

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.



"I HAVE NEVER PROFESSED TO BE BETTER THAN OTHER PEOPLE."

CHAPTER XII.—THE FORTESCUES AT BATH.

"WHERE is Irene?" asked Madam sharply, regarding the vacant place at the breakfast table with some displeasure.

"I think she is abroad with her maid," answered Athol. "She is much addicted to an early morning walk. She goes forth two or three times in a week."

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"A fine country habit," said the Squire placably: "I am glad the maid has such sense. She is looking sadly pined in this gay place. Doubtless she is beginning to long, as I am, for the freedom of the country again."

"I cannot think what has come over Irene of late," remarked Fulk, "she has lost all her colour and good looks and quietly saucy ways, and is as demure, and often as dismal, as the veriest

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Puritan. Methinks Hugh will scarcely know her when he comes. But, perchance, he will do her good. In old days those two seemed to have much goodwill and understanding of one another. Comes he quickly, say you, sir?"

The Squire referred to an open letter by his plate, and said: "He hopes to follow this in about two days' time. He has been working something over-hard at his books—that was always the way with Hugh—and has been recommended to leave them for a while. He would rather have waited till we were at home again, but he is bidden not to tarry, so he comes here first, and will, perhaps, return with us shortly to Rookwood."

The sunshine of a bright February day was illuminating the room in which the Fortescue family had assembled for the breakfast, which was at an hour that for the times was fashionably late. Mrs. Bridget was no longer of the party, having completed her cure some fortnight since, and returned to her brother's house at Hownston; but Athol had been left behind to remain as long as the other family of Fortescues did. She was enjoying herself vastly, and greatly enhancing the pleasure of Madam, who had now a vivacious and talkative companion at her side, and the handsomest girl in Bath to chaperon to the many scenes of amusement there.

The courtship of Fulk and Athol, too, was a source of great pleasure and interest to her. She was very proud of her elder son, and had always set her heart upon his marriage with his handsome and well-dowered cousin. There was no denying the fact that her own daughter had been a failure; and Madam so cordially hated failures, that after the first fortnight of Athol's visit she had almost ceased even to wish to take Irene into society. Her daughter-in-law elect was as great a success as Irene was the reverse; and as late hours, hot rooms, and the round of social dissipation appeared to tell unfavourably upon the younger girl's health, she had been gradually allowed to shirk all but the morning promenade in the Pump-Room, and was left for the most part to her own quiet retired ways, save when her father took her out for a ride with him, or she joined Athol and Fulk in some like exercise. Mrs. Bridget had recommended that the child should be let alone and not forced into society against her will: nevertheless that shrewd woman had given to the girl many pieces of rather incisive counsel, which had been received in the silence with which Irene almost always now did receive advice, of whatever kind it might be.

So little heed was now paid to the quiet pensive girl, that Athol alone experienced any misgivings on her account; and she was too busy and too full of pleasurable occupation to have much time or thought to spare for her little cousin. She had however observed of late that Irene seemed in unwontedly low spirits. Often in the mornings her eyes were red and heavy, as though she had been watching or weeping half the night; her movements were listless and lifeless, and not unfrequently, if playfully rallied by her vivacious cousin, she would burst into uncontrollable weeping, though she never spoke of the source of her

unhappiness, and grew more silent and more drooping day by day. If such a thing had been possible to believe, Athol would have thought that Irene was pining after her professed lover, young Lord Lovel, who had been at Bath for a short time, but had quickly departed, possibly disgusted by the tame and cold reception accorded him by the lady he had honoured by his preference. But knowing as she did that her cousin was worse than indifferent towards the young man, she could not connect her grief with his absence, and had almost ceased to trouble herself about it, regarding it as a nameless malady which time would cure, and only striving with good-natured tact to engross her aunt's attention, and keep her from persecuting her unsatisfactory daughter.

What therefore was Athol's surprise, when, as they were in the middle of breakfast this bright morning, Irene came in with flushed cheeks and shining eyes, her whole face irradiated and almost transfigured, a look of rapture and exaltation in her eyes which was absolutely startling.

Irene was much addicted to early walks with her maid—so much Athol knew before, though at what hour she rose and where she went, she had no notion: but generally she returned before the breakfast hour, looking worn and weary and faint. What could have happened to change her so to-day? She looked in silent amaze at the radiant creature before her, and felt absolutely confounded at her appearance.

Madam, who was reading Hugh's letter, looked up with a sharp rebuke at such irregular habits; but the Squire, who was glad to see rosy cheeks and bright eyes again, laughingly called the girl to him, declaring that it was plain that early hours were the right thing for her, and that if she brought such roses home, she should not be chidden for being late. Doubtless she had been out upon the downs and had come back with a hunter's appetite. He piled her plate with good things as he spoke, and bid her sit beside him to eat them, whilst he told her of the news concerning Hugh.

But it seemed to Athol, who was closely watching Irene, that he was speaking to deaf ears. She smiled and said yes or no from time to time, but her thoughts were plainly far away. The light in her eyes did not fade or change, but it was a light which responded to no impression from without. Athol grew more and more curious as the minutes flew by. Judging from her own experiences of life, she would have said that Irene had come straight from some happy meeting with a secret lover: but the idea of such a thing as connected with her cousin seemed absurd, and yet it began to be plain to her that Irene was indulging in some secret mystery of her own. This strange and radiant gladness was as remarkable and inexplicable in its way as the profound melancholy it had displaced.

When they rose from table she slipped her hand within her cousin's arm, and the two girls passed upstairs to the little boudoir they were supposed to share together, though Irene nearly always preferred to use her own bed-room. A cheery fire was blazing on the hearth, and Athol

pushed her companion into a comfortable chair, and stood over her, scanning her face with great attention.

"Irene," she said at last, "what has come to you? You are a different being this morning. I cannot understand you."

The girl clasped her hands together and the light seemed to deepen in her eyes.

"Different! Oh, Athol, if only you could know what that difference is—the difference between the blackest night and the most glorious day; betwixt heaven and hell itself, methinks! Oh, would that you did also know it, dear cousin: the release from sin, the perfect joy of knowing the Saviour for *your* Saviour, the knowledge of His pardoning love. Oh, the weary burden of sin that has been weighing me down! and now to know that all is pardoned, all taken away; that He is mine and I am His! Oh, Athol, Athol, I have heard of it before. I have even seen it in others. But, oh, the blessedness of knowing it in one's own heart! Oh, dear, dear cousin, will you not come to Him too? He is waiting to call you His. Come to Him now, and be happy, as I am happy, in Him and Him alone."

Athol stood silent and confounded. To hear the silent, reserved, depressed Irene break forth thus into a flood of impassioned speech was so astonishing that the elder girl knew not what to think or to say. The phrases, which fell so eagerly from Irene's lips, sounded strangely in the ears of the Rector's daughter. She had not had sufficient interest in the new revival within and without the church to recognise its new expressions. For a moment it seemed to her as though Irene's senses had suddenly deserted her.

"My dear child," she said, "be calm. I do not know what you are talking about. Of course we are all children of God, we were made so in our baptism, surely you believe that. I am not much of a theologian, but I do know that we have been baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ, and that we are His by adoption and grace. You need not speak as though I were beyond the pale. I have never professed to be better than other people, but at least I am a Christian; you will scarce deny me that privilege, I trow?"

But Irene did not smile, her face was full of pleading and passion.

"A Christian—and given over to worldly enjoyments and carnal pleasures? A Christian, and not a humble follower of Christ? A Christian, and yet not seeking Him first in every action of your life? A Christian, yet not flinging yourself in deepest abasement and misery at the foot of His Cross, pleading and agonising for pardon, till He is graciously pleased to set you free? Oh, Athol, I speak of what I know and have experienced. I would not speak at all if I did not know the more excellent way. I have agonised and suffered. I have prayed day and night for pardon and peace. I have told myself that it would never, never come. And, behold, to-day, this very morning, as we were singing together one of those sweet hymns of Mr. Charles Wesley's that tell of the boundless mercy and love of God, behold the black cloud suddenly lifted, the sunlight poured into my soul. I knew that I, too,

was forgiven, that I was loved, pardoned, justified, sanctified. Oh, Athol, Athol, I would that all the world could share that glorious knowledge, that glorious joy!"

Athol simply stood aghast at a revelation which had burst upon her with the force of the utterly unexpected.

"Irene," she said slowly, "do you know what you have said? You have spoken words which have betrayed a secret to me. I knew that you often went out early in the mornings, but I did not profess to know where. Now I can have no further doubt. You go to those five o'clock Methodist conventicles, against which we hear so much spoken. What would your mother say if she were to know?"

"I know not, I care not," answered Irene vehemently, "did not Christ Himself say to us that he who hated not father, mother, brother, sister, ay, and his own life too, was not worthy to be called His disciple? It is better to serve God than to please man. I have lived in darkness and blindness of spirit all my past life. Am I to refuse free salvation when it is held out to me from a coward fear of what a worldly mother would say?"

Athol drew her brows together sharply.

"Dear cousin," she said quietly enough, "if this new doctrine of which you tell me, teaches you first to deceive and disobey, and then to speak slightly of your own mother, I must be pardoned for declining to have anything to do with it. I do not much believe in new religions. The old one is good enough for me. 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' it tells us, and again, 'Children, obey your parents.' I do not care to argue: I doubt not you are well stuffed with texts and sophisms, and I doubt not for a moment that all you have done you have done with a clear conscience: but, for my part, I like it not. I would have fought your battle in sister-fashion, had you boldly asked leave of your mother to go to these meetings; but to go by stealth, under cover of a morning walk, I like not. It savours too much of cowardice and subterfuge."

Irene's face had flushed hotly. Her reply was vehemently spoken.

"You know it would have been useless to ask. She would not only have refused, she would have made of me a prisoner, and my poor famished soul would have starved and pined away for lack of heavenly food. I like not secrets either: but what could I do? When the choice lies betwixt pleasing man and obeying God, there can but be one end to it. You remember the words of Peter and John when in like case? 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye.'"

Athol turned away with an impatient sigh.

"Oh, I knew you would have texts enough and to spare. Who was it said that the devil could quote Scripture for his own ends if he had a mind thereunto? not that I am comparing you to his Satanic majesty, dear coz. Still, I cannot see things as you do altogether, and I am not certain that I wish to; but, on the other hand, I will not set myself up as a judge."

And there for the present the matter ended.

Irene glided off to shut herself up upon her knees with her new-found and ecstatic happiness, whilst Athol dressed for her daily ride, with a perplexed feeling at heart, and was more and more convinced that the less people meddled with the vexed question of religious controversy the better and happier it was for them.

"It is that maid who is at the bottom of it all, I will be bound," she said; "this change began to come over Irene almost from the day Nancy began to wait upon her. Those Dawsons have always been a stiff-necked family in religious matters. I should not have thought that one of Janet's daughters would have turned Methodist: but I remember I did fear that the farmer himself was bitten. Well, well, it is no concern of mine: but I hope when Hugh comes that Irene will open her heart to him. It seems neither fitting nor proper that she should be more than half a Methodist herself, when her mother knows nothing of it, and hates the very sound of the word. In old days Hugh had influence with her. Strange, how those natures that seem so soft and yielding, are really so stubborn and unimpressionable! They seem to yield like indian-rubber, but they spring back just in the same way to their former shape. Heigh-ho! well, it is no business of mine. I am thankful I never had any wish to be more religious than the rest of the world, or than my dear old father thought needful."

Irene's exalted frame of mind continued through the next days, and upon the third Hugh made his appearance at Bath. He was not much like his handsome brother, being far less magnificent in his outer man, and lacking the gay dashing air of distinction which always made Fulk a power wherever he went. He had the well-cut Fortescue features, with some of Madam's decision in the lines of the mouth: but the eyes were dark blue-gray, and very deep-set beneath the intellectual brow, and were often dreamy and abstracted in expression, although upon occasion they could glow and flash and reflect many varying emotions. Hugh was tall, but very slight, and he had the book-worm tendency to stoop, which tendency was quickly noticed by his father, who prescribed much horse exercise to eradicate it. He had plainly overtaken his health through the severe application to study which he had indulged for the past two years, and though not ill in the ordinary acceptance of the word, he was in need of rest and change.

It was not wonderful then, considering his state of health and the nature of his tastes and habits, that he and Irene should be thrown a good deal together. The social dissipations of Bath had small attraction for him, and late hours and hot rooms were avoided by medical advice. Therefore by the end of a week it came about that he and his sister had resumed the old habit of childhood, and consorted a great deal together; and Irene had lost in a great measure the shyness and constraint which had grown up during the two years' absence of Hugh at Oxford. She recognised in him a seriousness she had not found in any other member of her family, and she listened with great attention when at last he spoke to her of his own plans for the future.

"Of course I shall enter the Church," he said, one day, "it has always been my father's wish that I should do so. There are several family livings to which he wishes me to succeed after my uncle, as other Fortescues have done in past times. But, for my own part, I think I should prefer only to hold one, and to do the work of that one as, I take it, it should be done. It is time that we of the Established Church awoke to our call and our responsibilities, and showed the world that we too can work, can feed the flock, can live lives of self-sacrifice and self-denial. The Wesleys, Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Ingham and many more, have set a noble example, but they have in some ways gone too far, neither do they wish for care over any particular place or parish. The day may come—I think it is fast coming—when their followers will induce them to take steps which shall make of the Methodists a sect to themselves, which thing was no part of the original scheme of its founders, and, indeed, is resolutely and boldly opposed by them now. But, be that as it may, they have been the pioneers in a noble work, and we must not be slack to follow their example in its wider spirit, trusting to avoid by God's grace some of the pitfalls into which we some of us think they are like to fall."

"Brother, brother, speak not against them," cried Irene, with sudden heat, "oh, I would that you would join that noble band—walking in holiness and integrity and in the fear of the Lord. Yes, I will tell you, though not a soul save Athol knows it now—and she surprised my secret from me. The Methodists have saved my soul. I was bowed down to the very dust beneath the burden of my sins, and they showed me the way to Christ—with them I received light, peace, hope, assurance of salvation. Oh, my brother, have you received that great gift? Do you know your sins forgiven? Can you look up to your Saviour and know Him for your own? Oh, if not, go to them and ask them to point the way. They are good and holy and Christ-like men, and every day sinners are coming under conviction, and receiving an answer of peace to their souls."

Hugh was little less surprised at this outburst than Athol had been, but he understood it far better. He understood too the nature of his sister's mind—at once so reserved, but, where reserve had broken down, so impulsive and eager of speech. He let none of his surprise appear in his face or manner, but as they rode quietly along side by side over the solitary downs, he drew from her by questions the whole history of the past year of her life. He was then able to enter into her feelings, her struggles, temptations and difficulties as he had never been able before, and as no one else in the world could have done, because at heart Hugh and Irene were very much alike, and, therefore, very much in sympathy in such matters.

Nevertheless his face was rather grave as the whole story was told, and he said very gently though very firmly,

"Athol was quite right in what she said, Irene, though it might have sounded harsh: you

ought not to act in defiance of our mother's wishes. You ought not to do secretly what you would not dare to do openly. It is acting a lie, however we may gloss it over. And it can never, never be right to do evil that good may come."

Irene's eyes dilated as she burst into vehement speech—a speech embodying all her difficulties, her explanations, her palliations of her conduct, her utter hopelessness of ever winning the smallest concession from her mother. Hugh listened with great sympathy, but shook his head at the end.

"I fully see the difficulties in the way; but, for all that, the thing ought to be done. I do not myself believe very much in growing in grace or getting nearer to God, if we begin by ever such a small defection from His own appointed way."

The girl made a gesture of despair.

"Then I must lose my own soul to please my mother's whim."

"Irene, Irene," answered Hugh, "think what you are saying, and beware. Are you not a baptised Christian? Have you not the church to go to Sunday by Sunday? Do you not kneel before God's table and receive the Holy Communion from His appointed minister? What more can even these earnest and devout men teach you than is contained in the word of Divine guidance to be found in your own Bible, as read and expounded in the Church's services? I know what these men teach—it is not new doctrine—it is held by our own Church, from which they have not seceded."

"Then why do they not teach it?" cried Irene, passionately, "why, if they have the words of life, do they not dispense them to the hungry flock? Why are we left to pine and starve?"

"Are you left to starve? you, individually, I mean, Irene? I dare not deny that the Church of this land has woefully fallen from her high estate, that her pastors have, in many places, neglected and betrayed their trust: but still there are faithful shepherds to be found, and methinks by what I hear, you at Sax have little to complain of. I know something by repute of Mr. Latham. Does not he teach the word of life faithfully?"

Irene sighed impatiently and hung her head.

"In sooth, I scarce know. He has but been with us a short while, and I have grown weary of trying to make sense of the dull discourses we hear in church at home."

"Ay, and so in weariness and disgust you condemn them all, and rush to pastures new for the food, which, perchance, you might get at home if you would but strive for it there. Nay, turn not away, dear sister, I have said my say, and will trouble you no more. I will not betray your confidence. All you have told me I hold sacred. I ask you only to watch and pray and judge for yourself, whether this present course of yours is not like to lead you at last into a position which may, perchance, throw discredit upon your Christian calling and profession."

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT IN BELGIUM.

II.

MUCH of the Protestantism that existed in Belgium in the early part of this century was of a negative rather than of a positive character. The Bible was often read rather for the purpose of finding objections to Romanism than for spiritual edification. Even some of the pastors in the towns were affected by the rationalism and worldliness then so generally prevalent. But there were noble exceptions. Pastor Merle d'Aubigné, at Brussels; De Visme, at Dour; Fr. de Faye, at Tournay; Goedkoop, at Ghent; and Spoerlein, at Antwerp, were truly devoted men, and were especially anxious to put the Bible into the hands of the people. A Belgian Bible Society was started, with branches in several places. To the church at Antwerp—a church mainly composed, we believe, of foreigners—belongs the honour of starting this movement. They were happy in the selection of the agent, Voskamp by name. He visited the foreign vessels as they were about to sail, and also pursued his calling in the squares and at the markets, besides going to neighbouring towns. Other colporteurs were soon started, and many copies sold; but funds not proving sufficient, the work was handed over to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which,

since 1835, had been represented in Brussels by the Rev. W. P. Tiddy. By 1837, as many as 20,548 volumes had been put in circulation, of which number 17,129 had been disposed of by the colporteurs.

This Bible-work soon excited the wrath of the Romish bishops, who issued circular after circular denouncing it. The books were spoken of as "abominably mutilated by a sacrilegious hand," because the books of the Apocrypha were omitted. The operations of the Bible Society were thus described: "The subtle machinations of a society alike hostile to God and the Holy Church," "the impious projects of this anti-Christian society." One result of these fulminations was, that the poor colporteurs were hardly beset, their books taken from them and burnt, and their own persons often subjected to rough treatment; and that in a country where perfect religious liberty is inscribed in the statute book.

The friends of the Bible soon began to feel that this extended circulation must be followed up by the preaching and exposition of its contents. This feeling was strengthened by an incident that occurred about this time. A man from Genval, near Waterloo, went to Brussels to buy

together under the name of the Union of the Evangelical Protestant Churches of Belgium. But included in this small synod or union were men who had no sympathy with evangelical doctrine or evangelistic work. To such the existence of the Evangelical Society was obnoxious, and we presume that those members of the union who had been supporting the Evangelical Society felt that their position was no longer tenable now that a union had been formed; consequently one after another they withdrew from the Evangelical Society. But, having taken that step, they soon began to consider what could be done for the promotion of the Protestant cause; and in 1844 a Synodal



E. R. Rochedieu

Evangelisation Committee was formed, which for many years has sought to colport the Scriptures, to establish schools for the benefit of the various churches, and to look after Protestants scattered up and down the country. The first part of their work ceased in 1860, when colportage was handed over to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The Union celebrated its Jubilee in 1889, and reported that it then had thirty places of worship, sixteen pastors, six evangelists and thirty Sunday-schools: at the same time the Evangelisation Committee stated that it had twelve evangelistic centres, with twenty localities more or less constantly visited, and fourteen agents, pastors, evangelists, etc. These national churches enjoy perfect liberty of action, their only bond of union with the State being the financial one. In process of time the rationalistic elements have gradually disappeared, and a considerable amount

of earnest religious life has sprung up, as indeed is evident from the statistics just given. At various times proposals have been made with a view of effecting a combination of the National and the Free churches, but insuperable difficulties have always presented themselves. And so long as the spirit of fraternal Christian rivalry prevails between them, and each seeks to do the work lying immediately around it, any attempt at union seems unnecessary. There is abundant work for both to do. The greater part of the land is still unoccupied. Thus a line drawn from Ostend through Ghent and Malines, and another from Antwerp to the same point, and then continued through Brussels eastward to Louvain, Liège, and Verviers, and then carried along the banks of the Meuse to Namur, and from thence to Charleroi and Mons, the chief town of the Borinage, the great coal-mining district of Belgium, would run through the principal districts in which evangelistic work has been attempted. Along this line may be found small and in some cases flourishing churches, especially in the province of Hainaut. But this field, large as it may appear, constitutes only about one fourth of the whole country. The provinces of Antwerp, Eastern and Western Flanders, Limburg and Luxemburg are untouched, except by colportage, while it is only of late that anything has been attempted in the province of Namur.

In Brussels, which like most European capitals is rapidly increasing, Protestantism is beginning to make its presence felt. The National Church—of which M. Rochedieu has for many years been the French pastor as well as the President of the Synod—this church worships in a building that was constructed in 1760, to serve as a chapel for the Austrian Court. In addition to this *Chapelle du Musée*, as it is called, there is a Flemish church in the Place Ste. Catherine. The Free Church has two chapels, in the Rue Belliard and on the Boulevard Bischoffsheim (formerly Boulevard de l'Observatoire)¹ for French services, and one in the Rue Terre Neuve for Flemish. In addition to these regular services, much evangelistic work is going on. It was first set on foot in 1880 by the Committee of the Evangelical Alliance, and representatives of all the churches took part in it. The Exhibition over, it was continued in a hall in the Chaussée de Wavre. This hall was subsequently handed over to M. de Jonge, who soon after gave up his position as pastor of the National Church in order to labour among the working classes (Flemish). This City Mission has five stations. Some few years since, the Evangelical Continental Society encouraged the Free Churches to undertake a mission somewhat akin to the McAll Mission in

¹ This chapel was built by the late Pastor Boucher with funds collected in England and America, for the benefit of the Free Church, and was used by that Church for many years. At length, for reasons best known to himself, M. Boucher, whose personal property it (legally) was, offered it to the Wesleyans. That body held it for several years, but have recently handed it back to the Free Church.

several parts of the city, chiefly among the French-speaking people. They have now four stations, directed by Pastor Meyhoffer, and three others (Flemish) by Pastor Haksteen.

Very considerable inroads are thus being made on the ignorance, superstition and corruption of this great city. The results it is impossible to tabulate, but one thing is certain. Many a dark home has been brightened, and many a trophy won for Christ. Besides, a Bible-reader has for years been visiting the masons from the country, who in the summer are found congregated in large numbers in Brussels. This has been the means of leading many of their families in the villages around to enquire for the truth and welcome the evangelist. Such is the origin of the stations at Clabecq, La Roche and other places. The churches, too, in Brussels have been benefited by taking their share in this general activity.

In the Charleroi basin, as it is called, in the midst of a group of large villages with 10,000, 20,000 and 25,000 inhabitants we find several important Free Churches. The veteran pastor Poinso, will, if spared to next year, celebrate his jubilee as a worker in this region. Fifty years ago, when he entered on this field, he found a state of things which those who have only seen it of later years can hardly credit:—no roads, only rough tracks, an ignorance and corruption among the miners which to-day seem impossible. After long and painful efforts he secured a chapel in the market-place of Charleroi; but this became too small, and in 1880 he was enabled to erect a large and handsome one on the new Boulevard, next door to the Palais de Justice. This church has greatly prospered, having now fourteen hundred members young and old, with eleven annexes. Another church sprang up at Jumet-Courcelles, not far distant, and this has now become, for convenience' sake, two churches. Persons who have visited the great ironworks—Cockerill & Co.—at Seraing, near Liège, may

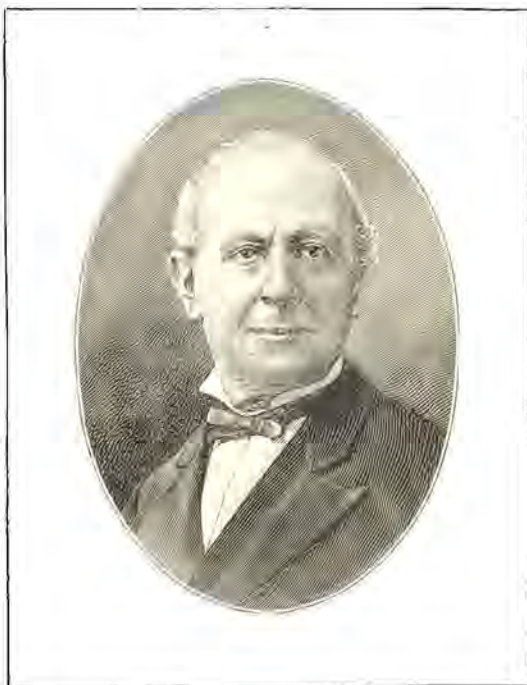
have observed a lofty building on a hill at Lize-Seraing. This is a Free church with a pastor's dwelling above it. Here large numbers gather for worship, and much Christian activity prevails. Pastor Cacheux was for many years the father of the people here.

Occasionally new openings occur through the ill-will excited by the action of the Romish bishops towards the priests or their parishes. One of the most recent of these cases is that of Paifve, near Liège, where the people threatened that if they were not allowed to have a priest of their own, instead of sharing the services of one with another parish, they would call

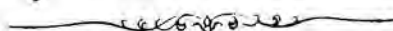
in the Protestant pastor. Their request being refused, Pastor Gagnebin of Liège was sent for. Strange scenes occurred. Much unhealthy excitement was manifest at first, but at length the hearts of some were touched by the truth, and now nearly all the inhabitants have "gone over to the Protestants," a chapel has been built, and Christian work is in progress.

In the Borinage much activity prevails. Open-air meetings are often held. There are temples at Douvrain and three other places, belonging to the Union. The regular services are well attended, and the earnest Christian people are bestirring themselves to help the pastors. At Wasmes, where the State Church holds meetings at one end of the village, and the Free Church at the other, a new Roman Catholic church has just been

built with the hope of crushing Protestantism throughout the district. But the task will not be an easy one, for Protestantism has, after fifty years of labour, taken deep root. Indeed, in another village also in the Borinage, a new movement has been started by the people themselves. Many of them have attended Protestant services in neighbouring places, and now are desirous of having a chapel of their own, but they are all poor people.



G. Poinso





THERE is, who deems all climes, all seasons fair;
 There is, who knows no restless passion's strife;
 Contentment, smiling at each idle care;
 Contentment, thankful for the gift of life.

She finds in Winter many a view to please:
 The morning landscape fringed with frost-work gay,
 The sun at noon seen through the leafless trees,
 The calm clear ether at the close of day.

—John Scott.

A PAGE FROM THE ANNALS OF THE POOR.

JESSIE VEITCH, CITY MISSIONARY, AND SOLDIERS' FRIEND.

IN the autumn of 1887, a remarkable scene was witnessed in the streets of Edinburgh. It was on the 23rd of August, a month when comparatively few of the professional or wealthy classes are there; but many strangers, as well as the people of the city, beheld a funeral of no ordinary kind moving towards the Grange Cemetery. The hearse was preceded by about seventy or eighty soldiers, artillerymen from Leith Fort, not "marched to the funeral," but permitted to attend it, and proud to show this loving respect to an aged woman who was known to them, and to comrades in all ranks of the service, as "the soldiers' friend." A great company of mourners followed the remains on foot, as is still the common usage in Scotland.

Who was this, thus borne to her last resting-place, to be laid beside many of the great and the good of the land? She was a very humble person in the eyes of the world, but truly a "King's daughter"; and angels would rejoice at the sight while they took little heed of more splendid burials. The inscription put afterwards on her tombstone tells briefly who she was. It runs thus:—In memory of Jessie Veitch, missionary, who died August 19, 1887, aged 81. Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." John xi. 25. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John xii. 32. "She hath done what she could." Mark xiv. 8. By her labours among soldiers and others, and correspondence for long years, she won the love of many to whom she was as a mother, and who will rise up and call her blessed.

Such is the record on her tomb.¹ In the report of the Edinburgh City Missions for 1887, we find the following notice:—"During Miss Veitch's long period of service (from 1855) her labours were marked by singular zeal, self-denial, and inventiveness. Originally employed among the degraded of her own sex, she latterly devoted her energy chiefly to the spiritual good of the soldiers in garrison in Edinburgh and neighbourhood, with their families—a sphere in which her labours were most indefatigable and fruitful. She manifested in this department a courage and tact which gave her great influence over the hearts of the men; and the name of Jessie Veitch will be held in enduring remembrance by a great multitude, many of whom are now in glory, and others scattered over the world. About three years before her death she was relieved of the burden of full service, which had become too heavy for her; and the directors were happy to be able, by means of the Disabled Missionaries' Fund, to make such an arrangement on her behalf as

allowed her to spend the remaining days in comfort while continuing to employ herself in her beloved work."

Many in Edinburgh may have known and may remember Jessie Veitch. There may be some now in distant lands who will not soon forget her faithful words and loving deeds. But as there are few in England who have ever heard her name, it is a pleasure to speak of her work in the SUNDAY AT HOME, through which the record of her labours and the example of her charity may become more widely known.

She was born at a small village in the county of Peebles, about twenty miles to the south of Edinburgh. In her Scripture Birthday Text-book this entry appears in her own handwriting on the page opposite to the 17th of March: "Jessie Veitch, born at Eddlestone, 1806. Born the second time at Dundee, August, 1839." The text for March 17 in that book, on which her eye must often have rested, is Psalm lxiii. 3: "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee."

Many years of her early life she passed in domestic service, first at Edinburgh, and afterwards at Dundee, where, in 1839, the second birth, to which she refers in her text-book, was experienced in the time when the Rev. William Chalmers Burns was occupying the pulpit of the Rev. Robert McCheyne, then absent on the famous mission to the Jews in the Holy Land. On the return of McCheyne, the saving impressions first made by the earnest appeals of William Burns, were strengthened, and she became a decided Christian. On her return to Edinburgh she attended the ministry of one of like spirit with Burns and McCheyne, the Rev. Dr. Moody Stuart. For more than forty years she was a member of his church, and in "Free St. Luke's," she had every opportunity of growing in Scriptural knowledge and in spiritual grace. The good pastor has not now strength for active ministerial work, but in his forced retirement he still, by word and pen, is a helper of many, and an able defender of the faith once delivered to the saints. Of Jessie Veitch, whom he esteemed highly for her own and her work's sake, he wrote a brief obituary notice, which gives a true estimate of her character when matured by age. "In a manner rarely seen, there were combined in her the deep spiritual doctrine and experience of a previous generation with the aggressive activity of the present day; and also an old Scottish sternness with great ardour and affection. In her last illness, as she lay on her bed, surrounded with letters, tracts, and booklets, fruits and tokens of a busy life that still occupied itself with active usefulness, her own expressed consolation was in resting on the electing love of God. Along with the inward depth that marked this 'old disciple,'

¹ With her Scottish independence, she had for a long time saved part of her scanty income, to purchase her burial-place.

she was to the last 'in labours more abundant' than others; and when over her it shall be said: 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,' it may well be added, with exceptional force, 'for she rests from her labours, and her works do follow her.'"

This was the testimony borne by one who had known her long. But let us go back to her early life. We are told, in a Memoir by the Rev. Alexander Mills (Stevenson, Edinburgh), who was superintendent of the Edinburgh City Mission from 1856 to the close of 1869, that when Jessie Veitch was a servant she more than once declined, or gave up what was thought a good situation, and accepted a less lucrative one, that she might have more time for the spiritual and beneficent work to which she devoted herself. This time she spent in visiting the poor; and in many a humble home, after a few kind words and showing friendly interest in the family, she left some tract or book illustrating the Saviour's sympathy and love. Mr. Mills also tells how she was appreciated by the families in which she lived, to whose interests she was not less devoted than to the work for her greater Master. In fact she gave proof of her faith by diligent attention to every duty of her calling. In one household where she served, her employer, in reluctantly parting with her, from change of his establishment, handed to her an envelope after paying her wages. She thought at first it was a one pound note, but, on opening the envelope, discovered a cheque for twenty pounds. Almost the whole of this sum she gave to the Jewish mission, in which she took deepest interest. This incident, coming to the knowledge of the directors of the Edinburgh City Mission, led to her appointment as one of their missionaries, and enabled her to dedicate her whole time to active service for Christ.

The district assigned to her on entering the work of the mission was a part of the Canongate, having Campbell's Close for its centre. Those who know modern Edinburgh well understand what a wretched field, outwardly, this was. To a small mission-room, destitute women and girls and children were invited, and during the long period that she there laboured, many were brought under her influence. All the well-known appliances of work among the destitute and the depraved were carried on with perseverance and kindness, and faith: mothers' meetings, sewing classes, day and Sunday schools: visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowing, helping the poverty-stricken, and spreading the glad tidings of salvation and peace, was her unceasing work. Many a dark home was brightened by her presence, and cheered by her voice. She made the dingy walls to be cleaned and whitewashed, and adorned with texts and pictures. The children loved her, for she brought them dolls and toys and picture-books, and took them happy excursions to the Queen's Park and Arthur's Seat in summer, or in winter gave them tea parties, enlivened by Bible stories, or by hymn-singing, in which many became proficient. It would be hard to name the variety of works of mercy for which she found time, in servants' homes, and

reformatories, and refuges for fallen women. In the Infirmary her visits were ever welcome. All this is told in the Memoir to which we have referred, and with what results the day will declare.

The same labour and rewards are common to the great army of workers, district visitors, home missionaries, Bible women, and others, who are engaged in the good warfare against sin, and its consequences, throughout the world. But it was as the friend of the soldier, and of the soldiers' wife and children, that Miss Jessie Veitch—"Mother Veitch," as she came to be called, was best known. It was soon after her appointment as a missionary in the "old town" of Edinburgh, that she was asked by the daughter of a deceased officer to pay occasional visits, during her own temporary absence, to the soldiers' families in the Castle. These visits soon became so popular with the men, as well as with the women and children, that the chaplain and officers requested her to continue them after the lady returned to town. Before long, similar visits were solicited for the cavalry in Piershill barracks and the artillery in Leith Fort, a high tribute at once to the usefulness of her services, and her discretion in observing the regulations and the wishes of the officers in command. So it came to be that she was allowed, as an "assistant chaplain," or lay-helper, to make these duties a part of her missionary work, with the approval of the board of directors. She herself became deeply interested in the welfare of the soldiers and those dependent on them. To the Scottish regiments at Edinburgh, she was as devoted a friend as Miss Robinson, on a larger scale, has been to the soldiers at Portsmouth. She had a happy way of gaining their attention, and winning the respect generally paid to loving, disinterested kindness. Many a young soldier was reminded of truths taught in early days in his home; tender memories were revived; and sometimes the rougher and more thoughtless were brought by the judicious visitor under the influence of steady Christian comrades. She knew gradually, by observing individual character, how to speak "words in season," or to offer the sort of reading suited for each. Good temperance stories or tracts she plentifully supplied, and many she persuaded to become total abstainers, as the shortest and surest way to resist the strong temptations by which they were beset.

As successive regiments occupied the barracks, she became personally acquainted with a large number of non-commissioned officers and men; and she never forgot those in whom she was interested. Letters, and booklets, and friendly remembrances, followed them wherever they went in after years. She must have kept a record of names and addresses, to enable her to attend to so many details, amidst her pressure of daily work.

The letters that came after her death showed the wide influence she had possessed. Here is part of the letter of a soldier's wife: "When she visited me, she was always ready with sympathy in domestic trials, and had also a kind word for the bairns. She never lost an opportunity of speaking to them of the love of Jesus, of the joy of coming to Him while young, and of working

for Him. She seemed to remember everyone's birthday; and her little books and cards were so appropriate. . . . In winter she would bring woollen cuffs, scarfs, and jackets for the little ones. Nor were the mothers forgotten. She was ever ready with a warm wrap of some kind to add to their comfort. She must have practised great self-denial to be so lavish with gifts to her friends. Her great humility often put me to shame. She was always about her Master's business, but found time for sympathy with every one she met who needed it. And she was equally faithful in giving reproof; but she did this with so much tact and tenderness that the culprit could not but feel that she was a true friend."

Many anecdotes might be given to illustrate the variety of her good works, and her acts of kindness. When the troops were going to South Africa, to remote stations, where writing materials could hardly be expected to be purchased, she sent packets of note paper and envelopes for their use. On one occasion a friend met her at the Post Office franking a large parcel to Cairo. One of the soldiers, an amateur artist, had said in a letter that he saw many things he would like to have sketched, from their historical or Biblical interest. So she went to an artist's colourman, and bought the contents of the parcel she was now posting. A few weeks after a grateful letter was received, expressing the great delight

which the thoughtful gift had afforded. For her gifts of clothes, and for the expenses of the tea-parties, and entertainments given at special times, as when one regiment was leaving and another coming to take its place, help was given by ladies, who enabled the good missionary to do what she could not have done unaided; and the speeches and music from willing visitors made many a pleasant evening. Some of these ladies counted it a privilege to accompany Miss Veitch in her visits to the afflicted and sorrowful; and a good training it was for them in works of practical religion. She was in the habit of going to meet soldiers and their wives on their arrival at Edinburgh by train, or at Leith by packet after a deck passage, and comforted them with hot coffee and buns, and cheery words of welcome. In fact it was on an errand of this kind that she got the illness which ended her life. She had heard of a young Scotch corporal of the Royal Horse Artillery, a recent convert, coming from Woolwich, who had to pass the Caledonian Station towards the north on furlough. It was a night in February, and Jessie was there very early in the morning with her hot coffee. The train was detained, and she caught a cold in the tedious waiting that bleak morning from which she did not recover. As her biographer says, "Truly might her epitaph be, 'She lived and died for the British soldier.'" May her name be honoured, and her work be long remembered!

"TO LIVE IS CHRIST."¹

"To me to live is Christ, to die is gain."—*Philippians* i. 21.

SUCH was Paul's experience; such was Paul's hope. The two are closely connected; the one involves the other. Only to him to whom to live is Christ, can death be gain. Happy are we, brethren, if the words of the great Apostle find a responsive echo in our hearts.

"*To live is Christ.*"—Think what the words imply. Christ is my life, and I live Christ. This St. Paul knew had been his case from the day of his memorable conversion. "When," he says, "it pleased God to reveal His Son in me. . . I live; yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me. The life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith—the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me."

St. Paul had realized the truth of the words of the Lord: "I am the Bread of Life. . . This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that a man may eat thereof and not die. . . He that believeth, hath everlasting life. . . I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord, "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

To me to live is Christ. It means: I know whom I have believed; Christ is mine, and I am

Christ's; Christ is the Divine Son who gave Himself up for me, and shed for me His precious blood. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; and when we were enemies Christ died for us. Love so wonderful has drawn out my love to Him, and His promise is fulfilled: if a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Christ in me is the hope of glory; and so to me death is gain.

We have met here to-day with sorrowing hearts; this church is filled with mourners; one who had been dear to us has been taken away in the midst of his years and his work; but we sorrow not at those who have no hope. For we thank God we can say with all confidence of our departed friend: "to him to live was Christ." Faith in Christ, love to Christ, was the spring of all his inner life—the root of all those qualities—all that zeal—all the force and all the tenderness, which drew forth the love and kindled the

¹ Sermon by the Rev. L. Horrett White, D.D., at the service held in St. Saviour's, Fitzroy Square, on occasion of the funeral of Mr. Henry G. Pinn, of the Religious Tract Society.

zeal of others, and which make us feel his loss so much to-day.

"Peace," said Jesus to His disciples, "I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." That he had that peace was the comfort of our friend on his dying bed. It was no vain delusion; for all who knew him well knew that to him to live was Christ. And so, to him, death is gain; gain, not simply because the world's sorrows, pain and weakness have for him ceased for ever. It is gain not simply as regards the past, but as regards the eternal future. He has gone to be with Christ. How much hindered his life in Christ while he was here! How imperfect his communion with his Lord! How many short-comings he had to acknowledge; how many imperfections to deplore! All this has passed away too. His portion now is rest; rest unbroken in the Lord—not the rest of perpetual sleep and dark forgetfulness, in the prospect of which some unbelievers profess to find their comfort, but the rest of him who is safe in the arms of Jesus: whom temptation vexeth not, sin defiles not; whose renewed spirit is for ever with the Lord, triumphant in Christ over evil, perfected in holiness.

This is the blessed hope of everlasting life which takes away the sting from death and lightens the darkness of the grave. The circumstances attending the Christian believer's departure cannot but be painful; there is the pain and the weakness, the grievous partings; earthly expectations disappointed; earthly ties sundered; but there is comfort amidst all. To him to whom life has been Christ, death is gain. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But (II.) when the Apostle said, To me to live is Christ—his words imply not only that Christ was his life, but that he lived Christ. That is Christ's life, which was the source and support of his renewed nature, was outwardly manifest in the character of his daily walk and conversation. It was his constant endeavour to make Christ's life the model of his own, and he did not hesitate to say to others: "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." When we read the Apostle's catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit—the Spirit whereby Christ dwells in the believer's heart—"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance," does he not seem to be telling us about Christ's life? When he gives to the Corinthians his matchless description of the nature and effects of Christian love, does he not seem to be describing to us the character of Christ?

Nor is it possible to study St. Paul's character, as it is incidentally revealed to us in his life and writings, without seeing that there was in him the mind which was in Christ Jesus, and that, though no doubt at a great distance, he followed in His steps. In the faithful discharge of every duty; in his yearning for his brethren's good; in his desire to give to every man his due; in his firmness and boldness in rebuking wrong; in his tender pleading with those he sought to save;

in his forgetfulness of self, and in his burning desire to extend his Master's kingdom—we recognise the consistent follower of Jesus, and acknowledge how true it was, in the most practical sense, that to him to live was Christ.

If a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His, and no one who does not in this life, bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, can truly say, "to me to live is Christ."

"I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . . abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no neither can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from Me ye can do nothing."

The words spoken by the Lord to the little company in the upper room at Jerusalem, on the night on which He was betrayed, have remained to be the heritage of His disciples everywhere; wherever two or three are assembled in His name, by faith they hear His voice; and to many a lonely one, to many a sick and dying one, they have sounded though all the ages since: words so humbling, so helpful, so cheering; humbling—because they remind the believer of his own helplessness apart from Christ; helpful—because they direct him to the Source of strength—"Abide in Me." Cheering—because they are accompanied by the promise and assurance of success—"The same, beareth much fruit."

These words comforted our friend on his dying bed, but they were old familiar words to him; the lesson they taught, had not then to be learnt as a new one; abiding in Christ, he had been able, by His grace, to bring forth much fruit, and the outward tenor of his life had shown that to Him to live was Christ, because he strove to be like Christ.

As one who has been closely associated with him in work for the last fifteen years, I am able to testify from my own experience—which the experience of others in the Religious Tract Society's service, who have known him longer than I have, will abundantly confirm—that he showed all good fidelity to his employers by a consistent discharge of every duty, and a conscientious and scrupulous attention to every detail of his work. To all those who worked with him, he was considerate, helpful and kind. Yet his kindness was not accompanied with weakness; he firmly set his face against all he felt to be wrong, and unworthy of the cause to which his life was devoted, and was anxious that all should attain to the high standard he aimed at himself. And he was what he was because he knew that the servant of the Lord Jesus should be diligent, faithful, punctual, hearty in all his earthly work, doing it as to the Lord and not to men.

And so the confidence reposed in him by the committee: the support which the secretaries felt they could always rely upon from his counsel, and influence, and co-operation: the loving regard in which he was held by all associated with him in work: the presence of so many sorrowing hearts from Paternoster Row, to-day, bear witness, not simply to the fact that he was

upright, just and kind, but that to him to live was Christ.

But I speak in the presence of many others who mourn with us to-day, and who have known and loved him in connection with other work which he was permitted to do for Christ among them. In the parish and congregation, of which this church is the centre, he has been well known, as a zealous lay helper for the last eleven years; in the Sunday school which he superintended; by the teachers whom it was his delight to help; in the church and school and mission room, where he used to minister and speak of Christ; in the vicarage where he was such a familiar guest; in your various parochial gatherings, and in the various branches of your mission work, he will be sorely missed.

The same qualities which made him so valued and so loved in the house of the Religious Tract Society, have called forth your regard and affection too. He worked for Christ and Christ was with him in his work. This is why you think so sadly to-day that the places where his presence was so familiar, will know him no more. That you will never again see his face or grasp his hand on earth. To him to live was Christ.

Yet sorrow not for him, for to him to die is gain. No one would have been more ready to acknowledge than he, that while he strove to follow Christ, and to be in some measure like Paul, after all, his work was but small, marked by imperfection—mingled with sin and weakness. All that is over now, all that hindered likeness to Christ has been removed, and he waits in peace the day when he with all those that have departed this life in His faith and fear shall shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's kingdom. Cherish his memory; follow his faith; consider the end of his conversation. To him to live was Christ; to him to die is gain.

Oh, that when our last hour comes, the testimony may be true of each of us.

But there is a little circle of mourners here to-day, whose grief is of a more special kind. The circle of those who knew him best and were most closely bound to him by the ties of earthly affection and relationship. Into their sorrow, we venture not to intrude. None know better than they, that to the beloved husband, father, brother and friend, whom they have lost, to live was Christ, and even through their tears they are able to feel, however great their sudden loss, that to die is gain; our hearts, are all I know full of sympathy for them; we all I know pray that they may be comforted and supported by His grace which is sufficient even for such who sorrow as they do.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; He is the Lord, He changeth not. Jesus Christ in glory is the same Jesus Christ who lived His life of love on earth. Think of Him at Nain, how He said to the widow, Weep not. Think of Him on His last journey to Jerusalem, how He took little children into His arms and blessed them. Think of Him. He wept by the grave of the friend He was about to raise to life. He changeth not; and He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Then pass, ye mourners, cheerly on
Through prayer unto the tomb;
Still as ye watch life's falling leaf,
Gathering from every loss and grief
Hopes of new spring and endless home.

Then cheerly to your work again,
With hearts new braced and set,
To run untired love's blessed race,
As meet for those who, face to face,
Over the grave their Lord have met.

MY TIRESOME SUNDAY SCHOLAR.

CHAPTER I.



HE was by far the most tiresome boy of all my Sunday-school class, yet I liked him the best. He was remarkably good-looking, I daresay that had something to do with it, though I would not have owned it, even to myself at that time. He had one of those winning faces that could not fail to attract strangers. Every new curate that came to visit the schools, and read

the opening prayer, every lady mayoress who presided over the Christmas tea party, and distributed the annual prizes, was sure to single him out of my group of thick-set, open-mouthed, healthy-checked scholars, and pat his crisp curls saying,

"And how is this little lad getting on?"

Or, "I hope you find this a good boy," etc. etc.

A good boy was exactly what Jones very seldom was. He simply could not sit still! Sometimes I had to turn him out of class, even before lessons began, he was so full of fun and mischief, and so hopelessly inattentive.

And yet there were days which more than rewarded me for my earnest efforts to guide his young steps aright; when it seemed as if the good seed I had so diligently tried to sow, was really beginning to take root and spring up; hopeful days when he would surprise me with some beautiful answer or thoughtful question. He would come in and sit close to me and say: "I'm going to be a good boy to-day, teacher; I've writ my text, and I know my hymn, and I ain't going to be bad any more."

And for the time being at least, he would be as good as his word. His knife would disappear into his pocket, his handkerchief, no longer rolled up into a mouse, was reserved

for its legitimate use. He would avoid knocking down somebody's books every time he moved, and he would walk in the school ranks to the children's service, like a well-behaved English boy, and not like a wild Indian, which I am obliged to confess he very frequently did.

Even at this time Jones had quite a little history of his own.

He had early lost both parents who lived and died in London, and he would soon have drifted into the great army of waifs and strays, had not one of our splendid rescuing societies laid its far-reaching hand upon him, and sent him down, a mere mitc, to board with some respectable fisher-people in Holkstone.

They loved him, with all his heedless ways; and fed him, schooled him, and clothed him, as though he had been their own son; receiving a small sum weekly from the society for his expenses.

His foster-mother, Mrs. Baker, was a remarkably nice woman, and I often used to go and see her, and have a chat about her little charge.

Sometimes she was full of hope; sometimes just the reverse. He was a child you could never be sure of for five minutes together.

He attended my class very regularly for some years, and at the end of that time, I think I really had succeeded in teaching him three or four texts, that he would never forget. One of his especial favourites was: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," but I fear when he put it into practice, his "might," was not always directed exactly as one would wish.

When he was about eleven years old, to his great delight, he was admitted into the choir. I had a trying time with him the Sunday I first heard the great and all-engrossing news. His quicksilver temperament evinced even a greater antipathy to quiet than usual, and it was a forlorn hope to attempt to fix his attention on the lesson from the gospel for the day. I was quickly made the recipient of his confidence; and his brown eyes fairly blazed with excitement, as he poured forth the account of his success with the organist in one unceasing rattle, unadorned by any stops, and ending with a little burst of affectionate superiority.

"Don't you wish you was joining too, teacher?"

So it was all settled, and he was to enter as a probationer for three months. His final installation, like that of the other boys who aspired to wearing the white, depended on his behaviour both in and out of church during the first quarter.

I watched him anxiously whenever I went to five o'clock evensong, and it was a pleasant sight to me to see him sitting among the choir-boys in his little white surplice, and to get a bright smile from him as he passed me on his way to the stalls.

He tried hard to be such a good boy for some time, but, alas! he had no stability.

A day came when he got into sad trouble. It was the old, old story from Eve downwards. How is it that apples seem particularly destined to lead us into temptation?

They were Alfred Jones' undoing, as they have been the undoing of many a one since our first mother. He wandered literally from the right path on his way to school that bright summer's afternoon, and though he thought he had got off scathless with his ill-gotten booty, his evil deed reached his school-master's ears.

"Alfred Jones, leave the school, and never come back. We do not want a thief here," said the stern voice of Mr. Wilson, the head-master, as our hero slipped in a little late, and was taking his seat more quietly than usual.

A dead silence followed these terrible words. Even the busy hum of two hundred boys was hushed till you could hear a pin drop! Jones turned red and white.

School discipline was strong, even in that turbulent spirit,

and he did not attempt to question or excuse himself. It seemed to his guilty ears like the accusing voice of an angel. He could not possibly conceive that in such an incredibly short time, any human agent had put Mr. Wilson in possession of the fact of his having broken into a private garden, and stolen some of the rich ripe fruit which was even now bulging out of his pockets. Hot tears of fear and shame sprang to his eyes. Something in his throat seemed to choke him, and his heart thumped so loud that he thought every one must have heard it, as he marched down the long school-room, snatched his old cap from the peg, and reached the door, amid the unnatural and awful silence of his school-mates. Then he turned and fled.

A thief! a thief! Was he really a thief? The dreadful words seemed to burn themselves into his brain! Where should he go? What should he do? Run away, ah, yes! but where? He had always heard of people in trouble going to London. He would go there too. It did not matter to him in his present state of mind that London was nearly sixty miles off, and that he did not even know which road to take. Terrified, disgraced, and afraid to go home and tell his "mother," as he always called Mrs. Baker, Jones took the coward's course and fled. Over the chalk-hills, across sweet-smelling fields, down through the hazel-copse, where the nuts were beginning to turn brown, past cosy little cottages, where happier children than he were sitting playing in the sun, miles and miles into the country, never stopping to take breath, or to change his mind. Bees were humming, birds singing, poppies glowing in the sun; "all things bright and beautiful," as the children's hymn says, were around him. In the distance the sea lay smiling, at his feet, the golden corn, but he was far too miserable to see anything, as he hurried along with sin upon him, and shame behind him. Even a blackbird's nest in the hedge was passed unheeded by.

The summer's day wore into night, and still found the frightened boy on the road, not knowing where he was, or where he was going; caring only to get far away from the town, where he feared he would be seized by the police, and sent to prison, and ashamed to go back and confess his sin to his foster-parents, and ask them to protect him, forgetting in his own absorbing terror, the fear and anxiety he was bringing on those who loved him by thus running away from home.

Oh, boys and girls, if you would only think more of father and mother, and less of self, how much misery and trouble might be spared in this sad world!

Talks to the Boys.

OUR BODIES.

"Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."—*Phil. i. 20.*

JACK HARBERD worked at a very large printing-office, where there were long rooms with many printing machines all down both sides in rows. Up in the ceiling was a long steel rod, or shaft, with wheels, called riggers upon it, always going round—something like the machinery at the hairdresser's but of course much bigger and stronger. From this steel rod there came a leather band down to each of the printing machines, and when the band was slipped on to a certain wheel of a machine it set it going, so that it began to print. The rod and wheels were kept in motion by powerful engines down in the basement of the office.

Each printing machine had a man to attend to it, to clean it, ink it, supply it with paper, and put in the frames of type, and one day, just in the very busiest time, one of the men was taken ill and had to leave off work. It was very tiresome, no one could be found to take his place, every one was so busy. So the foreman sent for Harberd and said, "Look here, my boy, I'm going to give you the charge of this machine. I think you're a steady, careful lad, and we'll see what you can do. Remember these machines are very valuable, they cost a lot of money; you must keep it in perfect working order, not a nut loose anywhere, or else, when you slip the band and set it going, there will probably be a smash."

Wasn't Jack delighted! Didn't he feel proud! First of all he set to work to examine every part for himself and see it was all right. A printing machine has a great many different parts that must be looked to. There are the rollers that ink the type every time it comes sliding back; there is the great slab on which the ink is put, and on which it must continually be evenly distributed, and just the proper thickness; there are the little clips to grip the paper and hold it while it is printed; and the long arms which seize it and neatly place it on one side when it is done. Every wheel and roller and crank must be properly oiled to make it run easily, and yet there mustn't be a single spot of oil dropped about to soil the clean white paper. The frame of type must be evenly placed, or else the printing will all be crooked and will not fit the paper; and all the little handles and nuts must be carefully looked to, however little use they seem, for very often one thing wrong will spoil the whole printing.

Last of all the handle is pulled which slips on the leather band, and then "clackety-bang, clackety-bang," the work has begun, and Jack is busy "feeding" the sheets into the proper place to be printed off, one after another, ready to be dried, pressed, cut and folded.

Do you know you have got charge of a wonderful machine! Much more wonderful than any printing machine, and much more delicate. Every part of it is of great use, and very valuable. No amount of money could buy another if you spoilt it, and it is not your own—you are only the boy that is put in charge of it to use it. Can you guess what it is I mean? Your body.

Yes, though you may be quite a little boy perhaps, God has given you, to take care of and to use for Him, one of the most wonderful and beautiful things He ever made, and it is your own body. It belongs to Him, for "He hath made us, and we are His." But He has lent it to you, and He says you are to be very very careful with it, to keep it very clean and pure, never to do anything wrong with any part of it, but let hands and feet and voice and head be all working for Jesus.

Jack Harberd was only allowed to manage the printing machine for a little time, while the man was away ill; but you have got to manage your body all the rest of your life. You can make it work or let it be idle, just whichever you please; you can keep it in order, and make it do whatever you want it to, by slipping on God's great strong band of Love, which is always moving and sets it going at once; or you can let it all get out of order, so that it works badly, and won't do what you want it to, but makes ugly marks, crooked lines, and dirty spots on the clean new days as they keep on coming one after the other.

Jack Harberd was only allowed to print just the words into which his type was set, though of course any printing machine can print bad words and wicked books just as much as good ones. It will print whatever words the printer puts into it, in blue ink or black or red, just as he wishes. And just so you can do anything you like with your body—your lips will say just whatever you tell them to,

perhaps sing beautiful hymns on Sunday, or say horrid wicked words on Monday; your face may be bright, cheerful, loving, or scowling, sullen, angry, just as you make it; your heart may be full of holy thoughts, or it may be spiteful, deceitful, filthy; your hands, your feet, your eyes, your ears, may be all helping to do good deeds, to read good books, to hear good words, or they may all be working for Satan—just as you let them. It depends upon you.

Now what are you doing every day with this wonderful body that God has lent you? Using it for Satan? Oh, I would rather see it smashed up altogether and killed than used for evil. (8. Matt. xviii. 8, 9.) Do you want to use it for God? Listen then—Jesus had a body just like yours; see how He used His, and that will show you what to do with yours. Wasn't it always for gentle deeds, kind words, and holy thought?

Consecrate your body to the service of God.

SYDNEY MILLEDGE.

QUESTIONS ON THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—II.

1. In what public transaction do we first find Paul taking part?
2. What was the part that he took?
3. It is possible that he was among those who disputed with Stephen. Show this.
4. In what way did he follow up the death of Stephen?
5. To what city and with what authority did he go afterwards?
6. Find three somewhat different accounts of what appeared to him on his way.
7. Where did he stay in Damascus?
8. How was he relieved from his blindness?
9. What description is given of him at this time?
10. How did the Jews in Damascus behave to him afterwards?
11. How did he escape from them?
12. Who was Aretas?
13. In Acts ix. 19, "certain days" are mentioned. Show that this was probably three years, and describe how the period was filled up.
14. What kind office did Barnabas perform for him, and how does it agree with the meaning of his name?

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ELLIPSIS EXERCISE.

NO. I.—p. 80.

To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—1 Sam. xv. 22.

KEY TO THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—I.—p. 112.

(1.) Acts xxii. 9; (2.) xxi. 39; (3.) xxii. 28; (4.) xvi. 37, xxii. 25; xxv. 11; (5.) xxi. 37; xxii. 2; (6.) xvii. 28; Titus i. 12; (7.) Acts xviii. 2, 3; (8.) xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9; (9.) Acts xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 6; (10.) Acts xxii. 3; (11.) Gal. i. 14; (12.) Acts vii. 58; Phil. iii. 5; 1 Sam. ix. 1, 2.