

of the carver, was employed in copying it for future generations. In our day the legend makes its appearance once more in the works of the new school of Christian art. Johan Gabriel Seidl, the late Austrian poet, had sung the best part of it with a piety that reminds us of the works of better times. We follow him in our account of the legend, adding what can be gleaned from older traditions.

For nine hundred and thirty years had Adam borne the burden of life. Broken by age and labour, he had never passed a day in which he had not felt the weight of the sentence of the Almighty, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken." When at last Adam was stretched on his bed of suffering, he called Seth to him and said: "My son, I am soon to leave thee, I feel that death is near. Death will come upon me, for it is the fruit of sin. I saw thy brother Abel die, and now the hour is come for thee to witness my death."

Seth wept bitter tears. "My Father," he answered, "thou shalt not die. There must surely be in the world some herb that will cure thee. I will seek it; and, wherever it is, I will find it—even though I should have to go as far as that Garden of Eden whose wonders thou hast so often described to us, where the beautiful Tree of Life grows. Yes, I will search Paradise from beginning to end, until I discover whether there is not some plant that preserves from death."

"But, my son," said Adam. "How canst thou enter Paradise to search it. since the Lord drove me thence in His anger? Should thou even succeed in finding the way thither, thou knowest but too well that the gates are guarded by an angel with a fiery sword."

"Even though there is an angel with a fiery sword at the gates, replied Seth, "I will move him by my tears and prayers. Farewell, father! Let thy blessing go with me. I go and I will return with the herb that shall restore thee to thy former health and strength."

Adam blessed his son, but in his heart he felt that his days were numbered. Then Seth took his departure. He wandered over the whole earth in search of the Tree of Life, and at last, completely spent with fatigue, but still supported by hope, he reached the gates of Paradise.