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How a Child's Prayer Built a Cathedral.

(The Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M. A., in the 'Christian Pictorial'.)

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally.—James i., 5.

People sometimes say that children are not very wise, that wisdom is found in older heads. I am not quite sure of this myself; I sometimes think that all children are born

wise, and that they grow foolish as they grow older. Now I wish to tell you of a child who believed the text, and asked God for wisdom, and got it. In the country of Germany there is a famous city called Strasburg. It stands close to where the great River Rhine goes rushing and tumbling down to the sea. It is a very old city, for some parts of it were built by the Romans nearly two thousand years ago. And in this city there stands a Cathedral so grand that it would take quite a learned man to describe it, and far more beautiful than any words of mine could tell, and it has in one of its towers the most wonderful clock in the world. Its hands are the figures of saints, and lovely stone angels chime the quarters, and at mid-day, at the stroke of twelve, the figures of the twelve Apostles come out and march round, each one pointing up to the clock's face, as if to tell us that another day is gone.

Thirty-three years ago Strasburg belonged to the French, and the German soldiers laid siege to it, and took it from them, and they fired shot and red-hot shell on the walls and warehouses and mansions, but they were careful not to fire on the Cathedral. 'No,' they said, 'we must not do the cathedral any harm, because it is so beautiful, and it is God's house;' and they said: 'Besides, we must not hurt the Cathedral, because it was built by the prayer of a child.'

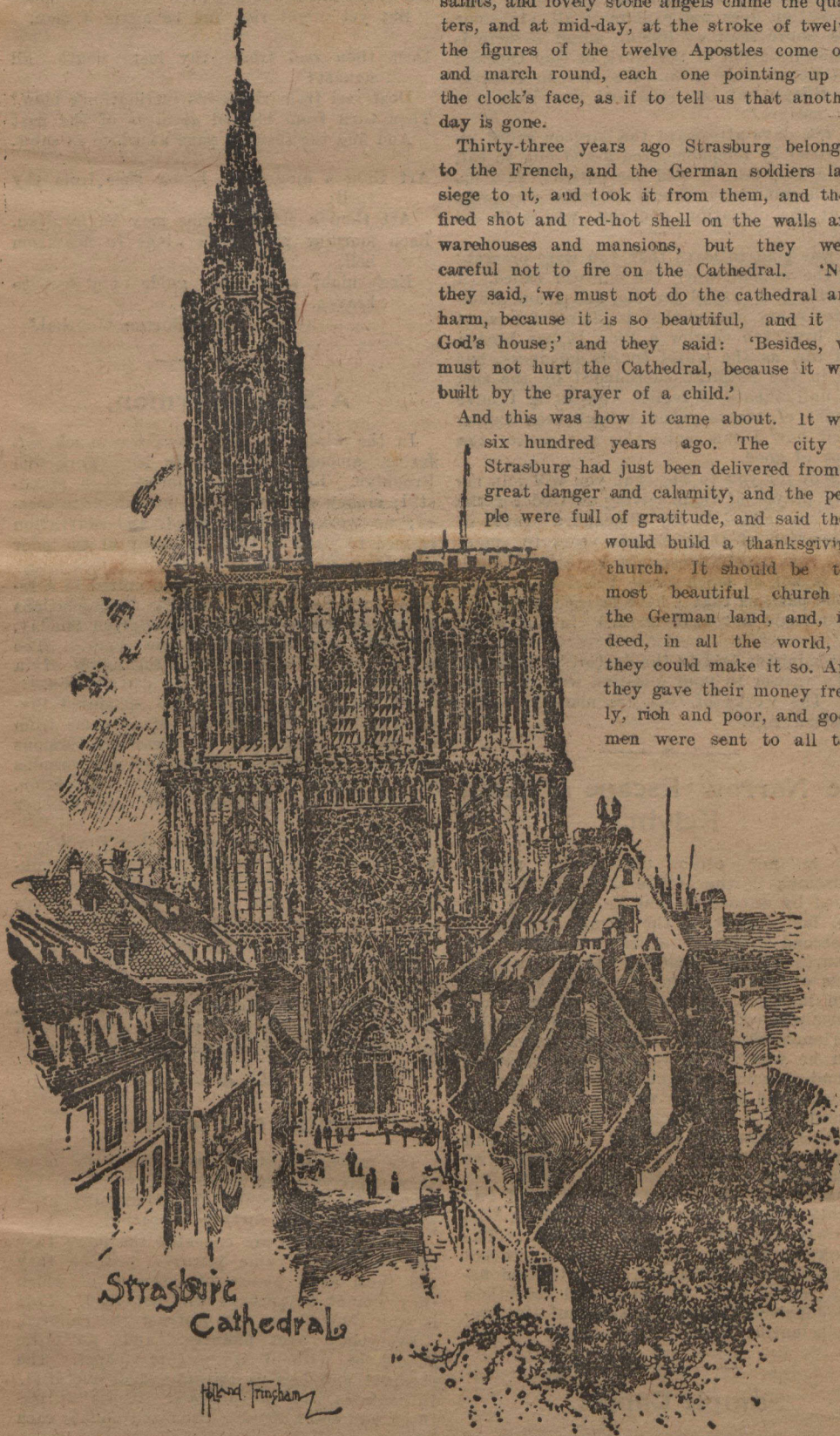
And this was how it came about. It was six hundred years ago. The city of Strasburg had just been delivered from a great danger and calamity, and the people were full of gratitude, and said they would build a thanksgiving church. It should be the most beautiful church in the German land, and, indeed, in all the world, if they could make it so. And they gave their money freely, rich and poor, and good men were sent to all the

how to chisel stone and cut marble into all manner of lovely shapes, and last of all they engaged an architect named Steinbach, who was the most famous master builder in the world.

Steinbach shut himself up in his study to draw a plan; for the plan must be drawn before the workmen could commence to build; and he thought and toiled many a day, and many a night, too, with paper and pen and pencil, but all in vain. He tore up each plan when he had drawn it because it did not please him; it was not half beautiful enough. And he almost lost heart and hope, and felt very much as you feel when you have worked for hours at some very hard sum, and at last fling it down, and say with tears you cannot do it.

Now Steinbach had one daughter, a motherless child, for her mother had died some time before, and, like her father, and like some of you, she was very fond of drawing, and was never so happy as when she had paper before her and a pencil in her hand. And, for a child, she had learned to draw cleverly and well. One night her father, because he had no one else to tell his troubles to, told them to his little daughter—how he wished to draw the plan of the great Cathedral, and could not do it—he was not wise enough, and that he was quite in despair. And the child said: 'Father, have you asked God to give you wisdom?' And he answered, 'No my child; I fear that would do no good.' 'But,' spoke the child again, 'mother used to say God could do everything; and here is a text in the Bible: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally." Had we not better ask Him, father.' So, to please his daughter, he knelt down with her, and the child prayed: 'Dear Lord, my father wants to make a plan for the Cathedral, and he says he is not wise enough; please, God, help him, give him wisdom, for Christ's sake. Amen.' Then they both rose, and the man went off to his study, and thought and pencilled all night, but no plan came; and the child went to her little bed, and fell asleep. But as she slept she dreamed—an angel came to her with paper and pencil, and said: 'My child, I will help you to draw the plan,' and he put the pencil in her hand and guided her hand as she traced line after line, until the work was done, and then the angel went away, and she dreamed no more, but slept quietly until the morning.

Lo! in the morning she found on her little table a sheet of paper, with the plan all drawn and complete. She thought the angel had done it, but if you had been in that room you would have seen the little figure of the child step softly out of bed, and quietly walk to the table and take the pencil in her hand, and you would have seen her draw line after line, though she was asleep all the time. You would have seen everything except the angel, who was there giving wisdom to her mind and guiding her fingers. And so the plan was drawn, and she took it to her father, and said God had sent it. And he started with gladness and surprise, for though it was only a rough outline, such as a child might draw, it gave him just the thought that he wanted, and he said: 'Thank God; this will do, my daughter,' and he drew a larger and more beautiful plan, but like that which the child



Strasbourg Cathedral

Holland Trushan

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kings and princes and wealthy folk around to beg for the Cathedral, and they came back laden with gold. So there was money enough for the work. And then they brought together clever workmen from all parts who knew