

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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



DUNNOTAR CASTLE.

“Founded upon a Rock.”

DASH on! Dash on! Rough sea, in all thy might,¹
And angry beat thyself 'gainst yonder height.
Why dost thou not, with one majestic sweep,
O'erwhelm Dunnotar's age-worn keep?
What! Can'st thou not? Methinks thou hast the will.
Thou crashest on: Thou art not ever still.
Thou hast the will; but not the power, proud sea;
Thy fretful waves are bound by God's decree.
Thou canst not forward press one inch thy way,
When His Almighty word has bid thee stay.
Thou art a giant but in chaffing chains;
And so Dunnotar's Castle still remains.

But other waves than thine, rebellious sea,
Are, like a hound, leashed in by God's decree;
The mighty waves of sorrow or despair,
Of unbelief, of sin, of pride or care;
These 'gainst the child of God are fiercely cast,
In hope that he may be o'erwhelmed at last.
But those relentless waves shall ne'er prevail,
For, founded on a rock, he cannot fail.
And there remain unshaken, safe, and fast,
The "word"² of promise now, the crown at last.³
No waves can overwhelm if Jesus say:—
“Be still, for here thy billows proud must stay.”

JOHN P. HOBSON, M.A.

TOM HERON OF SAX.

A STORY OF REVIVAL TIMES.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE PROSELYTE.

ONE bright cold day early in March, when the farmers were bestirring themselves upon the land, and the birds beginning to find their voices again after the long winter of the north, the village of Sax was more or less electrified by the news that Tom Heron had returned at last, and was to be seen sharpening harrows and shoeing horses within the precincts of his uncle's forge.

For nearly five months nothing whatever had been heard of Tom. If he had written to his uncle (which was most improbable) Samson had not mentioned the matter to anybody. Not a soul in the place had the least idea where he had been, or what had kept him away for such an unwontedly long period; but the news of his return spread like wildfire, and before the first morning had passed, Luke Crowder, together with some half-dozen of his old boon companions had gathered together to go to the forge and give him a welcome back.

Tom was shoeing a troublesome young horse when his quondam friends arrived upon the scene, and it had never been his way at any time to neglect the task in hand for idle gossip with his own comrades. It therefore surprised no one that he responded to the noisy greetings bestowed upon him with nothing more than a brief nod, and concentrated his attention upon the animal under his hands, fitting, paring, and nailing with all his habitual skill and force of muscle, speaking gently and firmly to the fidgety creature,

and proving that his hands had not lost their cunning during his long absence.

His friends lounged round the open shed, and watched him with approval. They were all delighted to have Tom back amongst them again. Luke was giving out that they should all have an invitation to the Red Dragon that very evening, and that they would “make a night of it” together in honour of Tom's return. The interest in this prospect (for the carouse was to be at the expense of Luke's father) attracted the attention of the group, and for the moment drew it away from Tom, who continued busily driving in his nails, whilst his companions chatted and swore in their customary way, seldom finishing a sentence without letting fall some profane expression or blasphemous word. There was considerable curiosity in the minds of the youths to know how Tom would enjoy the prospect of seeing his mother installed as mistress of the Red Dragon. Luke's mother had died during the previous year, and rather to the surprise of the whole community, Nat had commenced paying serious attentions to Jenny Heron very soon after her remarkable seizure on the occasion of Whitefield's sermon near Sax. It appeared as though the prospect of a comfortable home and assured income had acted beneficially upon the woman. She had soon forgotten her distress of mind and perturbation of spirit, and after a small space of hesitation, when she seemed

² Eph. vi. 17.

³ During the troublous time of the Stuarts the Scotch Rogalia (a crown, sceptre, and sword of state) were lodged at Dunnotar Castle for security.

¹ Dunnotar Castle stands on a rock washed on three sides by the sea; while the fourth side is cleft by a deep chasm.

undecided as to whether she would turn Methodist in good earnest, or marry Nat the publican, she had finally decided upon the latter course, and the wedding had been duly celebrated upon New Year's Day. Jenny had always been a good-looking woman, though of late years her wild irregular life had told unfavourably upon her appearance. A few weeks of life at the Red Dragon had improved her wonderfully, and she already wore something of the buxom rosiness which was considered appropriate to the wife of the host. Blind Molly had not accompanied her mother. Samson had offered to keep the child with him, and the offer had been accepted. Tom had returned to find his old home shut up, but no other person had taken the place, nor was the scanty furniture he had placed in it removed. It was evident by the present look of the cottage that he intended living there once more. Perhaps Molly, who for all her blindness was a helpful little maiden, would be able to keep house for him if he desired to settle for a time.

Whilst his friends stood engrossed in conversation just outside, Tom finished the task in hand, and suddenly lifted himself up. No one was at that moment regarding him. Perhaps it would take a keener eye than any of those drink-dulled youths possessed to perceive the subtle change that had come over the blacksmith during his five months' absence. As he listened to the coarse profanity of the talk, recognising with a start of shame that it was just in this vein he himself had once spoken—only that he always surpassed his comrades in the force of his oaths and the recklessness of his blasphemy—a change passed over his face, the features seemed to sharpen, the eyes flashed strangely in their deep caverns. His face was a good deal sunken, as though with some kind of physical or mental strain; yet he did not appear in any way enfeebled or weakened, and his voice rang out clear and strong as he suddenly advanced upon his companions.

"Swear not at all," he said, "for heaven is God's throne, and earth is His footstool; and for every idle word which we speak we shall one day be called upon to give account."

A roar of laughter greeted these words. To hear Tom mimicking the Methodist preacher was rich in the extreme. Luke Crowder slapped him delightedly upon the back.

"Tom, old man, it is good to have you back. Why, bless you, my boy, you bring new life with you. You cannot guess what a wretched hole this has been since you left it. If we do not all get merrily drunk to-night in honour of your return, call me a liar."

But Tom withdrew himself from the friendly greetings of his companions, all interlarded as they were with words which cannot be written in these pages; and instead of joining in the laugh which Luke's words had raised, and which his own frowning severity increased (for it was looked upon as a bit of fine acting on old Tom's part), he stood very still and upright until there was silence again, and then he spoke in short incisive sentences.

"My—friends, as I would fain call you still, only

that I may not call them friends who are at open enmity with the Master I serve—I beseech you leave off this vile and wicked habit of evil and profane swearing. It sears the conscience like a hot iron, and crucifies afresh the Lord of Glory—putting Him to an open shame. Cease to do evil—learn to do well. I tell you, friends—that you are walking blindfold into the abyss of perdition. Your souls are lost eternally if you turn not aside from your evil ways. Turn, then, and repent, and do the thing that is right, for that alone can bring a man peace at the last."

Gaping, astonished, unspeakably disgusted, the little knot of men fell back a pace, and stood staring upon Tom with wide-open eyes and gaping mouths. Then Michael Portway—the most decent and respectable of the lot, whose mother had always held him back from any very wild conduct or open profanity, ventured to put a question or two, to discover if this new phase were anything but a trick on the part of the young smith, who had ever been the leading spirit in anything evil or reckless. But Tom's stern uncompromising answers soon left no doubt as to that, and the rebuked and astonished youths slunk away muttering ugly words, more disappointed and disgusted than they well knew how to express.

The sound of voices had drawn Samson from the forge itself towards the open shed where the horses were shod, and he heard the whole of the brief dialogue which had caused Tom's visitors to slink away in deep disgust. When they had gone, the elder man came forth and laid a hand on Tom's arm, saying in kindly tones:

"Have a care, lad, that thou dost not needlessly affront those who would gladly be thy friends."

"I may not hold friendly commune with those who blaspheme the name of my Saviour with every breath they draw," answered Tom quickly.

"But thou mayest speak them gently and kindly, I trust, remembering that not long since thou wert as one of them thyself."

"Ay, there is the bitterness, the terrible anguish of my life, which nothing can ever take away. I was worse than any of them—the chief of sinners, Must I not then be tenfold more forward to rebuke those same sins, seeing how I led them forward in my unconverted days?"

"Ay, ay, lad, I read thy meaning. Thou wouldest make amends for the past by eager service in the future. But thou must not forget that it is not by harsh rebukes that thou wilt win thy way and lead thy comrades onward. Thou must have patience; thou must remember how hard these things are to be understood. Thinkest thou that thou wouldest have been thus won had men done naught but set before thee the evil of thy ways, had done naught but rebuke and condemn thee?"

"It was rebukes that broke my heart," cried Tom, his dark eyes flashing strangely; "it was seeing myself walking over forward to hell-fire that caused me to pause, to turn away in fear, to inquire what I might do to be saved. What good to preach the gospel of the Crucified One's love to men who blaspheme His holy name each time they open their lips? Nay, first show them

the need for a Saviour. Show them the host of hell—the living fires, the undying worm; then, perchance, but not till then, will they strive to flee from the wrath to come. Conviction of sin must first come; perchance, then, it may be followed by pardon and peace.”

Samson passed his hand across his face with something of a puzzled expression. He was not altogether ignorant of the phrases which were becoming gradually to be almost like the catch-words of a party; but he had been born and bred in a different school, and, whilst respecting genuine earnestness whenever he was convinced of it, he was by no means certain that Tom's teachers had been entirely successful with this new disciple of theirs. He was genuinely rejoiced to see the change effected in Tom's character and manner of life, but he was considerably puzzled by a good deal that he saw in his headstrong nephew. It was characteristic of him to “go the whole hog,” as the modern phrase is: but zeal is all the better for being tempered with discretion.

“Thee must remember, lad, that all folks are not cut to one pattern,” he said, “some may want driving and skeering a bit: but there be others as can only be led by gentler ways. I'm no hand at talking of such things myself: but it do seem to me as it can never be wrong to speak first of the love of the Lord. I think, if I were He, I would sooner have folks coming to me because I'd bidden them love me and come to me, than because they were skeered out of their lives at the thought of going to hell-fire. It seems to me that some of your Methodist friends (of whom I would speak with all respect) go about, as we plain folks say, putting the cart before the horse: but, maybe, they know best.”

“Ay, indeed, they do know best,” cried Tom with eager impetuosity, his face darkening as he heard even this small criticism upon the method of his teachers. “Uncle, how can thee know? What hast thou ever learnt? What do any of us know here in Sax? Look round, and what do we see? From the great house yonder down to the lowest cabin, all the same story, drinking, swearing, gaming, the Sabbaths profaned by cruel and impious sports, men spending all their superfluity upon their own vile appetites—rioting by day and night, no shepherd to feed them, no guiding hand to lead them, none to point out how all alike are hurrying on to the pit of destruction. Oh, if thee had been with me in York thee would speak very differently. What had we there? Huge gatherings Sabbath by Sabbath of hungry souls craving the word of life. Strong men falling down as helpless as babes when conviction of sin pierced them through and through. Why, upon the blessed day when Mr. Wesley himself came amongst us his voice at length could scarce be heard for the groans and cries of those pierced to the heart by his words: and again and again he had to stop to pray for this soul or that, ere they could be set free from the bondage of Satan. And when thus freed, oh, the joy, the blessedness, the thanksgiving! And I remained to see hundreds gathered to the fold, all of one heart and one

mind, meeting often together for prayer and praise, following in all things the steps of their great leader, fasting oft, denying themselves all but the bare necessities of life that all else they had might be given to the poor; the women modestly arrayed—however rich in this world's goods—in plain and sad coloured garments, the men forswearing every indulgence, and walking soberly and righteously before the Lord. And yet thou strivest to set thine own opinion above that of these holy men from the midst of whom I come! Verily, uncle, methinks that thou must be in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. What was done for me by thee when I was so long with thee? If thou hadst the word of life and salvation, why didst thou keep it back from me?”

Samson said no more. Argument was not his forte. He scratched his head with an air of perplexity, and suggested that they should go in to dinner. To dinner they went, but Tom only swallowed a hunch of dry bread, washing it down with a draught of cold water, refusing almost fiercely the glass of home-brewed ale his uncle would have pressed upon him. So soon as he had bolted this meagre repast, he retired to his own cottage, where he had already elected to take up his abode; and his uncle was very sure that he had locked himself in there to read his Bible and indulge in prayer.

The days following were days of considerable perplexity to the worthy Samson, and of seething excitement to the whole of Sax.

Tom was back amongst them—but Tom was a Methodist! The thing seemed too incongruous to be true, and the whole place, as Glegg had it, was set by the ears. Upon the first Sunday following his return, Tom tramped off to Hownston, to join a Methodist service there early in the day; and in the afternoon, when the youths of the village met upon the green just outside the place to indulge in the favourite sport of baiting a young bull belonging to Nat Crowder, who found the sport conducive to the after-sale of liquor—behold, there was Tom, Bible in hand, standing upon an eminence in the centre of the green—close to the stake to which the bull was habitually tied. As soon as his old comrades appeared, he commenced reading from the Scriptures the most hotly denunciatory passages to be found there, and it was very plain he intended to keep his position: while no one altogether cared for the task of attempting to dislodge him from the vantage ground he had taken up. In old days it had always been reported with pride that Tom could fell an ox with a blow of his fist; and although there was a tradition to the effect that Methodists did not fight, nobody wanted to run the risk of receiving a knock-down blow from the blacksmith's arm. Then the novelty of the entertainment drew many round him to listen; and though he did not attempt to do more than read, and afterwards to sing a hymn, he kept a small and attentive congregation about him all the time, and those who held the bull were forced presently to take the beast home unbaited.

But proceedings such as this were so unheard of in Sax as to arouse the keenest excitement.

"If Madam were at home we should soon see things put down with a high hand," said Glegg, shaking his head wisely: "young Tom had better take care how he goes on. Neither Madam nor yet the Squire will put up with this sort o' thing. If he dare try it agin next Sunday, I'll go and argify with un myself. I'll tell un what I think of boys as has been a disgrace to an honest village, going and setting themselves up as preachers and teachers. I'll sen un home with a flea in his ear, that I will."

So spoke Glegg; and, accordingly, the next Sunday was looked forward to as eagerly as though some prize cock-fight were to be witnessed that day.

Of course the return of the prodigal, and the extraordinary change in him, were duly reported to Mr. Latham, who took an early opportunity of calling upon this remarkable parishioner of his, to see if at this crisis of his life he could be of any assistance to him.

His call was made after working hours, when Tom was likely to be at home in his cottage: but when the clergyman knocked at the door, it was opened by blind Molly, who said that her brother had shut himself up, as was now usual with him on his return from the forge, in his own room; and she was plainly afraid of disturbing him.

Mr. Latham sat down and talked to the child. He was glad to find that Tom was still kind and gentle to her always, though she was a good deal perplexed and a little distressed because he told her almost every day, that until she was converted, she could not hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that she could not be converted until she had been convinced of sin. Little Molly, however had received other teaching from Mr. Latham and the Lady of Ernscliff, and though sometimes perplexed by Tom's words and arguments, was not seriously disturbed, nor afraid that Jesus would refuse her love because she had never felt absolutely weighed to the ground by the sense of her sins. She could not argue with Tom, who was very vehement if contradicted, but it was a relief to her to speak out freely to Mr. Latham; and he stroked her soft curly hair, and bid her never doubt the love of the Good Shepherd, who gathered the lambs with His arm and carried them in His bosom, and had said in His own gracious and tender words—too clear to be misunderstood: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out," without prescribing any special method by which that soul should come.

"The wish to come is a sign of faith," said the clergyman smiling, "for why should we wish to do so if we had not belief in our Saviour? and if we know Him as our Redeemer, we cannot approach without a sense of humble penitence for the sins which have kept us away, or have clouded our communion with Him. You, my dear child, have felt all this, I know. Fear not but that Christ looks upon the heart, and draws each according to His will. Some, it may be, have need to fall before Him in deepest affliction and abasement: but sure it is not for us to strive to keep away those who approach with greater confidence,

if this confidence be the humble trust of a little child. Truth, my little girl, is found in every creed, in every section of God's holy Catholic Church, and let us respect and honour that truth wherever we see it, giving it all credence and reverence, even though in our hearts we know that it is but a part of a great and mysterious whole. And now go and ask your brother if he will give me speech for a few minutes, and run you to your good uncle's. I am glad you still remain beneath his roof, though it is well you spend half your time with your brother likewise."

Molly glided from the room and up the staircase where voices were presently heard in confabulation. Then she returned with downcast mien and faltering speech.

"I pray your pardon, sir, but Tom will not come down. These hours he gives to prayer and the study of the Bible. He will not be interrupted for anybody," he says.

"I am glad he is so well occupied," answered Mr. Latham mildly: "I should be pleased if I could in any way assist him in his studies. Perhaps another time I may be more fortunate."

Molly coloured vividly as she replied:

"That is what I said, that you would help him better than anybody, but—but—"

"Well, my child, do not be afraid to speak."

"But he said he had better teachers, and wanted no help from the clergy. He bid me ask you not to come again, not to trouble him by—oh, pardon me, sir—by your false doctrine. Poor Tom does not understand. He—"

"My child, the fault is less with him than with us," answered Mr. Latham gently and sorrowfully: "it is but too true that we have been faithless shepherds, blind leaders of the blind, and we are but reaping what we have sown. In time, please God, we shall recover our hold over our flock: but for the present we must wait in patience and faith. Do not weep, little one; you have much to be thankful for in the conversion of your brother. Some day, perhaps, he will learn to look upon me as a friend instead of a foe."

Had the Lady of Ernscliff heard of this repulse of the curate, Tom wondered, when, two days later, she reined in her horse at the forge to speak a few kind words to the young smith, who coloured crimson as he came forward to return her greeting. There was something in the grave sweetness of her face and the questioning glance of her clear eyes that was not all approval; yet her words were very kind, and they brought a throb of gladness to Tom's heart. After she had passed he upraised himself for that throb, and remembered that this fair woman had worn a rich gold clasp to her riding-hood, and that her habit was of velvet, which ill-beseemed those who would follow the footsteps of the saints: and he withdrew himself more and more from the companionship of others, and gave himself to fasting and prayer, that he might be cleansed from every sinful passion and every unholy thought.

The Sunday encounter between Tom and Glegg was exciting enough to satisfy all listeners. Glegg

took the line of biting sarcasm against upstarts and false preachers: Tom that of vehement denunciation of faithless shepherds and reckless evil-livers. Neither paid great attention to the arguments of the other, but spoke in turns, launching anathemas and neither giving nor asking quarter. The battle raged for an hour. Each disputant believed he had come off victorious, and public opinion in the village was divided on the point. As Tom strode away, hot and fierce from the encounter, he was stopped by the

bailiff of Rookwood, who had always been well disposed towards him.

"Have a care, young man," he said, "for Madam and the family will be home very shortly, and if you wish to stay here in Sax, you will have to turn over a new leaf. Take my word for it, Madam will have no Methodists on the estate. You will have to give up either your living or your new notions," and with a kindly nod the man strode away without waiting to hear Tom's reply.

AMERICAN TRANSLATORS OF DEVOTIONAL POETRY.

A CELEBRATED American preacher has, within late years, given an interesting and forcible interpretation of the text: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Prov. xx. 27). Every lighted candle, he says, is a manifestation-point for that fire which so fitly symbolises the Spirit of God. "Here is the universe, full of the diffused fire of divinity. Men feel it in the air, as they feel an intense heat which has not broken into a blaze. This is the meaning of a great deal of the unexplained mysterious awfulness of life, of which they who are very much in its power are often only half aware. It is the sense of God, felt but unseen, like an atmosphere burdened with heat that does not burst out into fire."

The man of eminent piety arises among his fellows: and—to further quote:—"In an instant it is as if the heated room had found some sensitive, inflammable point where it could kindle to a blaze. The vague oppressiveness of God's felt presence becomes clear and definite. The fitfulness of the impression of divinity is steadied into permanence. The mystery changes its character, and is a mystery of light and not of darkness. The fire of the Lord has found the candle of the Lord, and burns clear and steady."

Surely this vivid and beautiful interpretation of the text may be adapted to the religious poet. For he, too, is, and in a special sense, "The candle of the Lord." He gives luminous and definite expression to that which, before his coming, has been diffused and vague, lacking the point of concentration. His soul, if it be pure and ardent, manifests in steady flame of "words that burn," something which might erst be compared to heat brooding over the spiritual atmosphere. He does not create the thoughts he utters, any more than the candle creates the flame, but he embodies, concentrates, exhibits, that which already existed in scattered indefiniteness before he gave it expression.

Down through the centuries religious thought and aspiration have, from time to time, kindled into a definite and steady point of light by the means of one who in this sense has been a "candle of the Lord." The candle in itself, without the flame, is a cold, dull thing. So there

is often imperfection, often error, in the religious poet. This only has been needful, that there should be submission on the part of the lower nature to the mighty truths it tries to express, and fitness to utter and obey them "as the docile wax obeys the flame."

Therefore, in order to recognise that a religious poet has been, or is, a true "Candle of the Lord" it is not necessary to declare that every point of his religious belief has been exactly in accord with the orthodoxy of to-day. This alone is needful:—that he should have caught a spark of the Divine flame, and let it burn before the eyes of men; and this he could not do, unless there were the gift to his soul of the true light and fire from heaven.

This thought lends an interest to the work of all devout poets, though there may have been much error in their creed. And just because there have been so many sweet singers through the centuries whose work, in its way, was good and beautiful, the translator of that work confers a benefit on modern Christianity. Thus, in the slight, and of necessity, cursory glance which we have taken of American devotional poetry, it does not seem right to ignore the translator, whose work in the sister country has been of no mean order.

To America, indeed, we owe some of the most beautiful translations that enter into our religious worship of to-day.

And first in order should come the translators of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, whom Luther called "the best monk who ever lived." It may not be inopportune to quote a verse or two from the American poetess, Phœbe Cary, describing him as he walked with his brother monks: "The sweetest soul among them all."

And oft, as silence on them fell,
He would pause and listen and whisper low,
"There is One who waits for me in my cell;
I hear Him calling and I must go!"

No charm of human fellowship,
His soul from his dearest love can bind,
With a "*Jesu dulcis*" on his lip,
He leaves all else that is sweet behind.

The only hand that he longs to take,
Pierced, from the Cross is reaching down,
And the head he loves, for his dear sake,
Was wounded once with a thorny crown.

The "*Salve caput cruentatum*" of St. Bernard is well known to English readers by the version beginning, "O Sacred Head, once wounded."

This version is from the pen of Dr. J. W. Alexander, who was born at Hopewell, Virginia, in 1804, and died in 1859. He was a successful translator of German hymns, and took this from the German version of Paul Gerhardt written in 1659. It is very remarkable that the Latin composition of a mediæval Catholic monk should have passed into the German of a Lutheran pastor, and again into the English of an American Presbyterian, expressing with equal force through seven centuries, in three languages, and in the name of three confessions, the dying love of the Saviour and the gratitude of the human heart to Him. Surely this strengthens what has just been said as to the universal adaptability of the religious poet.

There is another American version of this "Passion Hymn" by the Rev. S. M. Jackson, which is said to adhere more closely to the original than that by Dr. Alexander.

But the most successful American translator of St. Bernard is Dr. Ray Palmer, well known to English Christians by the favourite hymn: "My faith looks up to Thee."

From his pen we have the exquisite and well-known version of St. Bernard's "*Jesu, dulcedo cordium*," beginning:

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

It is significant that the utterances of this Cistercian monk in the twelfth century are among the dearest expressions of Protestant hearts to-day.

Another translation of Dr. Palmer's, from the Latin of an unknown author, is perhaps less familiar—"Cor meum Tibi dedo, Jesu dulcissime."

I give my heart to Thee,
O Jesus most desired!
And heart for heart the gift shall be,
For Thou my soul hast fired.
Thou hearts alone would'st move,
Thou only hearts dost love.
I would love Thee as Thou lov'st me,
O Jesus most desired!

The fervour of these utterances burns on through the centuries with steady flame. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."

The "*Veni Sancte Spiritus*" of Robert II. of France, has also been translated by Dr. Palmer. Some of the verses are of great beauty.

Come, tenderest Friend and best!
Our most delightful Guest,
With soothing power.
Rest, which the weary know,
Shade, 'mid the noontide glow,
Peace, when deep griefs o'erflow,
Cheer us this hour!

Dr. Palmer is well known as a writer of original hymns, some of which vie in fervour of devotional feeling with the translations already quoted.

English readers are indebted to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for the only complete translation of Dante executed by an American. That mighty expression of mediæval faith, "the voice of ten silent centuries," finds accurate interpretation in Longfellow's work, respecting which his own words are worthy of quotation. They show the spirit of reverent sympathy in which he approached his task.

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door,
A labourer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and, with reverent feet,
Enter and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er.
Far off the noises of the world retreat,
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate,
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

Longfellow's translation of Dante is just such a help as English students of the difficult original require, for he is literal before everything, and may be trusted absolutely as a guide.

But not only in this vast work does he appear to advantage as a sympathetic and accurate translator of religious poetry; he has rendered sundry shorter poems into charming English verse. Some from the Spanish of Lope de Vega are very beautiful. One is a poem quoted below, called "To-Morrow." It recalls the well-known picture by Holman Hunt, "Christ the Light of the World."

Lord, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
Thou didst seek after me—that Thou didst wait,
Wet with unhealthy dew, before my gate,
And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?
O strange delusion!—that I did not greet
Thy blest approach, and oh! to heaven how lost,
If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon Thy feet!
How oft my guardian angel gently cried,
"Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
How He persists to knock and wait for thee!"
And oh! how often to that voice of sorrow,
"To-morrow we will open," I replied;
And when the morrow came I answered still, "To-morrow!"

"The Children of the Lord's Supper" from the Swedish of Bishop Tegnér, is another instance of skilled and graceful translation.

Almost the earliest Christian hymn on record has been translated by an American. It was written by Clement of Alexandria nearly seventeen centuries ago, and in the words of the Rev. Henry Martyn Dexter, D.D., a Congregationalist

minister and editor, it is familiar to many in connection with anniversary services.

Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth,
Through devious ways :
Christ our triumphant King,
We come Thy name to sing,
Hither our children bring,
To shout Thy praise.

While parents and teachers of modern Sunday scholars sing this hymn, it is difficult to realise that it came from a Greek original composed in the earliest ages of the Church !

The "Stabat Mater," the sublime hymn of the Middle Ages, has been well translated by Erastus C. Benedict, LL.D., of New York.

To turn to comparatively modern times, the German language offers a rich field for the translator of devout poetry ; and in this field Americans have been indefatigable workers.

Dr. Hedge, appointed Professor of German Literature at Harvard in 1872, has done good service in this direction, and has produced an excellent version of Luther's hymn : "A Mighty Fortress is our God !" Dr. Alexander has been already mentioned as a successful translator from this language. Dr. Bethune, Rev. Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham, Dr. J. F. Clarke, can only be enumerated. The Rev. C. T. Brooks, of Newport, Rhode Island, excels in the rendering of quaint Christian legends from German into English, and has done original work of this description. The "Amen of the Stones," a story of the Venerable Bede, from Kosegarten, is worthy of note, and "The Lost Church," by Uhland, seems to convey much of that poet's mystic sweetness. It tells a weird story of a worshipper absorbed in devout meditation in a forest, who hears the sound of a phantom bell, and is caught up to the visionary Church on high.

Far in the deep and lonely wood,—
So deep and still and lonely all,
Nought breaks the silent solitude
Save chirp of bird or light leaf's fall,—
At times when all is hushed, the ear
Catches a low and solemn knell,
Born on the breezes, sweet and clear,
As from some near unearthly bell.

I heard the bell with solemn swing
Thrill out through all the trembling tower,
No hand of mortal drew the string,
The tongue was swayed by heavenly power.
Wild rapture 'whelmed me like a flood,
A tempest wafted me on high ;
Till in that lofty dome I stood
With trembling joy, in upper sky.

What peerless visions met my eye,
Still rapt in ecstasy profound !—
What blessed music floated by,
Holier than trump, than organ's sound !—
In vain my feeble tongue would tell ;
Let him whose bosom yearns to know,
Go listen in the lonely dell
To that sweet pealing, wild and low.

William Cullen Bryant has written some

exquisite translations. One, from Luis Ponce de Leon, is evidently suggested by verses from the Song of Solomon :

"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou
fecdest,
Where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon?"

and is very charming in its picture of the "Good Shepherd."

From His sweet lute flow forth
Immortal harmonies, of power to still
All passions born of earth,
And draw the ardent will
Its destiny of goodness to fulfil.

Might but a little part,
A wandering breath, of that high melody,
Descend into my heart,
And change it till it be
Transformed and swallowed up, O love! in Thee.

Ah! then my soul should know
Beloved, where Thou liest at noon of day;
And from this place of woe
Released, should take its way,
To mingle with Thy flock and never stray!

Perhaps the choicest specimen of American translation from a modern language is due to the Rev. C. T. Upham, a Congregational minister, and a Professor successively at Andover Seminary, and Bowdoin College. He wrote the "Life and Experiences of Madame Guyon," and has paraphrased the lines composed by her during her ten years' imprisonment in the Bastille.

A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air,
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there.
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee !
Nought have I else to do,
I sing the whole day long,
And He whom most I love to please
Doth listen to my song.
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing.

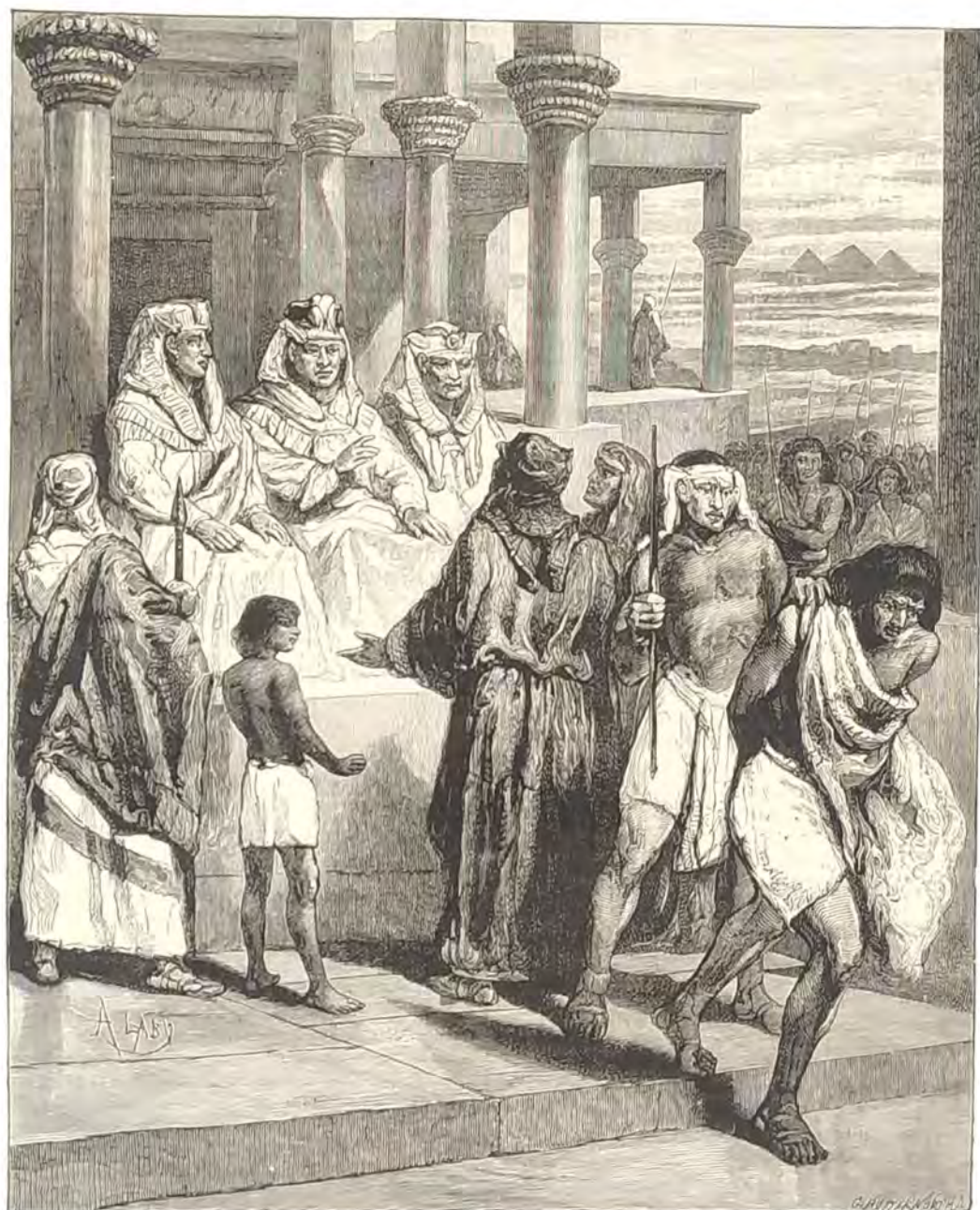
My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly ;
But, though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore
Whose providence I love!
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.

This charming poem is truer to the original than a more literal translation would have been, and exhibits in a fine degree that sympathy and poetic feeling which are indispensable to the translator. It may fitly close the sketch of American work in translating devotional poetry—work that is worthy of honour and that will endure.

LILY WATSON.

A CURIOSITY OF A PAST CIVILISATION.



(By A. Laby.)

THE PUNISHMENT OF SLOTH.

THE household expenses of the ancient Egyptians were probably less than those of any race known to civilisation. According to Sir Gardner Wilkinson, who quotes from Diodorus, the total cost of rearing and educating a child

from infancy to manhood, including food and clothing, and we suppose a proportion of rent, was just thirteen shillings; not thirteen shillings per year, but thirteen shillings for twenty-one years, or not quite seven pence per annum. What

the wages were we know not, but if they were in anything like the same proportion, the Egyptian must have earned about as much in a year as the Englishman does in a morning.

But however small the nominal wages might be, the governors took care that none of their subjects led a slothful life; and what to us is one of the problems of the future, was solved by them in a peculiarly practical way. No one was allowed to live in idleness, useless to himself and the community. To encourage the industrious, and distinguish them from the lazy, a system was in vogue by which every person had at certain times to appear before the magistrates and give an account of his name, dwelling, trade, and means of livelihood. A day was fixed for this ceremony, and the men of each parish marched in procession to the magistrate's office, and there individually reported themselves to the registering clerks who examined them on the subject, and took corroborative evidence.

Each man as he advanced would make the usual salute, one hand falling to the knee, and the other placed over his mouth to shield the superior person from the smell and infection of his breath.

This custom of reporting oneself to the police—for that is really what it came to—was of very ancient origin. There is a painting in existence of the eighteenth dynasty in which the scene in the court is shown. The banner-bearer stands in front of his company, and the men, one after another, advance and give their report to the scribe who seems to be filling up a sort of passport.

Egypt was the land of passports and personal descriptions. Even the parties who sold or bought property had not only to be described by name but by appearance. For instance: "Pamonthes, aged about forty-five: of middle size, dark complexion and handsome figure; bald, round faced and straight nosed," and "Semnuthis Persinei, aged about thirty, of middle size, sallow complexion, round faced, flat nosed, and of quiet demeanour," had to be so described with other persons in order that they might buy and sell a piece of land at Thebes.

If a man did not tell the truth he was punished as if he had committed a capital crime; if he had been engaged in unlawful pursuits he was similarly punished: if he was found to have led an irregular life he was bastinadoed: and if he appeared to be without any visible means of subsistence he was promptly put to death. We have heard much lately of what the Salvationist leader somewhat uncourteously calls "the human sludge." The way in which the Egyptians dealt with the sludge problem was, to say the least of it, efficacious for a time. But it may be pointed out to those who do not approve of this application of the strong hand that Egypt has gone down in the world rather more than its governors expected.

The Egyptian had, however, the courage of his opinions; and looked his facts fairly in the

face. He recognised that the tendency to dishonesty was almost ineradicable.

Among the lawful trades a man was at liberty to follow, was that of a professional thief. The trade was not a laborious one. On entering it the man had to give in his name to the chief of the robbers, who occupied very much the same position as the head of the Lost Property Department at our Scotland Yard. Whatever the thief stole, he reported to this functionary; and, on the owner applying at the office, giving full particulars of his loss, the goods were returned to him on his paying twenty-five per cent. of their value, which was shared between the department and the thief. In this way the light-fingered gentry were provided with suitable employment and kept out of serious mischief, while the "propertied classes" were taught the advisability of keeping a sharp look out on their possessions and not putting temptation in a weak man's way. Curiously enough, the "sheikh of the thieves," the modern representative of these "chiefs of the robbers," was in existence at Cairo until recently, and may be so now.

The same way of dealing with the idle was adopted by the ancient Greeks. At Lacedæmon, men who did no work were not tolerated; and the occupations of each individual were regulated according to his ability and industry. And when Solon returned to Egypt he introduced similar laws at Athens. Even among the Romans and Germans the lazy were dealt with in the same way; poverty was no crime, but habitual sloth meant death at the hands of the community.

Things New and Old

NOTE ON ST. MARK xiii. 32.—"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Those who deny the Divinity of Christ make much of this verse; arguing that as our Lord did not claim knowledge of the time of the ending His mediatorial work, so was His knowledge limited during that mediatorial work; thus denying the fulness of the Divine as well as the human nature in the God-man. They omit to observe that this is the only place, in the New Testament, containing any reference to Christ's nescience, while multitudes of passages imply the omniscience of His Divine nature. He "emptied Himself" of what would have prevented His being the Mediator, but He did not empty Himself of anything necessary to be a perfect Saviour and an unerring Teacher.

Of course there was progression and growth in Christ's human nature—increase of wisdom as of stature—but we may be sure that the Holy Spirit, the Inspirer of the Scriptures, did not allow any statement to appear during the public ministry of the Lord, which was not meant to be recorded as the certain and infallible testimony of His Divine knowledge.

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT IN BELGIUM.

III.

TURNING to the Flemish portion of Belgium—about one-half of the whole country—we come upon a soil in which Gospel-seed has been abundantly sown, but without yielding much fruit. Increased interest has been of late manifest in the Flemish services at Ostend and in Brussels, but as a rule this section of the people is almost inaccessible. The late Pastor Léonard Anet, for



Léonard Anet

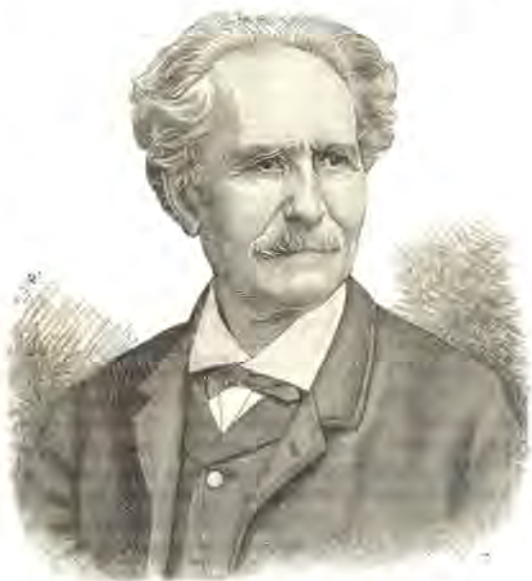
many years the secretary of the Belgian Evangelical Society, used to say, "The Flemings are a sensuous, pleasure-loving people, and withal thoroughly attached to the superstitions of Rome." The fact is there is much ignorance, and the priests' and the landowners exercise an enormous influence.

Taking now a general view of this Belgian field, we are brought to the conclusion that though the Protestants are a small, a very small minority—only some 20,000 out of 5,500,000—and though with very few exceptions they belong to the poorer classes, yet they are a source of light and blessing in the country. It has often been alleged that if foreign help were entirely withdrawn from these continental missions all traces of the good apparently done would soon disappear. There is little fear that such would be the case in Belgium. Evangelical Christianity has obtained a firm footing. The work done is solid. The piety of the church-members is marked. They realise the responsibility resting upon them to let their light shine. As we have seen much Christian activity prevails. They are making strenuous efforts—those of them who belong to the Free Churches—to sustain their

pastors and various Christian institutions; and when we remember that their means are often extremely scanty—Belgian miners, to which class many of them belong, being notoriously ill-paid—it is surprising how much they have done to render these churches independent of foreign aid.

These churches thus form a marked contrast to some similarly situated in other countries, where the plea of poverty is often raised, and the foreigner who has given them the Gospel is expected to supply all the means for the continuance of the work. The fact is, the ministers in Belgium, for the most part natives of France, Switzerland and Holland, have wisely grappled with this question of support, and have not shrunk from urging upon their people the duty of trying to make the work self-supporting, and thus to become independent of extraneous assistance. It was a Belgian pastor, M. L. Durand, of Liège, who some years ago published a tract, which has been widely circulated, in which he employed the simple argument, that as people go to their butcher and baker and pay for the meat and bread they procure, so in going to the house of God they should pay for the spiritual food there provided. And this teaching has had its effect.

Belgian Protestants are therefore worthy of the respect and confidence of Christians in this and



M. L. Durand

¹ In Ghent with its 137,000 inhabitants there are, it is said, 8000 persons officially connected with the Pope and working on his behalf.

other lands. And it would seem that the Belgian people themselves, as far as they know

them, hold them in high esteem. Protestant funerals are always largely attended by Roman Catholic neighbours. The last report of the Belgian Evangelical Society gives a singular case in point. More than a thousand Romanists were assembled in front of the house of mourning, and were listening attentively to the minister's words. Among the hearers were the delegates of two workmen's unions. Suddenly one of these delegates interrupted the speaker and tried to prevent him from continuing his discourse. He was speedily silenced, and when the ceremony at the grave was over, several of the delegates apologised to the pastor for the interruption. They also requested the gendarme to take note of the scandal, and secure the proper punishment of the offender. This was done, and a fine was inflicted. Moreover, the man was deposed from the office of President of his Union, and deprived for six months of the rights of membership. It is worthy also of note, that when the strikes occurred in 1886, in the mining districts around Charleroi, Mons, and Liège, and were occasions of so much violence and destruction of property, the members of the churches in the neighbourhood, nearly all of them miners, and therefore personally interested in the questions at issue, carefully stood aloof from these scenes of turbulence, and gave proof of their attachment to the principles of order and justice which the Gospel inculcates.

One other fact may be mentioned in illustration of the hold which the Gospel has obtained over those who have professed to accept it. Some years since, a considerable emigration of miners took place from the Borinage to the Department of the Pas-de-Calais, in the North of France, and especially to the neighbourhood of Liévin. Among the emigrants were several Protestants, who at once began to wish to have

the Gospel preached in their new home. This led to a movement which has since resulted in the erection of a chapel, and in a very encouraging evangelistic work in that region.

Belgium is thus one of the most hopeful mission-fields of Europe. The churches are alive to their duties and responsibilities. The dead Protestantism, so prevalent, alas, in many parts of Europe, has few, if any representatives there. But the work is only in its infancy. The land has yet to be won. As we have shown, large tracts of country are unvisited by the evangelist. For many years to come, therefore, the societies at work in the country will need the support of Christians in other lands. The churches last year, though greatly tried by strikes and by slackness of work, gave more than in the previous year, and yet, in spite of this, the Evangelical Society is suffering from a heavy deficit, and is unable to go forward and avail itself of the hopeful openings that present themselves. We therefore ask for the work in Belgium the hearty and practical sympathy of all our readers.

As regards the future, Protestantism has not yet obtained that hold on Belgium which would enable it to contend on equal terms with Rome and its organised forces. Priests, monks and nuns at present form a host twice as numerous as the Protestants, men, women and children all included. But the fact that, while in 1831 scarcely 200 native Protestants were to be found, there are now some 50 churches or communities numbering some 15,000 persons, with a ministry largely composed of young and devoted men, is a ground of hope that in process of time the "little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation," capable of resisting and driving back the hosts of superstition and darkness. May the Lord hasten it in His time!

TALKS ABOUT TEXTS.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."—*St. Matthew v. 9.*

THIS text came to my mind the other day, as I watched a number of war-ships steaming slowly down the English Channel, after several weeks of mimic warfare. The sun was dancing merrily on the blue water, the flags were fluttering in the breeze, and the three-and-twenty ironclads looked harmless enough as they steadily pursued their courses. Little children looked up from their play on the sands, and watched the great ships go by. No sense of alarm disturbed the most timid, for every one knew that the formidable-looking vessels were built to protect our shores, and to fight against the enemy in case of real war. The mere thought of what must happen whenever they shall be employed in their deadly work of destruction, makes one utter the words of our Lord and Saviour, "Blessed are the peacemakers." God grant that there may be such a spread of the Gospel of peace all the world over, that the nations of the earth shall learn its lesson of mutual forbearance and peace.

One of the greatest of modern artists tried to help forward the cause of peace by two remarkable pictures, "War" and "Peace." The picture of "War" is a very dreadful one.

Masses of black smoke appear to be rolling across the landscape, and in the foreground, by the side of a disabled cannon, lies a horse, dead, and beneath him the lifeless form of his master—an officer. The dead and dying lie all around, and one's heart grows heavy at the thought of the homes that are made desolate, and the wives that are made widows, and children orphans, by the evil spirit of war, when it is abroad in the world, slaying its thousands of brave and useful lives.

How different is the picture of "Peace!" In a field overlooking the sea, some children are playing about an old cannon, half-buried in the rich grass. The sheep as they quietly browse, look with curious but untroubled eyes into its open mouth. The lark is singing over the yellow corn-fields, and, far beneath, the waves are breaking in fleecy foam on the sandy beach. A perfect picture of peace, and an emblem of that peace which reigns in our hearts when Jesus our Lord speaks to us, saying, "Peace, be still!"

God is frequently called in the Bible the "God of peace," and our Saviour the "Prince of peace." Those, therefore, who know God as their loving Father, and Jesus as their

Saviour, love to be peacemakers, because all God's children are such.

But you may say, "I am only a child, and much as I should like to stop nations from going to war, and people from fighting, I am too weak and ignorant to be able to do so. I wish I could."

Such an expression would be very natural, and yet there is much that even little children may do to help on the great cause of peace. They have no voice or influence amongst statesmen, but they have ample opportunities in their daily lives of acting as peacemakers. In the nursery, and school-room, as well as in palaces and parliaments much may be done, if the heart be right. I know a gentleman who has a large family, and his elder children are almost men and women, whilst the younger are still in the nursery: but he loves the smallest as well as the biggest, and when the baby of the family shows its love, and puts out its chubby arms, he takes it on his knee and kisses it, because, though it be but an infant, it is his child just as much as any of the bigger ones. And thus, when our Saviour said, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God," He meant the little peacemakers, quite as much as those whose names are known and honoured amongst men.

And we should always remember that to be great peacemakers we must first be small ones. The famous men in history did not rise by one step to greatness, but gave early sign of those powers which afterwards distinguished them. If we show signs of anger and wrath in the nursery, we cannot hope to become peaceful and honoured men and women in later life; and equally, if we try to show that we are the children of the God of peace, we may hope that being faithful in that which is least, He may yet use us in greater things for His glory, and the good of others. We cannot too soon begin the work of peacemaking, for every opportunity is important. A word, or look, may turn away the wrath that would otherwise work harm. If any one of us saw a little child throwing lighted matches about in the house, how alarmed we should be, and how we should try to stamp out the fire before it became a blaze! Angry words, unless they be met with kind, peaceful answers, may burn and injure in their way just as sadly as the lighted matches. Little hatreds are in God's sight just as wrong and evil as great ones. The spirit of cruel war may be seen quite as much in the conduct of children, as in the conflict of armies. I saw not long since two young lions—like very small woolly puppies they were, for they were not many weeks old—but it was amusing to see the way in which they opened their little mouths, and tried to roar. It was only a feeble cry, and one smiled to hear it; but, harmless as they seemed, they had none the less the lion nature, and in a very short time they would be dangerous playmates. How often we forget that the passions of little children, which cause people to smile, are evidence of the evil nature within, which may presently make them dangerous companions.

Before we can be peacemakers ourselves we must have peace. If we ask our Father in heaven to make us His dear children, He will give us that new nature which is alone to be had from Him, and which is one of peace and joy in believing.

There is a beautiful prayer in the Bible which may fitly close our "Talk" to-day, and which we would do well to commit it to memory:—

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (*Heb. xiii. 20, 21.*)

MY TIRESOME SUNDAY SCHOLAR.



CHAPTER II.

T home in the fisherman's cottage they wondered where Alfie could be.

"Ain't that boy come home yef, mother?" old

Mr. Baker's gruff, yet kindly voice shouted from the little shed in the back garden. "Here's half-past four, and all these bobbins to be tied up by night."

"No, he ain't, and he won't be home before tea, if I know him," answers Mrs. Baker from the wash-tub just inside the open kitchen door.

Silence for a time: nothing heard but chopping wood, and rinsing clothes.

"Ain't Alfie in yet?" comes again from the shed.

"No, he ain't! How you do worry! Do let the boy have half-an-hour's play, after sitting in school all this time!"

"Half-an-hour's play," echoes Mr. Baker reproachfully, "seems like you don't know what the time is, missus. It's just gone six by the church clock, and so I tell you."

"Mercy me! you don't say so, Sam!" cries the woman, letting the shirt she is rubbing fall with a flop into the tub.

"Why, whatever can have got the child? He has never been as late as this, and his practice night and all, and I've never set the tea!"

"Strikes me I'll go and have a look for him," says Mr. Baker, coming out of the shed, and struggling into his guernsey. "Tiresome young limb, he's always up to his larks."

"I expect he is down at the harbour, watching the boats unload," suggests Mrs. Baker, trying to speak brightly; but, all the same, her heart seems to sink somehow, though she could not say why, or wherefore, if she had been asked.

Her husband goes out, and she busies herself with the tea-things, stirs up the fire, and soon has the kettle boiling.

Ding, ding, dong—seven o'clock! Ding, dong, ding, dong—half-past seven chimes the church-clock over the way. Still no Alfie! Mrs. Baker tries to drink her tea, but is too worried to enjoy this usually soothing meal. She cannot shake off the "shivers," as she calls the feeling of coming sorrow which has taken hold of her motherly heart, and although she tells herself over and over again that the boy is all right, and is only as her husband says "up to his larks," still, it is all to no purpose. She put her tea almost untasted away, stood the pot on the hob to keep hot; and, with an act of real determination, got out a coat that wanted patching and began to mend the sleeve.

Eight o'clock! and at last old Mr. Baker's heavy foot-step sounds in the little stone passage. She runs out

hastily to meet him, but gives a little cry at seeing him alone.

Her fears return with redoubled force.

He has a hard set look about his mouth, and a frown on his forehead which makes her afraid to ask any questions. He is evidently extremely annoyed at whatever he heard when he was out.

He does not keep her long in suspense however.

A minute more; and she knows a great deal more than she cares to hear.

"Alfy been robbing an orchard. . . . Her boy a thief. . . Expelled from school. . . . Lost. . . ."

Her first feeling of anger, gives way to grief when she thinks of him wandering about forlorn and alone all these hours.

She drops into a chair, throws her apron over her head, and rocks herself to and fro.

"Oh! I knew it. . . I knew it," she sobs, "we shall never, never see our little Alfie again. I am sure something dreadful is going to happen. I've felt so queer all the afternoon. . . ."

"Don't you be so stupid," says Mr. Baker, severely. "The young rascal is hiding somewhere round about here this minute, I'll be bound. He is always up to his larks. Bothered if I don't give him a jolly good hiding when I do catch him," he adds, as he flings off his high fisherman's boots, and settles himself down to his sadly postponed evening meal.

His rough common-sense rouses her to action. She looks up at his quiet face.

"If you really think that," she says slowly, "I'll find him, if I'm out all night."

She wipes her eyes. Lights the little oil-lamp swinging over the kitchen table, cuts her husband some slices of bread and butter, and pours him out a cup of tea. Then she hastily throws on her bonnet and shawl and goes out into the coming darkness.

A thin fine rain is beginning to fall. A robin is singing rather a dreary little good-night hymn on the bush in their neighbour's garden.

Mrs. Baker breaks down again. The tears run slowly down her cheeks and drop on her old black shawl. "Oh, Alfie," she sobs, "oh, my boy, where are you?"

Where, indeed? That was the very question, which no one seemed able to answer.

From the time he had been turned out of school at two o'clock that afternoon, all trace of him had been lost.

Mrs. Baker, after a weary and fruitless search, among all her friends and acquaintance, and in every likely spot for a truant boy to be found, was at last compelled to return to her empty cottage; more heart-sick and miserable than when she had left it two hours previously.

Even Mr. Baker looked grave now, and ceased to declare that "he would give him a jolly good hiding"; and that he was "always up to his larks."

CHAPTER III.

NEXT day the police were communicated with. Bills were posted; rewards offered, and enquiries made in all the neighbourhood.

It was not a difficult matter for an organised body of men to track a little run-away child.

There had not been time for him to go very far on foot.

At the end of the third day, information came to hand of his whereabouts, and Mr. and Mrs. Baker set off in a donkey cart they had borrowed for the occasion to bring him home.

No particulars had been given them of his discovery,

but they were directed to the hut of a peasant woman, about eight miles over the hill.

She was expecting them evidently, and was standing at her door shading her eyes with her hand, and looking across the fields, as Mr. Baker urged his donkey up the steep road that led to her cottage.

A minute after, and a well-known little figure dashed out of the cottage and rushed into their arms, as they pulled up at the door.

Alfred Jones' delight at seeing the kind faces of his foster-parents was very true and genuine.

He threw himself again and again on his mother's neck, and declared with tears and kisses, that he would never, never, leave them any more, and always be a good boy in future.

"And you won't let them lock me up for taking the apples, will you?" he said, "I wish I had never seen the horrid things! Oh, I've been so miserable ever since. And all the first night I lay under a hedge, and it rained, and was so dark, I was dreadfully frightened; but then I said my prayers, and, 'O Lord save me.' (What we learn at Sunday school), and one little star came out, and then it did not seem so bad, and I went to sleep, and in the morning she (pointing to the woman), gave me some breakfast."

He really looked as he said—miserable!

He had gone through a great deal of suffering, both of body and mind, during the last three days, and Mr. and Mrs. Baker as they looked at his little pale face and frightened eyes had not the heart to say anything severe.

Truth to tell, they were only too glad to have him safe back again.

They had never realised how much he had endeared himself to them, until they thought they had lost him for good. Mrs. Baker cried for joy as she stroked his curly head and pressed it to her heart, and Mr. Baker told him to jump into the cart and forget all about his troubles.

"After all, I'll let him off his hiding," he said to himself as he marched along at the head of his donkey on the homeward journey, "the poor little chap has had punishment enough already."

But, unfortunately for Jones, though he escaped his "hiding" a much more serious and unexpected punishment was in store for him.

The Philanthropic Society, which had originally rescued and sent him down to Holkstone, had been informed of his foolish escapade, and subsequent running away from the Bakers' care, and had decided that a more watchful eye, and a firmer hand must be kept upon him in future.

And so it came to pass that one week after his return, a big official letter was handed to Mr. Baker, requesting him to send Jones immediately to the Home at —mouth. And so, before the corn was carried, or the apples ripe in that fatal orchard, poor Jones, broken-hearted, and utterly miserable, left those he loved best in the world for a second time. Blinded with tears, and choking with sobs, they put him into the train that was to carry him away on his long, lonely journey. No doubt it was for his ultimate good, but the parting was a terrible one, and in their position of life it probably meant for ever.

No Christmas holidays to look forward to, no visits from father or mother. Even letters would be scanty, and few and far between.

So when at last they unclasped his clinging arms, and lifted him into the third-class carriage, they took their last look at his sunny face, and felt they would never hear his merry voice again.

We heard afterwards that he was doing very well, but the light of the Baker's little home was gone, and I lost "my tiresome Sunday-school scholar."

"ELIZABETH."

Monthly Religious Record.

THE friends of the McAll Mission in France have been rather disappointed in the response to their appeal for help to make up the sums deficient by the death of some of their larger contributors. But it cannot be that a work so peculiarly begun in faith in the Lord's call twenty years ago shall fail to receive the needed support. Hundreds of thousands in France are by this means brought within the range of the Gospel who otherwise would never have heard the "truth as it is in Jesus" preached. And many evangelical French pastors themselves are now warm in their sympathy with this, which is to them a "foreign work."

IN *Darkest Russia*, reference is made to the United States Commission to enquire into the causes leading to the great increase in the number of Russian refugees to American ports. They have finished their enquiry in Russia, and it is stated by one who interviewed Dr. W. Kempster, one of the Commissioners, that "the revelations the commissioners intend to make will astonish the world." Dr. Kempster confirms the impression that the persecution is based on religious grounds, by pointing out that it is being applied with merciless impartiality to all dissenters from the Holy Orthodox Greek Church. The official report will be looked for with eager and painful interest. It may yet be hoped that even Russia will not continue to set the good opinion of the whole civilised world at defiance.

THE Tiflis correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* states that, M. Pobiedonostzeff, Procurator of the Russian Holy Synod, is finishing up a long career of persecution by terribly drastic measures against his Protestant fellow-countrymen. His most recent action was the arrest of four of the chief leaders of the Protestant or Stundist movement still at large. These men have been torn from their families without a word of notice and sent under police escort, secretly, for a term of five years to some mountain district near the Persian frontier, where their only neighbours will be fanatical Mussulmans. In addition to the prominent members of the protesting sects, one hundred and ten persons of both sexes have been banished to Gerusi, a small village in the province of Elisabethopol. Among these are Baptists, Methodists, Molokany, and Old Believers. They were reported as being in the greatest distress, and obliged to beg their daily bread from the Armenians and Tartars around them.

THE North African Mission is one of the youngest of the societies for the evangelisation of the world, yet its progress has been remarkably rapid. Begun only ten years ago among the Kabyles belonging to the Berber race, in the Jura mountains, just east of Algiers city, the work has spread until now there are nearly seventy members of the mission. They are located in Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, and North Arabia. In a little while it is intended to enter Egypt. The whole northern sea-board will then be occupied in what is an exceedingly difficult enterprise among almost entirely Mohammedan races. Up to the present there have only been a few seals to the faithfulness of God in answering the eager expectation of His people who are in the work. But the members of the mission are full of hope and holy resolution. Four medical missionaries are among the number. Enquiries often follow this effort to do good to the bodies of the sick who come to be healed. A lady missionary writes, referring to a series of Arabic tracts, issued by the Religious Tract Society, and widely circulated: "Many questions have to be answered, and then the old, old story must be told. An Arab gentleman stopped me to-day, and said he wanted to know the meaning of a passage in a tract I had given his little son. It was, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.' I showed him the same passage in the Bible, and read him corresponding verses. For half an hour we stood thus together in the street discussing the great truth of Christ as Intercessor and Mediator,

because He is first the Redeemer. He went away, asking me to bring him a portion of the Bible to read."

THE riots in China and the continued and intense anxiety of foreigners have given occasion for still further enquiry as to the cause of the disturbed state of the country. There seems no doubt now that it has arisen mainly out of the long-continued and intense hatred of the foreigner. It is clearly established that it is not an anti-missionary movement, but an anti-foreign one. Dr. Griffith John gives some examples of the horrible placards which have been distributed broadcast and affixed to the doors of the examination rooms. In one case, an abominable placard with disgusting illustrations was pasted underneath the list of candidates, so that the aspirants to degrees might be sure to read it. Such sentences as these occurred in the manifesto: "A foreign devil at Canton went dropping poison down the wells at night. Every one fell ill of a strange disease which could only be cured by foreign doctors. Untold numbers died. At last the prefect found it out, arrested over thirty people and put them all to death. When the foreign devils open a chapel they begin with their female converts by administering a pill. When they have swallowed it they are beguiled. At Tientsin they used constantly to beguile and entice away young children in order to scoop out their eyes and hearts." And this paper declared that 12l. 10s. could be got for a set of these.

DR. JOHN says: "I wish emphatically to state that the real riots are not to be ascribed to the hatred of the foreigner among the masses of the Chinese people. The root of the opposition is to be found, not so much in the feelings of the people as in the anti-foreign policy of the government and literary classes. . . The language of the anti-foreign placards and pamphlets always issued by its scholars, with the full cognizance of the magistrates, and simply fathered on the people, is often too vile for translation into any living tongue. Almost every trouble that we have had in these parts can be traced to this source. I look upon Hunan as the true source of the recent riots."

It now turns out that the Edict proclaiming religious liberty throughout the whole of China, was only obtained under strong pressure. Sir John Walsham, in a dispatch to Lord Salisbury, telegraphed as follows on June 21, and this is now set forth in the Blue Book on the subject:—"An Imperial edict was, however, published on the 13th inst., in which the attacks on missionaries were strongly condemned, and the high authorities called upon to protect all foreigners, and to punish those who incite the people against them with the utmost severity. *This edict and its publication in the 'Gazette,' was obtained by us with great difficulty.*"

A *Times'* correspondent gives a concluding sentence from another placard which says: "Those who do not kill missionaries are not men; their houses should be burnt everywhere, and to the ground; no one has been sent to banishment for doing it." Another extract runs: "The English rebels have their vile abode on the margin of the sea. Their ruler may be either a man or a woman. As to their species they are half men and half beasts. In the Book of the Hills they are called naked vermin, and in the language of China, mud-fish." And it proceeds: "A large number of men in whom skill and courage are combined, should be secretly engaged, and having been liberally supplied with travelling expenses, they must be sent to patrol the watercourses and highways. Should they come across a foreign devil they must act as may be most expedient in the circumstances, and rob him of his money, or strip him of his clothes, and deprive him of his food, or cut off his ears and nose."

Riots have again broken out north-east of King-Chow and in Takow, places just a little north of the great wall,

and not far from Peking. Three hundred Christian Chinese and missionaries have been most cruelly tortured and then massacred. Times of peculiar danger and difficulty have so often been the prelude of some great blessing in missionary enterprise, as well as in the history of nations, that the Church of Christ must cry yet more mightily to God that He may guard and guide and control all foreigners in China, so that the people may be won over and not further estranged. Yet China must be taught the lesson that foreigners who have brought many advantages in the wake of commerce and missions have a right to be protected in accord with the law of nations.

THE continuance of the Imperial British East African Company in Uganda seems for the present to be decided on. It was declared that unless the English Government supported the Mission of Captain Lugard, and would contribute towards the fund for the establishing of a railway from Mombasa to the Victoria Nyanza, a distance of five hundred miles, the Company must retire. The railway, it is urged, will greatly tend towards the destruction of the slave trade, and further tend to develop commerce on healthy lines. Until after the Brussels Conference, when this part of Central Africa came under the sphere of British influence, the missionaries never asked for anything more than the moral support which has always been accorded to them. The Church Missionary Society's committee now say, however, as follows: "At a very heavy expenditure, and at the cost of many valuable lives, the chiefs and people of Uganda have been brought to receive the truths of the Christian religion, and to welcome the pioneers of civilisation and commerce. The Brussels Conference and Anglo-German agreement, of July, 1890, have seriously changed the position of the missionaries in the country, and compromised them in the eyes of the hostile parties in Uganda. They are now identified with the people 'who,' to use the phrase common among the natives, 'have come to eat up the country.' We would urge," say the Church Missionary Society's friends, "that withdrawal would form a disaster extending over the whole sphere of British influence, and greatly affect the efforts being made for the evangelisation and civilisation of the various tribes within that influence. We would further submit that no greater encouragement could be given to the slave trade than such a withdrawal." It is understood that promises have been received from friends of the Church Missionary Society and those immediately interested in the East African Company to the extent of £40,000, as a guarantee fund from those who are personally interested in the continuance of the Company in Uganda. A telegram has been received by the British East African Company from Captain Lugard, who states that he has been successful in the pacification of Uganda and Unyoro. He reports the driving out of Kabbarega's slave-raiding lieutenant from Lower Unyoro, and that a legitimate King Kasamego is installed. He has made a treaty with him and the King of Ankoro. He concludes that the state of affairs at Uganda is improving, and that the prospects are encouraging.

AMID all the controversy raging around the Bible in consequence of the 'higher criticism,' it will be sound advice to give to all: "Study the Book itself more and more." The Bishop of London in his recent Triennial Visitation urged upon his clergy the importance of Bible knowledge in dealing with the sick, the dying, the ignorant, the erring, and the doubter. He begged them to lay it to heart that it was the imperative duty of every man of God to be constantly studying the Bible with all the aids which he could obtain for that study—that the Bible should be for him the book from which illustrations, examples, precepts, warnings, and above all, messages of love might be readily gathered. He entreated them to consider how impossible it was to depend upon old memories that were fading out of the mind, and how impossible it was to use with effect the repetition of passages that had become stale to them simply by their constant reference to them, and to them alone. If they were to use the Bible rightly in their ministry, it was absolutely necessary that their knowledge of it should always be fresh.

THERE is reason to fear that the growth of wealth in Christian circles leads to such an increased demand on the

heads of families in the direction of social engagements, that family prayer and the constant reading of the Word of God are at first intermitted and then abandoned. Yet it is quite impossible to repel the attacks upon faith if the citadel is not guarded. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." Needful, as ever, is it for each one to be able to say with the inspired Psalmist: "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." And under this influence alone will the young grow up in Christian families with pure and strong faith.

JOHN WESLEY's chapel in the City Road has been reopened after undergoing considerable alteration and adornment. Dr. Stephenson, the President of the Conference, preaching on the occasion. The foundation stone was laid by Wesley in 1777, and at the recent Wesley Centenary celebrations a number of contributions were given towards the cost of what has now been done. Interesting features of the place are the mural monuments to John and Charles Wesley, the saintly Fletcher of Madeley, Dr. Adam Clarke and others. Within the apse a chair has been placed which was long used by John Wesley; and the free-stone baptismal font, presented by the present vicar of Madeley, because of its association with Fletcher, has been mounted on an alabaster pedestal.

ABYSSINIA is now again opened for the colportage work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and an interesting letter appears in the Society's *Reporter* giving in very simple fashion an account of the work of Mikael Nagasch, evangelist colporteur of the Swedish Mission. The new version of the Amharic *Pilgrim's Progress* published at the cost of the Crischona Mission and the Religious Tract Society, will soon also be on sale there.

THE health of Mr. Spurgeon does not seem to give signs of improvement. He himself says: "I am tossed up and down upon the waves of my disease, and what is thought progress to-day is gone to-morrow. I have seasons of utter prostration. Always weak, it seems at times that I have no strength whatever, and must altogether collapse." He adds: "My physician at a recent examination said very little; but I saw that he did not feel pleased about a certain 'murmur,' which was by no means less than when I was at home. I had hoped that this was reduced to the imperceptible, but it was not so. By another test it was soon apparent that the disease itself was not changed from what it was in Norwood; or if any change was manifest, it was for the worse. The leakage of life-power was not stopped." Yet he has full faith that he will recover, though the process be a slow one.

THE American evangelists, Messrs. Moody and Sankey, are again in this country. They held only two meetings in England, the one at the Congregational Church at Woodford, Essex, and the other at the Polytechnic, Regent Street. Then on to Scotland, where a short series of meetings will be held previous to evangelistic tours in England, Paris, Norway, Sweden, and India.

THE Dean of Ripon (Dr. Fremantle), speaking at a meeting in behalf of the Religious Tract Society's work said: "I am here first, as a reader of tracts; then as a tract distributor; thirdly, as a writer of tracts; and fourthly, as a subscriber to the Society. I am always glad to help forward societies like this, which stand out against one of the great influences antagonistic to the Gospel—the infidel press. There is an immense amount of vile, blasphemous, and unscriptural literature in circulation, and the more we can flood the public mind with good books and pure literature, the better. This Society stands in the foremost place in its circulation of millions of tracts, and in its continual presentation to the world of most beautiful books."

DURING the month, Dr. Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of Carlisle, has died suddenly. The list also includes Edward Thornton, Esq., Honorary Secretary from the first of the Bishop of London's Fund; Dr. Charles Winter Hodge of Princetown; Mrs. Hannay, widow of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Hannay, late Secretary to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, who died about a year since; Sir James P. Corry, Bart., one of the members for Belfast, and well known in Presbyterian circles.