

"Who gave Hans Luther the hasty promise? You alone; I never wished to have anything to do with it, and for a good reason also, for I know how to reckon household expenses, and that you do not understand. It is enough for you if morning and evening the dish is steaming on the table; but whence it is to come you never inquire, and you have no idea how I sit up at nights and worry myself."

The organist slowly moved his head. "Well do I know that I have a small income; but I know also that God will bless to us what we do in charity, and that in any case where we share our money with the poor, we shall never be suffered to want."

"Of such a blessing I have never experienced anything as yet," said Katherine maliciously, "but rather dispeace and vexation have entered our dwelling since Martin has come to it."

Lindeman's face assumed a serious expression. "That is not Martin's fault, but rather your unkind, ungenerous heart. Since you look at him with displeasure, and grudge him everything, there is no peace in your heart. God's blessing comes only to the cheerful giver."

At this moment the soft tones of a lute were heard proceeding from the parlour, and, after a few chords, a voice as clear and as pure as a silver bell burst forth. Konrad listened and held his hollow hand to his ear. It was a sad melody, and tremulously the sound passed through the quiet house. When the voice had passed away the organist drew his breath, and said more to himself than to his wife, "He is a wonderful boy, Martin! As often as I hear his singing, it always seems to me as if I heard it for the first time, so new and refreshing it is, and I can never have enough of it. My fellow-organist at St. George's judges likewise. He says that at the mass he can hear the one voice among hundreds which touches his heart like the voice of an angel; and the worshippers often turn round and ask, 'Whose is that wonderful voice?' And now they continually call him the Nightingale. Well, if nothing better is to become of him, he is a musician and minstrel already, and will make a name for himself in the world; and if the Pope in Rome knew about him, he would be able to make use of him, and the Italians would grow dumb in listening to the German nightingale. What do you think, Katherine?"

"What should I think?" she answered impatiently. "First of all, I think musicians and choir-boys are flighty people, whose fame is worth little; secondly, my opinion is, that if Martin is able to sing so merrily, he cannot be badly off. If people are sorrowful they do not think much of singing. Therefore I consider Martin a rogue; he feigns his illness and acts hypocritically, to touch our kind hearts by his sighs and melancholy manners." With these words Katherine left the room hastily, without waiting for a contradictory reply from her husband.

#### CHAPTER III.

Meanwhile Martin had gone up to his little garret, taken off his clothes, which were scarcely dried enough at the stove, and thrown himself on his poor bed. He felt very confused, his eyes were dancing, and he shivered with cold. Ere long the cold turned to heat, and a fever was in process. The following morning he was unable to rise; indeed, he could scarcely remember where he was. Little Barby, who had waited for his coming down in vain, peeped through the half-open door, and ran down in great alarm, as she noticed Martin, known to her only with the palest of faces, lying with highly flushed cheeks on his bed. Konrad had gone the preceding day to Ruhla, where he was to stand godfather to the child of a distant relative. This was an unfortunate occurrence, for Katherine had so much to do that it was noon before she found time to look after the invalid. She found him lying with half-closed eyes, and descended the stairs with an easy mind; or if she had a care, it was the thought that a long illness might be in process with Martin, which would entail on her a great deal of trouble. The more this thought took hold of her, the more angrily she walked about the house, like an evil spirit, so that her children kept aloof from her; and at last even her lord was silent, having learned that, on trying to soothe her, he only poured oil on the fire. Those were sad days which Martin spent in his garret. Not that bodily pain troubled him much, since the fever had only turned to a great weakness; but there was a battle raging in his inmost soul hotter than the fever in his veins. Martin felt a great war going on in his heart; he glowed with irresistible longing for investigation and learning, and the little that he had tasted [of knowledge] hitherto had but tended to increase his thirst, and filled his soul with enthusiasm. It seemed to him in the halls of wisdom as if wings were given to his intellect, and in the blessedness of happiest satisfaction he lost himself in the secrets of human learning, forgetting everything around. Besides, he was so well liked by his fellow-scholars, that in seeing his genius they overlooked the threadbare coat; and the eye of his master rested upon him with unmarred delight. What! Had all this only been a dream? He lifts his hand to his brow, sees close above him the tiles of the roof, and all around the tokens of his poverty, his hopeless poverty. Alas! it had been but a dream, and now all is over. He must give up the struggle, he must suppress his desires energetically, and give up the highest happiness of his life. "It is not possible," he says gloomily and sadly to himself. "I shall not be able to struggle through the unfavourable circumstances nor against inexorable fate. If I wished to begin anew it were vain; I would perish on the road to the inaccessible goal." Thus the unfortunate boy tormented himself; and as he arose from his miserable pallet at the end of five days, he had made up his mind to return to Mansfeld, and to become a miner like his father.

The following day he took his books under his arm once again; for the last time he wished to hear the voice of his much-loved teacher. After the classes were over he remained behind. He could not get the packing of his books finished; and, besides, he wished to let the boys pass out before him to allow him to talk alone to the rector. But at the moment when he wished to open his mouth to take leave of his teacher his courage failed him.

Trebonius saw that something troubled him. "What is the matter with you, Martinus?" he asked, laying his hand kindly on the boy's shoulder.

Martin bit his lips to keep back the tears, but it was of no use; they persisted in appearing, and he stammered with difficulty, "Have patience with me, honourable sir; I was obliged to stay at home for a week."

After arriving at his uncle's the struggle began anew, and now there was added to his trouble the reproach for want of courage that he had not been strong enough to fulfil a determination previously made. He threw himself on the cold floor of his little bed-room, and cried out, "O God, thou must help; I cannot help myself." After having risen, he took up his knapsack hastily. "This is the last time," he said, "that I shall make use of it, for to-morrow I shall most assuredly tell the rector, and in three days I intend to be at home in Mansfeld."

#### CHAPTER IV.

There is a house with three high bold-looking gables in George Street, close to the church, which rises far above the adjoining dwellings. The dragon's heads at the corners, pouring the rain-water down the street through their gaping mouths, the carved stone flowers above the house-door, and the bright windows, give to it quite a stately appearance. Here dwells Mr. Konrad Cotta, one of the richest and most esteemed burghers of the good town of Eisenach.

It was again a cold, dull November day. The rain poured down the deserted street without interruption. Mrs. Ursula Cotta with her children sat near the stove, where the wood-fire crackled for the first time this season. She was busy showing them the old pictures of the old legend book. Heinrich was just asking the question why "Holy Elizabeth" looked so hungry, seeing she was a reigning countess of Thuringia, and a countess did not require to be hungry, when suddenly the singing of the choir-boys was heard from the street. Mrs. Cotta did not answer her child's question; she listened to the sounds which reached her ears. The melody was well known to her. The boys sang the "Kyrie Eleison" of the mass. Suddenly she sprang up and hastened to the window. "There is our nightingale back again," she cried out in delight, and with shining eyes. "Do you hear how pure the voice sounds, like a silver bell? I have wanted something during the whole week, since I did not hear the nightingale, neither at mass nor in the street, and I feared it had taken wings and flown to a country where there is no winter and no sorrow."

She searched among the boys with their honest blue eyes, until she had found out the bird, hitherto only heard but never seen. The sight must have touched her, for the tears started to her eyes, which rested continuously on Martin Luther; and her children hung about her and asked, "Are you sad, mother? do listen how beautifully they sing." The kind-hearted Ursula knows not how it happens, but ere she remembers she is down on the street; and when she came to herself again she stood in her warm room, and the choir-boy sat on the bench, his cloak being put close to the stove to dry.

Has it been a song of mourning or murmuring, the "Kyrie Eleison," which the boy had sung? Yes, he meant it so, but without his intention it had turned into a prayer, and now that has already been granted. Martin reads it in the eyes of the kind, high-born lady, who speaks to him as his own mother does at home, only more gently and tenderly. Mrs. Ursula asks so sympathizingly about Martin's circumstances, as if he had been a new relative of whose existence she had suddenly heard. Meanwhile the servant brought a plate filled with warm soup from the kitchen; and now Mrs. Ursula had the pleasure to see how a boy enjoys his dinner who has not had any good food for years.

After Martin was satisfied, Mrs. Cotta began to catechize him anew, and soon she was made acquainted with his life-story. Her mind was at work upon an idea, which shaped itself in uncertain figures before her eyes, and which only required her absent husband's sanction. She did not let the boy notice anything, but told him rather to pray earnestly, and the Lord, at the request of the holy Virgin, would relieve his need at the proper time. Then she dismissed him, his knapsack well-filled, and she called after him, "God grant that we shall see each other again."

Martin did not feel the weight of his bag. He hastened home on wings, and did not even notice the astonished face of his aunt Katherine, who was attracted by the change in his whole bearing. When he reached his little garret he threw himself on his knees and thanked God for his mercies.

It required but a short conversation between Mr. Cotta and his wife, to open the resolution that they would take Martin into their home and treat him as their own child. At dawn of the same day there was a knock at the organist's door, and a distinguished-looking lady asked for admission.

"Ah! is it you, noble lady, who condescend to step under my roof?" said the organist, humbly lifting his cap.

"Martin told me how kind you have been to him."

"Do you love Martin very much?" said Mrs. Cotta gently.

The organist cast a side glance to his wife, who entered at that moment, then he replied, "Martin is my sister's son, and a good, pious boy; why should I not love him?"

"I also have learned to love him," continued Mrs. Ursula, "and I should like to have an opportunity of showing my love to him every day. Therefore, I beseech you, permit me to take the boy with me to my own house."

Herr Lindeman could not trust his ears, and stared at Mrs. Cotta with questioning eyes. But then, as she repeated the request, he bowed in the deepest agitation, seized her hand, and said, "May God reward you in all eternity for what you have done to my poor child in his name."

Katherine stood in the door, rooted to the ground. Shame and repentance were working in her heart, and made her face glow. After a short while she stepped forward, her eyes cast down, and pressed Mrs. Cotta's hand in silence.

On the same evening Martin Luther sat at the well-covered

table in the circle of a noble, pious family; and when, at a later time, he went to bed, he did not shut an eye during the whole night, but one prayer after another rose from his grateful heart to God.

Twice is Eisenach mentioned in Luther's story, and both times an important event takes place in the great man's life. The Wartburg yonder on the hill, and the house in George Street down in the valley, are homes of the Reformer. The walls of the Wartburg saved the outcast from the murderous steel of Rome, who tried to assassinate the hero for the truth's sake; and the care in George Street saved the despairing one from the miner's cowl, wherein the genius was on the point of hiding itself.

Luther himself never forgot what Eisenach did for him, and always called it "my dear town." Ursula Cotta was an excellent woman, truly a pattern of women, an ideal of feminine virtue and pious customs, but she would never have been famous, nor would posterity ever have heard her name, had she not been chosen by God to be the benefactress of the great Reformer. She became a famous woman through him, and wherever Luther's name is mentioned her kind act is remembered. S. S.

#### THE GRACE OF HUMILITY.

"Whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose."—The greatest saints of God in every age of the Church have always been men of John the Baptist's spirit. In gifts, and knowledge, and general character they have often differed widely. But in one respect they have always been alike;—they have been "clothed with humility." (1 Pet. v. 5.) They have not sought their own honour. They have thought little of themselves. They have been ever willing to decrease if Christ might only increase, to be nothing if Christ might be all. And here has been the secret of the honour God has put upon them. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke xiv. 11.)

If we profess to have any real Christianity, let us strive to be of John the Baptist's spirit. Let us study humility. This is the grace with which all must begin, who would be saved. We have no true religion about us, until we cast away our high thoughts, and feel ourselves sinners.—This is the grace which all saints may follow after, and which none have any excuse for neglecting. All God's children have not gifts, or money, or time to work, or a wide sphere of usefulness; but all may be humble.—This is the grace, above all, which will appear most beautiful in our latter end. Never shall we feel the need of humility so deeply, as when we lie on our deathbeds, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Our whole lives will then appear a long catalogue of imperfections, ourselves nothing, and Christ all.

#### "WHOM YE KNOW NOT."

It is a solemn thought that John the Baptist's words in this place apply strictly to thousands in the present day. Christ is still standing among many who neither see, nor know, nor believe. Christ is passing by in many a parish and many a congregation, and the vast majority have neither an eye to see Him, nor an ear to hear Him. The spirit of slumber seems poured out upon them. Money, and pleasure, and the world they know; but they know not Christ. The kingdom of God is close to them; but they sleep. Salvation is within their reach; but they sleep. Mercy, grace, peace, heaven, eternal life, are so nigh that they might touch them; and yet they sleep. "Christ standeth among them and they know him not." These are sorrowful things to write down. But every faithful minister of Christ can testify, like John the Baptist, that they are true.

What are we doing ourselves? This after all, is the great question that concerns us. Do we know the extent of our religious privileges in this country, and in these times? Are we aware that Christ is going to and fro in our land, inviting souls to join Him and to be His disciples? Do we know that the time is short and that the door of mercy will soon be closed for evermore? Do we know that Christ rejected will soon be Christ withdrawn?—Happy are they who can give a good account of these inquiries and who "know the day of their visitation!" (Luke xix. 44.) It will be better at the last day never to have been born, than to have had Christ "standing among us" and not to have known Him.

#### BOOKS.

God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of the past ages. Books are the true travelers. They give to all who will faithfully use them the society, the spiritual presence of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am. No matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling. If the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof, if Milton will cross my threshold and sing to me of Paradise, or Shakespeare open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart, and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom, I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship; and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live.—*Channing.*

"EXCEPT a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." To dwell in the new heavens and the new earth, we must be made new creatures. There will be exquisite scenery in heaven, when the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem appear; but a blind man could not enjoy it. There will be exquisite melody in heaven, from the golden harps of angels and the redeemed; but a man without an ear for music could not enjoy it. And just so there will be spotless holiness in heaven—it will be the very atmosphere of heaven—how, then, could an unholy soul enjoy it? "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again."—*Alc. Carey.*