

atone for your first childish fault than it does now to wash away this load of guilt? You but hazard His displeasure, and increase your offence, by refusing His offered pardon. You say you are lost, then you are one of those whom Jesus came on purpose to seek. You have read the story of Peter's denial?" Yes; Anka remembered it well. "Then hear it once more;" and the old woman turned to another portion of her treasure, and read until she came to the words, 'And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.' My dear, the Lord has been looking at you for a long time; He has never lost sight of you for a moment."

Then Anka's unbelief gave way; she threw herself on her knees beside her faithful friend, "and wept bitterly."

"All your struggles against conscience," continued the old woman, "and all your wretchedness He has seen; and He knew that at last, if nothing else led you back to Him, for very weariness you would be driven to His feet."

"Oh! it seems too much, too much!" sobbed Anka.

"Too much for us to understand, but not too much for Him to do; for in loving and forgiving, in remembering our helplessness, and forgetting our ingratitude, He shows Himself the Son of man and the Son of God. My child, those honour the Saviour most who draw most freely on His bounty.

Paul's half-hour of grace extended to an hour; but it seemed only a few minutes to Anka, as she hung upon the words that fell free from the aged Christian's lips, whether read from the sacred page, or the utterance of her own full heart. Anka trembled for herself in the future, and had the choice been given her she would gladly have shared her comforter's cell.

"We are safest," remarked the latter, "when we distrust our own strength. 'In me is thine help said the Lord.'"

And so the two women parted; they had not even asked each other's names, and never met again on earth.

Before Anka left the prison, her kind benefactor, whom she had mistaken for the bold Carlos Alba, had been suddenly called to leave the city with his regiment, to join the detested Alva, who was mustering all his forces for another encounter with the brave Netherlands. The battles and sieges that followed do not concern us now, although we may be interested in the fate of one or two of the combatants.

We will pass on to the day that succeeded one of the engagements, when, the excitement over, nothing but the ghastliness and cruelty of war remained. On the battle-field, those who had fiercely struggled together were being buried peacefully together in one common grave; and in the little village church, that had been turned into a temporary hospital, friends and foes lay side by side drinking from the same cup, and being ministered to by the same gentle hands.

From one sufferer to another passed a grave woman, whose eyes often overflowed at the sight of pain beyond her power to alleviate; but ah! the tender pity in her looks; the sympathizing words so softly spoken; the womanly attentions so delicately bestowed, were better than the leeches, lancet or drugs for some of those sick and dying men. Few were the comforts, and scanty the food for the little hospital, but that woman's presence stilled all complaints, and the coarsest trooper refrained his customary oaths in her hearing.