

say to him: "We Englishmen have a better mine in Manchester, meaning the *cotton manufacture*. I should be understood as signifying simply that the cotton manufacture yielded more profit than the gold mines. Those ritualistic Hebrews who cling to obsolete ordinances may boast of their *Altar, our Altar* is infinitely better even the *sacrifice of Christ*." Altar and super-altar are foreign to the teaching of our articles, and should have no place in our Reformed Church. E. DUVERNET.

(To be continued.)

Family Department.

DAILY STRENGTH.

"As thy day thy strength shall be!"
This should be enough for thee;
He who knows thy fraze will spare
Burdens more than thou canst bear.

When thy days are veiled in night,
Christ shall give thee heavenly light;
Seem they wearisome and long,
Yet in Him thou shalt be strong.

Cold and wintry though they prove,
Thine the sunshine of His love;
Or, with fervid heat oppressed,
In His shadow thou shalt rest.

When thy days on earth are past,
Christ shall call thee home at last,
His redeeming love to praise:
Who hath strengthened all thy days.

CLAIRE.

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

By T. M. B.

"Come if you can without risk; it may be the last time."—CLAIRE.

Felix pressed the bit of paper to his lips and thrust it into his bosom, and then swiftly and lightly descending the stairs, he opened the house door and passed out again into the night. This time he kept as much as possible in the shadow, and as far as might be from the uproar which seemed to have become even wilder and more hideous. The flaring torches had increased in number, and some of the revellers were waving them wildly in the air, and seemed to be inciting the crowd with yells and frantic outcries to follow them. Drunkenness, however, appeared to have the chief mastery over the majority and to incapacitate them for the time being from any action beyond that in which they were engaged. Rapidly and warily Felix passed the neighbourhood of this orgie, and, still keeping in the shade, went on through the village and began ascending the hill, on the brow of which stood the Chateau. The moonlight now lay silvery clear upon the grassy slope, and the shadows of the trees were black and motionless, for there was scarcely a breath of wind to stir them. What a contrast was the stillness and beauty of the night to the horrible scenes with which Felix had become familiar. In those days a whole lifetime of terrible experience seemed crowded into a few brief hours, all the occupations and associations of life were turned into confusion; the world was out of joint, chaos seemed to have returned, and it was well for those who, in the midst of this frightful perplexity, could retain their moral courage, their sense of right and trust in God. During his solitary walk from Paris Felix had had time, in a measure, to recover his tone of mind and to overcome the cruel excitement which had almost overthrown his self-control, and although the return to his home under these disastrous circumstances was a fresh and poignant grief, yet he had regained, to some extent, the inner strength and calm which were his noblest characteristics.

Arrived at the top of the hill, Felix followed the road which led along the outer wall of the Castle and passing by the main entrance and a smaller one, went on until he reached the little postern, where,

on the evening when Marthe had, against her will, enlightened Claire, they had parted from each other. How familiar was the spot to Felix. It was here that he and Marthe and Claire had gone in and out. As children they had spoken of it as their own little door, and all through the years of their youth, until Felix had gone away to Leyden, they had scarcely ever entered the chateau except through this little, half-hidden postern. It led into a small court-yard beneath the windows of Claire's own rooms. If Marthe was with her now it was here that he should find them both, Felix had said to himself, and yet, now that he laid his hand upon the door and felt it yield to his pressure, he shrank with an agitation which was almost dread from the sight of Claire.

How had he longed for her presence, longed for the day to come when he might stand before her and feel that though, in the eyes of the world, there was a great gulf fixed between them, yet the years of his absence had been so spent as to bring them nearer to each other, that he had done as she had bidden him, carved out a life for himself, far different from that of a retainer of the Count du Plessis, and now—how could she regard him save as one of the class that had arisen to cast off all allegiance to that to which she belonged, nay, all authority, human or Divine, which had arisen like some monster wild and horrible by nature, long restrained, but now, with fetters burst asunder, turning to devour those who had kept it in subjection! How could he ever set himself right in her eyes or regain the confidence and kindness which she had entertained for him! Was he not the son of the man bound by every tie of association and loyalty to her father's house, and yet who at this moment, as Felix had too clearly seen, was the instigator not only of disloyalty, but of brutish insolence, if not worse, among the peasants of the *seigneurie*.

These thoughts rushed through the mind of the *Intendant's* son as he stood for a moment motionless with his hand upon the postern, but he had come now without reference to his own feelings, he had come as the protector, so far as his faithful heart and strong arm would enable him, of the two beings dearest to him on earth. If danger threatened them his place was at their side, by God's help to avert it. In another moment he had passed into the little grassy courtyard. A paved path led to the entrance to the turret or wing of the castle containing Claire's rooms, and a narrow ray of light which crept through the closed shutters of one of the lower windows served as a guide to Felix. Standing before this shuttered window, he knocked thrice. Three gentle knocks with a pause between. It was his old signal, when, having sometimes been ranging the woods all day, he would call for Marthe to take her home. A faint, smothered exclamation caught his ear. With a wildly beating heart he waited for a moment, and then—the door was opened by a trembling hand and Marthe looked out.

"Marthe—do not be frightened, he said softly, "it is I—Felix." "*Ah c'est lui, c'est mon Felix!*" "I knew it," she cried, and with a sob of joy clasped her brother in her arms.

For a moment in the delight of his return she forgot everything, all the terror and the horror that surrounded them, but in the next she caught his hand and eagerly drew him into the chateau. "Come," she said, "come to Claire." In the boudoir, where, as children, they had played together, stood Claire du Plessis, her white face turned towards them as they entered. The faint light of a lamp just touched her golden hair and showed the deep shadows round her eyes. "It is he, Claire," cried Marthe—"Oh thanks to *le bon Dieu*—we are no more alone!" For a moment or two neither Claire nor Felix spoke, only Claire held out a cold, trembling, little hand, which the young man clasped for an instant in his own. "You have come back in an evil time, Felix," said the sweet voice which had been so familiar to his memory that he seemed but *now* to have heard it, and then she added with a touch of bitterness, "your dreams of great things are fulfilling themselves strangely." "Truly Mademoiselle," he replied, and there was a great depth of sorrow in his voice, "it has been a sad awakening,

yet, God knows, in His own time there may be a fulfillment. I have come now to put my life at your service, to show you that at least *all* faithfulness, *all* loyalty is not dead in France. My little Marthe and I are yours now and always." Claire listened to him with deep emotion. "I know it Felix," she said, while two large tears rolled from the beautiful, sad eyes. "How could I ever doubt your affection for me! Alas! are you not my only friends? And yet Felix, this may be our last meeting. I am to meet my father to-night, and to fly with him to Calais."

"To-night?" said Felix—looking at her with mingled pain and pity—"has Monsieur le Comte sent you word that he would be in the neighborhood to-night?" "Bartel, his valet, was here this morning, bringing me a letter; my father was in a place of safety—he had escaped from Paris three days since, but knowing of the disaffection of the peasants, had thought it wisest not to come here. I am to meet him at Font-Couvert at the cross-roads about midnight. Bartel was to accompany me, but he has not yet returned." "Why did he not remain here?" "His mother lives in the village, and he was anxious to see her." "Is he to be trusted?" "How can I tell?" said Claire, with a gesture of weariness and despondency, "were it not for Marthe and you, Felix, and my poor Ursule I could believe that there was no truth or faithfulness left in the world."

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

III.

"This man receiveth sinners."

These words were uttered as a reproach. They were words of contempt and reviling, spoken by the Pharisees and Scribes. They who would have drawn away their garment from the very touch of an unclean hand, who stood aloof from the publicans and sinners, wrapped in their own self-righteous arrogance,—well might they "murmur," as they saw this Man, whose influence was so powerful and so subversive of their teaching and authority, this Man whom as they said in the bitterness of their soul "all the world had gone after," gather around him the outcasts of society, as well as those of every social grade. "This man receiveth sinners," they said with a sneer of malice; will *such* an one set himself up as a ruler and guide in our stead?

Fools and blind. Little did they know that the very words in which they reviled Him were words which express the best and highest hope of the human race. This *Man* receiveth sinners. Ah, truly, what blessed words are these that come from the lips of malice and cruel envy! This Man receiveth sinners! He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance! He came to seek and to save those that were lost! The friend of sinners, who with His blessed touch of healing could give peace to the troubled soul, with His words of Divine forgiveness, could cleanse the sin-stained woman, making her white as snow! What title does He possess which expresses more fully the wondrous closeness of that tie which binds Him to us by the greatness of His pitying love, and of our infinite need, than this—the friend of sinners! It was as though to make us understand in some measure what that title means, that He speaks those beautiful and wonderful parables of the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver, which have dropped balm upon many a stricken heart and kindled Divine hope in the bosom of despair.

These parables are as fountains of love, forever brimming over for the travel-stained and weary who have lost heart and hope in the "wilderness of this world," who have lost faith in their own power to amend, and in God's forgiveness. "Likewise I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Have not these words led men to Him that uttered them and made them understand, as far as human weakness can grasp the greatness of Christ's love, the meaning of that name, the "friend of sinners!"

Think of Him as He stood among the publicans and sinners, speaking those words of love, while the Scribes and Pharisees stood apart, separating themselves from Him and cutting themselves adrift from God and eternal life!