

**A Tale**  
OF THE  
**KLOSTER**

**A Romance of the German Mystics  
of the Cocalico**

*By* **BROTHER JABEZ**

*Illustrations by* **FRANK MCKERNAN**

*Oh, blessed solitary life,  
Where all creation silence keeps!  
Who thus himself to God can yield  
That he ne'er from him strays,  
Hath to the highest goal attained,  
And can without vexation live.  
Faith, toleration, love, and hope,  
These all have come to his support.*

—JOHANN CONRAD BEISSEL. Translation  
from the German by Julius Friedrich  
Sachse, Litt. D.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

**My Mother**

THIS STORY OF THE LITTLE BAND  
OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS  
OF THE KLOSTER  
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED



"Thou queen of the Roses of Saron, art thou  
holding court in thy temple of beauty?"  
Page 216.



## INTRODUCTION

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A GREAT New England historian has said that "The colony of Pennsylvania was not only more heterogeneous in population than any of the others, but it actually was the principal center of distribution of the non-English population from the seaboard to the Allegheny Mountains. All of the population of the Carolinas, as well as in Virginia and Maryland, entered the country by way of Pennsylvania, and this migration was so great, both in its physical dimensions and in the political and social effects which it wrought, that Pennsylvania acquires a special interest as the temporary tarrying place and distributing center for so much that we now call characteristically American."<sup>1</sup>

It is undoubtedly true that into none of the other colonies did there flow such a tide of German immigration, bringing with it many a hardy Swiss and French Huguenot refugee from the Palatinate, along the lower Rhine.

Up to the Revolution there were more Germans in Pennsylvania than in all the other colonies together. Benjamin Franklin, it is well known,

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<sup>1</sup> "Dutch and Quaker Settlements." John Fiske.

feared that the State might become a German province. Among the causes of this resistless tide of immigration were: Religious zeal, fostered by the teachings of William Penn and George Fox and their followers, and Penn's far-sighted pledge of tolerance as to liberty of worship, sectarian ambition, escape from religious persecution, and bad government.

Especially were the first-comers inspired by religious zeal, and it was to this that such old settlements as Bethlehem and Germantown and Ephrata owe their founding. Later, when the tide rose to a thousand German immigrants a month, a great majority came with the simple desire to earn a livelihood in peace and safety—a desire played upon by the glib-tongued, unscrupulous land agents of that day so successfully, that shipload after shipload of poverty-stricken German peasantry, enduring uncomplainingly the sufferings and hardships of hunger, thirst, and foetid air of the crowded hold and consequent ship-fever, poured into the port of Philadelphia and immediately took the oath of allegiance.

Quaint and curious names they had, as is evidenced by many an ancient shipmaster's list—patronymics indicative of trade, occupation, profession, personal characteristics, nicknames, names that by a slow but sure process of anglicization have lost much of their humor and flavor, and are now

so changed in spelling and sound as hardly to be recognized in their original form.

But with all the fears of pauperism and disease and racial deterioration and establishment of inimical foreign institutions, this mass of crude, uncouth peasantry, with their unpronounceable names, besides bearing the brunt of Indian depredation and massacre during the French and Indian wars, became the ancestry of perhaps not less than one-third of the population of Pennsylvania to-day.

Beneath the unpromising exterior of these peasants were firmly fixed the virtues that give strength and stability, if not mercurial brilliancy—piety, industry, patience, thrift, peaceful dispositions, and intense love of home. The men were homemakers; the women were homekeepers. Devoted tillers of the soil, politics and business had few charms for them.

Although in such counties as Bucks, Lehigh, Lancaster, Dauphin, Northampton, York, Carbon, and Monroe, there are many communities inhabited almost entirely by Pennsylvania-Germans, still retaining their peculiar dialect, nevertheless their German church service and German newspapers are rapidly becoming things of the past.

The present generation of Pennsylvania-Germans is going to the public schools, normal schools, and colleges, and in other respects is becoming thoroughly English; for however strongly the more



conservative ones may cling to the old habits and traditions, it is true that ere long Pennsylvania-German and such things as Pennsylvania-German singing schools, "Fóstnacht" festivities, "frolics," and "vendues," will be matters of tradition.

Perhaps no phase of their history is more interesting than that of their early religious experiences. In no other of the American colonies were there at such an early date so many altars raised to the various faiths—orthodox, sectarian, mystic, and separatist, Lutheran, Moravian, Quaker, Mennonite, Dunker, Seventh Dayer, and New Mooner. But though differing in creed and tenet, and frequently hurling at each other their broadsides, as their controversial pamphlets were called, all these sects were conspicuous for their thrift, industry, and religious devotion ; for though many of their beliefs were extremely mystical and showed every vagary of pietism, one great fundamental idea inspired and possessed these people, namely, to live in the utmost simplicity of habit, manner and speech, garb and diet, in strict conformity with the practices of the early church, and as close as possible to their Lord and Master, to whose service their lives were consecrated. It is because of this idea conscientiously lived out that this Commonwealth is so greatly indebted to them.

The author has selected as a type the Kloster at Ephrata (a name fragrant with biblical suggestive-

ness), the founder of which, Conrad Beissel, was a strong, intensely earnest, impetuous religious leader, who in a few years gathered about him a number of zealous men and women, some of them of considerable learning. In less than a decade there arose a semi-monastic community which developed into a religious, educational, commercial, and industrial settlement that at an early date set up in that far-away wilderness, many miles distant from the chief city of the province, the third printing press in the colony, and the first to print with both German and English type.

The little town, or "mountain borough," of Ephrata lies about eighteen miles southwest from the flourishing city of Reading and not more than thirteen miles northeast of Lancaster, with its memory of the Continental Congress, in the rich, fertile valley of the Cocalico in the northern part of Lancaster County.

The Ephrata of the present day, numbering possibly three thousand inhabitants, is situated at the foot of the gentle northwestern slope of the Ephrata Mountains. A broad main street that easily ascends toward the southeast leads up close to the "Ephrata Mountain Springs," a famous resort in the days before the war of the Rebellion. But directing one's way in the opposite direction, leaving the little town with its banks and hotels and industrial establishments, the unfailing accompani-

ments of these prosaic, unsentimental days, the wide, ancient thoroughfare leads northwestward, the business features giving way to the neat, pleasant, comfortable homes so characteristic of the Pennsylvania-Germans. The houses, with the peculiar feature of their gable ends toward the side instead of facing the street, are well set back in the grassy yards enriched with glorious dahlias in crimson and gold and ivory white, purple asters, bright geraniums, flaunting hollyhocks, and all the other well-beloved, old-fashioned favorites, while from the opulent garden in the rear, most likely a magnificent sunflower in solitary gorgeousness turns his dark, golden-fringed eye to his god of fire and light, now and then the whisper of some truant breeze swaying the stately head of the ardent devotee into a half-wistful glance out over the dusty road.

But neither these nor the spacious front porch, with its luxurious trellised vines and the inviting benches before the front door, receive more than an admiring and half-envious glance, and are left behind as the road passes over the arches of the old stone bridge that spans the Cocalico, flowing along the northwestern edge of the town. In the angle formed by the northern bank of the stream and the southern side of the turnpike road, but a short distance beyond the point of the angle where the road leaves the bridge, lie the Kloster grounds,

formerly known as "The Settlement of the Solitary" (*Lager der Einsamen*), but now locally referred to as "The Kloster," a full and excellent description of which is contained in "The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania," by Julius Friedrich Sachse, LITT. D., in which he has, after years of patient labor given us a most admirable, critical, and legendary history of the Ephrata Kloster.

Within the confines of this out of the way nook the author has placed the personages of this romance, which he fondly hopes may be of interest not only to Pennsylvania-Germans, but to all who delight in a story which is only a story. Over a century and a half has elapsed since the Sisterhood and Brotherhood were in the zenith of their little world, and it were well-nigh impossible to reproduce at this late day with absolute fidelity such matters as dress, customs, manners and habits, religious rites and ceremonies; and yet, thanks to the exhaustive investigations of Mr. Sachse and others, the author has been able to pattern forth in the warp and woof of this tale more or less distinctly, considerable that relates to the homely architecture, the cloïstral life, worship, rites, ceremonies, and beliefs of these peculiar but devoted, plain-living, high-thinking Sisters and Brothers.

To reproduce their speech, even if possible, were of course sadly out of place at this day; for the German, even of the early settlers, was represented

by such various dialects as Swabian, Würtemberger, Bavarian, Swiss, Hessian, Palatinate, and others ; and though these were all German dialects, yet since those days there has been such a copious infusion of English words, that to-day Pennsylvania-German, though "it is still, in the articulation of its bones and its general form and spirit, the tongue of the Rhine country,"<sup>1</sup> is none the less neither German nor English, but "a hybrid, non-descript jargon,"<sup>2</sup> at best an Americanized dialect of the German, but a dialect able to produce beautiful flowers in the fields of lyric poetry under the cultivation of such as Harbaugh, Hark, Zimmerman, Zeigler, Fisher, Grumbine, and others.

Pennsylvania-German being a dialect not of the almost universal English tongue but of the German, and what is especially to the point, a fast declining dialect with but a small remnant who can speak and understand it in the vernacular, the author feels not only that he should by employing this dialect address himself to an exceedingly small audience, but might, moreover, justly incur the charge of pedantry and affectation.

Thus while it is true that the greater number of the Sisters and Brothers of the Kloster were Germans and spoke the mother tongue in their daily intercourse, yet after all language is only the

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<sup>1</sup> "The Pennsylvania-German Dialect," by Lee L. Grumbine, Esq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

means of conveying ideas, thoughts, and these we know have a language understood by all.

Moreover, this volume is not presented from the standpoint of the antiquarian or philologist. The Brothers and Sisters of Ephrata, though celibates, sworn to the love of the celestial Eve and the heavenly Bridegroom, were none the less flesh and blood, subject to the same passions and temptations as the men and women of the present day. They too had "eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions," and were "fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer." In a word, they were men and women of like passions with ourselves.

It is of such men and women the author writes ; men and women unused "to the courtliness of state, unskilled in the hollowness of vain compliment, untutored in the frippery and polish of artificial society, unacquainted with the insincerity and diplomacy of the wider world, removed from kith and kin and thrown upon their own resources among strangers and amid new surroundings."<sup>1</sup>

The author, that he may not be held to have drawn too deeply from his neighbor's well, fully acknowledges his great indebtedness to his friend, Mr. Sachse. Indeed, to do exact justice, it must

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<sup>1</sup> Grumbine.

be said that this volume contains nothing more than a romance wound about the facts, incidents, traditions, and descriptions, taken by the author from the "German Sectarians," with the kind permission of Mr. Sachse.

Acknowledgment of indebtedness should also be made to Rev. J. Max Hark and Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, Governor of Pennsylvania, for the use of translations, portions of which are prefixed to Chapters XV. and XIX. It should also be added that the initial letters used through the book, as well as the design on the cover, are made from reproductions of pen-work drawings executed by the Ephrata Sisterhood.

THE AUTHOR.

# CONTENTS

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I. FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD . . . . .	I
II. "PETER THE HERMIT" . . . . .	10
III. SONNLEIN . . . . .	21
IV. WE LEAVE THE HERMITAGE . . . . .	30
V. EPHRATA . . . . .	40
VI. CONCERNING TAXATION . . . . .	51
VII. THE RIGHT PREVAILS . . . . .	69
VIII. OUR FIRST LOSS . . . . .	77
IX. A LOVE FEAST . . . . .	86
X. THE BROTHERHOOD OF ZION . . . . .	94
XI. BROTHER AGONIUS AND HIS PROPHECY . . .	108
XII. SISTER BERNICE IS COMFORTED . . . . .	127
XIII. THE COMET AND BROTHER ALBURTUS . . . .	135
XIV. OUR SISTER LEAVES US . . . . .	146
XV. THE GREAT COMET . . . . .	155



CHAPTER	PAGE
XVI. A FAR JOURNEY . . . . .	165
XVII. IN A STRANGE LAND . . . . .	176
XVIII. SONNLEIN COMETH TO MAN'S ESTATE . . .	193
XIX. WHEN HEARTS ARE YOUNG . . . . .	207
XX. SISTER GENOVEVA IS GONE . . . . .	223
XXI. BROTHER ALBURTUS . . . . .	235
XXII. SONNLEIN TAKETH THE ORDEAL . . . . .	249
XXIII. A MIDNIGHT VISIT . . . . .	265
XXIV. MINE ENEMY'S HIDING-PLACE . . . . .	281
XXV. THE END OF THE WITCH . . . . .	295
XXVI. THE TWAIN ARE MADE ONE . . . . .	305
XXVII. RETROSPECT . . . . .	324

## CHAPTER I

### FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD

Happy the man who has the town escaped ;  
To him the whistling trees, the murmuring brooks,  
The shining pebbles, preach  
Virtue's and wisdom's lore.

The whispering grove a holy temple is  
To him, where God draws nigher to his soul ;  
Each verdant sod a shrine,  
Whereby he kneels to heaven.

—*Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty.*



OR a clearer understanding of what I have here written in the fond desire that there may be those who delight in a tale simply told, even though it be of my brothers and sisters who lived their quiet, peaceful lives, with now and then, 'tis true, a jarring note, consecrated to their faith, in the solitude of a new-world wilderness, I must set forth, without weariness to the reader, I hope, somewhat of the

humble pilgrim whose now old and time-worn hands pen these lines.

I, Johann Peter Müller, son of a reformed minister, under the inspection of *Kreis Kaiserslautern*, was born in the year 1710, at Altzborn Oberamt Kaiserslautern in the Palatinate, studied at Heidelberg, matriculated 1725 at that university and in my twentieth year volunteered in response to the urgent calls for clergymen from the province of Pennsylvania.

Leaving my beloved father and mother and *Vaterland* in the summer of 1730, I floated on a raft down the Rhine to Rotterdam, embarking there for America on the good ship "Thistle," and after a long, uneventful voyage arrived at Philadelphia, August 28, 1730, taking the oath of allegiance the following day, which oath I am proud to say I have always kept. Almost immediately upon my arrival I applied to the Rev. Jedediah Andrews, for ordination, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

After asking me a great many questions he advised me to apply to the synod. This excellent advice was acted upon so promptly that in three weeks after my arrival the notes of the synod recorded, "It is agreed by the synod that Mr. John Peter Miller, a Dutch probationer lately come over, be left to the care of the presbytery of Philadelphia to settle him in the work of the ministry."

In pursuance of this resolution the presbytery appointed three ministers to examine me for entrance upon my holy office, and what they required of me is best shown by a minute of the meeting where I "came under Tryals and after a previous Test of his ability in Prayer, Examining him in the Languages, he read his sermon and Exegesis on ye Justification and Various suitable questions on ye Arts and Sciences, officially Theology and out of Scripture."

Briefly, the presbytery licensed me as a candidate to preach the gospel "where Providence may give him opportunity and call," and for four years after my ordination to the ministry I preached the word, during which period I received much assistance from Conrad Weiser, one of my church officers, who for years was consulted by both the civil and military authorities in times of need and danger, he being an efficient Indian interpreter to the government.

I officiated among my countrymen in Philadelphia and Germantown, and in the Skippack Valley, besides visiting the more widely scattered congregation in the province. I was also called upon to take regular charge of the Tulpehocken Church, together with the Union Congregation of the Lutheran and Reformed which had been formed by the Germans living in the valley of the Cocalico and the Bucherthal. This region was almost

wholly settled by those of the Lutheran and Reformed faiths, the circuit being known as the Canestoga congregation. Ere long a church for the United Congregation was built about six miles northeast of Ephrata on a commanding hill beyond the Bucherthal, the Moden Crik (Muddy Creek) Church.

Having preached to mine own people for several years, I quit the ministry and returned to private life, not, however, without much prayer and meditation ; for about that time the Ephrata community was in its infancy. I had never had much inclination to join it, because of the reproach and contempt which lay against the community by the orthodox churches of the province ; but my inward conductor brought me to that dilemma, either to be a member of this new institution or consent to my own damnation. I chose the first, and received baptism into the congregation in May of 1735, together with Conrad Weiser and a number of families from the Union Church. We were baptized by Conrad Beissel, whose inspired eloquence had finally prevailed upon me to take this step.

I did not much differ from a poor criminal under sentence of death when I was led into the water. However, the Lord our God did strengthen me when I came into the water, and then I in a solemn manner renounced my life with all its prerogatives, without reservation, and I have found, in all my

long life, that all this was put into the divine records, for he hath never failed to assist me in times of need, and these have been many.

But much wrath and indignation was engendered against us by our baptism. We were called "seceders," "rebels," "Beisselianer"; others said we had been deluded by the witchcraft and sorcery of Beissel; still others said that our conversion was the work of the Evil One; others were for bringing civil action against us; but in all the noise and smoke of this great tumult, Brother Weiser successfully prevented any charges being brought against us. Pastor Boehm, my old Skippack rival, hath kindly said of me in this matter in his report to the Amsterdam Synod: "This Miller at the same time drew the Tulpehocken church to himself, against whose false spirit I frequently warned them; but they continued to adhere to him like misguided, silly people. Finally, the fraud against which I warned them so honestly and continuously has come to light, and this Miller publicly went over to the dissolute Seventh-day Tumbler sect, and had himself baptized Tumblerwise in the Canestoka, in the month of April, 1735. He took out ten families, Reformed and Lutheran, from the Tulpehocken congregation, who did as he did."

May the Lord forgive him for his narrow sneer as I have long ago, for it hath ever been my rule not to bear spite or malice, no matter how grievous

the injury, knowing full well that what the Roman philosopher hath said is true, and that is, "Malice drinks one-half of its own poison."

Brother Weiser, I regret to say, did not possess himself of the same spirit; but on the contrary always resented every insult, and it is still current among us that shortly after he left the Kloster in later years to accept a justice's commission offered him by Governor Thomas, our Brother Weiser, while riding the road to Reading, met the Reformed pastor of the Cocalico, on his nag. Brother Weiser, foolishly forgetting the spirit of humility of the Kloster, cried out to the pastor that he surely must think himself above his Lord whom he professed to serve. Asked for an explanation, Brother Weiser replied that where an ass was good enough for the Saviour it should be good enough for his followers, to which came the quick rejoinder that this was perfectly true, but as Governor Thomas had appointed all the asses as justices, people were forced to ride upon horses.

Within two days after our baptism, and in order that we might cut ourselves entirely loose from our former mode of life and thought, we determined that all books which were now considered *libri heretici*, such as the Heidelberg Catechism, Luther's Catechism, the Psalter, and Arndt's "*Paradies Gärtlein*," should be utterly consumed by fire. In short, all devotional literature of the old faith not

in accord with our new departure, we gathered from the various families that had been converted, and not a few from mine own little library, and upon the appointed day Brother Weiser and the converts and myself assembled at the little cabin of Brother Fiedler, and there solemnly condemned the pernicious volumes to be burned.

The "*Paradies Gärtlein*," however, had a peculiar sanctity attached to it by the German settlers; for it was firmly believed that it was protected by Divine interposition from both fire and flood. I had heard, even in my boyhood days, many a story of the miraculous preservation of this book. Some present objected to its being included, for surely the Lord would save it. Others, as ardent in their new faith as they had been in the old, no more honored the book as sacred, but were now firmly convinced that as its immunity hitherto had been from the Evil One, the greater the reason it must be destroyed with the others.

The brush heap was accordingly prepared in front of Brother Fiedler's cabin. Each of the participants gathered up an armful of the doomed volumes, and at the word filed out of the little doorway headed by myself, followed by the schoolmaster. Arriving at the brush heap it was soon set afire, and the various books were solemnly consigned to the flames by Brother Weiser and the schoolmaster and others, with the solemn invoca-



tion "Thus perish all priestcraft!" Afterward the ashes were scattered to the four winds, and we departed feeling that we had thus cut ourselves off from the faith of our forefathers and had this day taken a step pregnant with glorious promise for the future.

It was said the next day, and I firmly believe this was an invention of our enemies, that one of Brother Fiedler's family found among the now cold ashes the little "*Paradies Gärtlein*," a trifle charred on the edges, the leather cover shriveled and blackened, the clasps almost burned to a crisp, but the leaves still holding together, and not a page of the print in the slightest impaired. Its preservation soon became noised abroad, and was greatly used as an argument against us by those who opposed our step. As for me, despite the many foolish and malicious charges that have been made against my soundness of mind for taking part in this thing (which I defend on the ground of necessity and possibly due somewhat to youthful zeal) I never believed that the book had been saved but for the reason that when it was thrown into the pyre it was tightly clasped and by chance fell to one side of the flames, and as I have often noted—paper tightly pressed together yields but grudgingly to the flames. Many good people, however, believed the miracle story and feared extreme punishment for condemning such a sacred volume to

destruction, and the demand became so great for the book that an edition was later printed by Christopher Sauer, of Germantown ; but strange to say not one of his great output was able to withstand either fire or flood when it came into contact with these elements.

## CHAPTER II

### "PETER THE HERMIT"

Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heaven doth shew,  
And every herb that sips the dew ;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like poetic strain.  
These pleasures, Melancholy, give :  
And I with thee will choose to live.

—*Il Penseroso.*



WITHIN a few weeks after the events already narrated, Brother Beissel made another visit to Dulpehackin with the intention of forming the converts into a new congregation, with myself as leader. When this proposal was made to me, I requested over night for reflection and prayer. In my zeal I had thought my recent baptism had cleansed and purified me from all fleshly lusts and from all such heaven-separating vanities as pride and ambition ; but that night witnessed

within me such a struggle between evil ambition on the one hand, and the desire to surrender myself completely to my Maker on the other, as I shall never forget.

To be elder of the as yet little band of followers of Brother Beissel, what might it not lead to? For I doubted not at the time but that the little band would eventually grow into a large congregation whose influence should be far-reaching. Like the mustard seed it might grow and increase until the whole world were living as one grand, consecrated sisterhood and brotherhood.

Some such splendid temptation the Evil One dangled before my eyes during that long night, but with the dawning my mind became clearer and the last star had just closed its eyes when I felt stealing over me a feeling of sureness that I would do what was right, and with that I felt myself pervaded with a sense of ineffable peace.

When Brother Beissel saw me in the morning, anxious for my reply, I told him I must decline his offer as I intended to withdraw into the solitudes and live unmolested from the frailties and follies of the world.

He acquiesced with a cheerfulness which I confess hurt the remnant of pride in me and which, I fear, hath ever been imperfectly suppressed, for I had hoped he would show his appreciation of me and what I was able to do by expressing at least some

regret. But that pride is ever the forerunner of a fall is, indeed, true, and my chagrin was not relieved any upon Brother Beissel's calmly announcing, as if it had all been prearranged, that he would appoint as teacher, or elder, of the congregation, Bro. Michael Wohlforth, whom I knew and respected for his sturdy love of our cause, but who, by reason of the infirmity of a harsh tongue and violent temper—and I regret to say it, though in charity—was not too well fitted for an office that requireth a gentle tongue, there being, as human flesh is made up, a limit even to Christian forbearance.

At that time, in May, 1735, the Solitary Brethren and Sisters had dispersed in the wilderness of Conestogas, each for himself, as hermits, and I, following that same way, did set up my hermitage in Dulpehackin, at the foot of a mountain, on a limpid stream; and that they who in these days live in their large, comfortable houses may know what the hermits' homes were like, I shall set forth how my own little hut, or cabin, was built, as a great many cabins of the first settlers were after the same pattern.

These be the dimensions of the proper model, which I set down in all particularity, so that if there be of my readers who ever take themselves to a life of solitude they may know how the true hermit should be housed, for I know there be

many that have not this knowledge and thus are in exceeding danger of running after some vulgar variation of the ideal model : Length, twenty-five feet ; breadth, twenty feet ; height under joist, eight feet six inches. The measurements must be no more, no less. The door should open toward the south to catch the sun, and above the doorway must be a small overhead piece, or porch, six feet from floor to ceiling. As I was fully six feet, if not more, my head and my pride received at first many a hard knock whenever I forgot that a hermit, at least if he be tall, must not walk with too haughty a stride. For the foundation we, my faithful adherents and myself, took four large stones, as flat and even as we could find, about a foot thick, and laid them for the corners, so that the floors of our huts would be clear from the damp ground ; but, and this was not so desirable, not only the smaller wild animals would creep underneath, but occasionally some straying serpent would stick its repulsive head out at me and make me regret that a hermit's hut must needs offer such attractions to these monsters.

Upon the stone foundations the ground logs were laid. These were notched at the ends and fastened with hickory pins. Smaller logs inserted into these longer ones formed the floor joists, though in most cases a solid log floor was laid. The cabin was then raised upon the ground joists,

the logs being run upon skids by the help of wooden forks, the corners of the logs being notched so as to bring them as close together as possible. In this work I could not give much help, for this notching and fitting together was done by experienced ones, called the axe, or cornermen. The less experienced of us carried the logs and ran them up into place, the doors and windows not being cut until all the logs were resting snug and secure in their places. But with all the care in fitting the logs closely, there were cracks and crevices that had to be filled with a mixture of loam and dry grass, so that the cabin might be proof against rain or snow and not give too draughty ventilation. For the rafters we took chestnut saplings, hewn flat on the top, and these were usually covered with shingles of flat oak, although it sometimes occurred that a temporary thatch or sod roof had to serve until the oak shingles were prepared. Last of all came the fireplaces and chimneys. Both of these were built of loam and stones outside, at one end of the cabin. Thus from the simple materials that lay at our hands and feet—the trees, the stones, and the earth—our cabins were built, and though small and insignificant as the worldly-wise consider things, were not too small to hold heads and hearts that thought and throbbed greatly for God and man. No iron was used, for as at Ephrata, when

it came to be organized into a community, we ever regarded iron as an evil metal. The temple of Solomon was built wholly without iron, and according to the Rosicrucians, from whom we had learned much concerning the mysteries of the Infinite, we were taught that no dwelling or building consecrated to the Almighty could have iron in it, as that metal was the emblem of darkness and destruction—nay, of the Evil One himself.

My little hut, so securely built, is still there, as are the old trees in the orchard I planted in those early days. Sometimes in later life, when even the Kloster wore upon me, I have resorted to this sequestered spot, quietly and unbeknown to the others, there to renew my faith and strength by undisturbed communion with God, reading and pondering with never lessening delight upon this little page out of his wonderful book of nature, for it was a lovely nook, an ideal retreat. The little *Mühlbach*, clear and cold and sparkling and pure as the water of life, came dancing joyously down the dale, kissing many a wild flower looking at its mirrored sweetness as it hung over the bushy brink. Many a time have I wandered along its wooded sides, drinking in, in all its fullness and completeness, the solemnity, the holy stillness of the long aisles of stately pine and heavy fir and balsam, with their fragrant odors rising from this woodland temple like incense toward heaven.



The only sounds that broke the stillness were the murmurous song of the stream, the chirp of insects, and now and then the choiring of the feathered songsters of these delightful glades. Such was the incomparable spot selected by me, now a recluse, for my probation and retirement, and here I fondly imagined I might live in beatific and solitary communion with Him; but I see now that this blissful idleness was not to be mine; for his service means more than a mere folding of the hands and pious meditation and contemplation of his beauty, his goodness, and his mercy.

Here I lived in all the simplicity that seemed to me best comported with the life of a hermit. My bodily wants, though oft clamorous, displeasing me much as showing how close I still was to earth, had to be content with exceeding little; my little cabin sheltered me from storms—a hard bench to sleep on, a long cloak of most humble make and material to form my covering; for drink, the pure water from a near-by spring, varied sometimes by acorn coffee; and for bread and meat, a bread made from acorn flour.

There may be those who care to know how this acorn coffee and acorn bread were made, not only by me, but by Brother Beissel and others who were leading lives of solitude; and lest some think we were utterly daft in relying upon this for sustenance, it may be said that it was not original

with us; but we were taught that from the earliest days of man the oak, wherever it grew, furnished him both meat and drink from the acorn and contained all that was necessary for his nourishment.

For making bread the acorns were first soaked in water, or steamed, to free the bitterness; they were then dried and ground into meal which was afterward worked up in the usual manner. This bread, which we in German called *Eichelbrod*, had as much sustenance as *Pumpernickel* (a favorite bread among the German peasants), but was wont to occasion more trouble for the digestion.

As a substitute for coffee the largest and soundest acorns were selected, only the thoroughly ripe ones being used. They were then hulled and taken out of their cups, cut into quarters and scalded with boiling water, after which they were drained and allowed to cool. After being placed in a bake oven until they were thoroughly dry, they were finally roasted and ground, in which state they were ready for use.

To make acorn coffee we would take about a drachm of the grindings for every three cups of boiling water, which we poured over the powdered acorns and boiled for about ten minutes. I must confess I never cared very much for this concoction for it lacked both the taste and gentle stimulation of the regular coffee. This acorn coffee was accredited with wonderful medicinal and mystical

properties and was supposed to drive all hereditary taint or distemper from the system. Indeed, even now it is frequently given to children afflicted with scrofula. I recollect that afterward in the early days of our community life at Ephrata there came to us one Jean François Regnier, a French-Switzer, whom we regarded as a visionary, as he claimed to have been awakened in his seventh year and professed great holiness. He was the special apostle of the acorn diet, not only claiming it to be good for food and as a substitute for coffee, but he also made a sort of vinegar from acorns and an excellent sort of whiskey which we used only in illness, but never as a drink, for our community never permitted the use of strong liquors to corrupt the body and inflame the imagination. Brother Regnier also made a sort of *Analeptikum*, or tonic, to be used after any serious illness. For this purpose the acorns were to be buried when the moon was in a certain quarter, I forget which, until they had lost their bitterness, after which they were dried, roasted, and powdered and mixed with sugar and certain aromatic herbs.

For myself I never could see much in this acorn diet, for I grieve to say that all my life I have had a most unpriestly appetite. I fear I was never made for scanty fare. Be this as it may, I know that the Rosicrucians taught that the oak furnished the first food for mankind, the acorn being

the meat and the honey-dew (*Honigmüth*) the drink. The Rosicrucians also taught that the rustle of the foliage of the oak denoted the presence of the Deity and even at Ephrata the Zionitic Brethren were wont to wander in the forest and appeal to the oracles of the oak, as the Druids had done in Britain hundreds of years before. It was also fully believed that when the time of the complete restoration of brotherly love should come there would come with it the primeval simplicity, when man's entire sustenance would be drawn from the oak. All these things were exceedingly difficult for me to believe, and I was even suspected of heresy because I could not subscribe to these extravagant beliefs.

Thus housed and fed I hoped to live out my days; but how utterly foolish is the boasted wisdom and foresight of man; for how true it is that we never know what a day may bring forth! When I went to my rest one night not many days after my retirement to this spot I had no thought but that here in this quiet, peaceful retreat, far away from the distracting cares and temptations of a gain-seeking, pleasure-loving world, I should live a calm, serene life, consecrated by daily communion with Him who filled it.

In this mind, while above the roof of my hut the night glowed with stars, sown by my Creator as thickly over the blue fields of heaven as the

husbandman scatters his seed across his broad acres, I sank into sweet, refreshing, dreamless sleep ; and yet not wholly dreamless, for it seemed to me, far in the night, I heard a light footstep near and saw a woman's form filling the doorway that stood open as was my habit, night and day, and then I thought I heard a cry—the cry of a child—but which to my sleep-deadened ears was also like unto the scream of some wild creature of the dense mountain forest behind my hut ; for I often heard such cries and occasionally detected the stealthy footsteps of the wild beasts that prowled near my dwelling, under the dark mantle of night ; but dream or no dream, I heard nothing more and slept on undisturbed until the light of the dawn shining through the doorway bade me arise.

## CHAPTER III

### SONNLEIN

And when the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring  
To archèd walks of twilight groves,  
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,  
Of pine, or monumental oak,  
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke  
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.  
There, in close covert, by some brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look,  
Hide me from day's garish eye.

—*Il Penseroso.*



HE dawn was still blushing at the greeting of the sun when, as usual, I took my way with bowed head to an old monarch pine, my altar, to greet the day with prayer. Absorbed in pious meditations I knelt down; but just as I was closing my eyes, I felt something lightly strike, or push, my knee. Still unheeding I knelt, when a

more vigorous push made me turn to see what venturesome creature had the temerity to disturb my adorations. I shall never forget the bewilderment that encompassed me when I beheld beside me, lying at the foot of the old pine, the form of a child, almost covered with leaves and cones. But this little visitant, of earth or heaven, child or cherub—I scarce could believe mine own senses! In truth, I know not how long I knelt there, mouth agape, eyes wide open and hands outstretched. But finally I recovered myself sufficiently to see that miracle or no miracle, the being was a reality. And then brushing aside the leaves I scrutinized the little foundling more closely; for sleeping it was, as sweetly and trustfully as if in the *Mutterchen's* arms, instead of on the hard bosom of mother earth with a wilderness about it. The little head with its tangled mass of dark, silky hair was resting against a large, sheltering root that reached out from the base of the pine, in a broad, tender arm-like curve about the babe. Recently dried tears had furrowed the not over-clean face, flushed with sleep, with grimy little water courses. A stained and tattered white baby cloak afforded scanty covering for the child; for beneath the frayed edges extended the poor, tiny, wayworn feet, which, like the chubby hands, were torn and scratched with thorns, filling my soul with pity, and with indignation at the wretch



"In truth I know not  
how long I knelt there."  
Page 22.





who could thus desert an innocent child ; and my wrath was not diminished when I felt that hair and face and hands and feet were damp with dew.

And yet the dear stranger slept on so unconscious of such trifling things as dew and hard, earthen cradle, I could not find the will to awaken the little one. Instead, I turned again toward the east and raising mine eyes to Him I implored and beseeched him, with all the power I could put into my petition, to guide and direct me in the care and conduct of this lost, orphaned one ; for somehow—I never knew why—I accepted the idea unhesitatingly that this child had come into my life to be a part of it to the end of my days. My prayer ended, I saw that my charge still slept. I quietly sat down on a rock near by and watched and waited for the awakening.

How long I sat I know not, motionless as to body but of a verity sadly puzzled in mind as to how the child came there and what I should do with it in my hermit life amid such wild surroundings. From the leafy coverts about me came the calls and the chattering of the birds greeting the morn with such lusty will I was almost minded to join in, but wisely refrained lest my heavy voice arouse the sleeper and mayhap drive far from me the cheerful songsters. A saucy red squirrel with waving, rearward plume came down the old pine, stopping now and then to bark defiance at sleeper

and watcher. Still nearer the red rover came, his proud plume fairly quivering with excitement. Once he rushed down in a burst of half-hearted confidence, coming almost to my feet, looking up at me as though challenging to mortal combat—and then with might and main he scampered back again, his long tail almost brushing the face of the little slumberer, as the bold tree-dweller rushed far up into the branches of the pine, as if he never again would be so rash and heedless.

At last, however, the little form at the foot of the tree moved uneasily and the yawnings and twistings showed that the awakening had come; and so it had. The little one sat up rubbing its eyes and blinking and winking, when suddenly it saw me and then such a full-lunged cry burst forth as drove the red squirrel in precipitate flight far into the depths of the forest and also drove me into a state verging upon imbecility; for verily I knew not what to do. The more I tried to soothe the child, the louder it yelled and truly my patience was tried most sorely. But I have since learned that the cry of a healthy child, however lusty, does not last long and so after many rubbings of the eyes and gradually subsiding sobs, and sundry sniffs, the little wanderer took out of my large, awkward hands the pretty wild flower I had plucked, and actually laughed as the big, dark eyes looked trustfully into mine.

I asked it in German to tell me its name—where was the *Mutterchen*? but the big eyes grew bigger still and a quivering of the underlip warned me I was only frightening the poor child. If not German, surely English, and again I asked, and this time in English, “What is thy name?” My little visitor looked at me gravely and then as if surprised that I should not know, said—a trifle crossly, I thought—what sounded to me like “Tass.” “Tass what?” I insisted gently, but he only replied more firmly as he rose to his feet holding on to my hand, “No Tass Wot, Tass!” And then as if a great thought had come to him he said proudly, “Me gone be man some day; me find faver.” “Very well, ‘Tass,’ where’s *Mutterchen*—I mean mother, mamma?” But the mention of “mamma” was too much for the overburdened little heart and flinging himself into my arms, his tiny hands clasping my neck, he cried as if he never would be consoled again. But I did the only thing I could do, let him cry; and I have since learned that it is an excellent thing not only for the tiny folk, when troubles press heavily on their little souls, but even for us larger children to cry it out and have done with it.

But when he was through crying for the time at least for his “mamma,” another problem stared me in the face like some hungry beast; for the poor child cried over and over with irritating per-

sistence, "Me wants sumfin to eat"; and "me hungry"; or "Me want watta," or "Me want mik." The "watta" I readily interpreted was water, which was soon supplied to him from the fresh, sweet product of the spring in the rear of my hut; but what "mik" meant I could not for some time decide; for I did not recollect that I had ever heard such a word in German, or English, or Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew, or any other language. At last it struck me it was an English baby word for milk. But I hardly knew how to get him that, since I kept no cows or goats. In short, in my hermit's life I never saw any milk and I could not run the risk of destroying the child's stomach with my acorn coffee; yet I did not know how to get him the milk, for which he cried incessantly. It was some distance to the nearest clearing where I could procure milk and it was much too far for him to walk, and indeed, rather far for me to carry him. Moreover, I did not care as yet to introduce him to the simple-minded but suspicious settlers, for I knew full well what a harvest of insults and taunts I should reap from my enemies who had not gone out with me should I suddenly appear with this little boy.

But if I could not take him along I did not see how I could leave him behind. However, I took him into my hut, and for the first time it seemed bare and cold and cheerless. I ventured a small

piece of a loaf of acorn bread on which my teeth had been paying penance for over a week. He ate the hard dry crust as though it had been the choicest morsel and then calmly announced that he wanted "moe."

"Merciful Father," thought I, "where am I to find food for this little glutton?" as I respected his request by handing him such a generous portion of the loaf as I thought would surely keep him quiet for the rest of the day.

It was evident I must take account of his appetite, and leaving him in the hut, closing the door behind me and fastening it so, as I thought, that such a small child could not open it, I marched forth to the nearest settler's, to one of the families that had followed me in my baptism by Brother Beissel.

After loading me up with *Swartzbrod*, a rough sort of rye bread, but exceedingly wholesome, and with a small crock of apple butter and some smoked meat of the pig, besides giving me a jug of fresh milk, the good sister remarked with that inquisitive hunger for news that is ever present in the lonely dwellers of the wilderness, whether I had company, because I took so much more than usual.

In my confusion, I hurriedly said "Nay," but recollecting I must not lie, I shouted back as I started off rapidly, "Yea, a little, not much," leaving the good sister staring at my retreating

form as though she greatly feared much piety had made me mad.

As I approached the clearing, burdened with my rich cargo—even to this day I smile when I think how eager and anxious I was to get back and find that boy safe—I saw that the door of my hut was wide open. I fairly gasped with apprehension. Had he been spirited away as mysteriously as he had come? I rushed into the cabin letting my load fairly fall from me as I looked about everywhere and into the most foolish places for this strange child. Then out again and to the old pine where I had first found him; but he was not there; back again toward the hut, my heart in my throat, I went, but how joy possessed my soul when hearing a gurgling and a bubbling and a laughing and crowing behind me I turned about like a flash and there sat the blessed rogue, his bare legs and feet swinging and splashing, kicking up and down, in my spring.

When he saw me he looked up with such a glad knowledge of me that I forgot to scold him for his vandalism and catching him in my arms I carried him crowing and kicking to the hut, where he filled himself so full with milk and meat and the fresh rye bread that I was greatly alarmed immediately lest he might become ill from his gorging; but he minded it not in the least and ere many hours had gone by was clamoring for more, so

that I doubted not the rest of my hermit life would be spent in making trips to the settlements for something to eat for this hungry mannikin.

Indeed, I should like to tell of all his bright ways and the wonderful things he would say all during the remaining summer we lived here in this lonely spot. At first he often cried for "mamma," but gradually he seemed to forget her and greatly delighted me by calling me "faver," which in later years he changed to the more affectionate *Vaterchen*. I tried almost every day for a long while to get him to tell me his name, but beyond assuring me it was "Tass," I never could learn anything. At first, I called him *Söhnlein*, but soon after, upon reflecting that he was English and not German, it seemed but just that I should make his name at least half in his mother tongue, and this I did by calling him Sonnlein, for a precious little son he was to me.

The cloak I preserved most carefully hoping that some day it might help me find my boy's parents; especially did I care to keep it because I had noticed worked on it in pretty red letters the initials "C. S.," but beyond this there was absolutely nothing about the cloak or any of the child's clothing in which I found him, to tell who he was or whence he came; nor did any reports come as to any lost child, so that I was confirmed in my first belief that he was mine for the rest of my days.



## CHAPTER IV

### WE LEAVE THE HERMITAGE

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

—*Bible.*



THUS our souls came closer and closer to each other, day after day, and grew into a love that bound us together as one for life. It seemed as though the father and mother love he had lost were all given to me ; for children must turn their love toward somebody or something, as surely as the rivers run to the sea whence they come. As for me, I doubt not that the love which is in every man, more or less, saint or sinner, turned me so strongly toward this pretty little fellow, with all his taking ways, as if he had been my own flesh and blood.

In this sweet companionship we drank in together the springtime splendor all about us, when the brook flashed bright as silver and the wooded

hill in the rear of my hut was gay with the songs of the little birds, their delicate harmonies frequently emphasized by the harsh cawing of the crows flying in a thin line overhead, while from the deep recesses of the forest came now and then the long drum call of some proud partridge calling to himself with lordly air, so I imagined, his numerous wives, or, perchance, bidding indignant defiance to some intruding brother partridge.

But the glory of the spring soon merged into the glowing beauty of summer, and all too soon for me and Sonnlein, who like the birds and the beasts were ever out of doors, came the fall, with its magnificent coloring of hill and woods; but none the less the shortening days and the keen air were portentous of the dying year and the cold, dreary winter that ere long would shut us off still more from my followers from whose visits I received such great comfort and delight.

But the inevitable, inquisitive mischief makers also came all too frequently, and these, especially they that held me as a heretic, presuming on my meekness of temper could find no sneer or taunt or insult too mean not only for me but even for my innocent boy, who the malicious ones pretended to believe was a child of mine and some nameless woman's.

Had my persecutors known how my soul raged within me, the chains of my will being scarce

stout enough to hold my wrath, when they thus insulted Sonnlein and spat even on him as being the "devil's spawn," just as they oft spat on me, they had not been so bold; for though I always have had the heart of a priest my Maker saw fit to give me the strength and stature of a warrior, so that it had been no great task for me to pick up my tormentors bodily and hurl them headlong into the brook—and at times I wondered whether I had not been justified had I done so. But my wise father had early impressed on me that any weakling can resent injury, while only a truly great nature can forgive; that the more we learn to forgive, the more we grow like Him who suffered everything and forgave all. So in all the afflictions mine enemies heaped upon me, especially through my boy, the chains, I rejoice to say, always held, though greatly strained, and instead of revenging myself I merely uttered an inward prayer for my tormentors, and in the long years allotted to me—so wonderful is God's wisdom—it hath fallen to me more than once that they who treated me so vilely came to see the error of their ways and were glad thereafter to hold me in their esteem and friendship. Truly, time and loving patience conquer all evil.

As the fall advanced I found though I had left the world, the world had not left me, and the melancholy temptations which troubled me every

day did prognosticate to me misery and afflictions, so that Sonnlein not infrequently seeing me in this gloomy state would confide to his playmates, the birds and flowers, that I was cross. Indeed, I came to the conclusion that under the pretense of holiness, I was doing nothing but nourishing my own selfishness, and I knew full well that selfishness cometh only from the Evil One.

But while I was in this state matters were shaping themselves for my redemption from this narrow, hermit's life; for when I withdrew from the world a number of brethren and sisters were living the solitary life dispersed in the wilderness of the Canestogues; but strangely enough and yet perhaps not so strange—for the right human heart leaneth toward the companionship of others—during the summer a camp was laid out for all the Solitary at the very spot where now the Kloster stands, and where at that time Brother Beissel, the leader of the hermits, among whom were the four Eckerling brothers, lived down in the meadow, near a spring, and nigh the Cocalico, which name hath its ancestry from the Indian *Hoch-Halekung*, meaning “the den of serpents,” for that the low lands along this stream were infested with water snakes.

The little camp on the Cocalico grew rapidly, accessions coming from many directions. The Germantown Dunkers after the death of their

patriarch, Alexander Mack, a veritable saint, sent no less than seventeen members. Others came from Falkner Swamp, from Oley and elsewhere, so that the settlement soon grew into large proportions. But for all these good people there was no cabin or house large enough for the holding of worship, as the little hermit huts were barely big enough for their own occupants. The largest building within the *Lager* was a cabin built against the hillside, wherefore this cabin was called the *Berghaus* (Hill-house); but even this was too small to hold the love feasts and the meetings.

While matters were thus progressing on the Cocalico, I was greatly surprised one morning, just as day was breaking, to see Brother Beissel coming toward my hut, Sonnlein for a wonder being still asleep. As he saw me, he hastened forward with his gentlest smile; for though he could be as stern and forbidding as Jove, our brother could, when it pleased him, use all the wiles and arts of Mercurius; so that, though I have ever been loth to suspect others of aught ill, I could not help wondering what new thing was on foot for tempting me.

"Surely, my dear brother, I marvel not that thou preferrest this paradise to our mean little place on the Cocalico," he said; for he always affected great humility, even though with all his godly zeal he was exceedingly proud and stubborn and often harsh and violent.

"Paradise it may be," I replied quietly, "and yet every earthly paradise hath its serpent to lead the sons of Adam into sin."

"Thou meanest the child?" he insinuated.

"Nay, not the child," I repeated with unbecoming heat. "Were it not for his dear companionship I had been unable long ago to remain apart from the world."

"It is verily true the hermit life hath its temptations and tribulations," remarked Brother Beissel, so quietly I should not have suspected anything had it not been he was watching my face closely all the while. But with all my simplicity I was not such an utter stranger to his dissimulation that he could wind me about his fingers like wax.

"So," I merely responded, "it hath, verily."

After a few minutes, during which he coughed lightly a few times and scratched the ground with his stick, he inquired indifferently, "Hast heard of our change on the Cocalico?"

"Naught much," I replied, also indifferently, being determined to make him come to the point, if it took all day, for I knew he had something at heart which in good time I should hear.

"Hast heard we have almost completed a large building where our Brothers and Sisters may worship?" he inquired.

"I have heard so," I made answer, still with seeming indifference.

And then he paused even longer than before and scratched the earth thoughtfully, neither of us saying a word. Then he resumed as though partly speaking to himself and partly to me: "This house which we have erected to the glory of God we have called Kedar, 'the house of sorrowfulness'"; after another pause, "it containeth a hall for the meetings and likewise still larger halls furnished for holding the love feasts. There are also a number of *Kammers* intended for the Solitary, after the manner of the early Greek Church."

"Ye have built wisely," I said, still quietly.

Then the longest pause of all, at the end of which he placed his hands meekly across his breast, saying to me as he turned about to leave: "When thou art minded to leave thy hermit's life, we shall give thee welcome at Ephrata."

He had actually proceeded, but slowly as if in deep thought, almost beyond the farther boundary of my little orchard, when he turned about gravely and came back again like one who had forgotten something. "Now," thought I, "shall I see the kernel of the nut he hath been cracking"; for I had not stirred, knowing he would return, and as he came toward me he said, watching me closely: "Our good Brother Michael Wohlforth exhorteth the Solitary with exceeding harshness and violence."

"Still they should heed him for I hear he is a godly man," I replied.

"But Brother Weiser and his followers can no longer bear Brother Michael Wohlforth's temper."

"A little temper will not hurt the Solitary."

"But Brother Wohlforth hath been recalled as teacher," continued Brother Beissel.

"There be many among you to take his place," I assured him.

"Nay, not so many, for upon the recalling of Brother Wohlforth, he was succeeded by Brother Emanuel Eckerling."

"A worthy man," I said strongly.

"But he preacheth too long; sometimes he discourseth even six hours without a stop."

"Surely he is of most excellent zeal," I murmured, smiling inwardly.

"The Solitary incline to think six hours be too long even for preaching," said Brother Beissel doubtfully.

"Six hours' preaching doth seem of rather great length," I admitted; "still an eloquent man maketh the time fly on swift wings."

"But our good Brother Emanuel is not eloquent. Before he hath spoken half an hour, most of the Solitary be asleep, so that this thing is a great disgrace to us."

"Surely the Brethren are not so rude and ungodly?" I asked innocently.

"Yea, I grieve that he too was recalled, and now we have no one that seemeth suitable."



"Thou hast forgotten thyself," I reminded him.

But he felt not the point. Instead he blurted out as I liked better to hear him, forgetting all his serpent's slyness—which I dislike greatly in man or woman—"We want thee, Brother Miller. The Solitary all want thee. We must have thee. I am enjoined not to return without thee." Brother Beissel could be just as outspoken as he could be insinuating. "What sayest thou?"

"Doth the invitation extend to the child?" said I pointing to my boy who had by this time come out to me and was hanging shyly to my hand, and looking with no great favor upon Brother Beissel.

"If needs be he come with thee, the invitation extends to him," he replied, although I thought reluctantly.

"Then we come," I promised him, whereupon our brother turned to say "Good-bye," but the strange feeling between Sonnlein and Brother Beissel, for some reason or other never wholly left either.

But even though I had chosen with so little hesitation to cast my lot and Sonnlein's with our Brothers and Sisters at Ephrata, I found that my hermit's life, with all its lack of companionship and intercourse with kindred souls was after all very dear to me, so that I was almost resolved to recall my promise; but in my bewilderment I turned to Him for help and guidance, and after

long and earnest prayer it became clear to me it was my duty that Sonnlein and I join ourselves to Brother Beissel and his followers.

The simple preparations for our departure were soon made. My hut and the little garden adjoining and my apple orchard were consigned to the care of one of my nearest adherents, and in a few days after Brother Beissel's visit, Sonnlein and I, my back loaded with my books, among them a number of volumes on the law, of which science I have been all my life an eager student, started out together sorrowfully enough for Brother Klopff's cabin, where he and his household, as well as Conrad Weiser and Hans Michael Miller and their families, and several men and women were gathered waiting for me and Sonnlein.

A brief season of the morning was spent in praise and prayer, after which we solemnly proceeded on foot—except Sonnlein, who had to be carried much of the way on our backs—to Ephrata, and by evening we were in the welcoming folds of the little community of which Sonnlein and I and most of the Dulpehackin converts became an abiding part.

## CHAPTER V

### EPHRATA

That we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.

—*New Testament.*



IN this wise Sonnlein and I came to Ephrata, the "fruitful," or like Bethlehem of Judea, the "House of Bread," and in this beautiful, peaceful camp, whose narrow domains embraced the rich, green meadows along the northern banks of the gentle Calico and the higher ground, named by us Mount Sinai, rising from the meadows, Sonnlein and I were destined to learn, after the long lapse of years, the mystery of his coming to me. Surely, then, I may look for forgiveness if at times I delay my story to tell somewhat of the manner of our life with the rest of the Solitary in this little forest-hidden corner of our large world.

When our little party arrived at Ephrata, we received a grave but none the less soul-satisfying welcome ; but as the Solitary always had great regard for the value of time, we new-comers, without waiting to be bid, at once added our labors toward the completion of Kedar, which though by now was under roof, was unprepared for its sacred purposes.

I fear no contradiction when I state that this structure was different from anything then to be found in the New World. As in the building of our cabins, there was no iron whatever used in the construction of Kedar. The material used was the timber we cut from the trees in the forest about us. The spaces between the framework and the floor joists were filled with wet clay from the banks of the Cocalico and cut grass from the meadow, the sides then being coated with a thin layer of lime prepared from the rocks near by. This filling was a peculiarity also of all our large later structures and had the advantage that it made the house warm in winter and cool in summer, and what was also exceedingly desirable, this filling was impervious to vermin. Incredible as it may seem, even our fireplaces and chimneys were built of wood and lined with this mixture.

In height, Kedar was of three stories, of which the chief one was in the middle. This contained the *Saal*, or meeting room, as well as the rooms

necessary for holding the *agapae*, or love feasts. The first story, or ground floor, was divided off into small rooms or cells called *Kammern*, for the Solitary. These cells were so exceedingly small that the Solitary had barely room to turn about though there was but one Solitary to each *Kammer*. The white walls, in their symbolism of heavenly purity, were utterly bare of ornament. There were no paintings or pictures, magnificent or otherwise ; in their stead the occupant of his narrow cell had but to look out of the only window, glass and small, and soothe his longing by gazing on a most glorious picture of rich meadow, sparkling stream, waving forests, dim, distant mountains, and blue sky above, all painted and framed for us by Infinite power and love. The only furniture was the hard, narrow, wooden bench that ran at a right angle along the length and the adjacent width, and on these religiously uncomfortable beds, with their flesh-mortifying wooden blocks for pillows, the Solitary, after their daily toil, could sleep, unvexed by troublesome consciences, with such peace and refreshing as many a king in all his idle luxury might well envy. The only mitigation against the chilling winter was our daily dress and the heat that sometimes drifted in to us from the fire-place in the little hall at the end of the narrow corridors leading into the *Kammern*.

The uppermost story of Kedar was given to the

spiritual virgins who had pledged themselves to a communal life. Shortly after, the ground floor was handed over to the strictest of the single Brethren for a similar purpose, these being Brothers Wohlforth, Meyle, Just, and Theonis, while two of the Eckerlings, Israel and Gabriel, as well as Brother Kalckgläser and Sonnlein and myself, as being the most important in the community, outside of Brother Beissel, who occupied his little cabin in the meadow, were quartered in the *Berghaus*.

Even before Kedar was wholly finished, *Nachtmekten*, or night meetings, were instituted by the Solitary. These were religious meetings held every midnight; for it was at that hour the great Judge was expected to come. At first they lasted four hours from midnight, but as this allowed so little time for necessary rest, two hours were held sufficient. It was arranged that the Brethren should hold their devotions first at these night meetings and after they had filed out of the *Saal* the Sisters would enter for their hour of prayer; but this was soon changed so that the midnight prayers were held jointly. This arrangement soon gave rise to such gossip and scandal among the enemies of our community that Brother Beissel exhorted the Brothers and Sisters to pray earnestly that these evil-minded ones might still their tongues; but though we prayed earnestly and in all faith

these gossiping tongues were something even prayer and faith could not stop and so after these joint meetings had continued a few months our good Brother Sigmund Landert proposed to Brother Beissel that Kedar should be kept exclusively as a Sister House, in which event Brother Landert promised he would out of the wealth God had vouchsafed him, build a house adjoining Kedar, the new structure to be used exclusively for assembly purposes, provided, however, that he and his two daughters be received into the settlement.

Though Brother Beissel objected at first, matters so arranged themselves finally that through the generosity and devotion of Brother Landert and another Brother, Hermann Zinn, a large edifice was constructed on the hillside, the *Bethaus*, House of Prayer. Besides the large *Saal* for joint meetings and public worship there were ample room for the love feasts, and at the time of the completion of the *Bethaus* the *Saal* was the largest and most imposing room for public worship in the province. At one end, toward the east of the *Saal*, was a raised platform for the gray-bearded fathers, while on either side of the length of the *Saal* ran the *Por-kirchen*, or galleries for the Solitary, the Brothers sitting on one side and the Sisters on the other. The body, or main floor of the *Saal*, was for the secular members, or householders, as we called them ; for be it known our community was

not composed entirely of Brothers and Sisters pledged to lives of celibacy, but in addition to these we had a large number of members from the country round about us, husbands and wives and their children, who believed as we did, that the Seventh Day was the true Lord's Day, and who differed from us in belief in this only that they practised not celibacy.

The *Bethaus*, like Kedar, was built entirely of wood, and clay and grass for the filling, the walls inside being made snowy white with lime, the only decoration being a number of proverbs and sentences of Scripture written in ornamental German characters, in script, known as *Fracturschrift*, which became famous far and wide for its beauty, and even now, after the passage of over half a century, these proverbs and sentences remain on the walls of our meeting-houses as clear and beautiful as the day they were first written.

Upon the completion of the *Bethaus*, the Brethren who had been quartered on the ground floor of Kedar were again relegated to the cabins and henceforth Kedar was handed over to the Sisterhood, and the *Saal* upon the second floor now became the chapel of the Order of the Spiritual Virgins, and from that time on, while the night meetings of the Sisters were held in the *Saal* of Kedar, the Brethren held their meetings in the *Saal* of the *Bethaus* for a number of years.



Thus, these buildings were the foundation for a more perfect communal life and in pursuance of which all the provisions were delivered to the Sisters in their kitchen, who daily prepared a supper for the entire settlement, in the large dining hall, the Brothers and Sisters divided from each other by a screen, everything being done in order and reverence according to the leading of the Holy Ghost.

About this time too occurred the first, so far as I know, of those mysterious manifestations that for so many years were a great bewilderment and anxiety not so much to the rest of the community as to me, for that with rare exceptions it chanced I must be the chief witness of the doings of this strange being that so long harassed us.

Even before Kedar was fully completed—being, however, far enough advanced for dedication to its glorious purposes—Brother Beissel made great preparations for a general love feast; and *Einlader*, or inviters, were sent throughout the province, especially among all the German Baptists and English Sabbatarians, requesting them to participate in the dedicatory services. As the time approached, ample preparations were made for a great multitude; for from all the reports brought unto us by our messengers we could not doubt but that there would be a great gathering in our humble little community to take part in the dedication, and to this day—and I like not to be con-

sidered superstitious—I cannot account for the failure of the dedication other than through this mysterious influence; for as a matter of fact but few strangers presented themselves, the only exception being that quite a number of English Sabatarians from the French Creek visited us and took an active part in the exercises.

But not only were we greatly depressed by the failure of the invited ones to come and add to the glory of the occasion their presence and their praise and prayer, but the night preceding the love feast was exceedingly dark and cloudy. Moreover, as the darkness grew the clouds seemed to gather heavier and heavier overhead, so that toward midnight the gloom and depression were almost overpowering, so much so that about an hour before midnight, Sonnlein being sound asleep, I arose—so unaccountably disturbed and troubled I could not sleep—and made my way, why or how I know not, for I seemed almost as one walking in his sleep, toward the cabin where Brother Beissel was slumbering down in the meadow. Suddenly, although I saw not his little hut, I heard a howl like one in pain coming from the direction where I knew our brother's hut should be. Then another cry as in pain and a sound as if some one were beating another with great force and violence. I rushed blindly on in the darkness stumbling and floundering until ere I knew it I had run up

against what with feeling around I found to be a hut. From within came moans and groans but the beating had ceased while with the moaning and groaning were mingled a sort of snarling and growling and muttering as of some wild beast. I had just reached the doorway, the door being wide open, when suddenly there rushed out a something which as it passed struck me a most violent blow across the eyes fairly staggering me so that all I could do was to make a wild clutch at the beast, or fiend, that was now speeding away leaving a trail of snarlings and growlings and cacklings such as human being could scarce make.

Recovering from the smarting blow over my eyes, I groped my way inside only to hear Brother Beissel say feebly, "Art come again, thou Prince of Darkness, to persecute me?"

"'Tis not the Prince of Darkness, brother; whatever hath been here hath fled; 'tis Brother Miller," whereupon with all his bravery he leaned against me for support, seeming to find great comfort in my being there.

"Surely the Evil One hath troubled me most sorely this night," said our leader more strongly now.

"But I smell not brimstone or fire, brother; dost thou?" I asked.

"Nay, but I tell thee 'twas the foul fiend himself; most grievously did he beat me with his long tail."

"With his tail, brother—surely thou meanest not that?" I protested.

"But I tell thee Beelzebub took his tail in his claws and beat me. Did I not see him in all the darkness, lift his forked tail on high and bring it down on me; and all the while he spat and snarled as though he were about to rend me asunder."

"Why didst not cross thyself?"

"The foul one came so sudden. I verily believe he rose up through the floor. I heard him not open the door and I sleep lightly."

"Yet thy door was open wide when I found thy hut; and if 'twas the devil, he left not the way thou sayest he came; for devil or beast as it rushed out the door, this evil thing struck me across the face so it still burneth."

"'Twas the Prince of Evil," still persisted Brother Beissel; "full well he seeth how we are shaking the walls of his foul kingdom. He thinketh to terrify us all by assailing me, your leader," and even in the darkness of the cabin I could see our commander straighten himself up as though he feared not a legion of devils, and in truth, Brother Beissel feared neither man nor devil, and I know now that it was my brother's undaunted will and courage more than aught else that ever gave him such sway over my gentler, cowardly nature.

Knowing he was firm in his belief I cared not to dispute with him then that I thought it might

not be the Evil One; but that, perhaps, some wild animal had strayed into his hut or else some of our enemies had taken this dark night for an opportunity to beat him, it being well known that among the German settlers were those who were greatly incensed at our leader for that the wives of some of them had left their homes and joined the spiritual virgins; and, indeed, there were those who upon hearing of the matter the next day declared that no doubt our leader had been persecuted by some one of our unfriendly neighbors. But most of the Solitary were just as firm in the belief which our leader unhesitatingly proclaimed, that the Prince of Darkness, being greatly exercised with our inroads into his kingdom had sought our leader in person, thinking no doubt to terrify him from further fighting against the powers of sin. Be that as it may, while I at the time hardly knew which side to join with, I myself felt certain in later years that our community in the person of Brother Beissel had received the first manifestation of that evil influence I had such good cause to dread for so many years.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCERNING TAXATION

E'en if a vicious man were like a leaky vat,  
That wastes what it receives, pour in, for all that !  
If vat and man are not in too decrepit plight,  
Keep pouring in thy gifts. How soon a crack soaks  
tight.

—*Lessing.*



AND now, early in the year 1737, occurred a matter which hath been held up against our community as a great reproach ; for by reason of this thing, which I shall set out fully, hewing to the line, caring not whither the chips may fall, we were regarded by many who were ignorant of the truth, as disturbers of the peace ; others accusing us of being misers, while still others went so far in their condemnation as to hold us guilty of nothing less than treason.

The whole trouble arose out of what was known as the "Single Men's Tax," our province having

passed an Act some twelve years prior to our first introduction to it, providing that "those single men whose estates shall not be rated at fifty pounds, they shall be assessed after the rate of three shillings a head upon a tax of one penny per pound, both for poor rates and city and county levies."

There were then, as before and ever since, those who had no regard for the sanctity of religion, no appreciation for what religion preserves better than all our courts and justices, namely, the safety and security of the State. For, let it be known to our credit, though we like not to boast of ourselves, we on the Cocalico did not spend all our time in pious devotions and speculations upon the mysteries of the infinite. Hard manual labor marked much of our lives, and I glory to say that this labor was not for ourselves alone. Up to this time, indeed, works of charity had been our chief occupation. Canestogues was then a great wilderness, but a wilderness into which many a poor German settler came to cut out of the deep woods a little clearing for his grain, and to build a log cabin he could call his home. These poverty-stricken brethren from the *Vaterland* often called upon us to assist them in building houses for them. To these calls we always responded, and for many a summer we were kept continually employed in hard carpenter's work, so that by this too great consideration for the needs of our poor neighbors our own poverty

was so increased that we wanted even things necessary for life.

Not only did we build their homes and help them till the soil, but we also bestowed such great care on our lands in the plowing, sowing, and reaping, that we often were blessed with such rich harvests that out of our bounty we supplied the poor for miles around with grain and flour, when their own crops, through inexperience, or improvidence, or rust, or drought, had failed.

Substantial assistance was never refused to such as needed it. The Solitary, whether sister or brother, always imbued with God's priceless gift of charity, were swift of foot to all calls of mercy and humanity. In the early days of our Kloster life we would not employ any four-footed animals to do our heavy work, thinking it unchristian to put on them what we should ourselves bear; and thus all our hauling and carrying and plowing was done by our own hands and feet and with our own backs. I recall full well how the Brethren and the Sisters, instead of mules and oxen, pulled the plows through the hard soil of our fields for the planting and sowing. Our life being orderly and systematic, we had time for devotions, and for work, and for charity, each receiving its due proportion, but the greater proportion falling to works of charity and benevolence. Indeed, this was the chief reason, and not because of any foolish super-



stitutions, that the greater part of our devotions were held at night.

But though we lived in this primitive manner of the early Christians and did all these works of charity, yet there was a number of persons who appreciated not our charity, or our stern but simple piety, and the hardships of our mode of life.

Such was the township constable, who, hungry for his worldly fees, was bent upon making the Brethren pay this "Single Men's Tax." With this purpose the worthy dignitary, much swollen with the importance of his high office, descended upon us one day, as a chicken hawk swoops down upon some unsuspecting domestic fowl, and with a loud voice and boisterous manner demanded that we pay the tax, all the while shaking his head and holding his nose in the air as if he already scented the fees that would fill his rapacious pockets.

His coming, and more his loud, gruff manner, threw great consternation into our hitherto peaceful camp. Brother Martin at first sight of the fat impressiveness of the bloated form of the constable, and on hearing his loud voice of command, shrank behind me and whispered timidly, "Is't the king come for his tax?"

"King! thou simple one!" I scowled at him, "King's fool, more like!" for I did not much admire the overbearing airs of this unmannerly tax collector, who, like many another of his stripe,

evidently thought because we were a plain, simple folk, we were easily frightened by the show of any authority of the law, especially when emphasized by bulk and big voice in the representative. But our bawling officer soon found that while we were ever a law-abiding people, not seeking to quarrel with any one, yet we were not accustomed to hide in terror every time the law appeared ; so instead of rushing forth in great haste with our taxes in our hands and beseeching the collector to accept them and leave us in peace, Brother Beissel, unheeding the constable's commands to hurry up and not delay him, summoned all the Solitary Brethren to the *Saal* to have our views in the matter. And at once there were formed two opposing parties ; one, headed by Brother Weiser—or Brother Enoch as was his cloistral name—arguing that it was just and right to pay unto Cæsar his tribute as commanded by Scripture, and counseling that the tax be paid and thus all trouble be avoided. The contrary party, of which I was the chosen head, contended the assessments should not be paid, because by our manner of life we were entitled to immunity from all taxation. And to support this I reminded my brethren that in the Eastern countries monks and hermits paid no taxes, it being a matter of well-known history that when the monks and hermits collected by their labors every harvest so much grain as to supply regularly all the prisons

in Alexandria with bread, Theodosius Magnus and other Christian emperors declared all such monks and hermits free from taxes. I could not see that we were in any wise inferior to the ancient hermits, and if not, it were contrary to custom to deny us the same immunity.

Brother Beissel interrupted loudly, forgetting his usual subtlety, "Brother Jabez, I doubt much whether our constable will feel bounden by the practices of the early church."

"That I will not," growled the constable, who had been admitted to the council; "the Act does set forth the tax must be paid, and the tax will I have ere I leave."

"But the Act doth not apply to us, I tell thee, or else I should counsel immediate obedience to thy demands," I said as calmly as I could; "we refuse not to pay this paltry tribute because we care overmuch for the little money we have; but we do not think it right for us to pay."

"Of that I know not," came another cavernous growl from the depths of the constable. "I know I leave not till I am paid the tax."

"Well, I for one shall pay it not," I cried out. "If our Kloster labors were merely for the enrichment of our coffers, then I should pay the tax as being my share of the support of the province. But we work not for ourselves further than is necessary for our slender needs. The overflow

of our abundance hath ever gone to the poor and needy settlers far and wide. If we came not to the relief of these, then would the province have the burden of their support. In all ages it hath been the custom and the law to grant immunity of taxation to the church and to those whose lives are spent in charity. I say I shall not pay the tax, for it is neither right, nor custom, nor law."

"If thou payest not the taxes thou goest to jail, for so the Act declares," bellowed the constable.

"So be it," I replied quietly, "and I fear not but I shall have worthy company."

"Thou goest not alone with this ungodly man," answered me Brother Elimelech—his secular name being Emanuel Eckerling—as he stood bravely by my side.

"I too go with thee into the camp of the Philistines," said Brother Jephune, brother to Elimelech, also coming to my side.

Another of the Eckerlings, Brother Jotham, stepped over to me and said quietly: "Even if it be to the stocks or the gallows I go with thee."

"And if I go with thee, Brother Jabez, as I surely will, then thou hast all the sons of my mother with thee," said Brother Onesimus.

"With all these Eckerlings—Emanuel, Samuel, Gabriel, and Israel—I fear naught, not even our formidable friend, the tax collector," I said gayly, not at all disturbed by his fierce looks and scowls

at me, whom he regarded as the instigator of all this little rebellion, although in truth there were more than the Eckerlings and myself who thought it not right to pay the taxes. But thus it ever hath been, for doth not the Scriptures say that out of the ten thousand who gathered to fight under the banner of Gideon only three hundred were worthy to be led against the enemy?

"The devil take ye all for a lot of pious fools if ye go not with me at once," thundered the constable, choking with wrath, so that I greatly feared from his purple face he might perish from the palsy.

"The devil, or his deputy, may take us now if he be ready," I said to him, which but the more enraged him, so that he rushed from us puffing and wheezing as he floundered across the meadow, the very swaying of his broad back expressing his indignation at our disregard for the majesty of the law.

"Brother Jabez," said Brother Enoch, as the majesty of the law disappeared down the road beyond the meadow, "dost thou know if we pay not the levy we shall be arrested and taken to jail?"

"If the constable be a man of his word, I doubt not thou art a true prophet," I replied, "but thou knowest Ecclesiastes sayeth there is 'a time of war and a time of peace.' It seemeth my duty to oppose this unjust tax, and now is the time to set

our faces firmly against the levy. If we five must go alone, so be it."

Just then some one laid hold of mine arm, and turning about I saw Brother Martin—Martin Brämer being his secular name—our tailor. I asked him: "What hast to say, Brother Martin, shall we pay the taxes?"

"Will they hang us if we pay not the king's officer?" he asked, still with the image of the king in his eye, looking first at me and then at Brother Enoch and then at the four Eckerlings.

"That I do not know," I said, after a pause. "Brother Enoch," said I, turning to him, "thou art learned in the laws of the province. What will be done with us?"

"Most likely ye will be imprisoned until ye promise to pay the taxes," said our learned brother, who afterward became one of the justices of our province.

"And our good Brother Jabez is so stubborn in this, if we pay not the levies, then must we abide in jail for all our days," sighed Brother Martin, "for I know he will never make such promise."

"Ye tailors are ever a timid folk," I broke in with some impatience. "'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'"

And yet with all the differences about the taxes, when the constable returned with five or six neighbors who liked not our Sabbatarian views and who

answered willingly to the summons to arrest the "rebels" and "heretics," as it pleased them to call us, I rejoiced exceedingly to see that not only the whole Brotherhood but even the Sisters were united in their determination to oppose the tax. And so when the constable and his eager minions came rushing across the meadow as though they were about to storm some walled city, they found us quietly gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai, our hands meekly folded across our breasts, no one saying a word, except that Brother Beissel, as guardian of our flock, stood somewhat in advance of the Brothers and Sisters, with me close to him, to meet the first onset of the doughty constable and his deputies.

As they came nigh, they paused, and then came to a full stop as they saw this goodly array of Brothers and Sisters. Whereupon Brother Beissel spoke up to the constable: "'Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take us?' Ye need not come in such haste and violence; our good neighbors, though they seem overly anxious to help thee in this, must say we have never done violence toward any one. We are gathered here to go with thee and to have our cause heard by the justices."

This was more than our constable had bargained for, for they were hardly prepared to convoy such a gathering, and we could but smile, Brother Beis-

sel and I, and even the Brothers and Sisters, to see the consternation that now reigned on the side of the constable and our officious neighbors. Drawing closely together they held such a lively conference, in which each seemed bent on out-talking the others, that it was no great difficulty for us to hear everything that passed between them. The constable was for taking me alone, because he regarded me as the ringleader; another argued just as violently that our superintendent and I should be taken, as we were the leaders of the community and therefore represented them; still another loudly claimed that the four Eckerlings and myself should be taken as being guilty of open treason for saying we would not pay the taxes; and still another thought we all should go.

Finally, it was decided to take only the Eckerlings and myself, and as Brother Martin cried out from behind my back that he would not pay the tax, he too was added to our number. As soon as this result was achieved by our adversary the constable, he stood forth and in a loud voice called our names and demanded that we stand forth, that we were arrested, and that we must go with him to Lancaster to be heard before the justices. It was with great difficulty that we prevailed upon Brother Beissel and the remaining Brothers and Sisters that they could not accompany us, for they were all determined that in this we must make



common cause. Finally, however, I succeeded in showing them that we six represented the community and were willing to stand trial for the sake of all, and that it would be the duty of the rest to remain at home and look after the sewing and the spinning and the preparing of the fields for the spring planting and to take care of the sick and poor and needy.

Thus matters at last having been settled, another problem stared our enemies in the face. They demanded that we provide some conveyance in which to be taken to Lancaster, which was some thirteen miles from us. To this I replied that we had none; that we always traveled afoot. Knowing this to be true, they had no more to say other than that they would furnish conveyances at their own expense, wherein we could ride to Lancaster. This also we said we could not do because it was our custom never to ride but always to walk, with staff in hand like the early pilgrims. When this conclusion was made known to the constable I thought, in all truth, he would now surely die in a fit; for he howled and stormed and raged like some one possessed with a thousand devils; but we merely stood quiet, saying not a word until the storm had somewhat subsided and he was sufficiently sensible to understand that if we were to go to Lancaster it would be on foot and not otherwise. Thus we departed after—with some misgiv-

ings it is true—I had first had a promise from Brother Beissel that he would look after Sonnlein until I came back again, the constable and his deputies in the lead, and we following in single file, with our staffs in hand, quietly and peacefully.

At first our captors were disposed to heap on us all the indignities and insults they could think of, pulling us by our long beards which they in their humor were pleased to liken to goats' beards, and calling us "he-goats," "men with women's frocks on," "bleached fools," "Beissel's lambs," and spitting on us every now and then; to all of which we raised not our hands or opened our mouths but followed meekly, as was our custom to bear all insult and indignity. Uphill and down again, through dale and valley, long stretches of forest broken only at rare intervals by some little clearing with its humble log cabin, we trudged along patiently and uncomplainingly only that the constable and his deputies who at first set out with such a high pace as though they intended to devour the way in a few steps soon found that even their spite and anger could not furnish endurance for such a pace. Gradually they slackened, the constable, by reason of his great bulk and this unaccustomed exercise puffing most violently and every now and then growling at our stubbornness and our pig-headedness in making them travel afoot and roaring and swearing most

vile oaths that we should pay dear for this great contempt of the law.

Indeed, before we were more than half-way to our destination our constable, not being built for walking, was suffering severely in his feet and limbs from these unaccustomed exertions, which we, inured to such trifles, minded not in the least. His deputies, who looked as lean and hungry as he looked prosperous, also were in sore straits; for they too found this walking not much to their taste. It finally came to such a pass, while we were yet some miles from Lancaster that the constable announced savagely, looking at us as though he would have liked to hang us from the branches of the nearest tree, that he could not walk any farther. A short consultation with the rest of the Brethren, and I stepped up to him sitting at the foot of a tree, puffing, and mopping the sweat from his forehead, and said to him respectfully that if he would tell us where to present ourselves we would go straight ahead and give ourselves up to the justices. At this he glared at us, if anything more savagely than ever, and declared it to be a scheme to escape. Whereupon I merely replied, "Very well, we shall wait here, then, until thou art ready to proceed with us."

"No doubt ye would," he howled; "for I doubt not it gives ye great pleasure to see what a sorry state ye have brought me to by your pig-headedness."

"Perhaps thou canst find a conveyance if we press on, and thou canst ride the rest of the journey?" I suggested to him gently.

He was not to be soothed, however, for he merely growled: "I know no place between here and the justices' courts where I can find beast or wagon to carry me."

"Dost thou object if we carry thee there, we and our kind neighbors who are helping thee?" I asked.

"Now are ye quite crazy, for do ye see anything by which ye can carry me, or do you intend to take me on your backs one at a time and thus carry me a laughingstock into Lancaster?"

"If thou wilt wait and hear the plan we have formed in our minds thou wilt perhaps have more respect for our foolish brains," I assured him.

"Well, what is this great plan of thine?"

"Sit there until thou seest, and if it do not please thee thou needst not take it." So saying I dispatched one of the leanest deputies who I thought could best stand the strain of walking, back a short distance to a cabin we had passed on our way, for a hatchet and some strong cord, or ropes, or perchance, nails. He grumbled and growled, but upon the constable's bidding him go on our fool's quest, the deputy left us. While he was gone, my brethren and I made search in the forest about us for such timber as we could make

into a litter and when the deputy returned, scornfully handing me the hatchet and some strong cord, we cut down a number of saplings suitable to the constable's weight, and with these formed a sort of litter on which he could sit or lie, as it might please him, while the rest of us carried him along. He was much loth to trust himself to what he considered a frail support for his mighty frame, but after showing him it was strong enough to hold him, he finally stretched his length thereon, sending the deputy back with the hatchet, while we waited his return.

But the constable still doubting, growled, but more softly, I thought, "Now what good is all this litter; who shall carry me? My deputies, who are themselves tired, cannot carry me all these miles to Lancaster."

"Nay," replied I, "but we six Brethren are young and strong and we will take hold of the poles and carry thee as far as we are able, after which thy deputies may relieve us until we regain our breath and strength when we shall again take thee on."

He sat up and said slowly and still doubtfully: "Do ye mean to say ye will do this for me?"

"That we will cheerfully," we all assured him; "though thou hast not treated us over kindly it is not in our minds to remember what thou hast said and done."

“You are not up to some trick?”

“Thou hast good reason to believe we be men of our word,” I replied somewhat stiffly; “my brethren are not given to trickery.”

The deputy having now returned, my brethren and I took the first turn and hoisting to our shoulders the long poles extending beyond the framework on which our constable sat in royal state, we trudged along quietly but cheerfully, even though our burden was not a light one, our neighbors, the deputies, under the direction of the still distrustful constable, attending to it that we departed not from our proper course, which none of us had the slightest intention of doing. Yet I must record that the human heart, as the Holy Book sayeth in its omniscient wisdom, is a deceitful thing, even in the best of us; for we had not gone far with our rude conveyance when we came to a most foul and dirty pool directly in our way. Brother Martin, being so small and slight and by reason thereof in great danger of destroying the evenness of the litter—which of course would not have been well for the choleric temper of the constable—was placed at my corner, in front of me, so borrowing from my height and strength that the litter would carry more evenly, and also our beloved little tailor be not overly taxed by the burden.

But surely the Evil One doth ever find an easy entrance to idle minds, wherefore we of the Klos-

ter always made it our rule to be busy as far as in us lay. Now in our anxiety to save our Brother Martin from undue labor, we had made the mistake of leaving too little on his shoulders, wherefore instead of having his mind on pious things, he was bent upon evil toward the constable; for it grieves me to say that as we came to this filthy pool and were about to step over it, Brother Martin turned his head about and gave me a sly look and made a motion of his body as of dropping our end of the lifter, which foul deed, had we done it at this juncture would most surely have dropped the majesty of the law into this slimy pool. In truth, so powerful is the mere suggestion of evil to our weak, sinful natures that ere I fully thought what I was about, I had responded by bobbing down a trifle, but recalling myself in due time, straightened up sternly, giving Brother Martin such a withering glance as made him faithful for the rest of the journey, if not for the remainder of his days.

Fortunately, our constable never knew how near he was to a ducking, and as we stepped carefully over the pool—at which he looked with some apprehension—and proceeded thoughtfully on our way, very seldom relieved by the deputies—for whom the farther we had come the more the heat of their persecuting zeal had abated—I could see assurance in the constable's features that we were rising higher and higher in his regard.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RIGHT PREVAILS

The Lord trieth the righteous ; but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

—*Bible.*



IN brief, we traveled in this way until we reached the City of Lancaster, which to us seemed all bustle and confusion. The constable, as became his dignity, alighted from his litter and took the lead, with his deputies following, and we after the deputies, in single file, creating great excitement, especially as it was conjectured by some that we were Papists—this by reason of our monkish cowls and long cloaks and abstracted air. Others of the idlers whom we passed jeered us and spat on us as being spies—of what, I am certain I never could learn—and that we were to be hanged as traitors.



As no one had known of our coming, the idlers and the busybodies were unprepared to give us such greeting as they no doubt would have relished, and we were led without any great difficulty to the court-house where, upon refusal to pay the taxes and in default of bail, we were committed to prison. Here we were held in a cold, bare room which we minded not ; for our jailor permitted us to occupy it together, which gave us great joy, and we complained neither at the confinement nor the coarse food, but the rather spent our time in praising God and most of all praying for our persecutors, all of us being unshaken in the hope that deliverance would come from above and that in due time our prison door would be opened unto us.

At last—and in this I believe our constable had a grateful part—when Tobias Hendricks (whose name I write here that his good deed may shine far out into the world), a venerable old man and himself a justice of the peace, came forth and offered bail for us, though knowing none of us except by rumor and repute, taking our bare word for our appearance in court when wanted, we were released from our captivity, and quietly and undisturbed we started out for our beloved Kloster, and upon the twelfth day of our departure with the constable and his eager deputies, we six Brethren once more filed into our little camp on the Cocalico,

where we were greeted with all the love and affection that the sobriety of our lives permitted.

Not many weeks thereafter, the May Court convened in Lancaster and we six Brethren, agreeable to our promise, put in our appearance before the commissioners and assessors of taxes who, when they saw before them these six gentle Brethren, in the bloom of youth, who had raised such a warfare against the world, the fear of the Lord came upon our judges so that they did not speak to us otherwise than friendly and offered us every favor.

The first question put to us was, "Will ye be lawful subjects of the king?" To which we replied—but in all respect—that as we had already pledged allegiance to another King we could therefore obey the earthly king only so far as his rights accorded with those of our eternal King.

To this our judges did not demur but asked another question, namely, whether we would pay the taxes? To which we replied respectfully as before, but firmly, not the head tax, because we acknowledged no worldly authority's right over our bodies, since they had been redeemed from men and the world. Moreover, we considered it unjust that, as we were pledged to spend our lives in our present condition, one of great benefit to the country about us, we should be measured by the same standard as vagabonds and be made to pay the same tax as they; that we desired not to be considered dis-

obedient, because it was our rule to live peaceably with all men so far as within us lay, for thus we were enjoined by the Scriptures ; but that if the judges would consider us a spiritual family we would be willing to pay of our earthly possessions according to what was just.

All this was granted us and remains unchanged to the present day ; for the fear of God came upon the gentlemen who were our judges when they saw before them men who in the prime of their ages, by penitential works had been reduced in flesh, so that our judges used great moderation and granted us our personal freedom under condition that we should be taxed as one family for our real estate, the judges even asking us how much tax in our judgment would be just and fair—in short, for us to assess our own rate.

This we refused to do, but finally, after much persuasion, we suggested to the judges that a tax of forty shillings against our settlement as a whole would be fair. This proving satisfactory to the board of judges, we were discharged, and with exceeding gratitude to these gentlemen for their benevolent treatment of us, which was so different from the persecutions we often endured from our neighbors, who were so often bounden to us for our charity, we set out with light hearts and winged feet on our long tramp through forest and field for the Kloster.

It was late in the day and darkness had already come upon us when we left the city of Lancaster, but our joy made the journey seem short and by midnight we arrived in the settlement just as the night watch was in full session.

In all my long life I have never forgotten and shall never forget how we appeared to our Brethren that night as we came to the narrow doorway leading into the *Saal*, I being in the lead. We could hear the fervent prayers that were being offered for our release and for a moment while the Brethren within were kneeling all unconscious of our nearness, I held up my hand and beckoned the Brethren behind me to wait a moment while we stood there silently gazing upon the bowed forms of the worshipers.

I have myself attended more than one of our midnight funerals of some dear Brother or Sister, and though wonderfully impressive and touching to one's heart, even they never touched me more deeply than this impressive sight before us. As we peered into the large *Saal*, with the upper galleries shadowed in darkness, the only light the flickering tallow candles in front of each of our devout Brethren, we saw the dark, mysterious shadows in the corners of the *Saal* with ourselves standing in such a gloom we were not perceived. But for a few moments we stood thus with a great peace filling our hearts, when suddenly we walked

quietly in, the prayer still in progress, and with heads bowed and hands crossed upon our breasts like the penitents of the olden days ranged ourselves in front of the platform whereon stood our beloved brother and leader, Conrad Beissel, erect, austere; and so far as we could judge from his immovable features, wholly undisturbed by our unexpected arrival, though well we knew that this seeming indifference was but one of discipline and self-control and that the heart within the sturdy frame was beating warmly for each and every one of us.

The invocation in our behalf being ended there was for a few moments as we stood before our leader a silence so profound as to be almost painful. Then suddenly the powerful voice of Brother Weiser rang throughout the hall in that magnificent, soul-stirring war-hymn of the *Vaterland* and the Reformation, a hymn as strong and rugged as the mighty warrior who wrote it, "*Eine Feste Burg ist Unser Gott.*"

The first line had not yet been completed when it was taken up by all present until the strains of the full-voiced battle cry sounded and resounded throughout the hall. For the time our Brethren had forgotten all the repressing influences of our Kloster life and poured forth their flood of praise and thanksgiving from their very hearts; for such singing had never before shaken the walls of the *Saal*.

After the hymn was ended thanks were duly offered and the night watch closed with a powerful address by Brother Beissel on the power of the beast upon earth, and while I feel not at this late day like stating aught that might savor of malice or revenge, I find in looking over our old records this note made with reference to our recent experience, namely, "Upon those neighbors, however, who had gloated over the misfortunes of the Brethren there fell the terror of the Lord so that they hurriedly left these regions"; and thus the beast received his reward.

After the services were over and the Brethren were wending their ways toward their *Kammers* for their much-needed rest I asked our superintendent about Sonnlein; for though I had said naught of him during these occurrences, yet he was in my heart and in my anxiety most of the time. I can still see and hear our leader, almost shocking me by laughing, a thing he was most rarely guilty of, as he said, "Thy Sonnlein is safe enough in thy *Kammer*, but I assure thee not only did I pray and hope for thy deliverance for thine own sake and the sake of our Kloster, but I do confess in all love for thee and thy boy that hadst thou not soon returned to take care of him I had either been compelled to give up my life here or give up thy boy."

I fear I did not even take time to thank him,

but hastened to my cell where I found my boy soundly sleeping.

It was no doubt thoughtless for me to waken him, but I could not help it, and when he did awake to throw his arms about my neck and hold me tight, I felt that, perhaps, it was no great sin after all to rouse him from his sleep. After very many questions as to where I had been and why the bad men had taken me, and all such questions as only an eager, trusting child can ask, I finally told him it was time to go to sleep, which he did without any great difficulty.

As he lay there sleeping in all the sweet innocence of childhood and health, I looked first at him and then out through the little window at the perfect beauty of God's handiwork in his heavens, and then I went to my rest, proud to be a son of him who created me in his image and who had put me into a world which, though full of dark and evil deeds, yet held in it, if we only looked aright, so much of beauty and joy and peace and love.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OUR FIRST LOSS

Let nothing make thee sad or fretful,  
Or too regretful ;  
Be still ;  
What God hath ordered must be right,  
Then find in it thine own delight,  
My will.

—*Paul Fleming.*



THE year 1738 is deeply graven on my memory, because it marked the first death among the Solitary, our Brother Martin Brämer. Secondly, because his death followed so swift upon the appearance of that strange being, woman, witch, or devil, who, time and again, thrust herself so violently into our lives.

In the first month of the new year, and on a day when the sun was shining clear and bright, there being no snow on the ground, I was on my way to the Brother woods for an armful of firewood for



the hall. Close upon where the Brother woods merged into the Sister woods stood a mighty oak within a little clearing on the Brothers' side, a favorite haunt of the Solitary for their rare moments of rest from their daily work. .

I had about reached the clearing under the shelter of the wide-reaching arms of the old oak when suddenly, for I was in my customary fashion of deep meditation with mine eyes toward the ground, I walked into Brother Martin, almost overthrowing him, for that our tailor was so small and slight. However, we gravely saluted each other as though naught had happened ; for each knew it had been a mere accident, and were about to pass on when I caught sight of his face, and saw from his more than usual pallid features and the twitching lips that he was suffering from some great shock. Never of robust health he had not been well lately, and I thought he was suffering more than usual from his infirmity.

I hailed him with brotherly solicitude, "Thou art not well, Brother Martin ! I fear the Solitary press upon thee too sorely for thy keeping of them clad as becomes their orders."

"Nay, nay, Brother Jabez," he replied gently ; but I could hear the trembling and the fear in his voice, "It is not my labors, which though toilsome, lie pleasantly on me, because I love my work, and those for whom I labor and strive to

please seem to love me for what I do for them"; and indeed this was true, for his gentle, unaffected devotion to us and Him we served made our Brother Martin universally loved.

"But surely," I insisted, "thou'rt not well; thou'rt disturbed and suffering, that I see plainly. I beseech thee tell me what so sorely weighs on thee."

He looked up at me, his pale, bloodless lips quivering, and whispered into mine ear, clutching mine arm and leaning on it as though he needed my protection, "I have seen the Evil One in woman's form," and then he gasped, "I shall surely die."

"Nay, nay, my brother," I replied, as though laughing at his foolish fears, "'tis true the Evil One comes to us at times in woman's form to lure us, as Solomon sayeth, 'to the gates of hell'; but when the fiend comes as such it is not in horrid, repulsive shape, but like those beautiful beings who came to Saint Anthony with such artful, seductive enchantments that none but saint could say them nay. Surely if this Evil One hath appeared to thee thou needst not look for thy immediate dissolution, but mayst expect some grace from the fair devourer."

But my poor brother would not be comforted, and merely stood shaking his head, saying mournfully, "This was no beautiful enchantress; no se-

ductive siren, as thou sayest ; 'twas the foul fiend in his foulest, most awful form, long, tangled hair falling every way over a face through which there gleamed eyes on fire with the hatred of hell. I saw the eternal enmity of the Evil One in those piercing eyes."

"Where was all this, Brother Martin ?" for I saw he could not be laughed out of his terror.

"Just beyond the oak," he replied ; "she was standing in a thicket covered with tangled vines as foul and poisonous as herself. I had all unthinking almost walked into her when suddenly I heard a snarl like some ravenous beast ; I saw her horrible claws uplifted as though she were about to spring on me and tear me limb from limb. I jumped back, my heart almost standing still, thinking naught but that my end had come. She came no farther, but contented herself with crouching there and glaring at me with those awful eyes of hate that seemed to burn into my very soul."

"Canst thou go with me where thou hast seen this witch or devil ?" I said boldly, although I had not overly much stomach for the venture.

As I said this he drew back and trembled violently as he cried out, "Nay, not even for the very hope of a safe hereafter would I go to that accursed place."

"Then remain there, thou gentle coward, whilst I go," commanded I.

Again he clutched me by the arm and cried out, "Nay, go not, Brother Jabez ; even if she touch thee not her look will blast thee like lightning."

"I fear her not," bragged I, and strode away, leaving him shuddering with the terror that had not yet grown cold, and with apprehensions for me.

I had no trouble in finding the thick bush and entangling vines Brother Martin had pointed out to me. As I approached its dark, forbidding front, I trembled like a leaf, and then grew angry at my weakness. Then I went on, resolutely forcing my way into the vile vines that caught me all about my face and body and limbs so that I was ready to affirm naught human could penetrate such a wilderness ; but though I looked carefully for any signs that would show that some one or something had thrust itself into these exasperating vines I could find nothing, even though I had in all these years learned much of the ways of the woods and its signs.

In great bewilderment I was about to turn back to chide Brother Martin with having seen nothing but a creature of his own imagining when I saw in a small gully at the farther boundary of the thicket a footprint, small, a woman's surely, in the soft, clayey soil. Had the imprint been that of a cloven foot I could not have been more startled ; for I knew that the Sisterhood seldom, if ever, came to the Brother woods, and the good wives

and daughters of the near-by settlers were too timid and honest to trespass on our lands. Much perturbed, for I knew this thing boded evil to our community, I walked slowly back to my waiting brother, vague remembrances strangely flitting through my mind, but making no impression at the time, of how Sonnlein had come to me, and the midnight beating of our Brother Beissel.

I found Brother Martin, still pale and fearful, anxiously wanting to know what I had learned. "Nothing," I said, "of witch or devil, but the substantial print of a woman's foot."

"Was there no smell of brimstone? No cloven footprint?" he persisted.

"Nay, thou simple one, else I had told thee. Say thou naught of this; for they who would not believe thee would only laugh at thee, and if any believe what could that avail?"

"Nothing, dear Brother Jabez, nothing," he said mournfully, a strange, fixed look in his wild eyes. "A woman with an evil eye once looked upon my little brother as he lay laughing in the cradle my father had hewn out of a log. Until then the child was strong and healthy, never having been sick; but from that day he wasted away, with naught that could help or cure him, and within a month we laid him down in his little resting-place in the orchard nigh our cabin. They whom the evil eye look upon live not long." And then, as

one who goes forth to certain death, he looked up at me smiling bravely through all his fears and said, "If my time hath come, let it come quickly, His servant waiteth."

I found it impossible to free him from this melancholy mood, and so we walked back slowly and sadly to our *Kammers*, saying nothing more.

A week passed, Brother Martin quietly, with resignation, doing his lowly duties each day; but we all could see he was in failing health. Only he and I knew, however, that the tortures of mind he was enduring far outweighed the lesser pains of the flesh; for I hesitate not to say of saint as well as sinner, that until death be actually at hand, they fear alike the inevitable end.

On a Friday night, just a week from the Friday our brother had seen this thing, the midnight services being over, and the Brethren and Sisters having returned to their *Kammers* to rest their weary heads on their hard wooden blocks, we were startled by the ringing of the Kloster bell. Clear and loud it pealed through the cold quietness of the night. Like a flash, though I had not thought of it before, I cried out to Brother Obed, who had the adjoining cell, "'Tis Brother Martin," though not more than a half-hour had expired since we had returned, he with us, from our midnight devotions.

Suddenly the pealing notes ceased, and then came the slow, solemn tolling of the bell, a custom

followed ever after on the death of any of our number, until forty-eight were measured out, which I knew was about our brother's age. His cell was on the floor below, where I hastened as soon as the last year of his life had been tolled. A number of the Brethren, with bowed heads, stood sadly in the narrow *Kammer*, in the still narrower doorway and corridor. I had been filled, ere I saw him, with a dread that his death agony might have had its terrors increased a thousand-fold by the awful memory of the witch; for I knew he had never forgotten it. But when I looked down on the slight form and peaceful face resting on the hard bench and still more mortifying pillow, I saw no trace of any overpowering, death-dealing vision. Instead, his face, though greatly wasted and altered, was as composed as though he had merely fallen asleep in the arms of his beloved. The little window looking out from his *Kammer*, as soon as the last spark of life had died out, had been opened so that his soul could take its flight unhindered and unmolested to that place of pure delights "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

At the funeral, which was the following midnight, as we carried the body out of the *Berghaus* a bucket of water was poured upon the sill and swept up, and the door immediately closed so that his spirit could not return again to its earthly

home, and to make further assurance against such a return three crosses were marked upon the door jamb with red earth.

We buried him who had thus passed away in the prime of his life, down in the meadow nigh to where in later years we built our Brother house. It was a dark, stormy night, no moon and no stars to lighten up the gloom of the sky or the still deeper darkness in our hearts ; but with our fagot torchlights sputtering fitfully, almost blown out by the wind at times, we laid him to rest at the midnight hour with all the honors and rites and ceremonies of our holy order.

Thus, on this weird, stormy night, in such contrast to the peace and gentleness of this earnest, zealous warrior of the faith who for almost nine years had abided with us, we left in the meadow his mortal remains, but took back with us the remembrance of his godly services and his truth and fidelity unto his profession and brotherhood during his short life.



## CHAPTER IX

### A LOVE FEAST

But when a lady chaste and fair,  
Noble, and clad in rich attire,  
Walks through the throng with gracious air,  
As sun that bids the stars retire—  
Then where are all thy boastings, May?  
What hast thou beautiful and gay  
Compared with that supreme delight?  
We leave thy loveliest flowers and watch that lady  
bright.

—*Song of Walter Von der Vogelweide.*



It accords not well with my ideas of humility and self-effacement that I should ever be writing of myself, and yet it seemeth not possible to tell this tale without bringing into it much that befell me in connection with those who were so dear to me, and of whose lives it is my pleasure and pain to relate. And of those who were so precious to me there

were none so dear to me as my Sister Bernice, not even Sonnlein; for however beloved he was of me he was none the less of my sex, while my dear sister was of that sex which a true man, so it appeareth to me, can no more help holding with a more or less tender feeling than he can help breathing.

I know this will seem unto many as foolishness, especially as I—like my Brother Beissel, who had published his "*Ehebüchlein*," or "Booklet on Matrimony," denouncing marriage as the penitentiary of carnal man—have ever been an advocate of the beauty and superiority of the virgin life; but in my reading of history I have noted how more than one man much stronger than I, changed utterly his beliefs and principles for the love of some daughter of Eve.

It is not that I have never been greatly attracted by the charms of my sisters, whom we in Ephrata regarded not so much opposite as complementary to our own, man's nature. I loved my mother dearly; her love hath been as a sweet fragrance to me in all my long life, and in many a trial and temptation have I felt her presence near, strengthening and upholding me in the right. And however cold and indifferent I may have borne myself outwardly to the gentler ones, still I never could speak otherwise than tenderly, and even reverently to them, as it seemed to me their

pure, finer natures deserved ; so that it hath ever grieved me to hear any one belittle a woman.

I shall never forget the first time I saw the slight, delicate form and sweet face of Sister Bernice. It was at one of our love feasts (*Liebesmahl*), which with us was not like among the other denominations, merely symbolic, but was patterned after that of the early Christians ; for we took a regular meal—and not merely a wafer or cake—in utter silence before communion, the love feast being an introduction to the more solemn part of the evening's service.

I remember full well how the Brethren were sitting on one side of the long table in Kedar, with heads uncovered, the Sisters on the other side not with their enveloping bonnets, but bedecked with the pretty prayer covering, which they always seemed glad to wear, which was a neat lace cap with strings beneath the chin.

After the reading of the Scriptures I raised my head, and then for the first time in my life saw the Sister opposite me—Bernice. I do not think she saw me or in any way observed me, for she seemed rapt in ecstatic adoration, her eyes turned upward and her lips slightly parted, as if she already saw and heard the glories of that heavenly home she was to visit ere many years passed over her fair head.

I shall never forget that look, that face, nearer

an angel's than any I have ever seen. An unaccountable pity swept over me, and that pity I fear was the beginning of another feeling I dared not own. But my dangerous thoughts were soon interrupted by the preparations for the *pedelavium*, or foot-washing. Small tubs of tepid water were brought into the *Saal*. The Elder washed the feet of the Brethren and the eldest Sister performed the same humble service for the Sisters, each Brother and Sister after the feet were dried receiving from him or her who washed the feet, a shake of the hands and the kiss of love and charity. A wicked wish came into my heart, grieving me days after for my perverse, unspiritual longing, that I might take the place of the eldest Sister, for I could willingly suffer the kisses of all the other Sisters for merely one touch of the lips of that young angel opposite me.

Fortunately, the Brothers and Sisters were so busy in their devotions, no one noticed whether or not my face reflected my guilty longings, for I was so absorbed in them that when the Elder came to me, instead of my feet I thrust my hands down into the tub, and was about to place them on the Elder's towel, when he, unobserved by the rest, gave me a little nudge and said in a low voice but sternly, "Art crazy, brother? knowest not thy hands from thy feet?"

I gazed at my hands for a moment, and then as

I realized my folly, I dropped my feet into the tub with such a splash that Brother Lamech who was seated next awaiting his turn, being utterly swallowed up in worship and forgetting whether or not his feet had been washed, hastily stuck them out past me into the Elder's lap just as I was placing mine own feet there. For a moment the Elder looked at us both in such solemn, puzzled disgust, that in spite of my natural gravity I almost laughed outright, which would have been most sacrilegious. Happily, our Elder was a quick-witted man, and drying our intermingled feet as best he could, he passed quietly to the rest who had not seen the little complexity down the line.

The feet-washing being completed, and we all having resumed the covering of our feet, we turned around on our benches toward the table, the Brothers and Sisters again facing each other. Then came the evening meal, which with us consisted of lamb soup as the chief dish, while bread and apple-butter were served to the strangers and visitors gathered in the hall. Brother Beissel having breathed a fervent blessing on the meal we turned to it in absolute silence. And yet not in utter silence, for if ever heart spake to heart I know mine was clamoring most violently, and I verily believe hers was too, for now and then, not slyly nor shamefacedly, the sweet face opposite me would look up and the tenderest shadow of a

smile would be wafted to me. I know little of these things, but I believe our hearts turned each toward the other without the power to stay them, just as certain as flowers turn toward the light and warmth of the sun. Those gentle smiles, as innocent and guileless as a child's, filled me with a happiness, an ecstatic bliss I had never felt at any other love feast. It was, ah me, truly a feast of love.

I suppose we had sat there forever in perfect happiness and content, had not the evening services interrupted our foolish bliss. I shall not describe what followed of the service, for they were similar to the love feasts that are still observed by our little congregation; the giving of thanks at the end of the meal, the holy kiss, when Brother kissed Brother and Sister kissed Sister. But if ever the kisses of my Brethren seemed stale and unprofitable—may I be forgiven for saying this—'twas then, when there was so near in being but so far in possibility, a kiss from my dear young sister.

Alas, what a garrulous old fool I am to be writing of such things at my age. But I cannot help it, for if ever I had a true idea of what heaven's bliss would be like it was that night. If such transcendent joy could come from sweet flesh and blood on earth, though in angelic shape, what joy must it be to wander forever the boundless realms of heaven enraptured with the love of the celestial virgin.

That night as I lay down on my hard bench in my *Kammer*, I felt for the first time as though it were too small to hold all the joy of human love and the pain of a conscience guilty of treason to its celestial virgin. What little sleep visited mine eyes that night brought visions of the dear sister in the form of our spiritual Eve, and when morning came I was so miserably happy, if I may so say, between the two loves I hardly knew what to do. Nor was I helped much during the day when I overheard our Elder remark to Brother Joseph that he had never seen such beautiful, soul-absorbing observance of a love feast as that shown by Brother Jabez and Brother Lamech the night before.

This was more than I could bear, and I laughed so heartily that Sister Maria, who afterward became the spiritual leader of the Sisterhood, suddenly coming upon me held up her hands in pious horror at such unspeakable levity. I did many a penance that week before I felt myself absolved from my impious frivolity. I have often thought since then how many a time we are praised when we deserve blame and blamed when we merit praise; and indeed it hath been a rule of my life never to be unduly elated by praise, or on the other hand unnecessarily depressed by censure. I have always set one against the other, and in this manner have contrived with my weak, erring temper to preserve a fair show of equanimity and serenity.

But I was resolved that I, Brother Jabez, the associate superintendent of the community, would not give way to this midsummer madness, and so far as I could see, Sister Bernice was of the same mind. I saw but little of her, and when we did come nigh each other, which was seldom, her averted gaze told me she too was struggling against our sinful love. And so day after day passed around, filled with its various duties, neither Sister Bernice nor myself giving any sign, so far as either of us was aware, of our poor, forbidden love, though often in the long after years I wondered whether all our self-denial of this sweet, human love was not a greater sacrifice than He required of us.



## CHAPTER X

### THE BROTHERHOOD OF ZION

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions.

—*Bible.*



HIS poor love for my Sister Bernice was not the only thing that troubled me about this time, which was in the same year that Brother Brämer passed away. It was during this very year of 1738 there occurred one of the most important events in the history of our community, and this was the formation of the Zionitic Brotherhood by the Eckerlings and their deluded followers, and the erection of a large building for the use of their mystical society. While Brother Beissel and Brother Wohlforth and myself and our followers rejoiced to see that from all parts of our province and the adjacent provinces men and women and their children flocked to us and became part of our community

—so that our secular congregation was now the largest Sabbatarian settlement in the colonies—yet our hearts were oft weighed down with apprehensions as to the outcome of the doings of these Eckerlings, to whose foolish and ambitious schemes there seemed no end.

These Eckerling brothers were the strangest mixture of worldly wisdom, on the one hand, and the most perverse and ridiculous religious beliefs, on the other, I verily believe, I have ever seen. While we taught and enjoined the purity and simplicity of the mode of life of the early Christians, the Eckerlings must continually be running after strange gods, so that at this time and for many years thereafter we were in great danger of total disruption ; for experience clearly showeth the Scriptures say truly, a house divided against itself must fall.

Thus by our increased membership and by the scheming of our Eckerlings it came about that the Solitary Brethren clamored for a building similar to the Sisters' house, Kedar, and while for a time the project was kept in abeyance by lack of money, which commodity was never dangerously plenty with us, yet finally, Brother Benedict (and I say this to his praise), a young Swiss from Kilcheryturnen, a scion of a rich family of Berne, who had joined our community, came forward with the necessary funds. Whereupon it came to pass not-

withstanding our opposition, so I find it in our *Chronicon*, that, "Inflamed by the love of God, he resolved to devote his fortune to the erection of a convent"; which was accepted as coming by divine direction, and his proposition granted. There was in the settlement a pleasant elevation from which one had a beautiful view of the fertile valley and the mountains lying opposite. Of this height the Brethren in the hill house at that time held possession. When now it came to the selection of a site, the most held that the valley along the Cocalico creek was the most desirable on account of the water. The superintendent, however, went up the hill until he came within the limits of the property of the hill house, and there was the site chosen. By this the spirit of wonders indicated at the very beginning that the Brotherhood would at first build its structure on the heights of reason and thus soar aloft until at length by a great storm they would be cast down into the valley; all of which was afterwards fulfilled in the minutest detail.

The site for the new chapter-house having been settled, the eager Eckerlings, like children hastening toward a new toy, could stand no delay. The Brethren must be pressed into immediate service, and every one joining in the work as though this heathenish temple were unanimously desired, in a wonderfully short time we had cut and framed the timbers, and a day was fixed in the month of May

when the building was to be raised with much ritual and ceremony.

In those days when home or barn or mill was to be built the "raising" (by which we meant the putting into place the large, heavy timbers for the framework) was made the occasion of a great gathering. From miles around, the sturdy, broad-shouldered farmers and their deep-bosomed and hardly less broad-shouldered wives, and even the children, would come trooping along to take part in the raising, the men attending to the heavier work of the building while the women folk took care of the more delicate labor of the cooking, and when we had our raising there was such a swarming from far and wide that the Sisterhood, aided by the visiting wives and daughters, were driven to make such mighty preparations for the hungry workmen we sometimes wondered where all the food was to come from; but our kind helpers, knowing the rigorous state of our larder and relishing not overmuch our thin and ghostly fare, brought along such a rich store of meats and jellies and preserves as threatened to ruin forever the stomachs of the Solitary. I grieve, moreover, to say that on this occasion many a Brother—I among them—and even Sister, did in the hilarity and good cheer vary so much from our usual temperance as to suffer in body and mind for some days after our well-meaning friends had left us.

Not the least of the joyousness of this raising was that in the evening when we were gathered, tired and hungry as wolves, about the long, wooden tables in Kedar, Sister Bernice and I in those few days saw more of each other than in all the months since that blissful love feast. It hath often puzzled me, even now I know not the explanation, that it happened every meal-time Sister Bernice waited on me; for the Sisters and the wives insisting the men must be fed first, knowing no doubt our fretful natures when hungry, gave zest to the meals by adding their womanly presence in the serving of the food. So, as I have said, it chanced that Sister Bernice waited on me, and whether or not the others observed the foolishness of our sweet love, I only know that when, most unaccountably, in handing me the meats, and the bread and the like, her hands would touch me, I came more than once so near grasping those wonderful little, soft things in mine, that most of the meal-time I was distressed lest I do some utterly foolish thing that would make my dear sister and me the laughing-stock of every one present, and this I determined must not be, at least for her sake.

Once, though, when the Evil One prompted me no one was looking, and I pinched gently the dear hand that for a moment rested lightly on the table, just by my arm, whereat she smiled at me with such well-nigh irresistible sweetness it seemed now

I must simply take her in mine arms and say to all, "This is my Sister Bernice; I am her Brother Jabez. We love each other better than life"; but some remnant of common sense and my ever-present cowardice in all matters pertaining to love saved us both from any noticeable outbreak of our sweet delirium. Ah, me! Ah, me!

But if there was great hilarity and good cheer after the labor of the day when the appetites of all did full justice to the food that came out of the Sisters' kitchen, even this was nothing compared with the bustle and noise and hurrying to and fro that attended the raising of the timbers into their place; for even the heaviest pieces had to be placed by sheer physical strength, the broad-shouldered, iron-muscled giants puffing and straining at their tasks; it seemed to me as though Hercules and Atlas had come to earth again, in the forms of these powerful farmers and woodsmen. As was to be expected, great rivalry, though in the best of humor, existed between these giants as to which could put up the heaviest timbers and the most speedily, and sometimes, though more in fun than for the value of the thing, wagers were laid as to who should prove the stronger. Where there is such a spirit work goes on rapidly, and in a very few days the large posts and the beams and joists were all up and our kind helpers ready to leave us to complete the lighter but more tedious portion

of the task. Fortunately we had among us Brethren who were skilled carpenters, so that by fall the building was ready for actual occupation, though it was not finished until five years later.

This building was erected on a hill, called by the Brethren Mount Sinai, within the bounds of the *Lager*, while the structure itself was called Zion. It was three stories in height. The lower floor consisted of one large room, known as the refectory, connected with which were three small chambers, *Kabinettchen*. Of these, two served as pantries for storing the provisions and necessities for the forty days' seclusion which, according to the beliefs of our Eckerlings, were necessary in connection with certain rites to attain perfection. The remaining chamber consisted of receptacles for the paraphernalia used by the Eckerlings in their ceremonies. The second floor of Zion was a circular chamber without any window or means of admitting light from the outside. In the center on a pedestal was placed a lamp which was kept burning continually during the forty days' rite.

Thirteen cots or pallets radiated from the pedestal like the spokes of a wheel. This chamber was known as "Ararat," meaning thereby the heavenly rest the Almighty had vouchsafed exclusively to his chosen people, just as the ark of Noah had settled down on the mount of that name, there to rest forever.

The third or upper story of Zion was the mystical chamber, where the arcana of the rite were unfolded to the Secluded. This room was entirely plain and measured exactly eighteen feet square, having a small oval window in each side, opening to the four cardinal points of the compass. The only access to this chamber was through a trap-door in the floor, and it was in this chamber that the ceremonies and rites were performed by the thirteen Brethren who were striving for their moral and physical regeneration and seeking communication with the spirit world.

Zion was no sooner advanced sufficiently for occupation than the necessary provisions and paraphernalia were obtained and preparations were made by thirteen of our Brethren to undergo the ordeal, which, like the other rites and ceremonies taught by the Eckerlings, were nothing more than what was known as the "strict observance," or the Egyptian cult of mystic Freemasonry.

At the conclusion of certain religious services, among which was the repeating in concert of the fortieth Psalm, a procession was formed and thirteen elect of the Brethren were escorted up the hill to the doors of the building, which, as soon as the adepts had entered, were securely locked to prevent any intrusion or interruption during the forty days' retirement from the outside world.

I had been greatly surprised to see that of the



thirteen selected for the ordeal, Gabriel Eckerling, or Brother Jotham, had been chosen prior instead of the eldest of the Eckerling brothers, Israel, or Brother Onesimus.

As the doors closed upon the last of the misguided thirteen, I turned to Brother Beissel and said, "Why hath not Brother Onesimus been chosen prior?" for it was well known to all of us that the eldest of the Eckerlings was the real leader in all these schemes.

Brother Beissel looked at me quietly for a moment and then said so low only I and Brother Wohlforth, who was standing near, could hear: "It meaneth naught other than that Beelzebub hath some deep plan laid for our undoing. What sayest thou, Brother Wohlforth?"

"I know not what it meaneth, but I feel sure it portendeth some evil, for our Brother Onesimus would not relinquish the honor of being prior if it were not that he hath somewhat else to attend to to complete his plans while our thirteen idolaters are practising their abominations."

"Perchance," I suggested, "our Brother Onesimus thinketh it necessary to keep watch over us while the others are shut up in Zion for their forty days' regeneration."

"I doubt not thou art right," said our leader, and Brother Wohlforth also seemed to think that Brother Onesimus did not deem it wise to incar-

cerate himself for forty days and leave us unwatched by him for that time ; but his own slyness in time proved his overthrow.

I have not space here to set forth in detail all the practices of our thirteen neophytes, which at this time were known only to the Eckerlings and their followers, being, as I said, a sort of Freemasonry, but in later years I learned from Sonnenlein a great deal concerning this ordeal and it may be that, later, I shall have somewhat to say of it.

I do know this, however, that at the end of the forty days the thirteen emerged, claiming they had successfully completed the ordeal, with physical bodies as clean and pure as though new-born, their spirits filled with divine light, visions without limit, mental power sunbounded, and no other ambition than to enjoy a state of complete rest and peace while waiting for immortality, so that each could say at the end, "I am that I am." So far as I could see, and I say this not in levity or prejudice but as being absolutely true, all the change I could see beyond their looking even thinner and paler than before, each of the regenerated could say more truly instead of, "I am that I am," "I am what I was before I entered." I could not see in all my later life that physically or mentally or religiously these adepts were any different or better than the rest of us, but seemed subject to the same weakness and infirmities as the unregenerated, only

that the silly thirteen did ever after by their aversion for labor show they really believed they had attained a state of complete rest.

All of which goes to show that in every community error is bound to come and that there are ever those who, not content with serving God in the simple manner he hath set forth in the Scriptures, must devise all sorts of foolish and even difficult modes of living the Almighty doth not ask for and which, I doubt, not do not please him.

However, while our *Vorsteher*, or superintendent, and Brother Wohlforth and myself were not in accord with the Eckerlings and their followers in establishing the Zionitic Brotherhood, who were ever looked upon with awe and veneration by the secular members, we did all in our power to live peaceably with them, Brother Beissel even bringing out a hymn book, known as the "*Weyrauch's Hügel*" (Incense Hill), for the use of the Brotherhood as well as for general circulation among the Germans in the province.

According to the ritual of the Eckerlings, *Weyrauch* meant nothing more than *Gebet*, or prayer. It was taught that the gum, made after a mystical formula and kept exclusively for religious uses, when ignited during supplication or prayer became corporeal and was wafted in fragrant clouds to heaven. *Hügel*, or hillock, also denotes an object held in special veneration, as the rising sun first

gilds the hilltops in the east, and it is well known that from time immemorial hills have always been designated as holy ground and were the chosen places for offering sacrifices, so that the title of the hymn book meant to the adepts more than a mere hill of incense. It typified the book as a volume of prayer which, if properly used would, like the visible flames of the burning incense, go direct to the throne of grace.

But this peace offering, besides containing a few old, popular German hymns, being chiefly made up of hymns composed by Brother Beissel and the rest of the Solitary, like so many other peace offerings failed to effect its purpose. Not only did the Eckerlings grow more and more swollen in their power and arrogance, but the printing of the book itself was greatly delayed; and as our good Christopher Sauer, the printer, of Germantown, to whom it was intrusted for publication, saw fit to make himself a censor of the hymns, it so occurred that when the four hundredth hymn was set up, a personal controversy, exceedingly bitter, arose and ended in an estrangement lasting fully ten years, during which our leader and our printer hurled at each other most violent accusations, the printer evidently being firm in his mind that our leader regarded himself as somewhat of a pope or a Christ, before whom all others must bow.

Indeed, there were during Brother Beissel's

leadership many false stories current about him, rising through superstition or enmity, the coarser part of the people regarding him as a great wizard, fully believing that the spirit whom he served had at times made our brother invisible; wherefore it is related that a justice of the peace sent a constable after our leader with a warrant, taking care to send an assistant. As the constable and his assistant came toward the cabin down in the meadow where our leader lived, they saw him go into his cabin with a pitcher of water; they followed him, and while one stationed himself at the door, the other searched the house from top to bottom, but no superintendent was to be found. Greatly bewildered and even alarmed at such witchcraft they departed, and after they were some distance from the house, on looking back they saw our leader come out as though naught had happened.

It is also true, and I regret to say it, that many of our Brothers, and even the Sisters, who seem ever given to idolizing, fell to the other extreme and, as in the case of John the Baptist, wondered whether our leader might not be Christ. Even Brother Onesimus once tried to poison my mind against our superintendent by remarking that even he thought that, perhaps, our leader might be Christ, whereupon I rebuked our Brother Onesimus so soundly for his folly, I never again heard him repeat such nonsense.

Thus it went back and forth so that it seemed the conflict between our leader and the printer were never to cease, the printer publishing it far and wide that our superintendent was born under a strange conjunction of the stars and that a number of planets manifested in him their characteristics: from Mars, our superintendent had his great severity; from Jupiter, his friendliness; from Venus, that the female sex ran after him; while Mercury had given him the arts of the comedian; and not content with this, our printer must even go so far as to say of our superintendent: "In many points he is very close to Gichtel and still closer to the little beast described in Revelation 13:11, which represents his peculiarity in spiritual things. His figure is such that if one beseeches him he has the horns of a lamb, but if one touches his temper a little he speaks like a dragon, and is, indeed, not to be regarded as the first great beast, whose number is 66. He is not so beast-like, but is also not clean Godly, but is humanly peculiar and no other than CVnraDV's BeIseLV's DcLVVVI—666."

All of which goeth to show that when one man hateth another beyond all reason, the hater maketh a greater fool of himself than of him who is derided.

## CHAPTER XI

### BROTHER AGONIUS AND HIS PROPHECY

No great genius was ever without some mixture of madness, nor can anything grand or superior to the voice of common mortals be spoken except by the agitated soul.

—*Aristotle.*



BROTHER AGONIUS, his real name being Michael Wohlforth, or Welfare, as he was known among the English settlers—what a shock, notwithstanding our boasted fortitude and resignation, his death was to us!

He was born, as became his warlike soul, at the fortress of Memel, on the Baltic Sea. Coming to this New World in his early youth, he at once joined himself to the Pietists, the Hermits of the Wissahickon; but he remained not long there, for his fiery, intrepid zeal left him no other mind but that he must journey to and fro, near and far, even making a long and dangerous journey to the Ger-

mans of North Carolina, preaching to them as he did to every one, in season and out of season, wherever he went, to repent their godless lives and to submit themselves wholly to the Master's will.

Upon his return, in 1723, from that distant province, he joined himself to our *Vorsteher* who, as "Brother Beissel," was then living the life of a Solitary in the depths of a forest not many miles north from Ephrata, which at that time had not yet been founded. In the solitude of this forest these two hermits, so alike in their energetic, impetuous, stubborn zeal, lived a life of silent contemplation and adoration of the mysteries of the Creator for some time, and from thenceforth even though they differed not infrequently with all the force and outspoken directness of their strong-willed natures, yet were they firm friends and companions until death separated them.

I recall how in later years in our Kloster life at Ephrata, when we had built Kedar and the other houses of worship, as I have already related, he became alarmed at their size, and deprecated especially the innovation of the innocent bells, so that for a time he withdrew from us and again became a hermit, in the mountains of Zoar, some five miles from the Kloster; but he soon resumed his life with us to remain as a valued co-worker for the rest of his days.

And now that he was gone, how we missed



him ! His boldness, aggressiveness, his fearlessness and fidelity in proclaiming far and wide his doctrine as to the Seventh Day Sabbath made his death a heavy loss not only to our community, but to all the Sabbatarians, German and English, in the province. He would travel on foot, no matter how hard and toilsome the way, staff in hand, in pilgrim garb, and no matter whether by country roadside or in the slave markets in the streets of the chief city of our province, in church or meeting-house, wherever he could find an audience, large or small, to listen to his voice, he would stand boldly forth, yet in the spirit of humility, and exhort and admonish with all his power, in German or in English, speaking both with equal ease, oblivious of taunts and revilings and persecutions, that his hearers live in obedience to God's commands as to the Sabbath day.

To Brother Beissel and to me the death of our brother came with far greater force than to the rest of the Solitary. Even more than our superintendent and myself he was unalterably opposed to the Eckerlings and their unchristian innovations ; for it can be said in all moderation that hardly would we three succeed in overthrowing some especially offensive scheme of the Eckerlings when one of the remaining four would present something new to torment us.

One of their abominations, which originated in

the busy mind of Emanuel Eckerling, Brother Elimelech, was the baptism of the living for the dead, and so persistent and subtle were his arguments that he finally won over to him our superintendent in spite of all that Brother Agonius and I could do to save our leader from this tremendous foolishness.

So it came about that on a certain day a procession was formed of the Brotherhood of Zion, the Spiritual Virgins, and the secular congregation, and as they wended their way slowly and solemnly down the hill and across the meadow to a pool in the Cocalico, Brother Agonius and I having steadfastly refused to countenance in any way the thing, were nevertheless compelled to say to each other that our Brothers and Sisters were an impressive sight. The solemn procession having arrived at the pool special hymns were sung and fervent invocations were made, intended no doubt to ascend, but which to my wrathful mood seemed more fit to descend.

I care not to dwell longer on this irreligious proceeding than to say that, with Brother Beissel as administrator, Emanuel Eckerling was immersed for his dead mother, and Alexander Mack the younger, for his dead father, although these departed ones had both been baptized in their own flesh in Germany. Indeed, this baptismal fever became so virulent that everybody, irrespective of

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faith, was becoming baptized for some deceased relative, so that I gravely wondered whether or not some utterly daft ones would be baptized for Adam and Eve.

Another scheme of the Eckerlings, into which our leader fell without the slightest hesitation, was that instead of "Brother Beissel," he should be called "*Vater Friedensam*" (Father Friedensam, meaning the peaceful one). This suggestion caused great uproar among us which finally settled itself into an agreement that the Solitary should call him "Father," and the secular congregation, "Brother," and so it remained for a number of years, but as for me, I always called him "Brother"—"*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*"

Would I could say I were done telling of these Eckerlings, for it seemeth to require as long to get rid of them here in the writing as it did to get them out of our community. About this time a pilgrimage from Ephrata was made by Brother Beissel and Brothers Elimelech and Onesimus and one or two others of the Solitary to the Dunker settlement at Amwell, in our sister province of New Jersey, with whom we had become acquainted about two years prior hereto. The charge of this pilgrimage was in Brother Elimelech, but he was with our Amwell Brethren only a short time when he succeeded in making as much trouble for them as he had already made for us. First, because

when he preached he kept on and never knew when to stop so that even though his hearers were used to long sermons the utmost patience could not endure his protracted discourses. Secondly, because of his proposing midnight watches and the like, such as had been fastened on us, so that finally he was dismissed and returned to us in disgrace. But as there is some good in all misfortune so it resulted that out of the strained conditions in the Amwell congregation a number of their brethren, among them Dietrich Fahnestock, Conrad Boldhauser, Johannes Mohr, Bernhard Gitter and several others with their families, came to us and either joined the Solitary or our secular congregation.

Hardly had this storm subsided than our Brother Onesimus, thinking no doubt it was his turn, concluded that even though properly baptized and notwithstanding he had taken the vows of celibacy, yet there was nothing to prevent him from re-entering the world and marrying, so he advised the Brotherhood to make a new covenant with the Virgin Mary as the patroness of their Order.

As a visible sign of their betrothal to the virgin, Brother Onesimus advised that the Brothers and Sisters all cut the tonsure. Brother Beissel, who always counseled chastity and celibacy, fell into this folly of the Eckerlings just as readily as he had into the former ones and hardly had the prior

convened the Brotherhood in the chapter house, where each Brother in turn kneeling down repeated his pledge of celibacy and had his hair cut and his crown shorn, when our leader, not to be outdone by the prior, called together the Spiritual Virgins, in their *Saal*.

After reconsecrating the assembled Sisters to the heavenly Bridegroom, Brother Beissel, with the assistance of another Brother, cut the hair of each of the Sisterhood in the manner of the primitive Christian church, after which the crowns of the Sisters were likewise shorn, our superintendent gathering up the tresses and carrying them to Zion where he laid them upon the altar expressing the wish that he might live until the Sisters' heads were gray—and it was further resolved and ordered that the tonsure was to be renewed every three months and in the meantime no one was to put shears to his or her head. Thus was another madness inflicted upon us.

Our prior continuing to exalt himself in his priesthood, had our Sisters make for him a robe or costume such as is described in the Bible as having been worn by the high priest in the temple, and when our prior presided thereafter at the *agapæ* and baptisms he presented to the unsophisticated a most gorgeous sight, while to me the whole thing was disgusting. Following the tonsure and the priestly robe Prior Onesimus introduced

night-watches and processions, which resulted not only that our superintendent was virtually superseded by our cunning prior, but what was far worse, these abominations, so foreign to our simple Sabatarian precepts, becoming known to the surrounding country brought additional ridicule and contempt upon us and for many years wherever we went we had hurled at us such epithets (*Schimpfworte*) as *Glatzköpfe* (bald heads), *Vollmonde* (full moons), *Bettel-Mönche* (beggar friars), and *Pfaffenmucker* (Papish double-dealers). Not only were we compelled to listen to such nicknames, but by reason of this aping of the monastic customs of the Middle Ages we incurred the ire of the Scotch-Irish settlers, hard-headed Presbyterians, between the Octoraro and the Susquehanna, so that no matter what we or our friends said to the contrary, these stubborn old Covenanters were sure we were nothing but a nest of Jesuit emissaries, and the "croppies," as our Presbyterian friends were wont to call us were decried from their pulpits as well as held up to scorn by the members of that church wherever and whenever the opportunity afforded.

Still the Eckerlings went on in their unceasing activities. Having built Zion according to their own ideas, they were, however, not contented; for as they had left no room for the congregational gatherings all the assemblages and love feasts were held in the house of prayer adjoining the

Sister house, Kedar ; but as the Zionitic Brotherhood had to traverse the intervening distance in all kinds of bad weather and as the nightly processions had to take their way toward the habitation of the Spiritual Virgins all sorts of unfavorable comments were made by the outsiders, who, judging from their own evil minds, did not hesitate to call into question the honesty of the Brethren in their adherence to their vows.

Thus it was determined to erect a building which should be a combined prayer and schoolhouse, to adjoin Zion and be large enough to accommodate the secular congregation as well as all the Solitary within the community, and so rapidly did the work progress and so favorable was the weather (although it was late in the fall not a drop of rain or flake of snow or frost appeared until the middle of the following January), that the work on the chapel went on without intermission or hindrance, so that by the following summer, Zion's *Saal*, as it was called, a stately three-story structure, was completed, the lower floor being for worship and the second for the love feasts and *pedelavium* and the third being divided into small cells for the Solitary Brothers of the Zionitic Order. In July of 1740 the last joint services were held in Kedar, to which all the Sabbatarians, far and near, were invited, not excepting the Welsh and English Brethren in Nantmill and Newtown, invitations being scattered

broadcast even among the Germans beyond the Schuylkill, and to all who came the hospitality of the community was most cordially extended. After that time Kedar fell exclusively to the Order of Spiritual Virgins.

Not two weeks later the Brotherhood of Zion dedicated their new temple, at midnight, the prior not losing the opportunity for making the occasion remarkable for an interminable number of processions, incantations, prayers, and mysterious ceremonies, said to date from Pharaoh, from whose bondage we, unlike the children of Israel, did not seem able to free ourselves.

About a month later, our Brother Beissel, being now the acknowledged superintendent of our entire community, must surrender himself so completely to the vanities of the Eckerlings that in the presence of the whole congregation, from among whom I saw Sister Bernice look at me with shy pride, he solemnly consecrated Brother Onesimus, Brother Enoch, and myself to the priesthood, by the laying on of hands, after which with most solemn and ancient ceremony we had conferred on us the centuries-old Order of Melchizedek, although what this order had to do with our Christian life, I confess I have never yet found out, only consenting to the doubtful honor in order to appease our superintendent's displeasure, whose rigorous spirit often pressed on my slower one.



And now, our superintendent, assuming the rôle of Grand Master of the Zionitic Brotherhood, deposed Brother Jotham and in his stead, despite the protests of himself and his following, appointed Brother Onesimus, Prior, or Perfect Master, of the Brotherhood. Our new prior, however, was even worse than his brother and applied the discipline of the order so rigidly that I was compelled to write to a friend, that "Now was there between the poor devotees of Ephrata and the wool-headed African slaves no other difference than that we are white and free slaves," and indeed, I fear I almost felt toward the Eckerlings like the English king who wondered whether there was no one to rid him of his enemies.

At the risk of trespassing too far on the patience of those who may read this, I shall narrate of the clock and bells donated to the community by my father, and which the Eckerlings obtained permission to place in the steeple over the roof of the *Saal*. This clock held an ingenious attachment for chiming the bells and for ringing them at certain times during the day and night, to call us to our various and now almost innumerable devotions. When this bell was rung at midnight, not only did the Solitary arise from their wooden couches, but for miles around, whenever the notes of the bell could be heard, all the families arose also and held their worship at the same time ; but

though the fires of first love for their faith burned strongly among the secular members at this time, yet it finally came about that the congregation demanded a house where they could worship unhindered by the exacting rules and ceremonies of the Brotherhood of Zion, who seeing in this an excellent opportunity for securing their temple wholly to their own uses, fell in with might and main to prepare the frame and timbers for another prayer house, nominally for the exclusive use of the secular members.

And now, though all our houses of worship were on the higher ground, the site for this new temple was chosen down in the meadow, and this less pretentious *Saal* still survives, while its loftily situated and proud predecessors have long ago passed away. Thus as the Lord hath promised doth he exalt the lowly and bring down the haughty.

In size the new prayer house was to be forty feet square and that many feet in height, thus symbolizing the perfect number, although it hath been claimed that some of the builders wondering what might happen if they followed not the perfect proportions, made the width two feet narrower and the height somewhat greater than forty feet. Be that as it may, I have not seen in these fifty years since the building was put up that the variation, if there were such, hath made any difference for good or ill.

But the good fortune attending us during the building of the *Saal* forsook us now, for many delays and heavy disappointments fell upon us ere our task was performed; for the weather during the fall and winter of 1740 and 1741 was exceptionally hard, there being the severest storms and the extremest cold. Never since have I seen such cold and sleet and ice and snow as during that awful winter. The Cocalico was completely hidden under its thick covering of ice and snow so that a stranger would not have known there was a stream there. At times the snow was three feet deep on the level, and where it had drifted from the winds, cabins and outbuildings were completely covered over. Families were imprisoned in their homes. Cattle died from want of fodder. Even the wild beasts in the forest, though knowing so well how to take care of themselves, died of hunger, so that deer were found dead in the woods. Indeed, it was no infrequent sight to see the pretty animals, usually so timid, driven by their great hunger to the very cabin doors for food, sometimes even mingling with the cattle. The settlers, especially of the more remote districts, suffered greatly from lack of bread, and had little to live on but the carcasses of the deer found in the swamps. Even the Indians suffered on account of the lack of game. Often during the night there would be borne to our ears the strangest sounds, heavings,

and groanings from the ice-bound, rebellious Co-calico, the walls of our buildings even seeming to strain and crack as though they would fall asunder. Sometimes at long intervals during those dark, bitter, cold nights there would fall from the depths of the sky the trumpet calls of wild fowls, winging their way I know not whither, but still, I know, within His care. At times, these shrill cries came with such strength and suddenness that Sonnlein would jump up out of the soundest sleep, cuddling up close to me as though only I could save him from those mysterious, threatening voices.

But the Solitary, despite the severity of the winter, pressed on at every relaxation of the weather toward the completion of our new prayer house, and as the spring opened, we being now joined by the congregation at large, the work went on rapidly, though the building which our superintendent named "Peniel" (being the name Jacob gave to the place where he wrestled with God), was not made tenantable until the following December, when it was duly consecrated to God.

All during this hard winter I could see that Brother Agonius, his hardy frame worn out by excessive zeal, was suffering keenly from the cold, piercing winds, and I felt with deepening sadness, day after day as I saw his infirmity increase, that our brother must soon cease to be among us. How bravely he fought to remain with us and how uncom-

plainly he faced the inevitable end, his rugged heart mellowing and ripening into sweeter and more resigned humility before being plucked from its stem by the Master's loving hand !

Spring had not yet yielded itself to summer—for it was only the latter part of May when the fields and the woods were gay with flowers—when what he stubbornly maintained was only a slight weakness passed into the serious illness that in a few days ended his labors on earth. But such was his unyielding will that on the Sabbath before his death he was at meeting, and the following evening there were good hopes for his recovery.

About an hour before midnight—Sonnlein having gone to sleep soon after dark—I bethought me to go to our brother's *Kammer* and give him such comfort as he might need. I found him alone in his little cell sitting feebly on his wooden bench, so that I could see he was suffering great weakness. At first he resisted my gentle persuasions to lie down and rest, but finally consented thereto, even, after much coaxing, letting me spread my robe under him and rest his head on it ; for he was so thin I could not bear to see his poor frame with nothing between it and the hard boards.

I rejoiced to see him drop off into a deep sleep that I fondly hoped would last until the morning ; but there was a something about his sleep so un-

naturally deep and profound I feared it might be the forerunner of his speedy dissolution.

It was close now to the midnight hour and soon there rang out from the darkness the clear notes of our bell calling the Brothers and Sisters to their wonted devotions. Scarcely had the first stroke died away when I was startled almost out of my wits to see Brother Agonius sit up straight on his bench, looking ahead with a fixed, steady stare.

"What seest thou, brother?" I asked softly and I know my voice trembled, for I understood not his strange gazing.

But he heeded me not in the least only that he appeared to be muttering to himself. Then his voice, becoming more firm, he said, still as though to himself, "Ye foolish Eckerlings; flee ye from the wrath to come!"

"What meanest thou?" I asked wonderingly; but still he heeded not, only muttering as before something about the Eckerlings of which now and then I would catch some few words, which seemed to me like, "O ye Eckerlings; ye poor Eckerlings; driven away—alone—captured—tortured—separated—persecuted—homeless"; and then my brother sighed as though a world of woe oppressed him and murmured, "Repent ye; repent ye"; all this time my flesh creeping with dread as the low tone of the dying man uttered this marvelous prophecy; for such, in truth, it was.

Finally he lay down again, but still muttering and mumbling, only lower than before. Once he mentioned my name and it seemed to me he said pityingly, "Poor Brother Jabez," and then after a long pause, "Poor Sister Bernice," and then after a still longer pause, during which I waited anxiously for what might follow he said more clearly, "The fight will not be long; comfort thou him, Lord"; so that I could not keep out a great fear for that he should couple my name with my dear sister's so strangely; for I had oft heard that dying ones see not only the past but even the future with great clearness, and I could not help the dread that held my heart as though with a hand of ice.

When the Brethren dropped in after their devotions our brother was again suffering such agony that he declared—being in his senses again—his sacrifice on the cross was now complete, wherefore he did not know whether any saint had ever suffered such martyrdom, and while the Brethren were singing at his request the hymn, "The time is not yet come," he asked that they intercede with God that he might open to him his prison door.

As his end drew near he asked that certain psalms and parts of Tauler's "Last Hours" be repeatedly read to him, after which he asked to be anointed in the manner of the first Christians. This was done, Brother Beissel applying the

chris. On the Wednesday following, Brother Agoñius kept looking keenly toward the hour-glass, for it had been revealed to him that his end was to come at the ninth hour of that day. And so when the ninth hour came he sat up straight on his wooden bench, but immediately fell over scarce breathing; but he revived again and asked feebly whether he had not died. With the end of the ninth hour he passed away with the senseless sands of the hour-glass.

The next day his mortal remains were placed in a neat coffin where the Brethren and Sisters and the settlers of all denominations for miles around could gaze once more upon the face and form of this unconquerable Christian soldier and martyr and pay their last respects to the memory of our eloquent exhorter. I shall not dwell upon the rites and ceremonies that made his burial so solemn and memorable. As his body was lowered into its resting-place in the meadow a little to the east of Brother Beissel's cabin, a special funeral hymn was sung by the Sabbatarians, composed for the occasion by his lifelong friend, our superintendent.

After the singing of the hymn the Brotherhood of Zion, being nearest about the grave, closed with its mystic rites the funeral ceremonies, the Sisters in a tearful group standing beyond us, and all being surrounded by the sincere friends of our



departed brother, and the curious ones who ever attend such sad occasions.

A modest tombstone marks his sleeping-place, bearing the following German inscription by Brother Beissel, which I translate freely thus :

HERE REPOSES THE GODLY WARRIOR

AGONIUS

DIED ANNO 1741.

*Aged 54 years, 4 months, 28 days.*

Victory brings the crown  
In the fight for faith, grace, and renown.  
Thus blessings crown the warrior true  
Who bravely sin and Belial slew.  
Peacefully he passed to his chamber of rest  
Where now he is free of all pain and distress.

## CHAPTER XII

### SISTER BERNICE IS COMFORTED

Girls and gold are the softer the purer they are.

—*Jean Paul Richter.*



THE beautiful flowers that grew down in the meadow where we laid our Brother Agonius in his chamber of rest, like him were soon gathered up into the arms of the Master Reaper. The enchantments of the long, hot, summer days had worked silently but surely the entrancing spells that now spread over field and forest the glowing vestments of the early fall.

But one day as I was resting at the foot of the venerable oak where Brother Martin had been hastened to his death by that strange woman not many years before, suddenly I heard a piercing shriek from the thick woods back of me and a wild, terrified rush toward the little clearing where I was standing erect, fairly astounded. In a

moment more Sister Bernice fell almost headlong at my feet, whence I lifted her unconscious with fright and terror into my arms.

Hardly knowing what to do I stood there helplessly gazing at her sweet face and then at the crown of hair that lay like a golden fleece over my arm, her hood having fallen to the ground, so that I was thankful some remnant of womanly vanity had saved her from the hideous tonsure. But I bethought myself to lay her gently on the ground, her head, a dear burden, in my lap, fanning her face as best I might with my large, toil-stained hands. At last the fluttering eyelids and the gasping breath told me of returning consciousness. At first she opened her eyes and gazed at me wonderingly, vaguely, and once she closed them as if to shut out some awful sight. I rubbed her hands, her wrists, softly smoothed her brow, and spake to her gently, "'Tis naught but Brother Jabez; thou needst not fear him. What hath he done?" and by such soft entreaties and with tender pressures of the hands I sought to soothe her to herself again.

Finally, she sat up weakly, but leaning so sweetly and helplessly against me—it being necessary to hold her safe with mine arms for great fear she might faint again—that I longed to sit there forever. She, however, after a while freed herself somewhat from my too careful protection and said



"In a moment more Sister Bernice  
fell almost headlong at my feet."  
Page 128.



shudderingly, "O Brother — Jabez — such an awful witch!" and after a pause for breath, "She came upon me while I was gathering firewood for our *Saal*. I saw her in the thicket close beside me — so close I could almost touch her — and she glared at me with such a frightful look of hate!" and my poor sister covered her face with her hands and trembled so I thought she needs must faint again. "I could see her ugly teeth like the fangs of some wild beast, as though she would tear me to pieces. O Brother Jabez, dear brother, believest thou in witches, believest thou in the evil eye? I — I am so frightened," and indeed, she was still weak as a child, so that I drew her again to the shelter of my side, resting her head 'gainst my heart, and soothing her by gentle pittings and strokings of that wonderful hair, just as I had often solaced Sonnlein in his childish griefs and troubles.

"Nay, my dear sister, my — Bernice, I never had much faith in such wild tales," said I, as she lifted those clear, trusting eyes to mine. And may I be forgiven for this unblushing, unscrupulous lie; for did I not know of the witch of Endor? Many a tale had I heard in the *Vaterland* of the malign influences of the evil eye, so that now I felt a vague dread I dared not make known to my poor little sister, who had flown to my arms as a birdling to its nest.

"Think not of her more, my sister ; she cannot harm thee now, dear Bernice." Upon which boastful assurance she smiled confidently enough and said with a look I would not have changed for a kingdom, "That I know quite well, thou great giant ; wast thou ever afraid, Brother Jabez ?"

"Never," I responded valiantly, recklessly adding another lie to the record I this day seemed bound to cover with falsehoods.

"Oh, that I could be so brave, Brother Jabez ; but I have ever been weak, such a coward ; the *Vaterchen* and the *Mutterchen* always shielded me as though I were in all truth a baby." Here she paused as if to catch her breath, and then slowly again as with difficulty she said quietly, "I have been growing so weak lately, I wonder what ails me ?"

And now my selfish joy, after all these gloomy months without sight of her, gave way to a pain that shot through me like an arrow as I saw how much more delicate and ethereal she had become since that blissful love feast. For a moment my soul was in hot rebellion at all the hardships and privations that made our Kloster life almost unbearable to the strongest and which were so heavy on the frail shoulders of this sweet angel at my side. Something of my wicked wrath must have expressed itself against my will, for she suddenly looked up at me alarmed, crying out, "What is

wrong, Brother Jabez? Thou hast such a hard, angry look in thy eyes, such as I have never seen there before."

"I am not in anger, Sister Bernice" replied I, softening my evil looks to fit my words, "merely thinking hard—exceeding hard."

"And dost thou look so stern and fierce and frown so, when thou art lost in great thoughts?" she asked looking up so innocently I felt myself an unregenerate and abandoned soul for such shameless lying. "If thou dost," she went on slowly, "I shall be afraid of thee."

"Yea, sister," I lied again unhesitatingly, "thou hast yet to learn that like many other silly men and women I save my smiles and cheerfulness for those whom I know the least and am sternest and coldest to those that know me and love me best."

"That I know to be false," she cried out, smiling up at me brightly, in such a way I thought I never could let her go; "thou art not a hypocrite. Who in all our Kloster does not know and love our big brother, Brother Jabez, for his kindness, his patience, his tenderness, his charity, for every one, good or bad, and most of all for that mischievous Sonnlein?"

All this sweet-sounding anthem to my unmerited exaltation made me so sinfully happy and irreligiously proud I fairly forgot myself in my foolish



joy, so that I pressed the gently resisting girl—for a mere girl she was—to my breast, and was about to insult her trust and purity by an unhallowed kiss, and doubt not I had done this great wickedness, had I not seen too near for me to venture on such indulgence, the form of some Sister straying our way.

I hurriedly urged Sister Bernice—who not seeing the approaching Sister, marveled much at my sudden coldness and failure to complete the sweet enterprise on which I had embarked: “Go thy way, my best beloved sister; think no more of witches; I shall not let them harm thee.” And with that she smiled more heavenly than before, but obeyed my will and betook herself to her *Kammer*, while I passing on in the opposite direction, went straight for that accursed spot where Brother Martin had been the first ill-fated one to see that grisly shape.

But though I searched most diligently, scrutinizing the vines, the brush, the ground, I saw no sign of her, and I was making my way back, sorely puzzled, to the oak, when suddenly I heard a quick rustling among the leaves, such as a bird might make, and turning sharply, beheld, not more than a child’s throw, in the gloomy shades of that thick, dark forest, the bent, crouching form of that hideous hag, a wild-eyed, savage-featured she-fiend!

The memory of poor Brother Martin, the terror

of my harmless, innocent Bernice, moved me to such anger as never before or since overcame my patience and moderation.

"Thou witch, or devil, whatever thou art," I yelled at her in my passion as I pulled out of the ground a stone as large as my clenched fists, "it is in mine temper to crush thee where thou standest, polluting these holy grounds, thou pestilence!"

With that she rushed forward fiercely for a few steps as though with clawlike hands and fanglike teeth she would rend me to pieces; but now that my blood was on fire, I quailed not, whereat she suddenly stopped, the more especially as my hand was drawn back ready to hurl the stone should she come any nigher.

As she stood there glowering and glaring at me, snarling and choking for the world like some angry beast, I marveled not that the others had been terror-stricken at such a forbidding shape. Again I commanded, drawing up my figure to its full height, "Begone thou vile beast ere I forget myself and slay thee as I would a snake!" and with that I advanced on her, my face distorted with such anger—for the passions are ever destroyers of comeliness—I doubt not she knew, if, indeed she had a mind for knowing, that I meant my threats.

I was but a few paces from her, when she made a spiteful sweep at my face with one of her talons that would have sadly marred me had I been

reached, and then, bent and crouching, she slunk away sullenly, still snarling and muttering inarticulate sounds. I stood there until her evil shape was swallowed up by the woods, and then I first knew I was shaking like a leaf and that I was as wet as though I had just come out of the Cocalico.

In this frame I walked back slowly to my *Kammer*, so sick at heart with forebodings of evil I dared not think of, which not all the joy of having had Bernice in my arms could make me forget.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE COMET AND BROTHER ALBURTUS

Night's curtains now are closing  
Round half a world reposing  
In calm and holy trust ;  
All seems one vast, still chamber,  
Where weary hearts remember  
No more the sorrows of the dust.

—*Mathias Claudius.*



ARDLY had Peniel been completed and dedicated, when there occurred an event that wrought great consternation, not only in our little community but among all the settlers in the province. This was nothing less than a comet. Many firmly believed this celestial visitant to be the precursor of war and its kindred evils, famine and pestilence ; for full many of our German settlers had still fresh in their minds the fiery comet that had appeared in the sky of the *Vaterland* immediately before the

Thirty Years' War, when the Palatinate was devastated from end to end and almost depopulated. Thus it was feared this fiery, flaming star foretold similar bloodshed and disaster in this hitherto peaceful New World. Many of our Brotherhood thought the flaming tail was a bundle of switches, with which the Almighty was about to punish the unrepentant and unregenerate.

To our brother hermits of the Wissahickon the comet was looked upon as a harbinger of the celestial Bridegroom, for whose coming they had so long devoutly waited.

I remember well the night this wonderful star appeared. It was early in the year 1742. The Kloster bell with its sweet tones was calling the Brotherhood of Zion to their midnight devotions. I still see our long slender line in cloaks and cowls file out of the narrow corridors, and silently and reverently take up our march toward the Hall of Prayer on Mount Sinai. There was no moon, but through the clear, frosty air was spread the light of a multitude of stars that twinkled brightly overhead. Not a twig stirred on the leafless trees. Everything was quiet, Kedar and Zion looming up distinctly on the hillside, and the sharp roof of Peniel, down in the meadow, seemed wrapt in deep slumber.

As the notes of the bells died away there was absolute stillness, save for the creaking and crunch-

ing of our wooden shoes on the frozen ground. We had passed over half the distance to the prayer house, when suddenly we saw in the eastern heavens a blazing star, with its bright, fiery tail flashing upon the face of the sky. I shall never forget the awe that took possession of us so that we trembled with fear, Brother Obed who was next to me, his teeth chattering violently, whispering hoarsely it was the judgment day and Gabriel would blow his horn. I myself was not without a feeling that something dreadful was about to happen, for it was the first comet I had ever seen, and I knew not what it portended. Still, I am glad to say I was not so utterly bereft of my senses as most of my poor brethren seemed to be.

Brother Alburtus, however, was least concerned of all, a peaceful smile lighting up his face as though the celestial Bridegroom were coming on some fiery chariot to take him to heaven; but Brother Onesimus fell on his knees on the hard ground, and prayed for mercy and that the great evil and calamities foreshadowed by the fiery messenger in the heavens might be turned aside and that the Almighty would hear our prayers.

And then I felt moved to quote the sublime words of Job:

Is not God in the height of heavens?  
And behold the height of the stars,  
How high they are.

After the first shock of this sudden apparition was somewhat abated, Brother Beissel ordered the bells rung throughout the community, and deputed me to order all out for religious services in Peniel, where we prayed and sang until the dawn, some of us fondly hoping as the daylight appeared and the glare of the comet died away our prayers had been answered, only to find the direful visitant in the sky on the following night and many nights thereafter.

Brother Obed held that the comet augured the end of the world and Brother Philemon agreed thereto ; for he recollected, which we all remembered now, that Brother Agonius some weeks before his death, had earnestly prophesied the long-looked-for millennium was at hand.

Special prayers as provided for in our ritual were said, and certain Brothers, detailed for that office, read these prayers at the services of the Sisterhood and the congregations of the households at Peniel. This liturgy consisted of the reading of the fourth Psalm, closing with a special invocation, these being changed each day according to the secret ritual of the Zionites. The sign for Sunday being the Lion ; the corresponding angel Raphael, and the planet Chamma, the Sun. For Monday the sign was the Crab, the angel Gabriel ; and the planet Lewanna, the Moon, and so on, a different sign and angel and planet for each day of the

week, the sign for the Sabbath being the Waterman and the Goat, the angel Chephziel; the planet Sabbathai, or Saturn.

Brother Jephune, who was skilled in astronomy and astrology, informed us the comet was near the equinoxes of the heavens the first night and in the tail of the Eagle the following night. For a few nights the heavens were so hidden by heavy clouds and fogs we did not see the comet again until the following Saturday, when the star stood near Lyra, having taken a northward course; by the next night the comet had flown to the tip of the Swan's wing, and so rapid was the wanderer's flight it traveled five degrees north within twenty-four hours. The next night the comet entered the head of the Dragon, after which the awesome visitor vanished again into space, many of the Brethren stoutly maintaining it had been swallowed up by the Dragon.

But the long-looked-for millennium did not come either with the comet or its vanishing, but happily, on the other hand, neither did those dire disasters and calamities fall upon us which many had predicted; and though it was a long time before we outlived the fear inspired by this erratic body, if another had come shortly after there is little doubt in my mind our terror would not have been quite so great, for this is the nature of man.

Nevertheless, the star made a wonderful and



more or less lasting impression upon all of our community, and from this time a number of our hymns date, which afterward were incorporated in the collection named by our superintendent, "*Paradisches Wunderspiel*" (Paradise Wonder Music). These hymns were full of prophetic insight and represented the mysteries of the last days so clearly it seemed to many of us as though the kingdom of heaven were already at hand.

But what troubled me far more than this flaming star was that which occurred the very next day after the comet disappeared. A few years after Sonnlein and I came to Ephrata, there joined the Solitary one whom I have already mentioned as Brother Alburtus, that being his Kloster name. What his real name was no one in our community seemed to know. And lest it be thought strange that we knew not who he was, it behooveth me to enlighten the reader by explaining that at Ephrata we seldom, if ever, demanded of man or woman desiring to join us, other than whether they had renounced the world and were willing to serve God in the simple manner we had agreed upon as being the best for our Master's cause.

And thus it came about that in our tolerant little republic all were welcome, no matter what their previous faith, Protestant or Catholic, or what their condition, high or low, rich or poor. Nor did we inquire overmuch into the past life of

any who desired to join us ; for what concerned us more than the past was the manner of life our brethren and sisters lead after joining us, and in this were we exceedingly strict.

But our Brother Alburtus was always a puzzle to me as, indeed, he was a great mystery to the rest of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, though we all were regarded as peculiar by outsiders. He was very tall, even taller than I, and broad-shouldered, so that even with his habit of walking humbly, with bowed form, he yet towered a veritable giant above all the rest of the Brotherhood. A pronounced roll in his gait, such as men receive who have served long on the sea, inclined many of us to believe such had been the greater part of his life, and there were rumors current in the neighborhood that our Brother Alburtus had been captain of a vessel ; while still others—especially the busybodies, who always imagine evil of others—gravely asserted he had been a pirate and had sought refuge among us from those who sought his capture ; but the only thing I ever saw as supporting the charge of piracy was a long, livid scar across our brother's brow, giving his otherwise gentle and benign countenance a rather forbidding aspect. Whether or not he had been a rover of the seas I never learned ; from his face I could not believe he had been a bloodthirsty pirate, though I know full well that oft beneath the form

and features of a saint dwell the thoughts and passions of the Evil One ; for the Scriptures say the human heart is a deceitful thing.

But this I do know, and in later years it was a great comfort to me, that in all the twenty or more years our brother was with us he lived a life of such saintly peace and gentleness as put to shame many a Brother who professed more but acted not so well. Whatever his past life, I felt sure with us he lived a true Christian ; for a man cannot well live a hypocrite long with his fellow-men and not be found out.

Yet he had two great peculiarities we often marveled at and of which one was, that no matter where or when one saw him, he would ever be clasping and rubbing his hands together. Day after day, month after month, year after year, all the time I knew him, I believe I never saw him but that he was clasping and rubbing those hands and looking at them in a strange, abstracted sort of way, and even when the Brotherhood were at their meals, if he was not attending to the needs of the inner man, he would be still rubbing and clasping those hands, which looked white and peaceful enough to me, so far as I could see ; but the suspicious ones—and they are ever a plenty—in our community and in the country round about were firm in the belief that those hands had been stained with the blood of men and even fair women

and dear little children, and for whose deaths he was doomed for the rest of his life to imagine he saw the blood there which he must ever be trying to rub off.

Mine own opinion was that our Brother Alburtus, who was one of those absent-minded ones who never know what they are doing, had simply fallen into this habit, which, as is the nature of habits, became a very part of him.

His other peculiarity was that often without leaving word with any of us he would wander off, or as I have often thought, lose himself in the woods, sometimes being absent weeks at a time; but as he always returned safely, albeit his body and his cloak a trifle the worse for his ramblings, we never attempted to restrain his freedom. He and Sonnlein seemed to have great regard for each other and this too made me love our harmless brother, and often I saw the two, Sonnlein leading the way, tramp off to the woods on some wonderful trip of discovery.

As I have said, this matter which I wish to relate came upon us the day after the comet left. I was walking in the Brother woods not far from the old oak that had witnessed more than once the manifestations of the old witch. It was a cold, raw day so that I felt it needful to have my cowl over my head and I was greatly surprised and yet not entirely so—for he always walked about as if he

regarded not the weather—when Brother Alburtus meandering bareheaded in the woods walked past me, clasping and rubbing his hands as ever, looking abstractedly at them and I felt sure never seeing me though his cloak almost brushed mine.

He had gone but a few steps beyond me when suddenly from out of a thicket there flew at him what for the instant I could not tell whether it was wild beast or human being; but as something bright flashed in the air like a knife or dagger I saw it was that horrible old hag, who in another moment would have surely killed our brother, standing there simple and helpless, had I not despite all the scratching and clawing, torn the vile form from him and hurled her crashing to the earth so that she rolled for a few yards from me.

I was too much startled and in such passionate anger at this assault upon our gentle, unoffending brother to say aught as the foul shape lay writhing and twisting but a second or two where I had hurled her. Then as she arose slowly from the ground as in pain—though I had heard one could not hurt a witch—and hobbled off into the forest I bawled after her: "Again have I let thee go, but 'tis the last. The next time thou dost assail any of us I shall surely kill thee"; for I was so beside myself with cruel, wicked rage I knew not what murderous threats were coming from my unbridled tongue.

And then I turned to Brother Alburtus and was surprised to see him standing there looking vacantly into space as if naught had happened, not even asking me what it was that had so violently attacked him, so that I wondered whether he even realized that I had saved his life. Thus I thought it not worth while to ask him why it was this strange woman had tried to kill him, as with all her violence she had never attempted actual harm to the others of us to whom she had appeared.

But what I failed that day to understand and for many long years was a riddle to me, came out clearly in the end.

## CHAPTER XIV

### OUR SISTER LEAVES US

O death, where is thy sting?

O grave, where is thy victory?

—*New Testament.*



ELL hath he of great afflictions said, "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Thus I said unto myself the night following the fright of my Sister Bernice as I sought in vain for sleep, for I felt the shadow of some heavy sorrow hanging over us. Not even the prattle of Sonnlein, or my unremitting daily toil, God's antidote for corroding care, could efface from my mind the wan features of Sister Bernice, the extreme delicacy of her fragile form, and the shock she had received from the witch.

And yet, for so He hath ordained, as time dragged its slow length away, my forebodings almost vanished, and the days were beginning to

pass "swifter than a weaver's shuttle," so I was not without hope that, after all, my fears had been the result of a too tender solicitude for my dear sister.

Thus almost a year passed away in which I saw her in fleeting glimpses, but not to hold sweet converse with her or once again to feel the touch of that hand I longed to harbor in mine and shelter from all the storms of life. How my poor human nature struggled with me those days, so that at times I thought I must take her in mine arms and with Sonnlein flee to some retreat where we could pass the rest of our days in perfect love and peace!

But "happy is the man whom God correcteth," for after all we are not fit for heaven until all the dross hath been tormented out of us, leaving the pure gold for his kingdom.

Whether my sister was enduring all these pangs of unspoken, forbidden love I knew not; I only knew that if by chance our eyes met, which was all too seldom, I thought I could see in their pure depths a tender, beseeching longing for me.

And now the glory of autumn had passed away. The fields about the Kloster lay cold and bare. The naked branches of the trees shivered in the chilling airs. How bleak and cheerless the world seemed in these early days of winter before the touch of ice and snow had transformed the fields and the forests into fairyland!



The last day of November was drawing to its close. The Brethren had partaken, in solemn thankfulness, of our simple evening meal and I had gone to my *Kammer*, first putting Sonnlein to rest, after having recounted to me all the marvelous happenings of the day, and was about myself to lie down to sleep, when hearing a step near, I looked up and saw Brother Beissel, even graver and sadder than usual. "Brother Jabez, Mother Maria hath come saying she would see thee and me." At once a great fear gripped my heart—something about Bernice.

"I am ready to see her, brother," said I quietly, rising to my feet. Just outside the door of Zion, for she would not come in, stood our prioress, a deep sadness in her usually hard and inscrutable features.

When she saw us, she waited first for Brother Beissel to bid her speak, and then she said quietly, with tears in her voice, for which I ever felt grateful to her: "Sister Bernice is leaving us; she is dying." And then duty overcame grief and pity, and looking up steadfastly into our faces, Mother Maria said, almost sternly, I thought: "Our Sister Bernice doth entreat us that before she die Brother Jabez may see her. I told her gently 'twas 'gainst the rules of our order for Sister to be in Zion or Brother in Kedar."

We stood silent for a few moments, and then,

looking at me as though he would read my very soul, Brother Beissel said to me softly: "Art thou and our Sister Bernice aught to each other?"

"But for our vows the world would know we loved each other," I said humbly, but looking not unsteadily into those eyes that seemed to read men's hearts like open books.

"Now I know for a surety that which thy troubled face hinted to me of late, my Brother Jabez. I know thou hast fought a hard fight. I command thee go see our sister, thy Bernice; no fear of idle tongue or hard letter of the law shall keep us from the true promptings of the spirit." And then, pushing me gently along, he said: "Go, haste. Mother Maria, it is my wish that thou take our brother to our sister; be thou the only one present."

And thus this wonderful man, who had in him all the fiery, unyielding hatred of sin of a Jeremiah, and yet a woman's tender sympathy, bound me to him, though oft we differed in opinion, for life.

When Mother Maria and I entered the narrow doorway leading from the corridor into the cell where Bernice lay, the Sisters gathered there were sent obediently to their cells, though the hearts of each of the gentle nuns longed to be present to soften the last moments of their young sister who for so many years had been a dear companion. Only Mother Maria and I remained with Bernice. At first, in the dim light of the little paper lantern,

she did not seem to notice me as I knelt down beside her, Mother Maria standing in the doorway and so thoughtfully filling it that no one could see into this little chamber already hallowed by the presence of the angel of death.

As I knelt there I took one of my sister's dear, white, wasted hands into mine, and lifting into my arm her head, from which flowed the golden masses of hair that gilded the hard, wooden pillow, I murmured to her, "Bernice"; and as she opened those eyes that had ever the look of heaven in them, I breathed softly to her, "'Tis thy Brother Jabez; dost not know me?"

And then she looked at me with understanding in her gaze and whispered so weakly I thought my heart would burst with love and grief: "I know thee; I am so happy." And as she said this, she smiled so sweetly I held her closer in my arms, our souls meeting in our first kiss.

For many moments I knelt sheltering her dear head in mine arms, each of us unspeakably happy that now even, though in the hour of death, we could say freely with our lips that which our hearts had told each other long ago. Outside was stillness, and so inside the hall. Mother Maria still kept her watch in the doorway, grim and sad, as though she neither saw nor heard my sister and me.

"I could not leave thee without telling how I loved thee," she whispered, lifting up the hand I

had not imprisoned in mine, and resting it on my shoulder, where it lay like a lily. "I tried so hard to forget thee, but since that love feast—thou knowest which one—thou wast ever with me."

"That love feast was paradise, my beloved sister; but thou must not talk so much, I fear."

"Nay, I know my end is near; I am not afraid now."

In a few moments she whispered shyly, "Dost remember the witch?"

"Yea, I could have slain her for frightening thee so."

"But when thou didst take me into thy great arms and soothe and pity me like some little child, I was almost glad I had seen the witch."

"Thou foolish girl, how canst care so for such a great, clumsy, stupid brother like me?"

She lay a few minutes as if she could not whisper more, and then, after I thought she had forgotten what I had just said, she whispered, but more feebly than before, "Thou'rt not clumsy or stupid; thou art so strong but so tender—I love thee better than life." And then she seemed so exhausted I was obliged to lay her head off my breast to her pillow thinking she could breathe more easily, but the gentle pressure of her hand on my shoulder and the nestling touch of the one on my own told me she preferred it thus.

I know not how long I held her in mine em-

brace, but she again opened her eyes and whispered, pausing between each word, "Thou wilt be with me in heaven?"

"Yea, *mein Liebchen*, forever and forever," I murmured holding her to me still more closely, whereat she smiled and whispered, but so low and broken I could hardly hear it, "I am so happy," and then I felt a shudder pass through the dear frame in mine arms; her head fell limp and lifeless from my shoulder, and I knew that from within the narrow walls of the bare, cold cell, and out through the dark night, there was winging its way to heaven the soul of my sister, my Bernice.

For a long while I knelt holding her in mine arms, the tears raining down my face as never since childhood. Then I laid her down on the bench which could no longer crucify the earthly habitation of my Bernice; I kissed the dear face for the last time, and then rising, I said as calmly as I could to Mother Maria, "Our sister hath gone to her home," and then I left the "House of Sorrow" with the light of a great peace in mine heart, for though I knew that earth had lost much of its sweetness, yet the bitterness of my short sojourn here was as naught compared with the added bliss heaven now held for me.

Thus Sister Bernice was the first flower to die of the Roses of Saron and the first of the Solitary to be laid away in the little God's Acre down in

the meadow by the roadside. Mine own wish, had it been expressed, would have been that our sister be buried in the simplicity which marked her gentle life, but those in authority thought it best to make her burial an occasion for all the imposing honors and ceremonies of our Order.

At midnight, while earth and sky were held in intense darkness—the chill, wintry winds sighing a mournful requiem more sad and mournful even than the chanting by the heavy-hearted Sisters and Brothers, of the dirge composed in loving memory by Sister Foeben—six of the Brothers clad in their long cowls tenderly and reverently carried the body of our dear Bernice from Mount Sinai down to the narrow little *Kammer* where all that was of earth of her could rest in peace until the call of the last day.

My heart was too full to note all this but dimly and to hear but faintly our footfalls upon the hard ground and the solemn tolling of the convent bells, the flickering rushlights shedding a weird, ghostly light over the sad, thin line of mourners.

Tenderly as a fond mother lays her child to sleep at evenfall we laid our sister to rest with all the symbolic beauty of the ritual of the Brotherhood of Zion and then having performed our last sacred offices for our departed one, we filed slowly back to our cells. The room Sister Bernice had occupied in Kedar was now closed to remain so

for some time, and upon the walls of her *Kammer* was hung a legend, or *Segenspruch*, composed by our Brother Beissel, and lovingly executed by the Sisters in their beautiful Gothic penwork :

*“Bernice, Freue dich in ihrem gang unter der Schafweide, und sey freundlich u. huldreich unter den Liebhabern.”*

Which meaneth : “Bernice, enjoy yourself in your sojourn among the sheep pastures and be affable and gracious among the suitors.”

Ah me, ah me !

## CHAPTER XV

### THE GREAT COMET

The Lord his signs makes to appear,  
To call us to repentance :  
A monstrous comet standeth there  
That we our sins shall flee from,  
But we, alas ! scarce give it a thought  
For each one thinks it cometh not,  
The punishment and danger.



THE winter winds had swept o'er the grave of our dear sister not a month, and hardly had our little camp on the Cocalico been restored to its usual evenness of temper after the wordy warfare Brother Hildebrand and I, under the leadership of Brother Beissel, had waged against our ancient foes, the Moravians at Bethlehem—for they believed not in celibacy—when we were again roused to a high pitch of excitement by that which was no less than a second comet which, following closely upon the one that flashed so suddenly upon us the



preceding February, left no longer any doubts even in the minds of the most skeptical and unbelieving, that we were within the portent of some great crisis.

It was on the evening of Christmas a number of the Brotherhood, among them the Eckerlings and Brother Weiser—for though he had gone back to the world he oft revisited us—our superintendent and Sonnlein and I, were gathered on the highest point of Mount Sinai, nigh to the Brother woods. The sun had hardly sunk from view and the twilight begun to deepen over the unbroken expanse of forest and upon the slopes of the distant hills to the west, when suddenly Brother Jephune, our astronomer, clutched Brother Weiser by the arm, and exclaimed in awe-struck tones, "See, look, the comet!" as he pointed all in a tremble to where the sun had just disappeared.

Startled by his voice and his intense gaze, we turned sharply. I could see naught but a single small star, shining dimly, but I held my peace.

Brother Weiser was the first to break the strain in a cold, calm, judge-like tone, "I see naught but a small star; Brother Jephune, thou seest ever visions."

"It were better for thee, our Brother Enoch, didst thou see more visions instead of having thine eyes stubbornly sealed against the mysteries of God," quietly interrupted Brother Onesimus.

"Brother Jephune, mine eyes are yet strong. I see naught but a star, nor do our brethren see thy comet," said our leader.

Brother Jephune apparently heard not his critics, for he still stood motionless and gazed most intently upon what appeared to us an innocent star.

Suddenly he turned to us again and whispered, "'Tis the very comet of last winter. I told ye the sun had swallowed it and now the sun hath spit out again the fiery monster," and then he wailed, "Woe, woe, be unto all the ungodly who shall be destroyed by this fiery serpent!"

Because I did not always agree with the many foolish and unscriptural speculations of the Eckerlings, they oft accused me of irreverence and lacking in spirituality. Be that as it may, and although I knew many comets had appeared to the eyes of men since the creation without any apparent change in the rules and order of the universe, yet I felt the same awe that enveloped our little group. Calling Sonnlein to me I said to him as we all clustered about him, "I have taught thee somewhat of the stars; thine are the youngest eyes here. Look thou carefully. Is that yonder pale star such as thou seest at night?"

And then with our awe reflected in his childish face he gazed steadily at the star, and then turning as in doubt, he said to me as though the others were not present, "'Tis a star, *Vaterchen*."

"What knoweth such a child?" exclaimed our astrologer peevishly.

"Have patience, my good brother; look again, my son; make a funnel of thy hands; thou knowest how I taught thee to," I said gently to Sonnlein, who in loving obedience put his hand rounded like a spyglass to his eye, and again he looked steadily at the apparition. Then my boy turned again to me and said simply, "It is but a little star, *Vaterchen*," and as if it were of no importance he added, "There is something like smoke behind it."

"Smoke! What nonsense is this?" cried Brother Enoch in disgust.

"Smoke," shouted Brother Jephune, "the child seeth that which I tell ye I see, ye blind scoffers. Was the smoke like a tail or a bundle of switches—had it shape?" he cried eagerly.

"Like a tail," said Sonnlein timidly.

"Oh, wondrous sight of innocent childhood," murmured the astrologer, "to see what world-blinded eyes cannot see!"

And indeed a comet it was, for it rapidly increased to great size and brilliancy, and for two months from early evening until after midnight flamed fiercely across the northwestern sky, a fearful, awesome sight, even to the least superstitious among us.

Brother Jephune, and many with him, accepted

the star, since it had appeared on the twenty-fifth day of the month, as the one prophesied in the Zohar, which was to hang in the heavens for seventy days, to be seen of all men as a warning, at the end of which time there would arise a great tumult and confusion upon the earth, to be followed by the universal peace of God's kingdom. The settlers in the country round about us relying upon Num. 24 : 17, 18, fully believed this was the "Star out of Jacob," and that a sceptre should arise to smite the evil in the earth; that the millennium was nigh, and Brother Beissel taught with his usual fiery zeal that when the fulfillment of the prophecy finally came, our Mount Sinai would be the center of the New Jerusalem in this evening land; that the Brotherhood of Zion would be chosen as the Priests of the Temple, and many there were who though hitherto they had hardened their hearts against our preaching and our charity, now through fear and superstition hastened to be gathered under the protecting wings of our community.

In this perturbed state we were for over two months, when on an evening a number of the Solitary Brethren were again gathered at almost the same elevated spot on Mount Sinai, hard by the Brother woods that we had occupied the evening Brother Jephune and Sonnlein had been the first to see the comet.

We had been standing in utter silence for a long while, when Brother Gabriel turned to Brother Weiser, and said as though in reproof, "And still thou believest this strange vision in the sky foretelleth naught?"

"It speaketh to me of the wondrous power and majesty of God," replied Brother Enoch reverently, "naught else."

"And yet thou knowest in 1680 there appeared a comet in the *Vaterland*—oft have I heard my father tell of it—not so great as this, nor with so long a tail. After that comet there followed a long and weary war, from which our beloved *Vaterland* hath never recovered. Dost thou not fear this fiery star, so much greater than the other, portendeth war and famine and pestilence to this New World?"

"Nay," I heard Brother Enoch say, "the holy word promiseth all such dire calamities because of man's wickedness, not because of comets."

"But comets may be the sign of His displeasure, as the rainbow is the sign of his covenant with Noah," persisted Brother Gabriel.

"I only know the holy book sayeth naught of comets."

"The comet is the fiery sword of the Lord whereby he shall cut down all the scoffers and the ungodly," interrupted Brother Jephune warningly. "I tell thee there will be much sickness and death,

and as the comet will disappear in Pisces, so I read its course, it presages misfortune to all the fish within the waters, and in this our Brother Christopher Sauer, of Germantown, agreeth."

"And yet, Brother Jephune," rejoined Brother Weiser with a faint smile, "the innocent fish have not sinned."

"Brother Sauer also reporteth," continued our astronomer, unheeding the mockery in Brother Weiser's voice, "the good people in New England take it seriously to heart that God is threatening a great judgment upon the evil ones of earth."

"And heed thou, Brother Weiser," enjoined Brother Gabriel, "thou sittest not in the seat of the scornful when the judgment cometh."

"Nor thou with the sorcerers and those who practise enchantments!" retorted Brother Enoch.

"What else doth our Brother Christopher say of this glaring visitant?" asked Brother Beissel in the hope of pouring oil upon the troubled waters.

"The printer sayeth that while the star first appeared in Aries, the habitation of Mars, and set in Pisces there shall come great changes, disturbances, wrath, confusion, and disorder, upon the nations of the earth. This cometh from Mars. As Pisces is the dwelling-place of Jupiter it foreshadoweth equal disturbances in spiritual things; there will be many changes and great confusion followed by dreadful quick-coming judgments. As

the star latterly hath so rapid a course, and burns like unto a great flaming torch with a long, fiery tail, he holdeth that the destruction of the religious Babylonian order is near at hand."

"Sayeth he no more—what cometh after all this destruction of evil? Surely light must follow darkness!" inquired our leader eagerly.

"Even so; for our learned Christopher sayeth, and I agree with him, that a newer, better order will follow. The comet seemeth again to be moving toward the sun as if to effect conjunction with it in the middle line. This foretelleth that the comet, the evil, shall be swallowed up by the sun, the source of light and life. Thus the darkness of sin shall disappear from the face of the earth and the light of His grace, and mercy shall shine forever from the hearts of men."

"Even so, Lord, let it be," said our leader most solemnly, "let thy kingdom come quickly."

To which we all responded in equal solemnity, "Amen."

And then just as we were about to take our way back to our *Kammers*, there arose without the slightest warning such a savage, blood-freezing, wailing cry from the woods hard by us, that by one accord each gripped the other by the arm as if in the presence of some awful, common danger, my poor Sonnlein rushing into mine arms almost speechless with terror.

In truth, each for the time was paralyzed with that cry that sounded like the wail of a soul in the torments of the damned. Finally, Brother Gabriel whispered, his teeth chattering so that he could scarcely utter a word, "'Twas the Evil One, he knoweth his end is nigh."

"Doth not Revelation say Satan is to be bound and thrust into the bottomless pit?" gasped Brother Beissel.

"Heard ye not the clanking of the chains?" whispered Brother Onesimus.

"What was't, *Vaterchen*?" whispered Sonnlein, who was still shivering in my embrace.

"Some wild beast that hath strayed nigh;" for in my hermit days I had more than once heard the panther's terrifying howl, in the darkness of the night.

"Was't an Indian, *Vaterchen*?"

"Nay, my son," replied Brother Enoch for me, "the Indians are at peace with us. "'Twas no human voice."

"Was't some wild beast, thinkest thou?" asked Brother Gabriel.

"Nay, it sounded not so to me; I know not what it was. It is a great mystery to me," replied Brother Enoch slowly, which was a great deal for our clear-headed brother to admit.

"'Twas the cry of the Evil One, naught else," declared Brother Jephune.



“And in this I agree with thee,” solemnly spake our leader; “great and gracious is our Lord to show us these marvelous signs of his coming. Let us go to our rest in peace and gladness, and await the dawn of his kingdom in the earth.”

And so we went full of such devout hopes to our narrow cells; but somehow I could not shake from my mind that the cry came from our old enemy, the witch.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A FAR JOURNEY

With God—over the sea ;  
Without him—not over the threshold.

—*Russian Proverb.*



THE time of which I write this, the fall of 1744, Prior Onesimus and his three brothers were in the ascendancy, and for a time it seemed as though Brother Beissel would be completely overthrown in his rule by these designing Eckelings ; but they who thought our superintendent easy to overcome reckoned without their host, for while to the worldly minded he had not the graces and attractiveness that marked our prior, our superintendent, though harmless as a dove, had the wisdom and subtilty of the serpent, and thus at this time, when the strain between these two had increased from day to day, Prior Onesimus, no doubt for purposes of

his own, conceived the idea that we make a pilgrimage to the Sabbatarian communities in Connecticut and Rhode Island. I recollect full well that when he made his desire known to our superintendent, suggesting possibly a short absence would tend to heal their differences, Brother Beissel at once gave his consent.

But if our prior had thought to surround himself with his own followers and thus make this enterprise redound solely to his credit he was greatly mistaken, for the superintendent quietly suggested the prior take with him his own brother, Jephune, and Brother Timotheus (Alexander Mack), and myself as traveling companions, the prior being promised by our superintendent that in the meantime he would attend to the prior's duties at the meetings. This was not exactly to our prior's liking, but Brother Beissel pointed out that these brethren were selected in order to insure the success of the expedition as well as the welfare and comfort of the party. Thus the prior would represent the Zionitic Brethren and the Theosophists of the community; Brother Timotheus, the secular congregation and the Baptists in general; Jephune, our mystic and astrologer, would serve as the physician of the party; while I was to be the theologian and interpreter.

Thus it was arranged and we at once began our brief preparations for the journey: extra soles for

our wooden sandals, the points of our pilgrim staffs sharpened, a day's provisions for the inner man, a copy of the "*Weyrauch's Hügel*," and a few of Brother Beissel's "*Theosophische Episteln*" for the spiritual man. I have it on my records that this occurred on the Friday of September 21, 1744, almost a year since our dear sister had left us, on the night of which an unusually solemn love feast was held in the *Saal*, at Zion, in our honor. The services lasted far into the night, even the hours between the midnight prayers and the dawn being passed in prayer. The next morning being our Sabbath we all were present at the meeting of the congregation, where every one bade us a most loving God-speed.

But in all these simple preparations and pious services I confess I had nigh forgotten my Sonnlein, and when the thought of him came to me on that Sabbath Day as to what he would do in my absence, I feared I should have to seek my release from the superintendent, for I am proud to say, never did boy hang to his mother's skirts more closely than did Sonnlein follow upon my heels, so much so it became a byword in our little camp that it could be depended on when one of us appeared, it would not be long until you saw the other, and indeed we were inseparable. During the day he would trot after me wherever my duties took me, whether in the fields or in the printing

room, or rambling in the woods for wild flowers, and as he grew older he insisted upon attending the midnight devotions, just as the grown-up Brothers and Sisters. With the exception of my brief sojourn in Lancaster in the matter of the levies, we had never been separated for more than a few hours at a time, and I knew if I left him now for this long journey the poor boy would be utterly disconsolate. I also knew full well that our Brother Beissel, though not a hater of children, still had little patience with them, and I doubted much whether he and Sonnlein could stand the trial of my long absence. I called Sonnlein to me and told him I was about to go away for a great many weeks. At once he danced and jumped about me in a most uncloistral manner, apparently never doubting for a moment that, as in the past, he would be with me; but when I said to him, "'Tis a far journey, Sonnlein, too far for thee," I saw the tears in his eyes, though he tried to keep them down as he asked:

"Am I not to go with thee, *Vaterchen*?"

"Nay, I fear not, Sonnlein; 'tis a long way over rough roads and through tangled paths, through great, lonely forests, where there are wild beasts, and then the wild sea to make thee sick. We know not what hardships we may have to endure."

"But I can walk, *Vaterchen*; I am not afraid of the lonely woods, not if I am with thee."

"But how about the sea?"

"Thou canst give me physic," he replied so innocently I could not refrain from laughing, whereat he pouted and grumbled, "I'm not afraid of the sea, and on land I can walk as well as 'Old Air-smeller.'"

"What!" I cried in amazement. "Whom dost mean by such irreverent name?" I demanded.

"Brother Jephune," he confessed; "he sticketh his nose into the air when he walketh about, so he falleth over everything."

"Is't needful you call him such name?"

"So the neighbors call him."

"Must do what foolish ones do?"

"Nay;" and then, looking up with repentance writ all over him, he said, "May I go? I can walk and I won't mind the water. Thou knowest I am fond of water," which was the truth, for when he was not with me he was swimming or fishing in the Cocalico, or hunting in the woods when the Cocalico was too cold.

Indeed, I doubted not he could endure the journey as well as most of us, for he was a hardy, active boy, and with our healthful life had never known a day of sickness. I liked no better to be separated from him than did he, and had he quietly taken my suggestion to remain I had been greatly disappointed; but when I broached the matter to my brother pilgrims they at first demurred, and yet

they loved my boy, for with all his mischievousness he was always ready and willing to do the bidding of any of them. Finally, upon my persuasions, they acknowledged it would be safe for him to make the journey. Accordingly I prepared a little pilgrim's staff for him and saw that he had a stout pair of sandals, and with a little bag of provisions for him we started out at six o'clock of that Sabbath evening on our journey, the assembled Brotherhood and Sisterhood watching us from Mount Zion until we were out of sight.

But once fairly upon our way, we walked, as was our custom, bareheaded and silently, in single file, Prior Onesimus at the head and myself at the rear, all except Sonnlein, who neither kept silence nor in file, almost exhausting me with his innumerable questions; at one moment he would be ahead of us and the next in the rear, now stopping to gather a handful of nuts that had dropped from the trees along our way or else to pluck the wild grapes that hung in royal purple from the luxuriant vines, and then rushing after me, tempting me to share his feast.

At first our course led us through the settlements of our German brethren in the eastern part of Lancaster County; thence among our English brethren in Nantmill, where we stopped for a few days and held several missionary meetings. From the Falls of French Creek we took the road among

the German families ; thence across the Schuylkill to the German settlements along the roadside leading to Germantown. A somewhat prolonged stop was made with our brother mystics on the Wissahickon, among whom we found much solace and comfort ; thence a short visit to the brethren of the faith in the city of Philadelphia ; thence our missionary tour took us to the Pennepack.

Thus far our pilgrimage had taken us mainly among the brethren of our own belief, and yet wherever we went our bare, cropped heads, long beards, white cloaks and cowls, our silence and manner of traveling, attracted considerable attention and even ridicule and grossest insults, Sonnlein, however, being never late in informing the curious ones who we were ; and while I admonished him frequently against his too great freedom with strangers, there is no doubt that by his frankness he saved us much annoyance, for I have long ago learned that one will be forgiven much if he only be open and candid, no matter how wicked he be ; but if, like a turtle, he keep within his shell and mind his own business like a good, honest turtle, every idler and good-for-naught must hurl stones at him to crack his shell.

After crossing the Neshaminy Creek at the falls we were ferried across the Delaware—a wonderful sight to Sonnlein—and entered our sister province of New Jersey. Arriving at Amwell, we



were greatly rejoiced to find the converts baptized some six years before by some of our brethren still keeping up their organization and considering themselves a branch of the parent community at Ephrata.

We remained here for some time and then parted from our dear brethren in mutual sadness, for we knew not whether we should ever see each other again.

And now our journey took us through long stretches of forest and for miles and miles our way was but a narrow path among tall, solemn pines so thickly grown and so crowded with brush and vines underneath as to have a most gloomy and depressing effect even upon the most cheerful of us. Now and then we came upon some little stream or pond that looked almost black under the shadows of the bordering pines. These streams and ponds were the only changes in the landscape excepting the occasional sand hills, and the only sound to break the monotony would be the note of some bird. Houses we saw not for hours and even for days, and many a night we slept within the folds of these dark and gloomy forests, our roof the thick, heavy branches of the pines, through which, on clear nights, the stars smiled down cheerily.

But though the nights were already cold and frosty and I feared exceedingly Sonnlein would

suffer from the exposure, still with a fire burning all night to keep us warm and to frighten away wild beasts we minded not the hard, rough earth with the thin carpet of pine twigs and needles any more than our hard benches in our *Kammers*. Sonnlein invariably slept between me and Brother Timotheus, thus being sheltered somewhat from the winds that even the thick forest could not entirely keep from us.

After some days' travel in this wise we finally came to the region between the Shark and Squan Rivers, where we found a little community of about fifteen adult members, Sabbatarians, who had migrated from Stonington, Connecticut, and Westerly, Rhode Island, and who had signed a covenant binding themselves to live and walk together as Christian people, although they had no church or pastor. A number of meetings were arranged in our honor, and at these I preached and admonished them to remain steadfast in their faith, so that I was gratified to note our efforts resulted in a church's being organized, Brother William Davis, the elder, although in his eighty-first year, being chosen pastor.

Leaving Shrewsbury, as this church is referred to in our records, we wended our way southward until we came to a place on the west shore of Barnegat Bay, almost directly opposite the outlet of this beautiful bay into the ocean. Here was an-

other settlement of New England Sabbatarians, who were known as "Rogerines," a band of about twenty-one persons. They received us with open arms and we were most hospitably entertained by Brother John Culver—the most prominent among the Rogerines—who had made several visits to Amwell and to Ephrata and upon whose earnest invitation we had come to Barnegat. These good people looked upon us as holy men, so that they brought their sick to us in the hope that they might be healed by the very laying on of hands and prayer, as our Rogerine brethren used no medicines nor would they employ physicians, relying upon strictly scriptural means for relief from illness. While we agreed not on all doctrinal points, still in so much of our manner of life and belief we were in such perfect accord that our stay was exceedingly refreshing to our souls, and it was through these good people as much as anything else we extended our visit to New England, stopping on our way to visit one John Lovell, an old Pythagorean, who lived as a hermit in the dense woods about four miles from Burlington, throughout the seasons, without fire, in a cell made by the side of an old log, in the form of an oven, not high enough or long enough to stand upright in or lie extended.

I mean not to be harsh or unjust to this surly hermit, who lived more like a beast than man, but

in his boyish straightness of speech Sonnlein spoke out full well what was in my mind and I doubt not in my brethren's also when he said, "Brother Lovell hath his soul from a pig or else would he not be so dirty," for we did not believe that our Lord any more than mortal man cared to look upon dirty, sour faces. We held that a contented mind showed itself in a bright, cheerful face, and thus it was our habit at Ephrata, with both Brother and Sister, always to be satisfied and to bear ever a glad countenance, even though the bitterness of death were upon us, and for this we have the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER XVII

### IN A STRANGE LAND

Oct. 10, 1744. I went to John Bolles to see 4 men Yt come from beyond Barnegat, with long beards 8 or 9 inches, and strangely clothed, no hats and all in white, but they were not there.—*Extract from diary of Joshua Hempstead, of New London.*



FROM the hermit's hut we proceeded to New Brunswick, and by good fortune found, as though especially waiting for us, a vessel about to sail for New England. Our journey thus far had been mainly among friends; but now, even though we had a letter of introduction from our Barnegat brethren to the Rogerines in New London, we could not with all our faith and fortitude repress the dismal forebodings of trials and persecutions we should encounter there on account of our beliefs—all except Sonnlein, to whom this pilgrimage was full of marvel and delight, and now that he was about to

go out upon the sea his joy knew no bounds, for verily he was born under Pisces.

But having put our hands to the helm we would not look back, and Brother Onesimus having secured passage for us we set sail, and barring that our good prior was most wretchedly seasick all of the voyage, while Sonnlein was sick but the first day, when he would have neither food nor physic, we landed near New London in less than a fortnight, safe and sound, hundreds of miles from home, in a strange country, no friends, and so despised because of our white dress and our otherwise monkish aspect that whoever saw us fled as though we were the plague.

Fortunately, our letter rescued us from much annoyance, for a prominent member of the Rogerines, Brother Bolles, hearing of our arrival came to us and on reading our letter received us affectionately and harbored us so hospitably, not far from the town, that we soon forgot our forebodings. And yet no sooner did our coming become known in New London than did a new danger arise against us, for the very day we landed the little seaport was wild with excitement over the news that France had joined issue with Spain against England. This coincidence coupled with our unusual manner and garb was too weighty a proof to be disregarded that we were Jesuit priests, French spies in disguise. Forthwith officers presented themselves at

the quiet little homestead of our Brother Bolles, arrested us, and marched us into New London, and had all the threats hurled at us by the excited inhabitants while on our way to the justices been executed, we had been undone.

Happily our host, a respectable and influential citizen, personally vouched that we were Protestants by birth and profession, whereupon our freedom was at once given us, and we were once more taken in charge by the Rogerines of New London, by whom we were so held in kindness and esteem that whenever we stirred abroad we had in our train no less than fifty persons, among them black men—of whom Sonnlein was sore afraid, never having seen human beings of such color—and Indians, the former being servants, and for whose spiritual welfare their masters were as solicitous as of their own, which thing we much admired.

We found the people of this region in a state of great religious excitement, the Congregationalists and the New Lights being especially bitter against each other, so that wherever representatives of these beliefs came into each others' presence they did nothing but argue and dispute; and so far was this pernicious custom carried that when a Congregationalist met a New Light, unless both were deaf and dumb, they would seat themselves on chairs, while about these wordy knights of the gospel would gather the listeners, in a circle, dis-

putants and listeners often giving vent to the most violent passions, all of which greatly shocked my brethren and me, yet showing us that, the world over, men are much the same when it cometh to difference in belief.

At the time of our visit they mostly disputed about the perseverance of the saints, and if the saints were as persistent in meek obedience and loving deeds as were these wordy warriors in their vociferous arguments, I have not the slightest doubt but that the saints have received rich reward. However, my brethren and I did all in our power, in patience and long-suffering, to allay the bitterness of this unseemly strife that left no peace whatever in this and the neighboring towns; and I rejoice to say our presence and persuasions did much toward this desirable end, for in all their heat they could not but see we had no other motive than to speak the truth, fairly and impartially, and with due consideration for the views of the contestants.

We soon grew to love and esteem our good Rogerine brethren, and I feel we endeared ourselves to them. We had much in common; we like them were regarded by the world as a peculiar people. Even the tolerant laws of Penn were not always sufficient to save us from persecutions, just as our New England brethren, because they conformed not to the beliefs in power, suffered fines,



imprisonments, and even the awful indignity of public whippings for His sake.

Unlike us they practised not celibacy, but they held firmly to the doctrine of non-resistance and that the reading of set public prayers and preaching for pay was utterly unscriptural. They agreed also with us in regard to keeping the seventh day instead of the first, the administration of the Lord's Supper, and baptism by immersion. But like their Rogerine brethren on Barnegat Bay it was contrary to their tenets to employ physicians or to use medicines in case of sickness, although for ordinary ailments some of the less extreme Rogerines used the customary remedies and were excellent nurses, being ever ready to minister to the sick.

Having thus so much in common it would seem there should have been no danger of any serious disagreement between us, and yet it tried my brother pilgrims and myself sorely to prevent open rupture by reason of our being unable to admit all our good friends claimed as to the scriptural manner of healing. Finally, upon mutual promises that if any one on either side should become angry the discussion should stop immediately, we took up the question of healing.

Thus spake the *Rogerine*, calmly: "We base our beliefs on the teachings of the New Testament."

*Brother Onesimus, similiter*: "We also base our mode of life on the Bible."

*Rogerine*, still calmly: "The Almighty not only hath infinite power to cure diseases, but hath also blessed willingness so to do."

*Brother Jephune*, gently: "We admit the Almighty hath the power, but whether he hath the willingness we are not ready to say."

*Rogerine*, a trifle ungently: "The treatment the physicians give is bungling and dangerous and greatly uncertain. Were a dozen doctors to treat the same man that man would receive physic for twelve different diseases. Christ's cures were all perfect."

*Brother Timotheus*, graciously: "Truly should physicians be modest men, for theirs is a difficult art in that so many different diseases have similar symptoms. And yet we regard healing as an art, though imperfect as is all human art. Christ was perfect preacher as well as perfect healer, yet there be bungling preachers as there be bungling physicians."

*Rogerine*, positively: "Christ healed without physic and the disciples had his promise of such cures for all who asked in faith."

*Brother Jabez*, humbly: "Though Christ healed without physic, nevertheless he pointed to the use of natural means by the spittle on the blind man's eyes and washing in the pool of Siloam. Naaman bathed in the Jordan seven times. Is it not written we are created in his image? Doth that not

mean that these wonderful bodies of ours and our surpassing marvelous minds were made to perform wonderful and marvelous things? Ye will also admit that not only did Christ heal the halt, the lame, and the blind, but that he also fed the five thousand with but a few loaves and fishes; Elijah was fed by the ravens; the widow's cruse of oil never failed. No doubt the Almighty hath power to heal us better than the physicians, who oft work in darkness, and to feed us better than the husbandmen, who are not always certain of their harvests."

*Rogerine*, indignantly: "Would ye ask of Him that while we sit here idle, with grain in the fields for bread, and abundance of fish in the sea for meat, we should expect him to feed us like idle, helpless children?"

*Brother Jabez*, smiling subtilely: "Why not? If with our God-like powers we do not search into the healing properties of the herbs of the fields and the salts of the earth, and try to heal ourselves, it seemeth to me we have just as much Scripture to sit still and let him feed us."

*Rogerine*, indignantly: "Brother, thy speech seemeth almost blasphemous. We hold our views from the Scriptures."

*Brother Jabez*, still mildly: "So do we; but it is with the Scriptures as in the law; he who sticketh to the letter loseth the true meaning. My be-

loved brethren, for indeed ye are so to us, he who readeth not God's holy word in the Spirit cannot understand it and findeth therein many inconsistencies and grounds for unsafe doctrines. We too believe that faith can perform miracles, but the Almighty never intended we should nourish and heal our bodies by dependence on miracles, or else would not he have given us these miraculous bodies and minds."

*Rogerine*, quietly : " We thank thee, brother, but are not convinced we are in error. Let us not imperil our love by useless argument."

" So be it," I replied, and thus the discussion was safely ended.

But so great was the faith of one of our *Rogerine* brethren, we were told, that when the smallpox raged in Boston some twenty years before, he journeyed one hundred miles to the infected city to prove his faith would save him from the terrible contagion ; for it had been his custom for over forty years of his life to minister to those sick of that disease. This time, however, he caught the distemper, which developed after his return home and brought him to his grave, as well as two other members of his family ; and in this connection, to show how we poor mortals are prone to carry our beliefs and doctrines to most foolish lengths it was also told me, by the *Rogerine* brethren themselves, and not by their enemies, that a few years prior to

our visit a certain skin disorder had broken out among the congregation ; but as their faith forbade the use of medicines they knew not what to do. In this predicament a church meeting was called to deliberate how they might get rid of the disorder and yet preserve a clear conscience. After a most prolonged meeting and the profoundest deliberations in which holy writ was thoroughly searched for precedent, it was solemnly resolved that this most uncomfortable disease, which we were told was the itch, was not a bodily ailment ; but was a noxious animal which had burrowed into their flesh. Of course, there being in their belief nothing to prevent the destruction of wild animals the usual remedies for this particular species were accordingly applied, whereupon the "itchy beasts" were duly slain and eradicated, and the consciences of our pious brethren preserved.

From New London we made an extended visit to our Sabbatarian brethren of the Newport and Old Hopkinton churches, in the province of Rhode Island. Here too, our appearance created much excitement but fortunately provoked no arrest. Our visit here, like all our visits, was a season of great refreshing for our souls, and it is my belief that we helped and strengthened our brethren as they did help and strengthen us.

Upon our return from Rhode Island to New London we were entertained by our good brother

Ebenezer Bolles, one of the town's wealthiest merchants. At that time he lived a single life, being a blessed virtuous man. We tried to persuade him to remain in this most perfect and holy state, but shortly after we left he married. Many years afterward we heard at Ephrata with great sorrow that he had passed away; that a few days before his death, being then in good health, he had been cutting some vines of the poison variety, whereby he was poisoned, and his body swelled to a great degree. He would not allow a physician to be near him; nor would he receive the most simple medicines. Just before he expired, when in great pain, he seemed desirous of some help, but the Brethren and Sisters would not allow it, lest he deny the faith.

I confess I was exceedingly displeased with myself that on our visit to our Rogerine brethren I had not spoken more strongly against their pernicious doctrine of the utter reliance on their so-called scriptural healing, for I doubt not the physicians could have saved Brother Bolles, even though ivy poison yields not easily to herbs or salts.

When we made known to our Rogerine friends our determination to depart for Ephrata, they insisted on paying our passage to the city of New York, and when the day at last arrived in which we were to leave this "fruitful garden of God," as it is referred to in our records, our departure was

made a gala day in their little seaport, into which we had made so unpropitious an entrance. A large concourse of persons, irrespective of denominations, including many souls converted by us during our stay, accompanied us to the wharf, and after pressing upon us numerous gifts—so that we returned home richer than when we left—wished us a loving God-speed.

As our vessel passed out into the sound, even though we were returning to our beloved Kloster, we could not wholly subdue our sadness at parting with these dear friends, who so long as we were in sight wafted their blessings to us. I think none of us even spake a word so long as we could discern our friends; but favorable winds soon swept us from their view, and then as we turned to each other again each of us, even Sonnlein, expressed his sorrow in a deep sigh.

With the exception that Brother Onesimus, who was but a poor waterman, was seasick again all the voyage, nothing worthy of note occurred until we set foot in the chiefest city of the province of New York, where our monastic garb again attracted much attention and suspicion, so that we were arrested as Jesuits from New Spain; and again a kind gentleman, a justice, knowing our circumstances, interceded so effectually we were promptly released, whereupon we shook the dust of that city from off our feet and immediately

started on our long journey for Ephrata, by way of Philadelphia, and it was not long when we were at New Brunswick again, whence we journeyed by foot to Trenton, where we crossed the Delaware and soon were in our own Philadelphia, among dear friends. Here we stopped for a few days with our Brother William Young, to rest before continuing our journey to Ephrata, which still lay ninety miles to the west, only that Sonnlein, with his ceaseless activity and insatiate boyish inquisitiveness, gave himself no rest whatever, but must be continually about this great city, especially at the wharves, where the incoming vessels, with their cargoes from all lands under the sun, were to him a perpetual wonder.

Our rest in this great, noisy, worldly city being at an end, for which I was not sorry, though our brother did all he could for our comfort and entertainment, we set out over the king's highway for Lancaster, whence we intended to reach Ephrata by way of the Reading road, for the season being now late we could not risk the less traveled ways, for even the best highways were now in a difficult condition. Sonnlein, however, being by this time such a veteran pilgrim, seemed not to mind what to our prior, and Brother Jephune particularly, was a most tiresome journey, our worthy sky-gazing brother floundering into every muddy bog in our way.



When we reached Lancaster we were, with all our endurance, so worn out we were necessitated to make another brief stop, but as soon as our bodies would obey our wills in any wise cheerfully, we started again for Ephrata, arriving weary and footsore within sight of Mount Sinai just as the sun was setting behind the hills. Falling on our knees we offered up to our Father our heartfelt thanks for our safe return, for indeed it was much to be thankful for that after our long wanderings we all had been brought back as safe and well, albeit a trifle weary and worn, as when we had started on our pilgrimage.

A little farther on we made a short stop with one of the house-fathers, as the brethren of our secular congregation were called, intending to time ourselves to arrive at Zion for the midnight devotions, once more to be enraptured by the strains of celestial music from the lips of our beloved brothers and sisters.

Our good house-father and his family were minded to make a great ado about our gaunt and haggard features, as though we had passed through great tribulations little less than martyrdom, all of which sympathy, though we liked not to confess it, was sweeter to our ears than even the voices of our choiring Brothers and Sisters, only I could not see how Sonnlein merited any great compassion, for the rogue, though he fared like the rest

of us, looked as ruddy and healthy as any of our good house-father's chubby, rosy children who swarmed about us inquiringly, not fearing us in the least, which thing pleased us greatly, for we did not like to be dreaded by the little ones.

When we thought it time to leave for the midnight services, our brother's little ones being long before with all their unquenched curiosity packed to bed, we started, as usual, in single file for the Kloster, Sonnlein lagging a few steps behind me.

We had almost reached the Kloster confines when, while our way was yet under the dark shadows of the overhanging trees that shut out the stars, I heard a scuffling noise behind me, and turning quickly saw Sonnlein in the grasp of some dark shape that was striving against all his squirming and fighting to drag him into the thick woods. Without a thought I hurled my pilgrim staff, with all my strength, lance-like into the bushes 'gainst the beast or being hanging over my boy, and then for a moment closed my eyes with an awful fear my staff might crush him; but it had hardly left my hand when a piercing cry of agony cleft the air, and then, retreating from us, came fainter and fainter a moaning and snarling as when some desperate beast receives a mortal wound.

We found Sonnlein lying limp and almost lifeless by the way, and as we gathered about him and one of us struck a light from our tinder box,

I saw my boy's throat was scratched and torn and bleeding, but happily not profusely.

"'Twas such a devil's cry we heard when we saw the comet, dost remember?" whispered Brother Jephune hoarsely, for the matter had startled us greatly.

"What wast, Sonnlein?" I asked him now that he had come somewhat to his senses and was on his feet, for beyond the choking and fright he seemed not much hurt.

"'Twas some beast with great claws caught me by the throat so I could not cry for help," he replied all in a quiver.

"Well, it hath gone now ; no doubt my staff struck it right fairly. Get on my back while I carry thee ; we must make haste else shall we be late," said I, first marking the spot with my eyes where I had hurled my staff.

Great was the surprise of our dear brothers when we filed silently into the *Saal*, Sonnlein having come down from my back, for we arrived wholly unannounced. After the loving greetings were exchanged over and over, our superintendent ordered a general love feast in Peniel for the following Sabbath to celebrate our safe return and to listen to our report, we having kept an exact diary of our pilgrimage. A full account of the whole journey was written from this diary and the doings of each of us, except Sonnlein, which he

mind not in the least, being too young for such older weakness. This account was then handed over to our superintendent and became the property of the Brotherhood.

After the events of this pilgrimage were over, we each resumed his usual work and devotions as calmly as though we had not been so long away, only that the day after we arrived I easily found the bushes into which I had with such unchristian violence hurled my staff. I found my traveling comrade lying full length in the depths of the wayside thicket. The iron point was reddish like as if with blood, but I could find no ghastly trail of blood leading away from the staff, but after close examination of the soft earth I did find what I believed were the prints of a woman's shoes, for I knew they were not those made by Sonnlein.

Could it be that our old enemy, the witch, had done this thing? Who or what was this baleful influence that hung over our sacred Kloster like some foul miasma? Did this being merely embody the evil that must ever be present in all earthly things? Whence came it? No matter how I turned it over and over in my mind I could not solve the mystery. So far, though our paths had frequently come close to the other, they had not yet crossed in direct conflict, and yet I felt, and even longed, that some day I should come face to face with the sphinx and either she or I be

destroyed. There had never seemed any disposition to seek direct injury to me, and yet of all our Brotherhood I apparently was chosen to witness most of her hellish manifestations. Why? I could not tell, for surely I knew not I had ever wittingly injured any one.

So weighted down was I by my unexplainable dread that for many a day I had little inclination for work or study or prayer. I could see too, that Sonnlein, though he and the rest knew naught but a wild beast had flown at him, was greatly impressed when I warned him he must not wander into the woods until he was older and abler to take care of himself against the beasts, which warning, it eased my mind much to observe, he heeded as well as a strong, healthy boy can heed anything.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SONNLEIN COMETH TO MAN'S ESTATE

For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.

—*Bible.*



ANY were the changes that came over our little community while my boy was growing into a man!

It was not long after the Solitary had united themselves at Ephrata that the Eckerlings conceived various enterprises whereby our cells should be filled with what to so many weak mortals is as precious as honey to the bees, namely, money.

In our early life our chief labor was the tilling of the soil, for which we had by reason of our scanty means and our own peculiar views the most primitive methods, so that we not only dragged the plow but even drew our carts, and oft when we traveled we resembled a caravan of camels, so

heavily laden were we. I can still see when the plowing came to be done the whole Brotherhood trooping around the hill of Zion. Under the Eckerlings, however, we consented to the use of beasts of burden for our heavy work; but in reparation of what many of us considered an unjust use of these animals we treated them with exceeding kindness.

Our first industry under the Eckerlings was the building of a bakehouse, which we used not only for our own modest requirements but even in the interests of the poor settlers, no charge being made whatever for the bread or the baking.

Another movement looking toward our enrichment was the planting of a large orchard of over a thousand apple trees, as well as a row of fruit trees entirely surrounding the Kloster grounds. The Eckerlings also proposed to set out a vineyard on the hillside; but this met with such determined opposition the project was abandoned, for we feared it might lead to winebibbing among us, and this we could not have, as we permitted the use of fermented liquors only when actually necessary as physic.

Then came a small grist mill, the first to be put up in this region, which we purchased shortly after the death of Brother Agonius. The mill we entirely rebuilt in stone, increasing its capacity to three run, and day after day for a number of years

the splash, splash of the water wheel and the rumbling murmur of the mill stones were sweet music in the ears of the Eckerlings and their followers.

Soon after came a sawmill; and then what was, perhaps, more important to us, the paper mill, whereby we made not only all the paper for the printing of our various hymns and books and pamphlets, but also furnished much of the paper that was used at this period throughout the province, our Brother Christopher Sauer making frequent demands on us.

Within a few years an oil mill was put up, the stones of which were unlike any others in America. This oil, like our paper, was not only used in our printing, but was sent far and wide for the making of printer's ink. There were looms for weaving linen and cloth, and a mill where the homespun made in the community and by the neighbors was fulled and prepared for use; and as there was no end to the money-making projects of the Eckerlings, a tannery was erected, where both tanning and tawing were carried on, in the meadow a short distance west of where we later built the Brother House.

Then of necessity, as one evil deed ever requires its fellow, followed a mill for grinding the oak and hemlock bark. This leather, by such as were hostile to us, was called in derision "Jesuit leather," but the nickname did not in the least



injure the quality of the leather or impair the demand for it, for—and I say it not boastfully—this leather, like our paper and cloth and flour and other products, was all of good, honest quality, and sought far and wide for its excellence.

The Brothers and Sisters thought more of how well they could do that which they were called upon to do than how much they were to receive for it. Thus they ennobled their work and gave dignity to their humble labors, all of which honesty of work and affection for it was expressed in the quality of the products; nothing slipshod, nothing half-finished in haste was permitted; nothing could go forth from our hands unless it was as sound and wholesome and perfect as our means and skill could make it—and surely there is nothing more honorable in man than to serve his Maker and his children by faithful, honest, affectionate toil.

To meet the demands of our various industries horses and wagons were procured, so that three teams were almost constantly kept upon the road. Agencies were established in Philadelphia and elsewhere for the purchase and sale of our different products and material, and my records show that among such agents were well-to-do citizens of Philadelphia, as Johannus Wüster and Christopher Marshall, the former being the same gentleman who in later years honored us by plucking from

our little garden one of the most beautiful of the Roses of Saron, our dear Sister Anastasia.

But as we had a printing press we must needs have a book bindery, and in a short time we had the largest and best-equipped bindery in the colonies, and I must say in justice to the Eckerlings, that however I disagreed with them in many of their various enterprises, I always felt we owed them much for establishing the printing press and the bindery, for man without books is as a plant without light.

Even the Sisters were not forgotten, for in addition to the domestic duties that ever so fitly fall to the lot of woman, they were constantly engaged in spinning, besides assisting in the lighter work of the fields. Many of the Sisters acquired great skill in embroidery and in calligraphy; and hundreds of our hymns, composed by our superintendent, the Sisters, and the Brethren, were written in the beautiful style of the Sisterhood, so that even now after the lapse of almost half a century since our sisters—many of them now resting in their narrow graves along the roadside—placed their love and devotion for their Master in their humble tasks. We greatly prize our hymn books—the notes and letters and graceful decorations coming from our sisters' hands shining forth still in all the clearness and purity of their first writing.

In this wise matters went on until our Eckerlings

almost proved our undoing, for it gradually became noised about that we were nothing more than merchants, tradespeople using our kloster life as a cloak to give us the appearance of honest, devout people, caring naught for gain; and there was much truth in what our printer at Germantown published, that in a short time the ringing and clinking, tinkling, clanking, and dangling at Zion, Ephrata, Kedar, Peniel, and Saron would equal Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Babylon.

The only remedy for this show and excessive love of money lay in the removal of the Eckerlings. This all the rest of the Solitary who loved a simple life knew must come sooner or later, and yet they dreaded the coming. Wherefore they groaned heavily in spirit under the bondage of the Eckerlings for seven long years. Then, and I have not space to relate how all this came about, were the Eckerlings dethroned, and their lording it over us brought to a certain end.

On a bright day in August the Solitary Brethren arranged in a circle about a heap of burning brush fed by most willing hands, we consigned to the glowing embers all the books and writings of Onesimus, among them being his polemic against the Moravians; and three days later the Sisterhood of Saron repeated a similar ceremony, upon which occasion two of his German broadsides and a pillar against the Moravians as well as his hymns



"We consigned to the glowing embers  
all the books and writings of Onesimus."  
Page 198.



were consumed by the fire. And to make sure naught of contamination remained with us, on the sixth day the brethren of the Secular Congregation gathered all the writings and mementos of Onesimus and committed them also to the flames.

Not many weeks later the prior and his brother, Jephune, with Timotheus and several other followers, fled about four hundred miles toward the setting of the sun, until beyond all Christian government they reached a stream which runs toward the Mississippi, New River by name, where they were joined soon after by the rest of the Eckerlings.

With their exit an immediate change took place. The mills were immediately closed, and word sent abroad that all our agreements were cancelled—only we would fulfill our standing orders—but that hereafter no grain or seed or logs or rags would be purchased by us, excepting such as would be absolutely necessary for our own use. Our horses and wagons and oxen were sold, and the different helpers who were not of our belief discharged, for we were determined that, as we had come here to serve God and not Mammon, God we would serve. But in spite of our resolution such was the excellence of the flour and the wheat and the oil, and the quality of the paper and cardboard we had made, that for many years demands were made upon us repeatedly; but I rejoice to say no effort was made in all the long after years again to rein-

state these things for anything except our own uses, and when two years later three of our mills were lost by fire, which certain malicious ones attributed to our superintendent, and which could not be extinguished either by our wooden fire charms or our incantations, not one of us greatly regretted the event, so far as the loss of the mills themselves were concerned, only that we felt the loss of the large stores of wheat and other grain. Thus as Brother Lamech hath well said, "Did the fire, with God's permission, make an end to all the mammon which the Eckerlings, by their flaying, scraping, miserly conduct had gathered in the former household."

And now I feel I must turn again to my Sonnlein, who by this time was a sturdy boy of about thirteen, and that it may be known from his actions, instead of my great love for him what manner of boy he was, I shall tell of his first fight, that is, the first one I knew of; and this I can say of him, even though he was not a perfect example of the doctrine of non-resistance, he cared naught for fighting, but suffered in silence many a taunt and vile insult that made the blood rush to his cheeks; for not only did the neighbors' children—learning this from their idle-tongued parents—call him a "nobody's child"—for as he grew older he soon found there were ever ready ones to poison his happiness by telling him of his unknown

parentage—but the elders themselves oft nicknamed him “Brother Jabez’ chicken,” for that he was always under my wing.

But one hot day in summer—and I take an unholy pleasure in writing this—Sonnlein and a lot of other boys and girls, were paddling bare-legged in the cool waters of the Cocalico, nigh the turnpike ford, filling the air with their thoughtless shrieks and laughter, so that the quiet-loving Brothers and Sisters were sorely tried in patience. Suddenly the harmless shrieks and laughter rose into a tremendous uproar, and so unusual was this tumult to mine ears I started hurriedly for the ford, fearing some awful calamity had befallen the children. As I came nigh I saw a lot of boys of all ages and sizes—so I wondered where they all came from—gathered in a struggling, yelling mass in the meadow along the creek, a fringe of frightened, white-faced little girls in the background—each boy, large and small, with might and main pressing forward toward the center of the howling little maniacs as if something of great moment were proceeding there. And indeed there was, for I was almost on them before they saw me or heard me call out sternly, “What meaneth all this noise?” When they did hear me and see my form hanging over them like some great thunder cloud they fled quickly, only that some from a distance in derision of my tonsure cried out at me, “*Alter*



*Blatkopf*" (old baldhead), so that like Elisha I wished the bears to eat them up.

All but two had fled, and they were rolling about in the grass, now one on top and then the other, then to their feet, striking, clawing, and scratching like nothing so much as two angry cats; but suddenly the smaller but more active one, who seemed to me strangely like Sonnlein, delivered a marvelously directed blow full upon the upturned nose of the other, bringing forth a goodly stream of rich, red blood, whereupon the bleeding one put across the meadows, his hand to his face, bawling at the top of his lungs, the victorious gladiator following a short distance and crying after the vanquished, "Dost want some more of 'Brother Jabez' chicken'?" and then horrors upon horrors, I saw through all the mud and dirt and disordered hair, and the fierce, distorted features, 'twas my boy Sonnlein!

He saw me about the same time, and then the angry face fell into one of shame as I called to him, "Come hither!" He came obediently enough, saying nothing; but the wild passion of conflict could not die out at once, and as he stood there, digging his toes into the earth and casting sullen, rebellious glances at me, such as I had never received from him, and sorely they wounded me, he blurted out, "He began 't."

"Have I not often told thee," I demanded, as

much in sorrow as in anger, "thou must not fight? Would couldst see thyself now to know how much like the beasts we become when we stoop to fight and tear each other asunder."

Still he said, but less defiantly, "He began 't, I tell thee."

"Art thou not sorry for breaking his nose?" I asked.

"Nay, he began 't; I had to fight. He hath been calling me names and trying to stir up a quarrel. Now he hath what he looked for."

"Couldst thou not have left him? Thou hast legs to carry thee," I reminded him.

But he only replied more firmly, "I'm glad I beat him, and that right well. He will trouble me no more."

And then as I took him by the hand and we were about to go to our cells I noticed within a few steps one of the little girls who had formed part of the frightened group in the background. She seemed about my boy's age, perhaps a trifle younger, with such deep blue eyes and long yellow hair, I thought of our Sister Bernice, only that our poor sister was never so rosy-cheeked and strong looking as this pretty little maid standing timidly nigh, and finally bursting into a plaintive appeal, "Don't whip him, Brother Jabez, it was Johann's own fault." Johann I suppose being the name of the still fleeing one.

"And why should I not punish Sonnlein for fighting, my little sister?" I asked gently.

"Because," she replied falteringly, and I could see her face was red as fire.

"'Because' may be reason sufficient for little girls, but not for big men," I replied still gently.

"Johann called him names," she rejoined.

"But surely hard names break no bones. If we fought whenever we heard ill of ourselves we should have little time for else than fighting. Now tell me truly why did they fight?"

And then I felt Sonnlein tugging at my hand and looking up at me more shamefaced than ever as he cried out, "Let us go, *Vaterchen*, I told thee why we fought," all the while frowning at our little sister as though warning her not to say anything.

I am not overly inquisitive, but now I was resolved to know all, so I said to her sternly, "My little sister, tell me the truth," and then more tenderly I said, "thou knowest Brother Jabez would not hurt thee or Sonnlein—not overmuch." Upon which great assurance she spake up as bravely as she could between the sobs that would not keep back, "Johann said I must be his wife when I was grown up, and Sonnlein said I was to be his wife, and—and—I—I—said so too."

"Well, what then?" I asked between stern surprise and tenderness as she wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Why, then we will keep house together," she replied innocently.

"I meant not what ye were going to do. I meant what did Johann do after thou didst promise thyself to Sonnlein?"

"Why Johann called Sonnlein bad names and struck me in the face and Sonnlein hit him." And then she said with such proud defiance I was greatly shocked, "Sonnlein licked him."

"And so ye two are to be man and wife when ye are grown up? What is thy name?" I asked turning to the little shrew.

"Mary."

"Well," and I spake out strongly, "let me not hear of this again, else will I tell thy parents, Mary; and as for thee, Sonnlein, if I hear aught of this man and wife wickedness again thou shalt have opportunity to celebrate thy first whipping." Thus did I threaten in my unwisdom these poor, innocent children.

"Ye do promise ye will never again speak to each other such nonsense?"

Whereat they both promised so willingly they would not that I greatly doubted the promise would stand any great strain.

As Sonnlein and I turned back again to the Kloster, leaving Mary to find her way home without the protection of her young knight, he looked up at me innocently and asked as sweetly as though

he had never known such fierce feeling as fighting, "Wast never in love, *Vaterchen*?"

I was about to reply with unwonted crossness, "What is't to thee," but just then I caught a glimpse of the mound, not more than a stone's throw to our right, beneath which lay our Bernice, so I merely remained quiet and answered not at all, only I could not help thinking that even Ecclesiastes sayeth there is a time for love and a time for war, and though Sonnlein was rather young for me to predict what his manhood would be, it will be seen that my fond hopes were none of the brightest for making him a gentle, peaceful celibate.

## CHAPTER XIX

### WHEN HEARTS ARE YOUNG

Come, Corinna, let me kiss thee !  
Come, my dearest, to me here !  
I would know why joy should miss thee,  
I would have thine answer clear.  
Smiling sweetly said she, " No,"  
Then demurely yielded so.

—*Francis Daniel Pastorius (of Germantown).*



NOW the years slipped by !  
Twenty years ago my  
Sonnlein had come to  
me a little toddler. Now  
he was a tall youth—  
even taller than I—  
strong and straight as  
the pine under which I  
found him ; full of health-  
ful animal spirits that  
sometimes in their ex-  
uberance give me vague fears as to what his active,  
enthusiastic nature might lead him to. Thus far  
he had done naught to shake my confidence in him.  
He was a constant solace to me. Brother Obed,  
with unwearying patience for Sonnlein's lively

ways, was exceedingly proud of his acquirements, for between Brother Obed and me Sonnlein had not only learned to speak our mother tongue like one of us, but even in Latin and Greek he was no indifferent scholar. We had also taught him the arts of rhetoric and logic and mathematics, and had versed him in literature and history, poetry and music.

But above all mathematics, history, language, and literature, Brother Obed and I had taught Sonnlein what we knew and what we could teach him to find out for himself about this world of ours, this delightful book of nature our Creator gave us to read and search with no less diligence than his written word, and so the moon and the stars by night, the sun by day, the ever-recurring seasons, calm and tempest, the sparkling streams, waving trees, the sweet and lovely flowers, the creatures that fill God's earth, man, bird, and beast—all these were taught so that our boy understood them as so many manifestations of his power and beauty and love and tenderness for us who were created in his image. And that our boy might have the best of all guides for the interpretation of this visible life and the unseen world beyond the gates of death, we taught him gently but persistently God's holy word, for in our simple view of life it seemed a great shame that one should know all about the kings and princes of this fleeting earth

but know naught of the Prince of princes and the King of kings. Thus our boy, we fondly trusted, was prepared to fill any place in this world according to his gifts, happily for himself and others.

But I dare not pretend that he was a youthful saint, for frequently to my poorly concealed amusement and the evident chagrin of our superintendent, Sonnlein often put the former to utter rout in the discussion of some of his finespun interpretations of holy writ. Indeed, I fear there was no love lost between our estimable leader and my boy, for Sonnlein had that inexorable logic, that sure keenness of mind that pierces a sophistry as a skillful archer wings his arrow to the center of the mark. At times Sonnlein's apparent want of reverence, his seeming irreligion, his lack of deference for Brother Beissel's peculiar views, threatened to disrupt the brotherly relations that ever existed between our superintendent and me, his associate; for with all his sternness, his austerity, his unbending will and ambition, I recognized that our leader was no ordinary man, and while not a scholar he was a man of great and many talents—all in all, just the one to hold together our little community.

The trouble was that while Sonnlein had much of the sweet reasonableness and charity that comes from the study and contemplation of the humanities, he added to his poetic, philosophical temperament the energy and will that mark the man



of action. An ardent, impetuous, positive nature like his was bound to clash with one like the superintendent's, and more than once it called forth all my wits to prevent actual rupture between the two, which would have scandalized us sorely. Thus it was that while I frequently reproached Sonnlein for his irreverence for Brother Beissel, I just as often placated the latter by pleading Sonnlein's youth and inexperience.

I recall especially one occasion when our leader had delivered a long discourse on one of his pet theories, that in heaven we should have the same occupations we had followed here. Sonnlein's brief comment, so it was brought to mine ears, was he pitied grave-diggers and the like if that was all the reward they were to receive. In our Kloster there were tattlers and talebearers, just as in more worldly places, and our leader hearing of the thing, which I knew Sonnlein had said more in jest than in disrespect, came to me in high dudgeon and demanded Sonnlein make open apology before all the Brotherhood. This I knew full well Sonnlein would not do and I besought our worthy leader to overlook the matter and forgive him. I shall never forget how he almost yelled at me, his small frame quivering with righteous indignation beneath my towering stature. "Forgive him! So sayest thou ever. I verily believe thou couldst forgive the devil!"

"In truth, dear brother, I oft have done so," I replied, smiling quietly and looking down into his angry eyes meaningly.

He straightened up and, as he walked savagely away, delivered this parting shot: "No doubt; thou hast had abundant opportunity in thy precious Sonnlein!"

It was my turn to flush now, but happily I controlled myself and said nothing, consoling myself with the reflection that our superintendent's witty retort would go far to appease his indignation and that by the morrow he would greet me with his accustomed affection and good-will, for in order to make others love us it is only necessary to make them love themselves, and many a rascal by this knowledge hath overcome many a wise man.

That night I spake to Sonnlein kindly but firmly, reminding him how poorly it accorded with his manhood's estate to indulge in such levity; that even if he could not always agree with the hair-splitting speculations of our worthy superintendent, it were surely wiser to hold one's tongue lest that unruly member poison all our peace.

"But," replied he gently, as was ever his way toward me, "*Vaterchen*, Brother Beissel hath something about him that everything he says and does irritates me. It passeth my understanding why he alone of all our Brothers and Sisters so affects me. I sometimes fear I hate him and that

he returns the same feeling, yet I know not that he hath ever harmed me. I promise thee to curb this tongue of mine. . Good night, *Vaterchen*; *schlafen Sie wohl*," and so saying he went meekly to his *Kammer*, from whence I could soon tell by his deep, regular breathing what I had said was not greatly disturbing his sleep.

Late in the afternoon of the following day, being now in the wane of what we have since learned to call the "Indian summer," I was wandering, somewhat aimlessly I confess, along the borders of the Sisters' close, when suddenly, on lifting mine eyes from the earth, I perceived one of the Sisterhood directly in my pathway, but a short distance ahead, sitting quietly on a projecting root, which, springing from the base of a towering chestnut tree, formed a comfortable seat.

She had not observed me, I felt sure, and thinking not to disturb her meditations, for I doubted not she was rapt in contemplation of the heavenly Bridegroom, I stepped quietly aside into the cover of a near-by thicket. I hardly had done so when, not far beyond the Sister, a rich, deep voice rang out in an old German hunting song :

"Out into the woods three hunters went,  
On the white deer's chase their wishes bent."

From my hiding-place I saw the form at the foot of the tree sit more erect in listening posture, and

as the face was uplifted, the fair features of Sister Genoveva met my gaze, such a pensive wistfulness and tenderness informing every feature of the lovely face turned unwittingly toward me, I somehow thought of my Bernice, who so soon was called to her celestial Bridegroom.

Again the fine, strong voice rang out, still nearer :

“Down under the fir-trees’ shade they lay,  
The same strange dream came to each that day.

“THE FIRST.

“ ‘I dreamt I beat on a sheltering bush,  
From out its fold sprang the deer, husch, husch !’ ”

And now I caught occasional glimpses of the gray fox-skin hunter’s cap Sonnlein wore when on the chase, for I had recognized his voice full well. Some one else too seemed to know, for I could not help seeing, e’en though I never have known much of the signs and symptoms of love, that Sister Genoveva’s pensiveness had given way to a gentle smile that brought an added charm to the wonderful loveliness of the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

Still nearer came the trumpet tones :

“THE SECOND.

“ ‘And as he sprang from the hound’s hoarse laugh,  
I branded him deep on the hide, piff, paff !’ ”

Where had the scamp learned to sing with such faithfulness to the sense? I heard plainly the "hound's hoarse laugh," the "piff, paff!" And again I wondered where he had learned to sing so true. Surely not from our leader; no Æolian harp about these manly, resounding notes:

"THE THIRD.

" 'And as on the earth him slain I saw,  
Lustily into the horn I blew, trara !' "

That "trara," like the blast of a hunting horn, transported me to my boyhood days in the *Vaterland*, where often I had heard the huntsmen call to each other in the thick forests and mountain glens. And then mockingly came the stanza:

" So there they lay and bragged these three—  
And there, ran by them the white deer—free !' "

Surely the light-hearted boy, for boy he always has been to me, was meant for a minnesinger.

And now he was so nigh only a thin wall of brush separated him, all unconscious, from Sister Genoveva and me, as she sat in the little clearing at the foot of the tree. Her eyes were now sparkling with merriment; delicate dimples of mirthfulness played hide and seek over chin and cheeks, despite the dignified efforts to maintain a sober mien as became one of the holy Sisterhood. Surely

she was thinking of the surprise in store for him when he should burst the bushy barriers—and see her. It seemed to me she might have left the spot, for certain it was there was no lack of opportunity. Once, in faith, I was about to call to her sternly, but I could not, for verily I believe we both were held by the witchery of his song.

Then came the last verse, still strong and clear, with its vein of mockery :

“But hardly was he within their sight  
He was gone again over deep and height.  
Husch, husch ! piff, paff ! trara !”

The echoes of his stentorian tones had hardly died away when he was on us. Rather, I should say, he was in the presence of Sister Genoveva, for I was safely ensconced in the thicket, resolved now to see the meeting to its conclusion. And what a picture they made in that leaf-strewn clearing, all red and brown and gold with the jewels of the dying year, the chestnut stretching its arms out over the two forms as if in a blessing !

Not all the studied plainness and cloistral severity of the black dress could suppress the womanly grace and beauty of the full, rounded form of Sister Genoveva ; nor could the hideous hood, which had fallen on her shoulders, have hidden from view those sweet features, so delicately strong and full of noble calmness and serenity—and yet no cold,

marble, nun-like face, for the full red lips, the rosy flush of the rounded cheeks, the dimpled chin, and the warmth of those luminous, deep blue eyes betokened an affectionate and loving heart; and now that I saw her with such opportunity to scan her without myself being seen, I could understand the reports that had come to me of the wonderful influence she already exerted over the Sisterhood by reason of her clear vision, her piety, her strong will, her even temper, and above all that largeness of heart that made her sought even more than *Mutter Maria* in the troubles and fears and temptations that even our simple, secluded life could not wholly shut out from our little world.

But if she was the perfect Eve in this little paradise under the spreading chestnut, Sonnlein was no unworthy Adam. I knew not which of the two most satisfied my carnal eye with their fresh, young, healthful beauty. From beneath his gray cap his thick black hair hung in heavy, wavy masses about his neck and shoulders. His ruddy, sunburned face glowed with the spirit and animation of his song. At first, when he burst upon her, he started back in surprise, and then he called to her in gentle gayety, as he dropped on one knee, cap in hand, bowing gracefully (so that I wondered where he had caught those courtier-like airs which not at all pleased my plain ways), "Thou queen of the Roses of Saron, art thou holding court in thy temple of beauty?"

And then, for I could have sworn when he burst upon us she had been thinking of him in maidenly tenderness, she looked up indifferently, even coldly, and rebuked him, "Shame on thee to disturb these sacred grounds with thy worldly, boisterous song, thou noisy reveler. Thou idle, mighty Nimrod, where are the fruits of thy chase? Perchance" (and I saw a sly twinkle in her eyes that his abashed face did not observe) "thou didst dream too long under the fir tree and the white deer escaped thee? Gay garments torn from innocent beasts to add to vain adornment do not make one a great hunter."

"Nay, Sister Genoveva," he replied more earnestly, "no white deer ran through my dreams; no fir trees' shade soothed mine eyes to sleep. Wide awake was I, and yet I dreamed of a fair, sweet rose that I, even though it had thorns to prick me, would wear next my heart."

"Indeed, thou poet, thou speakest as though inspired with love. Surely it is time thou dost take the vow of loyalty to the celestial Virgin and join the consecrated Brotherhood; why delayest thou so long? In her love thou wilt find no thorns."

"But, dear sister, I want the rose with the thorns" (how delicately he emphasized the "with"). "Canst thou not see whom I mean, or dost thou not care to know?"

And then I saw the delicious mockery leave her



face and voice as she said to him in solemn tones, "Nay, my brother Sonnlein, I dare not know ; for thy sake as well as mine I must not know. Thou art possessed by some idle fancy the Evil One hath put into thee. Thou must not disrespect me by making my woman's heart struggle 'gainst my vows of celibacy."

He lifted his head and looking into her eyes that met his so fearlessly, his passionate heart burst forth into a very torrent of love, so I wondered she could withstand him. "I do love thee, sister," murmured tumultuously the low, warm voice, "with all my heart and mind and body and soul. I do not hold thee lightly in my respect or I had spoken of this long ago ; but my respect for thee, for *Vaterchen*, for our Holy Order forbade ; but I can no longer withhold myself." And then masterfully he stood erect and in strong, earnest tones declared, "I for one am not ashamed of human love. I should rather be ashamed of myself did I not love such as thou art to me." And then, the eloquent diplomat, "Brother Beissel, whom the Roses of Saron worship as little less than God himself, hath he not declared, is it not the very foundation of your vows of celibacy that man was first a spirit containing both the elements of man and woman ; that this spiritual virgin, the *Sophia*, left him ? Then was woman formed from a rib of his side, whereby man lost his woman's

attributes and retained merely man's? Thou must not smile and shake thy head, my sister. Thou art, I care not if the wide world know it, my *Sophia*, my angel, my celestial virgin, that left me in my creating. Canst marvel and deem me mad or blasphemous because I long to come to mine own other self again, to have thee, mine own sweet rib, evermore at my side, beneath my heart, caressing it and content to hear it murmur its undying love for thee—my sister, *mein Liebchen*—tell me, dost thou not love me?"

How like one inspired he pleaded! Surely she would yield, for I saw the steady light in her eyes falter, and for a moment she clasped her hands meekly before her, like a humble captive before some proud conqueror, but just for a moment—strange is the heart of woman—and then I was most inconsistently displeased to see her lift her gaze all unabashed to his as she said lightly, "What an orator thou art; now know I what we oft have marveled at, how thou wheedlest our good Brother Jabez into so much forgiveness for thy indifference to our holy life."

"So our good brother is wheedled," thought I, indignantly at first, and then smiling in a superior manner at the impossibility of such a thing as my being wheedled.

But my boy was not one of those who could easily be laughed away from his purpose, for I had

taught him—in season and out—never to let sarcasm or ridicule have the slightest effect on him when he had once chosen his ground and knew he was right. If he did feel Genoveva's gentle mockery he showed it not, but instead did what I never could have had the courage to do, unless upon modest invitation, and that was to step resolutely forward and take Sister Genoveva by the hands and hold her thus against her feeble striving to free herself while he said to her boldly, "Thou dost love me or else wouldst not tease me so!"

"Hast forgotten our promise to good Brother Jabez when thou didst fight Johann, that we would never again talk to each other of love?"

"That promise hath no life; we were but children, and secondly, 'twas drawn from us by fear. Such promises *Vaterchen*, who knoweth the law, himself sayeth are not binding."

"Oh, thou lawyer," thought I to myself; "thou'rt far too worldly-wise for a minnesinger."

"Thou dost love me," he again said strongly.

"Thou tyrant to hold me against my will. Loose thy hold or else I shall not doubt I dislike thee," she declared right vehemently, though it seemed to me she might have struggled more earnestly to loosen his grasp.

But like a true-hearted man he obeyed her request, dropping her hands and saying softly, "Thou dost not hate me, then, thou cold-hearted nun?"

"Nay, naught of reason have I to hate thee, Sonnlein"—and how sweetly she said his name—"but dost not know, thou mighty hunter, woman expects little less than perfection in him she would love," and then she said maliciously, so I could not fathom her, "surely thou dost not think thyself perfect?"

"As to thy last," he rejoined, "I shall make answer, I am human. I leave it to woman to be perfect"—the flatterer. "As to thy first I doubt not thy sex ever looks for perfection in our imperfect sex, and it strikes me this accounts more for our Sisterhood than does their love for their heavenly Bridegroom, whom they see not until after death."

"Thou irreverent scoundrel," thought I.

"And yet," continued he, "when I think of him for whom our Sister Eunice lately left the Roses of Saron, it seemeth as though some of thy sex at least look not for perfection."

"Still I say our foolish hearts yearn for the ideal, but when we love the attainable we forgive everything, and this is woman's weakness."

"Nay, sister, 'tis her most glorious strength that she, an angel, can stoop down and make him see heaven in her."

"That I had the gift to speak with such a golden tongue," thought I, and then fortunately for us all—for I liked not my spying, and yet I could not

leave unnoticed—Sonnlein chanced to see Brother Alburtus approach. Suddenly that scamp of mine kissed her full on her sweet lips. How she blushed and said not a word, as he held her close to him for a moment whispering passionately, "Thou must love me as I love thee, forever!" and then as they both saw Brother Alburtus perilously nigh, she quietly sat down again at her former place, most demurely, while Sonnlein passed on toward his *Kammer*.

As Brother Alburtus came upon her he stopped for a moment, hand rubbing hand as usual, looked at her in grave absorption and passed on as though she were not there.

And then I could have sworn I saw peering at her, and next at the departing form of Brother Alburtus, the loathsome features of that awful woman whom I had not seen for over ten years, from the shelter of a tangled clump of vines and brush, which I solemnly promised myself should be cut down on the morrow, root and branch.

Stealthily I crept out of my hiding-place and proceeded to where it seemed I had seen the witch, but as I came near I saw naught, and yet as I walked slowly away there came faintly to mine ears as though receding from me, that horrible, cackling laugh I had reason to hold in so much dread.

## CHAPTER XX

### SISTER GENOVEVA IS GONE

O thou whose glory fills the etherial throne,  
And all ye deathless powers, protect my son!

—*Iliad.*



WILIGHT was fast deepening into night when I returned to my *Kammer* in the large Brother House, or Bethania, which we built a few years after the departure of the Eckerlings, down in the meadow, nigh the Cocalico, and facing the Sister House, or Saron, Brother Beissel's cabin sitting circumspectly between the two houses of our Order.

Here, as in Zion, Sonnlein and I had adjoining cells. I was not greatly surprised as I entered mine, to hear him whistle softly a worldly tune, though where he had caught it I knew not—surely not from me—for our sober lives never favored such godless puckerings and twistings of the lips!

Then he hummed the blasphemous thing for a while, changing into whistling again, and in his humming and whistlings making such vain and perverse changes, flying from high to low, from loud to soft, mingling with it all such sundry quiverings and queer little runs and trillings, until not able to stand it longer—for it seemed he would never stop—I marched sternly to the doorway of his cell, flung back the light door and spake to him, “Art crazy or in love?”

“Both, *Vaterchen*, both!” he fairly shouted, as he grabbed me ere I knew what was up, and spun me around so I could hardly keep my feet.

“Surely thou’rt mad,” I gasped feebly as I sank down on his bench, “Hast been drinking?”—though I knew he had not.

“Yea,” he shouted again even louder than before, “from the loving cup of the gods!”

“Be not so boisterous, thou blasphemer! Wouldst have the Brethren think thee drunk?”

“The Brethren are not about; I am not so wild I know not how to save thy gentle reputation, *Vaterchen*”—and in truth in his adventures he ever regarded me.

“Still it poorly becometh thee to act like a thoughtless boy,” I remonstrated.

“Surely, *Vaterchen*,” he laughed gayly, “if thou didst but know what it is to be in love thou couldst not scold me so!”

"Every man to his trade," I replied dryly, not trusting myself to look at him; "my trade is preaching and trying to behave myself. Thine appears to be loving," saying the latter as sarcastically as my dislike for sharp words and my love for him would allow.

But he only laughed the louder as he said, "'Tis a trade that never had to advertise for apprentices."

"Cease thy levity; canst not be sober-minded? If thou must make music we have hundreds of noble hymns in our books."

"They are not framed to my mood, but"—and now in truth he looked more serious and manlike, as I most admired him—"dost thou agree with our superintendent that marriage is a sinful state?"

"Dost ask for mere curiosity, or hast found some foolish woman who careth for thee?" I asked with seeming ignorance.

He flushed at this, and then said gently, the schemer, "Nay, but sometime I might see one foolish enough, as thou sayest, to love me and perchance I might commit in all ignorance the grievous sin of marriage."

"I commend thy great thoughtfulness," said I, looking at him in a way that made him in turn look at me as though wondering whether I knew more than I cared to tell. "To relieve thy anxiety I shall tell thee, which I would not have pro-



claimed from the housetops, there being those who hold to stricter views, I do not regard marriage as sinful. The word of God sayeth not so. In truth it esteemeth marriage highly. We base our views of celibacy on what Paulus sayeth, thou rememberest, 'For I would that all men were even as I myself,' meaning unmarried."

"But Paulus himself wrote that he spake this by permission and not of commandment."

"True, and so say I, now that I am older and wiser. We practise celibacy, and praise it because we believe that, as good soldiers of the Lord, we can go better to battle than if we are impeded by wives and children."

A long pause and then anxiously, as though much depended on my reply, he asked with a touch of reverence in his voice, "Wouldst think it wrong for any of our Sisters to marry?"

"Our vows are binding only on our consciences. We compel no one to celibacy. Each follows his own will. Thou knowest many of the Brethren and Sisters who were married when they joined our order left us again to live together and no one said them 'nay,' but our single Sisters and Brethren have almost invariably remained with us."

"If I were to marry one of the Sisterhood, wouldst thou condemn either of us?" he asked eagerly.

"When thou'rt sure thou hast found one to

break her vows for thee it were time to ask me that," I admonished him ; and then, as I arose to return to my cell, I said smiling, not meaning it with malice, "thou knowest much may happen between sunrise and sunset."

Hardly had I said this—and oft it hath come to me how like it was to the fulfilling of a prophecy—when the Kloster bell rang out from Mt. Sinai strong and clear as though calling us to face some sudden danger. Alarm was writ plainly on our faces as we looked out of the little window, fearing to see the glare of fire against the sky, but we saw nothing. Soon the hall and corridors were filled with the anxious brethren, for it was still a few hours from midnight, and each of us knew something of great moment must be about to cause this hurried ringing so early in the night.

As Sonnlein and I hastened out of the corridor and the low doorway for Brother Beissel's cabin, the rest of the anxious brothers trooping after us, we saw our prioress and a number of the Sisters gathered about our leader in front of his cabin, the changing light from the fat lamps showing clearly enough the fear and consternation oppressing us.

As our leader saw me, he called me to him and said, his voice trembling in spite of him : "Our Sister Genoveva cannot be found ; no one hath seen her since sunset."

I could feel Sonnlein's grip on my arm like the hold of a drowning man, but he said nothing.

"I myself saw her then in the Sisters' close, sitting at the foot of a large chestnut tree," said I slowly, for I could not help thinking of that evil face I now felt certain I had really seen peering at our sister from behind the thicket.

"She may have gone to some of the neighbors to attend some sick one," suggested Brother Beissel, but saying it as against his own belief.

"But first she would have left word with us," the prioress reminded him, "for such is our rule."

"Still, there may have been sudden illness that left no time for word to us," persisted our leader.

So far, no one had said a word as to the great fear that I knew was clutching the hearts of my Brothers and Sisters, which was that the Indians had either killed or carried away our Genoveva; for over a year had gone by since the French and Indians had taken up musket and tomahawk against the English settlements, and though we had thus far been spared the horrors of this savage war, yet we heard now and then of awful massacres of the whites by the Indians not many miles to the north and west, among the outlying settlements of our province, so that the whole country, by reason of these barbarous deeds and the want of proper defense, was in a great state of excitement and apprehension.

Calling Brother Alburtus to me, I asked him slowly and distinctly, for he seemed oft not to understand one: "Thou wast in the Brother woods and the Sister woods at sunset. Didst see signs of Indians, the red men?"

But he only shook his head with his accustomed vacant air, so that Brother Beissel exclaimed impatiently: "'Tis waste of time to question him; he never seeth aught."

"Brother Beissel, if thou wilt send of the brethren among the neighbors to inquire of our sister, Sonnlein and I will go to the Sister woods," and with this I turned about for Sonnlein, but he was gone as though he too had been swallowed up, for I had felt him but a moment before at my elbow. My flesh was beginning to creep and prick with unmanly fright when one of the brethren spake:

"He hath just gone with a fagot to Mt. Sinai," and as I looked where my brother pointed, I saw the occasional glimmer of a light through the trees and bushes.

Without waiting for a light, though the night was dark and overcast with heavy clouds, threatening rain, I dashed after my boy as fast as the gloom and my knowledge of our Kloster ground would let me.

When I reached him he was already at the chestnut tree, kneeling, torch in hand, closely searching the ground. As I came nigh I saw his

face was hard and drawn, and though I could see his hands tremble, his voice was firm as a rock as he commanded me, as he never spoke to me before, to stand back a moment.

All around the base of the tree he looked, missing, as I thought, not a leaf or twig or stone, I wondering now at the patience of him who never since I had known him had been overly patient.

Then slowly he got up from the ground, still holding his torch close to the earth, and started off, now stopping as in doubt, then holding aside a branch or vine in his way, I all the while following as meekly as a little boy his parent, but rejoicing now that Sonnlein's living in the woods so much had taught him what I knew so little of. On we slowly and surely went, he often stooping down and scrutinizing the earth as though he had lost his guiding marks, but always finding them again, until we had gone down over the hill and were aiming toward the Cocalico where it wound its course fully a half-mile below the Brother House.

A great fear again chilled me to the bones. Our sister had thrown herself into the cold waters of the creek rather than weakly surrender herself to love for man! But when I had seen her last she seemed not over-weighted with grief or remorse. Nay, not self-murder!

And now as we were following the right bank of the Cocalico and were treading the wet, soft

earth, I could see plainly now and then what a child could have seen—through the weeds and grasses, footprints of three people, one of whom I felt sure was our sister, for some of the prints were small and delicate, such as would be made by the wooden soles of her sandals. Other of the prints from their size were those of a grown man, but whether white or Indian I had not sufficient woodcraft to tell. The other marks were too small for a man's and yet not Genoveva's, being differently shaped.

We had not gone far along the Cocalico, when suddenly the grassy bank spread out into a stony, gravelly beach, where the deep pool we had been following dwindled away to a shallow, rippling stream. On this hard beach I at once lost the footprints, but Sonnlein never hesitating led the way, still silent and grim, to the water's edge, and there again I plainly saw the foot-marks in the soft mud among the stones.

He paused but a moment as he looked at the marks, and then plunged into the stream without waiting to see whether or how I might follow. My selfish indignation at his indifference to me lasted but the space of a lightning's flash, for I immediately thought of the great trouble that had come to my boy, and without any ado I plunged into the icy waters that, despite its shallowness, caught me knee-deep at times, and with such

savage eagerness as I feared more than once would sweep my feet off the slippery bed of the stream and no doubt drown me, for in my neglect of earthly things I had never learned to swim.

But with all my floundering and splashing I did at last reach the farther side, where I found Sonnlein following the shore looking closely for the foot-prints, of which I could see none. But suddenly we found them again quite a distance below where we had emerged from the Cocalico, and I realized now that the captors had practised the old trick of walking in the water some distance to destroy all pursuit.

But now Sonnlein's fagot was almost burnt out and the rain was beginning to fall, lightly as yet, though I knew it would soon be drenching us to the skin, and by washing away the foot-prints make it impossible to follow any further.

I tried to call Sonnlein's mind to the utter folly of hoping to accomplish aught in the darkness and the rain, but his only reply was to make a fresh torch from the dead branches of an old tree overhanging the creek. Lighting the sticks from his fast expiring fagot, he suddenly turned to me, as if for the first time since we had left the chestnut tree he were aware of me, and said shortly, "Stay thou here till I come back," and with that he plunged into the heavy brush, mine eyes following anxiously as far as I could the light of his torch.

It was not long until, with all the straining of my sight, I no more could see aught of his light, and then heavy-hearted—as I had not been for many a year—and wet and shivering from the cold rain that was beating down faster and faster, I crouched up close to the dry side of the old dead tree, and patiently awaited in all the misery of my body and mind the return of my boy.

Not that I feared he could not take care of himself, for I knew he had the strength of a lion and the quickness of a cat, but I knew his determined, persistent nature, and that he would go to the ends of the earth, if needs be, for her he loved.

How long I waited under the old tree I remember not. Through all the rushing of the rain and the sweeping of the winds, I heard faintly the Kloster bells, and I knew it must be midnight. I could see in mind the Brothers and Sisters file out of Bethania and Saron for our little chapel for the accustomed devotions, and I found much comfort because I felt sure earnest, loving prayers were ascending to Him to watch over our sister and my boy and me, and bring us back safe and whole to the fold.

But mortal flesh is ever weak, and as I stood and waited with the storm howling about me, wondering where our sister was in all this wind and rain, wondering where my boy was and when he would come back to me, I lost heart and faith.



Besides the wind and the rain and the murmuring of the creek, everything was absolutely silent. I seemed utterly alone in the world. I thought to myself, Who or what am I in all this great universe? What careth God for me? While in this weak mood an owl hooted overhead, and though I had never before found the hooting of owls aught but sad and mournful, this one sounded to me almost as sweet as our own dear bells. And then I thought of what our Master had said about a sparrow's fall—and I doubt not he also regardeth owls—so that I felt better again.

And great need I had of comfort, for hour after hour I waited for my boy. I was drenched to the skin and so cold I shook like a leaf. More than once as I had made up my mind to wait no longer I started to leave, but then crouched closer to the tree again, ashamed of myself for wanting to leave my post. Still as the long, awful night grew toward morning and the faint light of a gloomy dawn came on, I thought to wait longer were of no avail, and so in great anguish of mind, heeding not the lesser pains of the flesh, I made my way back, heavy-eyed and still more heavy-hearted to my cell, drying myself as best I might, and then throwing myself on my hard bench to seek in sleep some peace for body and mind.

## CHAPTER XXI

BROTHER ALBURTUS

When death immortal stays the mortal pulse.

—*Lucretius.*



HEN I write here that I slept until after the seventh hour—which was midday with us—I fear it may be thought I missed not much our sister and my Sonnlein, but I like not to be misjudged, for though I slept so long and even soundly, it was because of a healthy body and for the still better reason that it was the rule and habit of Brother and Sister, so far as we could school our weak, rebellious flesh, never to fret or worry or complain about anything, whether, as blind mortals regard things, it were good or ill.

But when I did get up stiff and sore, my first thought was of Sonnlein, hoping he had returned by now, but as I opened the door into his *Kammer*

my hope sank within me as I missed not only his presence but everything else that would indicate he had returned during my sleep.

Inquiry among the Brethren confirmed my fears. He had not returned. No one had seen him since the night before nor had they learned anything of Genoveva among the neighbors. I reported first to our superintendent what Sonnlein and I had found and how he had gone on against my will, but I said nothing about my dread of the witch, for while I was sure she had something to do with our sister's disappearance, yet the footprints had shown some other than the witch among the captors.

Our leader at once called a meeting of the Brothers and the nearest house-fathers and set before them the substance of my report. It was soon agreed, as I had expected, that the red men had stolen our sister. But what was to be done was not so easy to decide. Even if the rain had not washed away the footprints none of us were sufficiently skilled to trace the savages. To make matters worse, this war with the French again aroused all the distrust our monastic mode of life so often inflicted on us. The old accusation was revived that we were Jesuits, through whom the French and Indians were continually receiving secret information that enabled them to perpetrate massacre after massacre with impunity. Indeed, so important in this respect did our enemies make

us and so bitter was the feeling against our little community that finally the governor of the province was actually prevailed upon to appoint a commission to inquire into these charges that rankled in our breasts in spite of all our humility and fortitude.

We could endure much in the way of false accusation, but we loved in our quiet, peaceful way our chosen home in this new world, and while, with our view of war, we refused to bear arms against the French and Indians, we were always zealous to do all we could for our province, and this we proved fully when in after years the colonies fought for independence we gave up freely of our property, never asking to be repaid therefor, to the cause of our beloved Washington—ever our friend—and not only our property and our services, but many a Brother and Sister cheerfully and lovingly gave up his or her life in nursing the hundreds of soldiers that lay dying of fevers in the halls and cells of our Kloster. It is for the sake of these dear martyr Brothers and Sisters I write this, which to others may seem idle boasting, but which is the glorious truth, as the records will show to him that careth to read.

The governor's commission came in due time and with great pomp and ceremony to our humble little camp, but as we hid nothing from them and answered freely and fearlessly the questions as to

our mode of life, these gentlemen soon left, satisfied that we were not Jesuits nor spies—traitors, but were what we claimed to be, quiet, peaceful monks and nuns, serving faithfully according to our peculiar ideas the same God and the same country as those who were so unnecessarily alarmed about us.

But all the distrust and suspicion and hatred in the minds of those who would not have it other than that we were spies did not keep us from writing out hundreds of notices of the capture of our sister. These we spread as far and wide as the state of affairs would let us, and, as day after day passed without bringing to me my Sonnlein or any word of him, I also sent out notices of his departure.

In our great trouble it came to me that our justice, Brother Weiser, might help us, for not only was he ranger, taking care of all stray horses and cattle, but as Indian interpreter for the government in this cruel war he saw much of what was going on and of necessity met a great many people. Acting upon this thought, I sent him a letter setting forth in full about our sister and my boy, knowing our stern but great-hearted brother would make our loss his and leave nothing undone to restore to us our own.

But over a month went by without a word or sign of our lost ones and to most of us they were now as dead ; but though my mind and heart were

oft assailed with a great dread that I should never again see my boy in this world, yet through all the dark clouds that hung over me there would now and then fall on me the bright sunshine of hope.

Another month went by. It was midwinter, and though I knew Sonnlein, like me, never made any great worry about the weather, no matter how severe, I could not help wondering where, if he were still alive, he had place to lay his head in all this broad earth.

While in this mood I received a long letter from Brother Weiser. He had as interpreter taken part in many negotiations with the Indian chiefs in various parts of the province. At every opportunity and wherever he had been he had sought information about Genoveva and Sonnlein. It grieved our brother much that he had been able to learn nothing anywhere. There had come to him strange tales from some of the Indians he had met about a tall, strong white man who was wandering from village to village and tribe to tribe seeking for his white squaw. The Indians had a name for him which meant one who wandered about searching without ceasing. There had also come equally strange stories to our brother of a young white hunter who was fighting among the hills and valleys of the Blue Mountains to the north and west beyond the block-house forts with untiring and savage ferocity against the French

Indians, by whom the young hunter was known as "The Firebrand," some of the Indians regarding him as mad for that he rested not night or day, as it seemed to them ; that the savages believed he bore a charmed life and that all the red men feared him exceedingly. More than this our good brother could not tell us, but somehow it left no doubt in my mind that this young wanderer, this fiery hunter, must be none other than Sonnlein, roaming the wilds so far away in the undying hope that somewhere he would find our beloved Genoveva.

In this uncertain, harassing state stood the welfare of my Sonnlein and our sister, when one day thinking even more than usual about him, I found myself wandering along the banks of the now ice-bound Cocalico. Ere I knew how far I had wandered thus aimlessly I had arrived at the place where Sonnlein and I had crossed the creek on that awful night. I could see through all the ice and snow where the pool narrowed at the stony beach and on the opposite side some distance down the creek stood the old, dead tree from whose gaunt and gnarled limbs the owl had hooted to me to be of good cheer.

I crossed the snow-covered ice and slid and walked along the bank until I came to the old tree, where I paused for a moment to consider the direction Sonnlein had taken when he left me that night. And now, like him, I plunged into the

undergrowth that overran the lowlands in this little valley of the Cocalico. Often I slipped and stumbled over some log or stone or brake through the snow into a hole or gulley, so that I marvel now I did not break my legs. The branches and the vines caught me about the arms and feet and more than once stung me across the face, but it seemed I had only a great overpowering desire to press forward in the direction I knew Sonnlein had gone.

In this wise I stumbled on in the snow for some distance without seeing any sign of any human being. As I stopped for a moment, nearly exhausted with my wild enterprise, to catch my breath, I gave a great start as I saw but a few paces ahead of me tracks in the snow, and which, as I hurried on, I saw to be the footprints of some grown person. The tracks were running directly across my path, and whereas I had been pursuing my mad course to the southwest, the footprints of this unknown person were pointing toward the southeast.

I had not the slightest idea that they were Sonnlein's and yet I know not why I suddenly determined to follow them. It may be that all unconsciously something told me they were the footprints of our Brother Alburtus who but a few days before had disappeared again from the community so that at the time in my own trouble I had paid little heed to his absence.

As I went on, the tracks, showing clearly in the



deep snow, left the lowlands for the hills, winding in and out among rocks and trees and bushes all the time going higher and higher into the mountains; and now and then I would see a little trampled space as if the unknown one had paused for a moment to rest, or, perhaps, to look down over the beautiful, snow-covered valley.

In this wise I went on and on until finally I was way up in the mountains that range themselves to the south of our Kloster grounds and, indeed, occasionally through the openings in the trees I could see Mount Sinai and the towers and roofs of our little monastery.

I believe I had gone but a short distance beyond my last view over the valley when suddenly I turned about sharply to my right whence I thought I heard a low moan. My next thought was that my fancy had played some trick on me, but as I stood in complete silence looking about in every direction I heard again this same sound as of one in pain, and as I pushed forward I noticed that the footprints turned toward the direction of the sound and I saw a large rock in front of me, the snow on it displaced and disturbed here and there as if some one had mounted it. I was about to scale the slippery height when again I heard the moaning sound so near I thought it must almost be at my feet and yet I could see nothing; but a moment later as I broke through a thicket I started back





"Again I spake to him. 'Dost not  
know me, Brother Albutus?'"  
Page 243.

horrified to see at one side of this great rock the cloaked form of our Brother Alburtus prostrate in the snow.

Then as I rushed to him and lifted his head on my arm I saw the blood rushing freely from a long cut directly across his brow so that I might have thought the scar he so long carried had been opened by the force of some fall. I could see too, he had not been hurt long, for the blood flowed too freely for that. With the pity and horror in my heart was also a strong feeling of guilt that we had so carelessly let our brother leave us without following and protecting him in his aimless wanderings.

When first I lifted up his head I saw that he was unconscious, but I wiped away the blood as best I could and bound the ugly wound with pieces from my cloak, and then rubbed his face with snow. After a long while he opened his eyes and looked at me wonderingly.

"'Tis thy Brother Jabez," I said gently; but he only looked at me with meaningless gaze, his hands lying so still and helpless it would have rejoiced me to see him rub them together as of old.

Again I spake to him, "Dost not know me, Brother Alburtus?" But still he seemed not to regard my words, and leaving him for a brief space, fearing his lying in the snow would be his death even if the wound would not, I brake from

the trees and bushes about me armful after armful of twigs and branches making a bed of them on the southern side of the rock where he would be sheltered from the cold winds and we could catch the warmth of the sun shining down through the trees. Then I dragged him tenderly upon his rough bed making him as comfortable as I could, rubbing his hands to warm them and then putting them within his cloak so they might not freeze, during all of which he seemed not to pay the slightest attention to me.

After a long wait he tried to lift his head, and I said to him, "Art feeling better, Brother Alburtus?" whereat he looked at me in great wonderment and said weakly, "Dost not know me, Thomas? Where am I? What is wrong with my head?"

"He mistaketh me for our Brother Thomas," thought I, and so I said smiling to him, "Nay, 'tis Brother Jabez; thou hast wandered from our Kloster and hast fallen from this high rock, Brother Alburtus."

But he only glared at me as he replied in such weak anger that my heart smote me, "Why dost thou torment me so, Thomas? Thou knowest I am David Seymour, thy own brother!"

"What meaneth he?" thought I to myself; "surely his hurt hath taken his mind from him so he knoweth not he is Brother Alburtus." Think-

ing it best to humor him I spake gently, "Yes, 'tis thy brother; what aileth thee?" To which he answered feebly, "The tree hath fallen on my head; take me to the cabin to 'Lisbeth and the baby."

"Surely," thought I, "we know not what we say when the mind is wrong," but still thinking it better to humor him I merely said, "Yea, as soon as help cometh we shall carry thee to them," whereat he smiled gratefully and lay back more contentedly.

But though I sat and shivered by the side of our brother for hour after hour, sheltering him from the cold with my cloak, I could see as the afternoon wore on, and his sighing and groaning grew fainter and weaker, that his days were numbered, and so with the sun's setting behind the hills to the other side of the valley, there was opened for our brother's coming, not the door of his humble cabin but instead the ever-shining gates of those mansions beyond the skies He hath prepared for his well-beloved children.

But now that the spirit of our brother had left its earthly prison house, I stood for a few moments and prayed earnestly that his soul might see clearly that which on earth had been shown darkly as through a glass, to our bewildered brother.

Then it came to me like a great shock, what was to be done with his body? At first, it seemed to me I could not let it lie in these cold, dreary

mountains. And yet I could not unaided bear him to the Kloster. Neither was I certain I could find my way back on the morrow with the Brethren, for these hills were utterly strange to me. And yet, for such was my faith, though it may seem harsh to some, why could he not rest here as well as anywhere else? The imperishable, immortal soul had gone to its Maker ; that which remained was merely the earthly shell that would mix with the elements, no matter where buried.

Much against my will I finally persuaded myself I must leave him in this wild, lonely spot. But I could not leave him exposed to the winds and the rain and the beasts of the woods, and yet I had nothing to dig up the hard frozen ground to make him a grave. And then just as I was about to give up in despair thinking I could do no better than cover him with brush, I saw a short distance farther up the mountain two long rocks, meeting at one end, but spread out at the other like a sharp angle, the opening toward me. Like a flash it came to me I could enrich these rough rocks by using them as a resting-place for Brother Alburtus.

I hastened up the hill and swept and scraped the snow out from between the rocks, making a bed of twigs on the hard earth. But it was no light task getting the great form of our brother up that steep slope, and more than once it seemed I must give up. But at last I did get him lying

snugly between the two huge stones. Then I made a roof over him by laying heavy branches across the rocks, on top of the branches placing such heavy stones as I could loosen from the hard ground. In this manner I also closed up the end of my brother's death *Kammer*, and to help me find the spot, should I have call to revisit it, I rolled a large stone at the upper end of the little vault, and after a last prayer for the soul of our sainted brother, I left, sad at heart, but rejoicing I had been able to do these last honors for our dead.

It was dark when I started down the mountains and so rough and slippery was the way I had many a fall ere I reached the foot ; but the longest and most toilsome way hath nevertheless an end, and though the night was well on when I reached my cell, I arrived none the less, safe and sound, only that our brethren were greatly alarmed at my absence, fearing I too had been captured by the Indians.

At the midnight meeting I recounted to my brethren the doings of the day, the death of Brother Alburtus, but not saying anything of his last words, requesting rather consideration as to what should be done with his body. As the greater part of us thought nothing could be done while the way was so rough and slippery with rocks and snow, we decided to let our brother rest for the time at least in his strange grave ; but we held special services



in his memory and in his cell we hung, as was our custom, a tablet, on which were inscribed in beautiful letters by the Sisterhood the words :

“Blessed in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

## CHAPTER XXII

### SONNLEIN TAKETH THE ORDEAL

There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio.

—*Shakespeare.*



VER a month had passed away since the death of our Brother Alburtus and his lonely burial far up in the mountain. My brethren, though at first of a mind to bring him to our little graveyard in the meadow, at last reluctantly came to my way of thinking that he should be left to rest undisturbed where I had laid him.

Often as the days came and went I wondered what Sonnlein would say when he returned, to find his dear Brother Alburtus gone. Oftener still in those dreary days I would ponder and puzzle over the dying words of our brother. I could understand how by the great shock of his fall he

did not know me, for I had seen more than once what a misty veil cometh over the sight of the dying so that they know not at all even their most beloved ones. But what I could not solve was why he called himself by a name I had never heard before. Was David Seymour his own, right name or the name of some friend of earlier days, and did our brother in his last moments imagine himself that other one? And 'Lisbeth and the baby, were these wife and child, or merely long-buried memories of acquaintances revived in the very shadow of death? With all my pondering and puzzling I could not solve the matter, and gradually it left me, though never wholly cast aside.

Indeed, with the wandering away of our Brother Alburtus and his dying up in those lonely mountains, and the loss of our Genoveva and my boy, my cup of woe was well-nigh running over. The winter was now on the wane, almost three months having elapsed since Sister Genoveva and Sonnenlein had gone, and still we knew no more than when they left us; for though our justice kept me and our little Kloster in most affectionate remembrance, I receiving many letters from him in all his great work and responsibility, yet he had nothing to tell us other than not to lose faith and courage; and for this we loved him, even though he gave us no knowledge of our lost ones.

But surely it is cowardly and ungrateful in man

or woman to complain because the infinite Father doth not always explain to our narrow, little minds why and wherefore he doeth this or that, for I have ever found that if one will but possess his soul in patience and cease repining and keep on doing his work all will come out right in the end.

So on a beautiful moonlight night, after I had retired to my *Kammer*, shortly after the midnight services and had fallen into my usual sound sleep, I felt, or at first dreamt I felt, a shaking of my arm ; but as I was about to turn over in my drowsy state, I received another shake of the arm, this time so decided I no longer doubted I was awake. As I sat up more frightened than I care to tell, I saw bending over me a form—surely it could not be ! but then as I heard my boy call me, "*Vaterchen*," with such sadness and despair and weariness in his voice as I thought would make my heart burst with very pity for him, I clasped him in my arms and kissed him and wept over him as some mother over a long-lost child. Such a simpleton was I, as all will agree, and yet I doubt not I should do the same thing over again were there similar occasion for it.

I know not to this day whether or not my boy wept, but his voice was soft and gentle as a woman's as he said to me, "I could not wait till morning."

"If thou hadst let me sleep till morning and

not know of thy coming I would never have forgiven thee," I assured him joyfully, holding him by the arms. And then I turned toward the door of my *Kammer*, and was opening it when he said, "Where art going? Surely thou'rt not tired of me so soon?"

"Nay, to tell our leader and the Brothers and Sisters of thy return. It were selfish to keep all this great joy to myself," and again I turned toward the door, first lighting my fat lamp; but then as the flame grew up I saw my boy was so faint and weak he would have fallen to the floor had I not caught him to me and helped him to my bench, making him as easy as our hard life would allow.

And surely I was well repaid for what I had suffered in all these months; for as I lay down on the floor of my cell—not finding it to my liking to let him go to his own—he whispered tenderly before he dropped off to sleep, "Thou'rt the same old *Vaterchen*;" and this praise, with my poor weakness for kind words, I held snug and warm in my heart for many a year.

Thus we both slept long into the morning, only for once in my life I slept not so soundly; for I could hear that Sonnlein was tossing and murmuring in his sleep, contrary to his former habit, for like me he had always been good at sleeping.

With the bright light of the morning I saw plainly now what his voice and bearing had told

me but faintly in the night ; for as he lay asleep, stirring often uneasily I could see that he was but a mere skeleton, his face gaunt and haggard, with great hollows under the deep set eyes, and the beard he had let grow was tangled and unkempt. A sudden fear clutched my heart that he had come home but to die.

But truly the healing powers God hath placed in these bodies of ours are wonderful things to set us straight if they be given a chance to work in peace and quiet ; for though I must spread the joyful news of Sonnlein's return to our leader and all the Brethren, not forgetting the Sisters, who were of a mind to make a great hero of my boy, and though the Brethren passed my cell more quietly than ever often during the day, not one with all the desire to give him greeting would disturb his rest ; for he slept on until evening, not even waking ere then to take the lamb's broth our prioress had prepared for him.

But early in the night he sat up, and said, "Such a sleep have I not had for many a day."

"Art not hungry?" I asked anxiously, "shall I not warm this lamb's broth Mutter Maria hath made for thee?"

"Blessings on our good Mutter Maria!" he cried out with some return of his old, fun-loving spirit, "but if thou lovest me," he said, as he gulped down greedily the broth—and I dislike

hasty feeding—"bring me the lamb itself, for I am hungry as a wolf."

And, indeed, when I did coax our good prioress to give me such a load of things as she declared was not safe to give him, it did seem to me as though I had food enough for ten men; but he merely smiled when I cautioned him against eating all this stuff, and in less time than I can tell it he had actually eaten up everything so clean not a crumb was left, so that I had not been surprised had he lifted the dishes to his face and licked them off, as he had often done in his childhood.

Thus for a few days I made him take abundance of rest and sleep, and between the Sisters and me he suffered not for food, but I refrained from asking anything of his absence, thinking it better to wait until he were more himself again.

But one evening, as we were sitting in my *Kammer*, about a week after his return, neither of us saying a word for a long while—for with all his lively nature he was never so garrulous as I—not being able to curb my curiosity longer, I finally asked him, "What hast thou learned of our Sister Genoveva?"

"Nothing," he replied sadly, "though I have sought everywhere for her."

"Hast been among the Indians?"

"Yea, and more than one of the French devils hath gone to his long home," he replied savagely.

"Hast been among the Conestogas?" these being a peaceful Indian tribe living in a little town or village not many miles beyond Lancaster, toward the Susquehanna.

"I went there straight on leaving thee, for that way pointed the footprints."

"Could the Conestogas tell thee nothing?"

"Nay, could not or would not—I know not which—though a half-witted one whispered to me when he thought none could hear, that he knew where the white sister was; but on pressing him for fuller knowledge he merely pointed back toward the northeast, whence I had come, saying, 'Up, high, with old woman,' but I paid no great heed to him, for he was not right in his head."

"That night what didst thou make of the footprints?"

"One was Genoveva's, that was plain to be seen; the largest, an Indian warrior's; the third, a squaw's or young Indian lad's, I have never made up my mind which," and then he said nothing more for a long while, but at last he looked at me suddenly, saying as though much puzzled, "Would that I knew what the half-witted one meant; it hath been with me day and night lately, so that I had no other will in me than to come back, for it is in my mind that Genoveva, if she be still alive, is not far away." After a bit he looked up at me as though he were ashamed to ask, "Dost believe,



*Vaterchen*, that if she be nigh her spirit hath called me back ? ”

To which I could only say, “ I know not, though there be among us who claim they have had such communication, both with the living and the dead.”

And then in all the simpleness of a boy he asked, “ Dost think our sister was caught up into the heavens like Elijah ? ”

Ere I knew what I was saying I replied with some heat, for his question seemed like blasphemy to me, “ Nay, nay, Elijah was a saint ! ”

“ Dost mean Genoveva was not good enough to be taken up like old Elijah ? ” he cried out angrily at me, as he had never yet spoken to me.

“ Quietly, my *Sonnlein*, quietly ; my reply meant not that I think not highly of our sister ; but though we have holy writ that Elijah was translated, yet there have been, as thou knowest, many good men and women since that time who have had to go to heaven by way of the gates of death. I do not think our Genoveva was taken up to heaven, and in this I mean no disrespect.”

But he heeded not the gentle reproof in my voice, and after a while he asked, “ Dost believe in the state of innocence taught by Brother Onesimus and his brethren while they were with us, and of whom thou hast told me so often ? ”

“ Nay, I ne’er had much faith in their heathenish practices,” I replied shortly.

Still he persisted, "They who pass through the ordeal of purification come forth with limitless vision and with mental powers unbounded."

"Who hath infected thee with this disease?" I asked crossly.

"I remember now that the day before Genoveva was taken from us Brother Benno, who was one of the thirteen that took the ordeal—and thou hast said thyself he was of the number—told me that since he had been purified he had often spoken to the spirit of his dead mother, and hath from here even seen his brother, who liveth in the *Vaterland*."

"Brother Benno is an exceedingly pious man," was all I could say.

"Dost not believe he speaketh the truth?"

"To the contrary I should be the last to doubt his word; but in my short stay on earth I have heard pious men and women tell of things which to my thick understanding were not possible. It never seemed to me that man or woman could in the short space of forty days attain to physical and spiritual perfection. What I have seen of my fellow-man compelleth me to hold that even the longest lifetime is much too short for the making of ourselves in any wise so much as near perfect."

But he only replied slowly, as if not convinced, "Still Brother Benno may be right; at least it can do no harm to try."

"Try what?" I said very quietly to hide my dread his remark had put in me.

"The ordeal. I have tried everything else. This one thing remains for me to do."

To which I made stern answer, "All this nonsense cometh from the Evil One; thou art tired, discouraged, worn out in body and spirit. Rest for a few days, and with new strength and courage thou wilt have no inclination for such foolishness."

To which he made no reply, but I could see his mind was, with all his love for me, set on going through this pernicious thing. And that it may be known why I dreaded this ordeal, which I hoped after the Eckerlings left us would never be undergone again by any of us, I shall set forth the manner in which the neophyte sought first physical regeneration, in order that he might be properly prepared for moral regeneration, and thus attain perfection.

This was the way of it: the seeker for perfection must with a single attendant retire to a hut or cave in the forest on the night of the full moon in the month of May, and for forty days live thus secluded in fasting and prayer. No drink was allowed other than rain water which had fallen during the month of May. This and dry bread crusts were all the nourishment the neophyte could have. After being weakened by such rigid fasting for sixteen days, on the following day the re-

cluse, that his physical nature might be further subjugated, had several ounces of blood taken from him, after which certain white drops were administered, though what their composition I never cared to know, only it was not poisonous, and for this remnant of good sense I give cheerfully to the originators of this iniquitous ordeal their proper dues.

Six drops of this elixir, which was prepared only by adepts, were taken at night and a like quantity mornings, the dose being increased by two drops a day until the thirty-second day when some more blood was drawn upon the rising of the sun, the seeker for perfection then retiring to his couch to remain there until the completion of the forty days.

At sunrise of the following day, being the thirty-third, the first grain of *materia prima* was to be taken, this being the universal and invisible principle out of which God made all things and which he had created to confer immortality upon man when first made in paradise, but which substance, by reason of man's fall, was lost to the race, only to be thereafter obtained by favor of such adepts as were within the highest circles of the Rosicrucian brotherhood.

My hope is that they who may care to read this tale will have more patience in the reading of this Rosicrucian folly than I have had in the writing

of it ; for surely, whenever I think of this worst of all wickedness inflicted on us by the Eckerlings, it requireth all the Kloster restraint and moderation to keep me from strong and strange words.

But spiteful words seldom cure things, so I shall tell of this *materia prima* ; for such was its power that the moment the neophyte took it he lost all speech and recollection. Three hours later convulsions and heavy transudation set in. After these subsided, the serving Brother changed the couch and a broth made from lean beef and sundry herbs was given. On the next day another grain of the *materia prima* was taken, in a cup of this broth, after which in addition to the convulsions and transudations a delirious fever would set in, which ended with a complete loss or shedding of the skin, hair, and teeth of the subject.

On the thirty-fifth day a bath of a certain temperature was given the neophyte and on the following day the third and last grain of the *materia prima* was taken in a cup of precious wine, after which the seeker fell into a gentle, undisturbed sleep, during which a new skin appeared, and also the hair and teeth shed two days before were miraculously renewed. On his awakening he was placed in an aromatic herb bath.

On the thirty-eighth day of the ordeal an ordinary water bath in which saltpeter had been dissolved was taken, the votary then resuming his

habit and exercising his limbs, and on the following day ten drops of the elixir of life, or "grand-master's elixir" or "balsam" were administered in two large spoonfuls of red wine.

The fortieth day ended the period of perfection, and the votary being now restored to the state of innocence man had before the fall, left his hut or cell with the power to lengthen his earthly existence to the limit of five thousand five hundred and fifty-seven years, in perfect health and contentment.

After this came the forty days moral regeneration, which if successfully passed, gave the seeker power to communicate with the spirit world.

Small wonder that I was strongly set against this perilous and utterly foolish thing. But I found the next day Sonnlein was stubbornly resolved he would undergo it; and though I had great comfort in the thought that it wanted some months ere May were here, yet, even this solace was quickly denied me, as he declared his intention of suffering the purification at once. To this even our poor, benighted Brother Benno objected, for he held that the slightest deviation from the prescribed particulars of the process would render the whole without avail.

But as Sonnlein declared he would go off in the woods and take the ordeal himself—and I knew in his sicklied state he would do so—Brother Benno and I finally compromised with the stubborn

youth by going to "Ararat," the second floor of Zion, where Sonnlein took one of the thirteen cells for himself while Brother Benno and I each took an adjoining cell.

Here in this deserted old chapter house, relic of the pride and folly of the poor Eckerlings, we lived all alone for almost a week, and never in my life was week longer ; for though Brother Benno and I attended all the services, yet the solicitude of the Brothers and Sisters was such—they believing that we had moved Sonnlein to the hill for purer air in his illness—that Brother Benno and I were not permitted to do any of our usual work.

This, indeed, suited our purpose most opportunely, for Brother Benno desired to keep constant watch over the treatment, while I was resolved to keep strict watch over my boy's safety.

Thus the first day, the second, and the third and even the fourth, and the fifth day passed, during all of which I was not permitted once to see my boy. Nor did I even hear anything, for Brother Benno and Sonnlein dared not so much as exchange a word. Only that on every opportunity I would seek Brother Benno and in a whisper, so my boy could not hear, would I get report of him, Brother Benno invariably saying Sonnlein was a most obedient votary and that he was in good health, though weak. Thus I allowed myself to become a sharer in this wicked thing.

But on the night of the fifth day, after coming from our midnight devotions, Brother Benno having given me his usual favorable report, I sought repose in my cell, though it seemed as I lay awake for a long time I could hear Sonnlein turning uneasily in his cell and murmuring continually in a great fever. Then for a long while all was quiet only that I thought I could hear him breathing heavily in his sleep. Reassured by this I dropped off into a heavy sleep, for in my anxiety I had kept vigil in my *Kammer* almost every night. It seemed to me I had not slept long, but I know now I slept almost until daybreak, when in my sleeping I heard a rumbling like thunder and then as a flash of lightning illumined my narrow cell, followed closely by a crash of thunder—for such storms have we at times even in winter—I jumped up fully awake and shaking like a leaf, though I never feared much the noise of thunder. And then without knowing what I was doing and heedless of Brother Benno's injunctions, I rushed into Sonnlein's cell, my heart almost standing still as I noted in all the darkness that he was gone!

I rushed madly for Brother Benno's cell, but my agitated steps had roused him from his slumber, and as I met him in the corridor I clutched him so that he shrank from me in fear as I howled at him, "Sonnlein, my boy, where is he?" and then ere my startled brother could reply I heard from



down the meadows, mingling with the crashing and rumbling of the thunder Sonnlein's voice crying out again and again, "Genoveva! Genoveva!"

I know not how I got out of Zion or whether or not Brother Benno was following as I darted down the hill for the Cocalico, once in a flash of lightning imagining I saw my boy plunge into the creek for the other side. But though I ran to the spot in all the darkness and the storm and though I rushed wildly through the stream, and into the woods on the farther side, all the while crying out his name, I had no reply, and at last feeling now as though I had indeed more than I could bear, I returned half-dazed to my cell in Bethania, not wishing ever again to set foot in that house of evil on the hill.

Brother Benno informed all the Brothers and the Sisters that Sonnlein had wandered away in his sickness and though everybody in the Kloster and also the good neighbors sought most earnestly and lovingly, even wading the icy creek for him, thinking most likely he had been drowned, naught of anything was found of my boy.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### A MIDNIGHT VISIT

In the meantime the wants of the body are also to be restrained and attention given so that the voice become angelic, heavenly, pure, and clear, and not strong and harsh, by a coarseness of food, and consequently prove valueless. But to gain the right tone, so that no unseemingly harsh screeching and creaking be heard in place of the proper melody.

—*Brother Beissel.*



SURELY God's ways for setting things right are not the ways of man's narrow wisdom! How often doth he take the lowly, simple, and even hideous things of earth to confuse the lofty and the wise whose faith and love have been weakened with much learning.

A number of weeks had gone by since Sonnlein had been swallowed up in the wilds, for in truth he could not have left less trace of himself than if the earth had opened up and engulfed him; but finally the mystery was solved, and if I come

slowly to the mark I humbly ask the forgiveness of all those who are not inclined to wait patiently for an old man's laggard step. Thus it came about. From the very founding of our Kloster we paid great attention to music, especially singing, and I would that I had time and space to write fully about the system of music invented by our leader, with the assistance of one of our house-fathers, Ludwig Blum, who was a master singer and also versed in composition.

But as we had been careful in everything else to conform as little as possible to the spirit of the world, instead shaping ourselves in everything to the heavenly spirit, so also it was in respect to singing. As hath been said, "*Musicam divini quid spirare*," if she sounds out the praises of the Most High, for which purpose she is solely calculated; so that we like not to see her noble character abused by theatrical diversions and her heavenly sweetness marred by their curled compositions; for it is well known they sometimes dwell two minutes on one syllable which is nothing else than a great nonsense. We also held it to be a great mistake to join all sorts of instruments with vocal music, without consideration, thereby eclipsing the dignity of the human voice; for the human voice is a most noble instrument, by which man may reveal his most intimate recesses; for when God made himself known in his created work he spake

the word, "Let there be light," and surely it was far more sublime than if it had been announced with a flourish of braying instruments.

For this reason we at Ephrata did not concern ourselves greatly about instrumental music, though indeed, when our superintendent prepared our system of music he knew very little except some notes which he had learned on the violin; but such was our leader's genius and his independence of spirit and energy that instead of borrowing anything from the so-called masters he took his style from the music of nature, our singing, in a word, being an imitation of the Æolian harp. Naturally, 'twas a style very peculiar, as the worldly minded regard things, in concords and execution, the tones issuing from the choir like very soft instrumental music and carrying such a sweetness and softness and spirit of devotion as seemed almost superhuman to the listener.

To carry out this idea of the Æolian harp, the music was set in two, four, five, and sometimes even seven parts. All these, save the bass, which was set in two parts, high and low, were led and sung exclusively by the females, the men's voices resembling the deep tones of the organ and in combination with one of the female parts producing a contrast which was an excellent imitation of the hautboy.

And in the perfection of this heavenly art we

spent much time and labor, for we felt that we were no greater than the angels, who themselves when they sang at the birth of Christ had to make use of such rules as we employed ; and for that we held music was truly an angelic art our leader gave us very many rules, especially as to our diet, for the refining of our voices. The Brothers and Sisters being formed into different singing classes, were each put upon a distinct diet with the intention so to affect the vocal cords and mold them that they would give forth the required pitch assigned to each class.

Thus the diet for the bass singers was entirely different from that of the tenors, while the second bass and the baritone varied as greatly as that selected for the soprano and the alto, and it being absolutely necessary to know what sorts of foods quicken the spirit and make the voice subtle and thin and to the contrary make the voice coarse and sluggish and heavy, our leader took great care that all those selected to sing should abstain from the use of foods which in great injustice man is accustomed to take from the animals, such as milk, which causeth one heaviness and uneasiness ; and cheese which maketh one fiery and hot-brained ; and butter, which maketh one so lazy and stolid one desires neither to sing nor pray ; and eggs, which awaken various and evil desires ; and even honey was forbidden, for as our brother held that

though this sweet essence of the flowers causeth light eyes and a cheerful spirit, it maketh the voice not clear.

Even among the vegetables we had not free scope, for beans came under the ban as being too weighty a food and making one heavy in spirit ; but above all things our leader held that the spirit of this art since it is of such virgin purity can suffer no love between man and woman ; for love in young hearts inflames them so exceedingly as to make the sufferers entirely unfit in mind and heart and voice and spirit. And, indeed, to this extent I agree fully with our leader, that people in love are not only useless for music but for almost everything else.

As to drink, our brother taught it had been settled long ago that in the straight path there is naught hath greater righteousness than the innocent, pure water just as it comes from the well, or made into soup to which a little bread was added. Otherwise, all cookery whereby water is deprived of its beneficent nature and changed by unseemingly art into a sort of delicacy our leader ever regarded as sinful, an abomination of abominations.

After our leader had assumed the rôle of *Capellmeister*, singing schools were held upon certain evenings in the Sister House, the sessions lasting four hours, during the third, fourth, and fifth, and sixth hours, corresponding in wordly time from

eight o'clock to midnight ; and so on this night, the brethren being in snow-white garments, which our ruler insisted upon as representing the necessary purity of heart and mind, he himself strictly adhering to this, met us as usual at the low doorway of Bethania and led us in long procession to the Sister *Saal*, the Sisters proceeding thither from Saron in the same manner, led by the prioress. The Brethren as usual took their places, being divided in their respective classes about their proper tables on the floor of the *Saal* while the Sisters took the places set apart for them behind the latticed galleries above.

It was seldom we sang through an entire session of these evening schools that some brother or sister did not receive a severe scolding from our leader ; for he ruled these classes with an iron hand, so that often there were bitterest dissensions where all should have been peace ; for at the slightest sign of levity or frivolity there would descend upon the offender such an avalanche of rebukes and scoldings as were, indeed, hard to bear even by the meekest of us.

This night was no exception, for though we sang our hymns one after the other in the utmost peace and order until after the fifth hour (eleven o'clock), suddenly the storm came, for our sisters Keturah and Priscam, being so busily engaged in some, I doubt not, trivial talk, noted not as another hymn

had been taken up and was passing around the hall from one class to the other, that their response had come, and forgot utterly to sing, so that we all were fairly amazed, and sat with bowed heads for the blast we knew would sweep over us ; and instantly it came, so fiercely that if one had not known our leader it might have been thought he were a man of the most violent and unchecked passions.

I had often heard him scold, and, indeed, had more than once felt the force of his temper in that I had never much voice for singing, and more than once was I rebuked for singing out of tune, which to our leader was as great an hurt as if one had stuck him with a sword, but this night so outrageous was the affront our poor sisters had given him he fairly seemed beside himself with righteous rage, so that, looking up at him out of the corner of my eye, his figure with all its insignificance of size seemed truly majestic.

I know not how long we had been compelled to sit there shivering and cowering like disobedient children, when suddenly we heard a voice, to me familiar enough, from the rear of the hall near the doorway, cry out half-sneering, half-snarling, "Thou fool !" Then as we all turned about, frightened almost beyond the telling by this unearthly voice, we saw crouching in the dark shadows about the doorway the form of her whom, though unknown



to the rest, I knew well to be my old enemy, the witch; but from the terrified Sisters huddled together in the galleries and from the awe-struck Brothers below not a hand or voice was lifted against the apparition, even our fiery little leader for the once forgetting his anger and his fearlessness, making the sign of the cross on his breast as he shrank back from the menacing shape at the other end of the *Saal*.

For what seemed an age she stood there glaring at us. Then she straightened up straighter than I had ever seen her, and there was in her voice such unusual sadness and dignity and lack of hate I greatly marveled as she cried out, even pityingly, "Ye poor fools, to fear him," pointing her long finger at our leader, and then, breaking out more fiercely, she snarled, "How many homes have been destroyed by his false teachings! Oh, thou needst not threaten me, a poor, weak, crazy woman, thou brave giant!" she sneered at me as I started forward with menacing mien.

"What dost thou here?" and then a sudden thought flashed through me, our leader and all the brothers and sisters marveling greatly at this show of spirit in their meek Brother Jabez as I cried out boldly, "What hast done with our sister, thou she-devil?"

And then she forgot all her brief softness as she screeched back at us, "Ye fools, now ye know

what it is to have one stolen from ye," and then she snarled defiantly, "Come and get your sister if ye can, ye women-men!" and with this she rushed out of the doorway, leaving us utterly bereft of our wits.

But then I leaped for the doorway, our leader crying out, "Hold him; the witch will kill him!" but I shook off savagely the hands of the Brothers trying with great love of me to hold me back from pursuing the grisly shape, for now I was on fire with the resolve to follow and learn once for all where this being held herself and who she was.

Although the early part of the night had been dark, I saw as I burst out of the doorway that the moon had come up, making the Kloster grounds as bright as day, so that I had no difficulty in seeing the fleeing figure skirting the foot of Mount Sinai and speeding down the meadows along the Cocalico. I doubt not I could have quickly overtaken her, but such was not my purpose. I had but one thought now and that was to follow her to her retreat, and, having this in view, I rejoiced that the moonlight showed plainly the form of the witch. But the moonlight, if a help in this way, was a hindrance in that if she looked back she could not but see me even though I took advantage of the shadows of every bush and tree.

Somehow I was not at all surprised that she followed the course of the creek to the very spot

where Sonnlein and I had crossed that night ; but surely she would not attempt to pass over on the thin ice that still lingered on the pool ending at that stony beach where the swift stream had weeks ago worn away its icy covering ! And yet so feather light did she skim over the thin, treacherous surface, and with such gliding, ghostlike ease, I was almost minded to give up the chase, fearing, though I had never believed such vulgar tales, she might fly away on a broomstick, or through some other hocus-pocus elude me and I make all my desperate endeavor for naught. And for all I knew she might, if pressed too hard, turn on me and change me into some vile beast, for I had heard of such things.

But not for long did I hesitate by reason of these childish fears. There was no turning back now, come what might. I placed one of my heavy feet delicately on the thin ice, and, then bearing on it my weight more heavily, I went through to my knees, almost falling full length into the pool, for the ice would not begin to hold my great weight.

There was but one way left, and, fearing I would lose sight of her did I pause longer, I dashed into the swift current below the pool with such hot-headed recklessness that ere I knew it and with all my slipping and stumbling I was safely on the other side, and though I wasted no time then in idle philosophizing, which hath ever been a weak-

ness of mine, I have often thought since and have come to the conclusion that there be times when one loseth all by dilly-dallying.

As I shook the water off me like some big dog I plunged into the brush with the same recklessness I had crossed the creek, though now my wet garments by their weight and their clinging about my legs impeded my progress almost beyond endurance; but as I stood panting and almost choking for breath I saw at no great distance ahead in a little, moonlit glade, mine enemy, still not looking back, so that I felt relieved to know she had not yet seen me.

On and on we went in this manner, she seemingly without effort, while I stumbled and fell repeatedly over rocks and gullies and fallen trees, yet beyond being severely shaken and bruised I received no great hurts. Of a sudden, as we reached the foot of the mountain she changed her way, hitherto toward the southwest, abruptly to the southeast, almost at the same spot I had come on the footprints of Brother Alburtus that sad day. She too, now as I continually kept nigh enough to catch sight of her among the bushes and trees, followed that same winding way up the mountain side, higher and higher. Once she turned half about and stood still as though listening carefully, and ere I could hide behind a tree I thought she saw me, but if so she gave no sign by hastening

her flight, if flight it could be called, for she appeared in no great hurry. But now and then she would turn sharply about and stand still for a moment as if listening, and always when I was in plain view.

We had now come nigh to the very spot where I found Brother Alburtus dying in the snow. Farther up the mountain I could see plainly his rocky tomb, and then, though I had glanced but a moment aside from my pursuit, she had completely vanished. I looked about me in every direction, but I could see naught of her, nor could I as much as hear the faintest sound. And then as suddenly as though it had come out of the earth, I saw on the top of that great rock whence our brother had fallen such a sight as for a moment almost benumbed me with fear; for there standing out clear in the bright moonlight was the tall figure of some dark being, so that my first overpowering fear was the witch had suddenly changed her human shape into that of the Evil One.

For a few moments I stood almost powerless with fear, the forbidding shape on the rock being also absolutely motionless, with its front toward me; and then, so that I have often wondered what it was gave me such unusual boldness, I felt a sudden strength take hold of me and such a courage as feared naught, as I cried out fiercely, "Be thou Belial himself, or the son of Belial, I shall fight

thee!" and with that I tore from its earthly fastening a young sapling most like my wrist, and having twisted off the top I advanced threateningly with my club, at which the figure on the rock gave a most unearthly screech or howl, such as for a brief moment chilled my resolution; but on again I went, yelling back, "Thou mayest spit and snarl all thou hast a mind to, thou foul one!" as I crossed my breast, knowing that the Evil One ever feareth the sign of the cross.

Suddenly I saw the right arm of the dread figure draw back, and like a flash something came hurling at me that would have dashed out my brains had it not been that He who doth watch over his own had placed between me and my foe a small branch, light and trifling almost as air, and yet great enough in his hands to turn aside the missile, so that instead of catching me fair on my brow, it barely escaped the side of my head.

Tearing my cloak from me and tossing it and my club aside, I dashed ahead, and ere my foe knew it I was on the rock, and we were in each others' arms struggling with all our might to hurl the other down, and if ever I needed the great strength that so often in my life I had been foolishly ashamed of as being unworthy of my calling I needed it now; for whatever my antagonist was I speedily found it flesh and blood like myself; for that he was not burdened with much clothes as

was I, my hold often slipped from his greasy body as we rolled over and over, now I on top and then he, each grasping for the other's throat or trying to trip or throw the other down from the rock.

Surely my only salvation now was that in spite of my great love of books, yet have I ever loved the open air, and in my Kloster life was never afraid of my share of hard, daily toil, so that e'en now I felt that my foe, with all his strength and quickness, had not an easy task cut out for him. Finally I wrenched myself from his hold, and then, both breathing so hard it was no great difficulty to know we were in deadly earnest, we stood apart glaring at each other and waiting for returning strength to renew our fighting.

All the while I kept my eye closely on him, prepared for any sudden spring or trick that my sly foe might try on me, and now as we stood there scowling at each other I saw plainly if it were the Evil One he had assumed the form of an Indian. Neither of us said a word, but all at once I saw my dark antagonist draw himself together and like a stone from a catapult hurl himself at me ; but that which was meant to overpower me by its suddenness proved my enemy's undoing, for—and I believe to this day Providence was with me—an old trick came back to me I had learned in my student days in the gymnasium, but of which I had no thought it still were within me.

And thus it was as my foe came flying upon me, I suddenly dropped on one knee, and ere he knew what I was about, I had caught him with both hands fairly under his middle, and then with all my power and strength gave such a mighty upward heave as with his own impulse threw him back over me so that he landed clean on the other side of the rock, where I heard him fall with a tremendous crash. And then, so savage is the human heart, I rushed to the edge of the rock eagerly hoping I had killed him outright. And, indeed, there he lay still enough, so that I knew whoever my foe had been, it had not been the evil one, for surely no mere man could kill Beelzebub.

As my breath and strength returned to me, though for a long time I was so weak in my limbs I could do little less than totter, I picked up my cloak and wrapped it about me; but with returning strength came a great horror that I had killed a human being, and unless one be of a gentle heart he knoweth naught what awful feeling possessed my soul as I thought upon my savage deed which, though I had done it in self-defense, yet seemed to me little less than murder.

For the time all thought of the witch was cast aside, my only fear being now that I had killed the Indian. I hastened to his side, and though I found him bleeding from some wound in the head, yet the violently throbbing heart told me there was life



there so that my own heart leaped up with a great joy and hope I had not killed him ; and—praises be to His name—as I knelt there anxiously waiting for return of sense to him, my red foe finally came to himself and sat up, holding his wounded head, which I had now bound up, and rubbing himself about his back and limbs so that I feared perchance these had been broken ; but to my great joy—for now I thought no more of fearing him—from sitting up, he gradually, with many gruntings and groanings, stood erect as he could in all his weakness, and then, as he seemed for the first time conscious of me, he grunted in broken English, “ Big woman-man, big chief ; me only papoose ; me go back to Conestogas and be squaw ; white chief-woman must help self,” and then before I could speak and ere my scattered wits knew what all this talk meant, he limped away down the mountain-side and was soon lost to sight.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MINE ENEMY'S HIDING-PLACE

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

—*The Bible.*



Y vanquished foe had hardly disappeared down the mountain when I recovered sufficiently from my dazed state to recall the witch, who I feared had escaped me while I was engaged in desperate conflict with the red man. No man who hath not gone through such adventures can understand what a weakness and loneliness came upon me way up there in that wild spot, with no foe to fight or witch to pursue; for surely idleness afflicts one with many foolish fears and vain imaginings.

I crawled stiffly, now that I had cooled off somewhat, to the top of the rock and looked carefully in every direction, straining my ears for any sound

of her; but I saw and heard nothing. I fairly groaned in my childish despair. It seemed to me I must find out this night the haunt of this sorceress. And then, as I jumped down from the great stone so heedlessly I almost fell, something leaped out of the dark shadow of the rock with such suddenness I shrank back trembling like a leaf; but as I saw, despite my shattered wits, the form of the witch fleeing still higher up the mountains, I rushed after her with such a vengeful whoop as startled even myself; but with all my violent efforts she gained steadily on me, for that she knew the way, dodging in and out among the trees and bushes with the greatest ease, while I stumbled and fell repeatedly bruising and tearing my hands and knees almost beyond endurance.

Yet how truly it hath been said that often victory cometh when we are ready to give up; for as I was passing a cluster of tall, gloomy looking pines only a few paces from me, I saw a white-clad figure which as I advanced cautiously toward it, suddenly rushed forward and ere I could hinder threw itself into mine arms with a cry that was nigh to weeping, "Brother Jabez!" As I recovered from my amazement and stepped back into the moonlight I could hardly believe my senses, not knowing at first whether it were another trick of the wifch; for she who lay so quietly in my protection was none other than our Sister Genoveva!

But she was not senseless as I first supposed ; for in a moment or two she stood up by herself, though trembling, and said with a great gladness, "The Lord be praised thou didst overcome thine adversary." Then with a vanity I trust King David never had, I boasted to my sister, "Didst see me fight the red man ?"

"Yea, and when thou didst throw him so mightily I feared thou hadst killed him ; for I knew thee not until I saw thee leave the rock in such hot haste after this poor creature."

"Where hath she gone ?" I asked eagerly. "I have vowed not to rest until I track her to her vile retreat, though she take me to the gates of the lost." And then our sister smiled so brightly I was hurt that she should feel thus at such a time, as she said, "Wouldst like to see her vile retreat, as thou callest it ?"

"For that and for thee I am here."

Still smiling she said more softly, and it seemed to me almost teasingly, "Art strong enough to stand a great surprise ?"

To which I replied boastfully, "After such a night of surprises can I endure anything."

With that she took me lightly by the arm and led me into the shadow of those dark pines and when in the very midst of them, I saw what appeared to me like one of the cone-shaped houses of poles covered with skins the red men are wont

to live in, only this one was larger than any I had ever seen before and so hidden by the enfolding branches of the pines that one might have passed it within a few feet even in daylight without knowing there were human habitation nigh.

"See," said Sister Genoveva, "this is the vile retreat of her whom thou callest the witch. 'Tis substantial, I assure thee; 'twill not vanish into the air."

And then, as she stepped down and lifted aside a flap that gave entrance to the structure, the moonlight shining through the opening fell full upon the form of some one lying within, seemingly asleep, just beyond the glowing embers of a bright fire that spread a soothing warmth throughout the rude dwelling. As I hung back, not knowing but that I was under some spell of the witch and that all this enchantment would be my undoing, Sister Genoveva assured me of herself by pushing me forward gently, saying, "'Tis not she whom thou hast frightened away by thy unseemly screeching," and as I still hung back for—I say it to my great shame—I feared perhaps the witch had changed herself into the form of our sister to lure me to my destruction, our sister said to me mockingly, "Surely a fighting man like thee is not afraid!" With that I stepped forward with a brave showing, for the man that can endure being called coward by woman is beyond recall.

But then as my feet sank into the soft floor—for it seemed thickly strewn with the skins of wild animals—the prostrate form moved uneasily and murmured weakly, “Genoveva,” and before she could hold me back I flung myself down beside my boy, calling to him like one crazy with joy, “Sonnlein! God be praised for his mercy!” forgetting the witch and Sister Genoveva, knowing only that in his wonderful way he had brought me back to my own again.

Best of all he knew me and though I feared the shock of my sudden coming might increase his illness he soon drove away my fears by saying, with such simple faith, and the tenderness illness often brings even to men, as made me more wickedly vain than ever, “I knew thou wouldst come.”

Much had we to say to each other after all our grievous trials, for Sonnlein would talk against all the admonishing from Sister Genoveva, and once when she insisted more firmly than before that he cease talking and go to sleep he retorted softly, slyly winking at me—though I detest winking—“Surely thou art not going to scold me ere we are married?”

“Married!” I burst forth, “much time hast had to make love if thou hast been sick since thou left us, and I doubt not thou hast been nigh to death.”

But he merely smiled more wickedly than before as he said, “When a man is too old or too

sick to make love 'tis time for him to die, and I feel not like dying, I assure thee."

So long as he had such nonsense in him I knew he was not in any critical illness. Indeed, Genoveva declared he was gaining so rapidly she knew not what to do, for that he was all the time promising she must be his wife so soon as he were well.

But finally, for with our Kloster discipline still upon us even in all these wild surroundings, in that we came slowly to what we most cared to hear, I prevailed upon our sister's modesty—for she would not have it that she had endured anything unusual—to tell me about her capture and long stay from us; but she insisted in making so light of all she had suffered and endured in body and mind that her story was over much too soon, though Sonnlein fell most ungallantly asleep ere she was half-way through, greatly tempting me to waken him with the reminder that he was the one who acted as though he and Genoveva were already married; but no doubt his illness was adequate apology; for truly no man worthy the name, so it seemeth to my inexperience, could even wish to sleep while his lady love were talking to him; though I have heard it stoutly averred that after marriage a great change cometh over the man so that he goeth to sleep whenever he feeleth like it even though his *Liebchen* be talking to him; but this I never could believe.

But it is not seemly that I, a monk, should attempt instruction in love and marriage, and therefore shall I turn to our sister's tale of her capture ; and very discreetly she said nothing about Sonnenlein's meeting her under the chestnut tree ; nor did I think it wise to refer to the matter for fear—though I never doubted her word—the temptation for falsehood would be too great ; for it hath ever seemed to me a most dreadful thing that the fair sisters, whom the Lord hath created so like unto the angels, should ever be guilty of untruth.

But here I am preaching again, as usual, so that it seemeth I shall never get to our sister's story. Yet now shall I proceed to it without further deviation. And thus it was : She was sitting under the tree but a short time after Brother Alburtus had passed her when suddenly some one from behind grasped her roughly by the arm and as she turned about, in her first thought believing it had been some jesting one stealing upon her, she looked up and saw bending over her threateningly the tall form of a red man, with an evil-looking old woman directly back of him. As our sister was about to cry for help he made such menacing motions and gestures that she knew it would be foolish to make resistance ; but instead she went with them as they led the way down Mount Sinai through the meadows, and along the creek, crossing it where Sonnenlein and I had seen the footprints.



At first their course was to the southwest from the Kloster, and in this direction they had gone for some miles, and though in the darkness that soon came upon them they went slowly through the thick woods, the captors not seeming inclined to be harsh to our sister, yet so oft did she stumble and the swinging branches strike and sting her face that she was compelled to stop for rest.

But now, though our sister understood not their speech, the red man and the old woman seemed to be disputing, the former wanting, our sister made out, to go back to the mountains, for thus he would point while the witch would shake her head and beckon to the southwest ; but at last she consented to the red man's persuasion, for suddenly they changed almost directly about, so that for a moment our sister had the cheering hope they were going to take her back to the Kloster.

This hope, however, lasted not long, for instead of returning to the Kloster her captors soon turned toward the mountains. Beyond the spiteful glances the witch would cast at our sister there seemed no inclination to injure her ; but though the way through the valley had been rough it was as naught to the unbroken path up the steep hillside in the darkness of the night, for they had no light, only that the red man went ahead as freely as though it were midday, with our sister next to him, and back of her the witch, to prevent escape.

At last they came to the great rock, from whose top a view could be had down over the valley of the Cocalico. The red man having ascended the high stone looked long and carefully in the direction of the Kloster. All at once he called the witch to him and pointed out something of great interest to both, causing Genoveva to climb upon the rock and look in the direction he was pointing. She saw now and then a light moving down from what she guessed to be Mount Sinai toward the Cocalico in the direction she and her captors had taken, and she doubted not that some one was coming to her rescue.

But though her hope was again revived it was but for a brief season, for heavy clouds had gathered after nightfall, and even while yet on the rock a few scattering drops of rain fell, so that her captors after a few moments more of careful examination of the valley proceeded up the hill and led her to this hiding-place. Hardly had they reached its shelter when the rain came down, and she knew as it came faster and faster none of us would be able to find their trail.

In this lonely spot she had been all these months with no other companion than this strange woman, who seldom spoke to our sister, but would often sit muttering to herself. Sometimes she would leave her hiding-place, and be gone for days and even weeks at a time, and had it not been

that the red man, who seemed to have a shelter somewhere nigh, had supplied Sister Genoveva with the flesh of wild animals and other food she would have starved ; for when the witch was absent our sister had thought to make her escape, but every time before she had gone far the red man would suddenly appear, and without saying a word lead her back to the hut.

Nor could she learn from him the reason of her capture and who the witch was, as he—according to the silent nature of Indians—would say nothing more than that the witch was friend to his tribe, “Conestogas,” had often taken care of them in sickness, and was regarded by his people as having wonderful powers.

Thus day after day and night after night she lived here during all the cold of winter, though snugly enough housed within the shelter of these pines, that sometimes with all her hope and faith, it seemed she must go mad ; but she never failed, no matter whether rain or snow or biting cold, to rise at the midnight hour and seek peace and comfort in praise and prayer. Often she heard the clear tones of the Kloster bell, even at this far-off height, if the wind were not in the contrary direction, and saw the cheering lights that shone out from Mount Sinai and from the wide scattered settlers’ huts throughout the valley, so that she felt not utterly alone in the world.

Then she came to that which she knew I most cared to hear, and that was how Sonnlein had come to her. And the manner of this has always seemed to me little less than miraculous, for it is beyond me to explain it otherwise. All that night that Sonnlein was with Brother Benno and me in the chapter house, our sister—the witch at that time being in her hiding-place—could find no rest. It seemed impossible for her to fall asleep. She held her usual midnight devotions from the rock looking down toward the Kloster, so that she might feel she were praying with us, and though this gave her some peace, yet when she returned again to the hut and lay down to sleep she found no rest ; but toward the morning she finally fell asleep, but only to have it filled with a strange dream ; for it seemed to her she saw Sonnlein lying on a hard couch in one of our *Kammers*, worn and wasted and suffering from some great illness, and then suddenly he arose from his couch and rushed from his cell and out of Zion down over the hill toward the Cocalico, calling her name, once, twice, a number of times, whereat she struggled to go to him but could not ! She awoke with a great start only to hear a heavy storm roaring all about her ; but though she knew she was awake she still saw, or imagined she saw, Sonnlein rush through the creek and into the woods on the other side, as though he were coming directly to her.

At first she tried to shake the matter from her mind as merely a dream, but she could not do so. Something even against her own persuading seemed to tell her that Sonnlein was seeking her, that she must go to meet him, and ere she knew what she was about she found herself outside the hut, rushing in all the storm down the mountain as fast as she could, the witch closely following.

Our sister could not tell how long or how far they had gone in this wild, headlong manner, but they were not far from the foot of the mountain, when suddenly at no great distance above them, seemingly the very way they had come, she heard a faint cry, "Genoveva!"

Not knowing whether she were bewitched or really gone mad from all these months of loneliness, she stood like one dazed; but then again, and even a third time, she heard her name as though the one calling were going farther up the mountain. The witch too heard the cry and together they hastened up the hill, but hearing no longer the calls; and in this wise they came back again to the great rock, and there, so that she could hardly believe her own eyes, it now being broad daylight, lay the figure of a man face downward as though he had fallen that way, who as they turned him about she saw was Sonnlein.

Here I interrupted our sister most foolishly by

asking, "What didst do—kiss him?" To which unmanly question she made no reply, only that I feel sure had it not been so dark in the hut, the moon having gone down, I should have seen exceedingly rich blushings on the face of our dear sister.

But she and the witch, the latter seeming to have the strength of a man (and in truth Genoveva was no weakling) carried Sonnlein into the hut, where he lay for weeks with a raging fever, and though she and the witch watched over him and nursed him, our sister despaired of his ever coming to himself again. Had it not been that the witch possessed wonderful knowledge of the herbs she gathered in the woods and made into physic for Sonnlein, our sister felt he surely would have died. But for some reason the witch became greatly devoted to Sonnlein, nursing him as tenderly as though she were his own mother, sometimes seeming jealous of our sister, so that until this night the witch had not left the hut since they had found Sonnlein lying on the rock; but gradually under the witch's care he had come to himself again, and was now quite strong and in his own mind, only that he was continually pestering our sister that she must marry him.

To this I made question, "But being a Rose of Saron thou wouldst not marry him?"

And to which she replied softly, "So have I oft told him, but he sayeth he careth naught what

I say, that he will marry me whether I have him or not, and thou hast so spoiled him all his life by letting him have his own will I fear I can do naught but let him have it in this."

I merely made reply, "May thy reward be great for sacrificing thyself so willingly to the result of my over-indulgence!" whereat she laughed so merrily, 'twas like music, for though quick to feel the soft sting in my retort she was too great-hearted a woman to be hurt at what she knew was only meant in jest.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE END OF THE WITCH

For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face.

—*New Testament.*



HUS we sat and talked until the morning light streaming through the partially opened entrance to the hut showed me more fully my boy, still sleeping soundly ; and for this we were thankful, knowing how much better than all physic is the healing power of sleep. I could see now by his thin face and wasted hands that he had been through a dangerous illness ; but his breathing was so even and there was such absence of fever, I said gratefully to Sister Genoveva, "Thou hast saved Sonnlein's life."

But she replied, blushing at my praise, "Nay, 'tis to the witch thou must give thy gratitude. She hath wonderful wisdom with the herbs she findeth in the woods."



And then for the first time in all these years, it came to me that, perhaps, I had misjudged this woman whom I held in such abhorrence. 'Tis an awful thing to think evil of an innocent person !

Suddenly I asked our sister, " How did she treat thee ? "

" At first I feared she meant me harm, for she would look at me with an evil glare as though she felt like killing me ; but the red man spake something to her whereat she seemed less sullen so that I lost fear of her."

" Thou dost not look as if thou hadst been pining away with fear," I said, smiling to our sister ; for as I glanced at her with such admiration as made her blush again, I marveled not how my boy could be so bent on having her to wife ; for I had seen him make love to her when he was in the full flush of health, and if a man when he be well can feel tenderly toward a woman, how much dearer must she be to him when she appears in the guise of a ministering angel.

Not that our sister was one of those delicate, ethereal ones whom a man must watch over like some frail flower ; for the clear, honest light of day showed fully what the deceitful moonlight had only half revealed ; the pure, healthful beauty of that graceful, rounded form and sweetly calm, noble face, so full of womanly strength and character not in the slightest dimmed or marred by

her hard life in this wilderness, far harder even than the rigorous life of our Kloster ; for though this rude hut were proof enough 'gainst wind and cold and rain, yet I could see from its meagre furnishings that she had endured more than usually falls to the lot of woman, so that it came to me, if Sonnlein were set upon marrying her, surely in all this wide world could he not find a fitter mate, in body, mind, soul, and spirit, as man and woman should be mated.

But now it came to me I must get Genoveva and Sonnlein home again, for in this dreadful war with the French and Indians, I knew not what the witch might do ; for though the Conestogas had been accounted a peace-loving tribe, yet there were many of the white settlers who charged the Conestogas with secretly assisting the French red men, and indeed, not many years after this, the Paxton boys killed a number of Conestogas in their little town.

Much against my will I was compelled to leave our sister and Sonnlein alone in this unprotected hut, while I with a great joy in my heart that made me forget my hurts and loss of sleep, tramped down the mountains, laughing to myself at the good news I should break to my admiring brothers and sisters.

I arrived at the Kloster while the morning was still young, and reported briefly to our leader of

my having found Sonnlein, saying naught yet to the Solitary of Genoveva, for I preferred to keep this as another joyous surprise, and though the Brothers and Sisters were of a mind to make much of me as one having been snatched from the very jaws of death, not doubting the witch had killed me, I finally, after each curious one had heard with more or less fullness of detail of my wonderful experience, succeeded in getting made a stout litter, and securing eight Brethren as bearers for Sonnlein.

With me proudly in advance I led my little band of God's warriors, by as unobserved a way as possible—dreading show and excitement—up the mountain to the great rock, my brethren walking in silence as usual, but I know inwardly burning with a great zeal for their loving mission.

For some moments my brethren and I stood on the great rock with its beautiful outlook over the delightful valley where lay our little Kloster, and then I told them of how I had found here our Brother Alburtus and how I had placed him in his stone grave, which I pointed out to them; nor could I keep my vanity from telling how I had overthrown my red adversary, so that Brother Hänsly looked at me with such awe I was not greatly displeased.

Then, at my bidding, my brethren followed me up the hill toward the hut, my heart now beating

hard for fear the witch and her red man had in the meantime carried our sister and my Sonnlein away again, for everything seemed so quiet and I saw no sign of Genoveva.

But as we came nigh the clustered pines, being in the lead I caught glimpses of Genoveva coming toward us, though I said not a word to my followers until we were almost upon her, who, stepping out suddenly from behind a bush almost killed my little band with fright, for to many of the Solitary she had long been held as dead.

Yet as they saw me greet her boldly, they, though still in great bewilderment, gathered about us, Brother Hänsly, slyly reaching from behind Brother Theonis, feeling her skirt to make sure she was no spirit; whereat she had him come to her much as a mother draweth to her some mischievous, beloved child, so that our diminutive brother's face reddened like a girl's.

We stood but a few minutes thus when from within the hut, so that my brothers were given another start, came a low call, "Genoveva," at which it was her turn to redden like a rose, as she said, "Thy Sonnlein hath so little patience; he surely is getting well," and as she turned to go to him we all trooped after her into the hut, almost filling it, each one greeting Sonnlein with such affection as to make my eyes wet in my foolish pride that my brethren cared so much for my boy.

And then against all his declaring he would not be carried like some great baby to the Kloster, we took a number of the skins from the hut and made a soft couch for him on the litter ; but before leaving, we went where lay our Brother Alburtus, at the relating of whose sudden taking away Sonnlein and Genoveva were much grieved. And because our brother had received such unusual burial, it seemed fitting to us ere we departed to honor his memory by singing and prayer.

Then sadly and silently, with slow and careful steps we carried Sonnlein safely to the foot of this rugged mountain. Here we rested for a short time, and then by as unobserved a way as we had come we arrived at the Kloster early in the afternoon, where we all received such joyful welcome as I shall never forget, only that there were among the Solitary some who seemed never fully able to forgive Genoveva for returning to life after they had so long maintained she had been translated like the prophets of old.

Sonnlein was at once taken to his cell adjoining mine, in Bethania, where with the nursing I gave him and with Brother Gideon's physic, not forgetting the feeding the Sisters and the housemothers, near and far, insisted he must have, it was not long ere he was up and out and so continually tagging after Genoveva that our Sisters and not a few of the Brothers must needs feel greatly scandalized.

But now I must tell of this strange woman whom I in my hasty judgment had ever thought was of the Evil One.

One day, a few months after the return of Sonnlein and Genoveva, we were thrown into the greatest alarm by the sudden appearance of a red man among us one bright spring morning. As he came across the meadow from down the Cocalico, seeing he was alone I stepped out with Sonnlein from the timid group of Brothers and Sisters to meet the intruder; but on seeing me he lost all his pride as he said meekly, "Woman chief dying up hill, want white rose and sick brother," pointing to Sonnlein, "come see her," and then he looked at me carefully and said, "Big brother come too."

Though our leader and many of the Brothers and Sisters sought to dissuade us from going with the red man, dreading it meant nothing but a scheme for taking us into captivity, Sonnlein and I, and even Genoveva, were resolved to go with the savage, for we somehow felt he told the truth.

Once again we went that long toilsome way to that far-off mountain hut, and by noon we all were standing within the rude dwelling where lay the witch dying, as we could clearly see.

At first she seemed so near the dark shore she saw us not, and then as though she noted neither the red man nor me nor Genoveva, the dying woman gazed lovingly at Sonnlein, and murmured,

“David, my David, thou hast been away so long”; and then as Sonnlein, obeying some gracious impulse, knelt down beside her she folded her feeble arms about him, holding him as though she never would let him go. Outside the birds were flitting from tree to tree, chirping merrily, as though death and sorrow never came to them; but else all was so quiet we could hear naught but the heavy breathing of this poor woman. Great tears stood in our eyes, even the red man bowing his head sadly for her whom his tribe held in such high regard.

But with all the solemnity of a soul's leaving its mortal home, my mind was fixed upon the mystery of the life of her who had always seemed to me so hideous, but who now in the refining hour of death had lost her forbidding aspect, so that I could believe that before suffering and hate had poisoned her whole being she had been a comely woman.

With such thoughts in my mind we watched over her, Sister Genoveva, with her woman's finer sensibilities, doing all she could to make the end more easy; but mine enemy—now mine enemy no more—still seemed to see only Sonnlein, caring for naught else.

Later in the afternoon she passed quietly away like a slowly expiring lamp; but just a few moments before her soul's flight, the dark veil that hung between her and the long ago was lifted

slightly as we heard her murmur to Sonnlein : "Charles, where is Charles?" and then she seemed to wait for some one's coming, but soon forgot her wish, and lay quietly, her arms slipping from Sonnlein's neck, and we knew her stormy life was over, and though we had strict views as to who could enter into the joys of the blessed, yet a fervent prayer went up from my heart that He who pitieth us as a father pitieth his children, would take her to him as one of his own.

As Sonnlein arose and looked long and earnestly at the poor handful of dust lying at his feet, I could see that he too was turning over in his mind the mystery of this old woman ; but he said nothing, and then Genoveva bent down and brushed back the tangled gray hair and folded the hands over the now quiet breast and straightened out the already stiffening form.

But the long May day was drawing to its close, and it came to us that ere we left we must make proper and respectful burial of the dead. With the suddenness of a flash of light an overpowering thought came to me that we should lay her alongside our Brother Alburtus. When I suggested this to Sonnlein and Genoveva, both, with all their sorrow, rejoiced I had thought of this, and even the Indian, when our plan was explained to him, grunted his approval by saying, "Big brother, good man."



Fortunately, though the stones were large and exceedingly heavy, yet by our combined strength and the using of pieces of wood as levers we worked the rocks far enough apart to make a resting-place for her alongside Brother Alburtus, whose mortal frame, by reason of the purity of the air and the cold in this mountain height had suffered no great change since the day of his burial.

And then having placed her whose life had been so troubled and tempestuous by the side of him whose days had been so gentle and peaceful, Sonnelein and Genoveva sang over them softly a few of our noble, heaven-inspired hymns, I following with a short prayer that this poor woman might see Him face to face, after which we closed up the top and ends of the little vault with heavy stones, knowing that at the last great day some bright-winged angel would find even this lonely sepulchre and roll away the stones.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE TWAIN ARE MADE ONE

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord.

—*The Bible.*



**H**AT a bundle of contradictions is poor human flesh! Here have I been all my life preaching the beauty and sanctity of single life, and am I not the same man who once at the command of Brother Beissel printed an argument against the Moravians for that they practised not celibacy and being called to task by our leader for the moderation of my views, I added so much salt to my polemics that Brother Beissel was greatly pleased and I doubt not our spiritual enemies completely overwhelmed?

But here am I now in my old age delighting in telling of the day when my boy and our beloved Genoveva were made one, our dear sister having

finally consented to give up her celestial Bridegroom for an earthly one.

Over a year had slipped by since the death of that poor woman, and how often I tried to solve the mystery of her life by the light of her last words, her strange devotion to Sonnlein in his illness, her clinging so to him in her last moments; and then the death of Brother Alburtus would come to me, and how he thought himself another person, calling himself David Seymour; but though my mind would continually hang over these two so that at times I thought I had caught the answer, yet I was often on further reflection compelled to confess I had not the solution of all this mystery, which I often feared would never be made clear.

And now sweet May had come again, to me ever one of the most pleasing months of the year, when the dandelions and the buttercups gleam in our meadows like stars, and the meek little violets nestle lovingly in the deep grass, while from the fields and the woods come the clear notes of the birds, mate calling unto mate with such delicious tenderness that I often wonder whether there be not a heaven for flowers and birds, and for everything He created. And yet I mean not the same heaven for all, for I like not snakes and bugs.

Indeed, 'twas either the enchanting spring days or else this getting my boy and our Genoveva

wedded that seemed to go to my head like wine ; for half the time I was flying about the Kloster grounds like a bee in a bottle, and yet if it ever be necessary for one to keep his wits from bumping against the other surely it is when there is intrusted to him the tremendous responsibility of tying together two young hearts in wedlock.

My Brothers and Sisters, though at first consistently opposing themselves to all this marrying, finally—for so great was their love for Sonnlein and Genoveva—took almost as great interest as I in the matter, especially the Sisters, notwithstanding their vows ; for I have observed that the weaker sex can no more keep away from weddings than honey bees from the flowers.

After much talk with the Sisters—and even the Brethren deigned to give most grave and solemn suggestions which I gratefully accepted and wisely disregarded—it was decided the wedding, or *Hochzeit*, should be held in Peniel, which as will be recalled we built in the meadow during that dreadful winter just before the death of our poor Brother Agonius.

So great a delight did our little community find in the wedding to be, that not only were invitations sent out to all the housefathers, their good wives and sturdy sons and buxom daughters ; but we even sent invitations to our English Brethren in Nantmill and Coventry and to our German

Brethren on the Wissahickon ; for we were not ashamed to let the world see that although we had high regard for our views of celibacy, yet we knew when it became us to bow gently to that which could not be helped, for surely when two be bent on marrying each other naught availeth to hinder them.

And now that we had decided upon such grave matters as the fixing of the day, the selection of the person to perform the ceremony, our justice, Conrad Weiser, having graciously accepted that honor, and the sending out of the invitations, the Sisters immediately set to work for the feeding of the great multitude we earnestly hoped would come, for on such a day we must feed our guests well and not subject them to the thinness of our Kloster fare.

Then too, though Sonnlein concerned himself not much about his wedding suit, the Sisters made great ado that their beloved Genoveva could in no wise be properly married unless she had most beautiful garments befitting such a wedding as this ; so that between the baking and sewing and all the other endless things that women ever seem to regard necessary for weddings, I fear that at our midnight meetings Sisters and Brothers did not always have their thoughts turned toward the heavenly Bridegroom and the celestial Virgin, the hymns having more of love in them than ever be-

fore. Whether this was mere coincidence I know not, and I leave this for wiser men to determine, only that Brother Beissel the day before the wedding complained to me he verily believed it were next to useless to hold any more midnight services until we got through with this marrying business; that even so solemn and stern a Sister as the prioress seemed now to think only of one thing, which was that Genoveva should be married in proper state.

But even wedding days, like all other days, are bound to come around if only one waiteth patiently and hath found a mate, and so Sonnlein's came, a perfect spring day, neither hot nor cold, but just such a day of mild, pleasant air and cloudless sky as might make one content to live on this earth forever. I have heard it said the most solemn one on a wedding day is he who is to be married, some claiming this to be due because he feeleth that thereafter he hath lost his freedom as being subject more or less to the will and wishes of another. Whether this be true I know not, only I can set it forth that Sonnlein greeted the morn of his wedding day not at all as one going to a prison other than one walled and barred by the love of his Genoveva.

So, early in the forenoon of that wonderful day, a great multitude was gathered on the grassy plot between Saron and Bethania as we had not seen

for many a year, so that even Brother Ezechial, with all his dread of womankind, came at Sonnlein's call to his cell and finally consented to peer out of the little window, but in great trepidation, seeing so many plump forms and rosy faces, the merry, tempting daughters of Eve laughing and talking—whenever their elders ceased to remind them we liked not such levity—like a lot of chattering birds.

“Art not sorry thy cell overlooks the Cocalico, good brother?” asked Sonnlein soberly.

“’Tis an awful sight!” whispered Brother Ezechial, shaking all over and turning his eyes from the gay medley below.

“Meanest thou the old one yonder who hath such fierce look?” said Sonnlein, pretending he missed our brother's meaning. “Thou needst not look at her. See, haste thee, that pretty maid is smiling to thee! Art not going to reply to such challenge?”

“God forbid!” exclaimed Brother Ezechial fervently as he turned hastily from the window and in mortal fear shut himself in his cell, though I never have believed one should be this much afraid of woman.

Shortly after midday we all, that is, all of the great crowd that could possibly get in, were crowded into the large *Saal*. At the farther, or eastern end of the hall, in the middle of a small

platform, sat our one-time Brother, now Justice Conrad Weiser, grave and impressive, as became the dignity of his high office, and yet not deeming it unworthy of the occasion to appear in such resplendent apparel as confirmed many a good Brother and Sister that our justice was, alas, beyond redemption; for from his long, black swallow-tail coat gleamed a row of gold buttons, his waistcoat being a color as I can liken only to the soft richness of a ripe plum; and more proudly sinful than all this were the silver buckles where the long black silk stockings met the dark knee breeches, and even on his black slippers were large silver buckles, the buckles and the buttons twinkling and glowing like little lamps, so that we all were quite dazed with the dignity and radiance shed upon us by our good justice.

To the front of our justice and a trifle to his right, being also on the little platform, sat our worthy *Vorsteher*, the lifetime apostle of celibacy, with such a look of humble resignation upon his face as would have softened the stoniest heart, even though he was clad in all the solemn grandeur of the sacred robes, which, in imitation of those worn by the Jewish high priests, the Eckerlings had wheedled him into wearing.

To the front and left of our justice sat our prioress in the robes of the priestess of the Roses of Saron, stiff, stern, and erect as ever, her tight,



evenly pressed lips giving her the inscrutable look of a sphinx, though well I knew our *dura mater's* heart was beating warmly for our beloved young sister.

And now having disposed of the high dignitaries, I come to my boy and his Genoveva, he sitting directly behind our leader and not at all abashed, though I have ever understood it becometh a bridegroom so to appear, for he fairly shone with health and happiness, so that more than one wistful glance was shot slyly at him by the soft-hearted girls; but as to what he had on, bless me, even though he was my beloved Sonnlein, I cannot recall, only that he was clothed as was the custom of the young men of the secular congregation, some plain black cloth, so near as I can tell, forming the staple of his attire.

To Sonnlein's left and behind our prioress and beyond the splendor of our justice sat our Genoveva, and though I know little of cloths and fabrics, especially of woman's dress, if my memory faileth me not she was clothed somewhat after the manner of the Sisterhood, only instead of the plain, coarse black dress or grayish ones they sometimes wore, her snow-white gown was of some wonderful material such as I had not seen since my student days and which gleamed and shimmered much as I have seen the sunlight play on the ripples of the Cocalico.

And whereas the Sisters ever had their beauty

enveloped in those hideous hoods, so completely hiding their virginal faces from the brothers, Genoveva, being already within the freedom that marriage brings to woman, had on no hood, not even a veil to hide that crown of golden hair waving so gracefully and simply from her brow and tied in the back with some beautiful band or ribbon formed into a cunning bow, among the folds of which were ensnared the sweet little violets Sonnlein had plucked for his bride, and these little violets she hath to this day, for thus is the heart of woman.

There were those, indeed, among the Sisters who had gravely asserted our sister could not be properly married without a veil, but Sonnlein and I being of one mind that everybody would desire to see how beautiful was our Genoveva, we stoutly held it were almost ungodly to hide her 'neath a hideous veil. And so as she sat there blushing modestly whenever Sonnlein glanced at her, which the rascal was doing most of the time, I know many a man's heart envied my boy, for surely never did I see anything to equal her simple, high-souled, woman's beauty.

Thus I write it down that when one hath the gift of loveliness one need not gorgeous raiment.

Directly in front of the low pulpit from behind which shone the majesty of the law was myself, on a short bench, feeling very big, as though all the glory of this wedding were mine. In front of us

and facing our way sat the Brotherhood on the long benches running across the hall, cloaked and cowled, hands folded meekly across the breasts, tonsured heads bowed, and eyes looking neither to the right nor the left, though assuredly there was abundance of attractive provocation. Even our Brother Ezechial had been prevailed upon to leave the safety of his retirement for the awful perils of the crowded *Saal*. And our good Brother Gottleib, who ever maintained that all jewelry was made in the workshop of the Evil One, for once overcame his scruples sufficiently to wear the gold ring—containing a bit of holy writ inscribed in Greek—that proclaimed our brother a duly initiated member of the Holy Order of the Mustard Seed.

Back of the Brothers and under the galleries, along the north and the south sides of the hall, were the gray-bearded housefathers, and behind them, filling every vantage place within the sacred walls, were the sturdy sons of the housefathers and the male friends and guests who had flocked from all directions to see a Kloster wedding.

And lest it be thought that I, being a surly monk, lack the gallantry due the weaker vessels, I shall mention that in the broad, northern gallery of the hall were clustered the Roses of Saron, while the robust wives and rosy-cheeked daughters of the house elders and the female friends and guests were assembled in the southern gallery.

These galleries, or *por-kirche*, as they were called, were screened with lattice work, following the custom of the synagogues in Holland and Germany, wherein the women were relegated to the screened galleries, for, with Paulus, we held that women should keep silent in the churches and remain modestly in the background, and I rejoice that I can write in all truth that our Sisters in the northern gallery, like our Brethren on their benches below, maintained strict and decorous silence. I cannot say so much for the wives and daughters in the southern gallery who from behind their lattice kept up such a whispering and commotion and bustling and peering about as greatly offended our order-loving souls, even our leader, who had it ever in him to be all things to all men and who could be pleasant as well as stern, frowning most severely, so that half the time I was in a tremble lest he would burst forth into one of his scoldings.

But at last there was some semblance of order in the crowded *Saal*, and then, at the word from our leader, our Brothers and Sisters rose to their feet and sang a number of our hymns, and surely never was our soft Kloster music more heavenly sweet, a great hush falling upon all the rest in the hall, for such power hath pure music over the human heart.

And then, Brother Weiser having first read from the Bible, discreetly selecting a chapter that had

naught of marrying in it, motioned Sonnlein and Genoveva to stand forth, whereupon they stood up, she in womanly grace and modesty and he as proud as any lord, my boy, by reason of his royal stature and his being on the platform, fairly towering over us as our justice called out whether any one had aught to say why these two should not be made husband and wife.

For a moment there was absolute silence and then from the rear of the hall came a loud, brutal voice from one not of our number, I rejoice to say, who in season and out of season had lost no opportunity ever since my baptism by Brother Beissel to heap upon me every foul insult and taunt and ridicule. And now with a hateful devil's smile on his face and a foul fiend's spiteful laugh, my persecutor cried out, "What name doth our good brother's Sonnlein give his wife?"

Had lightning fallen upon us from the clear sky I know we had not been more dazed, for though we had provided for everything else, it had never come to us that Sonnlein must have a name to give his bride! For a moment a great bewilderment held me fast, and then, as mine enemy laughed loudly again at our consternation, not heeding the angry looks of the more excitable of our housefathers and their sons, I could see that it required all of Sonnlein's will to keep him from this ungentle intruder who with his evil heart seemed to find

most exquisite delight in our torment as he laughed more brutally than before, "Call thyself 'Müller,' Sonnlein, and thou goest not wrong, I swear."

At this vile insult I thought Sonnlein would fly from the platform and rend the villain limb from limb, for such passion was in my boy's face as I had rarely seen, but I gently pressed him back while I spake quietly but steadily so all could hear, "If Sonnlein careth for it and our sister will bear the burden of so humble a name as Müller I give it gladly," and then I cried out proudly, "For all that mine enemies and the enemies of our holy Order may think or say to the contrary, 'tis a name my boy need not be ashamed of!"

"And the only one that belongs to him, thou bald-pated hypocrite!" sneered mine enemy so all could hear, whereat I so forgot myself to cry out—for it is foolish to lose one's temper and bandy foul names—"Thou liest!" but I was beyond all endurance and had I said the word I could see by the lowering looks of our adherents it would have gone ill with this hate-poisoned man, but I controlled myself, though how I know not to this day, and again I spake softly, "I entreat you all to hold yourselves in patience but a few moments until my return," whereupon I left the *Saal*, some following me anxiously with their eyes, fearing my peace-loving spirit was making me run away from all this untimely quarrel.

In a few moments I was back again holding something under my cloak out of sight while I related how Sonnlein had come to me and about the dying words of Brother Alburtus and the last moments of that poor woman, and as Sonnlein and Genoveva and the Brothers and Sisters added their testimony so far as they knew I could see the great wonderment creeping over the faces of all present, even mine enemy, despite his hate and unbelief, remaining quiet for once.

And then, having brought the assemblage to this mood, I suddenly pulled out from beneath my cloak the little white baby garment I had found on Sonnlein that morning in the woods in the long ago hermit days. Holding up the stained and soiled cloak so all could see, I fairly shouted to mine enemy, "Come and see the pretty letters on this child's cloak, 'C. S.," and lifting mine hand on high, I declared solemnly, "Before the Great Searcher of Hearts I swear I know not how those letters came there or what they stand for!"

And then came a thrilling cry from the rear of the hall, "Praise the Lord, 'tis David's boy!" and then some one rushed forward through the crowd that fell back who for a moment I thought was our Brother Alburtus returned from the dead, some of the Brothers and Sisters and of the secular members actually whispering in their fright, "'Tis Brother Alburtus."

But the stranger heeded not the commotion only pressing forward the tears running down his face, and shaking in every limb, as he caught Sonnlein's hands in his, holding them as if he never would let go, saying over and over, "My brother David's son; my brother's only son!"

Finally as the stranger became more composed, he turned to me. "Didst ask the child its name when thou didst find him?"

"Yea, the first thing I sought was his name, but he only would say 'Tass,' and such name have I never heard. To this day I know not what he meant, though often have I thought on it."

"Oh, thou wise, simple monk! 'Tass' was naught more than baby for 'Charles,' which his unpractised lips could not frame into other than 'Tass.' We all called him 'Tass' for a pet name."

I could not doubt 'twas so, for I could see more than one of the housefathers and the housemothers exchange nods and smiles with the nighest one as much as to say, "How stupid our Brother Jabez hath been not to see this long ago!" But how was I to know, not having any great knowledge of the little ones?

Then turning to our justice I bowed humbly, and said, "Brother Weiser thou art a justice, and if I mistake not hast power and authority to administer an oath or an affirmation.

To which our justice gravely responded, "Such



power reposeth in me by virtue of my commission as justice."

"I shall ask, then, good brother, that our friend who sayeth his name is Thomas Seymour be affirmed that he will speak the truth.

And then as the stranger faced about toward the pulpit, our justice with his full, round voice that ever sounded to me like some strong, deep toned bell, said to the stranger :

"Dost thou, Thomas Seymour, solemnly and truly declare and affirm that thou wilt tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and so thou dost affirm ?"

To which the stranger as solemnly replied, and yet distinctly in the breathless silence of the hall, "Yea !"

And now, after all these long years, my boy found his own, right name ; and mine own reputation, often so bitterly assailed by those who held not with our mode of life, was cleansed from all stain and dishonor ; for truly "a good name is better than great riches."

And thus our good brother, Thomas Seymour, whom many present with us this day vouched to be one of our most devout and influential English Sabbatarians, from Coventry, had come all this long journey merely to honor us with his presence ; but in the providence of God destined to find his brother's son and to have all this dark mystery

about Brother Alburtus and the witch and Sonnlein made as light as day.

Briefly, as our Brother Seymour related it to us, he and his brother David, known to us as Brother Alburtus, with his wife Elizabeth and their boy, Charles, our Brother Thomas being a bachelor, had lived together in Coventry. By the fall of a tree, which they were felling nigh their cabin, Brother Alburtus received the great gash across his brow, the hurt taking his mind from him so that one day he wandered away leaving no more trace of his departure than if he had been taken up into the sky, only that he had frequently after his hurt spoken ramblingly about joining the hermits on the Cocalico. Inquiry among the Solitary showed he was not with them; for it was not until some years after Sonnlein and I came to Ephrata that Brother Alburtus joined our community, and where and how he lived ere that no one ever knew. Some weeks after he had left his wife, she, unable longer to endure her suspense, left suddenly with the little boy, while our brother Thomas was absent from the cabin. She and the child also were swallowed up so completely by the wilderness that with all his long searching naught could he find of them, though he had visited the Conestogas, on a rumor that there was a white woman living with them, but they could not or would not tell him aught. At last, almost heart-

broken and despairing of finding the lost ones, whom he now believed to be dead from the wild beasts, or starvation, or the Indians, he left Coventry, not returning again for over ten years after the loss of his brother David and his wife and child.

More we never learned, but it was clear to all that the fearsome witch was the wife of Brother Alburtus, that he was David Seymour, the brother of Thomas Seymour, and that Sonnlein was the baby. Many an eye was dimmed in the *Saal* at the plain, unadorned recital of our brother's tale, as we thought of all the long years of darkened mind that had held our Brother Alburtus, so that he knew not his own boy though so nigh; but most of all our hearts went out in a great sorrow for that poor woman who half crazed by unwearying search and ever-recurring disappointment had suffered all these years the bitter pangs of separation from husband and child; and I know many a silent prayer arose from our hearts for those two who at last were sleeping side by side in that rude, mountain grave.

Indeed, it was a relief to our strained feelings when Johann, who long ago had forgiven the beating Sonnlein had given him, turned toward mine enemy yelling at him, "If thou leavest not at once with thy devil's grin, thou wilt be hurled into the creek," whereat mine enemy, abashed for once, slunk out of the hall like a whipped beast.

Surely there is not much else to relate of this marriage, though I shall never forget how lost and lonesome I felt, like a father bereft of his son, when our justice asked Sonnlein—and ever hath he been Sonnlein to me—“Dost thou, Charles Seymour, take this woman, our Genoveva, to be thy lawful wedded wife,” my boy responded proudly, “Yea.” And then, as I remember it, our justice asked our lovely Genoveva a like question if she would take him to be her husband, and upon her low “Yea,” our justice pronounced them husband and wife, and promptly saluted her with such a willing smack as made even the Sisters titter, while poor Brother Ezechial hung his head still lower, blushing to his very ears.

The next day Sonnlein and Genoveva left on their honeymoon with his uncle for Coventry, and though Coventry be not to the end of the world, it seemed to me as though all the world had left me, only that she kissed me ere she left, whereat I blushed so through all my long beard, that Sonnlein laughed so heartily I liked it not; but had he known how long I cherished the memory of that kiss, the only one for many a long year, ah me, my boy had not laughed so boisterously I know.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### RETROSPECT

Moreo'er, the shields so steady and the consecrated swords,  
O God, that I were worthy to join the victor lords.  
Then should I like the others achieve a prize untold,  
Not lands that have been promised, nor king's or noble's gold,  
But oh, a wondrous crown, and for evermore to wear  
A crown which poorest soldier can win with axe and spear.  
Yea, if the noble crusade I might follow o'er the sea,  
I evermore should sing, All's well ! and nevermore, Ah me !  
Nevermore, Ah me !

—*Walther Von der Vogelweide.*



AND now, after the long lapse of many years since my boy and our Genoveva were made one—and yet how short the time hath been—one of my chiefest delights is to dwell on the past. Mine eyes are no longer turned toward the future with eager questioning as in my youth. In mine old age I am like unto an old tree standing alone, a solitary

landmark of the decline of our Kloster, the setting sun casting my shadow toward the morning. The Kloster hath never survived the indomitable spirit of its founder, Brother Beissel, and his sturdy associates. Slowly but surely its power hath diminished. Since the days our warrior, Brother Wohlforth, left us many others of our number have gone to their eternal reward. Brother Obed, our schoolmaster, with his kindly, genial soul, long ago have I missed him from his accustomed place, and the Eckerlings, of whose sad fate we heard years after they left us, they too, with their dreams of commercial conquest, have passed away to that realm which harbors neither bargain nor sale.

The first great loss that came to us was our Brother Enoch, our justice, who died but a few years after that never to be forgotten wedding; but not many years before his death there was great rejoicing among us to know that the serious breach between our leader and our justice had been closed, and though our justice had greatly grieved us when he allowed himself to be fooled so to accept a commission from the governor, yet when we saw the door of our brother's long spiritual captivity had been opened we welcomed him gladly, so that his old acquaintances of the Kloster all told him the lost piece of silver was now found. Not long after, our congregation assembled for a

love feast at which he, by partaking of the holy sacraments, was reincorporated into our spiritual community, although we willingly after his death yielded to his mother church the honor of having garnered in his body.

He died on a Sunday after a violent attack of colic, and was buried on his farm at Heidelberg, not a great distance from us to the northeast, where with his children and a number of Indians he awaits the call of the last day.

And now I come to the closing years of our beloved leader—and surely these were full of trouble. For a number of years prior to his death it became manifest to all of us that physical infirmities were fast growing upon him. But far more grave than these were the estrangements he suffered more or less from both of our Solitary Orders, though it seemeth not becoming to set forth here the false and bitter accusations made against our leader so that his cup of bitterness was pressed to the full.

All during the winter of 1767–1768, besides the distress of mind and spirit, he suffered from many diseases, chiefly a wasting cough, and at the beginning of July of 1768 his various ailments became so aggravated he was most of the time in great pain, so that he was forced to exclaim more than once to me—and I rejoice now I never deserted him—that he was nailed to the cross; but

such was his stubborn will and fortitude that he refused to acknowledge any physical sickness, but would often say his sufferings were mere spiritual throes preceding his new birth. He also found great comfort in the firm persuasion, which many of his most intimate followers held with him, that he would be spared the pains of a bodily dissolution and would be translated into the realms of bliss as Enoch and Elijah of old ; but in this, like his predecessor on the Wissahickon, Magister Johannus Kelpius, our leader was destined to make his exit in no wise different from ordinary mortals.

Notwithstanding his grievous infirmities our leader attended to the duties of his office to within eight days of his end, when for the last time, in his priestly robes, he officiated at a love feast, and seeing that his end was nigh he consecrated Brother Philemon and Brother Eleazer and myself to the priesthood, from which his successor should be selected. While in such suffering he received word, only three days before his death, that one of our oldest housemothers was breathing her last, and that she wished to see our leader even if he could not speak to her. So with him leaning on my arm we went to our dear sister's, thereby fulfilling her wish.

"At last," so our *Chronicon* states, "Wednesday, the sixth day of July of the year 1768 came when he laid aside his mortal raiment."



On that morning, having rallied somewhat, he attended prayers in the Sisters' *Saal*, and sought earnestly for reconciliation with our prioress, but in vain. As he returned to his cabin, sad at heart—for with all his fiery nature he ever strove to merit his favorite name, Father Friedensam Gottrecht (Father Peaceful Godright)—none of us thought his departure was so near; for the powers of darkness, as he said, could not prevail upon him to lie down.

Meanwhile the Brethren kept a constant watch, for many of our little flock looked for great happenings, feeling assured the powers of death would have no easy struggle with such an old soldier of the cross, who was neither accustomed to call on men for mercy nor to yield to the powers of darkness.

But by the time the sun had stood at midday, we could see the end was near, and all the Solitary and the near-by householders gathered about him in his little cabin, soon filling it, many standing outside the doorway. On his little bench, as hard and uncomfortable as any of ours—for he scorned any comforts denied to his disciples—sat our little ruler, gaunt, wasted, his features thin and drawn, and eyes sunken. Around him clustered the Brethren of Bethania, sad and silent, but not shedding any tears to annoy his stubborn spirit. Back of the Brethren stood the Sisters, some of the shorter

ones on a bench, and most of them weeping quietly despite their fortitude. All was silence and expectation. But though within the cabin reigned the darkness of death, outside under the glowing sun all was life and brightness, like the glorious radiance that would burst through the gates of death, for our beloved leader.

Over an hour we stood, not saying a word, but all the while our brother becoming weaker and weaker from the great heat and the stifling air in so small a cabin. At last he broke the silence and asked the Brethren to bless him and receive his memory into their fellowship. Then I anointed him with the holy oil, and as I spread the sacred chrism upon his forehead I gave him my blessing with the laying on of hands, after which all the Brethren in turn gave him the kiss of peace to take with him on his journey.

After this tender ceremony was over he consented, after my continued persuasion, to lie down on his bench, resting his head upon the wooden block that had served him so many years. He lay quietly for a while with eyes closed, and then as if gazing into the very depths of eternity, he partly raised himself on his elbow and exclaimed, "*O wehe! O wehe! O wunder! O wunder!*" (Oh, woe! Oh, woe! Oh, wonder! Oh, wonder!) and then fell back, his spirit soon after taking its flight peacefully from its earthly home to that

still more wonderful home of which oft during his stay with us he had received such gracious visions.

Immediately upon his death messengers were sent out near and far with slips prepared by the Sisters, inviting the people to the funeral of our *Vorsteher* which, on account of the great heat, was set but two days following his death, the Brethren meanwhile preparing the body for burial, the Sisterhood keeping vigil, five Sisters constantly watching and reciting prayers for our dead.

On the day of the funeral our usual customs were observed, such as sweeping the floor of his cabin, pouring a bucket of water over the door-sill, and the chalking of the three crosses upon the side of the doorway. And there were those who, following an old German superstition, went about and informed every hive of bees within our grounds and for a considerable distance without, of the death of our leader, it being firmly believed that the bees would swarm if this notice to them were neglected; and also every barrel, keg, and crock of wine and vinegar and pickles and sauer kraut and preserved fruits, in order not to be spoiled, had to be turned on the shelves or skids.

The funeral services were held in the great *Saal* we had built many years before at a right angle with Bethania, where our brother had so often preached. After a sermon by me there were addresses by Brothers Philemon and Obed. We

sang special hymns, and never did our Kloster music, in which our leader had ever taken such great pride, sound more sweet and heavenly. When the services were over in the *Saal* the body of our *Vorsteher* was carried to the graveyard close by, followed by the immense throng in spite of the short notice gathered from every direction. Before lowering him into his last resting-place, the lid of the coffin was again raised, so that according to our ritual the sun might once more shine upon his body. Then his body was turned slightly to the right side, being kept in place by a piece of sod, thus ensuring perfect rest in his grave. The lid was then closed down, and the little form of our great-souled leader was lowered into the dark cell, there to repose until the trumpet of the angel shall call him forth to receive his crown.

On the same day our brother died, a Sister who lately joined the Roses of Saron passed away, and this being joined to the death of the housemother but a few days before, gave the Solitary firm assurance that the departed spirits of our sister and the housemother had been deputed to attend the spirit of our *Vorsteher* and minister to it.

Often during his life he had promised he would return in spirit to the Kloster after leaving this world. Many of the Solitary as well as the settlers about us firmly believed this. It hath ever been a matter of much thought with me whether

or not the spirits of the dead ever revisit their beloved ones on earth. It seemeth to me it should and must be so, and yet have I never been vouchsafed such visions. But only two days after his burial our leader appeared to Brother Luther and Sister Catharina, in their cells. He also appeared to our Brother Ezechial, who for some fancied grievance had been the only one of our number not to attend the funeral and gave our disgruntled brother most earnest admonitions, so that Brother Ezechial became a changed man, for the better let it be said. Later on, our leader's visits to the Solitary became nightly occurrences, and indeed he even appeared to one of our Germantown brethren.

Be these things as they may, for I record not what I saw—merely what I heard—this I know to be true, that with all his failings and shortcomings our Kloster reached its greatest renown during the rule of our little leader. Naught but a poor journeyman baker had he been in his early days ; of little learning, but to a man of such great talents as his, the lack of learning from books hindered him little. In his lifetime he originated, with some help from others, our wonderful Kloster music, himself composing fully one thousand pieces of music, printing over four hundred of them, and full of beauty and prophetic insight are they, so that we hold them as great treasures. And with all his fiery nature, there was in this man such

tenderness and humility that in time most of the estrangements of his early Kloster life were fully reconciled, thereby confirming what he ever maintained, that he was a lover of peace.

But I shall not longer darken my story with the deaths of my beloved Brothers and Sisters. I still have my Sonnlein and his devoted Genoveva. After that blissful day, they went with his uncle, living with him, he being a bachelor, until his death, after which, his estate having come to Sonnlein, he and Genoveva, at my earnest persuasions, took up a farm near by, which Sonnlein tilleth like a good husbandman, only that he never hath outlived his love for hunting and fishing, even though he is now on toward middle age. But such hath ever been the simplicity of his life that he hath the strength and spirit of one in his thirties.

As for our beloved Genoveva, she too is of those blessed ones who never grow old—for surely time seemeth to have no influence on that fair face and graceful form. What a sweet, noble woman she is! Indeed, it is Sonnlein's oft-repeated jest, that he is exceedingly jealous of old *Vaterchen*; to which Genoveva maketh gentle retort that she never quite understandeth how she came even to think of Sonnlein while I was about. But she is all devotion to her Sonnlein and her children; and what a brood of healthy, happy-hearted, romping, noisy boys and girls they are, so that often they are re-

proved for worrying so much their grandfather Jabez—to such dignity have I attained. But with all their sitting on me and sliding over me and pulling my beard and hanging to my cloak wherever I go, I would not for worlds have them otherwise.

The eldest one, a tall, grave, solemn-eyed youth, who is ever at his books, and asketh me most serious questions, hath been named Jabez, against my earnest protestations.

A second, a lively young imp, who careth for everything but books, they have called Peter, he no doubt representing my more worldly life ere I joined the Kloster, as Jabez standeth for my stricter life thereafter. Indeed, I often aver that had I more names Sonnlein and Genoveva would make use of every one. There is too, a precious little toddler whom they consented at my request to call Sonnlein, all my names being used up.

Beside the cradle in which lieth a plump, rosy, crowing, happy baby, our little Genoveva, stands a sweet-faced little maid, with hair of gold and heaven's own blue eyes, whom, though I have ever been a great stickler for impartiality, I cannot help loving a trifle the best ; for Genoveva, with that marvelous insight women seem to have above men in matters of the heart, hath named the little maid Bernice. Ah me !

As for me, I cannot help feeling that mayhap I did not use all of my few talents faithfully. I

wonder sometimes whether I did not bury some here in the solitary life of the Kloster. Not that we were selfish, or mean, or lacked in love for our Father ; but perhaps, aye, I fear it is so, man cannot best serve man by withdrawing from him. I see clearly now it was not the Master's way. He taught neither fasting nor feasting ; neither vigils nor sluggish sleep. Even within the sacred bounds of our Kloster, sequestered from the world, things were not—it pains me e'en now to say—as holy as they should have been. Hate, spite, envy, greed, lust, passion, ambition, intrigue, quarrelings, bickerings, misunderstandings, false, bitter charges, prevailed within the monastery no less than without. I understand now what the deep-sighted Luther meant when he said that the world is in the heart of man and not in his surroundings. It is even so, and because it is so, I cannot withstand the arguments of those who contend truthfully that the life of the monk and the nun, sweet and holy though it may be, is not so large and noble and useful as the life of him and her who with duty for a watchword and purity of heart for an armor and the word of God for a sword go forth to battle with sin wherever his horrid form may be seen.

But thanks to the priceless inheritance of a strong, healthy body, preserved by temperance in diet, serenity of mind, and abundance of labor in the open air close to the heart of God, mine old



age hath not yet become a reproach to me. Still, like the Preacher, I feel it will not be many days ere the keepers of the house shall tremble, the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. I have endeavored always to bear victory and defeat, joy and sadness, with evenness of spirit. I have not complained overmuch here and surely when the silver cord is loosed for me or the golden bowl be broken and I meet Him face to face in the boundless fields of eternity, I know naught but bliss will be mine; and yet with my poor earthly sight and understanding, I shall long to meet there and be with them for evermore, father, mother, the Brothers and Sisters of the Kloster, Sonnlein and his beloved Genoveva and their dear children; but dearer than all these I want again to clasp to my breast the sweet flower cut off while still in its budding, my Bernice.

