

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.



"TOM RUSHED TO THE CASEMENT TO GASP FOR AIR."

CHAPTER X.—A BRAND FROM THE BURNING.

THAT night, Tom was awakened from the troubled, dream-haunted sleep into which he had fallen, by a sensation of intolerable suffocation. As he opened his eyes, he was conscious of a red glare upon the bare walls of his little attic chamber, and he started up with a cry of terror. It had come then at last, that fiery doom of which he had been thinking and dreaming for weeks and months past! Death had found him—he had died in the night—or was it on the scaffold he had perished, suffering the traitor's doom? and now he was being borne away to the fiery pit, and already felt the hot breath of the undying flames fanning his cheek.

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With a wild shriek of terror he sprang up as if to fly; then he awoke thoroughly, and his faculties returned to him. He knew that he was not dead, that he was in his little bare room in the old inn, and that it must be this house itself which was now in flames.

Plainly there was no time to lose. The old-fashioned building was of wood, lath and plaster, and was burning like tinder. It might be already doubtful if the stairs would bear. Tom hurried on his few clothes with lightning speed, and cautiously opened the door.

A puff of hot and suffocating air blew in upon him, and without there seemed to be nothing but thick smoke charged with sparks. He heard shouts and ories from within and without the building. Plainly, the alarm was now universal;

PRICE ONE PENNY.

but how to find the stairs in the midst of this darkness and suffocating heat he did not know. The winding passages of the old inn were intricate enough even by day, and what assurance had he that he would not be met and swallowed up by some volume of advancing flame, if he ventured to leave his present position?

What to do for the best he knew not. For the first time in his life Tom Heron was assailed by a deadly physical fear—he who had so often boasted that he knew not the meaning of the word. He felt that this moment he was standing upon the brink of eternity, and standing there alone: a sudden wave of terror overcame him, robbing him at once of his self-possession and his courage, causing his knees to knock one against the other, whilst a cold sweat broke out over his face. Nerveless, powerless, consumed with unspeakable horror, it seemed to him as though there was nothing for him but to wait where he was till a terrible death swallowed him up.

Shaking off by a tremendous effort this blind horror, he staggered a few paces along the narrow passage, only to be driven back by the ever-increasing heat and suffocating blasts of smoke. The air was so thick, so full of fiery sparks, that he could not even breathe in it: darting back into his room he closed the door, and rushed to the casement to gasp for air.

Then perhaps he realised for the first time the deadly peril of his position. From the lower windows of the inn flames were already bursting, the whole place was in a blaze; most certainly he was a lost man—lost body and soul. The red flames he saw below him would in a few short minutes consume his body: and then the eternal flames of hell would prey for ever and ever upon his sin-stained soul.

But the hopelessness of his position helped to steady Tom's nerves. The love of life was strong and fierce within him: was there no way of escape for him? He looked down into the narrow street below. If he jumped from the window it would be certain death: there were houses opposite, to be sure, but, narrow as the thoroughfare was, it was too wide to be spanned by a spring. The houses, it is true, were considerably lower than the inn. A trained gymnast might almost have performed the feat of leaping from Tom's window to the parapet of the building opposite: but Tom, with all his strength of muscle, was not any great adept at feats of lightness and agility. He knew that such a leap was beyond his powers. He might be driven to trying it—but it would only be to be dashed to pieces on the stones below.

Oh the terrible loneliness of those moments—perhaps it was the loneliness that preyed most of all upon Tom's spirit. In the front of the building there was life and excitement enough: but in this little side street not a soul seemed to be moving. The houses opposite had scarce any windows looking that way, and not a single face gazed forth in terror and sympathy, not a living creature knew of his deadly peril, or stirred hand or foot to help him. He would perish alone, unseen, unpitied. Little Molly would never know why her brother came not home again. Samson,

his mother—the Lady of Ernscliff; none would ever know the history of his tragic death, or drop a tear for him. Oh, it was terrible, terrible, terrible! It was worse than that fearful doom upon the scaffold, for there at least there were faces all around, and some eyes to look with kindly compassion upon the doomed.

"Friend," cried a thin, penetrating voice from some place not far away, "thou art in a great strait, but the Lord may have mercy on thee yet. If thou hast a strong arm and a steady head, methinks thou mayest be saved."

Tom started violently and looked round him, and then he saw a small figure crawling along the parapet of the houses opposite. It seemed to pause for some time beside a chimney stack, and then reared itself upright. The glare of the fire made the place as light as day, and Tom, with a start of exceeding surprise, recognised in the meagre proportions and insignificant features of the man opposite, the little sandy-haired Methodist who had walked beside the condemned criminal that very afternoon.

A sudden wild thrill of hope passed through Tom's frame. In his hour of sorest need had come to him the very man who had once appeared to his excited imagination to be treading with him the very brink of the valley of the shadow of death. Death was looking for him now, he could feel its fierce hot breath upon his cheek. He had already given himself up for lost; but here was one who offered him some chance of life, who had come to him in this hour of dire need, even as he had come to that other, just when all the world beside had forsaken him, and death alone seemed to have him in his merciless clutches.

"Friend," said the little man, calling shrilly above the roar and crackle of the flames, "thou must act quickly and bravely, or thou art lost. See, I have here a rope. I will swing this weighted end across to thee, for thee to catch. Thou must then tie it about thy waist, and spring across to me here. I will strive to pull thee safely over; in any case thou canst not fall far, for the other end is safely knotted about yon chimney. Thou mayest be bruised and hurt perchance, but thy life will be whole. Do not pause nor tarry, for methinks the flames have well-nigh reached thee."

All the time that the little man was speaking, he was slowly and carefully swinging out the rope, which, weighted at the end, oscillated nearer and nearer to Tom each time, until at length he was able to lean down and catch the heavy end, and secure it firmly about him. He did not waver. He did not hesitate. His native courage had returned to him, and with it a confidence in the little man opposite which would have astonished him had he had time to analyse it. It seemed to him his duty to do as he was bidden without a second thought, and the next minute, setting his teeth firmly, he made a desperate spring across the narrow chasm.

There was a strange feeling as of flying through the air—then came a crash, a grinding sensation, and a myriad of blood-red sparks danced before his eyes. He was vaguely aware of a dull pain in his head, then black darkness settled

down upon him, and he knew no more of the details of his escape from the burning inn.

When next he opened his eyes it was to find himself lying half-undressed upon a narrow pallet bed in a small and poor little room. A meagre fire burned in the grate, and the dull light of a tardy November dawn was shining in at the window. Everything in the place was spotlessly clean, but there was nothing there for ornament or show, and Tom fancied for the moment that he was in some unknown room in the inn; for he had changed his quarters before now, and did not always recollect in the morning the look of the place in which he had fallen asleep overnight. Had he been drinking hard? he wondered as he lay. His head felt unaccountably heavy, his eye-lids seemed as if weighted with lead, his faculties were dull, and his memory was, for the time being, in abeyance. He could not even trouble himself to try and think, and closed his eyes again until a slight noise at his side caused him to open them once more.

A little sandy-haired man was standing beside his bed with a basin in his hand which gave forth a savoury odour.

"Thou hadst better drink this, my friend," said he, "my wife has prepared it with her own hands, so I know that it is good. When it is eaten thou canst finish thy sleep in peace."

The sight of that face aroused in Tom vivid recollections of the scene of the previous night. He suddenly sat up in bed, but as quickly sank back with a groan, for the movement had brought on a qualm of sick giddiness never before experienced by him.

"Gently, young man, gently," said the stranger smiling, "thou must remember that thou art still something shaken by thy leap and the blow upon that hard head of thine. Methinks thy skull will prove the harder of the twain; but, verily, I feared once that thou hadst knocked out thy brains against the bricks of yon house."

"Where am I?" asked Tom feebly, as he took in the sense of these words, and allowed himself to be fed like a little child, "and when did it all happen? and who art thou?"

"I will answer thy last question first, my friend. I am called here Brother Holdsworthy, and am what men call a Methodist; and this is my poor abode, which I share with Brother Seaforth, who is one of our props and pillars, and powerful in pleading with the Lord. As for the fire, that happened but a few short hours ago, and the flames have just but burnt themselves out. It has been a terrible night for some—called away in the midst of their sins to meet an offended God." Tom shuddered as he lay back on his hard pillow, thinking how narrowly he himself had escaped that fate.

"Did not all in the house escape?" he asked.

"Not all. There were three young men high up in the building who perished miserably therein. No man could reach them, and though all might see them at the window, shouting and blaspheming God with their last breath, it was impossible to rescue them, and they went forth to meet the Judge with oaths and curses on their lips, and black evil thoughts in their hearts. Oh! what

a terrible thing it is to leave our souls' salvation for a more convenient season! How many are thus fearfully cut off in the midst of their sins, and how shall they, in the last dread hour, turn to One, whom all their lives before they have slighted and contemned?"

"Don't," said Tom faintly, "don't talk about it—now. What were the names of the men who were burned in the inn?"

Brother Holdsworthy had heard the names; and Tom listened to them, a new thrill of horror passing through him. He had guessed as much before. They were the boon companions of his sojourn in York. With them he had spent the best part of his time, drinking, dicing, attending cock-fights and other savage spectacles. With them he had gone to see the executions, and had listened to brutal and profane jests upon the ghastly scene. Wild and wicked and reckless as they were, he was held to be almost more so. His reputation transcended theirs. And now they had been suddenly called to their last account. They had died a terrible death, with their sins and their iniquities upon their heads. What was their fate? Whither had they gone? If there were another life beyond the grave, what would that life be for them and such as they were?

Tom groaned aloud in the disquietude of his spirit, and the groan was partially understood.

"Young man," asked the Methodist gravely, yet not unkindly, "is it that thou hast perhaps had some dealings with those same godless youths in days gone by?"

"We were friends and comrades," answered Tom with another groan, partly caused by physical discomfort, partly by mental distress. "Tell me, sir, what has become of them now?"

"Young man, there is none can rightly reply to that question save God alone: and we know to our hope and comfort that His mercies are great and everlasting. Yet He is just as well as merciful, and His words are easy to be understood. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. Thou mayest best know if thy poor misguided comrades had ever repented of their sins and had them washed white in the blood of the Lamb."

Tom turned away with a gasp of oppression and misery. It was terrible to hear words like this at such a time, when he could neither escape from them, nor divert his thoughts from their dread significance. He felt for a moment as though he hated this little insignificant man who had such power to move him: and yet he did not wish to be alone: the very idea was intolerable: and he did not forget that it was to this very man that he owed his own life and safety.

"Don't go," he said, putting forth a hand as if to hold him: "don't go. Tell me more. Tell me of the fire. Tell me how you knew that I was there, and why you troubled about me. I was not worth the saving. I deserved to perish."

The pale eyes of the Methodist regarded him searchingly.

"Young man," he said with a smile playing round the corners of his thin lips, "it may be that the Lord has saved thee for some great

work. Thou art indeed as a brand plucked from the burning. How often have we seen that those whom He has willed to save as by a miracle are often vessels of grace, saved by Him for some especial work. My brother, God Himself has snatched thee from the very jaws of death—from the talons of the devil, who was doubtless crouching to spring upon thee and carry thee off to hell. Oh what else canst thou do than dedicate to the Lord's service the life He has thus preserved? How doubly dyed would thy ingratitude now be, if after all He has done for thee, thou shouldst again turn thy face from Him and continue in the bonds of iniquity and the bitterness of death?"

Tom moved restlessly, and averted his gaze.

"I am not fit to serve God. I have led a wicked life. I am worse than any of those three who perished in the flames last night."

"Young man, dost thou think that anything is too hard for the Lord? Dost thou think that any heart is too strong for Him to break? Is His arm at all shortened from the day when with great signs and wonders He wrought deliverance for Israel, and broke even the stubborn heart of Pharaoh? Is Christ's blood so impoverished that it cannot wash white the darkest stains? Has His word in anywise failed, that we may not look with confidence to Him, however black be the sins upon our heads, however frail and feeble our resolutions, our strength, our courage? Oh, brother, if it was on these we had to rely, how far short of the kingdom should we all come! But it is not ourselves—it is Christ in whom we trust. His is the fight, His the victory—His the triumph over sin. He has won salvation for us—all we have to do is to look to Him and take it. Only believe and ye shall be saved, only believe, only believe."

The little man's face was beaming, his thin hands were clasped together; the utter trust and confidence expressed by his upward glance was not lost upon the eager eyes of Tom.

As has been before mentioned, Tom Heron's imaginative powers were far more developed than is usual amongst men of his class, and as a natural sequence he possessed also the power of sympathy and quick insight which generally accompanies that gift. Many had been the sufferings his vivid powers of imagination had entailed upon him, but now they gave to him a strange and sudden comprehension of this new doctrine which came upon him like a revelation.

Brother Holdsworthy, like all true and enthusiastic Methodists, held by the duty of speaking without fear and without preparation, in season and out of season, rebuking, exhorting, comforting all with whom he came in contact. The fact that he had rescued Tom from a fiery death gave him a sense of personal ownership in the young man, body and soul alike, which would in any case have stirred him up to active efforts for his conversion, whilst the questioning looks and the bitter words of his guest showed how sorely in need was this ignorant soul of the teaching he was longing to outpour.

So, without farther preamble, and carried away

by his own zeal and fervour, the good man poured upon Tom's head all the burning words with which his heart was filled to overflowing: and Tom, weak in body, full of terror and remorse of soul, and yearning unutterably for light and truth and strength beyond anything he had yet known, as well as for escape from the fire and worm that never die, listened with greedy attention, and with eager belief.

His imagination took fire, the electric spark of sympathy passed from soul to soul. The earnestness, the perfect certainty of the teacher affected the mind of the pupil. With bated breath and wet eyes he heard the story of Calvary, a story scarce heard or heeded before, and saw the dying Saviour holding out His wounded hands and bidding him—him, the wicked, the reckless, the evil-living Tom Heron, come to Him to be saved. He saw the other side of the picture, the angry devils cursing that Holy Saviour, and striving to hold him back from going to Him. Tom had known enough of that holding back, that luring on to wickedness, to believe every word he heard, and to see the fight raging over him by the powers of good and evil. He cried aloud in anguish of soul as he seemed to feel himself being dragged away from the foot of the Cross, whither he had flung himself in bitter humility rather than in faith: and there were moments when the voice of his instructor seemed scarce to reach him, so terrible were the imprecations he heard breathed in his ear by the demons tempting him to his ruin.

That strange form of demoniacal possession (as it was accounted in those days to be: though in this century it would probably be explained in another way) for a time took possession of him, and his cries of agony resounded through the little house.

And then, in the midst of the tumult and despair of his soul, another man came in to him, and falling on his knees beside the bed broke into fervent prayer. Tom heard the new voice, a voice with a ring of power in it. He heard that voice bid all tempting, raging devils to be gone. He heard it adjure them by the name of the living God to trouble his soul no more. And as he heard it seemed to him that a great quiet and calmness came over his spirit. The hateful whispers died into silence, the mocking laughter ceased, the clutching hands were withdrawn from his throat. He could breathe, he could see and hear, he could even think. And then he saw kneeling beside him two pious and holy men, wrestling in prayer to the Crucified One for his poor lost soul; and with a sudden burst of tears, so strange that they seemed to wash away all the hardness, the unbelief, the despair from his soul, he himself called aloud upon the living God, and owned in that Saviour his own Redeemer and Lord.

In the ranks of the Methodist body in York there was great rejoicing that day: for Tom Heron, whose wild ways were not unknown even in that large place, was reported to have been converted, and to have found first conviction of sin, and afterwards unspeakable peace and assurance of salvation, in the house of the Methodist brethren.

MODERN DISCOVERIES AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

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

III.—THE APOLOGY OF ARISTIDES.

THE Apology of Aristides reflects back an important side light upon the Acts of the Apostles and the method of Apostolic preaching as we have already shown. It also bears important testimony to the state of the Christian Church immediately after the apostles had ceased to live. A great modern divine once used an expression about this period which has now become celebrated. He described the Church and its history as passing through a dark tunnel, during the time which elapsed between the year 70 or 80, and 150, or, to put it more broadly, between the apostles and Justin Martyr. We have the Canonical writings for the earlier period. Then the Church passes out of sight till it emerges in the full light of historic day in the pages of the latter writer. We have writings indeed belonging to the intermediate time, the Apostolic fathers, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Hermas, and such like; but they are devotional, not historical or controversial; they are intended for people inside the Church, not outside of it, and therefore omit much that we should desire to know.

Now the Apology of Aristides gives us a sketch of the Christians, their life and their doctrines, written for the heathen. It strikingly coincides with and illustrates other glimpses which we get from outside. The earliest external or Pagan notice of Christianity is very little known. It was found in Pompeii some thirty years ago. Pompeii, as most people know, was overwhelmed in a moment, by the earliest known eruption of Mount Vesuvius, in the year 79. The people of that town were overtaken in the midst of their trade, their amusements, and their sin, preserving thus for us types and specimens of what an ancient Pagan city was like. Among other interesting discoveries which have come to light have been vast quantities of what we should call street placards or bill posters. They were not exactly the same as their modern representatives in these days of printing, but they discharged the same function. A contested election at the present time always develops numberless election squibs and addresses. A contested election was proceeding at Pompeii when Vesuvius destroyed it, and numerous election squibs have been found on the dead walls, inscribed by means of charcoal, the usual instrument for such a purpose. Among others, alluding to topics of transient interest, there was found the following brief inscription, surpassing every other in interest, and giving us a glimpse of Christianity before Pompeii was destroyed: "Igni gaude Christiano," "Rejoice in the fire, Christian." These words painted on a Pompeian wall prior to the destruction of the city confirm the story of the terrible persecutions which the Christians suffered under Nero, and show us that St. Paul's words were in no wise exaggerated when he spoke of himself as "re-

joicing in afflictions." The very Pagans took knowledge of the Christians that their lives in this respect were inspired by a supernatural force which enabled them to rejoice even amid the fires of persecution.

This is the earliest outside notice of Christianity.¹ Then we have Tacitus, but he simply regards Christianity as "a mischievous superstition," and its adherents as "a class hated for their abominations and their hatred of mankind." Pliny is the next who gives us a description of the Christians as the Pagans saw them. The Ninety-seventh Letter of the Tenth Book of Pliny's Epistles is a most important document. It was written about the year 110 to Trajan, the predecessor of the very Emperor whom Aristides addressed, and describes with legal precision the religion and the life of the Christians of Bithynia, and of Asia Minor, as they were regarded by a man who exercised the highest authority in that district. Pliny writes to the Emperor for directions as to how he should decide when Christians were brought before him in his judicial capacity, making his inquiries, because hitherto "he had never been present at any trials concerning those who profess Christianity," which is a plain proof that persecutions and martyrdoms had taken place in Pliny's own time and within his knowledge.

Pliny first of all wants to know "whether any difference is usually made with respect to ages, or any distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles to a pardon, or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error; whether the very profession of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves inherent in the profession, are punishable." The last query reminds us of and illustrates St. Peter's words in his First Epistle (iv. 15, 16): "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters; but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." The simple profession of Christianity was already in St. Peter's day a crime in the eyes of the Roman law, as the reply of the Emperor Trajan to Pliny shows it to have been some fifty years later. Pliny's letter seems to illustrate and throw a vivid light upon the Epistles.

Pliny then enters into very copious details concerning the Christians, their numbers, their

¹ This inscription will be found in the "Great Corpus or Collection of Latin Inscriptions," which the learned German scholar Mommsen and his friends have been publishing for many years. It is contained in Vol. iv. No. 679. This inscription is very important in many respects. It is not only the earliest inscription touching upon Christianity; it also proves the wide and rapid extension of Christianity among the provincial towns of Italy. In Acts xxviii. 13, we are told that St. Paul found Christians at Puteoli. Here, now, ten or fifteen years later, we find them a few miles distant at Pompeii, the other side of the Bay of Naples.

devotion to Christ, and the tests employed to discover them. "An anonymous information was laid before me, containing a charge against several persons, who, upon examination, denied they were Christians or had ever been so. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and incense before your Statue—which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods—and even reviled the name of Christ; whereas there is no forcing those who are really Christians into any of these compliances."

What a commentary we have here upon two passages of the New Testament: 1 Cor. xii. 3: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God, saith Jesus is Anathema: and no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Ghost." And, again, James ii. 6 and 7: "Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment seat? Do not they blaspheme the honourable name by the which ye are called?" Pliny wrote seventy years after St. Paul, yet it was the same in his day as in the apostles'. The test applied to Christians was this: Will you call Jesus Anathema? Will you revile your Master?

Again, a little further in this important Epistle, he gives us the following description of the Christians as he had gleaned it from the witnesses he had examined. "They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a stated day before it was light, and addressed a form of prayer to Christ, as to a divinity, binding themselves by a solemn oath not for the purpose of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust, when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble, to eat in common a harmless meal." Their devotion to Christ, their worship of Christ, and their purity of life, as a part of their religion, are the points which specially struck Pliny. Now when we come to the report from inside the Church, the authoritative description which Aristides gives of the Christians, is in strict agreement with Pliny's, only fuller, larger, more copious, as was natural, considering the personal knowledge he possessed.

Aristides tells the Emperor of the origin of Christianity in the early part of the Apology. "The Christians then reckon the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God most High; and it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew Virgin took and clad Himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God. This is taught from that Gospel, which, a little while ago, was spoken among them as being preached; wherein if ye also will read, ye will comprehend the power that is upon it. This Jesus then was born of the tribe of the Hebrews; and He had twelve disciples, in order that a certain dispensation of His might be fulfilled. He was pierced by the Jews; and He died and was buried; and they say that, after three days, He rose and ascended to heaven; and then these twelve disciples went forth into the known parts

of the world, and taught concerning His greatness with all humility and sobriety; and on this account those also who to-day believe in this preaching are called Christians, who are well known."

In this passage Aristides sets forth the historical facts of Christ's life, as they are embodied in the Apostles' creed. He teaches the pre-existence of Christ, His miraculous birth, His crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and the diffusion of the faith through the Twelve Apostles as set forth in the Acts of the Apostles; he refers to a written gospel and a Christian literature, as he does more fully in another place, to be hereafter quoted; and distinctly shows that the Athenian Church in the days when thousands of the Apostles' contemporaries still lived, regarded our Lord as God. Nothing can be stronger than the testimony of Aristides: "God came down from heaven and clad Himself with flesh." The Christians at Athens, whom Aristides represents, were at one with the Christians of Bithynia, whom Pliny knew in rejecting a mere human Christ. They all agreed in adoring a Divine Person as their Saviour. In this extract, Aristides sets forth the doctrines taught by the Christians. Toward the close of his Apology, he describes their customs and mode of life in a manner which exactly tallies with the language of Pliny, and of the Pompeian inscription. The extract is a long one, but it is most interesting, and sheds much light upon many a verse in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul and St. John.

"Now the Christians, O king, by going about and seeking have found the truth, and as we have comprehended from their writings they are nearer to the truth and to exact knowledge than the rest of the peoples. For they know and believe in God, the maker of heaven and earth, in whom are all things and from whom are all things: He who has no other God as His fellow: from whom they have received those commandments which they have engraved on their minds, which they keep in the hope and expectation of the world to come; so that on this account they do not commit adultery, nor fornication; they do not bear false witness; they do not deny a deposit, nor covet what is not theirs: they honour father and mother; they do good to those who are their neighbours, and when they are judges, they judge uprightly; and they do not worship idols in the form of a man; and whatever they do not wish that others should do to them, they do not practise towards anyone, and they do not eat of the meats of idol sacrifices, for they are undefiled: and those who grieve them they comfort and make them their friends; and they do good to their enemies: and their wives, O king, are pure as virgins, and their daughters modest: and their men abstain from all unlawful wedlock, and from all impurity, in the hope of the recompense that is to come in another world: but as for their servants or handmaids, or their children, if they have any, they persuade them to become Christians for the love they have towards them: and when they have become so, they call them without distinction brethren; they do not worship strange gods: and they walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them, and they

love one another: and from the widows they do not turn away their countenance: and they rescue the orphan from him who does him violence; and he who has, gives to him who has not, without grudging; and when they see the stranger they bring him to their dwellings, and rejoice over him as over a true brother; for they do not call brothers those who are after the flesh, but those who are in the spirit, and in God: but when one of their poor passes away from the world, and any of them sees him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability; and if they hear that any of their number is imprisoned, or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him."

"And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy, and they have not an abundance of necessities, they fast two or three days that they may supply the need with their necessary food.¹ And they observe scrupulously the commandments of their Messiah; they live honestly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them; every morning, and at all hours, on account of the goodnesses of God towards them, they praise and laud Him, and over their food and over their drink they render Him thanks. And if any righteous person of their number passes away from the world, they rejoice and give thanks to God, and they follow his body as if he were moving from one place to another; and when a child is born to any one of them, they praise God; and if again it chance to die in its infancy, they praise God mightily, as for one who had passed through the world without sins. And if again they see that one of their number has died in his iniquity or in his sins, over this one they weep bitterly and sigh, as over one who is about to go to punishment. Such is the ordinance of the law of the Christians, O King, and such their conduct."

This passage is most interesting. There is not a single direct reference to any book of the New Testament, nor to any other document, such as the Teaching of the Apostles, which dates from the same period as our Canonical Scriptures, and yet there are numerous implied references to the teachings and doctrines which are found in them. The duty of love to our enemies and the golden rule are expressly set forth exactly as we find them in the Gospel, in St. Paul's Epistles, and in the Didache; while the unlawfulness of idol-feasts, and the absolute necessity for bodily purity and self-restraint are taught, as in the Apostolic decree in Acts xv., and in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. But this is not all we may derive from this primitive defence of the truth as the following extract will show. Following

immediately after the passage now quoted, we find this important statement:

"As men who know God, they ask from Him petitions which are proper for Him to give and for them to receive; and thus they accomplish the course of their lives. And because they acknowledge the goodness of God towards them, lo! on account of them, there flows forth the beauty that is in the world. And truly they are of the number of those that have found the truth by going about and seeking it, and, as far as we have comprehended, we have understood that they only are near to the knowledge of the truth. But the good deeds which they do, they do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude, and they take care that no one shall perceive them, and hide their gift as he who has found a treasure and hides it. And they labour and become righteous as those that expect to see their Messiah, and receive from Him the promises made to them with great glory." A passage which reminds us of St. Matthew's Gospel (xiii. 44), which speaks of the kingdom of heaven as like unto treasure hid in a field; and again of the tone of thought contained in the sixth chapter of the same Gospel, where our Lord commands secrecy and retirement in those actions of religion which bear most closely upon our personal life.

The last extract we shall make in this article is perhaps the most important, because it proves that the Christian Church had already a sacred literature to which it appealed, and in which its doctrines were embodied. "But their sayings and their ordinances, O King, and the glory of their service, and the expectation of their recompense of reward, according to the doing of each one of them, which they expect in another world, thou art able to know from their writings. It sufficeth for us that we have briefly made known to your Majesty concerning the truth and the conversation of the Christians, for truly great and wonderful is their teaching to him that is willing to examine and understand it. And truly this people is a new people, and there is something divine mingled with it. Take, now, their writings and read in them, and, lo! you will find that not of myself have I brought these things forward, nor as their advocate have I said them, but as I have read in these writings, these things I firmly believe, and those things also that are to come. And, therefore, I was constrained to set forth the truth to them that take pleasure therein and seek after the world to come." These words show, from their very tone, that they refer to the books of the New Testament which we now receive as Canonical. The reference to the reward which they each expect in the world to come is a plain echo of several passages in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. It is equally plain that the writings of the New Testament were not viewed in exactly the same light by the second generation of Christians as by ourselves, and this was but natural. They had thousands among them when Aristides wrote, who had known all the apostles, remembered their deeds, and could repeat their speeches and sentiments. So long as these men survived, so long as St. John himself lived, or

¹ The "Shepherd of Hermas" was written, at latest, within the first few years of the second century, that is, before A.D. 120. We find in it (Similitude v. chap. iii.) precisely the same custom: "Having fulfilled what is written, in the day on which you fast you will taste nothing but bread and water; and having reckoned up the price of the dishes of that day which you intended to have eaten, you will give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to some person in want, and thus you will exhibit humility of mind." "The Shepherd of Hermas" was written at Rome; our Apology at Athens. Christian rules and customs were alike at both places in the year 125.

even his disciple Polycarp, men preferred to hang upon the spoken word, for the living human voice and living human testimony have a subtle secret charm about them which far surpasses in persuasive power any written documents whatsoever. The canon of the New Testament, too, was not fixed when Aristides wrote, and several books were then accounted canonical which we do not

receive as such. Still, the literature to which he refers the Emperor, and which he regards as embodying the sum total of Christian doctrine, must have been substantially the same as ours. There is not a single statement, doctrinal or otherwise, made by him about our religion, which cannot be proved by texts drawn from our present New Testament.

WANDERINGS IN THE HOLY LAND.

BY ADELIA GATES.

V.

AMONG the guests (not really pilgrims) who had arrived during my absence were Professor and Mrs. George, whom I had met on the Suez Canal. They, along with all other "secular" travellers, ate in a handsome dining-room, and had also a good sitting-room. I declined the invitation to join them, and stuck to my pilgrims, although I was often glad to join their party of an evening. Evenings have to be short in a monastery, because it is an unalterable rule of the house that every one should go to his room at ten o'clock, and no guest is expected to be out after that hour. It is only the quiet and orderly traveller, therefore, who should put up at a monastery; but, indeed, were there travellers of a different complexion in Jerusalem they would have nowhere to go to in the evening. There is no place of amusement of any sort in the city. This is one thing that makes it seem so different from all other places in the world.

I joined my friends in their trip to the Dead Sea, and went shares with them in a young dragoman, who was just beginning to take out parties on his own account. If you have to take a dragoman it is well to take him young. For this reason—the young dragoman obeys you, whereas you obey the old dragoman. The young one awaits your pleasure; the old one waits for nothing, it seems to me. His whole soul is bent in hurrying his party as fast as he can, so that he may re-deposit them at their hotel in as short a time as possible, and be free to take another party along at the same intolerable speed.

The first part of the road to Jericho was as bad as a road could possibly be—so I thought, at least, until I came to the second part, which was infinitely worse. I then realised the full force of the imprecation, "Go to Jericho." I have seen bad roads: I have seen roads muddy and roads sandy, roads steep and roads stony, but a road like this I never even imagined. It is simply a precipitous passage over naked boulders and broken ribs of rock. But I forgot the road in the wild beauty of the "brook Cherith."

"Hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan:" this was the command delivered unto

Elijah the Tishbite, but one has to see the "brook" before understanding the meaning of the passage. It is no "brook" as we understand the word, but a very deep ravine, cool, shady and delicious. If it was here the Prophet dwelt, and was fed by ravens, it was indeed a delightful retreat, away from the heat of the glaring rocks, away from the sandy dust. The "brook" dries up to-day after a drought just as it did long ago, for we are told, "And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land."

And so we journeyed to Jericho, and slept there one night. The curse seems still to lie upon Jericho. As it was destroyed by fire in the days of Joshua, so it is even now. There is no Jericho to-day that dates back further than to the year 1871, when it was all burned down; and even that city dated only from the Crusades, when it was built anew by the Franks. The Jericho of the New Testament occupied a site about a mile away from the seventy miserable hovels that call themselves by that ancient name. The country round about is now a desolate waste.

The next morning we rode to the Dead Sea. What new thing can I say on so old a subject? The region around is desolate. The sea is salt, fish do not live in it, that you know, but birds do fly over it, and do not drop dead into its waters; and we did not feel prickly nor sticky after a long bathe in it. Probably in the southern part it is more salt than here, near the mouth of the Jordan, and it is also more bituminous there.

We went to the Jordan, and in its waters I bathed my face and hands, and along its wooded banks I found flowers. Long ages ago, say the geologists, the level of the Dead Sea was from 300 to 400 feet higher than it is now, and it is still very slowly becoming lower. It is at present about 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and nearly 3700 feet lower than Jerusalem.

We lunched in a "woodsy" spot near the Jordan, sang there one of the songs of Zion, and sat long, talking, and perhaps dreaming; as it is so easy to do in places that have a history. The Jordan is one of the crookedest and most headlong of rivers: so crooked that while it is only 136 miles

long in a right line from its source in Mount Hermon to its mouth at the Dead Sea, yet its sinuosities make it measure more than double that length. Its other peculiarity is indicated by its name. Jordan is a slight alteration of the Hebrew word *Yardén*, which means "descender." From its source, to the little Lake Hüleli, it descends 1434 feet, from thence to Lake Tiberias it falls 897 feet, and from thence to the Dead Sea it falls 610 feet, in all some 3000 feet in its short course of 136 miles. But as it approaches the Dead Sea its course is so level that it is saline for some distance up, owing of course to admixture of the salt water. Altogether it is a stream that bath its own peculiar nature and ways.

While the others of our company rested and slept, I sat in a pleasant nook and painted the flowers I had found. They were not numerous nor new, but I was glad to have some floral memorials of the place. It is probable that the immediate region of the Dead Sea is sterile rather from want of fresh water than from any other cause, and the absence of animals would necessarily result from absence of vegetation. The Jordan is a fishy stream, however, and sometimes its finny inhabitants, too adventurous in going to see what the sea is like, perish in its salt waters. I saw some of them cast upon its banks.

VI.

Bethany! The name falls pleasantly upon ear and heart. Nothing is known, nothing can now be known, as to the exact spot where this or that thing happened, but we may believe that by this

very route Jesus did come up from Jericho; we have reason to believe that this little huddle of poor houses is on or near the site of the Bethany where dwelt the "Martha and Mary and Lazarus whom Jesus loved;" the Bethany "nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off." We are sure as we go on, that we pass over the place where "Martha met Him." We picture the meeting,



A "WOODSY" SPOT NEAR THE BANKS OF JORDAN.

we hear the piteous "If thou hadst been here our brother had not died," and the comforting response which as yet her poor smitten heart could not understand. But why cannot we be left in peace with our thoughts?—if only they would not everywhere meet us with inipostures!

This is almost or wholly a Mahomedan Bethany; and strange as that seems, they claim Lazarus as their own saint, and keep and show what pretends to be his tomb. At one time they would

not allow a Christian to enter it, but now anyone may come, and the little antechamber of the tomb is open to all, and in it Mahomedan prays as well as Christian.

Guides point out the spot where they alleged stood the house of Mary and Martha, and also the house of Simon the Leper. Indeed each event has its site, but it can interest no reasonable person to be told that "in this spot Judas hanged himself." These exact traditional sites, if they are traditional sites and not the invention of recent guides, have come down to us through twelve centuries of Mahomedan keeping. And when we consider that that keeping was hostile to Christians during the greater portion of those centuries, we must view with much reserve the sites they show. They call the place el-Azariyeh, in memory of Lazarus. Being equally with the Jews descendants of Abraham, these Arab Mahomedans feel a right of possession, equally with them and more than equally with us, in many personages and things of the Old and New Testaments.

Mahomet was in no way tender towards idolaters and unbelievers, and would have them destroyed as enemies of God. But it is written in the Koran: "Certainly they who believe and follow the religion of the Jews, and also the Christians, and the Sabaens; in a word, whoever believes in God and the Judgment day, and who does good, all these will receive a recompense from God. Among the Jews and the Christians, there are those who believe in God and in the books sent to us and to them, who humiliate themselves before God, and they will find their recompense with Him." An unbrotherly hatred has grown up in place of this spirit.

Jerusalem was as sacred for the Arabs as for the Jews, and its possession was greatly desired; but though it cost a four months' siege, Omar on its capitulation treated the inhabitants with the greatest clemency, leaving them their goods and their religion. So also in Egypt and in Spain, but not always and everywhere so, by any means.

Another trait of the early Islamism was its spirit of democratic equality. An anecdote will illustrate this. When the king of the Ghassanides, who, with his tribes had been converted, came to Mecca to visit Omar, he struck an Arab who had accidentally pushed him. On the complaint of the Arab, Omar was obliged to apply the old law of talion, "eye for eye," etc., and the distinguished guest must receive a return blow from the Arab. "What!" cried he, "shall a man of the people lift his hand against the king of so many tribes?" "Such is the law of Islam," replied Omar, "and before that law there is neither privilege nor caste. All Mussulmans were equal in the eyes of the Prophet, as they are in the eyes of his successors." Again, alas! that these equitable customs should so soon have been replaced by the absolutism of the Kalifs, and the early simplicity by extravagant luxury.

Of the temple built by Solomon himself, and of the second one built by the Jews after their return from captivity, no trace remains. Of the

third magnificent one begun by Herod twenty years before Christ, and burned in the siege and destruction of the city by Titus, seventy years after Christ, the massive foundations were not destroyed, and we can feel certain that though for half a century there was no Jerusalem, so utterly was it overthrown and its people driven out, still when, under Hadrian, a town was built on the site of the old one, they made no mistake in believing that the temple they raised to Jupiter was erected on the foundations of the ancient Jewish temple. And we have good reasons for equal certainty that the present Mosque of Omar stands upon the same foundations.

But when we consider how many times that city has been taken and overthrown, and that for a long period Jerusalem had no history and no Jewish inhabitants, and that at yet another time they were forbidden under severe penalties to set foot within its walls, and that by no possibility can there be remains of any building of the Jerusalem of 1800 years ago, we shall be slow to yield credence to the ignorant and impudent frauds attempted to be palmed off upon us. Said the Reverend Dr. Bacon to me, "Do not believe in anything in Palestine for which you must pay a fee, or which is enclosed within walls." At the same time, there are certain localities that Bible students who have given great time and thought to the subject are fully agreed upon.¹

The Mosque of Omar is magnificent, but anything like an adequate description of this historic building would be impossible in any but the most complete book of travels. It is only recently that it was shown to the general traveller, and it is impossible to look at it without emotion. One's thoughts fly back to that tremendous day when the Crusaders under Godfrey de Bouillon first came to worship here. They waded literally through blood to the building; for eye-witnesses have left it on record that the fearful red stream was so deep in the streets after the town was taken by assault, that it covered the "fetlocks of the horses." But they washed their feet and gory hands, these stern relentless Crusaders fresh from slaughter, and entered the temple and bathed its floor with their hot passionate tears. We are so far away now from those days of fierce intolerance and equally fierce belief, that we cannot understand the heart of a Christian who could plunge his sword into the vitals of an enemy, and with the smoking weapon still in his hand fall upon his knees in prayer. They were wild, grand, and savage; and there is something in them that stirs our hearts, and perhaps compels our admiration. Our pale civilisation is far away from what is wild and savage: we have advanced beyond that, but may we not also perhaps have advanced beyond the grand? Then, think of that other day when the Moslems came finally back, and retook Jerusalem, after the fall of the short-lived Latin kingdom of the house of Bouillon. This was the mosque that Omar

¹ For the results of recent discovery, see the volume issued with the aid of the Palestine Exploration Fund, "The Bible and Modern Discoveries," by Henry A. Harper.

purified with four camel-loads of rose-water brought for that express purpose from Damascus. The walls and the ceiling and the floors were all washed down with rose-water; and so they hoped to wash away, perhaps, the hot passionate tears of the old Crusaders. Ah! indeed, there is much to think upon in the Mosque of Omar. And while the guide chatters along and points to the heel-mark of Mahomet in the altar rock, I think of the past, and see other foot-prints on this shining floor.

The Mosque is circular in form, as every one knows, being surmounted by a splendid dome.

It was given by the second king of Jerusalem to the military monks, for their residence.

doubt—this spot has lain in the heart of Christians for nearly a score of centuries. This is the point that their longing eyes turned towards, as a magnet turns towards the pole. Thither have pilgrims come during ages, often old, sometimes dying, always weary, but all alike happy if they might but reach the Holy Sepulchre, and offer up their prayers in that sacred spot. In this church millions of human beings have poured out the love and longing of their hearts. All round about are hung beautiful and precious objects placed there by devout, if often superstitious worshippers. When one looks at these, it almost seems as if they might be considered as the materialisation of the aspirations and thoughts of



THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

Hence their name of Templar, and hence, too, the circular form of many of their churches. The Temple Church, in London, is a beautiful and the best preserved example of their favourite style of architecture. The small circular church, which seems now only an appendix to the main portion of the building, was built in loving memory of their Great Temple in Jerusalem; and that Great Temple is the present Mosque of Omar.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a subject of considerable debate among the antiquaries of the Holy Land. Some go so far as to assert that the site should be removed to quite another hill. I am not able to judge these matters. It would require, it seems to me, a lifetime of investigation, and more learning than most people possess, to obtain convincing proofs that the present church is wrongly placed. Of one fact there can be no

past pilgrims. The recollection of millions of pilgrims dead ages ago, whose nationality even no one knows, is embodied in the beautiful objects around, and we still feel their presence. One prefers, therefore, not to know what individual pilgrim gave what individual object. This spot belongs to humanity, and to no particular sect. It is best, therefore, not to listen to what the guide says. Close your ears to the sound of his voice, oh! ye who visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but open them to the echoing voices of the spot.

VII.

I went quite alone to the Mount of Olives—I wanted no companion. Crossing the deep valley of the Kedron, I came to Gethsemane, and here I

felt glad to believe that tradition and the Bible narration are in accord. But as Thomas could not believe without touching, so here, well-meaning, but credulous and ignorant persons could not content themselves without mapping out Gethsemane so as to be able to lay their finger upon the very place of each incident of its touching story. So, unless like Bunyan's Pilgrim you put your fingers in your ears, you will be told just where the disciples slept while Jesus prayed, where Judas stood when he kissed Him, and where Christ was standing when arrested.

Along with olive trees evidently modern, there are seven so old as to need propping up with stones, and their trunks are divided into several parts, as if they had burst open—as is, however, the manner of olive trees no longer young.

The claim that they date from the time of Christ is rejected by most persons as an unreasonable one; but I have seen at Girgenti, in Southern Sicily, some olive trees which are historically proved to have stood there over nineteen hundred years, and seem disposed to continue their existence indefinitely. We have a very few other well-authenticated instances of similar longevity, though I myself have heard of none to equal that. The bursting of their stems and the hollowness of their hearts is not a sign of extreme age: it is a way they have. But

though it would be pleasant to believe that Jesus had looked on these very trees, and though their age does not make it absolutely impossible, still there are other things that contradict that possibility. It is well known that after the destruction of Jerusalem in our first century, all the trees around the city were cut down. It is equally well known that when the Crusaders came they found it an absolutely treeless region. It is also asserted that before the sixteenth century, there was no mention ever made of any old olive trees here. All which I submit, and reluctantly resign the faint faith I once cherished in regard to them.

But why should we make so great a matter of it? The event is greater than its accessories or witnesses. On this mountain He did weep over the doomed city; at Gethsemane, He prayed in His agony; on Calvary, He was crucified; on the road to Emmaus, He talked with the disciples, when their hearts burned within them, though "their eyes were holden, that they knew Him not;" these skies were His roof, these stars His witnesses. Let unchristian intolerance, and fraud and superstition do their unendurable worst—still this is "the Land of the Book," the Land of the Great Teacher, the Land from which have come the deepest, highest, broadest influences that have acted upon humanity.

A BRIEF MINISTRY AMONG THE BLACK-SPUR SPLITTERS.

II.

A FEW of the splitters' houses I found unoccupied. However, I paid in all nine visits that afternoon, and had, I thought, on the whole, every reason to be thankful for the welcome I received.

Time would not admit of my visiting and conversing with the men at their work that day. Accordingly I left word that I purposed doing so the following day, and returned to F— for the night, and walked up again in the morning.

Jeanie volunteered to guide me to the place where her father and his mates were at work, and I gladly accepted my little friend's offer.

We found the splitters hard at work about half-a-mile distant from their hamlet. A great giant had been felled the day before, and lay a hundred yards along upon the space cleared for its reception. An expert woodsman will point out to you the precise direction in which a tree will fall. Indeed so perfectly straight are these giant gum trees that the skillful wielder of axe and cross-cut can fell them just where he pleases. The usual mode of procedure, after having tested the value of the tree and ascertained that it will "run out," is to erect a stage or platform of about six feet in height at the base of the tree,

and from this vantage ground to cut it in deeply with the American axe on the side it is intended it shall fall on, and then to apply the cross-cut to the opposite side, following the cut with iron wedges which deflect the tree at its lofty summit several feet from the perpendicular. How many feet of deflection is a mere matter of arithmetical calculation according to the height of the tree.

The men seemed rather shy of "the parson," at first. But I entered so heartily into the science of woodcraft, at which I am fairly expert, that they soon warmed to me, especially when I threw off coat and waistcoat and took a hand at the cross cut. The huge trunk had been measured off in lengths of six, eight, ten, and twelve feet, to be split into weather boards and palings. I thereupon took my first lesson in splitting weather boards, Jeanie's father being my instructor in the art. H—, who was famous for his skill, deftly ran out the twelve feet length perfectly even from end to end of the log, the thickness throughout being not more than the eighth of an inch.

Physically the men were fine specimens of bushmen, tall, sinewy, active fellows. H— was almost a giant, standing six feet three

inches, and built in proportion to his height. I soon perceived from the great fellow's tenderness towards his pretty little daughter that "Big George" concealed beneath a rough exterior a soft heart.

Before parting from the men, who had thrown off their reserve and become quite friendly, I had their leader's permission to hold my cottage services fortnightly on Thursday afternoons in his house; and his mates agreed to "knock off" work the next Thursday in good time to attend the meeting.

I inwardly thanked God. Twenty-eight persons were present at my first service in the cottage. I had brought with me a supply of Prayer Books and hymnals, most of which were purchased and paid for by the members of the congregation after service was over. The singing of such favourite hymns as "Rock of Ages," "Just as I am," "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness," "There is a Fountain filled with Blood," was specially enjoyed, and earnest and hearty at any rate, if not very tuneful or in strictly correct time.

The catechising I purposely deferred for awhile, until I had instructed the bush children privately and in classes, as I visited the hamlet from time to time. When I did venture on teaching the elders, as well as the children, and as soon as the natural diffidence of the latter wore off, and they boldly answered the plain questions put to them, I found that my catechetical days were the favourite ones with all the members of my little flock, old and young alike. And certainly to me those afternoons at the "Black-Spur" were full of encouragement and pleasure.

As I look back through the long vista of years closing in swiftly upon far more recent events, I can vividly recall the rapt, intensely interested expression on Jeanie's bright face, and the intelligent answers she modestly gave to my questions on the great facts of the Gospel history, and the foundation truths based upon them. Little did I then dream how soon and how sadly this interesting child of the forest was to be removed from us.

Six or seven months after the commencement of my happy labours among the "Black-Spur" splitters, on a hot sultry day in early March, I was riding up for my usual fortnightly cottage service when a thunder-storm burst upon me with tropical suddenness. The rain poured in torrents for about fifteen or twenty minutes, drenching me thoroughly. Arrived at the hamlet, Jeanie's mother kindly offered me, with many excuses, the only change of garments possible under the circumstances, a suit of her husband's clothes, consisting of white moleskin trousers and scarlet shirt—or "jumper," a novel and rather showy dress for "a parson," and, moreover, several sizes too large for me. I have no doubt I cut a queer figure in these garments; but they were dry and warm.

George, his wife informed me, had gone to F— early in the morning on business, and could not return home before evening. Jeanie too was absent, having wandered away to the

riverside with her Bible to learn the verses I had appointed for that day's lesson.

"I hope the child was not caught in that thunder-storm," I observed.

"Oh, no, sir; we have not had the storm up here, only a few heat drops fell about half-an-hour ago. We heard the thunder in the distance distinctly. Strange that Jeanie has not returned," Mrs. H— added, with some anxiety, "she was anxious to be in good time for the service. I think I will just step a little way in the direction of her favourite haunt and cooeey to her."

I volunteered to accompany the mother in her search for my little pupil, feeling some misgivings as to the cause of her prolonged absence. When we had reached the end of the glen we paused and cooeeyed loudly; but only the echoes answered us.

Becoming seriously alarmed, we hurried on silently to the riverside, and struggled desperately through the tangled maze of greenery, now stumbling over concealed rocks and boulders, now tripped up by treacherous trailing plants, or the rope-like vines. Several times I called out "Jeanie! Jeanie!" but in vain; while the child's mother hurried on in silence, her pale face fixed in an agony of nameless terror and apprehension.

A sudden, sharp bend of the river brought us to the secluded spot I had laughingly named "Jeanie's bower," and then in a moment the sorrowful tragedy was revealed in all its terrible reality. The child lay face downwards in the bed of the stream, whose murmuring waters toyed with her golden hair gently floating on its surface, and danced and eddied by her, seeming to caress the fair girl's form as she lay there motionless, lifeless, the Bible she loved so dearly still clutched in her outstretched hand. Alas! the stream she loved so well had treacherously robbed her of her young life. She was drowned, and in water of a depth of scarcely two feet. The whole thing was clear to us in an instant. Jeanie had evidently sprung from her seat by the riverside, meaning to hasten home in time for the approaching service; a trailing vine had caught her foot, and she had fallen forward into the river, striking her head violently against a large stone. Stunned, and rendered temporarily unconscious by the blow, she was unable to rise, and thus was suffocated before she could recover from her insensibility.

I endeavoured to restore animation and respiration by the usual methods with which I was familiar, but all in vain, life was gone. The Saviour Jeanie loved, and of whose holy pure life, and glorious works of mercy, love, and power she so delighted to read, had taken this sweet innocent child of the forest home to Himself—translated her to a Paradise whose splendours surpassed the beauteous scenes amid which her brief life had been spent, even as those enchanting scenes surpassed the arid scorched plains of the great Australian desert.

The suddenness of the blow seemed to have almost paralysed Jeanie's poor mother. Not a word escaped her lips as the body of the dead child was mournfully borne by two of the splitters to the cottage, and tenderly placed upon her bed. I motioned to the men to remain, and, kneeling down, poured out a fervent petition for

strength and comfort to be supplied to the bereaved parents, and that their deep affliction might, through the manifold grace and wisdom of God, draw the sorrowing mourners nearer to Himself.

As she rose from her knees, I was thankful to see that the hard lines had faded from the woman's rigid features, and that tears had come to her relief.

"Oh! Mr. S——," she cried, "George will break his heart over this! Jeanie was just his idol! Oh! whom can we get to break the dreadful tidings to him?" It was evident the poor creature had been bearing the double load of her own and her husband's grief.

"I will undertake that duty myself, and will set out at once," I replied. She appeared much relieved by my proposal. I set out, therefore, at a brisk pace upon my delicate mission. The father was just starting homewards when I met with him. As cautiously as I could, I broke the sorrowful news. For a moment he appeared dazed, as if unable to comprehend. Then, with a sudden sharp cry, the great fellow set off up the steep mountain-road at headlong speed. For a few hundred yards I followed, and endeavoured to overtake him, calling to him breathlessly to stop.

Heedless of my cries, probably not even conscious of my presence, on he madly tore, and was speedily out of view, and beyond the sound of my voice. Giving up the useless pursuit, I walked on as rapidly as I could to his cottage. It then appeared that the distracted father had not relaxed his speed until he reached his own door, at the threshold of which he fell down utterly exhausted; and, I imagine for the first time in his life, the strong man swooned away. A little water applied to his temples, with other simple measures, however, quickly restored him to consciousness. But the strong man's grief was truly terrible. I have ministered to many a grief-stricken soul since that sad scene, but no

similar event has left so deep and indelible an impression on my mind. Here, truly, was one, who, like Rachel of old, "weeping for her children would not be comforted. . . ."

Not many weeks subsequent to the sorrowful catastrophe, I was offered and accepted a living in England, and having settled my affairs returned afterwards to the mother country, where I have ever since resided. But, although so far removed from the sphere of my late interesting labours, I by no means lost sight of my humble "Black-Spur" friends. I frequently wrote to, and heard from, one or other of these rough-mannered but warm-hearted dwellers in the primitive Australian forest.

George H——'s first letter to me upon my arrival in England I regard as one of my choicest treasures. The writing might easily be surpassed in style and finish by a scholar of nine summers. The composition is, doubtless, as faulty as the spelling is defective; but the choicest caligraphy and the most perfect of compositions in the epistolary line would fail to afford the unmixed pleasure I derive from its perusal and re-perusal. I am sure it cost the poor honest fellow no slight pains and trouble to indite it. I will not be tempted to reproduce the letter. It is sacred. Only I will say that in it he made a good and plain confession of his faith in Christ Jesus, and of his "sure and certain hope of everlasting life" through the merits of His Saviour. His conversion he ascribed, under God's Divine grace, to my brief ministry at the "Black-Spur," and to the death of his sweet child, Jeanie. Of the reality and permanence of that happy change subsequent testimony afforded satisfactory assurance.

As I look once more on that scrawl, becoming yellow with time, the vision of those distant days returns to me. I see that bright young maiden sitting by the well in the forest, and hear again her question about the "living water." She knows now the full answer, and thirsts no more.

AGED PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY.¹

THE charitable institutions of London are now so numerous and so varied, that there may be risk of some of the oldest and best being insufficiently supported. By the kindness of the Lord Mayor, the Annual Meeting of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society, was held in October at the Mansion House, and attracted a large attendance. In his address as chairman, Sir Joseph Savory spoke with warm earnestness of this charity. He said that it deserved support because it was for the benefit of the aged, and specially of the aged of the "household of

faith." It gave pensions of five, seven, and ten guineas yearly, to 1237 pensioners; and 180 aged Christians found quiet and comfortable shelter in the four Asylums, at Camberwell, Hornsey Rise, Stamford Hill, and Brighton. The expenses of management were so small that, of every shilling, elevenpence went direct to the poor. The Society has existed for 84 years, and the sum now distributed in pensions alone amounted to 7800*l.* per annum. A further sum of 1500*l.* is required for the maintenance of the homes and of the funds connected with them. For this the annual income is not sufficient; and it is hoped that larger revenue may be obtained from the publicity of this meeting.

The charity is entirely undenominational, as

¹ The treasurer is W. Heathfield, Esq., 44 Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Secretary's Office is at 83 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.

the names of the speakers supporting the Lord Mayor indicate:—the Rev. Lewis Borrett White, D.D., Rector of St. Mary Aldermary; the Rev. E. A. Stuart, of Holloway; Sir Francis Peek, Bart., Mr. E. Rawlings, and Mr. F. A. Bevan. The foundation stone of the asylum at Camberwell was laid by the late Alderman Challis; the late Alderman Wire and Alderman Abbiss were warm supporters of the charity, and Alderman Kelly, Lord Mayor at the accession of Queen Victoria, was treasurer till his death. The City of London has thus long been honourably associated with the institution. Its benefits are not however confined to the Christian poor in

the Metropolitan district, nearly half of them residing in the country.

Sir Joseph Savory well sustained the character of his office for encouraging beneficent institutions, as not a few of his predecessors have done; and he commended this charity above most others, as the conditions of relief were old age, helpless poverty, and Christian character. Mr. Collingridge said he had known the working of the charity for forty years, and there was no society more conscientiously, more economically or more satisfactorily conducted than the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society. It deserved to be more widely known and more liberally supported.

J. M.

WHAT GEORGE LENTON GAVE UP.

CHAPTER II.



GEORGE'S father and mother had a great deal of talk together about his wish to go to business, and at length they came to the reluctant conclusion that, under all the circumstances, it would be the wisest course to let him have his way. Accordingly, accompanied by his mother—his father being quite unable to go—George went to see Mr. Greenwood again.

"I am afraid, Mrs. Lenton," said Mr. Greenwood, "we cannot give your son the situation he came to

inquire about. We must have somebody older than he is, and somebody who has had a little experience in keeping accounts."

George's countenance fell, for he had felt almost certain he would get the place, and it seemed as though he were not going to get it after all.

"But," continued Mr. Greenwood, "I want a boy for a few hours every day, to write to my dictation letters and other things, and to convey messages. He will have to fill up his time in the warehouse, where there will always be plenty to do. Do you think you would like that?"

George was a little disappointed, for he had pictured himself raised at once to the dignity of a clerk in the office, and now it seemed as though he were to be he hardly knew what. He made no objection, however. He was willing to do anything which would bring in money, and so, in some degree, relieve his parents of the burden of his support. He turned to his mother, as if to ask what he should do; and the look she gave him indicating that she left him to decide for himself, he briefly said, in reply to Mr. Greenwood's question, "Yes, sir."

"Then come to-morrow morning at eight o'clock," said Mr. Greenwood, "for a month's trial."

On arriving at home, George went straight to his father, to tell him what had been done. Mr. Lenton was in his bedroom, too weak to leave his bed. He listened to George's account of what had passed with evident pleasure, though his pleasure was not unmingled with regret as he

thought of the hopes George had relinquished; and then he said, "Come and see me again in the evening, my boy. I hope I shall be a little bit stronger—then; and we can talk more about it."

Fortunately when the evening came, Mr. Lenton was so much better that he was able to have a long conversation with his son. What passed made a deep impression on George's heart. It was, indeed, the turning-point of his life. He had been a good lad, his father said, and he hoped he would try to be so still. He would find when he went to business new duties, and new—and sometimes, perhaps, strong—temptations; let him always resolve, seeking the help of God, to do what conscience told him to be right. He hoped, too, that when he himself was gone, George would always be kind and helpful to his mother and sisters; which George with a quivering lip, and with cheeks wet with tears, promised faithfully to do.

It was the last long talk which George had with his father, for only a week or two after Mr. Lenton caught a severe cold, which seized at once on his lungs, and within six days he was in his grave.

George addressed himself vigorously to the work of his new post, but he was by no means without his difficulties and troubles. Mr. Greenwood was really a kind-hearted man, but he was one of those kind-hearted men who do not always show how kind they are. At first when George went to work Mr. Greenwood was impatient with his slowness in taking down what he dictated. To meet his wishes, though without saying anything about it, George set himself to study shorthand; and in the course of a few weeks he became so far proficient in its use that he was able to write almost as rapidly as Mr. Greenwood could speak. This smoothed matters wonderfully; and all the more because he took pains to make himself conversant with the things about which he had to write. In these ways Mr. Greenwood soon found him very helpful.

It so happened that a year or two after George went to business, the firm began to have transactions with houses in Germany and Italy; and of course this involved a great deal of correspondence. There was no foreign clerk in the office, and although Mr. Greenwood had some acquaintance with German, it was often found necessary to have recourse to strangers, and that was not always convenient. George had learnt a little German at the Grammar School, but he

had not kept it up. Seeing, however, how useful it might now be, he addressed himself once more to its study, availing himself of the kind help of the master by whom he had been taught when at the Grammar School; and within less than a twelvemonth he was able to conduct the entire German correspondence without any help or supervision. To this he added, by-and-by, sufficient mastery of Italian for all practical purposes.

It may be thought, perhaps, that having so much to do in these various ways, George would be gradually relieved of all drudgery in the warehouse. But it was not so. Mr. Greenwood was one of those men who, having themselves great powers of endurance, scarcely ever think it possible for anybody else to be overworked; and for not less than five years, along with the duties of which we have spoken, George had devolved upon him the entire responsibilities of one department of the warehouse work. Nor was this all; for Mr. Greenwood gradually availed himself more and more of his help in the supervision of matters in the factory, of which he himself had been wont to take the chief oversight.

It was hard work, and he sometimes complained of it to his mother, saying that he did almost the work of two.

"Be patient, my boy," said Mrs. Lenton, "you know what Solomon says, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.' You have not broken down yet. It will all come right some day. And then, too, Mr. Greenwood has not dealt ungenerously with you."

That was true. It was long since George had left behind him the four-and-sixpence a week with which he had begun; and Mr. Greenwood had dealt with him all the more liberally because he had heard, in some way or other, that he spent nothing on himself beyond what was absolutely needful, and that he devoted all the rest to the comfort of his mother, and the education of his sisters.

Eleven years passed, and in the course of that time the senior partner, Mr. Greenwood's father-in-law, had died, and the business was entirely his own. But now, strong as he had been, his health had begun to fail. The fact was, he had overtaken his strength, and he had to pay the penalty. At length it came to this, that he must leave everything behind, and go, for weeks and months at a time, first to the south of England and then abroad. Then his physicians told him that his only chance of life was a long sea-voyage, for at least six months.

Young as George was, Mr. Greenwood felt that of all the men in his employ, there was not one to whom he could so safely entrust the business as to him; and the result proved that he was right. The six months for which he left England were extended to twelve; and when he came back at the end of that time he found, to his great satisfaction, that things had gone on just as well in his absence as though he had remained at home.

Mr. Greenwood made no arrangement with George before his departure on that long voyage, as to any increased remuneration on account of his increased responsibilities, but when he returned he made him a very handsome present; and from that time he has been in the receipt of an income which has enabled him to surround his mother with every comfort. Long since, indeed, he insisted on her giving up her school, and enjoying what he justly called her well-earned rest.

It had been the secret wish of George's father and mother—and especially of his mother—that he should be a Christian minister; and with that view they had struggled to keep him at the Grammar School, and had looked forward on his behalf to the more advanced studies of the University. They thought—and they had good reason for thinking—that, with the grace of God in his heart, there was good reason to hope that he might be exceedingly

useful; and it was his own desire and ambition to be a minister. He has found comfort, however, in the persuasion that there are other spheres of Christian usefulness besides the ministry. He is a devoted Sunday-school teacher, and he takes an active part in other forms of philanthropic and Christian service. For years his minister has found him one of his steadiest workers, and at the same time one of his most faithful friends.

There are whispers—with what foundation remains to be seen—that there is still better fortune in store for Mr. Lenton, as everybody in the establishment now calls him, but Mr. Greenwood, who always speaks to him, and very frequently of him, as "George." Mr. Greenwood has an only daughter, and it is well known that Mr. Lenton is a frequent visitor at the Holm Lee. It is said, too, that his mother and sisters are also frequently there. Time will show how far the gossips are right.

A CHAPTER OF SCRIPTURE

NO. I.

This chapter gives the account of a journey; the names of six countries are mentioned, and of nine cities, nearly all quite familiar. To one of the countries an epistle was written; another is mentioned seven times in 2 Cor. One of the cities is the most famous in the Bible; at another an attempt was made to stone two apostles; at another a lame man was cured; the name of another may be found among the "seven churches;" at another an apostle saw a vision, described in this chapter; and another was a Roman colony. Mention is made of Jews, Greeks and Romans; also of women, three especially; the names of two are given, one of whom was engaged in trade, but is found to be prayerful and full of good works; another is spoken of as a believer, and her name may be found in 2 Tim. i.; the third is only called "a damsel." Three men are mentioned by name, all Christian teachers, and one afterwards received two letters from another. Spiritual influence, both good and evil, is described, and an account is given of great cruelty, terror, danger and suffering, and of much prayer, praise, kindness, hospitality and joy. Mention is made of two rites, one Jewish, one Christian. A story is given of a miracle worked in the name of Jesus which excites great anger, bringing the servants of Christ into trouble. A fresh convert, however, is made, of whom the name is not given; the whole city is alarmed by a strange event; and the persecutors are afraid of their own prisoners. The way of salvation is very clearly set forth in a single verse. The whole story is a remarkable fulfilment of Christ's words in Matt. x. 17, 18, and Luke xxi. 12.

L. T.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. X.

1. What the wise man says goes before destruction.
2. A bird which was counted unclean under the Jewish law.
3. The material of which Solomon's throne was made.
4. What Jesus calls "The light of the body."
5. What the Word of God is likened to, in a parable.
6. That which the Saviour says the knowledge of shall make free.

The initials of each word in order place,
And a great office of Christ you trace.

W. C.