

Alsace and Breisgau.

The holy Odilie.

Attich, duke of Alsace had an extraordinary beautiful and amiable lady, and for the completion of his happiness he only wanted the enjoyment of a father. But so much as he wished a scion, as often as he preyed to Heaven for marital blessing, his longings never seemed as if they would be accomplished. Once he prayed fervently, and vowed that he would devote the child entirely to the service of God, and his prayer was at last heard, the duchess felt the throes of child-bearing, and bore a lovely daughter which was baptised Odilie. Yet the parent's pleasure was not unalloyed at this birth, for the girl (as if Heaven had retained a pledge for the fulfillment of the vow), was blind. However Odilie grew a blooming maiden, but still more than by bodily beauty, she early distinguished herself by pre-eminence in goodness and by pious sentiments, and this sentiment increased daily, so that she was the delight of all good persons. But as she wanted the gift of sight, she could only have imperfect ideas of the exterior world and nature, and the more charming descriptions one made her of God's glorious creation, so much the more Odilie deplored her blindness. Ever when so very sad she sought consolation in prayer, and

in her childlike piety she prayed incessantly to the Almighty to unclothe her eyes, and to allow her the high enjoyment of the sight of his beautiful world. What nobody expected happened; the Heaven wrought a miracle on Odilie, she saw. With indescribable joy the parents saluted this unexpected happiness, and offered thanksgivings for the costly present, praising the goodness and power of God. But men are too inclined to withdraw from the fulfillment of an engagement, and not to keep a promise for which it was given, when it is completed. Since Odilie enjoyed the light of day, and the glance of her eyes increased the charm of the graceful maiden, she did not want wooers, and the honourable offers which were made to the Duke, caused him often to regret that he had dedicated the child to the service of God. For a time Attich had thoughts of giving notice of such a change of opinion, and as count Adelhart an excellent knight who had done him great service begged as reward the hand of Odilie, the duke thought it not necessary to regard the vow, and gave his consent to the count. With terror the pious maiden heard that she was to marry. She had already hoped, (according to her former destination, and inclination), to be received in a convent, and she believed to be obliged the more resolutely to resist, the intention of her father as so much the more sinful it appeared to her against God, she there-

fore ventured to represent to the Duke his wrong, and to declare decidedly her refusal, and seeing that arrangements were making to compel her, she fled from the castle into the wood where she hoped to remain concealed. It was however soon found out whither she had gone, and Attich drew out his servants and huntsmen to catch her. Soon she heard her pursuers. As a hunted deer she fled before them in the impassable thicket, but at last the fugitive's steps were hemmed-in by a steep broad rocky wall; already the servants and her father were near, the maiden called on God for help sinking on her knees, and see, the rock opened, took the pursued, and closed after her again. All who saw this stood immovable from terror and astonishment, but the most perplexed was the Duke, and the wickedness of his action was heavy on his conscience. While regarding the rock which hid Odilie, her voice sounded from the stone. „My father if you wish to see me again so fulfill your Vow faithfully, if you insist on my marrying I am for ever taken away from you.“ Attich who now distinctly knew that his daughter was irrevocably destined to Heaven, swore not to act more against this destination, and then the rock opened and Odilie stepped forward. But in remembrance of the miraculous event, and to atone for his wickedness, the Duke had a cloister built where the pious Odilie was withdrawn from her pursuers; Odilie