

abdication he prostrated himself before his successor, promising obedience, and then, raising his eyes to heaven, said, "Lord, I return to Thee this family which thou hast confided to me. Now, as Thou knowest, most sweet Jesus, I have no longer strength nor ability to keep on caring for them. I confide them, therefore, to the ministers."

He lived about six years after this, broken in body and spirit. His sufferings, physical and spiritual, were beyond expression. He foresaw, with anguish unspeakable, the decline of the order, and in his helplessness he reproached, with terrible vehemence, those who were destroying his work. "Where are they," he would cry, "who have ravished my brethren from me? where are they who have stolen my family?" He gave himself up more and more to meditation and prayer, dwelling with intense concentration on the passion of Christ; and sometimes in the church, and sometimes on the mountain or in the forest, he would spend long periods absorbed in his thoughts. He was possessed constantly by the vision of the crucifixion. Before the day of the elevation of the Holy Cross he passed the night alone; and in the morning there came to him, the legend says, a vision of a seraph, with out-stretched wings, which flew towards him from the edge of the horizon. "In the centre of the vision appeared a cross, and the seraph was nailed upon it. When the vision disappeared, he felt sharp sufferings mingled with the ecstasy of the first moments. Stirred to the very depths of his being, he was anxiously seeking the meaning of it all, when he perceived upon his body the stigmata of the crucified." However it was produced, there seems to be no doubt that there were on the hands and feet of the saint marks resembling the impression of nails, and on his side the appearance of a wound.

The last days of Francis were full of joy. He had recovered his old spirit, and spent most of his time singing the Canticle of the sun, much to the distress of some of the brothers, who thought he should have been thinking of his sins. He died gladly: "Welcome, Sister Death," he cried, as his hour drew on. Thus died, at the age of forty-six, this remarkable man, who was one of the purest-minded of the long line of enthusiasts, who believe themselves to be and who are the inspired prophets of God. During his lifetime, the brothers went into all the countries of Europe, preaching the gospel with wonderful results. They even journeyed as far as Syria and Morocco, and everywhere disciples were gained. It was Francis' plan to go to all nations. "Do you think," he said to a cardinal, "that God raised up the brothers for the sake of this country alone? Verily, I say unto you, God has raised them up for the awakening and salvation of all men. . . ." The prophet in his strength hopes all things; conscious of divine power he does not at first realize how big the world is, and how evil or inert men are. Yet, though they do not accomplish their brilliant dreams, their labors and anguish are not in vain. We do not appreciate how much we owe the saints until we try to picture what the world would have been had they never wrought and suffered. But it takes not one, but a multitude like Saint Francis' to accomplish what he dreamed of doing. The work goes on, there is generally an Elias to receive the mantle of Elijah. To-day most conspicuous among the spiritual successors of Saint Francis are Count Tolstoi, General Booth and John Ruskin. In character Ruskin approaches closest to him. It is told of him that, when he was in Rome, there was every day a beggar on the steps of the Pincio to whom he always gave something. One day the grateful man caught his outstretched hand and kissed it. Ruskin stopped short, drew his hand hastily away, and then, with a sudden impulse, kissed the beggar's cheek. The next day he came to Ruskin, and, with tears in his eyes, offered his benefactor a shred of brown cloth, which, he said, had once been a part of the robe of St. Francis.

TELL'S CHAPEL AND TELL LE GENDS.

BY FRANK L. DAVIS.

We now passed Tell's Platte, which is a small rocky shelf, the spot where Tell, the Swiss patriot touched, when he leaped from the boat of the tyrant Gessler. Above it was the chapel which we went to see later on. The end of this lake trip is at Fluelen, and here the passengers, who have preferred the boat this far, take the famous St. Gothard Railway, with its seventeen marvellous tunnels through seemingly impassable solid rocks, emerging from their dismal blackness into sunny Italy. We were much tempted to go, but, as the fever was just then at its height, we reserved the pleasure. About two miles from Fluelen is the historic town of Altdorf, at an elevation of 1,500 feet, which was the scene of the shooting of the apple by Tell. It has an immense statue marking the spot where he stood and a fountain is built on the position of the child when his father made the intrepid shot. The legend is to this effect: Gessler, —Vogt of the Emperor Albert of Hapsburg, (Austria,) —in 1307 had caused his hat to be placed on a high pole in the market place, so that none could fail to see it. All who passed by were ordered to make obeisance to it as an emblem of imperial supremacy. Tell, who was famous for his skill as an archer, refused to bow to the abhorred symbol, and was commanded, as a punishment, to shoot an apple off his son's head or lose his own. He did so bravely, but Gessler's sharp eyes discovered a concealed arrow and asked Tell its use. "For your heart, tyrant, had my child been harmed." For this boldness, Gessler took him prisoner and was carrying him away to his castle at Kussnacht. A sudden storm arose, and, as none but Tell could steer, he was released but used his freedom to jump from the boat to a rocky ledge below. Later on he waylaid the Vogt in a narrow mountain pass and shot him, for which act he was proclaimed liberator of Switzerland from Austrian oppression. A short distance from Altdorf is a chapel, built to mark Tell's birth place. Though the most of these Tell legends are now called myths, the peasants cling to them with great tenacity, as is evidenced by their continued erections of chapels and statues. It is conceded that there was a William Tell among the patriotic confederates, who swore

"— to be a nation of true brothers,
Never to part in danger or in death."

But they will not admit that the stirring and pathetic incidents connected with his name have any more solid foundation than the creations of any poet or novelist.

Leaving the steamer at Fluelen wharf, we ascended to the hotel, to find the dining-room monopolized by a large German society of some kind, who were eating with their hats on, singing noisy songs, and in other ways conducting themselves boisterously. They seemed to have exhausted all the resources of the place, and we were much amused by the anxious efforts of our host who, like the Mikado, seemed to unite every office in his small perspiring person. His equally anxious sister was evidently landlady, messenger, cook and table-maid all in one. A semblance of a meal was finally, hurriedly placed before us which we might have enjoyed, had not the jovial Germans chosen the exact time to complete theirs. Without rising, and still surrounding the table, they coolly lit their cigars and puffed them leisurely, filling the room black with smoke. Escaping into the pure air we soon forgot all trifling annoyances in the prospect of the delights in store. Mr. C—, the father of the English party, and myself secured the back seat in a carriage holding four, with a hood at the rear for the baggage and wraps. The front seats were occupied by two very pleasant ladies from Boston; the rest of our party preferred walking. A drive long to be remembered over the famous and romantic Axenstrasse road, which extends nine miles along the Lake of Uri above Tell's Chapel, from Gersan and Brunnen, to Fluelen. It is

almost entirely cut out of the solid rock of the Axenburg, extending along the side of the mountain like a shelf, with occasional pillars to support the great weight of rocks above. It also has a stone balustrade with a broad flat coping, to prevent careless tourist from falling over the steep precipice into the water below. A few years ago this side of the Bay of Uri was totally impassable except by a very difficult mountain path. Now it is a delightful excursion either by carriage or on foot, and allowed by all travelers to be one of the most picturesque roads in the world. The views from this parapet are magnificent, but that day ours was a little cut off, owing to a slight belt of haze or mist in the Western horizon.

At a certain point all left the carriages to take in the varied prospect and throw stones down to try and realize the height. They seem to fall down, down, and take an endless time to reach the water. It makes some people quite giddy to look over, and the steamer looked like a nutshell floating along.

Farther on there is a tunnel cut through the solid cliffs, a triumph of engineering skill, with arched openings towards the water, through which lovely views may be enjoyed. Emerging from this tunnel, whose moss-grown sides are kept green by trickling streams, we shortly came to the entrance of the walk to Tell's Chapel. This walk is a steep descent down natural rocky steps, through a lovely ravine, known as the Hohlegasse (or Hollow Way) in some part of which according to Schiller

"— once the Austrian fell,
Beneath the shaft of Tell."

Dismissing the carriage, we employed a small boy to carry all wraps, and enjoyed the scramble down through the shady ravine to the chapel, coveting time to stay and pick the delicate wild flowers with which it abounded.

The legend may be a myth, but the chapel is a picturesque reality. It is unpretentious with a plain portico and a small red spire, partially lost in the thick foliage. Above the door is a representation of Gessler dying by the hand of Tell, and a short inscription relating the occurrence.

The original chapel dated as far back as the 15th century, but becoming a ruin, it was decided to restore it and the necessary funds were soon raised. The interior decoration was given into the hands of the Swiss Society of Art, who engaged Earnest Stickleberg, of Basle, to do the work. After making a zealous study of the history and types of the Forest Cantons, he painted the four fine frescoes which appeal not only to the common people but are much admired by connoisseurs. The altar is very simple and above it is the Leap From the Boat; on the right is the Death of the Tyrant, on the north wall the Apple Scene and on the southern the Oath of the Rutli. There is a portrait of St. Nicholas von der Flue, a local saint for whose memory the people of these cantons have a feeling of reverence.

The chapel thus restored was dedicated June, 1883, with religious and civil ceremonies, the magistrate and people of Uri in presence of a large concourse of people in boats held the first service there. Annually, the Friday after Ascension Day, this religious service is repeated and a patriotic sermon preached to a great mass of people from all parts of the Swiss Republic, who gather in boats.

There is not much to see, but there is something very fascinating about the tiny chapel with its historic associations and surroundings. Some writer says "It is not much, but it is enough. Any more than this would seem incongruous, and would mar the effect produced upon the imagination by the very simplicity and artlessness of the place. The quiet which reigns here, with the huge mass of the Rigi looking down upon the chapel, the lake glittering in the distance, the tall trees overshadowing the lovely road, all this forms a scene well calculated to impress itself indelibly upon the memory." Thus we left this "tiny altar in the sublime cathedral of the mountains" in its peaceful solitude, consecrated for all future ages in the hearts of that reverent and patriotic people. It only needed the view of the crumbling ruins of the strong-hold, on a steep eminence in the direction of Kussnacht, in whose dungeons Gessler intended to confine the bold mountaineer, to complete as charming a panorama with their historic and classic associations, as one was ever privileged to witness in one day.

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LOOKING BACKWARD—A N EXPERIENCE MEETING.

REV. W. S. MCTAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

Dec. 30th. Psalm 145: 1-21.

Time on its ceaseless round has brought us to the close of another year. It is well, therefore, to look back and consider what the year has taught us. Perhaps to some of us it has been a year of progress, of joy and of great satisfaction; possibly to others it has been a year of sadness and of disappointment; probably to the great majority it has been a year in which joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, satisfaction and disappointment were blended. Some days the heavens above us seemed draped with heavy clouds, other days were bright and beautiful. Sometimes we were surrounded with the mists and shadows of sorrow; at other times we walked in sunlight sheen. As this topic is to be discussed at an experience meeting, each one might state for himself what the year has brought, and what lessons have been suggested to him by it. This meeting might be one of the most profitable we have held during the year if each one would briefly state some lesson learned by experience during the past twelve months.

Whatever may have been the year's joys or sorrows, its pleasures or its pains, its hopes or its disappointments, its opportunities embraced, or opportunities neglected, they are gone—gone forever. "Four things come not back—the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, the neglected opportunity." Ye shall henceforth return no more.

Now, however, when we review the past, it is safe to say that though the experience of one member of the society may be very different from that of another, each and all will have abundant reason for thankfulness. We may have passed through grievous trials, we may have met with some bitter disappointments, we may have had sore afflictions, nevertheless these may have taught us some of the most valuable lessons we have ever learned. Perhaps we learned some things in the shade that we would not have mastered in the sunlight, we may have gained some blessed experiences in the storm that we would never have gained had our course been upon smooth waters; we may have had our eyes washed with tears, but we have since then been enabled to see some great truths more clearly than we ever saw them before.

Our more pleasant experiences have not been passed through without great and lasting benefit to us. Perhaps, during the past year we have spent some hours which were as delightful to us as were the hours spent by Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. We renewed covenant vows; we dedicated ourselves afresh to our Master's service; we spent sweet moments—moments rich in blessing—at a throne of grace, we pondered with fond affection some comforting truth in Holy Writ; we braced ourselves up for new activities. As we look back now and recall the joy of these memorable hours we feel that we ought to say, "Bless the Lord, O, my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy Name."

A backward look will doubtless remind us of many failures. What are we going to do about them now? Shall we sit down to moan and sigh? No; such conduct will not retrieve the past errors, nor help us for the future. Some one has said that the best thing we can do with our failures is to make them teach us something. A fool may never learn that lesson, but a wise man certainly will.

It is said that the battle cry of an Indiana regiment, when they went into the fight one day, and made themselves the wonder of soldiership, was the name of an old fight in Mexico in which their brothers ran away. They burned out the disgrace, set the smoke of their old shame ablazing and came home with the light burning clear and high. Thus may our past failures nerve our arm and inspire our heart for greater conflicts in the future. True it is that men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things.

Presbytery of Portage la Prairie held a meeting in Knox church, Portage la Prairie, on the 5th ult. The clerk read a circular from Rev. D. J. Macdonell in reference to the augmentation fund. The subject was most earnestly considered and every member present promised to do his utmost to raise the amount apportioned to the congregation. Rev. Mr. Munro called the attention of the Presbytery to the amount of Sabbath desecration on the M. & N. W. R. in the matter of running trains on Sunday. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Synod at its meeting next week. The Presbytery resolved to invite Rev. Mr. Meikle to carry on evangelistic work within its bounds.