

And There was One, Anna

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Chapter 1

SNOW was falling in great blobby flakes that melted as soon as they touched the ground, and a miserable wind was blowing that cut like a knife in the chest. Everything--houses, stores, even the horse-drawn vehicles--was seen through the dimming mist of the driving snow. Only compulsion and necessity drove a person outside, and then for as short a time as possible to accomplish such necessity.

People went past the bakeshop with their heads bent low, trying to shield themselves from the wet coldness, for the snow now was making a slush underfoot that got a person thoroughly wet. The sky got lower and lower on that particular day, until it was hard to tell where the dirty gray of the sky left off and the dirty, scuffed-up snow began.

Anna never forgot this day, for it was the day when she first began to try to keep the commandments of the Lord. And here was the queerest thing she had ever seen or heard tell of or even dreamed of--mother was the one who made it hard for her. Up to then, mother was a great champion of doing right and standing firm, and not being afraid to stand alone.

"If you see something is wrong, and you have to take your stand on it, stand for the right, even if it is unpopular, and if you are hated for so doing."

Anna could see in her mind her mother's face as she would make these holy pronouncements--so earnest, so intense, her eyes glowing like coals. But always busy, never idle-handed even though she was uttering such ponderous truth. She would be scouring a kettle, rubbing the stove, cutting scallops in newspapers for the cupboard shelves, or sewing a patch on the seat of Freddie's or Gus's or Olav's breeches. Never idle, hand or mind, that was mother. But now it seemed as if her intensity had dug such a rut in her practice and thinking that she could not turn the course of her soul travel, even though turning was right and good and the only thing to do.

Anna never forgot the heartbreak of those days and weeks, for she was the oldest of eight children, and mother had relied on her to be a second mother in the house and in the store as well. She knew about the bakery business, too, and could lend a hand at the kneading of bread and the making of pies and cakes and rolls and crullers if the occasion demanded. Mother did not like it too much when

Anna kneaded, for her small arms were not strong enough to pound the big holes out of the bread dough, and all too often there were complaints as a result.

"Bread tasted real good, but didn't have the texture this time it usually has," Mrs. Niermeier or Mrs. Hofbrau might remark. "I figger it was Anna. She ain't got the muscle, but then you and Mr. Wertz can't be everywhere."

"Yes, but I can't let her do too much of the kneading," Mrs. Wertz would wearily admit. "Yet with Otto off on the delivery wagon and with the store full of trade, what is a person to do?"

"Learn her to wait on the trade," the friend would suggest. "I betcha she could learn that real fast."

"I'll have to," Mrs. Wertz would reply, her thin fingers swiftly tying up rolls and bread and poundcake.

Anna had waited on the trade on this miserable day ever since she had come home from school, and her legs ached from the running to and fro, anticipating the needs of her mother and the customer she might be helping.

"While you're there, Anna," her mother would often call, "get me a dozen cookies, too, the ginger ones with the scalloped edges, and six of those pecan rolls."

There would hardly be time for them to eat supper, so lively was the trade at night from six to eight, and even to nine; for folks were coming home from work, in the days before the forty-hour week was thought of, and men would come in for the bread their wives demanded to accompany the thick soup, fried meat, and strong coffee.

But something had happened, and life could never be the same again. It began the summer a year before, when a man came into the bakery selling religious papers. Mother was attracted, for he had a copy in the German language, and she bought one for father. Anna remembered seeing it lying on the counter when she came home from school. It was called Zeichen der Zeit, and father, who loved to read in German, told her later it was wonderfully interesting, and it meant in English "Signs of the Times." Later, after he had read and reread it, he told her he never dreamed there were so many things in the Bible, and he had learned more out of the small paper than in years of churchgoing. He wanted to get another one, and he wrote to the publishers for a subscription.

And that was the thing that started it. He began to read the paper through and through and through again before the next copy came in the mail. They would go to church, mind you, as they had done comfortably for years on end. But instead of Otto settling and dozing even occasionally, he would sit up straight as a ramrod, just as if he did not trust a word the pastor said. Sometimes he told him so, too, much to Helga's shame and embarrassment.

"That ain't Biblical, that baptizing of the babies, Pastor," he offered once on leaving the church, after several babies had gone through what some folks said was a perfectly lovely christening. The pastor stiffened, and a steely look came into his eyes.

"Unfortunately, no," he said with as much pomposity and dignity as he could muster. "But it is a beautiful tradition, and many of the church fathers commended it."

"Didn't the Lord say something about teaching for doctrines traditions like that?" Otto pursued, eager to get to the bottom of the thing.

"And that was in regard to another matter entirely, Brother Wertz," the pastor answered, ice in his tone now. "Come and see me in my study sometime, and I'll make it more than clear. Good morning, Mrs. Morgan. Yes, a beautiful day, Mr. Baumgartner."

Otto felt himself dismissed but not vanquished. He went home to study his German Bible and Zeichen der Zeit even more assiduously and eagerly. Anna was his chum, his pal, and he eagerly told her of his many findings and of the real truth of things he was confident he had rooted out.

It was monstrous at first for him to believe that the church that generations of Wertzes had attended was wrong. Yet, how could he be a true follower of Luther and close his eyes to truth? Luther went far, and likely, if the church he established had gone on digging, it would have had the whole, pure truth by now, for one man could hardly dispel all the horrible black errors of apostate Christendom. It had settled down and tried to sit in Luther's light instead of feeding it and making it glow more brightly.

But it was not Otto who had the courage to step out and do the right thing. After they had studied the new thing in Zeichen der Zeit the week before, Anna, though only thirteen, made a decision.

"I'm going to do it, Father. If it's in the Bible, I'm going to. You tell me when it is sunset Friday, and I'll start. You ought to, too."

Otto sighed heavily. "I can't, Anna."

"Why, Father? You yourself said it was right and true and the will of God!"

"Your mother would-well, I-can't. The bakeshop, you know-the trade, and we've got a very big family to feed. But you, Anna--you make the start. Maybe God will forgive me if I don't."

Anna never forgot that night. Mother had gone to bed, for Aunt Carla, who helped with the work, had said she would finish up the kitchen duties. Mother's feet were swollen and sore from the long hours, and the baby was teething.

Father had gotten the big German Bible, and Anna and father had gone through the article again, looking up the texts laboriously and corroborating the truth they were both sure of now.

And that Friday evening, all Otto had said to Anna was, "It's sunset, my dear," and she had taken off her apron and gone to the house, even under the bombardment of her mother's angry eyes.

Even though the history books say that immigration from Germany fell off in the latter part of the nineteenth century, because more opportunities were offered to the common people of the fatherland and they stayed home, Otto came, and came alone from a small farming village in western Germany.

His father had died, and he and his mother struggled along somehow on the miserably small farm, hardly big enough to keep the two of them alive, for two or three years. Otto had heard dimly of big German factories off to the north and west, but the growing cities and the chance to earn in other ways than by the grueling toil of planting and reaping by hand did not touch Otto's life. When he heard of it, it was as if he were hearing news of a foreign land. All he knew or had known was the small hut where he and his mother lived, and the few bleached acres, and the cow, and the pig they fattened every year for meat, if they were fortunate. When mother died suddenly, from just a cold in the chest that got worse at nighttime, Otto was so scared he went out into the darkness to summon his cousin Rudolph.

But when he got back, with his cousin striding along by his side, he realized poor mother had died all alone. It was so frightening that Otto was at a loss to know what to do in this emergency, or how to do it; so Cousin Rudolph helped him. The whole sad business of getting poor mother buried was accomplished, though Otto was in such a daze he hardly knew how it was achieved.

Then Rudolph sat down with him to talk things over and decide what could be done. The cow had been milked and the pig fed, and the pot was bubbling with cabbage-and-potato soup. There were still big loaves of black rye bread mother's hands had made. It did not seem possible she was gone. So much of her remained. The spinning wheel with the lint just as she left it; the griddle turned on end on the dresser by the fireplace; her old shawl by the door near the chip basket, as if she would at any moment need it when she went outside. Rudolph had helped him make up her bed, and Rudolph's wife had washed up the bedding. Things seemed as if they were ready for mother to come in and start living again. It seemed queer to order his life without her.

They had built a fire in the grate and had not bothered to light a candle, for the room was bright enough with the leaping flames. They were sopping their bread in the bowls of thick soup.

"Now you are wanting to know what you are going to do," Rudolph said, more as a statement than a question. Otto nodded, looking at the kindly, bearded" face opposite him with deep affection. Rudolph was good; he went out of his way to help people. He was poor, and worked like a slave to make his small farm feed his growing family. One thing the whole village knew: Rudolph wanted to go to America. He wanted to go so badly that he had learned everything the small village had to teach him of that faraway promised land. Of every visitor Rudolph would glean what few grains of knowledge he possessed, until he was the most traveled man in the village, though he had never been more than five miles from the pump in the center of the village square. People came from everywhere to ask him things.

Sitting on the three-legged stool that night after mother had been carried to the churchyard in a coffin the shape of the sole of a shoe, Otto regarded Rudolph's lean face almost fearfully. How could he, with all the hardships everyone knew he suffered, have a solution for him? How could he? He could not let Otto come to the crowded hut where his own family eked out an existence. Nor could Otto let them come here, for there was not as much room here, nor were his own acres any more productive than were Rudolph's.

After a long silence, in which Rudolph's burning eyes seemed to seek a solution from the leaping flames of the fire, he arose like one inspired. "You must go to America, Otto. You have no wife, no children to cry for bread when it is hard to find, and you can find the way to go. I will help you. The price is cheap on the

steerage, and like I always say, you can stand anything for a matter of two weeks or three."

In the next day or two the treasures, meager and poor, of the home were taken to the market place, and a few of them were sold--but not enough. Yet Rudolph was not discouraged.

"You work on my farm for a few days, Otto," he suggested, a light gleaming in his dull eyes, "and I will do a thing I have wanted to do all my life. I will borrow Herr Bromley's cart and small donkey and carry your things to Aachen, and there I will find the money for your passage. I know I will, for there is a factory there, and they say folks there have money. I have always wanted to see a far place like that, and now my heart will be satisfied."

For the next week Otto wrought in the soil of the farm for his cousin. His cousin's wife, who was shrewish, grumbled continually, and was alternately angry and fearful. Sometimes she accused him of driving her husband off, and other times she wept loudly at the prospect of never seeing him again. But on the evening of the sixth day Rudolph returned, the cart empty and his face triumphant.

"A pity it is that we did not wait and sell all the things you had in Aachen," he proclaimed loudly. "I got twice as much for everything there as I had wished, and I have more than enough for you to go to America, my boy." He spoke fondly, and with an air of accomplishment such as Balboa and Ponce de Leon might have worn. No one in the village had gone as far as twenty-five miles away in ever so long, and Rudolph had to sit up late that night to tell his adventures to the whole assembled village.

For his services Otto gave Rudolph his cow and his pig, and the selling of the farm where his fathers had lived and died for generations. If it could be sold, Rudolph was to use the money to come with his family to America. He would repay Otto as he could, and he could, for everyone knew that great riches awaited those who landed on the beckoning and fabulous shores.

Rudolph knew how to go about getting the steamship ticket, for he had dreamed of getting one for himself so many times. He had Otto again work on his farm while he joyfully went to transact the lad's business. This time he was gone more than three weeks, and a lot of the people were already shaking their heads in dire prognostication of the dread calamity they were sure had overtaken him.

But he returned. He came up the road carrying his shoes, for his feet were so blistered with the long walk he could not bear to have the shoes on. The whole

village turned out to see him. He was a personage, a traveled man. Everyone looked at him with awe and respect.

"I have gotten you a ticket on the Hamburg-American steamship line, Otto, and you will go in three weeks. It is on the steerage, and it is better than I thought it would be. The shipmaster let me go all over that ship, and let me tell you, our whole village could move in and have room to spare."

All the while he was talking, he was taking out the things he had in a small packet which had been tied to his shoulder. In the center of it was the ticket, a long, involved thing, much written on. Otto looked at it with great awe and fear, and was almost afraid to touch it. To think of a mere piece of paper having so much power as to help him traverse land and sea!

During the next few days things were in a real whirl. Otto packed the shirts his mother had made for him, every stitch neat and regular and fine, and the trousers she had fixed for him from the ones his father had in the great chest that was kept shoved against the wall. One pair was from the ones his father wore at the time he married his mother. It was so long ago that Otto was aghast that they should last, though it was not really so long as that. Otto was only fifteen, and he was the one and only child; but to Otto, sixteen or seventeen years was a long, long time.

"Where shall I go, Rudolph?" Otto asked. "I am afraid of the big city--New York. I do not want that at all. I wish I did not have to go there."

"My uncle lives at a place called Newark. They say it is near New York. I will write him two letters, one to send before you go, and one for you to give to him. He is a fine man, and he will welcome you. And he speaks good German and will like to hear you speak it. That will make your welcome more sure, though it will be sure, without question."

Otto was not a very strong boy, and the getting ready almost made him sick. He had all his possessions tied up in a great bag made of one of mother's home-woven blankets. He started in plenty of time to get to Hamburg, riding on a train part of the way. Rudolph took him to the town where he boarded the train. This was his first train ride, and he was so ill with the excitement of it all that he could not eat the food Rudolph had given him.

Then he came into the confusion of the big city. The great Elbe River, a mile wide in the city, was filled with vessels from every part of the world. He trembled from head to foot while the train was threading its way into the great depot. He

wondered what he could do and where he could go. Suddenly he thought of going right to the boat which he would take. It might be loading, and if it was, he might get work there and give himself a bit of money besides that which he had sewed up in the lining of his jacket.

Soon he found his ship, the Empress Alexandra. He took out of his pocket the paper his cousin had written. That was it. No mistake. It was the same. It was the boat he was to take to get him to the promised landthe promised land! He could hardly breathe, he was so excited. He walked up the wooden dock platform and surveyed the great boat proprietorially. Neat and trim it was, and even then the men were painting her and holystoning the decks.

Down at the end of the gangplank he saw a man engaged in earnest conversation with another. He had on a uniform, so Otto concluded he must belong to the ship. He waited, and asked for a job, explaining that he had a ticket for passage and had no place to stay or go till the ship sailed. He was given some work and was shown to the place he was to sleep for the voyage. He was warned to put his possessions in a safe place, and the purser consented to have them in his cabin. Otto was grateful to him, for the steerage was one great room divided into sort of dormitories for men and women. The bunks were anything but comfortable, and the whole thing was very near the pumps and the engines; the place shook all the time, and smelled of bilge water and rats. But it was as Rudolph said: a fellow can stand anything for two or three weeks. It would soon pass and be forgotten in the joy of being in America.

Chapter 2

OTTO had work in the galley, being handy boy for the cook. He peeled potatoes and onions, watched meat frying, sorted beans, and scoured the floors. When the day came for the boat to sail, he was given the job for the voyage. Thus he was virtually paid for the trip. He rejoiced at his good fortune, even at the start, and was given other quarters than the steerage.

If he had not had this work, he would have been very sick on the voyage. But he was given a place to stay with the crew, which was far better quarters than the steerage, and the food was much better also. He used to look at the poor folks down in steerage and be very thankful he had such a good spot. More often than not his hammock was slung aft on the deck, where the breeze could catch him, and away from the stale body smells and the bilge and the rats.

The next few weeks were so filled with events that afterward he could hardly sort the days apart. It seemed that someone was always on hand to help him when he got into difficulty, and he did not have the real puzzlement he had so feared. Almost before he knew it, he was with Rudolph's kind uncle, Mr. Schaffer, in Newark, New Jersey, and was welcomed and treated like one of the family. And wonder of wonders, he was offered a job, for Mr. Schaffer had a fine bakeshop and needed a boy to learn the trade. He was more than glad to give Otto his chance. The wages were small, but the food was good, and the home was all he could have desired.

He was given a room in the attic of the friendly house, and his work was to begin at once. August Schaffer was the kindest of teachers, and Otto was to cherish him as a friend all his life.

The great ovens in the bakery were fired and heated with hard coal, the like of which Otto had never seen. Uncle told him it was mined in nearby Pennsylvania. His flour was kept in small, tight rooms-ratproof, Mr. Schaffer said, for he was as fussy and clean about his baking and his bread as Otto's mother had been in her peasant home in Germany. There were great cloth bags of the flour in mighty heaps, and the kindly baker had strict ways of which flour to use so as always to use the oldest flour first. Otto learned many things in those days.

He was always glad that his mother had taught him to pray, for though the Schaffers were good to him, he had a life singularly apart from their lives. They were not religious, and cared not a whit for the things which Otto had learned from his childhood were the best and happiest things of life.

He had never forgotten how his mother wove religion into all her doings in the house. She told the lad that when she washed her face in the morning, she prayed that she might be washed just as clean within from the sins that might touch her during the day. She told him, when she put on a clean apron, that it covered the old, everyday dress and made it almost dressy, some what like the robe of Christ's righteousness covers our poor efforts to be good and do right. When she picked up the broom to sweep the dooryard or the small hut, she told him it reminded her of the poor folks that did not know they were lost, as in the story of the woman who was searching for the lost coin, and had to sweep her whole house in order to find it.

"They are lost, anyway, and must be found, for they are precious," she told the lad. "We must seek them and make them see how wonderful it is to serve a great Jesus." If Otto came in for a cool drink of water and found the pail empty, she was

sure to remind him in her sweet voice that no one who ever went to the Living Water would go away thirsty, but Christ would supply the need of every thirsting soul.

So Otto lived a lonely life in his attic room, often sitting on his cot all day Sunday and reading his German Bible. No one was particularly unkind, but neither was anyone particularly friendly. He did not enter into the things the others of the household did, and after his long hours of work, he went to his room or to church, or just to wander around and see the sights of the city. His greatest pleasure was the churchgoing, though, and he went to every meeting he heard announced. He was considered a very pious boy.

But he noticed that even the young folks in the church did things his mother had told him again and again were not things he should do. Some of them drank, and some played cards, and not a few went to the dances, which his mother had condemned in no uncertain terms. And Otto believed his mother.

By the time Otto was nineteen, he had begun to pray to the Lord for guidance in the matter of selecting a wife. It was a rather queer prayer, for Otto had never had a girl friend in his life. He looked at himself ruefully in the glass and wondered who would have the temerity to even so much as look at him. He saw his wide mouth and strong jaw, his straight yellow hair and blue eyes. He thought he was about the ugliest person God had made, and he wondered if he would be an old bachelor. But up in his attic room he prayed his lonely prayer just the same.

"Dear God, look down on my loneliness and give me someone who will care for me, and keep house for me, and look for me to come home at nighttime, and love me."

He was almost ashamed to say the last, for it sounded even a little sissy, though no one could possibly know about it, except him and God. and he was sure God would not laugh or tell it on him so that others might hold him up for ridicule. But he could not see himself as others did. His mouth might be big, but it was sweet. His fair hair and blue eyes, which he despised, gave him the look of a young saint, such as one sees on old church windows, straightforward and stern of purpose.

One day he was working alone in the bakery while the others were gone to eat their evening meal. He was bringing up great trays of buns and bread from the basement bakerooms when a pretty maiden came into the store to get some bread. She stood looking into the large cases where the loaves of crusty bread stood on end, sending out the sweet, yeasty aroma of new bread fresh from the

oven. It was maddening to a hungry person, and Otto was unusually hungry this night.

"I want two loaves of that bread," she said, pointing to the long loaves of Vienna bread Otto had just brought up. They were still warm and fragrant.

Getting the bread out, he reflected, a little guiltily, that she had the prettiest voice he had ever heard. It was the first time he had heard a girl who sounded like his mother. She was a stranger, and he must find out from whence she came.

"A stranger here?" he managed to ask her, trying hard to be casual.

"Yes," she answered. "We have bought the house on the corner, and it is to be made into a boardinghouse. Mother is a widow. Daddy died six months ago, and she thought she might make her living in this way. We sold our farm."

"You can," Otto agreed. "I often hear folks asking where they might find a good boardinghouse, especially since the gear factory has started over east of here."

Then she smiled at him sweetly and told him that she would tell her mother and it would make her very happy. Mother was terribly worried that she would lose the money dear daddy had left her, and then what would they do?

When the girl left, it seemed to Otto as if the room darkened a little bit. But no-- he looked around, and the wall lamps in their brackets were burning as brightly as they ever did.

Otto thought that as soon as he got through with his apprenticeship and began to earn real wages he might be glad to have a room in the new boardinghouse. It was only a matter of months now, and he would be a fullfledged baker. August had praised him loudly, and had let him do up many a batch of bread all by himself, and pies and cookies too. Now he was learning to make cakes, including fruitcake, since the holiday season was approaching.

Little by little he got acquainted with Helga Meier. He soon knew the whole Meier family, too, for they were the kind of folks that seemed to take to you, and you to them. They were all religious, and Mrs. Meier wondered if she should take folks into her house who smoked and drank lager beer till they were fairly drunk as lords.

Otto considered, for he knew she counted on his advice. "I do not think it would be especially wrong for you, but it would not be a good example for the little boys, growing up here and seeing these things to be common. When a thing gets to be common and you get used to it, it doesn't seem so bad."

"That settles it!" cried Mrs. Meier. "I will take a stand on that. I will ask them not to smoke or drink on the premises. I believe I will get a better class of boarders if I do, and I believe God will bless the place."

"You won't be alone, but it will be extraordinary. I've seen Temperance Hotels. And there's no doubt about your getting a better class," Otto agreed, "especially if you take your stand on liquor, for it keeps pretty sorry company."

When Otto graduated from his apprenticeship, it was just before Christmas. August hired him at a good wage, and was glad to do so. Otto began to put away money, hoarding it as a squirrel hides nuts for the winter. He did not move to the Meier boardinghouse, for the Schaffers continued to let him have the attic room free and charged him only a small sum for his board. Thus he was able to save almost all his wages, and he was delighted. He wanted very much to dress up and ask Helga Meier to go with him to church and to music concerts. But he had no good suit, and he wanted to have more money saved up before he dared to spend a thing. His work clothes were not good enough, and he sensed it.

In the early spring there was a box social at the local schoolhouse, and Helga asked him to go with her. She blushed when she asked him, explaining quickly that the girls were supposed to ask the boys, and she hoped he did not think of her as brazen and unladylike. He was so overwhelmed with the desire to go that he told her Yes before he stopped to count the cost. And he assured her that as for thinking of her as brazen, he thought she --- but here he got so embarrassed and confused that he could not say another word. She smiled at him, picked up her package of bread, and ran out. Otto was in the seventh heaven of delight until he remembered his clothes. Then his spirits went down to zero and congealed.

He had not a thing fit to wear. No, not even father's wedding pants and shirt, which dear mother had made over for him with such love and care. He would be a laughingstock, for they looked so old-world and out of style that someone would be sure to call him Christopher Columbus and say, "I didn't know it was a masquerade."

In anxiety he went out to the biggest department store in town and looked at the men's clothes. He had money in his pocket in case the desire to buy overwhelmed him. He found himself in the hands of a master salesman, a young man so tactful that he put him at ease. Soon Otto was talking freely and unashamed, for the young man seemed to understand. Before he knew it, he was the proud possessor of a fine blue serge suit; two new shirts, not ruffled and stiff-bosomed like his; some neckties; and a fine pair of shoes, black button shoes with bulldog-nose

toes, as the style was then. He was persuaded to invest in a greatcoat, too, of dark blue wool, and all these he wore on the way home, to get used to them. A fine black derby was perched at a jaunty angle on his fair hair, and he carried his old clothes in a large bundle.

When he came to the bakery, he hesitated to enter, fearing they would make fun of his getup, he looked so different. But he need not have feared. August, his wife, and their daughter were all in the store when he entered. For a moment there was an impressive silence, as they gazed at his embarrassed face.

"Well, would you look, Mother!" boomed August heartily. "I thought it was one of those Astors or Vanderbilts comin' in our store, and here it is our own Otto, who looks like an American now. Say, you look like you might have a pair of fine horses and a cab out in front. I had no idea how nice you would look if you took a little notice of your clothes. You ought to have done it before."

"You look like a regular dude," Mrs. Schaffer contributed, and she drew near to examine the material. "Good quality, too."

"You'd better go and see that Meier girl you've- been makin' eyes at, afore you are an hour older," old August advised him slyly. "All the girls in this district will be settin' their caps for you. You'll see."

The year was 1898. The paper had been full of the doings of Spain, and everyone was sympathizing with the people of Cuba, who were rebelling against their unkind rule.

Otto had taken out his first citizenship papers by now and was on his way toward becoming an American citizen. America was his country now. He was intensely excited when President McKinley sent a message to Congress, saying that the conditions on the island of Cuba were intolerable to the United States.

"That is America," he told Helga when he went to see her, brave in his fine new outfit, and Helga agreed, proud of her young man, all dressed up as fine as anyone. At the box supper he asked Helga to give him a sign when her box came up for sale, and he would bid it in, if it was the last thing he did. And he did, and had the joy of sitting with her and eating the pretty meal she had prepared, all wrapped in one of her mother's big linen towels, ironed as smooth and stiff as paper.

She had made an angel food cake, and Otto declared he had never tasted such a good cake. Of course, it was wonderful because the lovely, soft hands of Helga had made it, and he looked at her with new interest. She could cook, and he knew

very well she could keep house, for her mother had told him she did not know what she would do without her. To himself he said that she would have to one of these days, if he had anything to say about it. Of course, he knew that Ma Meier would not oppose him. She was always saying he was like a son to her, for it seemed he fixed something every time he went to see Helga. Once it was the food mill. Once it was a leaky tap, and again he cleaned out the kitchen stove that took a sudden notion to get stopped up and send out billows of black smoke at the wrong time. And while he was walking into the heart of Mrs. Meier, he hoped he had captured the heart of Helga. And so the months rolled by, the happiest of Otto's life.

Chapter 3

ONE night when Helga was setting the sponge for bread to be baked in her mother's kitchen the next day, Otto was more than helpful. He talked bread, and little secrets he had learned from August, and some he had found out for himself.

"I was the one who thought up the creamtop bread folks like so well over at the bakery," he told the girl proudly. "I just put a couple of quarts of cream into the big batch of dough, and let me tell you, it makes the crust so good we named it Cream-Crust. I dip my hands into the cream and spread it on top of the loaves the last thing before I set them in the proof box to rise. You have to study to make your bread different and better than other breads."

"And it was you who thought that up, Otto?" Helga asked in pleased surprise. "I always buy that kind of bread. It is my favorite. And lots of the boarders here especially ask for it, too." Then he told her how to make a currant sweet loaf, and she told him how she made a breakfast loaf, using eggs and powdered sugar, and added excitedly that it made wonderful toast, too. It was queer talk for a courtship, but every cadence of her voice set Otto's heart to spinning like a top, and every time Otto told her anything she could not help but think how smart he was. They were falling in love, those two, and the realization was so thrilling that each moment was as sweet as sugar candy. It was so delightful Otto wished he could stop all the clocks of the world, and hang onto these precious moments and never let them go.

Then Helga asked him about his mother and his life in Germany before he came to America. Talking with animation, his eyes glowed as he tried to picture to her the beauty of his mother's character and her sweetness. He told her that he thought the two of them would love each other, and the saddest thing he could think of

was that they would never meet and love each other, as he wished they could have done.

Somehow the talk went from the past to the future, and they began talking eagerly of their plans in life. Before the evening was over, they decided to pool their dreams and work out their lives together. They went in to tell Ma Meier of their decision. She was mending sheets, putting dainty patches on, under the light of the big kerosene parlor lamp. Hand in hand the two stood before her.

"I have been expecting this," she said, smiling, "and though it will make it a little hard on me, I am glad it is you, Otto, instead of some of these clothes-horses who claim to be men. I have no complaints."

They set their wedding date for New Year's Day, 1899. It did not give them too much time, but the two had laid their plans and they were eager to work them out.

Together they walked all over town trying to find a site for a bakeshop, for Otto was eager to have his own business. He knew it would be a hard, uphill job at first, but he felt he could do it, with Helga at his side to encourage and help him.

Finally they found a place where a bakery used to be, but the man had sold it and gone off to the Spanish-American War. The ovens were there yet, and the owner had been instructed to sell them for whatever he could get. It took a lot of scrubbing and cleaning to make the place presentable, and Helga helped, going at it with such energy that Otto was surprised and touched.

For a month before the wedding, Otto had his bakeshop and bakery going. He was in debt, and that troubled him not a little. But Helga assured him that with her help the debts would soon vanish in thin air.

At first, there was not the trade in the new store that Otto had counted on, and which he needed to pay expenses. Folks had to get used to a new place, he told himself. It had stood empty a long time. Besides, folks said his predecessor was an inferior baker. Otto went out in the evening and peddled bread and rolls for a few days, talking at every home and telling them of the new place he had set up in the neighborhood. In a little while things were buzzing, and he could hardly get his baking done for waiting on the trade. He lost weight, working so hard, and he needed Helga terribly.

Helga, too, was painfully eager to get to her lifework with her dearly beloved Otto. A month seemed so long to wait when he needed her so sorely.

After the shop was closed at night, he was busy remodeling the rooms at the back for living quarters, using his old-world methodical skill to fashion things solidly and well. He had a sense of beauty, too, and of symmetry. He was not wedded to the old ways, but got books and magazines from the library and pored over them, in order to make the place as neat and handy as he could. He was not acquainted with the American way of buying on time and contract, and he signed the contract to buy the building with great fear. Helga explained to him that after he had given the down payment his rent went to pay for the place, which was a great deal better than just renting and getting nothing for it but the rent receipts.

Piece by piece the small living quarters were finished and ready for the furnishings. Otto haunted the furniture stores for bargains, getting good things at reduced rates if he could. The divan he got for their small sitting room was new, but a small scratch on the wood trim at the back constrained the shopkeeper to sell it for less. Otto fixed it with linseed oil, sandpaper, and a bit of wood stain.

The bed, a tall, wooden structure, was carved and lovely, but as the owner explained, "The young folks these days ain't got no sense of beauty. They're all runnin' after them new iron beds. And just look at this. Ain't it pretty? I'll give you a bargain, for I see you know good stuff when you see it." And so were the rooms furnished, carefully, lovingly, and thoughtfully selected for beauty and for long service.

Helga was more than busy, getting ready for her wedding. She sewed and flew around like she was possessed. The wedding was in the parlor of the boardinghouse, and Mrs. Meier did the honors in a thoroughgoing fashion. The bride herself cleaned the parlor and put up the decorations, with the help of all the boarders. They all were so interested that they gave what help they could.

The wedding was simple, but as Otto said, the end results were just the same. In a few minutes they were partaking of the bride's cake, which the groom, of all persons, had made for the occasion. August Schaffer had wanted to make it, and he did make one. So, at each end of the table stood a stately cake of several tiers, each topped by a bride and groom, and one could not tell which was the better. Helga said she did believe Otto's was a little tastier, but Otto laughed at that. He knew she would think so, even if there was really no difference.

After a while the guests were gone, and Otto and Helga could examine their wedding presents. The table was full of them. Then the new Mr. and Mrs. Wertz called a handsome cab, which was a special luxury, and loading themselves and their wedding presents in, went home. Their wedding trip was about a mile, from

the Meier residence to the rooms behind the bakery. Helga had her clothes and her things there already, Otto having taken them over a few at a time, when he came to see his ladylove. Now, there were just her suitcase with the last things, and the wedding presents, which ma and the boarders packed into the big clothesbasket and a couple of boxes they found in the cellar.

Even though it was late when they got home--after eleven o'clock, an unheard-of hour--Otto had to get up next morning at four to start things going in the bakery, especially since he had had to be gone on the business of getting married the evening before. But it was going to be handy, being right next to the bakeshop.

Helga took complete charge of the store. She was glad that her kitchen was in the room next to the bakery. She could run in when there was a lull in the trade, and put on the potatoes or wash the few dishes. She insisted on wearing neat, pretty dresses in the showroom, and always wore a snowy apron with a crocheted edge. She told Otto it was good for business.

"I figure this way, dear," she said in her naive, sweet way: "Folks want their food to be clean, and you know that a lot of stores and bakeries are anything but clean. If we keep things clean and neat, and look the part ourselves, and our bread is the best in the city, we are sure of getting a lot of business. We'll have so much that you can afford to hire another baker to take a lot of the load off you."

"That's right, dear," Otto answered. "I would like to start a route, and we could make a lot of money. There is a whole section north of town where folks are far from a store, and a regular bakery route will bring in a lot more than our store. That is my dream."

The two of them worked very hard for six days a week, and on Sunday they rested, as they thought they should. They went to church as piously and as regularly as if they were a hundred and ten years old. And they prospered, though they worked cruelly hard. Hard work is not really so hard when one walks in peace and contentment, and hope lies ahead. And where there is love. Yes, love is important.

The new year went by swiftly, full to the brim of hard work and the joy of accomplishment. Otto had never been happier in all his life. He built a little porch on the back of the store, and together they cleaned out the back yard, which had, so Helga estimated, tin cans and rubbish from at least ten generations crushed down into its topsoil. After the bakery was closed at night, Otto carried trash in a cart to the deep declivity in the vacant lot a few blocks up the street, where folks

were invited to empty trash for fill. As soon as the yard was clear enough, they fixed one side for a vegetable garden and the other for grass and flowers.

From a fence factory in town Otto got palings, and soon a pretty picket fence surrounded his property, making it seem all the more like their own. He painted it white. At the store next door, a hardware merchant remarked about the change.

"I tell you, we are glad to have good neighbors next door to us. It made my Bertha fairly sick, the way those folks threw their rubbish right out under our noses. If you want any good starts of cabbage plants, we've got a lot in a cold frame, and you can have all you want. Tomatoes, too."

And so they got neighborly and dug in to stay. Otto and Helga decided that if they could make two payments on their property a month, they would do so and cut in half the time till they should be able to call it their own. They achieved their goal, and two or three times that year they made as many as three payments a month. It was fun to watch the principal whittled down and to see the interest get less. They always were pleased and excited after making such a payment.

In March, 1901, their first babe, a little girl, was born. Helga's duties in the bakery were curtailed, naturally, and she was not able to be in the store as much as she had been. But things worked out just fine. Helga's younger sister wanted work, and she came in and did a good job, as well as earning money for herself at the same time. And Otto was really pleased, secretly, that his business was so good his wife could stay at home and keep the house and the baby, and he could have a clean house and regular meals as he liked. She still kept the books, though. Not that things were unsatisfactory before; but it stood to reason that she could not be in two places at the same time. Now she put more frills on the cookery and entertained more, too.

They named the little girl Anna, and Otto was as proud of her as if she were a little princess instead of a Newark baker's daughter. He had high plans for her.

"She must have a good education, Helga, with us living in a fine country like this. Even the poor and the ordinary folks can go as far as they like in schools. Who knows--maybe little Anna will be a great missionary, or a reformer of some kind, or a great teacher. See how smart she looks. She shall have her chance if I keep my health and strength."

It was not for long that Anna was alone. Little brothers and sisters came along regularly at two-year intervals, till Mother Helga had a real family about her. Five children made music in her kitchen and played with blocks on the floor. Otto had

built additions to the bakery home, and it extended out far beyond the original honeymoon flat. Anna, Freddie, Martha, Evelyn, and Gussie--oh, a wonderful family!

The Wertz family were very religious, and not a Sunday went by but that Otto or Helga, or both, went with the children to the Lutheran church. The children never knew any way to spend Sunday morning except to go to church and Sunday school. They made quite a procession, with Otto pushing the baby carriage and a child or two holding on, and Helga bringing up the rear with the older ones.

People could almost tell the hour of day by the time they went by. "Is it nine o'clock already? It must be; there go the Wertzes. They pass at nine on the dot, as a rule. I do declare, we ought to get started going to church like that. I always say it does a body good. But it is hard, getting out every Sunday like they do."

But one day a terrible thing happened. Otto and Helga were never the same again.

Little Evelyn was four, and was the sweetest child you could ever see. Her hair was like spun gold, and her little voice was as sweet as angel bells. Otto loved her greatly, and she would run and throw her baby arms around his legs, crying in an ecstasy of delight, "My daddy, my daddy." He would look at Helga and say, "Things like this pay for all the hard work and worry a person may have." And he would take the little thing up and bury his face in her sunny curls. Of course Helga agreed. Even people on the street would stop and talk to Evelyn.

She loved to learn her memory verses, and several times in Sunday school expositions she was put up in front to say her little verse in front of all the people. Otto would almost swoon with pride. Oh, he loved Anna and Freddie and Martha, but on little Evelyn and Gussie he seemed to lavish a greater degree of tenderness, for they were the youngest.

Little Gussie was dropped by a neighbor woman who helped out when he was born, and his back hit on a flat-iron on the floor used to hold the door back. His little back was injured so badly that he was in a cast for almost two years. He never seemed to make a comeback, and was not so rugged as the rest. Otto thought he could not stand it to hear the little fellow's thin, wailing cries, and now he knew what it meant when folks would say they wished they could suffer for their children. He wished it a thousand times. Gussie's small, twisted back ground sorrow into his soul.

Gussie's illness was a sad contrast to Evelyn's radiant health and sweet vivacity. She and her small brother would come running to Otto as soon as he came in from the bakery. Gussie with the tap, tap of his little crutch, and Evelyn, her little shoes sounding like fairy's steps on the carpet. He loved them so much that it was a physical pain to him. He longed with all his heart to shield them from all pain and sorrow and anxiety, and he often prayed aloud for them as he drove the bakery wagon.

But on this terrible day! Oh, for years and years neither Helga nor Otto could speak of it without terrible sobs and tears. Otto had been out to burn the trash that had accumulated in the bakery. There were odds and ends of paper scraps and broken wooden boxes and some of the shelf paper that Helga's sister Bertha had taken out. Otto took the box of matches out into the yard and started the fire. But he forgot and left the box of matches lying on the edge of the wooden fence. He did not dream that the children would get at them. It was one of those things that you wonder all your life why in the world you did it, why you did not think and save yourself a world of heartaches.

But he did forget it, and Helga allowed little Evelyn and Gussie to go out into the fenced-in yard to play as usual. She went about her work, cleaning the house and scrubbing and scouring, until she heard Gussie calling her loudly. She cried, "Just a minute, dear, till I get this bed made." She went on, finished one bed, and started another. Then Gussie screamed again, and she thought she heard Evelyn cry. But she was not alarmed, for they liked her to be near while they were playing and were always calling her.

She went to the door, and what a sight met her eyes! Little Evelyn was a torch of flame, and was already lying down in the grass, rolling in agony. It was too late when she got to her, for the little thing was beyond all help. Helga began to scream, and the neighbors came, and Otto came, but no one could help either Helga or Otto. They were out of their minds with the horror that had come upon them.

If it had not been for August Schaffer's wife, the bakery would have been closed, for neither Otto nor Helga could do a thing. Mrs. Meier had to take all the children home with her, and it was days before they could get Otto or Helga to eat or even change clothes. They did not speak; they just sat like dead people. The children, like little wraiths, looked at their parents in fear.

They could not bear to stay at that house any more, and Otto bought a bakery in Trenton. They moved and rented their place. In Trenton the new house was away

from the bakery, and though it was not so handy, Otto and Helga liked it better in many ways.

"It keeps the children away from the bakery, and they don't cry to eat between meals as they used to," Helga said one day.

"Yes, and it is a quieter life for them," Otto answered. Both of them had aged, and silver threads showed in their hair, though they were still in their early thirties.

Every Sunday Otto would go to the cemetery and take some flowers to put on little Evelyn's grave. Anna went with him when she could, for he looked so solitary wending his way all by himself. Once he put his arm around Anna and looked down at the little stone, with tears standing in his blue eyes.

"I cried over my father and my mother, Anna," he told her. "I sorrowed for them bitterly, but not like I do for little Evelyn. She must have thought we had failed her. She must have, for no one went to help her when she cried. And it was my fault she found the matches I left there like a fool."

"Don't cry, Father," Anna said. "The great God knows you did not mean to do it, and don't forget, little Evelyn is in heaven now, where nothing can hurt her. She is singing right now the angel songs, and she knows you didn't mean to hurt her."

"We will see her in heaven, Anna. We must be good so that we can see little Evelyn. Oh, sometimes I have thought I would gladly die if the next moment I could hear her fairy footsteps running to me, her voice crying out, 'Daddy, Daddy,' as she used to. But mother and I must go on and live for you children, and look forward to all of us being in heaven."

"We will, Father, oh, we will," Anna cried with all the conviction of her young heart, for heaven and its reward were real to her, and she firmly believed in them.

It seemed as if the sunshine had gone out of their lives forever, but time is a great healer, and it soon brought a portion of peace to the family. Still they often talked of their lost daughter. Otto would say, "Well, I am glad we had her for a short while at least. We're better for her pretty little life!" And Helga would always agree. They lavished all the more love on little Gussie, who seemed to be more frail and nervous after Evelyn's tragedy. The doctor said Gussie had a great shock, too; though he hardly realized what it was all about, yet it affected him. The rest of the children seemed very happy and healthy, and time went on, healing as it passed.

Chapter 4

HELGA began to help in the bakery again, particularly after they moved to a big house next door to the bakeshop. Being far away had become a burden. Now it was easy to run in and out, especially since Anna was old enough to take on a little responsibility.

One day when Anna came home from school, she saw a small magazine in the German language lying on the counter. She picked it up curiously. "What is this, and what does it say, Mother?" she asked.

"It is Zeichen der Zeit," she replied. "It is a German paper I got from a fellow who came along selling them. I thought it might please your father. You know how he enjoys reading things written in the German language. I suppose I would too if it were my mother tongue."

"Do you know what it means, Mother?" Anna pursued, holding it up and scanning its queer writing curiously. "I don't see how father can read a word of it."

Helga laughed. "It is wonderful how folks can read things they have been brought up to read. Ho Fung Ho, the Chinese laundryman, can read such stuff as I never could see a bit of sense in. But you will see how pleased father will be. He fairly dotes on German. The man said it means 'Signs of the Times.' I think it is a religious magazine, but that will not spoil it for your father. He likes religious things."

Otto was very pleased, indeed, and that night after supper he took it to his big easy chair and sat down to read. One of the first articles he read was by Elder Offerman, about the second chapter of the Book of Daniel. It particularly interested Otto, for the conditions in Europe were enough to get anyone worried. It had not been long since Austria reached down in the Balkans and annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other trouble was brewing, too. Only recently Italy had made war on Turkey and seized Tripoli; then the Balkan league had made war on Turkey.

All of Europe seethed with intrigues and hatreds. It was whispered that most of the countries of Europe were so tied up with treaties that if there was a war everyone would be in it at the drop of a hat. One would be bound to help the other. Folks said that some country of Europe would get strong enough one of these days to rule the whole shooting match, and some said it was Germany.

Of course Otto realized that Germany was a military country, and if he had not come out when he did, he would have had to serve in the army as his father and

his grandfather had before him. Yes, Germany was a military country and ambitious to be a great power.

But this study on the second chapter of the prophet Daniel said that no king or emperor would ever again rule Europe and put it under one kingdom. It was plain that Rome was to be the last, and the paper gave the proof in a Bible verse at the end of the lesson.

It told of the dream given by the Lord to King Nebuchadnezzar. It was a dream of the history of the world, represented by a great image. The head of gold represented the kingdom of Babylon. The chest of silver was the dual monarchy of Media and Persia, which in its turn ruled over all the earth. As the tide of civilization swept westward, this kingdom was conquered by the Greeks, represented by the belly and thighs of brass. The legs were of iron, and this represented the iron kingdom of Rome, which ruled the earth as the last great universal kingdom. The ten toes were part iron and part clay, and they were the kingdoms, some strong and some weak, which would be on the earth after the last great universal kingdom to rule the world had had its sway.

The prophecy made it clear that in spite of efforts to unite the nations, union would not be accomplished, even though they intermarried and tried to weld the broken kingdom together by the ties of blood and kinship. It would not work. They would not cleave together, even as iron and clay do not cleave. Many men have tried it through the ages, only to fail utterly. Charlemagne, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, tried to restore the old Roman Empire and weld the fragments together as of old, but he died without accomplishing his purpose. Charles V, and Louis XIV of France, drenched Europe in blood in a vain effort to join together its states. Then Napoleon--but he met his fate at Waterloo, and his fond dream of holding all Europe under his sway went into nothing. Would the Kaiser try it? If he did, he would fail just as the rest did, the article in the paper said.

Otto was so impressed that he sent for a subscription to the paper. He was enamored by this article from Daniel 2, for everyone said that Europe was a powder keg likely to explode at any moment and plunge the whole world into such a war as they had never known before.

Why, it was as clear as a bell that this chapter outlined the successive world empires down to the setting up of Christ's everlasting kingdom. And that setting up of Christ's kingdom would be in the days of the kings of the toes, when the kingdoms would be partly strong and partly weak. This was amazing.

Soon the papers began to come. Otto devoured every one. When one had an article on the state of the dead, because of his grief over little Evelyn he read avidly. Then he got angry and furious. How dared that fellow say that little Evelyn was not in the land of the blessed? Of course she was. She was even now singing in the choir of the angels! He was sure of it.

Yet--yet he said such sweet things, though they were things that Otto did not want to believe. He said that the time would come when those who have gone to sleep in death would awake to life immortal. There was that text he quoted: "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing." Ecclesiastes 9:5. Why, if that were so, little Evelyn was not in heaven at all; she was sleeping in her little grave and would not hear or see a thing until the Lord awakened her out of her sleep.

When he told Helga of this, she would not believe a word of it. "Nonsense, Otto," she said sharply. "Why, everyone knows that the good people go to heaven when they die. Don't say such a thing to me. I know that our little Evelyn is with the Saviour in heaven."

That was one thing Otto felt sorry about in Helga. She was different from what she used to be. She would not listen to him when he argued with her, no matter how conclusive the argument was. She used to listen and be reasonable at least. He concluded that trouble had made her unreasonable. That must be it.

He kept reading until he believed that the dead sleep in the grave till the resurrection. He saw the logic in it, and began to talk it over with Anna, who had an inquiring mind like himself. He often mentioned how foolish the popular belief was. "What is the use of the resurrection, Anna, if the dead are already in heaven or hell? Who would be resurrected, and why? It is not even reasonable, and I don't see how I ever came to believe it. Then, if a person goes to his reward as soon as he dies, what is the reason for a judgment? Since God is just, how could He send a man to his reward or punishment before he faces the judgment bar? You know the Bible says we will all stand before the judgment bar of God and receive a reward for the deeds done in the body. The truth of anything is more simple and reasonable than error any day."

Anna heard so much about it that it was as plain as day, and she was a little chagrined that her mother was too stubborn to see the logic of the thing. Father was getting so much good and so much comfort out of the Bible now that it was a pity mother would not share his pleasure with him. Anna could not have known

what a comfort she was to her father--she gave him someone to talk to. If it had not been for her, he would have been very lonely indeed.

Later, when they would go out to the cemetery, Otto would stand at the grave and say aloud, "You're asleep, little Evelyn--asleep--and I wish I could be here when you wake up. All those ugly burns will be changed, and you will run to me and cry, 'Daddy, Daddy, Daddy,' the way you used to."

One day Helga went to town and got Anna a lovely confirmation dress, for she was coming to the day to be confirmed in the church. But when she went for discussion, to learn about the Lutheran faith, Anna and the pastor could not see eye to eye, and she told him she did not want to be confirmed. Helga was outraged and tried to command the child, but Otto and the pastor both demurred. The pastor told her mother that the child must not be forced, for she was a child who definitely knew her own mind; if she were left alone, gentleness might win out where commands would definitely drive her farther from the church.

Otto patted his girl on the shoulder and told her she did not have to attend or join a church she did not believe in, for he believed in religious liberty. Helga sniffed and went out of the room. It was hard to understand her these days. Anna touched the truth when she told her father, "I think mother believes as we do more than she wants to admit, but she is stubborn and won't give in."

But soon they were in for it more than ever. The question of the seventh-day Sabbath came to Otto's attention in the paper he perused so eagerly every time it came.

This was an issue he had never so much as dreamed of. And the evidence in favor of the seventh-day Sabbath seemed even more overwhelming than was that on the state of the dead. He was aghast. He could accept the doctrine of the sleep of the dead and not make any particular change in his life, except his habits of thinking. But not so with this new thing. It would get down to the very habits of his life and his living. It would get its fingers into his bakery and into his home life, and make changes that seemed impossible to make.

He was almost afraid of Helga these days. She was getting to be so sharp-tongued and so exasperating that he hardly knew her for the sweet wife he had married years before. Of course, she had had a lot of hardships. Little Gussie had been a care, and he was still a frail child. With the big house, and all the children, and the

work she insisted on doing in the bakery, it was plain that she was overworked. He tried to get her to ease up, but she seemed determined to wear herself out.

But Otto studied on about the Sabbath and told Anna all he learned. Soon the two of them were thoroughly convinced. One day he came home from delivering bread and told Anna he had passed a church where they kept the Saturday Sabbath. He wished she would go the very next Sabbath and see what they did. He drew a little diagram so she would be sure to find the church. The next Sabbath Anna dressed up and went to the Seventh-day Adventist church. It was rather pitiful that she had to keep it secret because of the way mother acted, She wanted to get her things all ready on Friday, but she really had no idea how to prepare for the Sabbath. Otto came over to the house and told her in a heavy whisper that folks who kept the Saturday Sabbath probably do things on Friday like pressing clothes and cooking. He had read in the Bible that there was a preparation day just before the Sabbath.

"My mother used to think that the preparation was on Saturday, and she would clean our house and get in all the supplies for Sunday. She made me fix up the wood and the fagots for making the fire. Oh, my mother would have kept the Sabbath if she had lived--she was a great one for truth."

Anna looked up at her father's earnest face. His blue eyes were so keen, so piercing, yet so kind. There were good lines on his face, and puzzled lines on his forehead where he had lifted his brow in an effort to understand. The golden hair was turning gray at his temples.

It had rained the early part of the week, and they had not gotten to do the washing till Thursday. Anna got up early Friday and dampened the clothes, and as soon as mother had gone to the bakery, she put the irons on the kitchen stove to heat. Mother had thought to wait till Saturday to do the ironing. But Anna put the old ironing pads on the kitchen table and went to work--few people had ironing boards then. She was hard at it when mother came home from the store after something.

She stopped in the kitchen and looked at Anna closely for a moment. "I thought you were going to iron that tomorrow," she said suspiciously.

"I had thought I would, but it seemed cool this morning, and I thought I would get it out of the way."

That was a logical answer, so mother only hesitated in the kitchen door a moment, then went back with a pair of clean sacks in her arms. Anna reflected on

her mother while she ironed piece after piece--Freddie's overalls, Martha's pinafore dresses, Gussie's little nightshirts. Even now she could hear the children playing in the back yard, and the work seemed easy when she had her thoughts.

Then on Saturday morning Anna dressed Freddie, Martha, and Gussie and took them to Sabbath school. It did not excite mother's suspicions, for she often took the smaller ones for a walk to the park to get them out of the way while the woman who came to do the cleaning was hard at it. But this day it was Rudolph's wife who had come. Otto's cousin had at long last gotten to America, and he and Otto were trying to find them a place to live and to work. Otto still owned the old store, which was rented to a steam-gas pipe fitter. Since he did not use the living quarters at all, Rudolph and his family were settled there for the time at least.

He was old to be an apprentice, but he could manage horses and was eager and quick to learn. Otto gave him the job of doing the bake route at first, and he told Helga he would teach him the baking trade little by little. Rudolph was so glad he had come, and was so bright and eager, that Helga herself was glad and immediately took to Huldah, his wife. Their children were all old enough to go to school, so they were no trouble to leave, and the problem of "help" was wonderfully solved for Otto and Helga. Of course, it would be a little hard till they got the hang of things, but Rudolph was so happy and so eager that it was plain it would not be long till he would be baking right along with Otto.

The walk to church took quite a while. Little Gussie hobbled along on his crutches, but he did not complain. He laughed at the birds, and when a squirrel came near, he fed it a piece of bread from his pocket. The little creature took it right out of his hand.

The church was a wooden structure, and not so big and so grand as the Lutheran church. They entered a bit hesitantly, not knowing just what to do, and stood by the door for a minute or two. But not for long, for a kind man with white hair came and took Anna by the hand and led her to the place where the other girls of her size were already gathering. And he took care of Freddie, Martha, and Gussie in such a kind way that they did not give Anna a backward glance. That was strange, for Martha was shy and did not go with strangers as a rule. And Freddie was a little spoiled; he would start crying at the drop of a hat. But they both went with Brother Burns, as he told them to call him.

Then Anna went to a class, and was as happy as if she had been going there all her life. When the preaching service began, the children came and sat with her. They

behaved themselves, for it was not the first time they had been in church. Folks commented on how nice they were, and that pleased Anna immensely.

When they got home, Helga was not pleased. She scolded her for a long time for not staying and helping.

Finally Otto said in his kind voice to Helga, "Mother, do not make it hard on the girl. She has a conviction, and I do too. I don't see how I can keep the Sabbath, but if she can, let us not trouble her."

Helga said no more about it, and Anna tried to help all she could, so that her going to church on the Sabbath need not be a trial to her mother any more than necessary.

Chapter 5

THEN one day the minister of the Seventh-day Adventist church came to call on them. Mother was gracious, but a little distant; and though she was the spirit of politeness, it devolved on Otto and Anna to make the folks feel at home. The kindly man and woman, Elder Purcell and his wife, told Otto and Helga that they were very glad to have the children at church, for they were so sweet and well behaved. It was plain they came from a fine home.

That broke Helga's reserve a little, and she managed a smile. For what mother is there who does not like to hear her children praised, especially when the praise is an indirect tribute to her and her training?

"We think they are good," she said, a trifle modestly. Then leaning toward the visitors, she said so piteously that Otto ached for her, "Oh, you should have seen our little Evelyn. We lost her a year ago--she was burned to death, and we can hardly stand it yet to be without her."

"Oh, you poor dear," Mrs. Purcell said, the tears standing in her kind eyes. "You poor, poor dear. Oh, I know--I know. We lost our little boy--the only child we ever had--spinal meningitis. I thought I could not live I did not want to--it seemed as if there was nothing left to go on for. Just Matt, my husband, and he needed me, he was all broken up, too."

"Then, you do know!" Helga was frankly crying. "I was fairly out of my mind for a while. I almost hated God for letting her die so-but . . ."

"Someday we will understand a lot of things we do not know now," Elder Purcell supplied in a kind voice. "I told mother here that I believe the Lord Himself will take the time someday, when we are in the kingdom, to tell us why we had to

suffer. If it was to make us more ready to meet Him, and to make our hearts purer and sweeter, I have no cause to complain."

Then they told the minister and his wife about little Gussie and how his back got hurt, and how he had not been well in his whole life. All the while Gussie was sitting on the minister's knee, watching him owl-eyed as he was the subject of the conversation. Helga was a little surprised at the child's taking so quickly to strangers.

"I like your church," he said shyly, looking up into the pastor's face. "And Anna said she would take me and Freddie and Martha again. We want to go every week."

Here the little boy stopped and looked over to his daddy, who was watching him proudly. "I fink sometime my daddy will go, for he told me he like me to go. He like it--and he like to go to--to heaven, I fink, but I don't fink mamma will go to heaven, for she ain't got the time. She has too much work to do."

There was a general laugh at this, and Gussie hid his head on the minister's bosom. But he laughed and patted him and said, "Oh, I think we will all have to take the time for some things, little boy. Some things can't be put off."

Otto noticed that Helga had hidden her face by bending over her mending, and he saw that it was very red. Perhaps the little lad had hit too close home, and she might be pricked to the heart at his innocent observations. Stranger things had happened.

"So you think I will be able to run and play when we get to heaven?" little Gussie asked the minister. "Will my back be like Freddie's and Martha's?"

"Oh, yes, my boy," the minister answered. "The Bible says the lame will walk and the ears of the deaf will be opened and the eyes of the blind will be made to see."

"Poor old Mr. Porney can't see," the child volunteered. "I will tell him when I see him about it, and I think he will be glad. He said he has a bad time, not seeing, you know. He just runs into things and bumps his head, and he can't find things he wants."

"You just tell him, Gussie," said the minister's wife. "I wish we had more little missionaries like you. The world is waiting for truth like that."

Otto had them show Helga from the Bible what it taught about the state of the dead, for he was so happy with his new-found truth that he longed to share it with her. She objected a little at first, but they made it so clear and so plain

before they left that even Helga was convinced. But after they went, she told Otto she did not believe anyone could ever convince her that Saturday--yes, Saturday, of all days--was the Sabbath. If it was, why had they not heard of it before?

One evening they made things so plain that Otto had all his doubts swept away. It was so logical, so irrevocable. Otto stole a look at Helga and saw that she would not look at him. She, too, must understand. She was a bright woman. Surely, she must see it.

The minister was explaining further: "I want you to notice that the fourth commandment gives as the reason for the keeping of the Sabbath the fact that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. He gave it to men as a virtual birthday of the world, if you please, and He wanted them to remember Him by celebrating it every week. By remembering the Sabbath day, they would be sure to remember Him, and that He had made them a home and given them everything they had."

"That sounds--well--logical," Otto said. "But what about it when someone says Sunday is the memorial of the resurrection of the Lord'? What do you answer to that?"

"I say that the Lord has already given us a memorial of the resurrection--the ordinance of baptism. What more do we want? When we go down into the water, we die with our Lord, and when we arise, we rise to walk with Him in the new life he wants us to live for Him."

Helga leaned forward. "Isn't there some place in the Bible--I have heard there is--where the Lord or the disciples or someone started the keeping of Sunday?"

Pastor Purcell smiled. "If such a text could be found, a great deal of trouble would have been averted, my dear sister, for men have been trying to find it for many years. It just is not there. On the contrary, a good part of our Saviour's ministry and teaching was devoted to the proper observance of the Sabbath. True observance had been terribly perverted, until the Sabbath was not a delight, but a burden. Its delights had been lost in the miserable traditions that had been heaped upon it like so much rubbish. Jesus knew why the Sabbath was made, and He knew for what it was made--for He made it. He said it was made for man, and he intended it to be a blessing, not a burden."

Silence greeted these words. Otto sat looking down at his big Bible. Helga was hard at work on one of Freddie's socks, and Otto could not see her face. Finally he spoke.

"What can a fellow do--a man like me? I have this business, and Saturday is the best day of the week for me. You know how the country folks come to town on Saturday, and how the shops pay at noon, and folks lay in supplies for the week. I do as much business on Saturday as I do on all the other days of the week put together. A fellow has to make a living, and I have a family to support."

Helga looked up at that. "We couldn't do such a thing at all," she said, as if it were something she was denying to the Purcells, and as if her telling the minister and his wife it was out of the question would close the matter for all time.

"Everyone has certain crosses to bear," the pastor said then. "The Lord Himself said to His disciples, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.' You see, Mr. Wertz, there are some things that cannot be explained in a logical way, especially the things that pertain to our salvation."

"What do you mean?" questioned Otto.

"This is the way I have reasoned it out. There are some things that cannot be logical and explainable. That is the reason the Lord says He has hidden some things from the wise and the prudent and revealed them unto babes. Who can explain how that if we are washed in the blood, we shall be whiter than snow? And if we lose our lives, we shall find them? And if we have the faith of a grain of mustard seed, we can remove mountains? We cannot explain these, but they are true."

"I had never thought of that before," exclaimed Otto, leaning toward them.

"The same thing is true about the paying of tithe--a tenth of your income to the Lord in support of His church. I find that the nine tenths goes farther with the blessing of the Lord than the ten tenths did before."

"That does not sound reasonable," protested Helga.

"Of course it doesn't," Pastor Purcell answered. "That is just it. It sounds--well--paradoxical, but that is the way it is, just the same, and it is the same way about the Sabbath. The Lord will help you so that you will prosper more in the other six days than you ever did before. He has blessings for you such as you have never dreamed of. He may take you through a few trials to help you to lean on Him, but I can assure you that He will be with you and see you through."

Two years went by. Otto studied and studied. Finally he was convinced that the seventh day was the day to keep. But he had not as yet the courage to carry out his convictions. He went to his work on Saturday "like a galley slave scourged to his dungeon." He often thought that a more miserable man never lived on the face of the whole earth.

Then the world war came; Germany invaded Belgium and began to rain shells on the city of Paris. The continent of Europe was swiftly embroiled. Otto painfully followed the newspapers and told everyone that the Kaiser would never rule the world. For it was set down in the Bible that the last world empire was Rome, and there would never be another till the God of heaven should set up His kingdom.

All this time Anna was taking the children to church and keeping the Sabbath as best she could. As she grew older, she was able to carry her share of the burdens of the home very well and still keep the Sabbath. Once or twice mother got very angry at her because she would not help out in the bakery when business was heavy on Friday night. Anna was firm.

"Mother, I just can't. I do not think it is right, and I can't--not for you or anyone."

"A religion that will make you disobey your parents can't be much of a religion," her mother retorted. "You don't care how much we work, just so you can have your rest."

"Mother, it is cruel and unkind for you to say that," Anna said, tears filling her eyes. "You know how hard I have tried to do my best. Mother, I feel I just would rather die than do what I know is wrong."

Then an event occurred that shocked the whole country. The United States entered the terrible world war on the side of the Allies. Soon there came such a lot of conservation that Otto had to use all kinds of flour, including the wheat flour he was used to. The people grumbled and growled, but Otto liked it. It tasted a little like the bread his mother used to make in Germany.

Then the government ordered that all places of business be closed for one-half day a week. Otto chose Saturday morning to close, and for the first time he went to church with Anna. He came back and opened the store at noon, and folks came like bees and ants to trade with him. Helga pointed out to him more than once how impossible it would be to keep Saturday, but Otto turned away and would not answer her.

Anna noticed that her eyes were red too when she came back. Why was mother so stubborn? Why could she not soften and give up? It would make father so very much happier.

That week Otto closed the shop on Saturday and took his stand definitely for the Sabbath of the Lord. Of course Helga was upset, but Otto did not allow that to deter him. At the same time, Anna decided to go away and take nurses' training. The minister had told her of Washington Sanitarium and what a good course they gave there. In spite of her mother's objections, she went. It was Helga's turn to cry now, for it was the first child to leave the home nest. Anna was almost ready to give it up and stay home when Otto came in from the store. His eyes were red, too, from weeping. He hated to see his big girl leave, for more reasons than one. She was his mainstay in his new belief.

"Go, dear-go," he said. "And remember Revelation 3:11." Later, on the train, Anna took out her little Bible to read the text her father had referred to. "Behold, I come quickly," read the text. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Once away, the problems seemed very far to Anna; but they were near to poor Otto, who was going through a real struggle. He knew that Helga believed, and he knew her well enough to know she longed to go ahead with him, and have the old dear companionship that they had lost since he had begun to find the new and better way of life. But words of condemnation and criticism come very easy after they have worn a path through the soul; therefore Otto was quiet and still most of the time and kept his own counsel. He took the little ones to church each Sabbath, and opened the bakery on Sunday instead of Saturday. To his surprise and pleasure, he had quite a business from the first. Folks from far and near came to buy fresh bread, rolls, cakes, and pies from the Wertz Home Bakery.

Once he tried baking some beans and making a great bowl of potato salad, and to his gratification it sold like hot cakes. Then Helga, as an experiment, made a large bowl of cottage cheese. It, too, sold, and they started on a new kind of venture, a store we call a delicatessen today. Otto put in a line of canned goods, and had butter and cheese. It was not many weeks before it was popular to say, "Run over and see what Wertz has; I'm too tired to cook a thing." He began to specialize in things to be had for a pickup supper. Once Helga made a whole platter of deviled eggs, and they were gone before they were on the counter ten minutes. Now they were making more money, with less aggravation and more fun, than they ever did when they stayed open on the Sabbath. The old companionship came

back, and they began to feel the same pleasure and pride in one another that they used to have.

"Feeling tired, dear?" Otto asked after they had had a particular run of trade.

"Oh, no." Helga laughed. "It's sort of fun, isn't it, devising new ways of making money. It just seems as if we were back in the early days of our marriage again. Yet Anna is off to nursing school, and Martha is almost through high school. It does not seem possible for time to go by as it does."

"I love you, Helga," Otto said impulsively. "I love you so much I want you to share the good things I have, even the hope of eternal life I have, and the hope of seeing our little Evelyn again."

Helga was making some cottage cheese. She did not answer for a while. When she looked up, her eyes were full of bright tears.

"Otto, forgive me," she said. "I have known for a long time that you and Anna were right. I do not know what got into me, for I felt so mean about it; and I acted mean, too, even when I hated myself for so doing."

Otto left the cookies he was arranging on a tray, and came and kissed her, though she protested that he had better not, for someone might see them.

He was in the seventh heaven of glory, and the next Sabbath Helga went with him to church. It was her first time, and when Pastor Purcell made the call to anyone who wanted to make a full consecration, with streaming eyes Helga arose to her feet. When the pastor asked her afterward if she contemplated baptism soon, she said, "As soon as possible. I have wasted too much time."

Martha and Freddie and Gussie were standing there when she said that, and Gussie nudged his mother. "What is it, dear?" she asked the lad.

"Why can't we all--Freddie, Martha, and I--be baptized when you are? Father and Anna have already been baptized, and we--well, we want to be baptized and be Seventh-day Adventists, too."

"Why not today?" asked the pastor. "We can have a special baptizing this afternoon. I have long prayed for this hour."

Otto just had to telephone Anna, and she got on the train and came to the baptism. They were all surprised to see her walk into the church just as they were singing "Shall We Gather at the River?" She came right down the aisle, weeping openly, went up on the platform, and stood watching beside her father while the blessed ordinance was going on. "It was the happiest moment of my life," she told

her friends back at the sanitarium that evening. "Mother fought it so hard, and father went through so much. It just seemed as if we could endure anything if we loved one another. Now, all is well with us."

Otto, almost militant about the wonderful truth for which he had suffered so much, began to tell it to those that came into his store. There were some who listened to what he had to say, asked a few questions, and let it go at that; soon their interest abated. Some got angry and argued. But in the course of a couple of years four families accepted it with the same fervor that Otto had. He was beside himself with joy.

Meanwhile, Anna had graduated from nurses' training and was home. Otto was delighted, for he liked to have his family around him. But he was saddened when Martha married out of the truth and quit going to church. In her seeking her own way, she could not know how Helga and Otto grieved over her.

"This is a greater grief to me than the loss of little Evelyn," he said once. "I feel sure of meeting her if I am faithful, but losing a child to heaven is far worse than losing one to the grave."

"Don't forget, we can pray, Otto," Helga answered. "God has heard our prayers before, and He will hear them again. I have felt condemned about her. She was poorly grounded because I was so stubborn and took so long to do the right thing. It is my fault."

"No, Mother, no," Otto said tenderly. "I believe the Lord will bring Martha back. Our prayers for her and our life after we have given ourselves to God will not be in vain."

Anna went to her sister and told her of the conversation, thinking it might touch her, but Martha simply tossed her head, not seeming to care a whit how much grief she was causing her dear ones.

Eventually Anna married a doctor, and he set up practice in a town not too far from home: It was a comfort to Helga and Otto to have her near, for Martha was now living in New York City.

Martha had a little girl, and Anna often thought of her. She wished that little Laurie were being reared in the truth, as she had a right to be. But she knew very well she was not. She knew the little thing was being initiated into a life that would be hard to be weaned away from. Anna wrote her sister, but was rebuffed. Then all she could do was pray.

Anna's husband built up a fine practice in the small town. A little church was there, but they were not satisfied. One Sabbath when Otto and Helga were visiting them, Otto looked at the flourishing farms and neat little village homes, then said to young Dr. Huff, his son-in-law, "These folks ought to know the truth, and you may have been sent here to warn them. What are you doing about it?"

"I have literature in my waiting room," replied Harvey Huff. "I pray with my patients when I think they will profit by it. I always pray before an operation."

"That is not enough," Otto said. "My mother often talked about the lost coin. It did not know it was lost, did it? Do these people know how wonderful it is to know the truth of the whole Bible? I think God sent you here to do more."

They listened to Otto's counsel, for he was doing more than just baking cakes in his home city. He was giving Bible studies to as many as would take them. "You are a doctor," he told Anna's husband. "Well, so was Luke. He never tired of spreading the Word; neither must you, if you expect the blessing of God on you."

"I am not a preacher," young Harvey protested.

Otto patted him on the shoulder affectionately. "I suppose a lot of Peter's and James's talks were about fish when they started their ministry," he said, "just as mine are about 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' I reckon that Matthew told about the taxes, and how sin levies its share."

"Do you think the conference would send us a minister to have an effort?" Anna asked her father.

"No, I don't," he answered. "There isn't enough interest here yet. You get the interest going, and they might do it. But you have a lot to do first."

"I think you might start with some meetings. There is a colporteur near here who can preach pretty well, and we might get him to help. You, Anna, can do a lot for the children, telling stories, since you had such a good start telling our children the Bible stories and taking them to church all by yourself."

They never knew just how the snowball got going, but it did. The colporteur was enlisted, folks from the city church volunteered to help with the music, and the local printer offered to make the handbills. Otto was beside himself with enthusiasm. He told everyone. Having automobiles, lots of folks could get there from afar and swell the crowds.

They rented an auditorium in the center of town, laid the plans, and started the effort. People came. Yes, and some kept coming, liking it. Others came for a while,

until they saw what was being preached would tumble some dear idols in their lives, and then they quit coming. But the workers were not discouraged.

Six teen-age girls, inseparable chums from a local school, came every night, and they were the first to take their stand and be baptized. Anna and Harvey rejoiced greatly at the first fruits, and they set about nurturing these young babes, trying to show them how to be Adventists in the fullest sense of the word.

The girls had had a lot of interest in the local school sports, but soon their interest changed to something different. The home of the Huffs came to be a meeting place for the young people. Every Saturday night was given to them. Anna would make a big pot of soup and pop some corn, and they would sit around the roaring fire in the huge living room, listening to records and playing games.

Their friends were invited in and made so welcome that it became a very popular and privileged thing to go to the Huffs. Instead of piling up money, Anna and Harvey sent a number of these girls away to school to get a good education. They legally adopted three of them and took them into their home as their own children. Because of these efforts for the girls, ten families of them live near the little church and are pillars in it today.

A wonderful thing happened to Martha. Her fourteen-year-old daughter, Laurie, came home one day with a Bible correspondence card she had found on the street.

She sent for the course, not realizing it was from the religion of her own grandfather, which her mother refused even to tell her about. The lessons began to come to her from the Voice of Prophecy Bible School in Glendale, California. Her mother hardly said a word as Laurie struggled with the lessons and asked her questions. Once when her mother answered one of the questions correctly, Laurie asked with surprise, "And you know that, Mommy? Aren't you excited? I can't see how in the world you know one thing and do another. And why don't you tell daddy? Why, if the Lord is coming so soon, and you know it, I can't see how you could stand it for us not to know. We need to get ready."

Martha went away cut to the heart by what she knew to be just criticism. How could she allow loved ones to face eternal death when there was eternal life to be had? She knew then that when one loses the first love and takes up with the things of the world, even natural love is less; for who can truly love, and yet allow dear ones to continue on in the way of death when life is to be had? Martha began to see how silly and foolish a life apart from God truly is. She stopped

painting her face and going to questionable places of amusement, because she had been cut to the quick by her little daughter's zeal over dear truths she had known all the time. When Laurie got the lesson that dealt with the seventh-day Sabbath, she came to her mother in great excitement.

"Mommy, grandpa is right. You have let me think all the time that he was fanatical, but, Mommy; he has all the reasons to do it. And as for Sunday, I'd be ashamed to go to church on Sunday again, and I won't. It is---well, you just read this lesson. You surely did not know all the history of Sunday-keeping; or you could never have let me go to church on that day."

Martha had to turn her head away at that, for shame was in her eyes: "I did know, darling, I did; and I need to get down on my knees and beg you to forgive me. You and I will go to church together. I know grandpa and grandma and Aunt Anna have been praying for us."

"We will have to pray daddy into this, Mommy. It is too good to leave him out."

There was great rejoicing at the old home and at Anna's when the news came to them. Anna was glad it came when it did, for Otto had not been well for a long time, and he had had to sell the bakery and retire.

A few weeks later Otto was dead. Standing there looking down into his quiet face, Anna said to her mother, "We ought not to grieve too much, Mother. Father was ready to go, and, oh, how he loved the Lord! And how he loved the truth! I am sure he will live again."

"That was all his life, Anna," replied Helga. "Nothing ever was so important after he began to read the paper I bought from that man who came into the store back before World War I. Why, I remember that when he came in, he seemed a little discouraged and poor. I gave him a big cinnamon roll and offered him a cup of coffee, for it was a cold and miserable day outside, but he refused the coffee. I wondered at the time, but after Otto started studying, I soon found out why."

"Mother," Anna said, "I have often thought about that man. Who was he? Where is he now? How did he come to have a copy of the German Signs of the Times? God led in that, for look how it has changed all our lives."

"Not only ours, Anna," Helga replied gently.

"Mother, Harvey and I sat down last night before we came over here and put down on paper the names of folks whose lives have been changed from that one

copy of Zeichen der Zeit. There were forty-six, Mother. Just think! And that doesn't count the small children who will grow into it."

"Do you remember how often father used to say, 'Remember Revelation 3:11'?" Helga asked her. 'He said that to you every time I gave you a bad time, when you were trying so hard and I was opposing you so much."

"Bless his loving heart," Anna answered. "He held fast, and no one will take his crown. It will look beautiful on his dear head, won't it, when Jesus places it there?"

They cried, of course, at the loss of a good husband and father; but they did not sorrow as those who had no hope, for one who was named Anna knew. She knew that he had been faithful even unto death, and God would surely give him the crown of life he had looked forward to for so long.