

The Miracle of the Roses

By Mary J. Malloy.

Spring ran laughing down the side of the Thuringian hills and pressed her signet of emerald on every tree of the forest as she passed. The young saplings looked up and put out delicate tongues of golden green despitely at the giants that towered above them, as if to say, "Wait awhile, you old folk up there—we shall reach you some day, and then we shall see!" And the old trees looked down on them and rustled, as if in answer, "Yes, yes, you young ones—we shall see. Many have we seen in our time, saplings and men, and many shall we yet see; so goes the world."

Up on the heights stood the Landgrave's castle of Marburg, strong and stately. A little stream ran all along the valley below, splashing happily over its stones with delight that the long cruel winter was over at last; and every here and there a tender wild flower slipped up suddenly alongside, or hung over its banks, or rose from slender root right out of its waters, where a hidden stone held fostering soil. Yes, the long cruel winter was over, but not what it had brought—hunger and suffering; for famine had been upon the land and touched, alas, too nearly at many a door.

Up there in the castle, perhaps, they knew no want; but down here in the valley the vassals of the Landgrave had hungered sorely, and shrank, with but scanty covering, from the biting winds. Then, too, Louis, the young Landgrave, was away, in sunny Italy with the army of the Emperor, and his mother, the Duchess Sophia, was indeed charitable, as became a great lady. But, "Ah, that the dear Elizabeth was now our duchess—that we had not to wait our lord's return to see her bride and lady of the land!" they said, the one to the other.

The dear Elizabeth! It was to her, young as she was, that each heart turned in confident hope; while she, passionate friend of all that sorrowed and suffered, could do so little of that which her heart urged, and had to listen unreplying to the counselors of the duchy when they said to her it was not for them to strip the treasury of their lord with reckless hand, even for charity's sake. With all her sweet soul she, too, longed for the return of him whom she had ever found kind and good, whose hand was ever open, and in whose heart dwelt the same blessed spirit as in her own. Sadly she felt the discontent of her that ran rife in the bosoms of those about her in the castle.

"She is not worthy of alliance with our noble Prince Louis," they said. "She loves better to be among the poor and lowly of the land than with us of the court. Moreover, he cares not for her. Let her return to Hungary, her own land, and mate with a noble, as befits her station, but with no prince."

But Elizabeth smiled when her sister-to-be, who loved her not, the lady Agnes, told her of this; for she knew that Louis loved her indeed and would have none other for his lady. So out from the castle gates came she each day, laden with all that one allowed her for her poor, and stripped of every jewel or piece of rich gear that she might turn into gold to render their suffering less.

Down in the valley, as the rays of the sun began to lengthen came the dear Elizabeth. A very part of spring she looked, as with hurrying steps she crossed the ground that seemed almost to break into bloom beneath her slender foot. Her soft rich hair, braided into two long golden plaits hung down over her shoulder, banded with earliest wild flowers instead of the pearls of her rank, long since turned into bread for her poor. Her robe was of a pale green, as bright and delicate as that of the verdure about, and over it hung a light mantle of the same hue, brodered with gold. She held it carefully gathered up before her, bearing a precious burden with its folds for some who, even now that the famine had gone, had not the good things tucked away wherewith to feed hungry mouths.

Her large eyes were of a clear dark gray that melted and softened as one saw them, so that each glance was a new beauty. As she came rapidly on, it seemed

Spring herself was treading the earth to see that every living thing had its separate joy, and that none should miss of it.

Yet within her own heart there was but little joy save that of charity. The two duchesses, Sophia and Agnes, mother and sister of her Louis, loved her not, she knew; and hers was a heart that craved affection as its daily bread. Their courtiers, quick to take the cue, treated with despite the lovely girl who might not, after all, become their Landgravine. Louis was far; her favor was of no present moment to them. Elizabeth could not even turn to her own for comfort. A motherless child of four, she had been sent away to the court of Thuringia that she might be brought up and molded as becomed the bride of the young Prince Louis. His father, the kindly old Landgrave Herman—her soft eyes glistened with a tear at the thought of him—had ever been gentle and loving to her; but he had been long gone, and Louis had been long gone—a whole year, far, far away in Italy. But oh, how happy the thought! he was looked for home now every day; any hour, in fact, might bring him; and then there was one friend for her! What might, what would they not do together for their people in many years to come!

"Oh, for my dear lord!" she cried aloud involuntarily.

"And why do you wish him?" said a merry voice close by.

Startled beyond words, she turned and paused, believing it an illusion, a dream.

At the entrance of a little side path she had just crossed, leading down the hill from a private postern of the castle, stood Louis himself, smiling as only Louis ever smiled upon her, holding out both hands—joy in his countenance and something of wonder besides at the added beauty his eyes had missed so many months.

Elizabeth's answer was a half-stifled cry. She was about to fling out answering hands of welcome to him when a sudden thought came to her mind, through all her thankfulness and delight. She shrank back a little, and held her mantle to her more closely with both fair hands, unwilling, in her generous modesty, that he should surprise her in her good deed.

"Why, my sister Elizabeth, have you no word for me?" queried Louis, surprised and wondering. "See, I have just returned—I sent no word before me that your pleasure might be all the greater—and is it thus you greet me?"

Then as he saw the sweet color come and go on her cheek—"You wished for me, Elizabeth. Here am I, to do my lady's bidding."

He approached her with a roguish smile; still she shrank, foolishly timid of discovery grasping her mantle even closer, heavy as it was now grown.

"What hold you there?" he asked her suddenly, seeing struggle in her mind. "Come, give me your burden then, it may be, you will speak again."

He held out his hand, laughing to see how startled she was.

"No, no, my lord," she cried. "Ah, I could not speak at first to you, because my heart had flown to God for joy of seeing you! But now—oh, welcome, welcome, indeed, and leave me no more in this world. My Louis, stay with me until, if so it please Him, we leave it together!"

The tears dimmed her sweet eyes and fell, and she extended one hand toward him with a gesture that took his heart with happiness.

Still did the other hold fast her mantle, now sagging with the unequal weight, so that she gave a little cry, and Louis involuntarily seized a corner that he might aid her.

"What have you within, Elizabeth?" he asked curiously, struck with her solicitude.

"Naught but—naught but—" she paused, blushing.

"Naught but—" he mocked her tenderly. "Why, what is all this? Nay, now must I see what this takes your thought from me! Nay, nay—" as she feebly strove to hinder him.

"Tell me, what means it all? Why are you so anxious to hide what you bear from me? What is it, sweet heart?"

"Only—bread for my poor, my lord," she said, at last; her eyes abashed, her tender head bent down,

standing culprit-like, discovered of her good deed, before him.

His clear joyous laugh echoed up the valley.

"So!—this is the rival that stands in my way! But now I claim my rights. Give me all of your thought, my Elizabeth, and I will ease you of all your burden. But, is there not more within? No golden crown, no jeweled rod of justice, or some such bauble? You see, I have heard how the Landgravine Elizabeth would become the robber of her lord and leave him bankrupt of his kingdom!"

Elizabeth smiled and blushed and laughed with him.

"See now, my little sister Elizabeth, I will be no King Assuerus to my Ester, not half, but the whole of my kingdom shall be yours, for so I know the blessing of God will be upon it. Now for the bread—I will carry it for you and take its burden as, please God, henceforth will I carry for you all your burdens of life." Gently he drew the mantle apart.

Surpassing sweetness smote the air about them. From out the folds fell, not bread indeed, but roses—roses of every size grew within its breast—great hearts of gold and crimson and pink and white and saffron—great clusters of luscious perfume—magnificences of color and form and odor, that showered and fell all about her, until Elizabeth stood in a circle and on a carpet of transcendent loveliness.

A new miracle—into her hands, outstretched in wonder and amazement, still from above the roses fell, and clung all about her shoulders and rested at last upon her golden head in a coronet of richness a queen might envy but never parallel.

Louis fell on his knee before her and kissed the edge of her mantle.

"Oh, thou beloved of God!" he said, in shaken tones of reverence and awe. "So hath He crowned thy charity! Give me, too, of thy roses, my Elizabeth."

Bending above him, the dear Elizabeth, all trembling with the glory and wonder of her miracle, drew from her bosom three roses with had there dropped and rested, and laid them in his hands. He pressed them to his lips and said to her, speaking very softly and low: "Faith, Hope, and Charity—but the greatest of these is Charity!"

Household Hints

BE YOUR OWN FURNACEMAN

Urging the importance of personal attention to their furnaces by householders this winter, the Fuel Administration for Ontario declares that 25% of the coal used in the average home can be saved by proper damper control. "Your firing line this Winter is the furnace door."

Don't trust your furnace to an itinerant old-job man. Be your own fireman. The first essential is cleanliness. One-hundredth inch of soot has the same power to resist heat as ten inches of iron. Give the heater a thorough cleaning, and stop all air leaks in furnace and fire pot. See that chimney and furnace pipes are in good repair, that ash-pit and clean out doors are tight, that smoke-pipe is not inserted too far into the chimney and is not obstructed by soot or other material. Cover all heat pipes in cellar with asbestos. Hot water and steam boilers should have a covering of asbestos or mineral wool.

CANNING CHICKENS FOR WINTER.

It is a great convenience to have some canned chicken on hand, and the work of canning is not difficult, if carried out just as for canning vegetables. Cut the meat off, pack tightly in jars, fill up with cold water, bring to a boil and boil three hours in the boiler. Screw down and keep in a cold place. Use the bones for chicken soup. If there is too much to use at once can the rest in sterilized jars and keep in a cold place.

Canadian News

Ontario

OTTAWA. — Last Thursday evening a banquet was given in honor of "Bob" Rogers, the old conservative war-horse, at Toronto, at which it became evident that the conservatives are preparing to replace the Union Government by the old conservative party. Undoubtedly they are getting ready for a break-up of the government.

— Sir Clifford Sifton has resigned as Chairman of the Commission of Conservation.

— Class One men under the Military Service act may be discharged, an order-in-council provides in-view of the armistice.

— A revised estimate of the Canadian potato crop from figures in possession of the Canada food board shows an exportable surplus in six provinces of 28,433,000 lb. over all requirements for domestic use and seedling. Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario have no surplus.

TORONTO. — Police Constable Frk. Williams was shot and killed in W. G. Cross' livery stable, while trying to arrest a man who gave his name as Frank McCullough.

— Eleven new lawyers including three returned soldiers were called to the Bar and sworn in before Mr. Justice Rose at Osgoode Hall, Toronto.

HAMILTON. — Fire on Burlington Beach destroyed twelve houses, causing a loss of between \$30,000 and \$40,000. It is believed to have been caused by a spark from a locomotive.

STRATFORD. — The Social Democratic case against five men in Stratford and fifteen young men in Easthope, was resumed. A telegram from the Department of Justice at Ottawa stated that following the amended order-in-council, the department had no desire to proceed further against any parties whose only offence was that of being members of the Social Democrats.

SUDBURY. — While hunting in the woods near Metagama, Edgar Pellow, one of the oldest locomotive engineers on the Lake Superior division of the C.P.R., was shot and killed by his eldest son, who mistook him for a deer.

CHATHAM. — One million dollars in cash was paid out by the Dominion Sugar Co. to growers of sugar beets in Chatham district for this year's crop. The mammoth plant is turning out hundreds of tons of sugar daily.

SANDWICH. — Four colored men convicted of assaults upon little girls were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment at hard labor in the Penitentiary at Sandwich.

Quebec

QUEBEC. — As a result of a leak in the gas main in the house, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pelchatt were found dead in their apartments. An entire family living upstairs were found unconscious but were revived by neighbors.

— Terror reigns in the district around Arthabasca, d'Israeli and Victoriaville, where bandits have been creating uneasiness among the population. Some time ago a number of daring hold-ups were reported from that district. A number of business men were held up at the points of revolvers, robbed of their money and in some cases robbed of their horses and rigs and of their motor cars.

Nova Scotia

SYDNEY. — The body of the telegraph operator Baldwin, of St. Stephen, N.B., was found on a road about a mile from town. Wagon marks and hay dust on the clothing indicated that the body apparently had been previously lying in a barn. When the body was found the watch was missing and there was no money in the pockets.

For the Winter Evenings

you need something to read for yourself and your family. Keep the young folks out of questionable company, by accustoming them to stay at home in the family circle. To do so, you must provide them with innocent enjoyments at home, and one of the best and most useful of such enjoyments is the reading of

Good Stories.

If you have a parish library, do not fail to take out books regularly during the winter months. If there is no parish library in your vicinity, do not dread the expense of buying some good Catholic books. It is a good investment, better in fact than almost any other investment you can make for the comfort and pleasure of your family. Other articles, even the most expensive ones bought for the pleasure of the members of your family will soon grow old and will no longer cause the former enjoyment, but a good and interesting book is

A Joy forever.

It will be read and reread by all the members of the family and will cause new pleasure each time.

One of the best series of good Catholic stories is collected in the four volumes of

The Ebb and Flow of Life

They contain about forty good stories written by the famous Catholic author Monsignore Konrad Kummel. They were first published in the German language in 1912 and soon the call for them was so great that four editions were sold within a couple of years. These stories are now available also in the English language, having been translated by a Father of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Ill.

During the months of October and November 1918 we have given our Readers an opportunity to see what these stories are like, by publishing one of them entitled "Man and his Illusions" as a serial in our paper. We now offer the entire set of four large volumes containing each about 440 pages, well bound in full cloth, free by mail for the low price of

Only \$5.00 for the entire set.

We can highly recommend this excellent work to persons looking about for suitable

Christmas Presents.

Either the entire work or individual volumes are suitable for such a purpose. By purchasing a set of these books, you can make four of your friends happy at Christmas.

We have only a limited number of sets of the work on hand. Intending purchasers should therefore not delay sending their orders at once. When ordering, do not fail to send the \$5.00 with the order.

Address all orders to

St. Peters Bote, Muenster, Sask.