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Entre Nous.

A Christian Home in Rome.

It has been said, and with some truth, that the Church of to-day is composed almost entirely of the middle class. It was quite otherwise with the Early Church, as we see once more in a book—*The Rome of Saint Paul* (R.T.S.; 7s. 6d. net)—which has just been written by the Rev. Albert G. Mackinnon, M.A., D.D. Soaked in traditionary lore and full of imagination, Dr. Mackinnon has made a special study of the Rome of New Testament days. One of the most interesting chapters in the book is on 'Some Christian Homes in Rome.' Excavations have been going on lately in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, and the tomb of Acilius Glabrio has been found. 'A little circle of graves of freedmen and slaves surrounds the tomb of their master, Acilius Glabrio. These, too, bear the marks of Christian faith. They tell the story of the influence of a strong, fearless martyr. It may be difficult for a man to be a hero to his own valet, but Glabrio was, or else there would not have been so many of his household who followed in his steps.' Another name closely associated with this cemetery by tradition, and closely associated with the Church of St. Paul's day, is that of Pudens, an army officer and a wealthy senator, who is specially interesting to us not only because of his link with St. Paul, but because of his link with England, for he went to England as second in command of his company. He shared in the Roman victory over Caractacus, and he accompanied the captured king and his daughter to Rome. 'In Rome a royal welcome awaited him. Claudius was in a happy mood, and received with worthy hospitality the conquered king. He gave him a palace to live in, and in return Caractacus changed the name of his daughter to Claudia, as a compliment to the Emperor.'

In A.D. 53 Martial announces the coming wedding of Pudens and Claudia. 'Claudia Peregrina Rufus is about to be married to my friend Pudens. Be propitious, Hymen, with thy torches. As fitly is precious cinnamon united with nard, and Massic wine with Attic honey. Nor are elms more fitly wedded to tender vines, the lotus more love the waters, or the myrtle the river's bank. Mayest thou always hover over their couch, fair Concord; and may Venus ever be auspicious to a couple so well matched. In after-years may the wife cherish her husband in his old age; and may she, when grown old, not seem so to her husband.' Dr. Mackinnon comments on Martial's words: 'A marriage wish could not be better expressed, and in this case it came true. It was a union of two souls tuned to each other. They became united in the most glorious of all enterprises—that of establishing the Church of Christ in Rome, and ministering to its greatest Apostle.'

We do not know how the conversion of Pudens came about. Reverent imagination, says Dr. Mackinnon, may fill in the gap, 'and as soon as it is given rein it leads me to Priscilla [the wife of Aquila]. . . . There seems to have been a connection, however, more than merely the Christian bond, between the Priscilla of the Aventine and the aristocratic lady of the same name who was the mother of Pudens. It is just possible that the former took her name from her patroness. It was not an unusual custom in ancient Rome. If so, and my supposition is right, then she repaid that honour a hundredfold.

'On returning from Corinth to Rome, I can imagine Priscilla seeking out all her friends and relations, and telling them the Good News which Paul had brought to her and her husband. Among others, she would come to the house of Pudens, and probably, being a favourite with his mother, having been called after her, she would be encouraged to open her heart.' And so the new life reformed the home of this older Priscilla. Did Claudia learn of the new faith from her husband, and did she in turn tell the news to her father Caractacus, so that when Nero allowed the return to England in A.D. 58 he carried the good news to his kinsfolk?

From Pastor, the son of Hermes, we learn at any rate that 'Pudens went to his Saviour, leaving his daughters strengthened with chastity and learned in all the divine law. These sold their goods, and distributed the produce to the poor, and persevered strictly in the love of Christ. They desired to have a baptistry in their house, to which the blessed Pius (who was Bishop of Rome, A.D. 142–57) not only consented, but with his own hand drew the plan of the fountain. On his suggestion the enfranchisement of the Christian slaves was declared, with all the ancient usages, in the oratory founded by Pudens.' The family of Pudens consisted of two daughters and two sons; one of the sons, Novatus, built extensive baths. After his death their central hall was turned by his sister into a church. 'At the present moment, below the church, the baths are being disclosed, and one can see the perfect

system of heating adopted by the architects of that time. The church itself is considered the oldest in Rome. It is mentioned in inscriptions of the fourth century. We know that it was restored by Siricius, who was bishop from A.D. 384 to A.D. 398, and he is supposed to have placed in the apse that magnificent mosaic whose freshness and beauty still attract the admiration of visitors. . . . The picture represents Christ in the centre, enthroned, and holding a book in His hand. The Roman artist has left his mark on the figure, for it has all the majestical air of a Jupiter, and the disciples in their togas might well be taken for Roman senators. On each side stand the two sisters offering crowns. The background is interesting. It represents a great villa: can it be a reproduction of the house of Pudens itself? If so, then we have an extant picture of the noble residence where Paul must have been a welcome visitor. The chained prisoner, with his guard, would have no hesitation in approaching that courtly mansion with its pillared courts, for the key of Christ's love had turned the lock.'

'We cannot leave this gracious home with its hospitable inmates without connecting it with that very last message of St. Paul in the closing verses of 2 Timothy: "Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, Linus, and Claudia . . ." Something tells us that it would just be like the Claudia we have depicted, to show her loyalty to the Apostle at the very last, even though in those dark days of his second imprisonment, when he was deserted by so many, such devotion might mean death.'

W. H. Temple Gairdner to his Friends.

Writing was no labour to Temple Gairdner. He wrote long letters to his friends and children, and papers on the greatest diversity of subjects and at all times and places. Only short extracts from these could be given in the excellent biography lately published (S.P.C.K.; 5s. net). Now the biographer, Constance Padwick, has inspired the publication of a volume of extracts from these letters and informal writings. It is a delightful book for the less strenuous moments. Gairdner was a man of the widest interests—like the great Apostle, all things were his to enjoy. The last extracts are on Elgar's Second Symphony. This is preceded by a chapter on the writings of H. G. Wells. Very charming are his letters to his children. Almost at random we quote his reply to a letter which said, 'In all art I find temptation,' and a letter which he sent to his old nurse when he was an Oxford undergraduate.

If thine eye offend.

'I feel that the whole letter is a deeply interesting and moving exhibition of the first stage—the earliest, best, purest and most beautiful stage—of *Puritanism*: of Puritanism when it is itself instinct with the very beauty it feels it must so sternly limit and repress (so different from the coarse later stage, when beauty is flouted by those who were never capable of even knowing her!)—the stage of Milton, where repression itself is apt to produce some masterpiece of the very beauty that is abjured, some beautiful masterpiece cold, stern, unearthly. I feel that his attitude is too much conditioned by *reaction* (the reaction caused by some irretrievable personal error) to be valid as a full or final philosophy or synthesis of the subject. Is it not rather the attitude of one who has righteously and faithfully obeyed the command of Christ to pluck out the offending eye and cut off the offending limb, . . . and yet the eye and the limb, in *others* who were not offended, are good and fair, are God's creation, and are moreover necessary to the completeness of the body. The amputated one is not one to frame the formula of completeness.'[1]

Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.

'I remember when I was a little boy after bathing in the sea at Ardrossan, I used to be enveloped in a huge warm towel, and carried from the rocks to the Villa. And as I felt the warmth after the cold sea, the comfortable being carried after the sharp stones, and the strong arms of the nurse, and heard the gravel crunching under her feet, I just clean *abandoned myself* to her, knew how safe I was, and wished the walk would never come to an end. That was all trust, utter abandonment. I knew I should not be dropped.

'That has *often* come back to me so clear that I can hardly imagine it happened seventeen or eighteen years ago. And it seems to me to be a *picture* of our faith in the strong arms of our Lord: a child's clinging, unquestioning and entire. Why, Mary, surely you must yourself have been that very nurse.

'To show my gratitude to you then, let the bread cast upon the waters come back to you after many days. Take it as a real picture of Christ carrying us. And when we have abandoned ourselves to His keeping, He *will* keep. He won't let us drop.'[2]

[1] *W. H. T. G. to his Friends*, 110.
[2] *Ibid.*, 78.

The Divine Tragedy.

Mr. St. John Adcock's poems have appeared in many journals, and they have also been published in book form. Now he has made a collection from the various books of what he considers best worth preserving, and the volume has been published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton at 7s. 6d. net—*Collected Poems of St. John Adcock*. All his best-known lyrics are here, the vernacular poem, 'The Anzac Pilgrim's Progress,' and three long satirical poems. The most considerable of these is 'The Divine Tragedy.' Smooth-flowing and with rich imagination it expresses more than any of the others Mr. St. John Adcock's own deeply-moving Christian faith. In it Christ comes to the world again, once more as a Jew and as a humble carpenter, and He is rejected the second time as He was the first. How is He treated? This is the attitude of the Vicar and of Lady Pomphrey Gauden, whose husband, once a grocer in a small way, has made money, is a member of Parliament, and has been knighted.

'My trust,' said Lady Pomphrey, 'is in you.
Tell me, dear Vicar, what I ought to do.'

'As I have told you, under his intense
Magnetic and bewildering influence,
I was almost persuaded to avow
Faith in the Man's identity. But now,
Now I am calm, and glad that I deferred
Deciding, for I see I should have erred.
We must be wise as serpents; we must tread
With prayerful caution, lest we be misled.
I thought at first it might be well if I
Invited him to come and occupy
My pulpit, but have now abjured the plan.'
'He is not, I suppose, an Anglican?'
'Probably not, and, in this calmer state,
I feel our proper course will be to wait
And—while our judgments in suspense we keep,
To see more of him—look before we leap.'

'Those,' said my Lady, 'are my views exact.'
Then, thinking how, with courage and with tact,
She might for social daring reap renown,
Be the most talked-of hostess in the town,
She added, 'If you think he won't decline,
I might perhaps invite him here to dine. . . .
But would a Man of this one's class possess—
Not that it greatly matters—evening dress?'
'Dear Lady, I should doubt it very much.'
'Ah! Well, the better way to come in touch
With one that all society, no doubt,
Will soon be getting curious about
Might be to send a note and ask him to
An afternoon reception—that would do.'

Mr. St. John Adcock touches with his biting sarcasm, amongst others, the successful politician of to-day. The poem ends with the imprisonment of Christ and with His disappearance in the morning from the cell.

It is far better He should only be
A tale we need not take too seriously,
An Ideal throned above our fallen state
For us to worship, not to imitate.
The great Reality we praise in prayers
Could ne'er be fitted into our affairs;
If It came down, we must in self-defence
Reject It, and restrain Its influence,
Harden our hearts, and warn It from our bowers
With, 'No admittance during business hours.'

Errata.

We regret that a paragraph has been transposed in the Contribution found on the last page of the April issue of this magazine. The last paragraph of Mr. Mathieson's letter has found its way into Mr. Scott's, and is given as his third paragraph. It deals with S. A. Cook's dating of the second edition of Robertson Smith's *Prophets*.

We might, perhaps, also call attention to an obvious error which was alas, however, not noted when an extract was given from a children's sermon by Mr. Stuart Robertson last December—'The last week of December,' he said, 'is the time when the sun is farthest from the earth.' Mr. Robertson writes: 'Thank you for the letters enclosed, and thanks to the writers for their correction of my blunder. I can only say what Dr. Johnson said when a lady asked him why he had defined the "pastern" in his dictionary as "the knee of a horse," "Ignorance, madam, sheer ignorance." I have undoubtedly taken unpardonable liberties with those august astronomical entities, Perihelion and Aphelion. I apologize to them abjectly, and hereby promise that if there be a second edition I shall amend my ways and do them justice.'

Printed by Morrison & Gibb Limited, Tanfield Works, and Published by T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, Edinburgh. It is requested that all literary communications be addressed to The Editor, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.