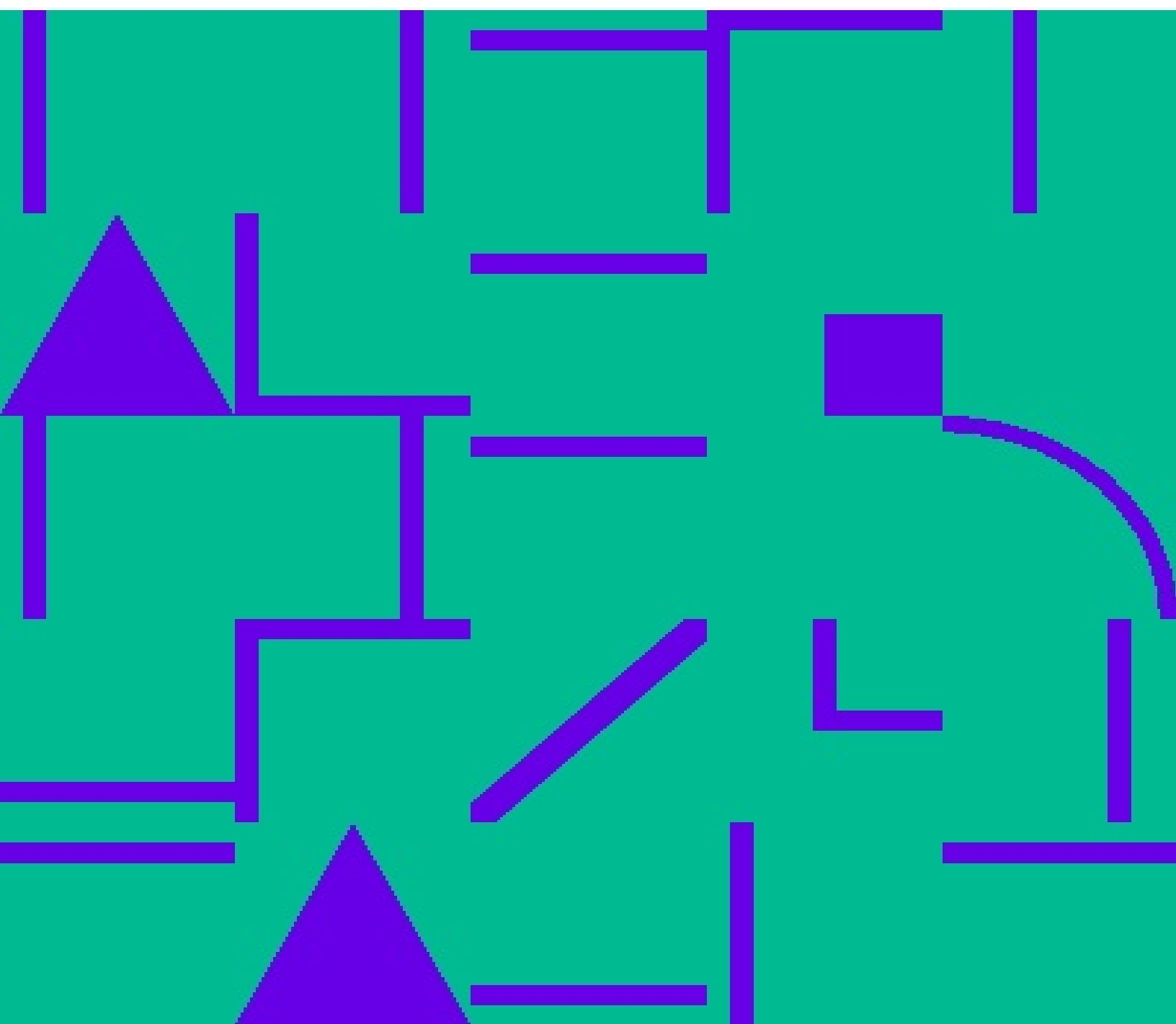


Theobald, the Iron-Hearted

Or, Love to Enemies

César Malan



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THEOBALD, THE IRON-HEARTED;

OR,
LOVE TO ENEMIES.

FROM THE FRENCH OF REV. CESAR MALAN.

1808



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THEOBALD, THE IRON-HEARTED.



CHAPTER I.

GOTTFRIED AND ERARD—PURSUIT OF A HORSEMAN—RESCUE OF THE WOUNDED CHEVALIER

In the long and bloody war which followed the martyrdom of John Huss and Jerome of Prague,^[1] two hostile armies met, in 1423, in one of the most beautiful valleys of Bohemia.

The battle commenced towards the close of day, and continued until after sunset.

It was then that old Gottfried, accompanied by Erard, his grandson, climbed to the summit of a steep hill, from the edge of which might be perceived, in the depth of the valley, behind a wood, some troops still fighting.

The old man and the child, (Erard was scarcely nine years of age,) were sad and silent. They both looked towards the plain, and it was with a profound sigh that Erard at last said, "O, how good is the Lord, if he has preserved my father!"

"The Lord can preserve him!" said Gottfried, with solemnity, "Arnold belongs to him; yes, my son, your father is one of his dear children!"

"But, grandpapa," resumed Erard, looking at the old man, "do not Christians also die in battle? God does not preserve them all."

"If my son has laid down his life for the Lord," continued Gottfried, "he is not dead: his soul has gone from this world to be with his Saviour."

"To be with my good mamma!" said the child. "In heaven with the angels, is it not, dear grandpapa?"

"To be with thy mother, my son," replied the old man, drawing the child towards him. "Yes, in the heaven of the blessed! It is there that all those who love Jesus go, and your mother was his faithful servant."

Erard sighed, and exclaimed, "O, how good will God be if he has preserved my father, my good father! O, grandpapa, why did you let him go?"

"Erard," replied the old Christian, "your father would rather not have fought, he has so much patience and in his heart; but then he also has courage: he has been surnamed----"

"Grandpapa," interrupted the child, with agitation, and pointing with his hand towards the plain, under the declivity of the hill, and in a narrow passage between the rocks and woods, "do you see those three horsemen?"

In fact, three armed warriors were hastening, at the utmost speed of their horses, towards a thick coppice, which they entered, and disappeared. The first seemed to be flying before the two others, who appeared to be in furious pursuit.

Gottfried listened, but no sound was heard; and, a few moments afterwards, he distinctly saw two of the warriors come out of the wood and hasten towards the plain, repassing the defile.

"Alas!" said the old man, groaning, "they have killed him! They have dipped their hands in the blood of their brother!"

"They have killed him! Do you say so, grandpapa? Whom have they killed? Is it my father?"

"No, my son; the first warrior was not Arnold. But it was a man, and those are men who have killed him! O Lord, when wilt thou teach them to love one another? But let us go to him," added the old man.

"To the dead man!" exclaimed Erard with affright. "Grandpapa, see! it is already night."

"Come, my child," said Gottfried, "and fear not. Perhaps he is not yet dead; and if God sends us to his assistance, will you not be happy?"

"But, grandpapa, the wood is so dark, that I don't see how we shall find our way."

"Well, Erard, I will wait here. Run to the house, and return immediately with Ethbert and Matthew. Tell them that I have sent for them, and let them bring a torch and the long hand-barrow. Make haste!"

Erard was soon out of sight, and only a short time had elapsed before he returned with the two domestics, who held each a flambeaux and brought the litter.

The child trembled while they descended, over the rocks and through the woods. It seemed to him that he was about to step in the blood or fall over the body of the dead man. The flame of the torches, which wavered in the evening breeze, now struck a projection of the rock, which seemed to assume the form of a man, now penetrated behind the trunks of the pines, which appeared like ranks of soldiers. The imagination of Erard was excited: he scarcely breathed, and felt his heart sink when Ethbert, who was walking before, exclaimed, "Here he is! He is dead!"

It was a chevalier and a nobleman; whom Gottfried immediately recognized by the form of his casque and the golden scarf to which was suspended the scabbard of his sword.

The visor of the casque was closed. Gottfried raised it, and saw the pale and bloody countenance of a man, still young, whose features expressed courage and valor.

He had fallen under his horse, in whose side was found the point of a lance which had killed him; and the whole body of his steed had covered and crushed one of his limbs. The right hand of the chevalier still grasped the handle of a sword of which the blade was broken.

Gottfried and his servants looked on some moments. The light of the torches shone on the rich armor of the chevalier and on the gold-embroidered housing of his horse, and it seemed as if its brilliancy must open his closed eyes and re-animate his motionless limbs.

Erard kept close to his grandfather and a little behind him. He wept gently, but not with fear—it was with grief and sorrow,—and he repeated, in a low voice, "They have killed him! The wicked men!"

"Perhaps he still lives," said Gottfried, kneeling and placing his ear to the chevalier's mouth. "Raise him! Loose him!" exclaimed he, rising hastily. "He is not dead!"

"He is not dead! he is not dead!" repeated Erard; and he began with all his little force to push the body

of the dead horse, which the three men raised, and from beneath which they at last disengaged the leg of the chevalier. It was bruised against a stone which had torn the flesh, and the blood was flowing from it copiously.

"Water!" cried Gottfried, unlacing the armor of the chevalier and taking off his casque, which one of the domestics took that he might fill it with water from the foot of the rocks.

Meanwhile the benevolent old man had laid the chevalier on the ground, upon the housing of his horse and his own garment, which he had taken off; he supported his head with one hand, and with the other lightly rubbed his breast, to revive the beating of his heart.

At last the servant brought water. Gottfried bathed and cooled with it the face and head of the chevalier, who, after a few moments, sighed, and half-opened his eyes.

"Almighty God," exclaimed Gottfried, "thou hast revived him! O, may it be for thy glory!" "Amen!" said his servants.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[1\]](#)

Both were burned alive at Constance, by order of the council held in that city: the first on the 6th of July, 1415; the second on the 30th of May, 1416.

CHAPTER II.

TRAPPINGS OF THE HORSE—MIDNIGHT ARRIVAL—CHARACTER OF THE WOUNDED MAN
DISCOVERED—HIS NARRATIVE—FAMILY WORSHIP.

The dear and sensible Erard was delighted. He laughed, he wept, he looked at the chevalier, whose cheeks had recovered some color, and asked him, softly, whether he lived, and whether he heard and saw them.

"Where am I?" asked the chevalier, faintly, turning his eyes towards one of the torches.

"With God and with your brethren!" replied Gottfried, taking one of his hands. "But say no more now, and may God aid us!"

It was necessary to transport the warrior to the dwelling of Gottfried, and the passage was long and difficult.

Gottfried first spread upon the litter some light pine-branches, over which he placed the housing of the horse and his own outer garments, those of his servants, and even that of Erard, who begged him to take this also; then, after the old man had bound up the bruised limb between strong splinters of pine, which he had cut with the blade of the chevalier's sword, and which he tied with his scarf, he laid the warrior on the branches, while two robust servants carefully raised and bore the litter towards the summit of the hill.

"And the poor horse!" said Erard, at the moment when his grandpapa, who bore the flambeaux and the sword of the Chevalier, began his march.

"You will return to-morrow morning," said Gottfried to his servants, "and take off the trappings. As to the body, the eagles and the crows must devour it. Come, and may God guard and strengthen us!"

The chevalier had recovered his senses. He saw himself in the hands of friends, and doubted not that the old man was a supporter of the cause he had himself defended.

It was not until midnight that the convoy reached the house of Gottfried. The journey was made slowly, and more than once the master had desired his servants to rest.

The bed of the old man himself received the wounded knight, on whom Gottfried, who was no stranger to the art of healing wounds and fractures, bestowed the most judicious cares, and beside whom this devoted Christian passed the remainder of the night.

"Go and take some rest," said he to Erard and the domestics, "and may our God and Saviour keep your souls while his goodness gives you sleep!"

Erard embraced his grandfather, Ethbert and Matthew bent before him respectfully, and Gottfried remained alone, in silence, near the bed, which was lighted by a little lamp, through a curtain which concealed it.

"You have saved me!" said the chevalier to the old man, when all was quiet in the house. "May the

Holy Virgin recompense you."

"It is then one of our enemies!" said Gottfried to himself, as he heard this prayer. "O God!" said he in his heart, "make thy charity to abound in me!"

"I am your friend," replied the old man, affectionately, "and God himself has granted me the blessing of being useful to you. But, I pray you, remain silent, and, if possible, sleep a few moments."

Gottfried needed to collect his thoughts, and to ask God for his Spirit of peace and love. He had already supposed, at sight of the chevalier's shield, that he belonged to the army of the enemy; but he had just received the certainty of it, and "perhaps, perhaps," said he to himself, "I have before me one who may have killed my son!"

The old man therefore spent the moments not employed beside the chevalier in praying to God and in reading his gospel of grace.

The knight slept peacefully towards morning, and on awaking showed that he was refreshed. "If it were not," said he, "for my bruised limb, I would ask for my arms. O, why am I not at the head of my men?"

Gottfried sighed, and as he gave the warrior some drink, said, in a low voice, "Why do men hate and kill each other, invoking the name of Him who died to save them?"

"But," exclaimed the warrior, in a deep voice, "are those who despise and fight against the holy Church Christians?"

At this moment Erard half opened the door, and showed his pretty curly head, saying, "Grandpapa, has the wounded man been able to sleep? I have prayed God for him."

"Much obliged, my child," said the chevalier, extending his hand to him. "Come! do not fear; approach. O, how you resemble my second son! What is your age and name?"

"I am called Erard," replied the child, giving his hand to the chevalier, "and I shall soon be nine years old."

"That is also the age of my Rodolph," pursued the chevalier. "Alas! they will think me dead! Those villains! those cowards! Did they not see that I had no lance, and that my sword was broken?"

"Go, my child," said Gottfried. "Let the table and the books be prepared, I will soon come and pray to God with you. Call all the servants."

"Will you also pray for me?" asked the chevalier, "If you will, pray also for my dear Hildegarde and our five children. O, when shall my eyes see them again?"

"Is it long since you left them?" asked Gottfried.

"It is a week," replied the chevalier, with firmness. "I learned that the intrepid Arnold----"

"What Arnold?" asked Gottfried, with anxiety.

"Arnold the Lion, as he is called," said the warrior, "and one of the chiefs of these rebels." (*Gottfried turned pale and raised his eyes to heaven.*) "I learned that this audacious Arnold had joined his camp, and I felt that my duty called me immediately to the field. I therefore left my family and my house, and have shown the rebels that my arm and my heart are as strong as ever,"

"Have you encountered this Arnold?" asked Gottfried, hardly daring to ask this question.

"Have I encountered him!" cried the chevalier. "And who but myself could have----?"

"They are waiting for prayers," said Erard, opening the door. "Dear grandpapa, will you come?"

The old man followed the child, and his tearful eyes soon rested on the Book of God.

"Grandpapa, you are weeping!" said Erard, approaching the old man. "What is the matter? Are you suffering?"

"Listen to the word of consolation," said Gottfried, making the child sit down; "and may the Spirit of Jesus himself address it to our hearts."

He read then from the book of Psalms, and said a few words on resignation to the will of God, and in his humble prayer supplicated God to remember the chevalier and his family, and to bless him in the house whither he had been brought in his mercy. "Amen! Amen!" repeated all the servants.



CHAPTER III.

THEOBALD'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CONFLICT WITH ARNOLD THE LION—HATRED OF ENEMIES—DISTRESS OF THE FAMILY.

"You are pious people," said the chevalier to Gottfried, in the afternoon of the same day, and while Erard was present. "Religion is a good thing."

"One who loves Jesus is always happy," said the child.

"Let them love Jesus!" replied the warrior. "But this is what I heard last evening, when I was about to fight the Lion."

"I pray you," said Gottfried, do not talk any more now; it will increase your sufferings."

"I do not suffer," replied the chevalier, "This leg is very painful, it is true; but it is only a leg," added he, smiling. "Ought I to make myself uneasy about it?"

"You fought with a lion, then, last evening?" asked Erard, with curiosity, "Was he very large and strong?"

Gottfried would have sent Erard away, for he feared for him the story of the chevalier; but the latter asked that he might be allowed to remain. "Erard must become a man," added he. "My children know what a battle is. Let Erard then not be afraid at what I am about to say.

"My name is Theobald," continued the chevalier, "and from my earliest youth I was surnamed *the iron-hearted*, because I never cried at pain, and never knew what it was to be afraid. My father, one of the powerful noblemen of Bohemia, accustomed me, from my earliest years, to despise cold, hunger, thirst and fatigue; and I was scarcely Erard's age when I seized by the throat and strangled a furious dog that was springing upon one of my sisters.

"War has always been my life. This has now lasted nearly four years, and my sword has not been idle. The Hussites and the Calixtans^[2] have felt it."

At these words Erard, who was sitting beside the bed of the chevalier, rose and went to a window, at the farther end of the room.

"I had spent some weeks with my family, when I learned that the enemy was approaching, and that one of their principal chiefs had just joined them. This chief was the Lion."

Erard, rising. Grandpapa, perhaps it was----.

"Be silent, my son," said Gottfried.

"Our camps had been in sight of each other two days," continued Theobald, "when we decided at last to attack them; and last evening the combat took place.

"It had lasted more than three hours, when I caused a retreat to be sounded, in order to suspend, if

possible, the conflict, and myself to terminate the day by a single combat with the most valiant of the enemy's chieftains.

"Our troops stopped, retired, and I challenged the Lion, who, without delay, left the ranks and advanced alone to meet me." (*Gottfried leans against a table, and rests his head on his hand.*)

He was a man younger than myself, and of noble appearance. His sword was attached to a scarf of silver and azure, and from beneath his casque, the visor of which was raised, escaped curls of light hair.

"Grandpapa!" exclaimed Erard, running towards Gottfried, "was it not—?"

"Be quiet, Erard," said his grandfather, ordering him to sit down. "Should a child interrupt an older person who is speaking?"

"This chevalier," resumed Theobald, "advanced towards me, who had also left the ranks, and when all was ready, stopped his horse, and said to me, mildly, but with a deep and manly voice, 'Jesus has shed his blood for us: why would you shed mine? I will defend myself,' added he, pulling down his visor and holding out his shield, 'but I will not strike.'"

"These words affected me, I confess, and I was on the point of withdrawing, when, fixing my eyes on the shield which he presented, I saw that golden chalice."

"It was he! yes, it was he!" exclaimed Erard, sobbing and flying from the room.

"This boy," said Theobald, "is still a child, and the idea of bloodshed inspires him with fear."

"Ah!" said Gottfried, "his father is also in the army, and this narrative gives him anxiety on his account. You did not then spare this warrior?"

"I have told you: the sight of the chalice awoke my fury, and exclaiming, Defend thyself, I took my sword with both hands, and with a single blow dashed aside his shield and cleft his helmet.

"But my sword broke; and at the moment when the Lion fell----"

Gottfried, with terror. Did Arnold then fall? Was Arnold killed?

"So perish all who hate the Holy Church! (*Gottfried conceals his face in his hands.*) But as soon as I had struck him, his soldiers precipitated themselves upon ours, and five of their chevaliers threw themselves upon me and surrounded me. I had no arms: I had laid down my lance to combat with the Lion, and my sword was broken. I could yet, with the fragment that remained, repulse and strike down three men; but I was alone, my people were themselves surrounded, and I saw that I must perish. It was then that I fled. (O, how I regret it! But the cowards! they did not give me even a sword!) Yes, I fled towards the forest, hoping to find there a branch with which I could arm and defend myself; but my horse stumbled over the roots, in consequence of which I fell and fainted.

"The rest you know. I owe my life to you; and you have taken care of me like a father."

"Arnold is then dead!" cried Gottfried, without perceiving that the chevalier had finished his narrative.

"Do not regret it," replied Theobald. "He was an enemy of our faith; one of those ferocious Taborites, ^[3] who deny the Holy Father and demolish sacred places."

"And it was you," continued Gottfried, "it was you yourself who struck him, when he refused to draw

his sword against you!"

"It was not I, it was the Holy Virgin, who overthrew him! It was she to whom I had devoted my sword, and it was in her service that it was broken. It is thus she consecrated it. May she bless you also,—you who, for love of her, receive me as a son!"

Gottfried had nothing to say in reply. He wished to pour out his tears before the Lord, and left the chevalier, to whom he sent the faithful and prudent Ethbert.

"Sit down," said Theobald to the domestic, and tell me who is this Prince of peace, of whom you spoke to me, last night. "Was it not you who bore me hither with another servant, and who, leaning towards me, when we passed the threshold of this house, said to me: May the Prince of peace himself receive you? Who is this Prince? Is it thy master, this venerable and mild old man?"

"Jesus is the Prince of peace," replied Ethbert; "for he is love, and love does not war against any one."

"Jesus! did you say, is the Prince of peace! But is he not with us who support his cause, and who yet fight valiantly?"

Ethbert. The cause of Jesus is the gospel of his grace. His cause is not supported by the sword and lance; but is defended by truth and love.

Theobald, surprised. Your words, Ethbert, are sermons. Where do they come from?

Ethbert. He who is acquainted with God speaks the word of God; and God is love. God will not revenge and kill with hatred. God pardons and bestows grace.

Theobald, agitated. You would say, perhaps, that God is not with me, because I avenge myself of my enemies. Have they not deserved my hatred?

Ethbert. "Love your enemies," saith God to those who know him. "Avenge not yourselves," he says again to his beloved.

Theobald, still more astonished. Your words trouble me. Is it then a crime to destroy an adversary?

Ethbert. Cain rose up against his brother Abel; and it was because the works of his brother were good, but his own were evil. The Christian does not hate. The Christian does not avenge himself.

Theobald. Am I then not a Christian?

Ethbert, mildly and respectfully. He who is of Christ, walks as Christ himself walked. Christ went from place to place doing good; and it is Christ himself, who says to his Church: "Love one another. He who loveth is of God."

Theobald was silent. These words: "He who loveth is of God," had touched his heart, and he was affected and humbled. Ethbert was also silent, secretly asking of God to enlighten and soften the heart of the chevalier, for which Matthew and himself had already prayed more than once.

At last Theobald said, slowly, "It is not, then, like Christians, for men to hate and war with each other? And yet these impious men deserve to be burned; and are not those who imitate them the enemies of God and of the Church?"

"It is no Christian," replied Ethbert, "who kindles the fire that consumes a friend of Jesus; and this Huss

and Jerome, who were delivered to the flames, loved Jesus."

Theobald. But did they not blaspheme the Holy Church?

Ethbert. He who loves Jesus does not blaspheme his name; and the name of Jesus is written on the Church of Jesus. No, no: the Christian does not hate or revenge himself; and he blasphemes neither his God nor the Church of God!

"It is enough!" said Theobald to the servant. "Leave me—I have need of repose and silence:" and the servant went out.

Meanwhile Gottfried had retired into his room, and, like David, wept and sobbed before the Lord, repeating, with bitterness, "Arnold! my son Arnold! Thou art no more! thy father will never more see thee on earth!"

FOOTNOTES:

[\[2\]](#)

Those who followed the doctrine of John Huss against the Church of Rome. The Calixtans, in particular, maintained that in the sacrament the cup or *chalice* should be given to the people.

[\[3\]](#)

A name assumed by the Hussites, under the command of John Ziska, after having built a fortress which they called Tabor, near the city of Bechin, in Bohemia.

CHAPTER IV.

KINDNESS TO AN ENEMY—ARNOLD ARRIVES ALIVE, BUT WOUNDED—THEOBALD'S AMAZEMENT AT THE KINDNESS HE RECEIVES.

Erard heard the voice of his grandfather, and ran to throw himself in his arms, exclaiming, "The wicked man! the wicked man!--he has killed my father! God has not preserved him, grandpapa! My father is dead!"

"Adore God, my son!" said Gottfried, overcoming his grief, "and do not murmur! Especially, my son, do not grow angry, and do not hate!"

"But, grandpapa," replied Erard, with anguish, "it was he who was struck! It was my father whom he killed!"

"No, my son; the warrior killed one whom he fancied an enemy, Erard! Theobald believed himself serving God, and doing a holy work, in killing a Calixtan."

"He then does not love Jesus—this poor chevalier!" exclaimed the pious child. "O, grandpapa, how unhappy he must be!"

"Yes, my son—very unhappy!" replied Gottfried. "Do not hate him, therefore, but pray to God for him. Was it not God who conducted him hither—and was it not that we might speak to him of Jesus, and that we might love him—yes, Erard, that we might love him, for the sake of our Saviour?"

"But," exclaimed the old man, rising and advancing towards the window of his room, "what is this? What do I see in the distance, toward the rocks, at the entrance to the wood?" Erard looked also, and was sure that he saw men. "Yes—soldiers!" exclaimed he; "for I see their helmets glisten. There are many of them, grandpapa! Are they coming to kill us also, because we love Jesus?"

"Yes," continued the old man, without replying to the child; "they are, indeed, soldiers. But they are marching slowly, and it would seem---- Ah, my child! they are our own warriors; and it is my son—it is the body of your father—that they are bearing. O God of mercy, support us at this hour!"

"I dare not see him!" exclaimed Erard, running after the old man, who hastened to the road. "Grandpapa, hide me! hide me, I pray you!"

"Here is some one coming to us," said Gottfried: and at the same time, and in the opposite direction, Matthew and Ethbert ran out of the house, from which they had perceived the convoy; and all together hastened to meet a warrior, who advanced, waving a scarf, and exclaiming, "Praise God! Arnold is living!"

Gottfried staggered, and his servants received him in their arms, where he remained weak and motionless. Erard embraced him, sobbing.

The soldier, all out of breath, reached them, and taking the cold hands of the old man, said, "Joy, my dear lord! Bless God! your son is living! Here he is! Come, come; he desires your presence—he calls for

you!"

"Grandpapa, he is calling for you!" repeated Erard, approaching the pale countenance of the old man. "Do not weep any more. Come, come quickly, and embrace him!"

"O the kindness of God! the mercy of Jesus!" said Gottfried, as he recovered; Arnold is living! He is restored to me!"—and leaning on the arms of his servants, he walked to meet the approaching troops.

"My father!--my son!" was soon heard. "Let us bless God! I am restored to you. He has preserved my life!"

This was Arnold—who had just perceived his father and his child, and was making an effort to glorify the Lord with them.

He was lying on five lances tied together, which ten warriors sustained by five other lances passed across beneath. A shield and some cloaks supported the head of Arnold, while a company of soldiers followed and guarded their chief.

Gottfried embraced his son, and blessed the name of the Lord: but after Erard had also manifested his tenderness, the strength of the chief did not allow him to speak any more; and it was in quiet and in silence that Arnold was borne into the house, then laid in a chamber adjoining that in which Theobald was.

The latter had fallen asleep, after Ethbert left him; and when he awoke, all was tranquil around him. The warriors, after having taken some nourishment, had returned to their camp, and Arnold was sleeping beneath the eyes of his happy father, and of Erard, who repeated incessantly, in a low voice, "O, how good the Lord is! He has preserved my father!"

"This is a singular house," thought Theobald. "What kindness, what benevolence, and, at the same time, what seriousness and solemnity, even down to this child! How they speak of God, of Jesus, and of heaven! But, am I mistaken? No: not one among them has named either the Holy Virgin or the saints!"

"Can it be possible!" added he, after long reflection. "Perhaps I am in the family of a Hussite, one of those Calixtans whom I abhor. No, no! They would hate me also—for they know now who I am—and perhaps I shall see no more of the love and interest they have shown me.

"But," said he again, "there is something here that I cannot comprehend. I must inquire and inform myself."

Gottfried had returned. His countenance was serene; and it was with affectionate cordiality that he inquired of the chevalier if he was refreshed by his sleep.

"I am as quiet as possible," replied Theobald; "though this limb pains me some, and I am slightly feverish. O, if I could only learn the welfare of my family! What keen anxiety must torment my wife and my dear children! For it will be published in the two camps that the Iron-Hearted has been killed!"

"Reassure yourself!" said Gottfried. "I have attended to that. I have caused the army to be informed that you are living and comfortable. But they are ignorant of your retreat. We shall also have, as soon as to-morrow, certain intelligence of your family. Do not agitate yourself, therefore; but be patient, and await the Lord's will—for he alone reigneth."

In fact, Gottfried, at the moment of the departure of the soldiers, had placed in the hands of their captain, a letter, to be read on the way, in which, under the seal of secrecy, he confided to him all that

concerned Theobald, and charged him to send the intelligence to his family; but concealing the place where he was. He also requested of the captain that a messenger might bring back some reply from the family, as soon as possible.

"Angel of goodness!" exclaimed Theobald, with profound emotion, which he was almost ashamed to display, "your love confounds me! I have never seen such up to this day. Whence do you derive it? Who gives it to you all?—for you all have the same love."

"God is love!" said Gottfried. "And if we know him, if he has revealed his love to us, ought we not also to love one another? Is it not in this, before everything else, that his image consists?"

Theobald. His image! The image of God! These words were never before spoken in my ears. I have never thought that I myself might bear the image of God. Who has suggested to you this unheard-of and sublime idea?

Gottfried. Was it not for this that the Son of God purchased us by his blood? Was it not that his Spirit might renew and sanctify us, to the resemblance of God our Father?

Theobald, (leaning his forehead on one of his hands.) Purchased by his blood! Renewed by his Spirit! What does that mean? These are, I am sure, the things of God, of heaven; but they are hid from my eyes. I do not understand them. Repeat them, I pray you.

Gottfried. Is it possible that the sacrifice of Jesus can be unknown to you? Do you not know, then, that the Saviour has shed his blood on the cross?

At this question, Theobald drew from beneath his tunic of fine linen, a little crucifix, which was suspended from his neck by a chain of gold, and after having kissed it, showed it to Gottfried.

"Well, then," said the old man, "since you wear upon your person a representation of this sacrifice, why do you not rejoice in what He has done for us? Yes; why do you not glorify him who loved us with such a love?"

"But I have not yet merited it," said Theobald, casting down his head, and coloring.

"Merited it!" exclaimed Gottfried. "Is Jesus, think you, a Saviour, if his salvation is not a gift?"

Theobald looked at the old man a long time in silence, and at last said, "This thought has never before occurred to me. If Jesus is a Saviour, you say his salvation is a gift. What a faith! Is that your religion?"

Gottfried. I am by nature a wicked man, like all others, but my soul reposes upon Jesus; and I desire to love him, because he has loved me, even unto dying for my sins. His blood has washed my soul; I therefore know that I am saved. Can I love him enough for such grace----?"

"Some one knocks at the door," said Theobald; and on the permission to enter, Ethbert announced that the hour for supper approached, and that his master was expected to attend prayers.

"You will not forget me!" said Theobald, extending his hand to Gottfried. "Go! and may God himself be with me as he is with you! I have much, much to think of."



CHAPTER V.

ARNOLD'S NARRATIVE OF THE BATTLE AND WHAT FOLLOWED—HILDEGARDE AND THEOBALD'S CHILDREN.

Prayers were held in Arnold's room. His wound was severe, but not dangerous, and his heart needed to hear his father thank God for the great deliverance which he had granted him.

It was carefully concealed from the two wounded men, that they were so near each other. The father did not, therefore, pray for Theobald, to whom neither himself nor any person made the least allusion. It was from Arnold that his father was to learn all that concerned him; and it was not until the next day, and in the afternoon, that Gottfried, having summoned Erard and Ethbert, listened with them to the narrative of his son. Matthew remained with the chevalier.

"You know, my father," said Arnold, "that I went forth against my will. Ah, what a denial of faith, to make war in the name of the religion of Jesus! But I thought my presence would control certain spirits, and that I might, perhaps, even prevent a conflict between the two parties.

"I communicated my sentiments to some true friends of the Saviour, who had repaired to the camp with the same intentions as myself; and we often assembled together, in my tent, to arrange our plans, and especially to pray to God.

"But the number in favor of peace and forgiveness of injuries was too small, and all our efforts were useless. The only thing we could obtain was, that we should not be the first to attack, and that, at the first signal of truce, we should cease fighting.

"For myself and brethren, we had pledged ourselves before God to limit ourselves to defense, and to use our arms only to protect our own lives, but not to strike our enemies.

"We had learned that Theobald, one of their chieftains, the lord of Rothenwald, a strong castle in the neighborhood, and who, for his indomitable courage, as well as the inflexible firmness of his manners, has been surnamed 'The Iron-Hearted,' had arrived at their camp, breathing only retaliation and revenge. We knew, besides, that his wife, the lady of the castle, named Hildegarde, was very hostile to the cause of the gospel, and had even treated harshly two of our brethren, who had been taken prisoners by Theobald, in a preceding action, and to whom the hatred of his wife had been cruelly manifested.

"Nevertheless, my brethren and myself had all a sincere desire to pray to God fervently for the welfare of Theobald and his men. Alas, he has been killed! He is dead! He has gone to give an account of his soul to God. Poor, poor Theobald!"

Here Erard, who was seated beside his grandfather, laid his hand on his knee and looked at him with a knowing expression. His grandfather placed his finger on Erard's lips, and kept it there, as if to enjoin upon the child the greatest secrecy; and Erard, with a sigh, turned his eyes again upon his father.

"But it was he, it was Theobald, who commenced the combat. He ordered his troops forward; and, himself advancing in front of ours, who had also formed themselves in battle array, he provoked us,

calling us heretics and infidels, whom Heaven had already cursed, and whom the Holy Virgin, he said, was about to crush beneath her feet.

"We did not reply; and the conflict which then took place, soon became terrific. We were almost equal in number, and well armed. But neither of us had that powder of sulphur and fire which strikes and kills the most valiant, even by the most cowardly hand.

"We, therefore, fought hand to hand; and those of us who only defended ourselves, disabled several men, by the extreme fatigue which we caused them in warding off all their blows.

"I do not know whether the Iron-Hearted perceived this; but toward evening, about sunset, he sounded a retreat. At that instant, our army, according to our decision, paused, and we thought the conflict was over; but it was only suspended, that Theobald might send me a challenge to fight single-handed.

"I immediately advanced, and heard my brethren say, 'Arnold, may God preserve thee! We pray for thee!'

"Theobald, with closed visor, approached me. Our horses neighed, while the two armies each uttered a cry, only a space necessary for the combat being left between them.

"I advanced, and in the profound silence which surrounded us, said aloud to Theobald, 'Jesus has shed his blood for us. He sees us from heaven; he bids us love one another. Why, Theobald, will you not hear him? Why will you shed my blood, and, if you can, take my life?'

""Perish the infidels!" replied the Iron-Hearted, approaching me and brandishing an enormous sword.

""Well, then, I am ready for you," I exclaimed, drawing down my visor also. 'Let God be our judge!' I will defend myself—but I will not strike.'

"On saying these words, I held up my shield and fixed myself firmly in the stirrups of my saddle. We had both laid down our lances, and were armed only with a sword—mine was still in its scabbard.

"It seemed to me that Theobald trembled, when I spoke to him of the love of Jesus; but as soon as I had raised my shield, he became furious, and seizing his sword with both hands, he urged his horse against mine, and struck me on the head with all his force, so that I was overthrown and my casque cleft by the blow.

"See in this, my father, the hand of God; for it was thus that he saved my life. When I came to myself, I was in a cottage, in the midst of a wood, and surrounded by three of my brethren, who had transported me thither. My wound was stanchd; I did not suffer much, and my soul was in perfect peace. I was able to sleep a little towards the latter part of this night—alas, so fatal for the unfortunate Theobald and his men!"

"To his men also?" asked Gottfried, almost betraying the secret of his heart.

"Ah! the vengeance of our soldiers, I was told, was terrible! As soon as they saw me fall, they threw themselves furiously upon the enemy. Theobald, they said, was overwhelmed by numbers and killed in a thick wood, whither he had fled. His troops were repulsed and routed, and many lives lost; and about midnight a soldier came from one of the chieftains, to tell us that they were about to seize on the fort of Rothenwald.

"Then my heart was moved. I thought of the wife and children of the unfortunate Theobald, and I entreated one of my brethren, a captain, in great favor with his chieftain, to bear to the latter a letter which

I wrote, notwithstanding my great weakness, in which I earnestly requested, as a personal favor, that he would allow the wife and family of Theobald to be conducted safely from the chateau. I told him that their lives were precious to me; and that, since I could not myself be their protector, I committed this charge to him, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"My friend immediately set out, after having received from me particular instructions as to the house to which he should himself conduct the lady of the castle and her children; and towards day-break, I received from this brother the message, that my wishes had been received and regarded as commands, and that the whole family of Theobald was in safety."

"Dear papa," said Erard, taking his father's hand and covering it with kisses, "you have done as the Saviour commanded—'Do good to them that hate you.'"

"My son," replied Arnold, "it was my duty, and I glorify God for having made it easy for me. Rothenwald is now only a smoking ruin. It was pillaged, then burnt. O, my poor soldiers, how deluded they have been! O, how far are they still from comprehending that religion of Jesus which they professed to defend!"

"But, my dear Arnold," asked Gottfried, "how were you restored to me? Who brought you here?"

"It was, truly, the hand of God, my father. I was in the cabin of the wood-cutter, with the two friends who never left me, when the wood-cutter's daughter came running in, alarmed, to tell us that a numerous company of soldiers were advancing towards the wood, and appeared to be in search of the house where I was concealed. 'Here they are!' she exclaimed. 'They are coming to kill you! O, may God save you!'

"But these soldiers were of our own party, and came to carry me to some other place. Their captain was known to me: he was a man who feared God and protected his servants. I expressed to him the ardent desire I had to be with you, my father; and my request was granted. The wood-cutter wished to make me a litter; but the soldiers cried, 'Our lances and our arms are the Lion's!' And you have seen how these brave people accomplished their work of love and honor.

"My two brethren insisted upon accompanying me: I opposed them. 'Go!' said I; 'hasten to your own families: for many hearts are in anguish on your account.' They embraced me; they committed me to the care of the faithful captain, and to our God; and our God himself has preserved me, and brought me to you."

"And Hildegarde, and her children?" asked Gottfried, with lively interest.

"Thanks to God, I have been able to send them to the house of your sister, my worthy and pious aunt, at Waldhaus. Her dwelling is at a safe distance; and her heart has received this unfortunate mother and her five orphans, as you, my father, would have welcomed them yourself. A messenger from my aunt reached me, while I was on my way hither, and I know that all is well. Alas! as well as it can be for a widow, suddenly driven from her home, despoiled of all her property, and who, I fear, knows not yet the peace and strength which are from God."

"The thoughts of the Almighty," said Gottfried, rising, "are not our thoughts, and his ways are not our ways! His mercies are over all his works, and his judgments are a great deep! Remain quiet, then, beneath his hand, and let his Spirit teach you to wait. He can 'make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water,' So his holy word declares; and this word, saith Jesus, is truth."

Thereupon the old man embraced his son. "I have received thee from God, the second time, dear

Arnold," said he, "and it is a new and great joy to my heart. Happy the son," added he, with emotion, "who has been to his father only a subject of gratitude to God."

Arnold pressed the hand of his father, who went out with Erard. Ethbert was left with Arnold, and upon Gottfried's order, revealed to him cautiously all which concerned Theobald, to whose room the old man now went.



CHAPTER VI.

ANXIETIES OF THEOBALD—WORSHIP OF MARY--- THEOBALD INFORMED WHERE HE IS.

"No news yet?" asked the chevalier, sadly; "and the night has come, and a long day has also passed! Matthew led me to hope the speedy arrival of the express; but he does not come: and I know not why, I experience in my heart oppression and anguish. O, who will tell me what has become of Hildegarde and my children? But what have I to fear? Rothenwald is impregnable, and should all our enemies surround it, is it not under the protection of Our Lady? Who shall conquer it?"

"He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," said Gottfried, "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Happy is the man who makes his refuge in the shadow of his wings, until his calamity be overpast."

"Your confidence is then in God alone!" replied Theobald. "You do not even name the Holy Virgin!"

"It is because she did not create me, nor does she keep me alive. This woman, blessed as she has been, did not purchase me with her blood, and is only a creature of God. What dependence can I place upon a creature?"

"But," said Theobald, "if God made the queen of heaven and the angels, and if all power has been given them----"

"Chevalier!" exclaimed Gottfried, "it is Jesus—it is the Eternal Son of the Father—it is the King, sitting on the holy mount of Zion—who says these words, applying them to himself, 'All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth.' Beware then, for the love of your soul, of attributing this authority to a woman, to whom, when she forgot that she was in the presence of her son, Jesus said, reproachfully, 'Woman! what have I to do with thee?'"

Upon this, Gottfried approached Theobald, whom he looked at affectionately, as he pressed his hand, saying, "May God himself be with you, and strengthen your heart! To-morrow, certainly, we shall have news of your family, and we know it will be good news, since it will be the will of God: and God, Theobald, is love."

Gottfried went out, and Matthew came to sit with the chevalier, whom he was to take care of during the night, and to whom he had orders to say a few words about Arnold and his arrival.

The night rolled away, and Theobald could not sleep. He was suffering, and sometimes groaned, and the name of Hildegarde was continually on his lips.

Matthew did not cease to pray to God in his heart, that he would visit this soul in mercy; and as the chevalier exclaimed, "O, how my heart aches!" Matthew approached him, and said, "My lord is suffering. What can I do for him?"

"Ah, Matthew!" replied Theobald, "it is my heart that suffers. It seems to me that it will break."

"If my lord," said Matthew, gently, "could weep, it would surely relieve him."

"Weep!" exclaimed Theobald, looking at Matthew; "weep, do you say? I do not know what it is. I have never wept. Shall the Iron-Hearted become a woman?"

"Jesus wept!" is written in the Gospel," replied Matthew. "And our good Saviour is our pattern in all things."

"You weep, then, here?" said the chevalier, with visible interest; "for here you do in all things like Jesus?"

Matthew, (humbly.) At least, we desire to. Our pious lord—

Theobald. Gottfried is then a nobleman?

Matthew. My master is the Count of Winkelthal.

Theobald, (with agitation.) The Count of Winkelthal, Matthew? Arnold, the Lion, was then his son? Am I then, indeed, in the house of his father?

Matthew. Arnold is the only son of my master; and he is not dead!

"Not dead!" exclaimed Theobald, extending his hands to the domestic. "Tell me, Matthew, are you sure of this?"

Matthew. Arnold is living. God has preserved him, and he is here; he is near you—yes, in the room adjoining!

"Now I can weep!" said Theobald, putting his hands over his face, and sobbing aloud.

Matthew approached him with emotion, and Theobald, passing his arm around the neck of the servant, leaned his head upon his bosom, weeping abundantly, and saying,

"Have pity on me, Matthew. My soul is overwhelmed!"

"O, my lord!" said the Christian to him, "it is God himself who has visited you and who calls you. Fear not; and let your tears flow before him."

"Matthew! dear Matthew!" said Theobald, clasping his hands; "pray to God for me!"

Matthew knelt beside the bed of the chevalier, and poured out his soul in prayer. Theobald was still weeping when the servant rose; and it was only by degrees that he became composed, and at last fell asleep.



CHAPTER VII.

ARNOLD INFORMED OF WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE—HIS JOYFUL SURPRISE—ABSENCE OF GOTTFRIED.

So passed the night in the chamber of Theobald. Arnold had slept quietly. Ethbert did not at first speak of Theobald; and it was not until morning, after his master had awakened and had with Ethbert lifted his soul to God in prayer, that the servant pronounced the name of Rothenwald, lamenting the ruin of that beautiful and splendid dwelling.

"It is the Lord!" replied Arnold: "'He casteth down and he raiseth up, and his judgments are over all the earth.' But what bitterness for the wife, alas! for the widow of the unfortunate Theobald! Imprudent man! why did he flee? Would it not have been better for him to have submitted to numbers, and been taken prisoner? He would now be living, and his house would not have been burned!"

"Did his pursuers say," asked Ethbert, "that he was dead?"

Arnold. They were two of our chevaliers; and I was informed, that their intention was to seize him; that they called to him repeatedly, and at last, in the wood, pierced his horse with a lance, that they might be able to take him prisoner; but they declared that, in falling, the horse had crushed his rider, who had been killed immediately by striking his head against a rock. Such was their account. The Lord knows whether it was so; but Theobald has perished. Poor widow! Sorrowful and feeble orphans!

"My lord would then have defended him," said Ethbert, feelingly, "had he been able?"

Arnold, (with warmth.) I would have preserved his life at the peril of my own.

Ethbert. The life of your enemy?

Arnold. Does Ethbert forget the word of his God? Or, does he not yet know that "if we love those who love us," we act only like publicans and men of the world?

Ethbert. Arnold, the Lion, will, therefore, bless the Lord, when he learns that the Iron-Hearted was not killed, and that he was taken, a living man, from the spot where he fell.

"Ethbert! is that the truth?" said Arnold, seizing the arm of his servant.

"It was I, my lord, who held the torch which illuminated the dark forest, and it was between the trunks of the oaks and pines that I saw first a horse extended on the motionless body of a warrior."

Arnold. And this warrior----

Ethbert. Was Theobald! Yes, my lord, it was he who had just, as he thought, struck your death-blow.

Arnold. And who directed your steps thither, at night?

Ethbert. God, himself. O, what a work of his wonderful love! Yes, God himself guided your noble father and your son to the Stag Cliffs at the moment when Theobald, flying before the two chevaliers,

passed through the defile of the wood; and your father summoned Matthew and myself to descend there with him.

Arnold, (with adoration.) My father! sent from God to the murderer of his son? How wonderful are the ways of the Most High! But, Ethbert, did you not say that he was dead?

Ethbert. We thought so. But your pious and benevolent father, my lord, knelt, touched the supposed, corpse, and exclaimed, "He is not dead!" and aided by our hands, disengaged him. He extended him on the mossy ground, called for water, bathed and refreshed the pale countenance of the chevalier; his life returned, and your father glorified God.

"Theobald is living!" said Arnold, lifting towards heaven his eyes filled with tears. "O, who will make it known to his wife and children?"

Ethbert. Your father, my lord, commissioned the captain who brought you here, to inform them of his safety; but she is still ignorant of the asylum of her husband.

"And where is he?" asked Arnold.

Ethbert turns, and pointing to one side of the chamber, says, "Behind that wall, my lord—Theobald is in your father's bed."

Arnold clasped his hands, praying, and blessing God. Erard, who had just entered softly, approached him, and said to him, with tenderness, "Good papa, have you slept well? It is I, papa!--It is your little Erard! Will you not embrace me?"

"O, my son," said Arnold, placing one hand upon the shoulder of his child, "if you knew how good the Lord is!"

"O, yes, dear papa," said Erard; "God is good—since he has preserved you."

"And he has also preserved Theobald," added the father.

"Theobald, papa!--the cavalier who was dead! and whom grandpapa, by the goodness of God restored! Do you know him?"

Erard looked at Ethbert, as if to know whether he might continue; and his father, who saw this look, said to him, "Yes, dear child—I know him; and I know that God has confided him to our care. O, Erard, remember that even an enemy has a claim on our love."

"Yes, dear papa," continued the child, "and, like the good Samaritan, we should love him and bind up his wounds. Papa, that is what grandpapa did the other night, in the wood. O, if you knew how afraid I was at first! Think, papa—a dead man!--blood!

"But now this chevalier is so good to me! I have just been to see him with Matthew; and he wept as he embraced me."

"Theobald wept, and embraced you, my son!" asked the father.

Erard. Yes, dear papa; and even said to me, placing his hand on my head, "May the God of thy father bless thee, and make thee resemble him!"

Arnold, (much affected.) Erard, did he say that to you?

Erard. Yes, dear papa; and when I was coming away, he called me back, and giving me this flower, said to me, "Erard, go to your father and tell him that Theobald sent this:" and he wept much. Here it is, dear papa. I did not dare to give it to you at first, because I did not know whether Ethbert----

"Embrace me, my child," said Arnold; "and go, and tell my good father, that I entreat him to come to me."

Erard. O, dear papa, grandpapa would have come before—but he went away in the night, with two servants, in a carriage.

Arnold. My father went away in the night, Erard! And do you know, and can you tell me where he is gone?

Erard. No, papa. Only he said, when he set out—for I was awake and heard him—"Go by way of the heath."

"He is then gone to Waldhaus," said Ethbert; "since the heath is on the direct road to the chateau."

These are the fruits of Christian love! It is active, fervent, and does not put off until to-morrow the good that may be done to-day. Sure and powerful consolation was necessary for the heart of the wife and mother whom God had afflicted, and the servant of the "God of consolation" was hastening, in his name, to Hildegard, whom he hoped to bring to him whose death she was deploring.



CHAPTER VIII.

FRIENDLY MEETING OF THE WARRIORS—MUTUAL FORGIVENESS—THEOBALD'S DESIRE FOR INSTRUCTION—RETURN OF GOTTFRIED—THE BIBLE—LESSON OF LOVE TO ENEMIES.

Arnold did not at first reply to Ethbert. His mind was troubled; but having sent away his son, he said to the servant, "Ethbert, God has given you wisdom. Go, therefore, now, to the chevalier, and bear him, in the name of the Lord, the salutation of Arnold. You will also say to him, that my great desire, my true and cordial desire, is to come to him. But say nothing of my father."

Ethbert entered the chamber of Theobald, who said to him, as soon as he saw him, "Ethbert, I have not yet seen your master to-day. Is he sick?"

"My master," said Ethbert, "is not now in the castle. But, my lord, you must know that God is now displaying his goodness—"

Theobald. To me, you would say, Ethbert. I know that Arnold is living; that he is here; that he is near me.

Ethbert. And my lord knows also that a disciple of Christ can love even an enemy?

Theobald. I was ignorant of it; but I have learned it here. Ethbert, do not fear to tell me all. Do you know whether Erard carried to his father a flower?

Ethbert. I know that his father blessed God when he received it, and that the desire of his soul is that the Baron of Rothenwald----

Theobald. Say, simply, Theobald—and you may also say, his friend, his humbled and repentant friend.

Ethbert, (respectfully.) The father of Erard says to the chevalier Theobald, that the cordial desire of his heart is to visit him, without delay.

"Arnold! Arnold!" exclaimed the chevalier; "do you hear my voice? O, why can I not come to you, and ask your pardon?"

"Theobald," was heard through the partition, "I am coming! Ethbert! Ethbert!"

The domestic immediately went out, and Theobald remained, with his eyes fixed on the door, until he heard the steps of Arnold and of his servant. Then his heart failed him, and he covered his face with his hands, while Arnold entered, and approached the bed, beside which he sat down, saying, "O, Theobald! I must give way to my joy! It is beyond my strength. May God support us at this hour!" At these words Ethbert left the room, saying, "Amen."

"It was I—it was I who struck you!" exclaimed Theobald, bathing with tears the hands with which he had covered his face. "Arnold, it was my sword that made this still bleeding wound! Pardon! pardon! in the name of God alone! Arnold, forgive! O forgive one who would have been your murderer!"

"And let our tears and our hearts mingle," said Arnold, rising, and embracing Theobald, "to bless this great God who sees us and who has brought me to you!"

"To me!" exclaimed Theobald, looking at Arnold, and coloring. "Ah, that bandage! that wound!"—and he began again to weep.

"But for this wound," replied Arnold, with energy, "would you be here, and would Theobald ever have been my friend?"

"Yes, thy friend, noble and charitable soul!" repeated Theobald. "You said to me, Arnold, when I advanced to kill you, 'Why would you shed my blood and take my life?' To-day, here is my blood and my life! It belongs to you. I call God, who now hears me, to witness."

"O, how wonderful are his ways!" said Arnold. "What an admirable Providence has united us—you, the Iron-Hearted, and me, the Lion!" added he, smiling. "Did the Baron of Rothenwald think, three days since, that he would be lying in the bed of the Earl of Winkelthal, and peacefully smiling at the words of a Calixtan?"

Theobald reddened: this last word had surprised and disturbed him; and it was only by controlling the secret indignation of his soul, that he said, "I did not know that peace and charity entered these lofty towers and innumerable battlements. I had been told, Arnold—and I believed it—that impiety alone made its dwelling here."

"No, Theobald—it is not impiety; it is the word of the Lord, and the love of Jesus, we trust, which directs and consoles our hearts."

Theobald. Yours! yes: I believe it; for I see it hourly. But these Taborites, Arnold—this ferocious and cruel Ziska—do they know the name of Jesus—they who persecute the Holy Church?

Arnold. You have seen them only at a distance, Theobald; and you do not even suspect that it was for the cause of Jesus and for his holy gospel that John Huss ended his days at the stake.

Theobald, (surprised.) Were not this Huss and his friend Jerome infidels?

Arnold. Ah, Theobald! was that John Huss an infidel, who, when the sentence that condemned him to be burned was read to him, immediately threw himself on his knees, exclaiming, "O, Lord Jesus, pardon my enemies! Pardon them, for the love of thy great mercy and goodness?"

Theobald, (affected.) Arnold! did John Huss, indeed, speak thus?

Arnold. He did! John Huss knew Jesus, and, like Jesus, prayed for his murderers. No, Theobald; he who loves—who loves unto death, and who can pray for his executioners—is not an infidel.

"O, Hildegarde! Hildegarde!" exclaimed Theobald, groaning; "what hast thou done, and what have I done! Poor prisoners! What injustice!"

Arnold. Your heart is oppressed, Theobald; some sorrowful remembrance distresses you.

The chevalier was about to reply, when a noise was heard at the door, which was opened by Gottfried, holding Erard by the hand.

"Here they both are!" said the old man to the child. "Look, Erard, and see whether the chevalier hates

thy father. See, if what Ethbert told me was not true!

"This dear child," added he, "had some fears for his father: for he knows all, Theobald."

Theobald, (with tenderness.) Come, then, Erard, and give me your hand. Come, my child, and also pardon me. O, how I need pardon from every heart here! Say, Erard, will you not forgive me?

Erard, (giving his hand to the chevalier.) I love you much, since my father loves you.

"Well, my son!" said Gottfried. "Go now to Ethbert, and tell him to be in readiness to accompany me."

Theobald. Shall you leave us again? Will it be for many hours?

Gottfried. It is on your behalf, chevalier, that I must now act. The express which we expected, did not come, and I feared that my message had not reached your dear Hildegarde. I, therefore, went myself to tell her of your welfare.

Theobald. Is it possible! O, tell me if all is well with her!

Gottfried. Thanks to God, Hildegarde and her precious children are well—very well. She has been very anxious until last night. My message did not reach her until then; and her express, who did not start until day-break, was detained on the way. I met him, and bring you more than he would have said himself.

Theobald. She knows, then, that her husband is---- with the Count of Winkelthal?

Gottfried. Hildegarde knows that her husband is with his friends, and she blesses God with us.

"Theobald," added Gottfried, "there should be no difference between us. Jesus will unite us by his grace."

Theobald. As he has already done, has he not? The old father, after having bound up with his trembling hands the wounds of a stranger—of an enemy—afterwards to bestow all the treasures of his kindness, and more than paternal charity, on him whose hands he supposed to be stained with the blood of his son! O, may this Jesus, who makes us love, reveal himself in my soul also! Arnold, my dear Arnold! teach me to know him!

"Theobald," replied Arnold, "he who desires to know Jesus is no longer a stranger to his love."

Theobald. And yet, my true friends, how far am I still from that charity which flows in your hearts like a river! You have pardoned even me; and you can love, pity, succor, and console your enemies! Arnold, it is to Hildegarde that your father is going—to her who, shall I tell you? caused the eyes of two of your brethren to be put out!

Arnold. No, Theobald, no; you could not have done that!

Theobald, (with a groan.) O, what was our injustice!--our cruelty! (*He weeps.*) And when their eyes were pierced, they stretched out their hands on all sides, saying, "Where are you, lord of Rothenwald, that we may take your hand and pardon you in the name of Jesus!"

Gottfried, (with solemnity.) Theobald, these two blind men are now with me; they knew, last evening, who was the chevalier brought here from the forest, and they have already prayed God for you many times! They have even asked Ethbert to assure you of their sincere love, before God their Saviour.

Theobald. O, withdraw from me!--leave me! I am stained with blood! God of heaven, how severely hast thou punished me!

Arnold. Is that to say, Theobald, that you believe us to be better and more charitable than God? Rash and blind man that you are! You see, that, by his grace in our hearts, we can forget and forgive an injury—an offence; and through the same grace of the same God, show mercy and love to our enemies,—you see that, you are affected by it, you admire it; then, when you look towards that God who teaches his children to be charitable or merciful, you see only an angry Judge—an implacable avenger—an enemy, about to strike you! Theobald, do you comprehend your mistake?

"But, Arnold," resumed Theobald, with humility, "by what right, wicked as I am, can I ask God to pardon me?"

"By the right," replied Gottfried, taking from among his books a Bible, which he placed on Theobald's bed, "yes, by the right that every man, every sinner has, who reads and believes the word of God, to receive its precious invitations and promises."

Theobald, (laying his hand on the Bible.) Tell me, my friends, is it by reading and believing this Bible that you learned to love your enemies?

Gottfried and Arnold, (together.) Yes, Theobald.

Theobald. I will then read it also; and, if God enables me, I will believe it: for, if men have called me the Iron-Hearted, I need now that God should soften my heart and make me his child—his ransomed one; and that his Spirit should teach me, like you, my noble friends, to imitate Jesus, in pardoning injuries and loving those who hate me!

THE END.

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