

And thus I submit that we may cling to our old formula, and decline to have it narrowed into a petition which expresses only a part of the truth as to evil, and leaves out of sight that corruption and weakness of our nature, without which outward things could not prove an occasion of falling. My object, in fact, has been to show that the article before *πονηροῦ* by no means settles the question as to the reference being to the Evil One, who is certainly not excluded by the rendering familiar to us, as the explanation in the Church Catechism shews us; but that no less on grammatical than on dogmatical and ethical grounds, when the true scope of this two-branched suffrage is ascertained, we are justified in believing that "THE evil" is the particular evil involved in the temptation, itself often neutral, but bad or good, just as it conquers or is conquered.

Yours faithfully,

W. KNIGHT.

Pitt Rectory, Tiverton, July 8th.

ART. V.—SISTER AUGUSTINE.

ONE of the most interesting biographies which have recently appeared is the Life of Sister Augustine,¹ a German Sister of Charity, who closed a life of devoted service among the sick and poor, under the ban of the Romish church to which she belonged—excommunicated and disgraced, because she would not give her adhesion to a doctrine she believed to be false—and dying, morally speaking, a martyr to her firm stand for truth against Papal decrees.

Amalie von Lasaulx was born at Coblentz in 1815. She was the youngest child of Jean Claude Lasaulx, a distinguished architect, and the descendant of an ancient Lorraine family, who had been settled for nearly three-quarters of a century on the banks of the Rhine. The Lasaulx family had always been characterized by great energy, talent, and versatility: and Jean Claude, no less than his relatives, displayed these qualities. After trying a variety of other callings, he had taken to architecture as a profession, and hard study and natural talent combined, made him one of the most eminent architects in the Rhine-land. Like his whole family, he was a Roman Catholic, but was considered very lax in religious matters. His wife (Anna Maria Müller) was stricter in her views, and conscientious and diligent in her duties; but her cold, stern and reserved character kept her children at a distance, and imparted a gloom and constraint to the household: combined with her husband's habitual absence

¹ "Sister Augustine." Pp. 340. Kegan Paul & Co. 1881.

of mind, it had such an effect on the children, that sometimes for weeks hardly an unnecessary word passed between them and their parents.

Nevertheless, Amalie's childhood was happy in its way. Her father allowed his children considerable liberty; his youngest child was the object of his fondest affection, which she warmly returned; she was the pet and darling of her three brothers and two sisters, all some years older than herself.¹

When she grew old enough, she was sent to one of the day schools for girls in Coblenz; but the education given was very limited, and the discipline lax. She was receiving, however, in the circle of her relatives and friends at home, an education which to her ardent and intelligent mind made up in some degree for the want of regular teaching. Many distinguished persons were in the habit of visiting her family, and from their conversation, and the intercourse with her brother Ernest, a man of great literary and artistic talents, she gained much which helped to develop her mind and cultivate her taste.

Trouble was not far off. Her youth had been, at first, as gay and happy as her childhood: but it closed with heavy grief. She had had several offers of marriage, all such as her family thought suitable; and her persistent refusal displeased her parents so much that, for some time they did not speak to her, even at meals. These refusals seem to have been caused by an early attachment; but it ended in disappointment, and eventually she overcame it, and became engaged to a young doctor, in whom

¹ She had been sickly in infancy, but soon outgrew the tendency, and grew up into a vigorous, joyous child, whose rosy cheeks, large sparkling black eyes, and bright smile, were the very picture of health and happiness. Always good-tempered and full of play and fun, she was the favourite of all her relations. At the house of their uncle Longard (the husband of her aunt Christine Lasaulx) the young people made up for the gloom of the home atmosphere; it was the pattern of a hearty, cheerful, Rhine-land household, and the centre of a large circle of friends and relations and acquaintances. Amalie's father was more at ease there than at his own house, and brought there all strangers of note and artists who came to see him. To his children, their uncle's house was a paradise; they would join their cousins and young friends in excursions among the lovely woods and hills of the Rhine, and in every pastime Amalie was foremost. She was a wild, high-spirited girl, fond of boy's sports, and looking like a boy, with her thick black hair close cropped, according to the then fashion. She was a skilled walker on stilts, and practised skating in a secluded corner of the Moselle; at that time it was an unheard-of accomplishment for girls, but though ashamed to be seen doing it, she "could not give it up, it was too nice!" Of course she could not walk downstairs like other people, but preferred sliding down the banisters. The poet Clemens Brentano (brother of the celebrated "Betina") who was a frequent visitor at the house, used to be shocked at the wild pranks and torn frocks of the careless child; sometimes his reproofs made her cry.

she fancied she had found her ideal of all that was noble and excellent. Her parents consented reluctantly: he was, in fact, not worthy of her; but her lively imagination had painted him in unreal colours. Some words of his own opened her eyes to his utter unworthiness: the engagement was broken off, but her suffering was terrible. It brought on a severe attack of typhus fever, and she was at death's door for some time.

This affliction seems to have been the turning-point of her life. She was awakened to the reality of heavenly things; and, as she said to one of her aunts, "I have given up all that makes life worth living in the estimation of the world: but I have gained what amply makes up for my loss."

At this juncture, an enlightened and Christian adviser, imbued with pure Gospel teaching, might have been of the highest service to her. Unhappily, the system of her Church makes it difficult to find any such teaching unfettered by restrictions which almost reduce the teaching to a dead letter. Her only spiritual counsellor was a former schoolmaster, a priest, named Seydel, who, though he could give hearty sympathy, had no enlightened views to impart; he was simply a zealous, earnest Romanist, with a warm and kindly heart. Like many young persons, after their first experience of sorrow, her interest in ordinary occupations and amusements was lost; and a great longing seized her to give herself entirely to works of charity. She was sent to stay with her eldest brother, now married and settled as a professor, in Munich: opposite his house was the hospital; and, as she saw the sick borne into it, "her fingers tingled"—as she expressed it—"to aid them."

The teaching of her Church pointed all these aspirations after useful work in the direction of what is termed the "religious life." The Church of Rome holds up as the kind of life most acceptable to God a life which includes not only devotion to charitable objects, but the binding of its votary to join a Monastic Order, and to take vows of separation from the world and from family ties.

We may look in vain through the New Testament for any sanction for such a life. We read of women who "ministered" to our Lord on earth of their "substance" and their affectionate offices; of others who "laboured in the Gospel"¹ with the Apostles; who "lodged strangers, relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work:"² but of separation from family life, of monastic vows of obedience and celibacy, we see no trace; and to insist on these is to lay "heavy burdens" which God has not appointed, and to take the task of disciplining ourselves out of His hands.

¹ Phil. iv. 3.

² 1 Tim. v. 10.

Poor Amalie had no wise friend to shew her this. Her parents disapproved of her plans, but on other grounds. She felt a strong call to a life devoted to active works of charity ; and she had been led to believe that such a life could only be led as a "Sister of Mercy." For two years she was inwardly struggling between her belief that she was called by God to this life, and her fear of grieving her parents and dread of leaving her home ; at last, at the age of five-and-twenty, she privately went to Nancy (where was the central or "mother-house" of the Order of Sisters of Mercy in the Lorraine and Rhine country), and entered the convent without informing her parents till the decisive step was taken.

We cannot but feel this was the greatest error of Amalie's life. The excuse for her is the teaching of her Church, which led her to look on it as an act of duty, and, also, the reticence in the presence of her parents, to which she had been early accustomed, combined with much outward liberty, and acting on a naturally self-reliant and reserved temperament. Still it must be regarded as a blameable action, though the chief blame rests with those who deliberately teach children practically to say to their parents—"It is Corban," while binding themselves to a life God has not intended for them. She took the veil under the name of "Sister Augustine," by which she was known all through the rest of her life ; and now began a life of many trials, brought on her by this mistaken step. She felt keenly the separation from friends and family : her love to her father was intense, and his displeasure and sorrow at losing the daughter who was the light and sunshine of his house was such, that he was long before he could forgive her. And no less trying in another way was the new life she had entered on, especially after some time had passed. At first, the influence of the Superior, a large-hearted, kindly woman, and of the Mistress of the Novices, who was of the same stamp, was felt beneficially : but they were both aged women, and when they passed away, and their places were taken by others, the growing spirit of pedantic bigotry, narrowness, and superstitions spreading through the Order (which, in earlier years, had been peculiarly free from these characteristics) had nothing to check it. Sister Augustine, naturally independent, high-spirited, and large-minded, and accustomed to a life of unusual freedom, was tortured by the petty restrictions and the hard, domineering spirit, which reigned paramount. Two years after her profession she was sent as dispenser of medicines to the hospital at Aix-la-Chapelle, and there, for seven years, isolated from all she had loved, and oppressed by the innumerable burdensome rules and formal observances imposed on her, she underwent many bitter struggles. Often, in her misery, she prayed for a callous indifference

to all she had loved before ; but afterwards, she saw that the prayer had been left unanswered in mercy. It was better to suffer for a time, than be the prey of a living death.

It was a period of much mental conflict. She was surrounded with those who taught that it was sinful in one devoted to the "religious life" to love any human being, and that we must try to root out all our earthly affections in order to love God the more. But her clear mind and healthful nature revolted from these notions. She felt that, as it has been expressed by a living writer, "God has no need of creating a desert in order to reign there." She could not sink into a mere religious machine, like so many of her fellow-nuns. She could not give up her love to the friends and family so dear to her heart.¹

The disposition in her Order was to multiply useless and formal restrictions, till the Sisters became mere tools in the hands of the Superiors. This, to her, was impossible ; her position in the Convent was thus completely against the stream.

Her warm heart, her severe regard for truth, her love for all that was noble and beautiful, and above all the simplicity of her religion, made her regarded with distrust and suspicion by the leading persons in her Order.

In 1849 she was appointed Superior of a newly-erected hospital in Bonn. Here she was, at last, in her right element. She was one of those who are naturally fitted for ruling and organizing, and only in such a position could her powers find scope. These powers were at once brought into play most effectively. All was arranged, by her care, so as to be not only comfortable for the patients, but cheerful and pleasant to the eye, both for them and the Sisters. Ascetic as the rules of the Order were, she had nothing ascetic in her character. She was ready to encounter any hardship or trial where duty called, but she did not believe in courting disagreeable things for their own sakes, and her happy playfulness often helped her through difficulties.²

¹ The sisters are allowed occasionally to visit their families, on condition of their lodging in a convent near them, if possible, and never sleeping or taking a meal under the roof of their friends or relatives. Sister Augustine availed herself of this permission to visit her home a few years after her profession. She found her father still so displeased that she had much difficulty in softening him, and a year later, she was summoned to his sickbed, and on arriving, found he had died the day before. This was a bitter grief.

² One of the permanent inmates of the hospital was a poor deaf and dumb man, whose mind was like that of a child of two years ; he was good-humoured, harmless and very fond of the superior ; but his name by some mistake had never been struck off the roll of the conscription list, and again and again he was summoned for military service, and she had to

Sister Augustine's influence was felt all through the hospital. When at liberty for a while she would bring her sewing and sit by the sick beds, talking cheerfully to the sufferers and listening patiently to their complaints. In serious cases and operations she was of the greatest help to the surgeons. She was ready to put her hand to anything and everything; and while constantly exhorting her companions not to overtax their strength, she never spared herself. She had wonderful discernment of character and power of finding out what each was fit for. Once a novice was sent to her, as a last resource, who had been considered unfit for anything. She was a timid, shy girl, who, having been an orphan and early neglected, and perhaps roughly treated, had become so morbidly self-distrustful that she was as helpless as a child. Sister Augustine soon perceived the cause of her failures, and by kind, cheerful encouragement and patience, she trained the poor, despised girl to be one of the most active and useful of her helpers. She used jokingly to call her "her little chicken."¹

She had numerous visitors, friends, old acquaintances, strangers, who had heard of her. From the princess, weary of the isolated position entailed by her rank,² to the poor working woman oppressed by hard toil and sickness, or the little child who had hurt itself at play, and cried for help, all came to Sister Augustine for sympathy. She was generally to be found in her dispensary, where she quietly went on compounding pills and mixing drugs, while she listened to her various guests, gave advice or help if she could—and always sympathy. That sympathy was so lively and intense that it made her the best of listeners: and sometimes a visitor would come back saying, "How very agreeable Sister Augustine was to day!" when she had hardly spoken a word, but only listened and showed her interest by her expressive looks. Most unlike the usual ideal of a nun, she loved everything that was beautiful and attractive—poetry, scenery—flowers above all—and pictures and objects of

write and explain why he could not come. At last she hit on a plan to fix it in their minds; she had a large pinafore made and put on the poor creature, and sent him in this garb to answer to his name. The commandant, greatly amused, at once attested his incapacity for service.

¹ She would gather the sisters round her, at the hour of recreation after supper, into a cheerful circle, and amuse them with lively talk and interesting anecdotes. Accordingly, those who would be transferred from one convent to another, in general, with perfect indifference, would be dissolved in tears and grief if called on to leave Bonn. The other Superiors could not understand it; but she would say, "It is only that I treat my sisters as human beings and not pieces of wood."

² Among her princely visitors was Marie Amélie, the ex-Queen of the French (widow of Louis Philippe), who never passed through Bonn without calling on Sister Augustine, whom she valued as a friend.

art. Her delight was childlike when a friend brought her a fine engraving or some other object of attraction for her rooms. She saw the danger of checking and trying to crush the affections, powers and tastes, which God has implanted.

With all her light-heartedness, she was subject to fits of very deep depression, doubtless increased by the isolated life she was compelled to lead. She bore these hours of despondency in silence, but she suffered keenly.

She did not see the errors of the Church of Rome in a way to drive her out of it; she did not understand that they were part and parcel of that Church; and she loved and venerated the ideal of her own Church, as she believed it to be. But with its errors she had no sympathy. She instinctively retreated into herself from the burdensome ceremonial and degrading superstitions with which Rome has overlaid Christianity, and rested her own soul entirely on the foundation truths of the Gospel, as doubtless many of God's hidden ones do, and have done, in all ages, while surrounded by the influences of a religion of mere outward forms. We find no mention of the Virgin or saints; the object of her soul's communion and trust was Christ alone. And much as she loved her work, her clear common sense showed her the evils of a monastic life. "How maiming is the spirit of an Order," she writes, "or, indeed, of almost all convents, to the human heart, which God intended to ennoble and sanctify by communion with others."

Nor could she endure the habit of looking on "good works" as a sort of life insurance for the soul: she disliked poems which "talked too much," as she expressed it, "of crowns and rewards." She often confessed she had found more true Christianity among Protestants than in her own communion. She was on friendly terms with the Protestant clergy, and with the old Pastor who chiefly visited the hospital was specially intimate: she knew by heart, and greatly loved, some of the Protestant hymns, and used to repeat them as prayers during the celebration of the mass.

When the war of Schleswig-Holstein broke out in 1864, and a number of Sisters of Charity set out to take care of the wounded, Sister Augustine was one of the first to volunteer; and giving the charge of the hospital to her trusted friend Sister Gertrude, she and another Sister left for the North in February—the first time during the twenty-four years of her convent life she had ever made any journey except to go into retreat. Her spirits rose with the occasion; and sad as were the impressions which she received on her arrival, she rejoiced at the field of usefulness before her. Her first halting-place was Kiel, where she had hardly got things into working order when she was summoned by a telegram to go on with three other Sisters to Schleswig to look after the severely wounded. She

found there more work than she could well overtake. The wounded were in a most helpless condition, and almost every needful appliance was wanting; even the things which had been abundantly provided could not be got at for lack of hands. Several labelled chests of oranges were standing in a shed quite inaccessible from the stores of other things piled on the top of them! She wrote to a friend in Bonn:—

My poor wounded are under the influence of narcotics, and while watching beside them, I can answer your kind letter. . . . I have lived through years during the last week, so varied are the experiences I have gone through! . . . Could the gentlemen of the Government spend but one week in the hospitals and hear the groans of their poor victims, I am sure they would be more peaceably inclined!¹

It is a merciful provision of God's providence that active exertion in alleviating suffering, has the effect of mitigating the intensity of the pain which the benevolent and tender-hearted must feel in witnessing it, so that scenes which, to a passive spectator, would be simply agony to behold, can be passed through by the active helpers without depriving them of courage and cheerfulness. Sister Augustine and her companions experienced this in the midst of most trying work. "Though our surgeons have dismissed," she writes some days later,

—"as many as possible to Spandau and Düppel, yet every day brings us so many sick and slightly wounded that we have hardly time to get ready the beds required. In this way 200 beds are constantly occupied, and only the newly furnished rooms are empty. Last night two waggons full of wounded Danish prisoners arrived. These poor creatures, indeed, deserve the greatest sympathy; first, for their sad physical condition, and then for the long imprisonment in prospect. Our poor fellows who, when hardly convalescent, must return to Düppel, have often a heavy heart too, knowing full well, as they do, that only death is before them. We put a piece of white bread and cheese in their knapsacks and give them a little money to help them on the way; they are all provided with good clean clothes—in this way we try to brighten the gloom which hangs over their future."

She was now summoned nearer still to the field, and telegraphed, in reply, that if accommodation could be found she would go. She writes, "God has been so faithful to me hitherto that it is doubly impossible for me to draw back from this new task." The surgeons rejoiced in her efficient help, and she was always at work to find some way of helping the wounded and prisoners.

¹ In the beginning of March she was sent on to the Third Field Ambulance at Rendsburg, to rectify some blunders made by the Sisters of her Order there. "It remains to be seen," she wrote, "whether I shall succeed in pulling the cart out of the mud." She did succeed, and that so fully, that in a short time everything was restored to perfect order, and former mistakes quite forgotten.

On one occasion the Lutheran pastor was administering the Communion to a dying Danish soldier. Sister Augustine was reverently assisting the clergyman in his arrangements, when suddenly the Roman Catholic army chaplain came in and stood at the door with such a look of stupefied bewilderment that she could scarcely keep her gravity.

She went on to Rinkenis, close to the scene of action, in April, accompanied by one Sister. "We went by rail to Flensburg," she wrote, "and were sent on in a field carriage from the commander's quarters with a guard of soldiers, arriving safely before dusk. The surgeons were greatly pleased at seeing us here among so many severely wounded; yet our own joy is much greater, in the consciousness of bringing relief and comfort to these unfortunate men. Do not be anxious about me; the roar of the cannon is near enough to shake our windows, but it cannot harm our wounded or ourselves."

On the 18th of May the entrenchments of Düppel were taken by storm. The wounded were brought in loads to Rinkenis. Sister Augustine actually spent half the night on the highroad, mounting the waggons and separating the living from the dead.

The Danish wounded prisoners were especial objects of her sympathy: they could not rejoice in their recovery like the other, with the prospect of perhaps a long exile in a strange land. "Our doctor insisted on our getting into the open air," she writes—

So we took a long walk to the entrenchments of Düppel, only one of which is remaining. We stood with heavy hearts at the graves of the fallen—large, simple, wooden crosses with green wreaths, and an inscription to tell how many rest beneath, are the only indications of these graves. From the heights the unfortunate little town of Sonderburg can be seen on the opposite shore; the bright red-tiled roofs form a sad contrast to the blackened, still smouldering houses. There is not one habitable house left in the village of Düppel, and the unfortunate inhabitants wander about destitute and without shelter. How many times have I wished myself in the presence of those whose watchword is ever "War!"

The armistice, to be followed by peace, which was proclaimed soon after, sent Sister Augustine and her companions home. She always felt she had gained much in her stay at Schleswig. She had been particularly grieved, on first starting, at the thought that she would be probably months without being able to take the Communion; and the views with which her Church's teaching had imbued her, had made her think it essential to spiritual life. But, on her return, she declared that she had experienced that God's grace does not depend on outward symbols, and that she had never felt nearer to Him than during that time.

On the 21st of June, she returned to the Bonn Hospital, and was overwhelmed with the warm welcomes of all the inhabitants. But she looked back with regret to her "ambulance" days and "the poor shattered soldiers, whatever country they belong to. I dare hardly tell you," she writes, "what a place they occupy in my heart, else you might feel inclined to laugh at me. Well, I believe God knows, and will, at some time or other, lead me again into another field ambulance."

Her wish was prophetic. In June, 1866, war broke out with Austria, and when she and her Sisters reached the Bohemian frontier she found ample work waiting for them.

The frightful aspect of the battle-field just after the fight, and the suffering she had to witness, filled her with grief and horror, but called forth all her energies. The decisive battle of Konigsgrätz was fought soon after her arrival, and the misery was truly terrible for the first few days after. Austria, having refused to join the Convention of Geneva, which had been formed to secure help for the wounded of all nations, left with inconceivable indifference the care of her own wounded to the enemy, whose means were of course insufficient. All the churches and buildings of any size in the country were filled with wounded and dying; the inhabitants had fled into the woods with all their possessions, and only a few brave men remained to face the horrors of those days.

The bravest and most devoted of these was the Priest of the village of Probus. He was seen first on the evening of the battle; a tall black figure was observed moving to and fro in the dusk; sometimes it disappeared, and then was again visible. On approaching they found that this good man was trying to minister to the dying, and to do so most easily, he laid himself on the ground beside them. It was in his church Sister Augustine first nursed the wounded, and between her and this kind priest a warm friendship sprang up. He gave away all that he had, and the sisters had to protect what little belonged to them or he would have given that too, for in his zeal he seemed to lose all sense of "mine and thine." Sister Augustine valued the loving heart and simplicity of "Pastor Nowark."¹

While her days were spent in nursing, her nights were employed in mending and washing for the wounded soldiers.

¹ She wrote to the mother of an officer who had fallen in battle: "God knows the comfort it has been to my heart to find a priest here who has not hidden the real substance of the Gospel under empty externals."

At Hradeck, Sister Augustine found eighty severely wounded soldiers lying on scanty beds of straw in the large riding-school of the Castle. This part of the hospital she chose for her sphere of work, as being the most difficult, and for weeks all the nursing was done by her alone, only assisted by one or two military attendants.

She seemed to need no rest; but the strain on her powers at this time eventually undermined her strong constitution. At the moment she appeared to feel nothing—she only complained of having sometimes to rest her feet, swollen and painful from long standing. The wounded from all the neighbourhood were brought to the Castle of Hradeck, on account of its healthy situation and advantages. But terrible neglect had to be repaired; numbers had been left for days on the field, and often died more from want of food and care than from the wounds. Sister Augustine was indefatigable in her efforts to supply all deficiencies.¹

One poor wounded Italian whom she had long nursed, begged to see her when he was dying, he wanted to say something to her. With his failing breath and broken German he faltered out, "When *Sorella* dies—immediately with Jesus!" On her making a sign that she understood him, he clapped his hands with a look of lively joy, and immediately expired. Sister Augustine was deeply affected, and remembered these words afterwards on her own deathbed.

In spite of suffering and fatigue, she enjoyed the seclusion, the "delicious, forest air," and, when the decrease of work gave her time, the woodland walks.

Her return to Bonn was however a sad one. She was only just in time to visit the deathbed of her old and esteemed friend Perthes: about the same time she lost several of her nearest relations—her three aunts, her eldest sister, and her youngest brother, whom she had the comfort of attending at the last. Her mother and elder brother had died some years before, so she was now left nearly alone in the world.

Her over-exertion in Bohemia had laid the foundation of a fatal complaint. Her heart and lungs were affected, and cough and breathlessness forced her for a long time to pass the night

¹ "The anxiety which weighs heaviest on my heart," she writes, "is how to get nourishment for those who are exhausted. The bread which is sent to the hospitals is probably packed while still hot; it is often very mouldy. A healthy person, if hungry, would perhaps not mind eating it; but a poor wounded man, faint from loss of blood, raises it to his mouth, and then, with tears in his eyes, quietly lays it down and tries to bear his hunger a little longer. This I saw daily and hourly, till I could stand it no more. Your kindness has happily enabled me, in many cases, to supply one want. Every morning I give a roll to each, of which I get three for a penny! and in the afternoon I go round with the butter-dish, cutting away the mould from each piece of bread, and spreading it with butter. I wish you could see how gratefully and eagerly the poor fellows stretch out their hands for it! For the last two days we have run quite short of bread. However, thanks to your kind gift, I sent to Nechanitz to buy some, and have distributed to-day two hundred slices of bread and butter. "Now we need not go to sleep hungry," they said, "may God reward our kind benefactors of the Rhine!"

in a sitting posture. When she first returned to Bonn, her sufferings were so great that she thought herself near her end, and only by strength of will could she carry on her usual duties for a time. She rallied, however, and to some extent regained strength, but was never again fit for active service. When the Franco-German War broke out in 1870, it was impossible for her to resume her work in the battlefield; but she was not idle. She made most careful preparations for receiving the wounded into her hospital, and as Bonn was not far from the scene of conflict, the ample wards were soon full. She could no longer do any of the actual nursing herself, but her watchful care in organizing, regulating and controlling every thing made her as useful, perhaps, as she could have been in the ambulances.¹

Severe trials were preparing for her. The want of sympathy between herself and many of the leading members of her Order, had been an increasing source of annoyance and pain to her for many years. The rules compelled her to go yearly to the headquarters at Nancy for what was called a "Retreat"—a time passed in religious exercises in company with the principal members. The moral atmosphere she breathed there had always been intensely uncongenial to her, and this was felt on both sides. "Fancy," she wrote to a friend, after one of these visits, "from 95 to 100 persons for ten whole days in low and not very large rooms, and not allowed to speak all day—only to listen! How often I looked up indignantly at the fat Jesuit Father, thinking, 'It is fortunate for you that I am only here to listen and dare not answer you!' The quiet little jokes I made to

¹ She sent two of the Sisters under her directions to help in a neighbouring hospital, replacing them in her own by the help of lady volunteers. She was thankful for all the aid she could get; but when the students in a "gymnasium" begged to come and watch the sick at night, she found their well-meant efforts gave her some trouble. "We hardly drop asleep," the soldiers complained, "before they thrust their little lanterns into our faces, to see whether we are asleep or not, and then, of course, we can sleep no more." "Those poor schoolboys," said the kind Sister, "I can't bear to hurt their feelings by sending them away; but I wish I could get rid of them by easy means." As usual, the prisoners were her peculiar care, and so anxious was she to alleviate their hard lot, that it almost made her own people jealous. "If I were a Frenchman, I should get all I want," a grumbling fellow would sometimes say; but the Superior would observe: "Poor fellows! they have no one else to care for them." Her impartiality, and the pains she took to avoid hurting the feelings of kind but injudicious visitors who brought useless or hurtful gifts to the patients, quite irritated at last one of her intimate friends, who finally became so displeased that she told her their friendship must cease. Sister Augustine only answered her by embracing her with tears. "Oh, don't do so," she said; "I am so lonely!" The friend was melted by the words, and their friendship remained unaltered.

myself helped me over the annoyances which were caused by all that was spoken, till I reached the hour of liberation, really in a pitiable state physically and spiritually, which only began to improve as the train hurried me through woods and meadows."

On another occasion, after having nearly gone through the prescribed exercises, the Lady Superior of Nancy announced to the assembled Sisters that she had found a faithful portrait of one of their members who had lately died, and had been greatly beloved by them. All eagerly pressed forward to catch a glimpse of the picture of their friend, when, to their dismay and horror, the Superior produced a skull which had been disinterred from the deceased Sister's grave! The shock quite unnerved some of the older or more feeble Sisters, and many were weeping or ready to faint. No one, however, dared to express a dissentient opinion, when the Superior spoke of the edification of the sight they had witnessed, except Sister Augustine, who, as usual, incurred the displeasure of the Superior for being "so different from any one else!"

But these apparent trifles were symptoms of a coming storm. The intensely Papal, or "Ultramontane," party were growing stronger and stronger; and for some time before the last war began, Sister Augustine had been painfully agitated by the indications of this spirit being on the increase. At the end of 1869, as is well known, a General Council met at Rome, and the dogma of the absolute infallibility of the Pope was carried by an overwhelming majority, as the decision of the Council.

The doctrine was not, it is true, a new one; a large body in the Romish Church had long held and preached it; but still it had been regarded as "a pious opinion," not an authoritative dogma which all were *commanded* to receive. Now all was changed. Some of the minority resisted; but most yielded, and accepted a doctrine which in their hearts they could not believe. Sister Augustine was profoundly shocked and grieved. She could not bear to see one after another of those who she knew agreed with her in disbelieving the Pope's infallibility, submitting and consenting to violate their consciences through fear of man. Those who still remained firm, and refused to accept the Council's decision, had much to suffer. They were suspended from their functions, if in the Church, and generally excommunicated. This it was which led to the "Old Catholic" movement, whose leader, Dr. Dollinger, was a friend of Sister Augustine's.

Meanwhile her health continued to decline. After her labours in the Franco-German war were over, she had a severe return of her illness. She again rallied, and observed regretfully, "I felt so convinced God would call me away, and I hoped

by this time to have been looking down on you all still struggling here below ; but He will call me soon." A relation talked of her restoration. " Yes, He will restore me," she replied with a bright, earnest look ; " but not as you think." She still, however, continued to manage the household, receiving reports from the nursing Sisters, and giving directions from her sick-bed, in spite of much prostration of strength. After her recovery from this second attack, she wished once more to enjoy the beauties of Nature outside the convent walls ; and she made an excursion to visit a relative who was staying at Unkel, a little town on the river beyond Bonn. She sat on the deck of the steamer in the early morning, and as she watched the sunbeams sparkling on the water, she was reminded of a passage in Dante's " *Paradiso* " she had been reading. She enjoyed it keenly. " I cannot tell you what a blessing such a day is to me," she said ; and, turning to the attendant Sister, who sat reading her breviary in a corner, " Why, dear Sister Bonifacia," she said, " look about you, you don't often see anything like this ! " She spent some pleasant hours with her friends at Unkel ; but she was so feeble as hardly to be able to walk from the landing to the house ; and her companions guessed truly it would be her last holiday trip. Her illness returned in greater force, and she felt the end must be near.

The persecuting Church, that had oppressed so many, had its eye on her, and a slight accidental circumstance brought on the crisis. A boarder in the hospital, irritated because her attempts to interfere in the management of it had been mildly but firmly repressed by Sister Augustine, revenged herself by taking the first opportunity of denouncing her to the heads of her Order, as one who received suspended priests. The Mistress of the Novices from Trèves was at once sent to inquire further. She asked to know Sister Augustine's views on Papal infallibility. They had no doubt of her adherence to this doctrine ; but they wished for an explanation of her conduct in receiving priests who were under the ban. Sister Augustine calmly replied that she did not, and never had, believed in Papal infallibility. The Mistress of the Novices was dismayed. " But surely you believe in the Immaculate Conception,"¹ she asked. " No," was the reply, " I do not."

The two Superiors of Nancy and Trèves,¹ on being informed of this, now lost no time in coming themselves to Bonn ; and entering the sick room where the invalid sat breathless and exhausted, having just risen, they proceeded to examine her themselves. The same questions were asked, and were answered as before : and they then told her, she could no longer remain in the hospital.

¹ The doctrine that the Virgin Mary was born perfectly free from sin.
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"If you set me down in the street," she replied quietly, "some one will pick me up."

She was quite calm and peaceful after making this confession of her faith, and felt, as she said, that the Lord had according to His promise, "given her what to say," when called on to answer for her belief. But her bold avowal had sealed her fate. She was formally deposed from her rank as Superior: they "could not keep a heretic in such a position:" and a new Superior from Nancy was appointed.

The whole hospital was in a state of the most painful excitement and grief: weeping, lamentations, and indignant words were heard on all sides, when it was known that the beloved Superior was deposed. "They may set a Superior down upon us," sobbed one of the sisters, a hardy peasant girl, in her vehement sorrow, "but they can never give us a new Mother."

"I was deposed yesterday," wrote Sister Augustine to a friend next day, "and a new Superior has been sent who will manage the house quite infallibly. . . . Don't write to me any more, as now my letters will be kept back and opened. For my own part, I rejoice that I have been permitted to take some small share in the persecutions which have befallen so many. Thank God, death cannot be far off."

The first plan of her persecution was to take her to Nancy, to be completely out of the way of all friends. They asked her if she could bear the journey in short stages? She did not know, she said: nor did she care whether she died at Bonn or on the way. But the hospital doctor, Dr. Velten, who had worked with her from the day on which they had first entered the hospital together, stood faithfully by his old friend, and distinctly forbade the journey. He gave notice to quit as soon as she was deposed. Her own relations, even, were forbidden access to her. She was watched like a prisoner, made to give up her keys, and prevented from seeing any friends or visitors. With great difficulty a cousin made her way to her, and found her hardly able to speak from grief and emotion, but unshaken in her resolutions. The protest of Dr. Velten, however, and of a relation who threatened to appeal to the Government, had some effect; the severity with which she had been treated was somewhat mitigated, and her friends allowed to see her. Her enemies even condescended to bring over some holy water from Lourdes and La Salette, for her benefit. "What good can all that do to me," she said, "when you have thrust a knife into my heart!"

Friends and relations on all sides were eager to offer her a home: she would thankfully have accepted one of these offers, had she been formally expelled as well as deposed; but she considered herself bound to observe the rules of the Order (which forbade staying in the houses of friends) till actually dismissed. However, she saw she could not remain in the position she was

now in, and she decided on going to Vallendar, a small town near Coblenz, where there was a hospital superintended by a Sister Hedwig, an old friend of hers, and a member of the Order; so that, even according to her view, there was no difficulty in her living there. With some reluctance Dr. Velten permitted her to make the journey which, short as it was, was yet a severe ordeal in her weak state. The parting from her old home and the neighbourhood of so many she loved, was a deep trial; but she was now calm and composed, and rested her soul on the promise in Isaiah xlix. 16—"I have graven thee on the palms of my hands."

She left as privately as possible, taking the train to a little country station just out of Bonn, on the 14th of November, accompanied by two sisters, one of whom was to remain to nurse her. Her weakness was so great that she had to be laid on the floor of the carriage which took her to the railway. The Superior of Vallendar welcomed her cordially, and she was conveyed to a little turret chamber, looking on the lovely Rhine valley. But she had, for the moment, lost heart for everything: she laid herself down, "with my face to the wall" (in her own words), "feeling all darkness within me; but then I said to myself, 'after all, I am foolish to be so sad. I have got Christ; and that is enough.'"

She was formally excommunicated—refused the Sacrament, and again had to content herself, as in Bohemia, with "spiritual communion:" but this she had learned to find. "We are one in Him—here as there," she said.

A fresh series of conflicts was now to follow; in her solitude she was visited by priests, Jesuits, and others; by Superiors of the Order, professors, strangers, and old friends, all urging her to submit, if only as a form. One day a Jesuit argued with her for hours; another, her old instructor, Seydel, came over, and, with tears, said: "Dear Malchen, do yield, as I have done, though it cost me much!"¹

The Superior of Aix-la-Chapelle came to entreat her to "save her soul." Then her enemies threatened formally to expel her from the Order. "What does it signify?" she said, when the

¹ The good Sisters of Vallendar—simple, narrow-minded, though kindly women, who thought on everything as their Church ordered them to think—were astonished at her boldness and firmness. Her sufferings increased, physically as well as mentally; but she never swerved for a moment. Her only surviving sister, Clementine, who in youth had been a handsome, lively, rather worldly girl, and then, to the astonishment of all friends, had taken the veil and joined the extreme Papal party, or "hot-headed saints," as Sister Augustine called them, came to see her, and cost her "tears and sleepless nights," as she said, in her vehement eagerness to induce her sister to recant what she looked on as heresy.

first shock of the announcement was over. "One day I shall get up and not find my black robe, and you will have to call me "Fräulein von Lasaulx;" but I shall still be before God and my own conscience a Sister of Charity."

All this, though it could not shake her firmness, greatly increased her physical sufferings. Her pain was so intense that morphia and other anodynes were ordered; but finding, after a temporary fit of unconsciousness, that an attempt had been made to send for a priest, she determined resolutely to abstain from narcotics, lest her mind should be clouded and advantage be taken of it to draw something from her which might be construed into recantation; and rather than thus lead others unconsciously in the wrong direction by her example, she preferred enduring pain, which scarcely left her any respite day or night.

She now sank rapidly. The doctor told her she had not more than an hour to live. "Thank you!" she said joyfully, taking his hands, "How glad I am I shall soon be with God." She prayed, "Lord Jesus, I live to thee; Lord Jesus, I die to thee!" and then, repeatedly exclaiming, "Come, Lord Jesus," she fell peacefully asleep on the 28th January, 1872.

She had left directions that she should be buried at a small village on the left bank of the Rhine, where her parents and younger brother were laid; but the difficulty was to find any priest who dared to bury one who had died excommunicated. Her coffin was carried in silence to the cemetery, and her friend Professor Reusch, who, like her, was under the ban, spoke a few simple words over the grave, and the Lord's Prayer was then repeated by all present. This was all the ceremony; but it was witnessed by many loving friends, who, with some of the villagers, followed her bier to the tomb.

And thus one more was added to the long list of faithful Christians who have suffered at the hands of the Church of Rome. She was not with the multitude of those who saw the corruptions of that Church plainly enough to make them leave her; but she belongs to another great company, less known but perhaps even more numerous, who, though not altogether clear on this point, still lived close enough to their Lord to shrink from the worst errors of their Church, and had courage enough to suffer all things rather than sacrifice God's truth to their own outward peace.