

destroy him, and halt mounes the persuasion that to get him fairly pinnod and fastenod helpless upon the cross is a victory we shall never achieve. But, O soul, listen not to that plausible deadly suggestion of unbelief! It is miserable enough to be ever blaming and alhorring ourselves, to have the brightness of life's daytime bedimmed by the mists of the pit; but surely even this misery of a soul that pines for ennobling liberty is preferable to the mirth of slaves who are content to wear their chains! Therefore be not weary, be not unthankful, for the anguish of a true penitent is a sure token that the Lord is at hand, and that deliverance is nigh.

We may contemplate next a further degree of crucifying the flesh, namely, that in which the old Adam is actually nailed to the cross and dying. The soul having "tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come"—and having become one with the Lord by faith—has now entered into a new state. Instead of sin reigning over us, we reign over sin, and have become new creatures. The old man is nailed to the cross. He is *being crucified*. Yet still he lives. Subdued, humbled, crippled, and suffering the agonies of death, still he lives. And what tenacity of life he exhibits! What a hard and lingering death he dies! How he begs and prays for a little respite! "Take me down from this cross. Show me only a little quarter. Have we not been friends together? Shall we never more taste together the sweet enjoyments of former days? Give me a little liberty—a month, a week, only a day, and I being so grievously weakened you will find no difficulty in binding me again." Thus he pleads for release; and O, what a strange bewitching power do his words at times possess! But regard him not. Show him no quarter. Compassion is a virtue, but compassion is misplaced here. What! shall I spare my direst, subtlest, deadliest foe, the murderer of the Lord, the murderer of my own soul? Shall the assassin be spared because with pleasant tones of deceit he endeavours to compass his ends, even after justice hath seized him? However hard it may be to us, we must show no relings here, for the daily mortification (that is, putting to death) of sinful self, is the condition of our own life. And we are encouraged to look daily for his death; to have faith in Jesus, that we may witness his utter destruction. But can this ever be on this side the grave?

## A TALE OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

BY EMILIE STARCHFIELD.

A LOVELY picture, a perfect scene unfolds itself, as upon the hill where stands the ruins of the Castle Sternberg we glance around. Opposite, on a sister height, is the Burgen Liebenstein; below, the Cloister of Bornhofen; outside the walls of its enclosure, a varied group of happy idlers; and beyond, through the branches of the luxuriant trees is seen the Rhine—the mighty, glorious, soul-inspiring Rhine. The sun flashes golden, then red; the twilight deepens, the stars peep out, and the moon becomes mistress of the scene. Yet still we linger, finding it hard to believe that the beauty will still be there when we are gone; that it has been there throughout the dim ages of the past. Years and years ago it was the same, and love cast its glamour over youthful hearts, while men and maidens lived, loved, and died even as we do now.

Back to those same far-off days, back to the time of the Crusades, back to the priod when Castle Sternberg stood entire and strong as a sentinel at his post; I will take you—that so, perchance a lesson may be learnt of those whose dust is now mingled with that of the earth. It was a lovely autumn evening, and 'neath the sweet light of the stars three young people sat on the castle balcony. They were singing, and as their voices floated out on the mystic air, one could, as it were, judge in a measure of their different characters. One, a maiden's treble, soft as a zephyr, yet stealing away as though its very softness lent power to its music, told of a heart pure and free from guile; a soul, too, which even on earth could yet in thought ascend to the highest heaven. Then came a tenor, sweet and flowing, but impulsive and passionate; and lastly, a low, earnest bass, which spoke of a nature strong to do and bear—a nature tender and true as a little child's.

The hymn, "Grosser Gott, dich loben wir," ceased; yet each sat on, for the moon was rising, and her soft beams were making lovely streaks here and there upon the waters. Ah,

that moon! it had many a time looked down upon a young ardent love, and now it was to be the old scene over again. A man's voice broke the silence.

"My children, is it not time to come in?"

It was a fond, true voice, even that of the father and patriarch (he was old, very old, albeit his sons were young) and so the elder, the owner of the bass voice, Heinrich by name, arose instantly and went away, leaving the maiden and Friedrich his brother to watch the lights and shadows as they pleased. But love was there, lending a pensiveness to the blue eyes of Minna, and causing the darker orbs of Friedrich to flash and sparkle as with hidden fire. She was their orphan cousin; she was as good as an angel in the household, taking the place of the loving mother who had gone away to heaven; and as both lads grew up, seeing her change from the pet and playfellow to the comforter and adviser of all, what wonder that they seemed to lose even their very being in the soft halo of her presence! Each knew of the passion of the other, but because they were brothers, and because the fair dream could in reality belong to but one of them, neither spoke. But to-night, when all things were fair, when sky, earth, and the grand old river whispered of love, love, love, when Minna was looking her sweetest and best, Friedrich told her his heart. Alas for Heinrich, and the deep, bass pathos of his nature! the younger brother conquered, or rather love conquered for him, and so both their fates were sealed. It was hard for the other, as the days passed, to witness the fond devotion of Friedrich, to note his happy, jubilant bearing, to watch the rose tints flutter upon Minna's cheek, and the lovelight sparkle in her eye. Oh, it was hard, very hard! And in the midst of his misery a loop-hole of escape seemed placed before him. He would respond to the holy call of the Christian world. He would join the crusade under the banner of Conrad. He told Friedrich and Minna of his intention out in the deep evening twilight, when neither saw the pain of his handsome face; and while Minna promised to break the news to the aged father, Friedrich grew enthusiastic, and resolved to share his brother's glory. Minna said not nay, for she deemed the cause good and just; but the lovelight ceased to sparkle, and the blue eyes were often dim in the days which followed. At last they wore the cross, the badge of their noble enterprise; and the old man knew of a truth that he was to be bereft of both, for could he hope to live till their return? So he reasoned, weeping the while, and Minna spake never a word. It was a trying time for all. Heinrich waited, hoping that Friedrich would consent to stay; for Minna's dear eyes, in their mute appeal, might have overcome a host, much more this man who loved her. But the younger stood firm, and while the old man wept, the maiden fainted; then Heinrich's resolve was made—he would stay and cherish his father, he would cheer Minna, and, by God's help, whose soldier he had meant to have been, he would be true to his brother.

And the days went on, and winter passed, then spring; and Minna grew calm and hopeful, for Heinrich was as a dear brother, only sometimes the idea would come to her that if Heinrich had but loved her, Heinrich who was so good, noble, and unselfish, she should have been happier than now. But again—Friedrich was noble; for was he not fighting for the Lord's people? So she smiled upon Heinrich, knowing naught of the stabs she inflicted; but the old father knew, for time was passing and eternity was close upon him, so that the veil was thin and easily pierced by the eyes which should so soon look upon the glory of the great beyond. He guessed, too, that when he was gone and the younger son returned, all would not be peaceable in the old Burgen, so he built the Liebenstein on the opposite hill for Friedrich and his bride, leaving the old castle with its belongings to Heinrich, the elder.

All was complete at last, and the will signed, so as to cause no dispute; and then the brother and sister, as they called each other wept alone, for the good father was gone, gone from earth and its petty strifes and tumults.

Friedrich was coming home! News had reached them at last; but Heinrich grew fierce and Minna pale and silent, for rumour said that he came not alone, and alas, it was but too true. A sorry reception awaited the young bride, for Minna could not meet her, and Heinrich's brow was heavy as a thunder-cloud before a storm. Words ran high between the brothers, and at length they went out into the valley, for their wrath was too great to be confined to the castle walls. So they fought a cruel fight, while from above a sweet face gazed downward, pale from past grief and present horror.