free the main shaft, but all in vain. One or two frantically tried to scale the sides of the tip. Then, seeing that all human hope that they should be saved was now taken away, they sought for that help which comes not from man. They knelt, and cried to Him Who is able to save to the uttermost, that He would bring them out of darkness and out of the horrible pit. And the prayer that had driven the gunboats down the Schelde, that had caused Herigar to stand untouched by the thundershower, that had kindled a fire among the Bavarian icicles, that prayer prevailed now. He heard them from His holy place; He sent them help from the Sanctuary, and strengthened them out of Sion.

The sun is half-way down the sky. In the counting house, there is a strong galvanic battery ready charged;—the physicians are there with restoratives; the anxiety of the

crowd is more and more intense; for the windlass and reels have been fixed, and the next rise of the bucket will bring up one of the sufferers.

And it came. And when the old man, James Peddar, was lifted out, exhausted almost to death, but still living, so wild a shout of joy broke forth, that it rang from S. Mary, Redcliffe's, well nigh to Brockley Combe.

Again I told you of the mighty deliverances that God had wrought in the days of old. I spoke to you of the Catholics of Africa, how, after they had suffered awhile, they were delivered from their cruel persecutors. We saw how His Right Arm had there been gloriously stretched out. We did not know that the same Right Arm was even then preserving the last of the thirty-seven, who, for forty hours, had been in the deep of the earth. Without a wound, or bruise, He brought them forth that they might say, as he of old,

"O that men would therefore praise the LORD for His goodness: and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men!" BY THE CALLED YE

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