

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

O DAY MOST CALM, MOST BRIGHT! . . .
THE WEEK WERE DARK BUT FOR THY LIGHT.—*Herbert.*

TOM HERON OF SAX.

A STORY OF REVIVAL TIMES.

BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN.



"EH! BUT WHAT A MAN THEE DE, TOM!"

CHAPTER I.—A YORKSHIRE VILLAGE.

"GOOD even, Tom. Busy as usual? Is that thy last job?"

Tap, tap, tap, went the young blacksmith's hammer, driving the long nails with faultless precision into the hind-foot of the nag which he was holding between his knees. He glanced up side-ways at his questioner, and said:

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"'Even, Luke, thee can't wait till I've done, if thee hast anything to say. Whoa, lad; steady; so, boy, so!"

Luke Crowder leaned negligently against the wall of the open shed which adjoined the smithy, where the shoeing of the horses was done, and watched Tom's quick accurate movements with a certain sense of admiration. He himself was a loose-limbed awkwardly-made man, and he

PRICE ONE PENNY.

betrayed by the uncertain movements of his hands, by the redness of his eyes, and the general "flabbiness" of his physical condition the fact of a long and intimate acquaintance with the contents of his father's cellar. His excuse for his habits of well-known intemperance was that since his father kept the Red Dragon, there was no getting out of drinking with the guests—common sociability demanded as much from him. Certainly, if that were so, no one could deny that he did his duty nobly, and sacrificed himself to the courtesies of life with the greatest good-will. He had the reputation in Sax of being the greatest ne'er-do-well in the place—with only one exception—and that exception was Tom Heron. He held the undisputed claim to being the blackest of all the black sheep within a radius of ten miles at least: and there were members of the community who distinctly prided themselves upon the notorious lawlessness and recklessness of the young blacksmith, which seemed to convey a species of distinction upon his native place.

Not that hard drinking was Tom's special vice. He was, to be sure, a constant visitor at the Red Dragon: but his head was as hard as the muscles of his arms, and he could stand a "night of it" without "turning a hair." But he was not especially fond of strong liquor. If he had been, he would most likely have found himself in the same state as Luke, for he earned good wages with his uncle, and had never yet been known to deny himself, from a sense of principle, any indulgence he craved. His companions proudly said of him in their moments of expansion, that he "feared not God, neither regarded man."

The horse was shod. The lad in attendance led him away, and Tom who had gathered up his tools, lifted up himself and faced the patient Luke. In so doing he revealed a very handsome and rather striking face which lacked some of the characteristics usually seen in the rustic type of countenance common in Sax.

There was nothing vacant, bovine, or placid in the marked features and striking countenance of the young blacksmith. His hair, which was remarkably thick, clustered in close curls round his finely shaped head, whilst from beneath overhanging brows, emphasised by thick, dark fringes, a pair of luminous eyes looked forth defiance upon the world, flashing, kindling, changing with every gust of passion or feeling: often enchainning the attention of the beholder at a first glance, such power, restlessness and wildness was expressed in that gaze. The nose, with its widely-dilated nostrils, was the only other feature in that remarkable face which seemed in keeping with the eyes. Passion and susceptibility to emotion were written there, but seemed to be contradicted by the excessive squareness and immobility of the mouth and jaw, and by the deep, upright lines in the brow, indicative of the dark scowl which came only too readily to the face, and was one of its most constant expressions. To look at that face in many of its moods would be to receive absolute conviction that this man was as stubborn and

immovable as the rock itself. The eyes spoke of changing gusts of passion, the quivering nostril of susceptibility to outward impression: but those straight compressed lips—that jaw, which looked as if moulded by his own strong hands upon his own anvil—it might well perplex any one to find a way of winning an influence upon the owner of such a mouth as that. Moreover the young smith stood six-foot-three in his stockings, and had a way of simply knocking down and leaving half-dead any person rash enough to try and interpose between him and his wild ways.

As he raised himself from his stooping position and faced Luke with a question in his eyes, he looked a very Goliath of Gath before the shrunken figure of the publican's son. Again a glance as of envy lighted up the flushed face of the toper, and he drew a long breath as he said:

"Eh, but what a man thee be; 'Tom! I'd give a deal to be like thee."

"Thee didn't come here to say that, I take it, Luke," was the rather scornful answer. "What's thee got to say to-night?"

"Well, I thought as I'd look in as I had naught to do. I say, Tom, lad, beest thee going to the preaching on Sunday?"

"Preaching?" echoed Tom scornfully, "thee be surely a fool, Luke Crowder—what have the likes of us to do with preachings and parsons—eh?"

"Nay, nay, I don't mean the preachings in the church. Thee must have heerd tell of the Methodys, as folks call them, Tom, them as preaches in the fields and places, and sends folks ravin' mad?"

Tom shrugged his broad shoulders and scowled in impatient disgust.

"I know naught about such things," he said, "I leave all that to women and fools. Thee be half a fool theeself, Luke, if thee listens to such old wives' tales."

Luke did not take offence at such plain speaking. Tom was privileged to say what he would.

"Well—that's true enow—only women and fools would care a straw what any fool of a preacher said. But folks say it's a mighty fine sight to see and to hear them—and there's to be preaching on Sunday at Hownston—at the markot cross."

"And thee's wanting to go, I suppose," sneered Tom. "Thee be a proper fool, Luke Crowder."

"Folks go who beant no more fools than thee, Tom," answered Luke nodding his head. "There be fine times at some of them preachings. They shy stones and rotten eggs, and set on the preacher and drag him round the town, or duck him in the horse-pond. It be rare sport they say to bait the preacher and send his flock flying. I thought if thee and me and some of our boys were to go—"

Luke stopped suddenly, for he saw that another listener had approached, of whose close proximity he had not been hitherto aware. Tom's eyes had given one responsive flash, although he had not spoken again; and now neither of the young men attempted to do so, for

old Samson Heron, the senior blacksmith of Sax, was the one being in the place of whom the black sheep had the grace to stand in some awe. He was a very fine-looking old man, with hair as white as snow, although he carried his seventy years so well that, save for his bleached locks, he would have passed for a much younger man. He had something the same physique as his nephew Tom: but here the resemblance ceased, for his eyes were a bright, clear blue, his skin was fair and ruddy in tone, and his features were rugged and kindly in expression, though not lacking in quiet firmness. He wore the leathern apron of his calling, like Tom, and his hammer was still in his hand as he stood upon the threshold of the shed.

"Ay, lads, if ye and some of your comrades were to go, ye could show the messenger of the King of kings how nobly and bravely and courageously the boys of Sax can show themselves—how they can set by the dozen upon one harmless, inoffensive, unresisting man, and drag him round the town, beating and pelting him, to show their own courage and manliness and worthiness. Go, Luke Crowder—and do it—it would be another feather in that cap of thine, it would be like thee and like thy other works."

"Come, come, Master Samson, thee need'st not turn on me like that," answered Luke interrupting half angrily, half sullenly, "there be better men nor me who say these preachers are wicked disturbers of the peace—Jacobites and papists in disguise—and I know not what besides—"

"If thou knowest not—hold thy peace, thou prating fool," was the stern reply of the old man—rendered all the more stern because that Luke was plentifully interlarding his speech with oaths, as was the regular custom of those days amongst almost all classes of people. Samson Heron, however, was one of those who never swore himself, and did all in his power to check the growth of the sinful habit in those around him. Even Tom was a little more guarded in his speech in presence of his uncle, though at other times he was as foul in his language as any man in the county.

But Luke did not relish being taken up quite so sharply, and he began again still in the same injured way:

"Well, Master Samson, I didn't think it of thee—taking up arms for these beggarly preachers—a good churchman like thee. Why, if they have told thee aught about it, they must have told thee that the parsons hate these preachers worse nor anybody else, leading away good sober folk from church, and turning them stark-raving mad, that nobody can do aught with them no more. I know a deal more than thee canst—for all the travellers come to the Dragon—and they are all full of these strange goings on, and what the parsons say to them. If thee be a good churchman, thee cannot uphold these preachers. So what'll thee decide betwixt them, Master Samson?" and Luke, who evidently thought he had got his enemy into a corner, put on a swaggering air and looked him full in the face.

The old man returned the gaze very quietly. "Thou art an ignorant loon, Luke Crowder," he said. "Thou hearest the idle gossip of thy half-drunken comrades, and thou thinkest thou hast heard a new gospel. I know better than thee, lad. These men who are preaching here and there all over the country are clergymen—the great ones amongst them—of the church of the land. What they preach is doctrine which may be found in our Prayer-book, and in our Bibles. If they fall into error from excess of zeal—as I say not that they may—have not better men than they done the same? 'He that is not against us is with us'—is it for us to fight against the Lord?"

"But, Master Samson, the parsons themselves are loudest in their complaints. It is they who lead the riots again and again. It is they who say these men teach false doctrine."

"Cease, lad—cease thy ignorant prating. There be parsons who welcome them gladly, and give to them the right hand of fellowship. Why it was but two days since that I was talking with our own Mr. Latham on this very point. He is no foe to these preachers. He says they be true Christians, ay and true churchmen likewise, and that they may well be instruments used by the great God of heaven for the awakening of His sleeping church."

"Mr. Latham—Mr. Latham, indeed!" sneered Luke in profound contempt, for Mr. Latham was merely the poor curate who resided in the village of Sax, the Rector, who held several better livings, being resident in the town of Hownston ten miles away. "What does Mr. Latham know? If Madam hears that he teaches folks such dangerous doctrine, she will soon send him packing. Ask the Rector what he thinks—ask the Squire. Thee be a fine speaker, Master Samson, and thee has fine ideas in that head of thine—but thee doesn't know everything yet, and best be careful how thee takes up these new preachings and doctrines, or thee may find theeself in the wrong box. Folks do say as Madam will make the Squire turn out of their cottage any folks who go to preachings and follow the Methodys."

Argument was not Luke's forte, and he stood in considerable awe of the doctrinal capacities of the blacksmith, who was said to be a match even for the sexton, Glegg. The latter was generally reputed the wisest man in the place, but as Samson was himself a loyal churchman, and a faithful old tenant of the Fortescue family, there was little occasion for controversy, although there was a latent consciousness in the mind of the people that the two men looked upon matters from a very different standpoint.

Sax was one of those villages, common enough in old days, that exist entirely, as it were, in the shadow of the great house of the place, ruled and dominated by the wills of the heads of that family, and practically dependent upon them for everything. Life may flow peacefully enough there in the main, justice, kindness and goodwill may for the most part be exercised to all alike. But let friction come, let some unlucky

wight contrive either by misadventure or carelessness or evil practices once thoroughly to offend the autocrats of the place, and then woe betide him. There is no appeal to a higher jurisdiction, there is small hope from public opinion. He may retain a few private friends; but the majority will side with the "great folks," and the luckless offender will be a practical outcast from his kind. The power thus practically vested in a single family is rather a terrible thing. And it behoves those who wield it to look warily where they tread, or they may have more to answer for when the books are opened and the secrets of all hearts and lives made known, than in their careless days of autocratic power they have ever dreamed.

In Sax the ruling power was vested in the Fortescue family. Squire Fortescue lived in the great quadrangular house standing well back in its finely timbered park; and "Madam," as his wife was always called, was said to be something of an autocrat at home, and was an object of veneration and awe to all the inhabitants of the village.

Rector Fortescue resided in Hownston, and kept a poor curate to do the duty in the little old church of Sax. Owing to his close kinship with the Squire, the Rector was very well known in Sax, but not as a pastor of his flock. He would have considered it out of place to visit any of them in an official capacity. He knew the names of most of the people, and would exchange a cheery word with them as he rode down the village street. His son, the "Captain," as the people liked to call him, was greatly admired in Sax for his dashing bearing and military ways. He was often over too, for he and his cousin Fulk (the heir of the Fortescue family) were great friends, and were constantly together whenever the Captain was home on leave. The latter had but just returned from the war, and having seen active service abroad and fought in the battle of Dettingen, was accounted a hero in the eyes of the people and admired more than ever.

Sax was a small place lying in the midst of picturesque country some twenty miles to the north-west of York. The traveller from York approaching the village would first become aware that he was reaching inhabited country by finding that the left hand side of the road was paled in, and had changed its character from moorland to an expanse of fine park. From time to time he would get glimpses of the pile of red brick building of which Rookwood was composed, and presently he would reach the first outlying cottages of Sax. A wooded lane branching off to the right led, as he might discover upon inquiry, to Ernscliff—Ernscliff itself being an old-fashioned house occupying the ground enclosed by a horse-shoe bend of the river Erne, with a little hamlet nestling round its gates,—and a farther branch of the wooded road, bending still more to the right, led to Farmer Dawson's farm of Sheepwold, of which more anon.

But if the traveller made no deflection from the main road, he would find himself speedily in Sax itself, and the first cottages, all on the right-

hand side of the road, were those inhabited by Tom Heron and his mother, and by his uncle Samson, who dwelt next door, though not under the same roof. The forge and its sheds were only a few yards higher up the road, and then came the picturesque three-arched bridge crossing the river Erne. From the bridge an excellent view of the whole place could be obtained, for the road was wide and straight, and rose slightly in a gentle slope. On the right lay the village street, if such a name could be rightly applied to the irregular row of cottages and buildings which composed the village of Sax. The Red Dragon, with its swinging signboard, was just across the bridge, and then came a row of small thatched cottages, inhabited by the labourers who worked for the Squire. Next the village shop stood out as a building of somewhat greater importance, and then came more cottages, and beyond that the village green, where the young men wrestled and played games on summer evenings, or occasionally a bull was baited—generally on Sunday—to the great delight of the majority of the community. Behind the cottages lay a thick belt of woodland, and the hill behind was also thickly wooded, so that no glimpse from Sax could be obtained of Ernscliff, though the place lay not more than a mile away as the crow flies.

To the left of the stranger standing on the bridge was still the park belonging to Rookwood, save that close against the road a portion of the park-land had been enclosed for church and churchyard; and the small, quaint, cruciform building clothed in ivy seemed to overlook the village opposite, the boundaries of the churchyard being on one side the road, on another the river, on the third the magnificent avenue of lime trees leading up to the house, and on the fourth a fence, through which there was a private way of entrance for the "family" to the church, the north transept of which was given up entirely for their use, and fitted up with stove and easy chairs almost like a room.

The river was artificially widened as it ran through the park into a succession of fine fishponds. The Squire preserved his game most carefully, and was the master of the hounds for the neighbourhood. On the whole, the Squire was a very popular man with his tenants (and there was no person in Sax who was not a tenant); and the heir was popular too. Of the second son, Hugh, less was known, as his life had been spent at school and at Oxford, and men did not come home in those days for vacations in the easy way they do now. Irene, the only daughter, was greatly beloved, though little was seen of her in the place. Her health was delicate, and "Madam" kept a firm hand over her. The emancipation and independence of young womanhood was a thing not so much as dreamed of then.

When Luke Crowder beat a retreat before the argumentative turn given to the conversation by Samson, and lounged across the bridge and in at his father's doors, Tom stood for a moment looking after him as if he were half disposed to follow; but he saw that his uncle's eye was upon

him, and he turned rather impatiently away, flinging down his tools in hasty fashion, as he strode off to his own home.

The picturesque exterior of the low thatched cottages with their growth of flowering creeper, was not much in harmony with the dark dampness of the interior, which had neither beauty nor comfort to recommend it. Tom's home had little of the home element in it. Although he earned good wages, as things went in those days, he lived in the midst of squalor and discomfort. The cause was not far to seek. Tom's mother—by birth half a gipsy, from whom he had inherited his swarthy skin, dark eyes and chiselled features—was a terribly wild and bad woman. During the lifetime of her husband, Tom's father, who had married her out of love, and had loved her faithfully to the end, she kept fairly straight. But on his death she broke out into the wildest ways, and finally deserted her little boy and disappeared from Sax. Samson took the boy and brought him up. He was himself a childless widower, and was glad enough to have the boy, despite the fact that he early showed signs of having inherited much of the wild nature of his mother. Tom lived with him until he was twenty—two years from the date at which this story begins; and then, after an absence of many long years, Jenny Heron suddenly returned to Sax, and brought with her a blind child—a little girl—her own daughter, but a child of whose father she never spoke.

She came to Tom, and demanded a home with him; and he gave it her. He had lately rented for himself the empty cottage next his uncle, for he and Samson did not entirely assimilate in

their ways as may well be guessed. Wild, reckless, dare-devil as he was, Tom would not turn his mother from the door, even though she brought to him nothing but shame and degradation. All the difference it appeared to make in him was that he became more and more reckless, drinking, swearing, fighting—always in the thick of any cock-fighting, bull-baiting, or other savage sport. He kept his mother supplied with money enough to give her ample opportunities to drink herself into frenzy, and only smiled a bitter smile as he saw her in her degradation, and found his home made more squalid and dismal than any other house in the place.

And yet in the midst of all this misery and humiliation there was one bright spot in the life of this young blacksmith—one soft spot in his hard and reckless heart. There were those amongst his boon companions who would have seen with astonishment the change that came over his dark face when he stepped down into the low-raftered room of his dismal cottage, and heard a little voice hailing him out of the darkness—

"Oh, Tom, Tom, is that thee? Oh, I am so glad! I have got supper all ready for thee—for mother is out—and we will have it so cosily together in the kitchen here."

And Tom stepped through the door, tossed the little blind child in his arms, and let her put her arms about his neck and kiss him—since there was nobody there to see him. For the love of that little sightless child, without father, without name, was the one influence in Tom Heron's life that kept alive within him the spark of the Divine nature in man—the love which is the name of God.

MODERN DISCOVERIES AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY THE REV. GEORGE T. STOKES, D.D.

I.—THE APOLOGY OF ARISTIDES.

IN the SUNDAY AT HOME for 1888-89, I gave an account of certain modern discoveries which throw a wondrous light upon the Christian story, confirming the testimony of the New Testament and of those early Christians who came next after the Apostles. At that time I dealt with a few leading cases, some of which I touched very slightly, while completely omitting others quite as important. I propose now to take up the story of discovery, and will begin it with an account of the very last precious relic of antiquity which has come to light. I mean the Apology of Aristides.

That work is undoubtedly a very ancient one, as I shall strive to show in this paper. It is mentioned by early writers; it accurately corresponds with the circumstances of the times, and

bears all the marks of an early date. It is, as I have said, the very latest find in the region of Christian antiquity, having been only published to the world last summer, though it was found two years ago in the wild desert and mountain monastery of Saint Catherine upon Mount Sinai, where thirty-two years ago the celebrated scholar Tischendorf found the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible, one of the most ancient and precious copies of the Holy Scriptures now in existence.

This monastery was built in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, whose likeness, with that of his wife Theodora, still adorns the walls of its great church. The Emperor doubtless endowed it with a library, and it now possesses some seven hundred manuscripts. Heaven alone knows what precious remnants of Christian antiquity may remain there.

Professor Rendel Harris, an English scholar, who has migrated to America, when visiting Saint Catherine's in 1889, found among them a Syriac manuscript which turned out to be a translation of this primitive Apology which now has been given to the world by the Cambridge University Press. I shall, in a subsequent paper, have something to tell about this Syriac translation which may be of use in guiding the researches of travellers in the east. Now, however, let us first deal with the story of a writer whose life touched and overlapped that of the latest Apostles.

Who then was Aristides? what was his Apology? and what is the special interest of that Apology? and what light does it throw on early Christianity and the Christian faith generally? These are queries, the answers to which will embody much that is new to the Christian student.

The first thought which rises in the mind of the ordinary reader when the Apology of Aristides is mentioned is this, what had Aristides the Just, the great Athenian statesman, to do with Christianity? Did he not live hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ? And this objection is quite natural. Aristides the Just is the most famous of the name, but then Aristides was a very common name among the Greeks of the second century after Christ as well as of those of the fifth century before Him. There were several sculptors and painters of the name known to classical writers. There was an Aristides too, very famous in the second century of our era. He was an orator, a philosopher and a statesman. He lived in the city of Smyrna, and has left behind him a mass of writings in praise of heathen deities, which, though he does not once mention Christianity in them, have served very materially to throw light on some important questions of early Christian history.

The story of this pagan Aristides is a curious one. He lived, as I have said, in the city of Smyrna and elsewhere in Asia Minor during the middle of the second century, the very time when Polycarp, St. John's disciple, was dwelling and suffering in the same city of Smyrna. Aristides had heard of the Christians as a noxious sect of atheists and evildoers who were making rapid progress, but he scorns the whole subject. He wraps himself about with his philosophic mantle, and bestows his thoughts upon topics more worthy of his position. He laboured under a chronic sickness for seventeen years, and his writings are devoted in large part to show us how he was cured. He thought himself the peculiar favourite of the god Æsculapius, the patron of the medical art, and in his "Sacred Discourses" he tells us how the god directed him by dreams and other intimations as to the remedies, the medicines and hot baths he should use. In these writings he mentions, from time to time, the names of the pro-Consuls of Asia, helping us thereby to fix the date of Polycarp's martyrdom to the year 155, proving that Polycarp, who died at a very advanced age, was a contemporary of the Apostles, and that his writings and his testimony should take their place next after those of the Twelve.

This case of the pagan Aristides of the second

century is most interesting as showing how Divine Providence has made the writings even of the most scornful and contemptuous opponent conducive to the establishment of the Truth. This man's name was Aelius Aristides.¹ But there was another Aristides of the second century. He was a philosopher, like his namesake from Smyrna. He lived however at Athens, the centre of the religious culture of that age; he was a contemporary of the last Apostles and apostolic men, and wrote an Apology or Defence of Christianity, which he presented to the Emperor Hadrian when he visited Athens in the year 125; that is, within twenty or twenty-five years of St. John's death, when thousands must have been living who had known and had been taught by the Apostles themselves. But then the question naturally arises, How do we know anything at all about this Aristides, or that he wrote an Apology? People have heard of the Apostolic Fathers, of Barnabas, and Clement of Rome, of Hermas, of Ignatius of Antioch and of St. Polycarp, but they have never heard of Aristides, and that for two reasons—first, that Aristides' Apology has been lost and hidden from us for much more than one thousand years, and again, because the ancient authors who mention him, especially Eusebius, are very much talked of, but very little read, by the public teachers of religion.

Now our great authority for the existence of Aristides is the celebrated Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine—the Cæsarea on the sea-coast where St. Peter saw his vision, and where Cornelius the centurion lived and was converted, not Cæsarea Philippi, which was far away inland in the north-east of the Holy Land. Eusebius lived one hundred and fifty years after Aristides, but still he possessed all the literature produced by the earliest Christians. We have already spoken a little about this in a previous article in the SUNDAY AT HOME for 1889 (p. 656), but we must enlarge upon it for it is most important.

How or where, it may be asked, did Eusebius obtain access to this ancient literature? The answer is simple enough. Eusebius had, in his own episcopal city, for instance, a large library which that great scholar and critic Origen had founded in Cæsarea half a century before Eusebius was born, and where the founder had placed all the Christian literature produced during the second century. That library was enlarged and enriched by the friend and patron of Eusebius, the martyr Pamphilus, who suffered for Christ in the year 309. It is said to have numbered 30,000 volumes in the fourth century, and it continued to exist till Cæsarea was taken by the Mahometans in the seventh century. Eusebius had another great Christian library at his command in Jerusalem, then called Ælia, which was collected there by Alexander, bishop of that city, in 212, fifty years or so after Aristides may have died. Eusebius had then ample resources enabling him to give a true picture of the literary activity

¹ The reader anxious to behold the best results of the highest culture of the second century should consult Mr. Capos's little work, "The Age of the Antonines," where he will find numerous notices of this Aristides, the pagan philosopher of Smyrna.

of the Christians from the very earliest times; and modern discoveries have demonstrated the industry and honesty with which Eusebius utilised the materials at his disposal. People, from their want of knowledge of the facts, do not at all realise how marvellously the accuracy of Eusebius has been proved by the course of discovery during the last two hundred and fifty years.

A few examples will show this. We knew nothing, for instance, about the First Epistle of Clement of Rome, save what Eusebius told, till the days of Charles I., when Patrick Young published it; and then it was found to be exactly what Eusebius had described, a missive elicited by the dissensions among the Christians at Corinth.

The Epistles of St. Ignatius were known only from Eusebius till Archbishop Ussher printed the text, and then again our author was vindicated.

The Diatessaron or Gospel Harmony of Tatian was, till twenty years ago, a subject of controversy as I have already told. Sceptics would not admit that such a thing ever existed, but the chance discovery of an ancient manuscript in distant Armenia has shown that Eusebius was most accurate in his account of it.

Time would fail me if I attempted to show in every instance how marvellously Eusebius has been corroborated by the results of modern inquiry. He has never in fact been convicted of any serious error, or shown to have made any important mistake in matters of fact, so that we may absolutely rely on any such statement as he makes about the Apologist Aristides when he tells us that he was one of the two earliest writers in defence of Gospel truth as against heathenism.

These then are the very words of Eusebius, when writing in the beginning of the Fourth Book of his Ecclesiastical History, concerning the end of the first century and the beginning of the second: "After Trajan had reigned for nineteen and a half years, Ælius Adrian became his successor in the Empire. To him Quadratus addressed a discourse containing an Apology for our religion, because certain wicked men had attempted to trouble the Christians. The work is still in the hands of a great many of the brethren, as also in our own, and furnishes clear proof of the man's understanding and of his Apostolic orthodoxy. He himself reveals the early date at which he lived in the following words; 'But the works of our Saviour were always present, for they were genuine; those that were healed and those that were raised from the dead, who were seen not only when they were healed, and when they were raised, but were also always present; and not merely while the Saviour was on earth, but also after His death, they were alive for quite a while, so that some of them lived even to our day.' Such, then, was Quadratus. Aristides, also, a believer earnestly devoted to our religion, left, like Quadratus, an Apology for the Faith, addressed to Adrian. His work has been preserved, even to the present day, by a great many persons."

In this passage Eusebius tells us the names of the earliest champions and soldiers of the faith.

He elsewhere speaks of the writers of the New Testament and of the Apostolic Fathers, Clement, Barnabas and Ignatius, who preceded Quadratus and Aristides in point of time. They were, however, edifying writers who wrote expositions of Divine truth for those who were within the fold of Christ. The earliest controversial writers, advocates of the truth and assailants of error were these two, Quadratus and Aristides. The Apology of Quadratus is as yet lost to sight, though the many discoveries of which we have been telling, and of which we have yet to tell, encourage us to hope that it will shortly be brought to light. Specially as we know from other sources that it was known and quoted down to the year 600 A.D., a much later date than that at which we find any notice of the work of Aristides, which has now been restored to us. Quadratus, according to some, was a disciple of the Apostles themselves and the Third Bishop of Athens. In any case he flourished while St. John was still alive, and his Apology, of which Eusebius gives us a brief extract, confirms the statements of the four Gospels concerning the miracles of our Lord in healing the sick and raising the dead.

Eusebius tells us, however, in the chapter just quoted, not merely concerning Quadratus, he also mentions Aristides, as another advocate for the truth. He gives us a fuller description of him in his Chronicle, another learned work which he wrote for the purpose of showing the connection between the Old Dispensation and the New, and to trace the working of Divine Providence all down the ages to his own time. There he tells us that Aristides was a philosopher of Athens, and that he wrote his Apology for presentation to the Emperor Hadrian when he visited Athens, in the year 125, seeking initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries; statements which are confirmed by St. Jerome, another very learned man, and accurate historical inquirer, a little later than Eusebius.

These are the Christian authorities upon whom we depend for evidence to prove that such a man ever existed, and that he wrote the Apology which Professor Harris has brought to light. But a sceptical inquirer might ask, have we any proof from other sources that Hadrian was ever at Athens at all? Can you confirm the testimony of Eusebius by any independent authority, or by any of the results of modern research?

Here again our reply is triumphant. We can confirm Eusebius, and that in the most minute particulars. Ancient history and modern discovery alike agree in testifying that the date assigned by Eusebius in his History and in his Chronicle to the composition of the Apology, and the circumstances described by him as leading up to that composition, are most accurately and honestly set forth.

The Emperor Hadrian was the greatest traveller in the long line of sovereigns who ruled the ancient Empire of Rome. In his feverish activity he surpassed any modern ruler, the young Emperor of Germany or the Shah of Persia are nowhere when compared with him. He visited England and Scotland, constructing the Roman wall, which still crosses England from the Solway

to the Tyne; he travelled all over Gaul, Germany, Italy, Greece, and extended his visits to Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, and even to distant Palmyra. He was perpetually upon the road, and has left us many interesting letters and decrees testifying to the keen delight he took in questions of philosophy and religion. We have the most precise details concerning these travels of Hadrian, and that from very different sources. There were official lives of Hadrian and his successors written for the use of the Emperor Diocletian, about the year 300. They are called the Augustan Histories, and were the handiwork of Pagans who had the full command of the magnificent record system of the Roman Empire. Hadrian's life, written by an author named Spartianus, expressly tells us that he went to Athens in the year 125 to be initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.

Then again modern discoveries have told us about Hadrian's travels. It was the Emperor's custom when visiting the cities of the East to issue decrees conferring certain powers upon them. These decrees were carved on stone, and erected in the public market-places. Many of these decrees have been found in the excavations which have been carried on so largely within the last twenty years by French, German, American, and English scholars, by men like Waddington, the celebrated French statesman, and Colonel Wood at Ephesus, and Professor Ramsey.

Inscriptions, letters, edicts, and decrees dealing with Hadrian have been recovered in such vast numbers that a Vienna scholar named Dürre found it possible, ten years ago, to write an elaborate account of his travels, which has been published, and found to agree exactly with the statements of Eusebius about Quadratus and Aristides. It appears that a visit of Hadrian was made to Athens in the winter of the year 125, when this visit, and the known devotion of the Emperor to Pagan worship and Pagan philosophy was made the occasion of raising a persecution against the Christians. Aristides was a philosopher of Athens, and the Emperor was known to be a patron and student of philosophy. Aris-

tides therefore wrote a philosophic defence of Christianity, combined with an attack upon Paganism. He is said even to have been admitted to a personal interview with the Emperor, which so impressed Hadrian that he issued an edict in favour of the Christians, or at least granting them the toleration which bigoted magistrates refused.

Perhaps it will conduce to a more perfect comprehension of the activity of Hadrian and the keen interest he took in religion, if I quote a letter of his which we derive from no Christian source, but from a Pagan writer who lived and wrote about the year 290, that is, before the last great persecution, and when there was not the slightest prospect of the triumph of Christianity. Vopiscus wrote a number of the official lives of the earlier emperors, inserting into them many original letters. Among them we find one from the Emperor Hadrian describing his visit to Egypt, which is of great importance as showing that Christians as well as Jews formed a large proportion of the population of Alexandria about the year 130. Hadrian is writing to the Consul Servianus, a dear friend, telling him of his experiences, and he says: "I have become perfectly familiar with Egypt which you have praised to me, dearest Servianus. It is fickle, uncertain, blown about by every gust of rumour; those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those are devoted to Serapis who call themselves bishops of Christ. There is no ruler of a synagogue there, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer, a quack. The (Jewish) patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is compelled by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ." This letter proves the interest which the emperor took in the contending religions then embraced within the bounds of the Empire, his knowledge of Christianity and Christian organisation; and shows that the statement of Eusebius concerning Aristides and the Apology he presented to the Emperor Hadrian at Athens was in exact conformity with all the circumstances of the age and place.¹



"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL."—LUKE X. 43.

BY THE REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.

THE incident on which this lesson is founded is so simple that it needs no unfolding, and so natural that it needs no effort of the imagination to realise it. We can enter quite easily, some of us too easily, into Martha's state of mind as she complains of her sister. It may not be quite so easy to enter into the Saviour's meaning in His remarkable answer; but this is what we shall endeavour to do.

It is of some importance to begin with, to

know where the accent falls. It is not on the word needful, as if Martha were neglecting the thing referred to; but on the word one, so as to distinguish it from the many things about which she was troubled. Martha knew the one thing needful, but then she thought so many other

¹ The authenticity of this letter has been questioned by some captious critics. Bishop Lightfoot has, however, vindicated its authenticity in his "Ignatius," vol. i. p. 464, with which may be compared his "Philippians," p. 223.



MARY AND MARTHA.

[After Henri Steinhilber.]

things were needful too. She was a disciple as well as Mary. Like her sister, she had given her heart to the Saviour; and her name is mentioned first of the three, when the family is spoken of as specially dear to Him. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." There is, therefore, no contrast drawn between the two sisters, as if the one were a Christian and the other were not. They were both true and loving disciples; they were both showing their love to the Master, though in different ways. The difference then did not lie deep down in the habitual state of their hearts. It only lay superficially in the state of their hearts at that particular time.

Remember, however, that it did lie in the state of their hearts, and not in the nature of their service. It is not Martha's activity that is rebuked; but her carefulness. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Let us by all means remember the meaning of the word "careful," as it is used in the Scriptures, where it signifies full of care. We now use carefulness in an entirely different sense, as signifying proper care and attention; in this sense we ought always to be careful, in the other, never. Hence the Apostle Paul says: "I would have you without carefulness," i.e. without what we call carking care. And again: "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God." What our Saviour rebuked then was not Martha's activity nor her assiduity, nor her desire to have everything just right, but her carefulness, her allowing herself to be full of care, and trouble of spirit.

And observe how gentle the rebuke was. She had really been fretful and fault-finding with her sister, a much more serious matter than over-anxiety. Bad temper is worse than care. But "He knoweth our frame." He understood it all. He knew that it was not really ill-temper at the bottom. He knew well that she had a kind, sisterly heart through it all. He saw plainly that it all came of nervousness, as we call it; and so, passing by the unsisterly exhibition of temper, He speaks only of that which accounted for it: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." The Lord knows very well when our ill-temper arises from nervousness, or from any other physical cause. If the cause is one over which we have no control, I am sure He does not blame us at all; and if it be one over which we have control, He puts all the blame there, as in this case of easily avoided care.

We shall not dwell on the more obvious lessons of the passage. They are simple and easily gathered, so that the mere noting them in passing will be enough. We readily recognise in Martha and Mary two types of Christians: the Marthas, who find it natural to be active in good works, to busy themselves in doing what ought to be done; and the Marys who live a quieter life, and exercise their influence for good in a less noticeable manner. These differences always have existed, always will exist, and always ought to exist in the church. They are founded on

diversities of disposition and of gifts. Of course it would never do to have the life of action separated entirely from the life of devotion. The active worker must find some time for devotion, and the devout thinker must find opportunity for action. Every one will understand that not an exclusive, but a prevailing character is meant. And both types of Christians are needed. It was right and proper that certain preparations should be made for entertaining the Master on this occasion; and undoubtedly the one to make these preparations was Martha. On the other hand, it would not have been quite respectful to their Guest, if both of them had left Him to Himself. Each, then, was in her proper place; and if Martha had gone quietly on with her work till it was done, and then sat down to enjoy her visitor's company, no remark, other than of approval, would have been called for. It would have been wrong for Mary to have depreciated Martha's activity, and suggested that she should sit down at once. But it was wrong on the other hand for Martha to find fault with Mary because she was entertaining the Master Himself, and not joining in the more active work of household preparation. The obvious lesson is that each of us should do the service we feel called to do, cheerfully, and should beware of finding fault with others because they do not feel called to do the same things, or to serve in the same way.

Many have an impression that the Marthas are rather hardly dealt with in this passage, while the Marys, who have their faults as well, are let off entirely. There is nothing but rebuke for the one, and nothing but encouragement for the other. But we must remember that the apparent inequality is set right in other passages. We need go no farther than the parable of "The Good Samaritan," right before it. The active Christian, who is devoted to good works, will find there all the encouragement and commendation which he needs. And again, when we read on in Mary's life, we find that her love to her Lord did manifest itself in an act of outward service, which is commended even more highly than her devout attention to her Saviour's words on this occasion. We may be very sure our Lord appreciates every kind of service which comes from a loving heart, and that it is out of the purest kindness that He here warns His more energetic disciples against what might spoil their excellent work. It was because Martha's over-anxiety was in the first place spoiling her service, next spoiling her temper, and finally spoiling her enjoyment of the Master's visit, that our Lord took the opportunity of giving her the warning she needed.

But now can we not go a little deeper into our Lord's words and get something that will do for us all—something that shall be good for the Marthas and for the Marys, and for every one of us? Certainly it is not the Marys alone who can have "the good part." It is for us all; and if we will only seize the great principle which our Saviour here takes the opportunity of laying down, we shall make sure of the good part, whether we are called to serve Him in varied

activities, or whether our service be in a silent sitting at the Master's feet.

"One thing is needful." Many things may be desirable, highly desirable; but one thing is needful. Is there any heavenly wisdom here? If not, it will be different from all the other words of our Lord. Let us look into it, and see what we can find.

This is a very perplexing and distracting world for those who try to do their part in it. There are so many, many things to be attended to. "All things are full of labour," as Solomon said three thousand years ago. It is as true now as it was then. The most astonishing progress in the arts of life has been made since his day. In nothing has this been more marked than in the multiplication of labour-saving machines. This must surely be a blessing. Now, that in the factory, on the farm, in the household, everywhere, men are using, for almost every kind of work, machines which can accomplish as much in an hour as without them could be done in a day, and often very much more, one would suppose that the people of the civilised world ought to begin to have just a little leisure. What can be the use of labour-saving machines if they do not save labour? And if so much labour is saved, why, of course, so much leisure must be enjoyed. But where is the leisure? Can you see it? Can you find it? Are not all things just as full of labour as ever? It seems to be about as hard work as ever even to make a living; and for a man or a woman who is in the midst of the activities of life to accomplish everything supposed to be needful appears even more hopeless than in any of the ages past. What is the explanation of it all? I believe it is just this, that we allow our wants to multiply in even a greater ratio than the facilities for their supply. What were luxuries long ago became conveniences in course of time, and are recognised as necessities now. A nation of weary housekeepers hailed the advent of the sewing machine as a relief from heavy burdens which they and their mothers had borne. The machine came. It came to stay, and to fulfil all the promises it had made, except that one of affording relief to the weary housekeepers. The machines came in by the million; but the housekeepers of the land are as weary as ever. Most of them are as "cumbered with much serving," and many of them with even as much sewing as before. There are so many, many things that were only desirable twenty years ago, which have become needful now.

If we could only keep down the number of needful things, what a comfort it would be to many a weary one; what a strain would be taken off weak nerves; what a calm would come over fretted spirits; what rest and peace and happiness! If only a fair proportion of those things which have grown to be needful things, so that we feel we must secure them at whatever cost, could fall back again to their old place of things merely desirable, which we might accomplish if we could do it easily, but did not feel absolutely obliged to attain, many of us would find it had paid well to let them go, having as our reward so many hours of quiet per day, and as

the result a healthier body, a happier soul, and a much more heavenly spirit. One of the great wants of the age is the cutting down of the altogether too vast and cumbrous multitude of things which are considered needful.

Perhaps these general considerations will prepare us for seeing or imagining what a comfort it would be, if we could only get full possession of the Saviour's thought when He said: "One thing is needful." What a soothing balm for the spirit, what a heavenly calm to take the place of "life's fitful fever!" If there is any truth in it at all, it must surely be worth getting hold of!

What then was the one thing needful? What was the good part which Mary chose? It was sitting at Jesus' feet, and hearing His word. Heavenly wisdom was her inspiration and her guide. What was Martha's for the time being? Conventionalism. That was the reason why so many things seemed so necessary to her, that she must fret and worry herself to accomplish them all. So has it been always, and so is it more than ever to-day. Conventionalism says, Fashion says, Custom says: "It must be so and so; this and that and the other must be done." Heavenly Wisdom says: "One thing is needful."

Observe here how those get on the wrong track altogether who say that the salvation of the soul is the one thing needful, and that our Saviour's purpose was to teach that worldly things are of no consequence in comparison. There is nothing in the passage about salvation. There was not the slightest question about Martha's salvation, except indeed her salvation from the cares and troubles which burdened and oppressed her. The idea is not that the things of the next world are the only things worth considering, and the things of this world should therefore be dismissed from the mind. Not at all. It is rather this: that if we would know how to live our daily life, how to discharge our daily duties, how to bear our daily burdens, how to accomplish all that we ought to accomplish, we have simply to sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word. Take His words and not the world's notions as our guide from day to day and hour to hour, and that is all we need to be concerned about. "One thing is needful."

It is no less a mistake to imagine that "the good part" is a life of ideal contemplation. If you are a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, He may detain you in His presence with a gentle loving constraint, say in the early morning hour, that He may give you some heavenly counsel and comfort; but presently you will hear His voice say: "Son, Daughter, go work to-day in My vineyard." You will hear Him telling you to be "diligent in business," to "provide well for your own house," to "do good as you have opportunity," to use all your talents in the service of God and your fellow men; and so you will find that to sit at His feet and hear His word in the early morning means a life of activity through the day.

Before you have gone very far you will have found that the "one thing" has expanded to

many things, very many things—even whatsoever good thing your hand finds to do. But then—and here is where the great comfort of the one thing needful comes in—whatever is beyond your strength, whatever is out of your power, whatever you cannot find time to accomplish, you may make yourself as easy about as you please. The Lord does not call upon you to waste and wear away your nerve force, one of the precious talents He has given you, which it is wrong to squander. He does not ask impossibilities. He does not ask you to do anything for which the requisite strength is not furnished. If you are inclined to say: "I must accomplish this, or that; my time and strength are all gone, but here is another thing that must be done," stop: "One thing is needful." Does the Lord wish you to do that? If He did would He not give you time? Would He not furnish you with the strength? Would He not give you the requisite ability? It may be desirable; but you must be ready to give up what is only desirable, for the sake of your health, for the sake of your peace, for the sake of your temper, may we not say? "One thing is needful:" be not then careful and troubled about many things. What though people, who know not your difficulties, may complain and criticise; you have your Master's approval; you have His "Well done"; and that is all you require. "One thing is needful." And do you not see how, by realising this comforting thought, we can really accomplish very much more? By avoiding care and worry, we save the time which it takes to do our fretting; for it takes time to do this as well as to do anything else. Better still, we save the strength it absorbs. Few people have any idea how much nervous energy is wasted in worry. Again and again it has been said, and again and again it has been proved, that it is not work but worry that wears men and women out. Most assuredly, if we could only save the strength that goes off in that unfortunate way, we should all accomplish a great deal more.

Once more, what disappointments it would save us, if we only held fast by the heavenly wisdom of these words of our Lord. If, for

example, we would only put our worldly ambitions in the category of desirable and not of needful things, how calmly and pleasantly we should be able to take the ups and downs, especially the downs of life. If day by day we accustom ourselves to the thought that the one thing needful is so to live as to secure our Lord's approval, then even if we fail in some cherished object of ambition, have we not the one thing needful left? Have we not after all that good part which can never be taken away from us?

"That good part which shall not be taken away from her." All other good things must be taken away. Even your active usefulness, that, must be taken away. Sickness may come and lay you aside; and if not, old age will come and do it. But however sick you may be, or however old you may get, you will never be deprived of the blessedness of sitting at Jesus' feet, and hearing His word. And it will always be a word in season. If it was a word of stimulus and encouragement when you were young and active, it will be a word of consolation now. However much your activity has been reduced, whatever your apparent uselessness now, day by day He will gladden you with cheering words. "If there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Now, in closing, we must throw a little more emphasis on the word "needful." We have seen that we may limit the range of needful things, and even reduce them to one; but beyond that we cannot go. One thing is needful, so needful that no one should dare to be without it. It may be requisite for our peace and comfort and efficiency of work to know and remember that not many things but only one thing is really needful. But it is necessary for our very life to realise that that one thing is needful, and to make it sure. You need to come and sit at Jesus' feet, and hear His word, for the pardon of your sins, for deliverance from your darkness, for help in the struggle with evil.

"Lord, to whom can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

FOR THE MASTER'S USE.

BY MRS. BOYD CARPENTER.

"HOW delightful it is to be at rest at last! and how soft is this delicious cotton wool! just the place I should have chosen to rest in after all that I have suffered. I feel as though I could gladly remain here for ever," soliloquised a beautiful Diamond as it lay in the Jeweller's drawer. "It is rather dark though, and very lonely," it added after some time. "I wish I had some one to talk to," but just at that moment it felt itself rudely jerked about and bathed in a

flood of light, for some one had opened the drawer. A large hand hung over it and dropped other objects into the drawer and then pushed it to, yet not so closely as to exclude all light. Being a very brilliant gem and able to concentrate and reflect the light, the Diamond soon discovered that it was no longer alone. Two others now shared its solitude, both were to him unknown, and it was with some curiosity and wonder that he observed them. One was about

his own size, but quite different in shape, being smooth and round, whilst he was all angles and edges; it was like him in being white, but the white was so different, not clear and bright, but soft and milky. The other was far larger than either of them, and of a lovely yellow colour, but of no special form; he heard a voice say "Gold" as it was dropped into the drawer, so that he guessed that was its name.

By way of beginning conversation, he remarked, "I hope you find this soft bed pleasant to rest upon; I was just rejoicing in it when you joined me."

"I do, indeed," they ejaculated together, "we are glad to get apart and rest awhile."

"As for me," said the Diamond, "I should be content, I think, to remain here for ever. I don't believe any one ever suffered as I did."

"I am, indeed, sorry to hear you speak so," politely sympathised the Gold. "I have been a severe sufferer myself, so I can judge what you must have felt, but I hardly think this can be the end. It is pleasant to be here for a time, but surely there must be something else in store for us after all the preparation we have been through."

"And I, too," chimed in the smooth white ball, "have suffered loss and been torn from home and kindred; my home is far, far away below the restless, roaring sea."

"Indeed," replied the Diamond. "I should like to hear about your home, for I was never in the sea. I saw it once, for I was brought here in a large boat, but that was before my trials began, when I took life pretty much as it came and did not trouble my head about what it meant, and why things happened. Do tell me all about it; but, first, what is your name?"

"They call me Pearl," she replied, "and if you wish it, I shall be very happy to tell you of my life. But you must both tell me yours afterwards, it will help to while away the time, for, as the Gold has said, I do not believe this is the end, we are only waiting here for a little rest before the Jeweller makes use of us."

As both the Diamond and the Gold agreed to this proposal, the Pearl began: "You must know that I was not always as you see me now. I am all that is left of what is called an oyster, and though the Jeweller now values me highly, it is only for what he has done for me. There was a time in my young days when it was just the reverse, and every one looked down upon me, and despised me, and thought that I should never be of any good."

"We all lived far down below the sea. There were many of us, and a merry time we had; numbers of fish came and went, and though we remained where we were, they brought us news of all that passed: so we had plenty to chat about. Some of us were very vain. I don't mind confessing that I was too. I was young, and plump, and took great pride in my shell. You must know that our shell was supposed to be our chief beauty. I know better now. But at that time we thought less about beauty in ourselves than in our surroundings, and our great care was

to cover our houses with brightness and smooth away all the fretting roughnesses that would worry us and make life painful. We have a peculiar gift by which we are able to do this: a fluid which we spread over our shells, and at that time I thought it was the best use to which it could be put. Life taught me another meaning in it, but you will see that as I go on. One special day marks a change. From that day I began to think more about what I was and less of what others thought of me. It all arose out of a very simple affair; something strange came into my shell and with a sharp pang of pain I suddenly closed it.

"After a little while I cautiously opened it again, and endeavoured to get rid of this horrid thing which troubled me. But, no! it would not go; the more I tried the more it pained me, until at last I could not open my shell at all. Of what use then was all its beauty? I could display it now no more. My friends and companions thought at first that I was sulky and gave me no sympathy. Afterwards they said it was a disease. I was 'smitten' and 'afflicted,' and they gave me what was worse than no sympathy, they gave me contempt. I was looked down on and despised. I fretted continually at first, and lost all my plumpness and colour. I struggled constantly against my fate, and the more I struggled, the more I suffered until at last in despair I gave it up. It was then, just at the depth of my despair that I found escape. The moment I ceased to rebel and accepted my lot it became less hard, and the gift, of which I spoke just now, helped me. I used to think that soft and beautiful liquid was given for our enjoyment solely, and as long as everything was bright and comfortable it almost looked like it. There seemed no great wrong in being happy and delighting in my own beauty. I thought it was the end of life and I was quite content. But when this trouble fell upon me my content was gone. For a long time it seemed as though I should never again be happy, and it was only after I had determined to give up struggling and to make the best of it, accepting the loss of my beauty, that contentment returned. The fluid which I had used to cover my shell now began to cling round the intruder which had caused me so much suffering, until at last I grew quite used to it and felt hardly any pain. Then it was that I became conscious of the contempt of my former friends, for the lump had grown so large that whenever I opened my shell they saw it, and not having one themselves they looked down upon me and said many very unkind things which hurt me terribly. But my day of triumph was coming!

"It had long been a story with us, how ages before, from the world above us, there had come down one who had gone about amongst our ancestors, seeking some and leaving others, and had taken away with him certain whom he had chosen. We all thought it more or less of a fable, yet we had talked as though it were true, and had all confessed an eager wish to see more of the wonders above, and had often speculated which of us should be chosen when he came again. Many had assured me that I should be

one, for my shell was so smooth and so brilliant, and my keenest pang was now caused by the knowledge that all agreed in considering my chance quite gone since this lump had grown. When therefore we were all thrown into excited commotion by the appearance of a large dark object in the water, and knew that the day we had long dreamed of was really come, I closed my shell tightly to hide what I looked upon as my deformity. But it was of no use, I was picked up, my shell forced open, I just heard the words, 'This will do, it is a beauty; truly perfect,' and I was flung into a basket and felt myself going upward, upward, and knew that I had been chosen.

"In our journey I had time to look about me and found the basket filled with numbers of other oysters, and all like me, afflicted, as I thought. Every one of them had lumps, some quite small ones, others larger, but none so large as mine. No one knew where we were going or what was to be our fate. This damped our triumph somewhat, and it was further shaken when we left the water and found ourselves piled together in a mass upon a sloping bed of sand. I thought I had suffered enough before, but it was nothing to what now befell me. Day after day we were left on the hot and blistering sand, without one drop of water; our shells gaped with the heat, and the wider we opened them the more we suffered. I felt I envied my fellows whom I had left in the cool delicious sea, and could have wished myself back again, but that I hoped there was still something better in store for me. My contentment was all gone, and in about a week there was nothing left of me but the poor despised lump, and this it must have been for which I was valued, for my shell and all else was thrown away. I next found myself in my captor's hands being placed in a round hole in a piece of wood, and, oh, joy, I was plunged into the water again. It was delicious! How I revelled in it!

"But a strange thing happened: the wood came closer and closer, and at last pinched me so tightly that I could have screamed. When I thought I could endure it no longer the wood and I were lifted out of the water, and then began a horrid process. I was rubbed violently with a white powder, which I found to be made of the smallest pearls ground quite finely, and though it increased my smoothness and brilliancy it was most unpleasant to bear. That is the whole of my story. I have lost everything, first beauty, then health, then friends, last of all my home was taken from me, and only that left which I had thought my greatest disfigurement. Even then I suffered agonies in being polished and rubbed by my fellows, and only now do I begin to taste of peace."

"You are indeed very beautiful," put in the Diamond, whereat the Pearl blushed a rosy red.

"Such beauty as I have was given me by the Jeweller who brought upon me all these changes. I was not ever thus; but now it is your turn, tell me of yourself," she said, turning to the Diamond.

"In many things my experience resembles

yours," said the Diamond, "it is true it was shorter, but I think it was sharper also. Until a few months ago my life was very quiet and uneventful. You must know I was not as you see me now, but rough and dull-looking and of no particular attractiveness. Indeed it surprises me, now I come to think of it, why the Jeweller should have picked me out from amongst hundreds of others all more or less alike. He must be wonderfully clever to know what is in us as he does! Well, he brought me home with others across the sea, and I was pleased enough to see more of the world. At times he would take us out of the soft green bag in which we lived and show us to his friends. I could not help noticing that though there were stones of other colours with us, they gave me the most attention, and when they discussed about a 'rose diamond' and a 'brilliant' I thought they spoke of our colour, but I know better now. I quickly gathered that a 'brilliant' was the most valued, and I determined that I was a 'brilliant,' for I could see I was quite colourless and unlike the rosy rubies; but I little knew all that was meant by becoming a 'brilliant.' I was quite satisfied with myself as I was—I knew no better—and when they knocked me against hard corners and tried to scratch me, I resisted with all my might. I rebelled against the rough treatment, and rejoiced when they spoke of my hardness. I thought it was a virtue and I gloried in it. But I learnt differently, it cost me pain enough by-and-by.

"When we reached land and I was next taken out of the bag it was in a dull little room, where I noticed they talked more distinctly of my being a 'brilliant' by-and-by, and spoke of 'cutting' me, and then of 'polishing,' after which they said I should be ready for the Jeweller's use. I had no idea what they meant, but I was not long in ignorance. I felt myself firmly fixed, and then piece by piece was taken from me till I was left little more than half the size I was before. I cannot tell the agonies I suffered!

"I thought it would never end, first one side was cut, then another and another, until I thought there would be nothing left and life was over for me at last! Bitterly did I regret my wish to be a 'brilliant' for I found that 'brilliant' and 'rose' are only two different names which they give to diamonds according to the way they cut them, and the rose does not suffer so much, as it is not so much cut about. At the same time I must admit that they said only the very best quality of stone would stand the amount of cutting necessary to make it a 'brilliant.' But it was too late now; I could only submit, and I know I ought to have been proud and happy to think that I was allowed to undergo all this, for some of the smaller stones that came over with me were simply pounded up in a steel mortar and used to polish others with,—just as your small relations were," said the Diamond, turning to the Pearl. "Doubtless their lives were equally useful, though not so honoured, and as we did not make our own but were chosen by the Jeweller himself, we may rejoice and be

thankful that he has so honoured us. I could not help seeing that I was more admired than ever, now that they had cut away my earthly outside, and strange to say, I gathered that the more I was cut the more the Jeweller would value me, even though my size were less.

"This puzzled me very much at first, but I know why it is now, every cut means a new side from which to reflect light and brilliance; the more sides I have the more I shall shine.

"But you must not think that was all that I suffered or that I shone all at once, oh, no! I had more to undergo: the powdered diamonds were rubbed against me again and again till I flashed out in agony, and as they rubbed they searched me eagerly to see how I stood it, and whether it would reveal any flaw or imperfection. The more they rubbed, the more I flashed back, till at last they pronounced me 'brilliant' indeed, and flung me into this delightful softness, where I was thankfully reposing when you joined me. You seem to think that this is not the end, for myself I hope it is, I am so tired."

"Oh, no!" rejoined the Pearl, "you are far too lovely to be shut up here in the dark; you must show others how beautiful you have become; you must shine as the stars for ever."

"That will be as the Jeweller orders," said the Diamond; and turning to the Gold, he added, "it is your turn now."

"My life, like both of yours, has been full of changes," sighed the Gold, "but I am not like you in having gained by it. I observe that each of you is conscious of improvement, whereas I am only an unformed useless mass without light or brilliancy."

"Do not say that," softly interposed the Pearl, "your colour is lovely, so rich, so mellow, so much more glorious than any I can show."

"Or I either," said the Diamond.

"Well, it is kind of you to say so, but, like yourselves, I must acknowledge that any beauty you find in me is not really mine, but is the work of the Jeweller. I can claim nothing of my own, indeed the only virtue I possess is that I am the most docile of all metals and the least volatile. I heard the Jeweller say that it was on this account that he selected me, because he could make of me the most readily what he wished, and that I should lose nothing, no matter in how fierce a heat he tried me.

"When I first came into his possession I was embedded in part of the earth, which I believe is called rock. It had always been my home and always would be, so I thought, and I was very well content. I had no wish for higher things like the Pearl, and would gladly have escaped suffering if I could. The first thing required of me was to come out of my earthly surroundings and be separate. To achieve this I was cruelly crushed by huge piles of wood shod with iron which were driven down upon me by machinery, and which there was no means of avoiding. I noticed how the earthy matter split and cracked, and how readily it parted from me, and washed away, whilst I remained caught in the hairy surface of a blanket, not a scrap of me was lost;

and though I was sadly beaten and battered about I was not yet quite free from all impurity. I was a little consoled after this, for my closest friend, another mineral called mercury, for whom I have the greatest possible liking, joined me, and I eagerly rushed to greet him, leaving all else behind and throwing myself upon him in a close embrace. But we were not to enjoy it long; they soon parted us, drawing off my only friend by a mysterious process which I think they call distilling. I cannot explain it, I only know I lost him; he grew fainter and fainter in spite of my clinging, and at last floated quite away, leaving me worse off than ever, for I was now nothing but a fine powder of a dull brown colour, no better than the earth from which I was taken. Ah, how I sighed for my quiet home. How I pitied myself; uprooted, crushed, robbed of friends and acquaintance, reduced to less than nothing, useless! So I thought, for I did not know that the object of all this painful discipline was just the reverse, and that only through suffering could I be perfected.

"But all was not yet over. 'I will purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin,' 'I will sit as a purifier and refiner, and purge thee,' said the Jeweller, and my pain began anew. I was flung into a biting cruel acid; I seemed to lose my very identity. I changed colour, and just as I felt I could bear it no longer and gave myself up for lost, in a moment all was changed, and once again I was a dull brown powder. It was not pleasant to feel oneself reduced to nothing in this way; it is most humbling; and a trial through which neither of you have passed, I think, so you can hardly know what it is like. I thought that now at last I might rest—but no. I was carefully gathered up and placed in an iron vessel upon a terrible furnace, which raged with such cruel heat that I dissolved into fluid and turned a greenish blue. I had no more strength left in me. But like you," he added, turning to the Pearl, "at the moment when I felt all was lost I was nearest to relief. I was removed from the heat, poured out and left to cool, and on coming to my senses found myself as you now see me."

"Your experience has indeed been varied," said the Diamond. "It all seems to me very puzzling. You were chosen because you would lose nothing; I gained by loss: you were soft and docile; in me hardness was a virtue. I should like to know what is your opinion about it all, and how you understand life."

"One thing," replied the Gold, "is quite clear; we have all been brought through great suffering of various kinds to a new state of being, being very different from what we were. It is also clear that the discipline used to perfect us was just the one best suited for us and calculated to turn our defects into virtues. Had I been treated as the Diamond my softness and docility would have caused much loss in value; yet the hardness of the Diamond was the very thing that made his treatment effectual to his perfecting. Truly the Jeweller is all wise, 'he knoweth whereof we are made,' and gives us each the experience most

needed to change the ugliness which was ours by nature into beauty. You, dear Pearl, have been afflicted with disease and the contempt of friends; the Diamond has suffered loss to the half of all he possessed; whilst I have been through every conceivable change, so bewildering in character that only now can I begin to think of it calmly. One thing I see quite clearly, we all had blemishes by nature in ourselves which we could not have got rid of without the Jeweller's help; in our original state we were each devoid of beauty, and but for the Jeweller who brought all these influences upon us, painful though they were, we should have remained so and should have merited no praise but rather blame."

"Well," said the Diamond, "that is true, but is there any purpose in it?"

"Surely," replied the Gold, "we all agree, do we not? that what we have gone through is preparation, and preparation of our very selves. It must be for some purpose that he sought us each out in such different ways, and from such different circumstances prepared us for himself; he must have some work or place for us by-and-by for which he has so carefully fitted us."

"I hope so," said the Pearl. "I should like to have the opportunity of showing to others all that he has done for me. It would help them to see what his wisdom can make out of the most unpromising materials, and it is our only way of thanking him to let others see the beauty he has given us."

As the Pearl said these words the drawer was again opened, and they heard the voice of the Jeweller speaking: "These are my most beautiful gems, they are nearly perfect. This Diamond and Pearl are almost faultless, they will shine with a light above the brightness of the sun in the day when I make up my jewels. The Gold, too, is pure gold, tried in the fire; it is the best and most useful servant that I have, indeed I could do little without it,—even my brightest, purest gems would lack half their beauty had I no gold in which to set them, so true is it that 'the greatest is he who doth serve.'"

Soon after this their repose was again broken, and their lives were separated. The Diamond and Pearl met once more in the same piece of jewelry as it was clasped round the arm of a beautiful girl by her fond lover. For the Gold a nobler service was reserved. Of it was made a plain and unpretentious ring, and when next the three met together the ring was on the girl's finger binding two hearts together in a life-long troth.

A CITY OF SCRIPTURE.

NO. I.

1. A small band of armed men arrived in this city, in hot pursuit of a victorious host.

2. It was named after its conquerors, having formerly borne another name.

3. It was afterwards smitten by a king with whom Ahab made a covenant.

4. An idol was worshipped there.

5. A king who "destroyed Baal out of Israel" spared this idol.

6. It is spoken of by Ezekiel as occupied in the fairs of Tyre.

7. It is also mentioned by Amos when speaking of "the sin of Samaria."

L. T.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. I.—OPPOSITES.

My first, given in initials, is the opposite of life.

My second, given in finals, is the opposite of wakefulness.

These two greatly resemble, and are sometimes mistaken for each other, but are never the same.

(1) The opposite of light; (2) The opposite of good; (3) The opposite of deal; (4) The opposite of false; (5) The opposite of hinder.

M. A. S. M.

NO. II.

"We shall surely die because we have seen God."

"Bring me a minstrel."

"Eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."

"We are well able to overcome it."

"Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord."

"I know not the day of my death."

"The half of my goods I give to the poor."

"We are bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage."

"The journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour."

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace."

"Arise, go seek the asses."

The speaker's name supply;

One heard that he must die;

One wrote a book;

Another went to spy;

And one, when Christ went by,

Climbed up to look.

Father of Israel's king;

And one who healed a spring;

A Temanite;

A scribe; a woman's name

Linked with heroic fame;

One who by promise came;

And one whose altar-flame

Caught up an angel from his wondering sight.

Initials mention one who is for ever

A type of Him whose priesthood faileth never.

L. T.

NO. III.

The initials of the words left blank in the following verses from Job, give the name of a beautiful group of stars mentioned in that book.

1. That man was — and upright.

2. Canst thou draw out — with an hook?

3. This man was the greatest of all the men of the —.

4. Still he holdeth fast his —.

5. Who hath sent out the wild — free?

6. My — are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.

7. Then — the Temanite answered and said.

8. When the morning — sang together.

M. A. S. M.