

## Family Department.

## THANKS BE UNTO GOD.

Tender mercies on my way,  
Falling softly like the dew,  
Sent me freshly every day,  
Much I bless the Lord for you!

Though I have not all I would,  
Though to greater bliss I go,  
Every present gift of good  
To eternal love I owe!

Source of all that comforts me,  
Well of joy, for which I long,  
Let the song I sing to Thee  
Be an everlasting song.

— Selected.

CLAIRE.

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian).

By T. M. B.

(Continued.)

It was a strange and touching meeting. These two, nearest in the world to each other, met to share each other's perils, as they already shared the fate which had deprived them of their ancient heritage. But the strangeness of the circumstances which surrounded them and the excitement of the moment, left no time for realizing this. The Count hastily embraced his daughter, while glancing with surprise and suspicion at her unexpected companions. "Where is Bartel, and who are these persons?" he asked, in his old imperious manner. "But for them, I should not be here" replied Claire. "Bartel has betrayed us; do you not remember Marthe? Marthe Duval? and this is Felix. They have helped me to escape and will help us further." But the name of Duval was no welcome one to the Count's ears. "I will trust none of the name," he said passionately. "What of your father, young man—the cowardly villain who has betrayed my trust and stirred up the ignorant hoors against their master?" I saw enough at our last meeting to know how he has since acted in my behalf. How dare you insult me by your presence? "Monsieur Le Comte" replied Felix, sternly and coldly, "there is no time to waste in recrimination; I have brought you your daughter, which should be a proof of my honesty at least. I have told her and tell you that I am willing to sacrifice my life for her or you at any moment to atone, in some measure for my father's misdeeds. I want to take my sister away from France while these horrors last, and you, by travelling with us, will run far less risk than in pursuing your journey alone. For your own sake I urge you to put up with our companionship, and to avoid one moment's unnecessary delay. The villagers of Du Plessis are now a frantic mob, and if Bartel has indeed betrayed you, might well follow you to this place." "They are my friends father," said Claire, in rapid, agitated tones; "the only friends I have ever had. I trust them as I trust myself; do you not see the sacrifice they make in going with us?" she added, "for their sakes I would indeed implore them to leave us." "Let us at least leave this spot," exclaimed Felix, "we cannot tell how near danger may be; Monsieur le Comte, suffer me to explain what I had purposed." The gravity and perfect self-control of Felix did not fail of their effect upon the Count, full as he was of passionate anger, and he tacitly consented, though still muttering wrathfully to himself; Felix then leading the way, the little party again betook themselves to the woods. Here, in the solemn half-light, with the innumerable trees around lending a sense of comparative safety and protection, Felix, briefly and urgently, represented to the Count the greater likelihood of reaching in safety the Flemish frontier, beyond which they might feel themselves secure, than in the journey to the French sea-coast, which would take them by a route much more exposed than that proposed by Felix, which passed, for the most part, through forest lands, little frequented. It was by this way, as being

the most direct, that he had travelled on his return from Leyden, partly on foot, partly on horseback. He knew the route well, he would be their guide, if Monsieur Le Comte would consent to this arrangement. The Count replied, ungraciously enough, that his object was to reach England as speedily as possible, and that the way by which the fewest risks to his daughter's life and his own had to be encountered would suit him best. "In God's name then," said Felix, "let us begin our journey. By day-break we shall reach a forester's hut, where we can rest for a while and take some refreshment. Come Marthe, we will lead the way." They were a silent party. The Count's bitterness of spirit, wrath and indignation, could find no fitting vent. Claire's gentle heart was wounded by the treatment which Felix, in his unselfish devotion, had received from her father, and the events which had crowded upon her within the last few hours had stirred emotions too deep for words, while Felix, with a passionate sense of his father's crime, was filled with a burning desire to atone for it. Alas! in how small a measure could he atone for it! Marthe, walking by his side, with a full heart, would look every now and then into his stern, set face, to assure herself that she was not dreaming, and would feel a thrill of comfort in his presence. The forest road was carpeted, layer upon layer, with the fallen needles of the pines, which rendered it even and elastic to the tread; the air was delicious, the silence deep and unbroken, save by the occasional, melancholy hooting of an owl. It was possible to walk thus for many hours without feeling much fatigue, and Claire and Marthe were country born and bred, and in the full vigour of youth and health.

It was the late afternoon of a fine autumn day some few weeks later. The level sunbeams were streaming through the wide open window of an upper room in one of the host-eries of the unattractive town of Ostende, and from that window there was an unimpeded view of the blue water, just ruffled by a slight breeze and sparkling in the sunshine. A few vessels were lying by the shore, apparently making ready for their departure, for there was more or less bustle about them, and now and then a shout from the sailors on their decks was audible even in that room where Claire Du Plessis sat lost in thought and gazing seaward. Yes, thanks to Felix, his unwearied watchfulness, his anxious, constant care, the noble courage and perfect presence of mind which had again and again saved them from difficulty or actual danger, they could at last breathe freely in the consciousness that they were no longer fleeing for their lives from those who were literally thirsting for their blood. Yes, by God's mercy, the danger was past; and yet those days when they had wandered as fugitives had not been unhappy ones. The dear companions of Claire's youth had shared their perils, and although the presence of her father had seemed at first to raise an intangible barrier between them yet, as time went on, it was impossible but that the devotion of Felix had to some extent broken down that barrier of bitterness and naughty pride and made the Count first tolerate, then rely on and even show favor to his self-constituted guide and protector. There had been hours when the Count had almost forgotten the immeasurable distance which separated a noble of his exalted rank from the son of his faithless steward—when, to beguile the tediousness of the way, he had so far unbent as to converse freely with the young student, and found himself marvelling not a little at the stores of varied knowledge unconsciously displayed. Then Claire and Marthe had walked or rested side by side, and, with a loving glance or pressure of the hand, had told each other that nothing could ever lessen or change their affection.

It was but seldom that Felix had addressed the young Demoiselle, yet Claire knew by an unfailing instinct that he was never unmindful of her presence. There had been times, too, when they had been thrown more immediately together—when Claire had conquered his calm reserve and made him talk to her almost with the happy freedom of the Felix of old. Poor Felix! and she had never yet thanked him. To-morrow—yes, by sunrise to-morrow—they were all to sail to England in one of the vessels which were being laden yonder. A

little while and they would all be in a foreign land, separated from each other, perhaps only meeting at long intervals. What were her father's plans? She had questioned him more than once, but had received vague and unsatisfactory answers, as though he were concealing his intentions from her. Claire sighed wearily as she looked out upon the shining water.

As she sat there, her slender hands lying folded on her knee, her fair tresses, no longer hidden under the peasant's cap, but falling upon her shoulders, her pale, pure face resting against the window-frame, there was a low knock at the door and Felix entered. No longer the roughly attired way-farer, with the heavy growth of beard, but carefully, though plainly attired, as became the young doctor of the University of Leyden. His brown beard, partially shorn away, his broad, white forehead which had been so constantly covered by the slouching hat, contrasting strangely with the bronzed hue of his cheeks. Claire's face had brightened with a look of gladness as she saw him, and she had gone, with outstretched hand, to meet him, but Felix had but touched the proffered hand, bowing low as he did so. "Mademoiselle," he said, in those cold, deferential tones which Claire knew so well and which always unaccountably to herself, perplexed and hurt her, "you will pardon me for coming when you must be needing rest, but I saw *Monsieur le Comte* just now on board the brigantine"—he paused for a moment—"and I desired to say farewell to you alone. To-morrow Marthe and I also set out on our voyage, a longer one than yours. We have determined to go to America."

(To be continued.)

## THOUGHTS FOR FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

V.

"And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not."

Overwhelmed with the sudden realization of the majesty of Christ, and with the recognition of his own unworthiness to stand in that Great Presence, Simon had cried: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Can we not feel with him the awe which brought him trembling to Jesus' knees? Each thinking of our own sins, do we not feel with deepest self-abasement what it must have been to stand face to face with Him who knew no sin—the Holy One and the Just? "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Thou who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, how canst Thou suffer such an one as I am in Thy Presence? It was the first half-despairing utterance of a soul smitten with a consciousness of God's greatness, but not yet capable of realizing His Love.

The one feeling of awe possessed the trembling soul, but what was Christ's reply? "Fear not," He said. Benign and blessed words, which lifted up the sinner from the dust of humiliation restored him to hope, implanted in him a high and glorious aim. "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." That all-seeing eye beheld in the awe-struck self-abasement of the fisherman, Simon, the pledge of future perfect devotion, when the strengthening and refining influences of the Spirit of Grace should have purged the imperfections of his passionate heart. The blind and despairing cry—"Depart from me" was accepted in its deeper meaning by Him who discerns the thoughts we cannot even clothe in words. Never will He depart from His servant, for though he deny the Lord whom now he adores, yet when he returns in penitence He will receive him with the arms of His mercy and be with him always, even unto the end of that life, ever afterwards devoted to His Service.

O to feel like Peter to the full, (not in the sympathy of imagination, but in reality) the greatness of our God, our own unworthiness! for, most surely, if we thus cast ourselves at His knees, the Voice of Love will say to us, as it said to Peter, "Fear not," I know thine heart and I account thee Mine, to do My work here and to be with Me hereafter.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"—Psalm xxvii., 1.