

"That I will not say;" laughed Hunderik; "our bargain is not made yet."

And not till the rage of hunger was appeased did the two fathers begin to bargain, for it was all a question of barter and sale, and Hunderik chose his time just as it was getting dark, and before the two sets of Franks began their carouse, but when their heads were comparatively clear. Hunderik, however, had no great confidence in his own power of reckoning or ability to perceive where his self-interest lay, and he called up Leo to consult.

There is no need to tell how they argued over acres of land, pounds of gold or silver, herds of cattle and the like, and what would be the father's dowry, and what the bridegroom's "morning gift"; nor how Hunderik tried to base his promises of gold on the ransom for his hostage that he expected to force from that mean old sordid rogue, Gregory the Bishop, who was cheating him of his due granted to him by King Theudebert.

They came at last to an agreement, though without reference to any such trifle as the decision which of the young ladies was to have the preference. Aldebert sat by all the time, but he was much too shy and loutish to make any approach to attention to them.

When the bowls of spiced drink were brought for deeper revelry, Hunderik, perhaps inspired by his first draft, declared that the wedding should be in the old fashion of their forefathers—the maids should each be mounted on one of his best steeds, and have a fair start, and whichever Aldebert first overtook and captured should be his. All the hearers broke out with shouts of applause. Christian rites of marriage were as yet little heard of among these wild Franks, and that the maiden should be made over by her father after due agreement and a few words of troth uttered on either side, was held to be a true and binding marriage, even among the less savage. Roswitha, however, listened with shame and dismay, and hid her face in her mother's lap; but she met with small sympathy there. Bernhild shook her off, and almost boxed her ears. "Be a woman," said she, "and not a babe; and be proud to be sought, like your mothers before you, by a brave man on horseback."

Poor Roswitha fell back, and when the great leathern vessels of wine and ale were going round, and nobody attended to aught else, she wandered in the rear of the party, crouched down, and wept; and thus Leo presently saw her as he was passing by, putting aside remnants of the feast, and trying to secure provision for the journey. He was a strange confidant, but the maiden in her wretchedness knew none other, and clutched at his tunic. "Oh Leo," she cried, "can you help me? I cannot bear to be carried off by those heathen

men, caught as though I were a wild beast! Valhild is much more willing. How shall I avoid them?"

Leo had much rather not have been delayed, but he could not help listening to the sobbing girl, and he stood thinking what might help her. "See here," at last said he. "Turn thy horse amid the pine-trees, where those who know not the windings can scarce follow thee, and when thou art well out of sight of all, then turn him loose, and get thee to the old pilgrim's hollow tree. There none will find thee, no stranger, and our own people will never look for thee."

"Then, O Leo, wilt thou not come and tell me when all is over, and when Valhild is won? I know she will be willing; but I am the eldest. Come, then, and take me out."

"Nay, that I cannot promise," said Leo. "Do not wait for me. Remember there will be feasting and reveling, and the cook may not be absent. Thou canst come to the border of the woods and listen. Heaven be with thee, child, however it may be! Now I must go. They shout for wine."

(To be continued.)

#### WOMAN'S SPHERE.

They talk about a woman's sphere,  
As though it had a limit;  
There's not a place in earth or Heaven,  
There's not a task to mankind given,  
There's not a blessing or a woe,  
There's not a whisper—yes or no,  
There's not a life, or death, or birth,  
That has a featherweight of worth,  
Without a woman in it.

—Selected.

How much do you love your Church? It is not so hard for you to answer this question as you may suppose. Let us put the matter to a practical test. That the continued existence of the Church depends very largely upon the success of the public services need scarcely be said. If all the members, or a large majority of them, were to habitually absent themselves from the house of God, speedy disintegration would follow. Now, what is your record? Do you realize your responsibility in the premises? Are you in your pew whenever it is possible for you to get there? Do you make sacrifices to reach this end? Again, the Church needs money in order to carry on its enterprises. Do you give your share regularly and cheerfully? Do you pay your preacher as freely as you do your grocer? Or do you dole out a scant contribution with a reluctant hand? An honest response to these inquiries will help you to understand the depth and intensity of your affections.—*Christian Advocate*.