

and hospitals and, as soon as his wife was able to travel, set forth on his Crusade accompanied by members of his household. First they stopped at the Abbey of Reynhartsbrunn, which Louis loved, and where he had prepared his tomb. At Schmalkalde he met the other bands of Crusaders, and there are many legends of the sad farewells taken here; but Elizabeth insisted upon accompanying her husband farther, until at last the wise Lord de Varila interfered and insisted that Louis must bid her return. And so Duke Louis "conquered his heart" and mounted his charger, having said good-bye to his "sweetest treasure" and shown her the ring that was to be the sign that anyone bringing it with news of him should be credited. The coming of that ring to Elizabeth again is a pathetic incident. Louis was brought back to rest in the tomb he had built at Reynhartsbrunn and Elizabeth continued to wear the widow's garments she had put on when she returned from setting him on the road to Jerusalem.

From this time the story of Elizabeth is one of martyrdom, hardship, religious penances and, above all, service to the sick and the poor. Her brothers-in-law drove her from the castles of which her young son was not yet old enough to be master. Following the example of their "betters," the poor, to whom she had shown such unending compassion, scoffed and jeered as she passed, an outcast, through the villages. Ingratitude is the characteristic of vulgar minds, but one would not readily look for it in the great House of Thuringia. Later the brothers repented of their treatment, under strong pressure from the nobility; they settled lands and revenues on Elizabeth, but these last were distributed to the poor and used in the building of her hospital at Marburg. Her maternal uncle assigned to her the castle of Botenstein and, as she was very young and of remarkable beauty, he wished her to marry the Emperor Frederick II; the Emperor, too, was anxious for this. "But," said she, "I have had for a lord a husband who most tenderly loved me and was always my loyal friend"; she and he had sworn that if one died the other would never again wed. Elizabeth had been the first person in Germany to join the Third Order of St. Francis, and now she went clothed usually in the simple robe of that Order. Her most precious possession, too, was the cloak worn by St. Francis, sent her by order of the Pope. From now on, until her death, her life is a series of religious observances, acts of charity, endurance of penances, and long weepings for her shortcomings. The penances were the result of the instructions of her priest, Conrad, who did not scruple to lay a rod across her bleeding shoulders himself if he thought that his priests had not been sufficiently energetic in exterminating any tendencies to self-will in Elizabeth. To do him justice, however, he was only acting after the custom of his time and at the instigation of Elizabeth herself. In most of the stories of the saints of that age we find that much weeping was regarded as a virtue and it required but slight cause to send the religious into floods of tears; they wept for joy and they wept for sorrow, and it seems strange, and even monotonous, to read of these constantly flowing tears. But we have to remember that this was an age of the development of feeling. Later ensued a period characterised by the development of intellect, and it must have been something of a sacrifice, too, to go down into the darkness of intellectual thinking instead of receiving guidance constantly through revelations working in feeling. But into intellectuality man had to go in order to develop his own individuality and free will.

At last, when she was hardly twenty-four, the summons came to Elizabeth to "the eternal wedding feast." She received it with joy. As her spirit passed, the tiny cottage, where she lived, was filled, we are told, with a sweet perfume, and, away in Aldenburg, a little child was saying to her companions: "I hear the passing bell at Marburg; at this

moment the lady, my mother, is dead." She was buried, as she had wished, in the chapel of her hospital until, at her canonization, her remains were removed to the great church at Marburg. Just as the last rites were about to be performed a large flock of birds gathered round the hospital and sang a beautiful chorus the like of which had never been heard before. In defending the authenticity of this miracle, St. Bonaventure says: "These little birds rendered testimony to her purity by speaking of her in their language at her burial and singing with such wondrous sweetness over her tomb. He, who spoke by the mouth of an ass, to reprove the folly of a prophet, could as well proclaim, by the voice of birds, the purity of a saint."

Later, largely through the efforts of Conrad, brother of Louis, Elizabeth was canonized, and it is chiefly to records collected, with this object in view, that we owe what is known of the life of one of the greatest of Royal Nurses. Isentrudis and Guta, two noble ladies who had come with her from Hungary to Thuringia, wrote long and careful records; they were well qualified for the task, as they lived in attendance upon Elizabeth until a period shortly before her death, when the priest decreed that it would be for her soul's good that they should leave her in order that she be waited on by two wretches who appear to have treated her with ignominy.

Many great churches, great triumphs of architecture, now bear the name of Elizabeth. We wonder which would be most to her liking, these, or certain lovely places of Nature's making, with folk-names given them by descendants of "God's friends and hers." Beautiful places they are, where often her feet must have trod. There's a spring of purest water in a rock, with vivid green sward all around it; there she used to wash the linen of the leprous and the poor. It is known as "*Elizabeth's Fountain*." There's a space in a wood with just the last traces of a wall about it; it is called "*Elizabeth's Garden*." There's a poor little hovel where once stood a chapel; this is named "*The Repose of the Poor*," for here she received her "Friends." Beyond is a green meadow, called "*The Field of Lilies*." These last two lie in a beautiful valley with a few oaks that are the last descendants of the forests Elizabeth knew; this is "*The Valley of Elizabeth*."—In the cities, great churches, many of them of an architecture to which her century gave birth—in the *solitudes* those lovely spots named, so to speak, by the Folk Spirit of her people.

It will be realised from this Paper on the life of "Dear Saint Elizabeth" what a wealth of interest is comprised in the lives of "Royal Nurses," the title chosen by Miss Isabel MacDonald, should the Papers appear in book form.

#### PETITION.

Scourge me, Lord, with a whip of steel  
 If I should labor and fail to feel  
 Darkness that is the blind man's share,  
 Pain that the cripple has to bear,  
 Keep my pity so keen a blade,  
 Its double edge upon me laid,  
 Lest I minister, yet keep back  
 Something that might fulfil the lack  
 Of a body torn from the hands of Death,  
 Of a heart that lives on the body's breath,  
 Grant me still and steady hand;  
 The hour-glass and its moving sand  
 Challenge us who are pledged to give  
 Flesh and spirit their chance to live.  
 So little time, so great a task . . . .  
 Thy understanding is all we ask.

ELEANOR ALLETA CHAFFEE.  
 From "*Public Health Nursing*."

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