

found upon the door-step. Of course there was great curiosity to find out what the basket contained, especially among the women, and Eberhard, full of his newborn happiness, was not long in removing the cover and finding no more nor less than a healthy male infant, clad in the finest of wrappings, and with a tiny gold chain around his neck, sleeping peacefully and unconscious of his introduction into a strange house. Wonder, indignation and pity were the mixed feelings of the men and women present, as they beheld Master Eberhard taking the young stranger tenderly out of his temporary nest; but he, great-hearted man that he was, said aloud, "Our God in heaven has sent me two children instead of only one," and going to his wife's bedside with the little fellow in his arms, he asked her if she would become a mother to the poor, discarded child.

"If my Ernest wishes it, it is my duty to obey," was all she replied; but it was spoken so sweetly, so trustingly and so sincerely that the Master bent down and kissed her with rapture.

"My angel, may God reward you for your kindness," he said impressively, and both he and his wife smiled with happiness as they laid the newcomer at Bertha's side, and all present agreed that they had never laid eyes upon two finer-looking children.

All of this, of course, may be read at length in the pages of that musty, prolix and old gossipy chronicle, and as for that matter, a great deal more which it is not my purpose here to repeat to the readers. They will be satisfied to know that the two children grew up as brother and sister until their eighteenth year. The seven-day wonder of Master Eberhard's strange present had been forgotten by most people, for many more seven-day wonders had come to pass in the meanwhile, and nobody seemed to remember that Henry Eberhard, as the boy was called, was only a foundling; his foster-parents themselves would hardly have ever thought of it, had not annually in some mysterious manner a package of fifty broad gold pieces found its way into Master Eberhard's house. How this money came there or by whom it was brought, neither husband nor wife, ever knew, as only the two words "For Henry" were incised on the outside of these precious missives. Master Eberhard, however, laid this money carefully in a secret drawer of his writing desk, for the boy's use when he would have to start out for himself in the world.

No one but his wife knew aught of this matter, but when they were alone by themselves many were the speculations which the worthy couple indulged in as to their boy's birth, and his parents' station in life. "Our boy," they called him nevertheless, and he was indeed a son to them to all intents and purposes. They loved him tenderly, and he, ignorant of the secret of his birth, really believed them to be his parents. Their affection for him was honestly returned, and throughout all Cologne no more dutiful son could be found than Henry Eberhard. The Eberhards had good cause to be proud of this boy, for he not only was a model of manliness, but also a skilful workman.

Under the Master's guidance he had worked on the slowly rising walls of the great church, and under his instructions he had commenced to learn the mysteries of the great craft in the Chapterhouse. Long before his indentures were cancelled by an honest fulfillment of his term of apprenticeship, he had become the equal of any workman who helped to rebuild the great church of Cologne. In addition thereto, he was popular with the workmen, and well liked for his gentle manners by all who came in contact with him; but the one to whom he was all in all was his sister Bertha. He was her idol. Thinking herself only his sister, the fair Bertha had learned early in life to love with a sister's affection this playmate and companion of her youth.

But somehow or other, nature will often assert her claims in the strongest, most unequivocal manner, and in Bertha's case the sisterly love she had felt in the earlier years of her life deepened in the course of time into a love more intense, more fervid, more holy. Did she really suspect, did she divine, that there were no ties of relationship between them? Did nature tell her that this man she could love as deeply a woman ever loved? Such a matter is incapable of determination; philosophy and reasoning are both here at fault, and certainly Bertha Eberhard, ere she had time to reason, was hopelessly in love with the man she believed to be her brother.

Him alone she worshipped. In his company alone she was happy, and for him, in consequence, she neglected and discarded a host of suitors. These luckless swains bore their disappointment as best they could, when they discovered that laying siege to Bertha's heart was a fruitless task. With that grace they could muster, they turned to other damsels less coy and more willing, who healed their broken hearts speedily, and made them happy wives and their children good mothers.

IV.

One only of Bertha Eberhard's numerous admirers chose to take no refusal and no rebuff. His name was Casper Hass, Mrs. Eberhard's sister's son—a sturdy young