

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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



After Lobrichon. Ex. Paris Salon, 1890.

NEIGHBOURS.

[By permission.]

Neighbours.

IN early days, when joy and youth
Go hand in hand together,
And life appears in very truth
Made up of sunny weather,
Like those pure flowers whose tender glow
Sweet springtide never misses,
The first faint buds of feeling grow
With childhood's artless kisses.

How often from that season fair
There dates a bond unbroken,
Though wrinkled brow and grizzled hair
The lapse of time betoken.
No tie we form and break again
In riper years impassioned,
Can match the link in friendship's chain
By baby fingers fashioned.

We see them still, with whom we shared
Our first and simplest pleasures,
Built castles by the sea, or dured
The woodland for its treasures.

Their cherished memories long abide,
When fate has torn asunder
The urchins roaming side by side
Through boyhood's realm of wonder.

Yes! God, who makes our paths diverge,
Denies not recollection;
And age brings cares that sometimes urge
To heartier affection;
For toil and trial often prove,
As life's brief span is lengthened,
The very means whereby our love
Is sanctified and strengthened.

Dear playmates—fancy leads me on
With many a vision tender;
For us the golden hours are gone
Which gave the morning splendour.
But when allotted years complete
The sum of earthly labours,
In heaven, may-be, communion sweet
Awaiteth old-time neighbours.

SYDNEY GREY.

TOM HERON OF SAX.

A STORY OF REVIVAL TIMES.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE SUMMER AT SAX.

MADAM was gracious and almost beaming. In the exaltation of mind induced by her son's marriage with Athol, she had almost forgotten her past grievances. Tom Heron had vanished from Sax (though he had not been expelled in the fashion she would have liked), and with him had departed that incipient hankering after new teachers and preachers which had threatened to disturb the quiet of the place. The little church had never been so well attended as it was now. Despite the "innovations" introduced by Mr. Latham now that he had a coadjutor in the person of Hugh Fortescue, the services appeared on the whole to give satisfaction, and at any rate they aroused interest and brought the whole place to church, where Mr. Latham's earnest discourses were listened to with far more of real interest than ever they had been before.

Madam gently plumed herself upon this, as an evidence of her own power in the place; and whatever credit she did not assume to herself she passed on to Hugh, pleased that a Fortescue should have been the means of drawing back the straying flock to their own lawful shepherd. Nobody contradicted or argued with her, and she

was left free to indulge her self-satisfied dreams to the full.

The marriage of her eldest son with his cousin Athol had been an event of no small interest, and had pleasantly occupied her mind during the months of May and June. The newly-married couple had now gone away, to travel about and see the world a little; but in the autumn Fulk was to bring back his bride, and the two were to take up their abode in one of the wings of Rookwood, which was to be divided from the rest of the house so as to form an independent establishment. The Squire could not bear the idea of losing his eldest son entirely, and was anxious that Fulk should remain at Sax, growing into the life and occupations which would one day be his. The young man himself had no objection, and Athol raised no obstacle to the plan. She might have preferred a more independent position than could ever be hers so long as Madam remained the mistress of Rookwood; but independence was less the habit of mind with women in those days than it has since become, and Athol was attached to her old neighbourhood, and resigned herself very easily to the thought of remaining there.

As for Irene, she had gradually lived down her disgrace. Whenever Madam wished to be unwontedly scathing in her criticisms of Methodism and its results, she would cite her daughter's case with subdued triumph, and Irene would quiver and tingle with shame and pain; but her father had soon ceased to look gravely upon her, and Hugh was always a staunch friend and supporter, so that life had become more endurable than once she thought it ever would; and she herself was learning to understand that she could receive just the same food from her brother and her parish minister that once she had believed was only to be found in the ranks of the Methodists, to obtain which she would be forced to disobey her parents and act either openly in defiance of their wishes, or set herself to deceive and circumvent them.

One difficulty at an end, however, Irene found herself face to face with another. Hardly had Athol and Fulk taken their departure, than Madam, always eager for some object of absorbing interest upon which to concentrate her attention, turned her mind once again upon the thought of the marriage of her daughter. It was high time, she said, that something should be settled; and Irene, coming in one day from a ride with her father, found herself called into her mother's boudoir—a sacred spot she never penetrated without an inward qualm of misgiving. Madam's face was on this occasion, however, very suave and gracious.

"Irene," she said, and the girl felt at once that something of importance was coming—no one could be long in Madam's presence without being aware of the iron hand beneath the velvet glove: "Lord Lovel is coming very shortly to Wilton Abbots, if he is not there already. We are certain to see a good deal of him these next months, and I wish you fully to understand what is expected of you."

Irene's colour went and came.

"Expected of me, Ma'am?"

"Expected of you, my dear. You must by this time be perfectly well aware of my meaning. Lord Lovel has done you the honour to solicit the right to pay his addresses to you, and your father and I have been pleased to grant him that permission. He is in every way a suitable match for you, and is one of the most charming men I have ever seen. You are a very fortunate girl, and I only hope you will show a proper appreciation of your good fortune in having secured the attachment of such an eligible husband."

Irene started as the word fell upon her ear, but these last months had been teaching her lessons of patience, filial respect, and a wider toleration. Her face expressed considerable perplexity and distress, but she did not attempt a reply. Madam watched her keenly, and her next words were very pointedly spoken.

"You have disappointed us grievously once, Irene, doing much to forfeit our trust and provoke our deep displeasure. If you wish to show that your sorrow is sincere, and that you are willing in the future to atone for the wilfulness and folly of the past, you will allow yourself to be guided in this crisis of your life by the wishes

and the commands of your parents. You know well what your defiance of their wishes led you into before; let that be a warning to you, and try to believe in the future that they do know better than you can do what is good for you to do and to think."

Irene made no reply but quickly escaped from her mother's presence, and took the first opportunity of speaking to Hugh alone, and asking him how she could escape the fate of being married to a man for whom she felt neither affection nor respect. She passed indeed such severe strictures upon Lord Lovel's worldliness and frivolity that Hugh could not restrain a smile.

"My dear sister," he said, "be just a little less impetuous. Perhaps you may slightly misjudge this young man, attributing to him more of evil than he really deserves, and forgetting in what an atmosphere of temptation he always lives. I knew him a little at Oxford, and I liked the little I knew, though we were in different colleges, and he left before I had completed my second year. Perhaps he is one of the men who might be led to better things by the influence of one to whom he was sincerely attached, and —"

"How can he be attached to me?" questioned Irene, with heightened colour, "I have scarce spoken to him more than a few dozen times, and we never agreed about anything. I know he thought me dull and stupid; and I thought him —"

"Never mind what you thought him. If he comes here, try, just for the sake of pleasing our parents, to see the best side of him instead of the worst. If I remember right, there was something very winning and fascinating about him. Perhaps if you were to try to bring out the best side of his nature, you might find him different from what you have believed. Think what a happy thing it would be for you, or any one, to have been instrumental in turning a brilliant youth in a high position to take life and its responsibilities more seriously—to win him over to the side of right—the side of Christ. We each of us have some work to do in the world for our fellow-men. Dear sister, it may be that this is the work you are called upon to do for God. If this young man did not love you, why should he seek you? He could find many maidens as well-dowered and as well-born as you. But he still returns to your side. He must prize your love for its own sake. If that be so, it may indeed be yours to do a great work for him. What think you of that, dear sister?"

Perhaps had Hugh not been young and ardent, and full of enthusiasm himself, he would have scarcely tried to urge upon his sister the somewhat perilous office of interesting herself in the reclamation of one who approached her as a lover. A wider experience of life might have taught him the lesson that a man generally proves the stronger under such circumstances, and that when he has won the heart of the woman, who fondly and faithfully believes that he will learn to think as she does, he too often draws her away from her own faith by the seeming strength of his own plausible arguments. At the same time, as truth is always stronger than

falsehood, and right will win its way, even over might, the victory by no means always remains with the seeming conqueror. At the same time, the experiment is a perilous one for the young to make, though one which has been successfully carried out many times, and will be many more; and for which there can be no better weapon than the deep unwavering faith which had been given alike to brother and sister, and which the experiences of the past months had deepened in Irene to something vastly more strong and lasting than the mere exaltation of a passing wave of emotion which she had once mistaken for the faith which moves mountains.

Hugh's words raised within her feelings of an entirely new kind—feelings which gave a new impulse to her whole character. Hitherto she had been, from circumstances as well as temperament, decidedly self-centred. Now it seemed to her that she had perhaps a work to do for her Master. She spent long hours in prayer for guidance—guidance as to whether this work was to be hers to do—and if so, for grace to do it aright. She prayed for the young man who was in the eyes of the world her lover, and prayed for strength to act rightly in the coming crisis of her life.

Thus, when Lord Lovel appeared, the old prejudice against him had quite melted. She no longer steeled her heart against him, condemning him as a hopeless reprobate; and accordingly she found that he had many generous and even noble traits of character, in addition to a winning address, which she had always found it rather hard to resist. And he for his part was simply charmed with her. He had always admired her, even when she repelled him; and though he had many times retired from her society in vexation and pique, half-resolved to withdraw his claim upon her hand, yet he never could get over the feeling that there was something more behind, if he could but get at it, while he had never seen another face which attracted him in the same way. He had been vexed at the persistence with which the thought of Irene had haunted him, and he came to Rookwood with the full determination to win the lady's hand once and for all, or to confess himself beaten and retire finally from the field. To find her thus softened, so much sweeter and more approachable was delightful to him, and as he grew to know her better, he found unexpected depths in her nature which interested and sometimes awed him. He felt that she drew out the better qualities of his own heart. Before her he felt deeply ashamed of follies and faults which he had regarded lightly enough before. He felt that if he could but win her for his wife, he would turn over a new leaf. He began to speak to her of matters that were not mere surface things and her quick sympathy and understanding were a revelation to him of a union of soul with soul which had certainly never been dreamed of in his philosophy before.

Hugh watched this little drama with unfeigned interest and pleasure, and did all in his power to deepen the impression being made upon the mind of his former friend. There was much in

the atmosphere of Sax just now to strike the young man, who had hitherto been content to be a more pleasure-seeker in life, and had hardly troubled his head for an hour over the deeper aspects of life, or given any serious heed to the burning questions of the day. His first Sunday was a surprise to him. He had seldom heard a sermon which so struck and moved him as did Mr. Latham's, preached from the text, "Surely I come quickly," whilst the number of communicants who remained after the service ended, likewise surprised him greatly. He himself remained, and knelt beside Irene at the Lord's table for the first time, save one, in his whole life before.

When they came out of church he was full of eager questions about the clergyman.

"He was my old tutor. I was under him during my first year at Oxford, and then he left, for his health would not stand the strain of teaching. I used to think I might have been a better man if he had stayed. Where does he live now? I must go and see him. But how fearfully ill he looks! I should say he had one foot in the grave already."

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Irene, "we are so fond of Mr. Latham; he has done such good. I am glad you have known him too. To-morrow you shall go and see him. On Sunday he is too busy, and he has no strength to spare."

The next day young Lord Lovel went in search of his old tutor, and found him in his own humble quarters. Mr. Latham lodged with a widow in a little rose-covered cottage, just in the fork of the road to Ernscliff, where one of the lanes deflected to the left in the direction of Sheepwold farm. The house was on the Ernscliff property; though the rooms were small, they were spotlessly clean, and the clergyman had always gratefully declined any offer on the part of Mary to enlarge them for him. His wants were very few, he truly said, and he had everything that he needed there; rest for the body and peace for the mind. Indeed, he carried that peace about in his own heart, and it seemed to shine out of the depths of his hollow eyes, as he rose from the easy chair in which he was resting,—for Monday always found him in a very languid and weary state—and welcomed his old pupil with warmth and pleasure.

"I thought I knew the face when I saw it in church; but I scarcely hoped to be remembered myself. I am very glad to see you."

"I wish I found you looking better, sir. I am afraid you are in very poor health. You should have stayed at Oxford; good men are wanted there. It was a thousand pities to throw yourself away on a country curacy. You are killing yourself over parish work, and you might have been a power in Oxford."

The clergyman smiled as he heard these words.

"I had a call from my Master," he answered, "and I could not choose but obey. He gave me a very little corner of His vineyard to till. Doubtless, I was not fit for a larger share. All I can hope is that I have done that small work faithfully. What more can any of us hope than

to be found faithful unto death; found watching when the Lord shall appear?"

The young man made no direct reply: but his face expressed no impatience and no embarrassment. He was interested, impressed even, but he knew not what to respond. He looked round the narrow chamber and said:

"Surely this is no fit place for you. Come, sir, let me speak to you freely, and trust you not to misunderstand me or think—think that I want to patronise. I know better what your value is—and my worthlessness. But I have a Rectory vacant; it is not very valuable, but it would be better than this; and there is at least a good house attached, and it is near Wilton Abbots, where I hope soon to settle down;" and the young man blushed. "I wish you would let me nominate you to it; you could keep a curate to do the work, and take your ease and give yourself to study and rest. You have worked hard enough I am sure; it is time that you should think of yourself now."

A very strange and beautiful smile played over Mr. Latham's face. He put out his hand and took that of the young nobleman.

"My dear lad," he said, "I thank you from my heart. It does me good to feel that I am kindly remembered by those I knew years ago, to whom I strove to do my duty—imperfectly as that duty was done. I thank you most gratefully for your offer. I ask you not to think it a lack of gratitude that I do not accept it. Let me counsel you to be very careful whom you select for the office. Strive for a man of piety and earnestness and zeal. Thank God there are such pastors still left, and I hope and believe that the time has come when He will raise up many more. But for me, my work lies here, in my little corner where Providence has led me."

"But you have done your work here, and you have worn yourself out. It is rest and ease that you need now."

"And rest is coming—it is very near now," answered Mr. Latham, with his radiant and luminous smile. "I need not seek it; it is coming as the gift of One who sees the need of each child of His, and gives to each one according to his need."

"But you might recover in another place," cried the young man, with some vehemence. "That is another reason to leave. In this cottage what comforts can you have?"

"Everything that I have need of, my kind young friend, and the love of those amongst whom I once feared I had laboured in vain. Kind faces look in at my window with a smile of good-will, sweet voices speak soothing words to me day by day. I have my books about me, my flock at my very doors; the sounds and the scents of the beautiful world are around me, and my Master is always at hand. What more can heart of man desire? I have been very abundantly blessed, and in calm and reverent hope I am content to wait for that one last final blessing which shall make me—either in life or death—one with Him for whom we wait."

Lord Lovel went away awed and impressed, perplexed in part, but in no spirit of scorn.

Every day he found his way to that rose-covered cottage, drawn thither by a power he could scarce understand, and every day he came away strengthened and confirmed in the new purposes rising within him, more resolved to break through the fetters of old habit and old association, and to strive after the higher life he now began to realise and appreciate in others.

Mr. Latham had other visitors too at this time: the ladies of Ernscliff came almost daily if he was too feeble to walk up the hill to their house; but the visits he valued almost more than these of friendship were those paid him regularly by Michael Portway and Jos Dawson. These two youths had been greatly impressed by the change wrought in their comrade since his conversion, and following the advice of Mr. Wesley, they had turned for counsel to their clergyman, and had been receiving regular instruction from him, with the result that, although they had not passed through Tom's phases of strong excitement and instantaneous conversion, they were brought by slow and sure degrees to the knowledge of their Saviour, and had set an example in the place which others were beginning to follow.

"At evening-time it shall be light,"—these words were often on the lips of the dying clergyman during these bright summer days, when his lamp was burning very low—though with a clear brightness that caused its beams to be widely diffused—as he sat beside his open casement and watched the golden glow in the western sky. By the time the harvest fields were yellow and ready for the reaper's hand, Mr. Latham was unable to leave the house, and those who still desired to see him had to seek him in his tiny cottage home. Hugh Fortescue removed himself from Rookwood and took up his abode beneath the same roof, nursing his senior and friend with filial devotion. Every day the young man felt that his soul was strengthened and elevated by communion with one who seemed to be almost within the borders of the unseen land. And it was to the side of the sick man's couch that Lord Lovel one glowing evening in September led the blushing Irene to tell his old tutor that he had found the bride of his choice, and to ask his blessing upon their union.

Most fervent and earnest was that blessing. Irene bent her head whilst the tears filled her eyes, and she felt as though it was indeed the seal of God upon the first love of her heart, sanctifying it and dedicating it to Him, from whom all pure love comes. A few very solemn and earnest words were spoken by the dying man to the young nobleman, warnings against temptation, exhortation to meet all such in a humble, prayerful spirit; solemn injunctions against daring to try and tamper with the faith of his betrothed wife, either now or at any future time; and with these warnings and cautions a very deep and heartfelt blessing upon the union which had in it so much of promise and hope.

"You will please your parents in this thing, my child," he said, detaining Irene for a moment when Lord Lovel turned to go. "And it is a happy thing that you have not been called upon to choose betwixt their wishes and your own

conscience. Be true to the teachings of that conscience through life. Let not the things of this world draw your heart away from the great and eternal hope of the coming of the Lord. Be always ready for Him when He shall appear, let Him find you watching and waiting; but let Him find you doing your duty—your whole duty—in that high station of life to which it has pleased Him to call you. Do not let small scruples worry you; look ever to the large issues of life, the wide teaching of our Bible; do not fret over little things, but avoid firmly and steadfastly all that raises up a barrier betwixt you and God; all that you do not feel you can ask His blessing upon. And now farewell, my dear child. In this world, perchance we may not meet again; but I trust the day will come when we shall all stand together with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, and be for ever with the Lord."

That same night the call came, and the spirit of the clergyman passed peacefully away. Hugh Fortescue, who felt that the end was near, would not leave him as he wished, but remained with him through the night, and just at dawn the mysterious change came which he had seen before and knew well.

"My dear lad," he said faintly, "I thought I saw you and Mary Ernscliff walking hand in hand over some stony path together, smoothing, toiling, working—ever together. Was it a dream, or was it a vision of what will come?"

Hugh made no attempt to answer. His deep

love for Mary Ernscliff, though scarcely admitted to himself, had been divined by his friend, and had just once been named between them before. A strange thrill shot through Hugh as he heard these words; but at such a moment, even that thought was but secondary in his mind.

Kneeling beside the bed, and taking in his own the cold and lifeless hand, he asked in broken words for the blessing of the faithful pastor and friend, who was going out so fearlessly into the dark valley.

Calmly and steadily was that blessing given, and with it a solemn last charge to his successor—for such he felt Hugh to be—to feed the flock; to be a true and faithful pastor.

"And remember especially Tom Heron"—such was one of the last whispered charges of the dying man—"remember him in your prayers. If he should return, comfort, help and strengthen him, confirm his faith, and help him to fight the battle to which he is now pledged."

"I will," answered Hugh in strangled accents, and then in answer to a look—an unspoken request, he rose to his feet and solemnly pronounced over the dying man the last prayer of commendation.

As those solemn words were spoken the silver cord was loosed, but the dark valley was not dark to one who was treading it in steadfast faith—certain of finding in it the road to Him who has said:

"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

TWO DOORS.

BY THE VERY REV. G. A. CHADWICK, D.D., DEAN OF ARMAGH.

"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—*Matt.* vii. 7.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."—*Rev.* iii. 20.

WHEN these texts are placed side by side, we are startled and pained by the contrast.

On one side is God, inviting us to knock at His door, and assuring us that it shall be opened. And on the other side also is God, waiting at our door, standing there because it is not opened, and so He needs to continue knocking; and as we listen, He does not say what shall happen if any man will dare to lock Him out. No, the uncertainty is the reverse: it is whether any man will hear His voice raised in appealing love and faithful warning, and open the stubborn, barred and bolted door.

And the contrast is more wonderful still, when we consider what is behind each of these doors, the hospitable and the inhospitable one.

A door is the visible expression of privacy. Outside is whatever we share with others; within, what is secluded, personal, reserved. For all that around which we draw a fence or raise a wall, and over which we spread a roof-tree, for the treasure we would guard from danger, for the meditations we would preserve uninterrupted,

for these we make strong the door. And within the house itself, the opening of door after door expresses a more perfect intimacy, as one is admitted to the reception-room, the study, and the chamber. Consider then the difference between what we have to throw open, and that to which God offers us admittance.

To think of the public treasures to which He admits all, may help our estimate of those rarer gifts which He reserves—the secret things of God. And so we let our minds range over the splendours of the visible world, the solemnities of night with its silent stars and whispering winds, the pomp of rising and setting suns, the march of the seasons across time, the spring fresh with promise, and autumn gorgeous with fruition. We remember the various relations which affect our lives, the interest of public events, the restfulness of home, age venerable with its ripe experience, infancy tender with its laughter and its pathos, all that breathes to our souls in those simple words "My mother," and "My child." And hope waves before us her purple wings, and success

gladdens us, and failure nerves us for a further effort. And the glories of the human intellect, literature and music and art, are freely given to dignify and crown our lives. And in these we are tempted to live, and with these we try to be content. O fools and slow of heart! For in reality all things around us bear witness to their Maker. They are like some lovely park and pleasure-ground thrown open to the public, and proclaiming in all their cultivated beauty the taste and resources of him who planned and who maintains them, and the goodness which shares them equally with friends and foes. But as we range through these, His messengers move among us, proclaiming that within, beyond, is a more perfect splendour, a Paradise without a serpent, "a garden enclosed," where the roses are thornless, and sorrow and sighing have fled away; a marvellous abode which is the perfection of beauty, the house of many mansions, the city where all are blessed. "See," they tell us, "the goodness which is shown in this promiscuous, indiscriminate bounty, and reflect upon what the love must be which He bears to His own, His friends, His beloved. It is the appeal of His lingering tenderness to those who will not accept the riches of His Fatherly heart. What, then, must remain beyond? And then He Himself announces that the door of His most precious treasures, the secret of His profoundest joys, is not shut against the rebellious, except only as long as they rebel. He calls them back, and the door which is closed against desecration will quickly fly open to penitence. He says "knock, and it shall be opened."

The worldly man, who thinks religion gloomy, is in truth lingering in the grass, and neglecting to enter the flower-garden of the mansion. He is refusing to know God, on whose bounty he subsists, and Whom to know is life eternal.

And observe that Jesus does not say, Knock now, and it shall be opened to you when you die. It is not of heaven above that He is chiefly speaking, but of the kingdom of God within us, and of admission to that blessedness which made His persecuted follower, while enduring the loss of all things, cry out: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Yet God hath already revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

Reconciliation, sonship, admission by prayer into God's immediate presence-chamber, the fellowship of the Spirit, holiness of life and holiness of heart—these are denied to none. And these are the choicest blessings. For the agonies which men endure, amid all pomp and splendour, who have lost their own self-respect (or even that shadow and mockery of a good conscience, the respect of their fellow-men), these agonies bear witness to the truth that to be good is a more real bliss than to possess all the good things of all the world.

Now this real bliss is offered to us, every one. No man has really sought for it in vain. It is true that some have prayed for it and have not been answered, but they have wished to combine it with contradictory pleasures which they would

not leave, and so they have never really come up to the door and knocked. But from such as come He keeps nothing back. He does not offer admission only to the vestibule of His household, but teaches us to come with boldness to the very throne of grace. He asks, arguing with our unbelief: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" There is therefore no door of blessedness which He refuses to open unto us.

Turn now from this noble and hospitable doorway, and ask what is within the other door? What treasures are hoarded there, on which He may not intrude? Why is it guarded so jealously that He knocks in vain, and stands waiting, and calls aloud, if perhaps men will hear His voice and open the door?

Sometimes there is the shame of conscious defilement. A man is well aware of corruption in his life, or baseness and foulness in the heart and mind, which he dares not show to others, and so he cowers and shrinks when the door of his heart is smitten, and stops his ears against the gentle and reassuring voice of Him that knocks.

Ah, yes, but his cowardice shows how meanly he thinks about his inmost self, how far he is from being really at peace with himself. At the blossom of his unholy joys, conscience ever gnaws like a worm, and spoils it. The knowledge of higher things possessed by the Christian, and a promise of what is yet to come, reproaches and taunts him for living below his destinies, and even below his secret longings. All noble desires, the spur of the Christian, are to him a wound and an anguish, and the soul, made large enough to contain God, is unfilled and unsated by the little share which one man's energy can snatch from our little world. Therefore he is restless; he demands more, he craves novelty and excitement and anything that may ward off thought. That is the confession of his unhappiness, for if he were content he would repose.

And yet he cannot persuade himself to admit this, behaving like one who hides, through false shame, the hurt which is eating out his life, from the Good Physician with the balm of Gilead in His hand.

Perhaps more often the door which will not open to Christ hides merely empty rooms, folly and idleness and inattention. God only knows how many souls are lost for ever, merely because they would not rouse themselves and take the trouble to be saved at once. Doubtless there are but few that argue, "I am better employed, or at least my employment interests me more than communion with God in Christ."

No, it is the thief of time, procrastination, who is also the murderer of souls. And the devils may well mock the idle loiterer in dusty chambers in a house fast falling to decay, who leaves the Master of heaven waiting because he is too indolent to draw back a rusty bolt and turn the door upon a creaking hinge.

Looking attentively at the latter verse, we discover that while we have been speaking of two transactions, they do actually coincide, so

that whenever we open our own door we ourselves enter in at God's.

Our will is the barrier which at once excludes Him from our hearts, and refuses to receive His love; so that, when it gives way, at the moment when He enters the soul, we are in turn admitted to His guest chamber, and sit down at the feast He spreads. Therefore it is written, If any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will become at once the visitor and the host; I will sup with him, and he with Me.

But what shall we offer to Him who said: If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for all the

beasts of the forest are Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills? He hungers for our love; he seeks not ours but us. The devotion of the humblest spreads for Him a banquet more acceptable than the proudest offerings of the insincere; and so there is none who may fear to admit this marvellous Guest; and in the honours which He bestows, the last shall prove to be first. And in return for our poor faltering love, He gives the love of God; the awful, the immeasurable length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God which passeth all understanding.

WANDERINGS IN THE HOLY LAND.

BY ADELIA GATES.

X.



MY DRAGONMAN AND ARAB HORSE.

IN the courtyard of the hotel there stand three horses saddled for gentlemen, two horses saddled for ladies, and a number of baggage-horses. A heap here, a heap there, a heap yonder, of luggage. There are tents, folding-

stools, and mattresses; there are trunks, bags, parcels, and baskets. There are four quadrilateral sharp-cornered chests, full of frangible articles, such as glass and crockery, bottles of wine, and bottles of lemonade: there are kitchen

utensils, and table linen, and shining silver. There is all that a luxurious Englishman or American could desire for his journey.

A dragoman and several of his men, are, with much talking, shouting, and imprecation, trying to arrange in impossible equilibrium this incongruous mass on the backs of the much-to-be-compassionated beasts. This is the outfit of a group within the hotel, who with such patience as they can command are awaiting the start that had been ordered and promised for a much earlier hour.

A horse with the Arab saddle used by both

a large sheath-knife. On the feet he wears sandals, on the head a turban: over the turban, and bound on with several coils of brown cord, there is a white cotton haik, which falls over the neck to protect it from the heat or the cold as the case may be. If you should raise the turban, you would see beneath it a head, always closely shaven except a little tuft on the crown. In the hand he holds a stick, which may serve the double use of staff and goad.

That is my horse and outfit: this is the mukâri, dragoman, servant, and I am the "party."



JERUSALEM FROM SCOPUS.

men and women, the stirrup-strap a piece of rope, the stirrup itself a loop in the end of that rope; a sack of barley hanging across behind the saddle, and over the sack of barley large saddle-bags securely fastened. One side of these contains a portfolio and the requisites for water-colour painting; in the other side there are the things absolutely necessary to a traveller who has learned to restrict her wants to the narrowest limits consistent with health and comfort.

Erect and motionless beside the horse, stands a tall, swarthy Arab, with sombre countenance and deep-set dark eyes, that seem never to have held a smile. His loose woollen garment is confined at the waist by a leathern belt, from which hangs

A Syrian friend had engaged him to take me to Tiberias, whither he was returning with two other Arabs, who had come to sell some merchandise, perhaps grain. He was glad to get a passenger, though it obliged him to return on foot as he probably came.

My friend had arranged the conditions of the journey with the utmost clearness, as is necessary in dealing with these people, otherwise there is likely to be an unpleasant discussion at the end. Yakûb was to take me to Tiberias, viâ Nazareth: if on arriving at Nazareth I should wish to go to Mount Carmel, six hours west of the Mediterranean coast, he should accompany me, and on reaching Tiberias should receive for each day two mejidi, about three and sixpence, he to pay

the keep of himself and horse. He seemed quite content with these conditions, nodding assent to each article as it was carefully repeated.

We were to start at ten A.M. next day, but as the morning wore on to noon, the Syrian, knowing Yakúb's haunts, went to look for him; and found him just returned from what is equivalent to our police court. He had been sentenced to pay a fine for some offence of which he declared himself innocent: "an enemy had accused him falsely."

He would come to me at three P.M. and we could go to El-Bireh, three hours from Jerusalem, and make an early start from there in the morning. Very well.

But neither at three o'clock nor at four, nor at five, did my tall dark-eyed Arab make his appearance, and I, of course, gave up all idea of leaving Jerusalem that night. At seven he came, with a plausible excuse for his tardiness, and insisted strongly on starting at once. I did not wish to do so, but he said we could make a good bit of way before bed-time, and thus lighten the next day's journey; so I consented, and bidding adieu to the kind friends with whom I had spent the last days, I set off.

Outside the gate of the city there awaited us a party consisting of two men and a woman with two children, one of whom was twelve years old the other three years, all bound for Tiberias. We went down into the Kedron valley and across it up to Mount Scopus. There I halted, and turning about took my last look of Jerusalem. How beautiful she was, her white walls, and domed roofs, shining in the clear moonlight!

We slept in a solitary house by the wayside, a little off the insignificant huddle called Shafut, less than an hour from Jerusalem. I wondered that Yakúb had insisted on starting in the evening to come only this little distance. I understood it later. We all slept on the one floor, a straw mat being laid down for each of us. I was well enough accustomed to this sort of lodgment not to complain of it, and so were they all. In the morning my mukári (muleteer), sent the lad, I think he was Syrian, to get five piastres from me (tenpence) to pay for my bed. I think he kept a good part of it himself, as the boy Mahmoud told me that the others paid only two piastres—fourpence.

There is nothing interesting at Shafut but the tradition that it occupies the place of the ancient Mizpeh; and wiser than I have decided that that venerable site where "the children of Israel were gathered together as one man even from Dan to Beersheba with the land of Gilead," to avenge the evil deed of the Benjamites in Gibeah is not here, but on the route from Lydda to Jerusalem.

After two hours through a not very interesting nor fertile country, we halted at El-Bireh. As every place must have its tradition, El-Bireh in the sixteenth century supplied its lack by manufacturing one, namely that this is the place where the parents of Jesus missed the Child from their company and went back to seek Him.

I drank excellent cool water from a stone jar, and ate excellent bread and cheese that I had brought from Jerusalem. The men ordered coffee

and lay down on the floor to rest, and perhaps to sleep; for an Arab can sleep any where and at any time if he has nothing else to do, and he can equally well gabble half the night if others will join him in it.

They seem to possess unlimited capacity for abstinence as for eating, and for wakefulness as for sleeping.

I strolled on in the pleasant sunshine, botanizing, and singing, now climbing a hill, now descending into a valley, and getting a long way on before the party overtook me. Though the country looked poor, it was flowery. Where Nature cannot enlist Ceres in her service, she can still win Flora as handmaid. In a mining region of the Rocky Mountains of North America, where it was not possible to raise grain, nor potatoes, nor edible vegetables of any sort, nor grass to pasture a cow, even there I found a rich flora.

Thrifty Yakúb asked me to pay my share of the little coffee bill.

"But I had nothing."

"You had some water."

"And not even a cup to drink it from."

He insisted that I had been counted in as one of the party, and that he had paid two-pence for me, and I was goose enough to believe him.

In my dealings with the Arabs of the Sahara, I had seldom met with dishonesty, and was slow in learning to look out for it in the Arabs of the Levant.

We went on through a country sometimes stony and lonely, sometimes fertile and with smiling valleys. By-and-by, I was gladdened by the sight of olive trees and figs. When I first saw olive orchards in their gray and dusty winter robes in Southern France, I thought them ugly; but little by little, as they took on a brighter spring aspect, I got to think them pretty, and to love them as I love few other trees. Perhaps association of ideas has something to say to it, but there is in their peculiar way of growth, and in the twisted and riven trunks of the older trees, a charm that grows upon one.

A detour of an hour or two would have allowed me to visit Shiloh, or rather the Seilûn that occupies that site, interesting from its connection with so many events mentioned in the Old Testament.

There "The whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled and set up the tabernacle of the congregation." There "At the door of the tabernacle Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided by lot their portion of land to the seven tribes that had not yet received their inheritance." There lived Eli and the young Samuel. There, one dreadful day, Eli, "ninety and eight years old and his eyes dim that he could not see," sat by the way, anxiously waiting for news from the battle. And when one came running and told that "Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons, Phineas and Hophni are dead, and the ark of the Lord is taken," then the poor old man "fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and brake his neck that he

died." Did he in that last moment foresee that the Ark would never come back, nor prosperity to Shiloh?

All these and other things from that old time, passed as in a vision before me, and I longed to turn aside unto Seilûn, though I would see only mournful ruins.

But Yakûb was no way disposed thereto, nor were the others of the party. If I had been alone I could have insisted, but as I had made no special stipulation for that, and as they had as much right as I to a voice in the matter, I reluctantly, and with lasting regret, gave up Shiloh, and we kept on to Nâbulus, over plains, hills, and green valleys, with sometimes a barren mountain, and sometimes a village with rock tombs. The "bare mountain" reminds me to quote Joshua xvii. 15, 19. In the distribution of the land among the tribes, the children of Joseph complained that their portion was too small for them, seeing that they were a great people. And Joshua answered them: "If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the

land of the Perizzites, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. But the mountain also shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down, and the outgoings of it shall be thine." Ah! Joshua, we reverence you; yours is the name of a great leader, but if you had lived in this, our day, or could have had the gift of foresight into the far centuries, you would have admonished them not to strip the mountain. You would have said; "He that cuts down and does not replant in some measure, he is not a benefactor to his posterity, but a malefactor."

A cool spring and a spreading oak make an inviting halting-place, and while the others take their rest lying in the pleasant shade, I find mine in painting the flowers that had smiled a welcome from stony places and grassless precipices, as if knowing me their friend and lover. The little child chatters Arab words, the Syrian mother smiles as she listens, the men talk lazily at intervals as they lie on the grass, and I "think of the leagues of land and sea that lie 'twixt those I love and me."

THE SPIDER AND THE STORM.

THE typhoon was upon us in Shanghai. Furious blasts of wind were bursting open windows and doors, mutilating and uprooting trees, tearing down masonry, with fatal consequences to life, whirling boats and junks to destruction; while the rain poured down in a deluge. The rain quickly flooded the settlement, including our compound and verandah, and, worse than all, rushed through unsuspected holes in our roof, bringing down huge fragments of ceiling; so that all our bed-rooms would have been swamped but for baths and basins hastily placed here, there, and everywhere. Meanwhile flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder were terrifying some timid ones among us.

Through a whole day and night the tempest raged; and then towards morning its fury subsided. But still the rain was pouring, and on my way down to breakfast, I stopped to secure the fastening of a staircase window. This window overlooked our one-storeyed kitchens and servants' rooms; and for several days before the storm I had noticed in an angle of roofing among these a very large spider's web, which I had hesitated to have swept away, it was so beautiful in fabric and design.

"The typhoon will have done the work of destruction now," I thought, as I approached the window. To my surprise, the spider's frail home had weathered the storm which had made such havoc of mine! And I saw the present heavy rain pass by it, through it, without damage to one of its gossamer threads. Too light, too slender was the structure to offer any surface of resistance to the deluge.

Surely, I thought, a parable of most practical

truth is here. Some words of the wise Jeremy Taylor, lately read, occurred to me: "I have known the boisterous north wind pass through the yielding air which opened its bosom, and appeased its violence by admitting it with easy compliance in all the regions of its reception. But where the same breath of heaven hath been checked with the stiffness of a tower, or the united strength of a forest, it grew mighty and dwelt there and broke down the lofty branches.

"As the noise of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, sounds forth the voice of the Lord in this our world, in its great national crisis, in earthquake, pestilence and famine, wars and rumours of wars. And in each human life how clearly at one time or another is realised that mighty power, in some shock of sorrow, blighting bereavement, loss of worldly possession, or some other sudden change in our lot, all reminding us how utterly we are in the hands of an Omnipotent God."

But while the apostle's challenge stands unanswered, unanswerable, "Who hath resisted His will?" the promise of old stands also sure: "Harden not your necks, but yield yourselves unto the Lord; for the Lord is gracious and merciful." "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He shall exalt you in due time." "With the lowly is wisdom;" and there is no wisdom like that divinely taught, whether in the instincts of nature, or in the lessons of God's word.

Not only is there safety, escape from all real harm, in lowly yielding to the will of God; when the rain was over and gone, my spider's web was not uninjured only, but beautified; on

every gossamer thread glittered rainbow-coloured gem-like drops of water, bringing to mind the words of the holy Rutherford :—

With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.

Are not the Word of God, the book of Nature, the course of Providence, the scheme of redemption, instinct with the principle here illustrated? Gain after loss, aye, and through loss; perfecting through suffering; the light affliction "working the weight of glory."

Yet one more thought involved in the spider's web. "Little but exceeding wise." The man of

wisdom has declared her, "taking hold with her hands, even in kings' palaces." The wisdom of the lowly is not defensive only, but productive of high attainment and achievement which no assumption of greatness could command. Here again is illustrated a radical law of the kingdom of God. "The meek shall inherit the earth:" "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." And how clearly is it shown in Scripture from end to end that the way of lowliness is the way of life eternal; that only in becoming "As little children" can we enter the palace of the King of kings; the home of joy everlasting on whose portals it is written, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

ALICE JANE MUIRHEAD.

THE BOILED RABBIT.

I SHALL never forget the day when peace and love were restored to me and my family by the means of a boiled rabbit. Old as I am, that simple memory comes often back again across the years.

Let me explain :

My father was an artisan, one of those town workmen who live in villages. I was his only child; so, although our cottage was not large, there was room in it for our small family. But my mother died before I was six years old, and some time afterwards my father married again. I was young enough to be pleased with the excitement of his wedding, although I had loved my mother, and still remembered her.

Let me hasten to add that it is not my intention to write a tale on the unkindness of a step-mother, for my father, who was a man of common-sense, had chosen a good woman for his second wife. My step-mother was a clean, tidy body, a real Christian in her rough, honest way, and well enough disposed to treat me kindly, and to make the home of my father comfortable. In spite of this, I must own, though I own it to my shame, that I could not get on with my step-mother.

The principal difficulty was this—and, although you may laugh at me, I can assure you it was a real difficulty—my mother had been a woman of education, and my step-mother had no love for books. My mother had brought to my father, besides a Family Bible, a Robinson Crusoe, a Scott's Poems, and a Whole Duty of Man; and she always encouraged me to believe that, if I paid attention to my "schooling," I should some day be able to read these books myself. I can see her still, a little, delicate creature, bending down to kiss me before I went to school; or raising her face from her needlework, always ready to be interested when I poured out my tales of my lessons on my return. Now my step-mother had no opinion of books or lessons—she considered them to be luxuries, unfit for the poor.

It was owing to her representations that my father seized every opportunity of setting me to work, so that, in spite of the strict laws of schools, I found myself often cut off from my lesson-books. Every year the head boys of our village school were examined, and the boy who did best received two pounds as a reward—you can fancy what the idea of

such an amount of money was to me, who had never handled a piece of gold in my life. I grudged every hour that was not spent with my books. I devoted to them every moment I could spare. I detested our allotment-ground, my little brothers and sisters, the pails of water I must fill, and the wood that I must cut. Looking back on those days, I can see plainly now that my family had reason to think me an unamiable boy, but I assure you that the only reason for my selfishness was that I wished to learn and gain two pounds. For otherwise I was ready to be pleased with my little brothers and sisters, even with the babies, though I disliked the perambulator.

Well, the examination day came and passed. I thought that I had not done so well as I might have done, and was very much distressed. I imagine, by the way, that after an examination day one always feels that one has not done so well as one might have done. My anxiety was great: I became feverish, unhappy, still less inclined for domestic duties; my step-mother said that I "went worretin' round," and that I "wasn't no sort o' good in anything." I had no comfort but the hope of the two pounds, and the feverish hope was as bad as an illness could have been.

At last, one morning—it is a distinct remembrance still—I heard from within the cottage the sound of the garden gate; and, going to the door, I saw our schoolmaster advancing with dignity up the garden path. He was a lean man, with a look of great importance, grey-haired, spectacled, somewhat solemn in manner, and decidedly slow in speech. But he put his hand into his pocket whilst he wished good-day to my step-mother, and there—there, in his fingers, I saw a gleam of gold.

The next thing I remember, for I was too much excited to know what happened until some while had passed, is that the money was laid upon the table, and that all the little ones gathered round to see it. The schoolmaster was gone, and I was no longer awed by his presence: I was delighted, triumphant. I do not know what I said or did. And it was then—then—that my step-mother delivered her opinion; she said that "it was a queer tale that one could get two pounds for nothing."

For nothing! Through the whole year I had toiled and striven, sitting up at night, getting up early in the morning,

renouncing marbles, and cricket; everything, that I might spend my time over books and sums. Nothing! Are lesson-books nothing, and slates, and examinations, and the honour of being amongst the head boys of the school? Oh, what is the good of trying, if when one has received the prize one is treated as if he had not done anything?

I ran out of doors into the damp autumn day; I spent the whole day in wanderings, hungry, cold, despairing. I made up my mind that I would go to "Ameriky," where honourable distinctions perhaps are recognised. How I should ever be able to find my way to "Ameriky," or what I should do when I got there, I did not stay to consider; I was only determined that I would leave my step-mother, so ignorant, so unfit to understand my qualities! I cried, and said to myself that if my own mother had been alive she would have been proud of me for having gained the money. I told myself that I would never work at school again; no, even if the school-master were angry with me, I would not! And then, as the darkness fell, and the cold became intense, I found my way slowly to my cottage home. I remember at this moment how cheering its red gleam seemed from the muddy roads and the dark autumn night.

If I had not looked such a miserable creature as I entered, it is possible that my father might have had some "words" with me; for I had not fulfilled one of the household duties which always fell to my share on holidays. But I was wet, wretched, shivering, unable even to eat, and I had just gained the two pounds which lay on the mantel-piece. So without much reproof I was allowed to attempt my supper, and then, aching and shuddering, to crawl off to bed. I had been cold, but as I lay down in the bed I felt as hot as if I had been burned with fire. A strange night followed, during which I did not sleep, though I was dreaming, and chattering nonsense all the time.

The next morning I was ill, and I remained ill for many days, sick with fever, the result of cold, and perhaps of over-work, suffering a good deal, of which I remember little, since I was continually delirious. Even worse days followed, when I was considered better, and brought into the other room, and placed in my father's chair, feeling as if I were all bones, and loose bones too, and in danger of dropping to pieces as I sat. I couldn't eat, not even when I tried to do so, and the parish doctor shook his head at me. I was too ill, and perhaps too young to understand that it is a serious business when a doctor shakes his head.

And then, one night—how distinctly I remember it!—I awoke suddenly in the middle of the night, and saw that my step-mother was seated in the room, working with desperate haste, by candle-light. The room was dark, as there was only that one candle, with its shadowy form, and its round bright brass guard, and I lay watching it, and listening to the voice of my father, calling to my step-mother from the other bed-room. She replied that there was some work that she must finish, and I suppose that he went to sleep, and that I also slept, for the next thing that I remember is the sight of my step-mother folding up her work, in the grey dawn of the morning. For some reason that I did not attempt to understand, she had chosen to sit at her needle-work all night.

That morning, after breakfast, when my father had gone to work, and my brothers and sisters had all set out for school, and there was only left in the cottage the baby in the cradle, my step-mother, the child of a neighbour, and myself, I was astonished to see my step-mother put on her bonnet, and say that she must take her work to the Hall at once. She added that it would be some while before she returned, for she thought that when she had been to the Hall she would walk on to the town. I was vexed, for I felt that she was neglecting me, and I knew that I was ill and important, and ought not to be neglected. I told

myself that if my mother had been alive she would not have gone to the town when I was ill.

Ah, well! The morning passed somehow, and with the worst of grace I endured the attentions of the neighbour's child. At noon came the noisy family, and my father, who was not pleased to find that his wife was away at dinner-time. I was not sorry that my father should be vexed with her: at the bottom of my heart there was a tiny, spiteful pleasure. We were still sitting at the table, although our meal was over, when the door burst open suddenly, and she came in.

How well I can see her! A stout, panting woman, tired with her walk, holding her basket, breathing loudly, but still with a look of triumph on her face, such as I had never seen before. Without allowing us any time to speak, she took the cover off the basket and held up the dish it contained, and there—oh, wonder! there lay a boiled rabbit, smothered with white sauce. Accustomed to live upon bacon all the year we were silent, breathless, hoping for a festival.

"Lookee here," cried mother, in agitation and delight, "this is the rabbit I have bought for Jim. I sat up all night, I did, that I might finish the needlework I was adoin' for the Hall. And then I did walk to the town, I bought the rabbit, and I stopped to see my aunt, and cooked it there; and I have made it wi' white soss, very nice, so as Jim may have summat real good to eat. It have gone to my heart, it have, to see him pinin' an' to know as there wasn't a thing as he could touch. An' now, this rabbit, it is for none else than Jim, an' he shall eat it his own self, every bit."

Do you blame me because, as I write these simple words, the tears rise again to my eyes as they did then, at the remembrance of the great kindness and affection which in its simple fashion had worked so hard for me? No doubt at the time I had other, lower feelings; in spite of my illness I became conscious of an appetite.

I did eat that rabbit; I ate the whole of it, for my step-mother was determined that I should; it was placed in the inner room, and whenever I felt inclined I went in, and cut off a mouthful and swallowed it. I do not know whether, on recovery from illness, boiled rabbit at short intervals is ever recommended by the doctors—if it is not I can only suppose that what cured me of my weakness was the delightful feeling of importance and luxury. The other children looked on me with awe-struck eyes, and said I had a rabbit to myself, like a gentleman! I was proud of the distinction, though I must do myself the justice to say that I would have shared it with them if I had been allowed to do so.

I got well; and from the time of my recovery there was more happiness in our cottage than there had been before; for the want of union between myself and my step-mother had been the occasion of discomfort to everyone. I think I paid back the rabbit by my affection and obedience; I am certain at any rate that I tried to do so, though still to my step-mother belongs the higher honour of having been kind to me before I had been good to her. Always, to this day, when I hear of some little kindness, I think of the rabbit; I cannot help doing so.

Have I myself, in the course of my busy life, given rabbits, or other kindnesses, to those in need of them? Have I tried to destroy ill-nature by affection, and worked hard for those who would not have worked for me? Perhaps not—not too often—such behaviour is not always easy; and yet I have not forgotten the rabbit with white sauce. These things—often little things—make life so much better. But I have not always remembered that they should be done. Have you?

M. A. CURTOIS.

IMMORTELLLES.

CHAPTER II.



IN their way to the cottage which was to be Winnie Markham's home for the next few weeks, the foster-mother and her little charge became quite friendly. Won by her new friend's sympathetic interest, Winnie was easily led to speak of her former life, which, up to the time of her parents' death, had been respectable, even comfortable; but since then had been little else than a struggle for bare existence. As Mrs. Carver listened to the story, so touching, but, alas! so common to the poor of London, she felt more and more satisfied that, in receiving the orphan waif into her home, she had taken a step which she would have no cause to regret. "She's a fine bairn," she said to herself, "and Rosie 'll be right happy with her."

If Rose Carver was glad to see Winnie, she did not show her gladness by any words of welcome. Face to face with each other, the two children looked at one another in silence, shyness holding them spell-bound. Seeing how it was, Mrs. Carver, after a simple introduction, wisely left them to themselves, and retired to the back kitchen to see after her delayed cooking. As the door closed behind her mother, Rosie looked as if she would fain call her back.

"What is it?" asked Winnie, noticing the other's uneasy expression and restless movement.

"It's my pillow that's slipped." With a quick, deft turn, the pillow was adjusted, and the invalid laid back comfortably.

"How do you know so well?" asked Rosie wonderingly.

"Mother was ill for a long while, and she had only me to change her pillows."

"Is she better now?"

"No, she's dead."

"Oh, dear, I'm so sorry!" There was a moment's pause. "But now that she's in heaven—she's gone there, hasn't she?—Miss Annette would say we must not be sorry for her, because heaven's far better. I'm so sorry for you, though, for it's sad when people die. Perhaps I'm going to die too, but I don't speak about it to mother, for it makes her cry."

"Are you not very much frightened?" asked Winnie with a world of terror in her large eyes.

"Not now. You see Miss Annette told me I wouldn't know anything but that Jesus was taking me up in His arms. I wouldn't be frightened with Jesus, you know."

"I don't know nothink about Jesus, leastways not much," murmured the other a little regretfully.

An expression half grieved, half shocked, passed over the sick girl's face, and her lips parted to speak, but at that moment her attention was diverted by the sudden down-fall of a heavy shower. "Oh, dear!" she sighed, "there's the rain, and now I won't be able to have the window open to watch for father's coming home!"

"It's too bad!" exclaimed Winnie sympathetically.

"No, it's not that. Father would say—he's a gardener, you know—that likely the flowers are needing a drink, and Miss Annette says that God never makes a mistake about

the weather, never." Then, seeing a puzzled look in the eyes turned upon her, "Did you not know it was God that sends the rain? How did you think it came?"

"Oh, I just thought that the wind tore holes in the clouds and then they leaked. But——" her tone changing to one of hurried eagerness, "if your father's a gardener, perhaps he can tell me the name of the flowers that don't wither, the ones that stand for ever."

"Immortelles, do you mean? They last a long time, I know, but not for always. I don't think any flowers do that——"

"But I've read about them," interrupted Winnie with a positive little nod. "It said—'the flower fadeth, but——' then the name was blotted out of the kind that it said 'stand for ever.'"

A smile lit up the pale face of the sick girl. "I know these words," she said softly. "It was one of our Sunday-school texts, and Miss Annette explained it to us. The words missed out are 'the word of the Lord,' that means His promises, you know, and teacher told us they were the real immortelles that stand for ever."

"Only promises!" repeated Winnie, grievously disappointed. "Promises aren't worth. They don't keep. They are just like the flowers; they wither. A man in Covent Garden said he'd give me some flowers for myself to sell—but he didn't."

"Ah, but God's promises are different, they keep for always——"

"Are you sure that it's only promises?" asked Winnie, unwilling to give up all hope. "Look here," and she drew from the bosom of her dress the soiled, but still treasured text-card.

Rosie glanced at it, then, with a cry of joy flung her arms round Winnie's neck. "Oh, how good God is! That's my card. I made it for you. And they were my flowers I sent you. And you're my own little rose-girl——"

"I don't understand," interrupted the bewildered Winnie, as the other paused for breath. "You didn't know nothink about me till I came."

"But Jesus did. I asked Him to let some little girl have them, that was needing them very much, and ever since I've prayed for you, though I didn't know you. Before the flower-service day came, when I was painting the card to be ready for the flowers, Miss Annette showed me this promise of God's—'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' And she said my little text-card was just a tiny bit of the Bread of Life that I was going to send I hardly knew where yet, but it was for somebody who was hungry and needing God. She said I mightn't find out any more about it for 'many days,' but in the end I should, for God had promised. And He hasn't made me wait 'many days' at all, only a very few, and then He has let me find you! Oh, mother, mother," as Mrs. Carver, a little anxious at the sound of the invalid's excited voice, hurried in, "come and give Winnie a kiss, for she's my rose-girl that God has let me find. Winnie, you see it's quite true that God's promises are the real immortelles that stand for ever."

CHAPTER III.

It was the middle of August, and Winnie Markham was still at Fordingbridge. Quickly, all too quickly, she said

to herself, the summer was passing away. To her the days and weeks would have brought nothing but unclouded sunshine, save for the shadowing thought that the day was surely coming when, her beautiful holiday in the country over, she must go back to London, and begin her old dreary life again as a lonely orphan wail in the great city. If sometimes she found herself wondering why that dreaded day had not already arrived, she tried, child-like, to put away from her all thought of the future.

Later on she learnt something of what had passed between her foster-mother and Miss Wards only a week after her arrival at the cottage. Miss Annette had come to see Rosie, and at the same time she brought with her the weekly sum she had guaranteed for the board of her little protégé. To her surprise, Mrs. Carver absolutely refused to touch a penny of it. "Na, na, Miss Annette," she said half indignantly, and with an expression of resolute determination which curiously reminded her visitor of old nursery days when she and her sisters had tried, but always in vain, to defy the authority of nurse Stewart. "'Deed, I wonder at your offering me that. You know fine how the bairn's doin' more for mine than all the doctors and their medicines put together. And she's a grander help to me in the house than I can tell: she's that willing, bless her! And as for the father, it's just divertin' to see the work he makes with the wee lassie." Miss Wards knew her old nurse better than to offer again to pay for Winnie.

The two girls were alone one morning, Mrs. Carver having been obliged to go out for the day. Winnie had been so busy since breakfast that at last for a rest she had brought her Sunday-school books beside Rosie, and together they had gone over the lessons for the week.

"Winnie, it's next best to going to school myself to have you go, and then come back and tell me all that Miss Annette says," remarked the invalid, shutting her Bible and lying back among her cushions. "Do you know," she went on, looking affectionately at Winnie, "I think that we were meant to be sisters, you and me. We are so like each other, inside of ourselves, I mean, in our thinks about everything, and in our liking the same people, and —"

"We are not altogether like each other though," interrupted Winnie in a rather sober voice. "You know you're a Christian, and I'm not."

"Oh, but," and Rosie bent forward, her face full of earnest pleading, "you are going to be. Perhaps you have come to Jesus already without knowing it quite."

"No," replied the other stoutly, "I'm waiting till I'm gooder. I didn't know before how wicked I was; but, you see, every Sunday Miss Annette speaks about me. She doesn't say it's me, but it is, and I just wonder how she knows so well. Every lesson she tells me about another fault I have, and I seem just to grow badder and badder. But, perhaps, some day she'll finish; don't you think she will? and then I'll feel better, and begin to be a Christian."

"Oh, but you mustn't wait for that! We've got to go to Jesus just as we are, and not keep Him waiting. He wants us to come."

"Miss Annette did say that too, but I thought she meant the other girls, not me, of course."

"You see we can't make ourselves better, though we tried ever so hard, and waited ever so long. Miss Annette and father and mother and the Bible all say that, so it must be true. Only Jesus can do it, and He's willing, and I think we must grieve Him very much when we won't believe it and come when He wants us to."

There was a long pause, then Winnie rose up with a light in her eyes. "I'm going, but," glancing at her working dress, "I can't go like this. I must put on my Sunday things, that will take a long time, and there's the peas to shell, and —"

"It doesn't matter about your clothes; I know it doesn't. One Sunday, when Miss Annette had been telling us about the dear Lord Jesus dying for us, because He loved us so, and wanted us for Himself, I told her quite low that I wanted to give myself to Him. She whispered to me to wait; and, when the rest were all gone, she took me to a quiet place, where we were alone, and she never said a word about my clothes, but just went with me straight to Jesus."

"But you see you did have on your best things," interrupted Winnie.

"Well, but that was just because I had, you know. And they weren't half so 'best' as teacher's own. Besides there's a 'immortelle' for you, if you're not sure. It says that, if we come, God will in nowise cast us out."

She stopped, for Winnie, as if a thought had struck her, laid down her basket of peas, and quietly left the room. From the kitchen the sound of running water and hurried pulling out of drawers reached Rosie's ears strained to sharpest keenness by loving anxiety. The silence which followed seemed very long to the watcher in the sick-room, but at length the door opened, and Winnie came softly in, her face shining with something besides the soap and water she had given it, her hair smoothly brushed, and her morning frock covered with a spotlessly clean pinafore.

"He kept His promise," she whispered, coming very close to Rosie. "I told Him all about it, and He just said quite low 'Winnie!' That was all, but I heard, and I didn't seem to want any more."

Words did not appear to come readily to Rosie just then, tears threatened to come instead. In silence she watched, while Winnie, after a moment's pause, tied on her working-apron, and sat down to shell the peas. Not a word was spoken until the task finished, Winnie rose up to carry her bowl and tray to the kitchen. Then two thin arms were slipped lovingly round her neck, and an earnest voice whispered in her ear, "Winnie, I'm so glad, so very glad; I feel like getting well."

There was a knock at the door. It was the doctor. He had not been to see his little patient for some time, and now he looked at her in astonishment. "Why, Rosie, I do not seem to know you! 'Better,' you say? To be sure you are better. Who has been taking such famous good care of you—this little woman here?" turning to Winnie.

"I've been helping, sir," she answered simply.

The doctor looked down at his patient. "I rather think," he continued, his fingers on her pulse, "you don't want any more of my medicines. What do you think," he asked, turning again to Winnie with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "would something nasty be good for her?"

Winnie's gaze had wandered a little wistfully to the doctor's open carriage standing at the gate. "No, sir," she promptly replied, her cheeks flushing however with the effort she made to get out the words, "not something nasty, but something nice. Please give her a drive. She never gets out, and so she never gets strong."

The doctor was a kind man. He would not let the child see that she had asked a strange thing. Smiling a little to himself he went down the garden-path to the carriage to make a few arrangements for the invalid's comfort. Meanwhile Winnie, with the help of a friendly neighbour, got Rosie and herself ready for the great event; and, almost before the sick girl had recovered from her bewilderment, she found herself being driven gently through the sunshine among the green fields and hedges she had begun to fear she might never see again. Her eyes shone, and a faint colour rose on her cheeks fanned by the gentle summer breeze, yet she took it all so quietly, so silently, that Winnie, herself greatly excited, hardly understood, not realising at first that this was a case of happiness being too great for words to express.

Just at first the girls were slow to tell their great news to Mrs. Carver that afternoon on her return home. "Let us wait till father comes, too," Rosie had said. But something in their flushed faces struck the mother. "Has anything happened, bairns?" she asked rather anxiously, as she glanced round the room which, however, betrayed no sign of anything unusual. Then the wonderful story of the doctor's visit was poured into her ears, told a little confusedly it must be confessed, and sometimes by both children at once. The mother looked from one to the other, her face working strangely. "And you're not tired, Rosie?" she asked, bending fondly over the couch. "My lambie, can it be that the Lord is going to give you back yet to your mother?"

"It's all Winnie, mother. The doctor said she'd been taking such care of me, and it was she that asked for the drive for me, wasn't it brave of her?"

Mrs. Carver turned to Winnie, and taking her flushed face between her hands, kissed her forehead. "My bairn, my ain bairn," she murmured, then hurriedly left the room.

"She didn't say thank you, but you know she meant it, Winnie."

Winnie turned a pair of shining eyes upon her friend. "Rosie," she whispered "she's given me the biggest 'thank you' I ever got in all my life."

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. XVII.

The answers to the following questions are all found in the Book of Proverbs.

What shall the counsels of the wicked be?

(It dwells in evil hearts);

What must we take fast hold of, lest she flee,

For wisdom soon departs?

What covers others' sins, and silence keeps

About transgressions past?

Say what the seed he sows who sadly reaps

Vanity at the last.

While scorning scorners, what shall heaven give

Unto the lowly one?

And what do sinners follow while they live

And love to see it done?

What is it that is always spread in vain

In sight of any bird?

What must we buy, and sell it not again?

For certain is its word.

With these initials tell the kind of man

Who stands with kings and rules;

He groweth rich by doing all he can,

While want shall wait on fools.

L. T.

QUESTIONS ON THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—IV.

1. Paul and Barnabas had to protest against some false teaching; what was the nature of it?

2. What arrangement was made to settle the dispute?

3. In the meeting that followed, who were the chief speakers?

4. What did Paul say of them on another occasion?

5. What resolution was drawn up, and at whose suggestion?

6. How did it happen that Paul and Barnabas separated?

7. Do we know anything that would make Barnabas favour Mark?

8. Whom did Paul choose for a companion? What is the longer form of his name?

9. Where did Paul meet with Timothy?

10. In his treatment of Timothy, how did he show his anxiety to comply with the law of Moses?

11. Mention two other instances of a similar kind.

12. Quote a sentence from one of Paul's epistles in which he gives his reason for acting thus.

13. Mention three incidents by which Paul was led by God's providence into Europe.

14. Name the places he passed between Troas and Philippi.

15. Mention a passage in the Psalms that speaks of meeting by the river-side.

16. What good deed of Paul's brought persecution upon him?

17. What was the accusation laid against him?

18. How did his imprisonment lead to further good?

A SCRIPTURE ELLIPSIS EXERCISE.

NO. II.

But ——— cometh after me ——— mightier than I.

The Lord is merciful and gracious ——— ———

and plenteous in mercy.

Then said I, wisdom ——— ——— strength, nevertheless ———

poor man's wisdom is despised.

How are the ——— fallen ——— the weapons of war perished.

He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; ——— ———

with diligence.

By ——— ——— he hath garnished the heavens.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice

——— Cain.

And ——— ——— not his cross and followeth after

Me, is not worthy of Me.

Then cometh He to ——— ——— of Samaria.

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. IX.—p. 144.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. M aneah | Judges xiii. |
| 2. A rk | Gen. vi. 14. |
| 3. T homas | S. John xx. 29. |
| 4. T imothy | 2 Tim. i. 5. |
| 5. H iram | 1 Kings v. 1. |
| 6. E ngedi | 1 Sam. xxiv. 13. |
| 7. W ine | S. John ii. 1-11. |

NO. X.—p. 160.—PRIEST.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. P ride | Prov. xvi. 18. |
| 2. R aven | Lev. xi. 15. |
| 3. I vory | 1 Kings x. 18. |
| 4. E ye | S. Matt. vi. 22. |
| 5. S eed | S. Luke viii. 11. |
| 6. T ruth | S. John viii. 32. |

KEY TO THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—II.—p. 192.

(1 and 2) Acts vii. 58; xxii. 20; (3.) vi. 9; (4.) viii. 3; (5.) ix. 1, 2, 14; (6.) ix. 3-8; xxii. 6-11; xxvi. 12-15; (7.) ix. 11; (8.) ix. 17, 18; (9.) ix. 15; (10.) ix. 23; (11.) ix. 25; (12.) 2. Cor. xi. 22; (13.) Gal. i. 17, 18; (14.) Acts ix. 27; iv. 36.