

Little Christian.

Translated from the French by Antoinette LeBlanc.

Chapter IV.

On leaving the castle, Christian walked to the neighboring town, about a mile distant, intending to remain there for a few days, thinking the baroness would answer his letter. At last he began to think of some way by which he could get something to do. Suddenly his passion for the study of medicine again took possession of him, but he saw well that this was impossible; then the need he felt of seeing his benefactress nearly drove him wild. The fifth day had nearly come to an end; Christian was sitting under the trees on the roadside; from there he could see the road that led to the castle, and he watched vainly, hoping that he might see one of the servants coming, that he might speak to him. At last he got up, and cast a last glance up to the room, to see if any messenger might be coming. He was about to enter the inn, when he saw a young girl coming by one of the cross roads; her figure seemed familiar to him, and his heart beat quickly. As she came nearer he saw that he had not been mistaken; it must be Agatha. "God be praised," he said, and went forward to meet her. She was greatly surprised to see him, but when she noticed how pale and careworn he looked, and what suffering was written on his face, she was quite anxious and questioned him closely.

"Alas, dear Agatha, the hour of trial has dawned. Yet though they be many and hard to bear, I shall try and be resigned. I have still a pure conscience, and a firm trust in God, therefore dry your tears and come and sit down by me."

Then with his habitual frankness, he related all that had happened, from his entrance to the castle until this day, and Agatha knew well that it was true, as he was incapable of dissimulation. She endeavored to console him, but he was

overcome by emotion, and he burst into tears. Agatha tenderly pushed back the hair from his noble and serene forehead, and said:

"You have indeed suffered greatly, but you have still preserved a clear and pure conscience. Do not despair. The baroness will soon find out who the real thief is. Remember that a true Christian glories in being able to suffer, and forgive his enemies."

"Dear Agatha, your words have the same effect upon me now as in the days of childhood. You are right; our Heavenly Father will set all things right in His own good time."

"But," said his sister, "we must make use of the means in our power to justify ourselves. I think it is my duty to go to the baroness, and beg of her to answer your letter."

"It can do no harm," said Christian, "but it is too late to go to-night; better wait until morning, and you can go as early as you like."

Christian described the beauty of the castle grounds, and the sweet little chapel they contained; also the house which he would have occupied, once installed in his new position. When they were about to sit down to supper, he said: "I am sure that you will not be able to see the baroness, for my enemies will take as much interest in keeping you away, as they would if it were myself."

This did not shake her resolution. Early next morning, before Christian was up, she had left, and by the time he was awake, she was far on her way to the castle, for even if the road had been strewn with thorns she would have persevered, knowing her brother's honor was at stake. Christian did not feel at all confident that she would succeed; and yet he prayed that God would give him strength to bear whatever might come. After three hours of the most terrible suspense, he saw her coming