



GEORG EBERS

**THE STORY
OF MY LIFE**

MEMOIR

Georg Ebers

The Story of My Life: Memoir

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TO MY SONS.

When I began the incidents of yore,
Still in my soul's depths treasured, to record,
A voice within said: Soon, life's journey o'er,
Thy portrait sole remembrance will afford.

And, ere the last hour also strikes for thee,
Search thou the harvest of the vanished years.
Not futile was thy toil, if thou canst see
That for thy sons fruit from one seed appears.

Upon the course of thine own life look back,
Follow thy struggles upwards to the light;
Methinks thy errors will not seem so black,
If they thy loved ones serve to guide aright.

And should they see the star which 'mid the dark
Illumed thy pathway to thy distant goal,
Thither they'll turn the prow of their life bark;
Its radiance their course also will control.

Ay, when the ivy on my grave doth grow,
When my dead hand the helm no more obeys,
This book to them the twofold light will show,
To which I ne'er forget to turn my gaze.

One heavenward draws, with rays so mild and
clear,
Eyes dim with tears, when the world darkness
veils,
Showing 'mid desert wastes the spring anear,
If, spent with wandering, your courage fails.

Since first your lips could syllable a prayer,

Its mercy you have proved a thousandfold;
I too received it, though unto my share
Fell what I pray life ne'er for you may hold.

The other light, whose power full well you know,
E'en though in words I nor describe nor name,
Alike for me and you its rays aye glow—
Maternal love, by day and night the same.

This light within your youthful hearts has beamed,
Ripening the germs of all things good and fair;
I also fostered them, and joyous dreamed
Of future progress to repay our care.

Thus guarded, unto manhood you have grown;
Still upward, step by step, you steadfast rise
The oldest, healing's noble art has won;
The second, to his country's call replies;

The third, his mind to form is toiling still;
And as this book to you I dedicate,
I see the highest wish life could fulfil
In you, my trinity, now incarnate.

To pay it homage meet, my sons I'll guide
As I revere it, 'mid the world's turmoil,
Love for mankind, which putteth self aside,
In love for native land and blessed toil.

GEORG EBERS.

TOTZING ON THE STARNBERGER SEE,
October 1, 1892.

INTRODUCTION.

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In this volume, which has all the literary charm and deftness of character drawing that distinguish his novels, Dr. Ebers has told the story of his growth from childhood to maturity, when the loss of his health forced the turbulent student to lead a quieter life, and inclination led him to begin his Egyptian studies, which resulted, first of all, in the writing of *An Egyptian Princess*, then in his travels in the land of the Pharaohs and the discovery of the Ebers Papyrus (the treatise on medicine dating from the second century B.C.), and finally in the series of brilliant historical novels that has borne his name to the corners of the earth and promises to keep it green forever.

This autobiography carries the reader from 1837, the year of Dr. Ebers's birth in Berlin, to 1863, when *An Egyptian Princess* was finished. The subsequent events of his life were outwardly calm, as befits the existence of a great scientist and busy romancer, whose fecund fancy was based upon a groundwork of minute historical research.

Dr. Ebers attracted the attention of the learned world by his treatise on Egypt and the *Book of Moses*, which brought him a professorship at his university, Gottingen, in 1864, the year following the close of this autobiography. His marriage to the daughter of a burgomaster of Riga took place soon afterward. During the long years of their union Mrs. Ebers was his active helpmate, many of the business details relating to his works and their American and English editions being transacted by her.

After his first visit to Egypt, Ebers was called to the University of Leipsic to fill the chair of Egyptology. He went again to Egypt in 1872, and in the course of his excavations at Thebes unearthed the Ebers Papyrus already referred to,

which established his name among the leaders of what was then still a new science, whose foundations had been laid by Champollion in 1821.

Ebers continued to occupy his chair at the Leipsic University, but, while fulfilling admirably the many duties of a German professorship, he found time to write several of his novels. Uarda was published in 1876, twelve years after the appearance of An Egyptian Princess, to be followed in quick succession by Homo Sum, The Sisters, The Emperor, and all that long line of brilliant pictures of antiquity. He began his series of tales of the middle ages and the dawn of the modern era in 1881 with The Burgomaster's Wife. In 1889 the precarious state of his health forced him to resign his chair at the university.

Notwithstanding his sufferings and the obstacles they placed in his path, he continued his wonderful intellectual activity until the end. His last novel, Arachne, was issued but a short time before his death, which took place on August 7, 1898, at the Villa Ebers, in Tutzing, on the Starenberg Lake, near Munich, where most of his later life was spent. The monument erected to his memory by his own indefatigable activity consists of sixteen novels, all of them of perennial value to historical students, as well as of ever-fresh charm to lovers of fiction, many treatises on his chosen branch of learning, two great works of reference on Egypt and Palestine, and short stories, fairy tales, and biographies.

The Story of my Life is characterized by a captivating freshness. Ebers was born under a lucky star, and the pictures of his early home life, his restless student days at that romantic old seat of learning, Gottingen, are bright, vivacious, and full of colour. The biographer, historian, and educator shows himself in places, especially in the sketches of the brothers Grimm, and of Froebel, at whose institute, Keilhau, Ebers received the foundation of his education. His discussion of Froebel's method and of that of his

predecessor, Pestalozzi, is full of interest, because written with enthusiasm and understanding. He was a good German, in the largest sense of the word, and this trait, too, is brought forward in his reminiscences of the turbulent days of 1848 in Berlin.

The story of Dr. Ebers's early life was worth the telling, and he has told it himself, as no one else could tell it, with all the consummate skill of his perfected craftsmanship, with all the reverent love of an admiring son, and with all the happy exuberance of a careless youth remembered in all its brightness in the years of his maturity. Finally, the book teaches a beautiful lesson of fortitude in adversity, of suffering patiently borne and valiantly overcome by a spirit that, greatly gifted by Nature, exercised its strength until the thin silver lining illuminated the apparently impenetrable blackness of the cloud that overhung Georg Moritz Ebers's useful and successful life.

CHAPTER I. GLANCING BACKWARD.

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Though I was born in Berlin, it was also in the country. True, it was fifty-five years ago; for my birthday was March 1, 1837, and at that time the house—(No. 4 Thiergartenstrasse)—where I slept and played during the first years of my childhood possessed, besides a field and a meadow, an orchard and dense shrubbery, even a hill and a pond. Three big horses, the property of the owner of our residence, stood in the stable, and the lowing of a cow, usually an unfamiliar sound to Berlin children, blended with my earliest recollections.

The Thiergartenstrasse—along which in those days on sunny mornings, a throng of people on foot, on horseback, and in carriages constantly moved to and fro—ran past the front of these spacious grounds, whose rear was bounded by a piece of water then called the “Schafgraben,” and which, spite of the duckweed that covered it with a dark-green network of leafage, was used for boating in light skiffs.

Now a strongly built wall of masonry lines the banks of this ditch, which has been transformed into a deep canal bordered by the handsome houses of the Konigin Augustastrasse, and along which pass countless heavily laden barges called by the Berliners “Zillen.”

The land where I played in my childhood has long been occupied by the Matthaikirche, the pretty street which bears the same name, and a portion of Konigin Augustastrasse, but the house which we occupied and its larger neighbour are still surrounded by a fine garden.

This was an Eden for city children, and my mother had chosen it because she beheld it in imagination flowing with

the true Garden of Paradise rivers of health and freedom for her little ones.

My father died on the 14th of February, 1837, and on the 1st of March of the same year I was born, a fortnight after the death of the man in whom my mother was bereft of both husband and lover. So I am what is termed a “posthumous” child. This is certainly a sorrowful fate; but though there were many hours, especially in the later years of my life, in which I longed for a father, it often seemed to me a noble destiny and one worthy of the deepest gratitude to have been appointed, from the first moment of my existence, to one of the happiest tasks, that of consolation and cheer.

It was to soothe a mother’s heartbreak that I came in the saddest hours of her life, and, though my locks are now grey, I have not forgotten the joyful moments in which that dear mother hugged her fatherless little one, and among other pet names called him her “comfort child.”

She told me also that posthumous children were always Fortune’s favorites, and in her wise, loving way strove to make me early familiar with the thought that God always held in his special keeping those children whose fathers he had taken before their birth. This confidence accompanied me through all my after life.

As I have said, it was long before I became aware that I lacked anything, especially any blessing so great as a father’s faithful love and care; and when life showed to me also a stern face and imposed heavy burdens, my courage was strengthened by my happy confidence that I was one of Fortune’s favorites, as others are buoyed up by their firm faith in their “star.”

When the time at last came that I longed to express the emotions of my soul in verse, I embodied my mother’s prediction in the lines:

The child who first beholds the light of day
After his father’s eyes are closed for aye,

Fortune will guard from every threatening ill,
For God himself a father's place will fill.

People often told me that as the youngest, the nestling, I was my mother's "spoiled child"; but if anything spoiled me it certainly was not that. No child ever yet received too many tokens of love from a sensible mother; and, thank Heaven, the word applied to mine. Fate had summoned her to be both father and mother to me and my four brothers and sisters—one little brother, her second child, had died in infancy—and she proved equal to the task. Everything good which was and is ours we owe to her, and her influence over us all, and especially over me, who was afterward permitted to live longest in close relations with her, was so great and so decisive, that strangers would only half understand these stories of my childhood unless I gave a fuller description of her.

These details are intended particularly for my children, my brothers and sisters, and the dear ones connected with our family by ties of blood and friendship, but I see no reason for not making them also accessible to wider circles. There has been no lack of requests from friends that I should write them, and many of those who listen willingly when I tell romances will doubtless also be glad to learn something concerning the life of the fabulist, who, however, in these records intends to silence imagination and adhere rigidly to the motto of his later life, "To be truthful in love."

My mother's likeness as a young woman accompanies these pages, and must spare me the task of describing her appearance. It was copied from the life-size portrait completed for the young husband by Schadow just prior to his appointment as head of the Dusseldorf Academy of Art, and now in the possession of my brother, Dr. Martin Ebers of Berlin. Unfortunately, our copy lacks the colouring; and the dress of the original, which shows the whole figure, confirms the experience of the error committed in faithfully

reproducing the fashion of the day in portraits intended for future generations. It never fully satisfied me; for it very inadequately reproduces what was especially precious to us in our mother and lent her so great a charm—her feminine grace, and the tenderness of heart so winningly expressed in her soft blue eyes.

No one could help pronouncing her beautiful; but to me she was at once the fairest and the best of women, and if I make the suffering Stephanus in *Homo Sum* say, "For every child his own mother is the best mother," mine certainly was to me. My heart rejoiced when I perceived that every one shared this appreciation. At the time of my birth she was thirty-five, and, as I have heard from many old acquaintances, in the full glow of her beauty.

My father had been one of the Berlin gentlemen to whose spirit of self-sacrifice and taste for art the Konigstadt Theater owed its prosperity, and was thus brought into intimate relations with Carl von Holtei, who worked for its stage both as dramatist and actor. When, as a young professor, I told the grey-haired author in my mother's name something which could not fail to afford him pleasure, I received the most eager assent to my query whether he still remembered her. "How I thank your admirable mother for inducing you to write!" ran the letter. "Only I must enter a protest against your first lines, suggesting that I might have forgotten her. I forget the beautiful, gentle, clever, steadfast woman who (to quote Shakespeare's words) 'came adorned hither like sweet May,' and, stricken by the hardest blows so soon after her entrance into her new life, gloriously endured every trial of fate to become the fairest bride, the noblest wife, most admirable widow, and most faithful mother! No, my young unknown friend, I have far too much with which to reproach myself, have brought from the conflicts of a changeful life a lacerated heart, but I have never reached the point where that heart ceased to cherish Fanny Ebers among the most sacred memories of my chequered career.

How often her loved image appears before me when, in lonely twilight hours, I recall the past!”

Yes, Fate early afforded my mother an opportunity to test her character. The city where shortly before my birth she became a widow was not her native place. My father had met her in Holland, when he was scarcely more than a beardless youth. The letter informing his relatives that he had determined not to give up the girl his heart had chosen was not regarded seriously in Berlin; but when the lover, with rare pertinacity, clung to his resolve, they began to feel anxious. The eldest son of one of the richest families in the city, a youth of nineteen, wished to bind himself for life—and to a foreigner—a total stranger.

My mother often told us that her father, too, refused to listen to the young suitor, and how, during that time of conflict, while she was with her family at Scheveningen, a travelling carriage drawn by four horses stopped one day before her parents' unpretending house. From this coach descended the future mother-in-law. She had come to see the paragon of whom her son had written so enthusiastically, and to learn whether it would be possible to yield to the youth's urgent desire to establish a household of his own. And she did find it possible; for the girl's rare beauty and grace speedily won the heart of the anxious woman who had really come to separate the lovers. True, they were required to wait a few years to test the sincerity of their affection. But it withstood the proof, and the young man, who had been sent to Bordeaux to acquire in a commercial house the ability to manage his father's banking business, did not hesitate an instant when his beautiful fiancée caught the smallpox and wrote that her smooth face would probably be disfigured by the malignant disease, but answered that what he loved was not only her beauty but the purity and goodness of her tender heart.

This had been a severe test, and it was to be rewarded: not the smallest scar remained to recall the illness. When

my father at last made my mother his wife, the burgomaster of her native city told him that he gave to his keeping the pearl of Rotterdam. Post-horses took the young couple in the most magnificent weather to the distant Prussian capital. It must have been a delightful journey, but when the horses were changed in Potsdam the bride and groom received news that the latter's father was dead.

So my parents entered a house of mourning. My mother at that time had only the slight mastery of German acquired during hours of industrious study for her future husband's sake. She did not possess in all Berlin a single friend or relative of her own family, yet she soon felt at home in the capital. She loved my father. Heaven gave her children, and her rare beauty, her winning charm, and the receptivity of her mind quickly opened all hearts to her in circles even wider than her husband's large family connection. The latter included many households whose guests numbered every one whose achievements in science or art, or possession of large wealth, had rendered them prominent in Berlin, and the "beautiful Hollander," as my mother was then called, became one of the most courted women in society.

Holtei had made her acquaintance at this time, and it was a delight to hear her speak of those gay, brilliant days. How often Baron von Humboldt, Rauch, or Schleiermacher had escorted her to dinner! Hegel had kept a blackened coin won from her at whist. Whenever he sat down to play cards with her he liked to draw it out, and, showing it to his partner, say, "My thaler, fair lady."

My mother, admired and petted, had thoroughly enjoyed the happy period of my father's lifetime, entertaining as a hospitable hostess or visiting friends, and she gladly recalled it. But this brilliant life, filled to overflowing with all sorts of amusements, had been interrupted just before my birth.

The beloved husband had died, and the great wealth of our family, though enough remained for comfortable

maintenance, had been much diminished.

Such changes of outward circumstances are termed reverses of fortune, and the phrase is fitting, for by them life gains a new form. Yet real happiness is more frequently increased than lessened, if only they do not entail anxiety concerning daily bread. My mother's position was far removed from this point; but she possessed qualities which would have undoubtedly enabled her, even in far more modest circumstances, to retain her cheerfulness and fight her way bravely with her children through life.

The widow resolved that her sons should make their way by their own industry, like her brothers, who had almost all become able officials in the Dutch colonial service. Besides, the change in her circumstances brought her into closer relations with persons with whom by inclination and choice she became even more intimately associated than with the members of my father's family—I mean the clique of scholars and government officials amid whose circle her children grew up, and whom I shall mention later.

Our relatives, however, even after my father's death, showed the same regard for my mother—who on her side was sincerely attached to many of them—and urged her to accept the hospitality of their homes. I, too, when a child, still more in later years, owe to the Beer family many a happy hour. My father's cousin, Moritz von Oppenfeld, whose wife was an Ebers, was also warmly attached to us. He lived in a house which he owned on the Pariser Platz, now occupied by the French embassy, and in whose spacious apartments and elsewhere his kind heart and tender love prepared countless pleasures for our young lives.

CHAPTER II. MY EARLIEST CHILDHOOD

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My father died in Leipzigerstrasse, where, two weeks after, I was born. It is reported that I was an unusually sturdy, merry little fellow. One of my father's relatives, Frau Mosson, said that I actually laughed on the third day of my life, and several other proofs of my precocious cheerfulness were related by this lady.

So I must believe that—less wise than Lessing's son, who looked at life and thought it would be more prudent to turn his back upon it—I greeted with a laugh the existence which, amid beautiful days of sunshine, was to bring me so many hours of suffering.

Spring was close at hand; the house in noisy Leipzigerstrasse was distasteful to my mother, her soul longed for rest, and at that time she formed the resolutions according to which she afterward strove to train her boys to be able men. Her first object was to obtain pure air for the little children, and room for the larger ones to exercise. So she looked for a residence outside the gate, and succeeded in renting for a term of years No. 4 Thiergartenstrasse, which I have already mentioned.

The owner, Frau Kommissionsrath Reichert, had also lost her husband a short time before, and had determined to let the house, which stood near her own, stand empty rather than rent it to a large family of children.

Alone herself, she shrank from the noise of growing boys and girls. But she had a warm, kind heart, and—she told me this herself—the sight of the beautiful young mother in her deep mourning made her quickly forget her prejudice. "If

she had brought ten bawlers instead of five," she remarked, "I would not have refused the house to that angel face."

We all cherish a kindly memory of the vigorous, alert woman, with her round, bright countenance and laughing eyes. She soon became very intimate with my mother, and my second sister, Paula, was her special favorite, on whom she lavished every indulgence. Her horses were the first ones on which I was lifted, and she often took us with her in the carriage or sent us to ride in it.

I still remember distinctly some parts of our garden, especially the shady avenue leading from our balcony on the ground floor to the Schafgraben, the pond, the beautiful flower-beds in front of Frau Reichert's stately house, and the field of potatoes where I—the gardener was the huntsman—saw my first partridge shot. This was probably on the very spot where for many years the notes of the organ have pealed through the Matthaikirche, and the Word of God has been expounded to a congregation whose residences stand on the playground of my childhood.

The house which sheltered us was only two stories high, but pretty and spacious. We needed abundant room, for, besides my mother, the five children, and the female servants, accommodation was required for the governess, and a man who held a position midway between porter and butler and deserved the title of factotum if any one ever did. His name was Kurschner; he was a big-boned, square-built fellow about thirty years old, who always wore in his buttonhole the little ribbon of the order he had gained as a soldier at the siege of Antwerp, and who had been taken into the house by our mother for our protection, for in winter our home, surrounded by its spacious grounds, was very lonely.

As for us five children, first came my oldest sister Martha—now, alas! dead—the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Baron Curt von Brandenstein, and my brother Martin, who were

seven and five years older than I. They were, of course, treated differently from us younger ones.

Paula was my senior by three years; Ludwig, or Ludo—he was called by his nickname all his life—by a year and a half.

Paula, a fresh, pretty, bright, daring child, was often the leader in our games and undertakings. Ludo, who afterward became a soldier and as a Prussian officer did good service in the war, was a gentle boy, somewhat delicate in health—the broad-shouldered man shows no trace of it—and the best of playfellows. We were always together, and were frequently mistaken for twins. We shared everything, and on my birthday, gifts were bestowed on him too; on his, upon me.

Each had forgotten the first person singular of the personal pronoun, and not until comparatively late in life did I learn to use “I” and “me” in the place of “we” and “us.”

The sequence of events in this quiet country home has, of course, vanished from my mind, and perhaps many which I mention here occurred in Lennestrassé, where we moved later, but the memories of the time we spent in the Thiergarten overlooked by our second home—are among the brightest of my life. How often the lofty trees and dense shrubbery of our own grounds and the beautiful Berlin Thiergarten rise before my mental vision, when my thoughts turn backward and I see merry children playing among them, and hear their joyous laughter!

FAIRY TALES AND FACT.

What happened in the holy of holies, my mother’s chamber, has remained, down to the smallest details, permanently engraved upon my soul.

A mother’s heart is like the sun—no matter how much light it diffuses, its warmth and brilliancy never lessen; and though so lavish a flood of tenderness was poured forth on me, the other children were no losers. But I was the

youngest, the comforter, the nestling; and never was the fact of so much benefit to me as at that time.

My parents' bed stood in the green room with the bright carpet. It had been brought from Holland, and was far larger and wider than bedsteads of the present day. My mother had kept it. A quilted silk coverlet was spread over it, which felt exquisitely soft, and beneath which one could rest delightfully. When the time for rising came, my mother called me. I climbed joyfully into her warm bed, and she drew her darling into her arms, played all sorts of pranks with him, and never did I listen to more beautiful fairy tales than at those hours. They became instinct with life to me, and have always remained so; for my mother gave them the form of dramas, in which I was permitted to be an actor.

The best one of all was Little Red Riding Hood. I played the little girl who goes into the wood, and she was the wolf. When the wicked beast had disguised itself in the grandmother's cap I not only asked the regulation questions: "Grandmother, what makes you have such big eyes? Grandmother, why is your skin so rough?" etc., but invented new ones to defer the grand final effect, which followed the words, "Grandmother, why do you have such big, sharp teeth?" and the answer, "So that I can eat you," whereupon the wolf sprang on me and devoured me—with kisses.

Another time I was Snow-White and she the wicked step-mother, and also the hunter, the dwarf, and the handsome prince who married her.

How real this merry sport made the distress of persecuted innocence, the terrors and charm of the forest, the joys and splendours of the fairy realm! If the flowers in the garden had raised their voices in song, if the birds on the boughs had called and spoken to me—nay, if a tree had changed into a beautiful fairy, or the toad in the damp path of our shaded avenue into a witch—it would have seemed only natural.

It is a singular thing that actual events which happened in those early days have largely vanished from my memory; but the fairy tales I heard and secretly experienced became firmly impressed on my mind. Education and life provided for my familiarity with reality in all its harshness and angles, its strains and hurts; but who in later years could have flung wide the gates of the kingdom where everything is beautiful and good, and where ugliness is as surely doomed to destruction as evil to punishment? Even poesy in our times turns from the Castalian fount whose crystal-clear water becomes an unclean pool and, though reluctantly, obeys the impulse to make its abode in the dust of reality. Therefore I plead with voice and pen in behalf of fairy tales; therefore I tell them to my children and grandchildren, and have even written a volume of them myself.

How perverse and unjust it is to banish the fairy tale from the life of the child, because devotion to its charm might prove detrimental to the grown person! Has not the former the same claim to consideration as the latter?

Every child is entitled to expect a different treatment and judgment, and to receive what is his due undiminished. Therefore it is unjust to injure and rob the child for the benefit of the man. Are we even sure that the boy is destined to attain the second and third stages—youth and manhood?

True, there are some apostles of caution who deny themselves every joy of existence while in their prime, in order, when their locks are grey, to possess wealth which frequently benefits only their heirs.

All sensible mothers will doubtless, like ours, take care that their children do not believe the stories which they tell them to be true. I do not remember any time when, if my mind had been called upon to decide, I should have thought that anything I invented myself had really happened; but I know that we were often unable to distinguish whether the plausible tale related by some one else belonged to the

realm of fact or fiction. On such occasions we appealed to my mother, and her answer instantly set all doubts at rest; for we thought she could never be mistaken, and knew that she always told the truth.

As to the stories invented by myself, I fared like other imaginative children. I could imagine the most marvellous things about every member of the household, and while telling them—but only during that time—I often fancied that they were true; yet the moment I was asked whether these things had actually occurred, it seemed as if I woke from a dream. I at once separated what I had imagined from what I had actually experienced, and it would never have occurred to me to persist against my better knowledge. So the vividly awakened power of imagination led neither me, my brothers and sisters, nor my children and grandchildren into falsehood.

In after years I abhorred it, not only because my mother would rather have permitted any other offence to pass unpunished, but because I had an opportunity of perceiving its ugliness very early in life. When only seven or eight years old I heard a boy—I still remember his name—tell his mother a shameless lie about some prank in which I had shared. I did not interrupt him to vindicate the truth, but I shrank in horror with the feeling of having witnessed a crime.

If Ludo and I, even in the most critical situations, adhered to the truth more rigidly than other boys, we “little ones” owe it especially to our sister Paula, who was always a fanatic in its cause, and even now endures many an annoyance because she scorns the trivial “necessary fibs” deemed allowable by society.

True, the interesting question of how far necessary fibs are justifiable among children, is yet to be considered; but what did we know of such necessity in our sports in the Thiergarten? From what could a lie have saved us except a blow from a beloved mother’s little hand, which, it is true,

when any special misdeed was punished by a box on the ear, could inflict a tolerable amount of pain by means of the rings which adorned it.

There is a tradition that once when she had slapped Paula's pretty face, the odd child rubbed her cheek and said, with the droll calmness that rarely deserted her, "When you want to strike me again, mother, please take off your rings first."

THE GOVERNESS—THE CEMETERY.

During the time we lived in the Thiergarten my mother's hand scarcely ever touched my face except in a caress. Every memory of her is bright and beautiful. I distinctly remember how merrily she jested and played with us, and from my earliest recollections her beloved face always greets me cheerily. Yet she had moved to the Thiergarten with a heart oppressed by the deepest sorrow.

I know from the woman who accompanied her there as the governess of the two eldest children, and became a faithful friend, how deeply she needed consolation, how completely her feelings harmonized with the widow's weeds she wore, and in which she is said to have been so beautiful.

The name of this rare woman was Bernhardine Kron. A native of Mecklenburg, she united to rich and wide culture the sterling character, warmth of feeling, and fidelity of this sturdy and sympathetic branch of the German nation. She soon became deeply attached to the young widow, to whose children she was to devote her best powers, and, in after years, her eyes often grew dim when she spoke of the time during which she shared our mother's grief and helped her in her work of education.

Both liked to recall in later days the quiet evenings when, after the rest of the household had retired, they read alone or discussed what stirred their hearts. Each gave the other what she could. The German governess went through our

classic authors with her employer, and my mother read to her the works of Racine and Corneille, and urged her to speak French and English with her; for, like many natives of Holland, her mastery of both languages was as thorough as if she had grown up in Paris or London. The necessity of studying and sharing her own rich intellectual possessions continued to be a marked trait in my mother's character until late in life, and how much cause for gratitude we all have for the share she gave us of her own knowledge and experience!

Fraulein Kron always deeply appreciated the intellectual development she owed to her employer, while the latter never forgot the comfort and support bestowed by the faithful governess in the most sorrowful days of her life. When I first became conscious of my surroundings, these days were over; but in saying that my first recollections of my mother were bright and cheerful, I forgot the hours devoted to my father's memory. She rarely brought them to our notice; a certain chaste reserve, even later in life, prevented her showing her deepest grief to others. She always strove to cope with her sorest trials alone. Her sunny nature shrank from diffusing shadow and darkness around her.

On the 14th of February, the anniversary of my father's death, wherever she might be, she always withdrew from the members of the household, and even her own children. A second occasion of sharing her sorrowful emotion was repeated several times every summer. This was the visit to the cemetery, which she rarely made alone.

The visits impressed us all strongly, and the one I first remember could not have occurred later than my fifth year, for I distinctly recollect that Frau Rapp's horses took us to the churchyard. My father was buried in the Dreifaltigkeitskirchhof,—(Trinity churchyard)—just outside the Halle Gate. I found it so little changed when I entered it again, two years ago, that I could walk without a guide

directly to the Ebers family vault. But what a transformation had taken place in the way!

When we visited it with my mother, which was always in carriages, for it was a long distance from our home, we drove quickly through the city, the gate, and as far as the spot where I found the stately pile of the brick Kreuzkirche; then we turned to the right, and if we had come in cabs we children got out, it was so hard for the horses to drag the vehicles over the sandy road which led to the cemetery.

During this walk we gathered blue cornflowers and scarlet poppies from the fields, bluebells, daisies, ranunculus, and snapdragon from the narrow border of turf along the roadside, and tied them into bouquets for the graves. My mother moved silently with us between the rows of grassy mounds, tombstones, and crosses, while we carried the pots of flowers and wreaths, which, to afford every one the pleasure of helping, she had distributed among us at the gravedigger's house, just back of the cemetery.

Our family burial place—my mother's stone cross now stands there beside my father's—was one of those bounded in the rear by the church yard wall; a marble slab set in the masonry bears the owner's name. It is large enough for us all, and lies at the right of the path between Count Kalckreuth's and the stately mausoleum which contains the earthly remains of Moritz von Oppenfeld—who was by far the dearest of our father's relatives—and his family.

My mother led the way into the small enclosure, which was surrounded by an iron railing, and prayed or thought silently of the beloved dead who rested there.

Is there any way for us Protestants, when love for the dead longs to find expression in action, except to adorn with flowers the places which contain their earthly remains? Their bright hues and a child's beaming face are the only cheerful things which a mourner whose wounds are still bleeding freshly beside a coffin can endure to see, and I

might compare flowers to the sound of bells. Both are in place and welcome in the supreme moments of life.

Therefore my mother, besides a heart full of love, always brought to my father's grave children and flowers. When she had satisfied the needs of her own soul, she turned to us, and with cheerful composure directed the decoration of the mound. Then she spoke of our father, and if any of us had recently incurred punishment—one instance of this kind is indelibly impressed on my memory—she passed her arms around the child, and in whispered words, which no one else could hear, entreated the son or daughter not to grieve her so again, but to remember the dead. Such an admonition on this spot could not fail to produce its effect, and brought forgiveness with it.

On our return our hands and hearts were free again, and we were at liberty to use our tongues. During these visits my interest in Schleiermacher was awakened, for his grave—he died in 1834, three years before I was born—lay near our lot, and we often stopped before the stone erected by his friends, grateful pupils, and admirers. It was adorned with his likeness in marble; and my mother, who had frequently met him, pausing in front of it, told us about the keen-sighted theologian, philosopher, and pulpit orator, whose teachings, as I was to learn later, had exerted the most powerful influence upon my principal instructors at Keilhau. She also knew his best enigmas; and the following one, whose terse brevity is unsurpassed:

“Parted I am sacred,
United abominable”—

she had heard him propound himself. The answer, “Mein eid” (my oath), and “Meineid” (perjury), every one knows.

Nothing was further from my mother's intention than to make these visits to the cemetery special memorial days; on the contrary, they were inter-woven into our lives, not set

at regular intervals or on certain dates, but when her heart prompted and the weather was favourable for out-of-door excursions. Therefore they became associated in our minds with happy and sacred memories.

CHAPTER III. ON FESTAL DAYS

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The celebration of a memorial day by outward forms was one of my mother's customs; for, spite of her sincerity of feeling, she favoured external ceremonies, and tried when we were very young to awaken a sense of their meaning in our minds.

On all festal occasions we children were freshly dressed from top to toe, and all of us, including the servants, had cakes at breakfast, and the older ones wine at dinner.

On the birthdays these cakes were surrounded by as many candles as we numbered years, and provision was always made for a dainty arrangement of gifts. While we were young, my mother distinguished the "birthday child"—probably in accordance with some custom of her native country—by a silk scarf. She liked to celebrate her own birthday, too, and ever since I can remember—it was on the 25th of July—we had a picnic at that time.

We knew that it was a pleasure to her to see us at her table on that day, and, up to the last years of her life, all whose vocations permitted met at her house on the anniversary.

She went to church on Sunday, and on Good Friday she insisted that my sisters as well as her self should wear black, not only during the service, but throughout the rest of the day.

Few children enjoyed a more beautiful Christmas than ours, for under the tree adorned with special love each found the desire of his or her heart gratified, while behind the family gift-table there always stood another, on which several poorer people whom I might call "clients" of the