

husband and wife, "a blessed inspiration" says a biographer of Elizabeth "which mingled in the mind of the man the pure name of sister with the sacred name of wife." Indeed, in the happy married life which was tragically short, these two mostly spoke to one another as "Brother" and "Sister"; those were their terms of endearment.

Elizabeth's life was not all sunshine, for the Duchess Sophia bitterly disapproved of certain actions of hers arising from the intensity of her religious life, and the general disapprobation became much more severe after the death of Duke Hermann before Louis came of age. But no amount of cruelty or scoffing would alter her in respect of her penances and religious observances, although all but Louis turned against her. This youth appears to have been a figure almost as outstanding in his qualities as Elizabeth herself. We have him described as attractive, charming, serene; we are told of his dignity, his beautiful cultured voice, his manliness, his purity, his modesty, of an honour never sullied in spite of perfidious counsellors and flatterers. He was resolute and possessed of a will of his own. Many pretty stories are told of the betrothed couple, of the presents he would bring her when he returned from some journey and of how she would run to meet her "Brother." Even after their marriage she never would sit at the head of his table, but always continued her childish practice of having her chair by his own. In 1220 they were married with great pomp, for Louis had opposed all efforts of those about his court to annul their childhood's betrothal. At the time of their marriage he was twenty and she was thirteen. Says one old historian:—"They loved each other with an incredible love and so the holy angels dwelt near them." "Elizabeth, my Saint," Louis calls his wife in Kingsley's "Saint's Tragedy," and in this poem we have a very beautiful translation, and a very accurate one apparently, of the historic reply of Louis to Varila when questioned by the latter as to whether he intended to carry out his promise to wed Elizabeth in spite of the opposition of his mother and certain members of his court. It runs as follows:—

"Look! If yon solid mountain were all gold  
And each particular tree a band of jewels

And from its womb the Niebelungen hoard  
With elfin warders called me to 'Leave thy love  
And be our Master'—I would turn away  
And know no wealth but her."

Duke Louis gave to Elizabeth every encouragement to continue her efforts to ameliorate the sufferings of the sick and the poor. Together they built many hospitals, one just at the gate of their palace which disappeared when a descendant of theirs—Frederick the Serious—erected a con-

vent in its place in honour of the memory of Saint Elizabeth. Their interest in the sick was a beneficent influence indeed throughout their kingdom, for nobles throughout a vast territory were the vassals of Louis; nor did he hesitate to call upon them to join his expeditions to punish injustices to the poor or the sick. Many reports are given of the gladness with which his people welcomed him back from these and other journeys. He was absent during part of the period of the great famine, and when he returned his courtiers met him and complained that his wife had emptied his granaries for the poor; their complaints only irritated him and he replied: "Is my dear wife well? That is all I care to know. The rest matters not. I wish you would allow my good little Elizabeth to give alms as she pleases; let her give as much as she wishes for God's sake, provided that she leaves me Eisnach, Wartbourg and Naumbourg. God will return the rest when he thinks good. We will never be impoverished by almsdeeds." Then he hastened to his "dear Elizabeth." We are told in an old manuscript that when she saw him her joy was boundless. "Dear Sister," said he while he held her in his embrace, "what has become of thy poor people during this bad year?" She replied, "I have given to God what belonged to Him and God has taken care of what belonged to thee and to me"



THE HOLY ELIZABETH.

From the painting by Hans Holbein, now in the Pinacotheca at Munich.

(i.e., one another). But it was the lepers who had the greater share of Elizabeth's charity and pity. By pathways hidden in the woods she would go to them, ingenuous and indefatigable always in carrying provisions to them and caring for their sores.

(To be concluded.)

Miss Isabel Macdonald hopes to publish "Royal Nurses" in book form.

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