

of this dear child, and I became almost a boy again, passing hours with her and her precious birds. It seemed then that I first realized all the force of our Saviour's words, "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," and understood the value of the blessings promised to those who resemble little children in holy simplicity. But, unhappily, there was another child in the castle, and he almost tempted me to give the lie to the Word of God. This was the young Lord Frederick, who, though scarcely ten years old, was already so cruel, that like the pagan twins, Romulus and Remus, one might have supposed him to have been suckled by a she wolf. The wicked imp took diabolical delight in tormenting his good little sister and spoiling all her pleasure. So, when the two young swallows flew out of the nest for the first time, and Herzelandia was dancing for joy, this firebrand, lurking like a cat for its prey, seized one of the defenceless little birds, then, with a burst of satanic laughter, began stripping off, one by one, its shining feathers.

I was not far off, and hastened to the spot, attracted by the cries of Herzelandia, who trembling and in tears, was endeavoring to snatch the poor martyr from the bloody fingers of her wicked brother. When I reproached him for his cruelty, he made a mocking grimace, saying, "What business it is of yours, Father Ambrose?" at the same time, he threw at my feet God's poor little creature, palpitating and covered with blood. Then, I blush to say, the demon of anger gained the mastery over me, and I administered a sound box on the ears of the young Count. I picked up the poor little bleeding bird and flung it into the well, to end its misery. Soon, my Lord Frederick uttered piercing shrieks, rolled himself on the ground with frantic gestures, repeating twenty times without drawing breath, "Grandmother! grandmother! help; I am being killed! Father Ambrose has been beating me!" Then came the Countess Stephania, her eyes flashing, her whole face inflamed with anger. Darting upon me a furious look, she demanded in a voice of thunder, "How did you dare, Father Ambrose, to lift your hand against

a hair of the Count of Ferette?" I gently told her all that had passed, and I thought it my duty to add. "Therefore, noble lady, in God's name and by virtue of my office, I venture to warn you solemnly, if you have the true interest of the young Count at heart, that you may punish him when he is in fault, for what says the Word of God—'He that loveth him (his son), chasteneth him betimes.'"

While I was speaking, the proud Countess became pale with rage, and in spite of my own emotion, I could not help observing the strange empire wrath displays on the face of man, for almost on the same moment, I saw her alternately become white as snow and red as crimson. At last, the noble lady, without deigning a reply, told her waiting women to lift up the young Count and carry him into the castle. But this was easier said than done; for the boy, beside himself with passion, kicked right and left like an escaped colt; he bit the hands of the young girl who attempted to carry him, and struck her on the face and bosom. When I approached to help her to master the young madman, the Countess repulsed me harshly, saying, "Touch him not! and never appear in my sight again." Taking up her idol herself in her arms, she vanished as quickly as she had come. I found myself alone again with Herzelandia—dear, gentle child; she was seated on the stone bench, looking as pale as death, but hiding in her bosom, under her handkerchief, the other young swallow. The parent birds, after hovering tremblingly around her, had finally perched, one on her head, the other on her shoulder. She continued to sob without ceasing, and when I sat down by her, she took my hand and said in her sweet, caressing voice,

"Oh, Father Ambrose, why did you throw the poor little featherless bird into the water?"

As I did not answer at once, Herzelandia, clasping her hands, continued,

"Cannot our Lord Jesus forgive Frederick his sins, as He did those of the thief upon the cross?"

"The thief repented, my daughter, and prayed to the Saviour. God only