

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

TOM HERON OF SAX.

A STORY OF REVIVAL TIMES.



CARRIED OFF BY THE CONSTABLE.

CHAPTER XX.—WITH NELSON IN NOTTINGHAM.

"I SHALL leave you under the care of my very good friend John Nelson. He is about to start upon a round of visiting, and will have some stiff work to do, I doubt not, in some of the places whither he is going. I think that you, my friend, will be an excellent companion for him. I think that you will have work and to spare of a kind that will be congenial to you.

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If I mistake you not you are of the stuff that fights gallantly upon the weaker side."

So spoke Mr. Wesley to Tom Heron, after the latter had travelled with him for some days, attending upon him with all reverence, feeling honoured even to be permitted to act as the servant of the great preacher, though Mr. Wesley was singularly independent of any personal attendance, and treated Tom rather as a friend and brother than the humble servitor he fain would

PRICE ONE PENNY.

be. At every preaching and meeting along the road the young blacksmith was present, a most attentive hearer, drinking in knowledge with the greatest avidity, and feeling his faith strengthened and confirmed each day as it passed by.

It had not occurred to him to reason about the future; he had not asked why he was taken from Sax, or what his work was to be. All he knew was that the Lady of Ernscliff had promised to care for Molly in his absence, and had given to him a sum of money sufficient to defray the cost of his modest wants for some considerable time. She had told him that she thought there was work for him to do beyond the precincts of Sax, and Mr. Wesley had said the same. He had, therefore, gone forth without questioning or wondering, prepared to act under orders, and trusting that his way would be made plain before him. So long as Mr. Wesley was his companion he had felt that he had no need to ask whither they were going or what his duty was to be. It was enough to be with him, drinking in his words, receiving a continual feast of instruction, and learning to view life and the work in which he hoped to be engaged with a wider grasp of its real aim and object. He began to have a dim understanding of Mrs. Mary's words. He began to feel ashamed of the bitter way he had turned from Mr. Latham's attempts at consolation, resolving that he could and would only hear those who were called in the world by the name of Methodists. With the wider views of life he now began to take, came wider comprehension of eternal truths, and a sense of expansion and elevation was the result which was in strange contrast to his old depression and despair.

When he heard that he was to join Nelson, he felt a thrill of mingled regret and pleasure—regret at leaving his present master, pleasure at being with the one whose words first aroused within him a sense of his own sinfulness and the eternal mercy of God. But his common-sense told him that he could not always follow Mr. Wesley in his wide journeyings, and he started forth with a high courage and a heart full of zeal for the work that awaited him with his old guide, Nelson.

"I am bound for Nottingham, Tom Heron," was one of the first words spoken to him by the stone-mason, as he looked up from the letter which Tom delivered to him from Mr. Wesley. "I shall be glad of the company of a man of thews and sinews, not that I would willingly repel force by force; but there be times when it is well to show that we can stand up against assaults of bone and muscle. The pair of us, Tom, will not, I think, be afraid to face any mob in the world."

Tom smiled and the eager sparkle in his eye showed that the fighting instinct was not altogether conquered in him yet. Nelson saw this and smiled, laying his arm upon that of his new coadjutor.

"Softly, my young friend, we will not fight with fists save in defence of our own persons. We will even then strike no blow, but only ward them off. And now, friend Tom, tell me how it has been with thee these past years since I saw

thee last? By what Mr. Wesley tells me of thee I should say that thou hadst passed through deep waters."

"Ay, truly, I think I have done," answered Tom, "but I trust I have come safe through them to the other side. Since I have been with Mr. Wesley I have felt all my doubts and troubles vanishing away. But I will gladly tell thee all my tale, though it is a bitter one to bring to mind."

"Then save it for the morrow when we ride forth together. It will beguile the way, and that way is something long. Dost thou know this part of the country, or is it new to thee?"

"I know little save what lies betwixt my own village and the city of York," answered Tom. "Tell me of this town of Nottingham. Is it like York?"

"In no wise, albeit it is a fine place as these smaller cities go. But the people are turbulent and riotous, and there be many that stir up strife whenever the Word of the Lord is preached among them. It follows that the mayor and aldermen mislike our coming, for they say that we stir up the people to mischief, and many times we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us. But, I thank God, He never leaves us to the mercy of the mob. His angel of the covenant is ever watching over us. I have been in many perils, but never one that has hurt. As we ride to-morrow I will tell thee more. But you have doubtless heard and seen something of it with Mr. Wesley."

"All men were very anxious to hear him. There were no riots when he stood up to preach."

"I thank the Lord that He hath so turned men's hearts, but again and again he has been in fearful peril, it has seemed as if naught could save him but a miracle, and yet he hath come out scarce scathed from the tumult. Surely the Lord is watching over him, else some mischief must have assuredly befallen him ere now."

Upon the following morning Tom set forth with his new companion, the two leaving the little body of brethren and journeying alone towards Nottingham.

As they rode, Tom told all his history to Nelson, not keeping back any detail; and it was listened to with profound interest. The only thing which was now troubling Tom was the fear that he had not been truly converted, because no very sudden and overwhelming change had come over him this second time, as it had done upon the occasion of his first conviction of sin, when the brothers Holdsworthy and Seaforth had prayed over him as he lay stricken in York.

He had then felt no doubt as to his conversion: but he had turned back again to his sins, and this time—notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Wesley himself had come and talked with him and prayed over him—he had been conscious of only a gradual diffusion of peace and comfort, not of any sudden illumination, penetrating like a flash of lightning the dark pall of cloud that had enwrapped him, and making him know and see all in a moment that his sins were blotted out and forgiven. Indeed, Tom said that

he still felt them to be something of a burden. He looked back to much in the immediate past with pain and shame, and though he had truly repented, and believed that his sins were forgiven him, he had not received any overwhelming and irresistible conviction on the subject. Nelson himself looked a little grave as he heard this, for the doctrine of instantaneous conversion was deeply rooted in his mind, and his experience had been favourable to the growth of that belief. Still he spoke encouragingly to Tom, and advised him to be instant in prayer that he might receive the full assurance of pardon, and that at some given moment—instantaneously. But he would not have him discouraged because the sense of free and full pardon was withheld for a time. Possible this was God's way of punishing him for that sad relapse into sin after he had been pulled out of the slough, and washed white in the Blood of the Lamb. He was sorry the matter had not been fully discussed with Mr. Wesley, who would, doubtless, have given him much good counsel: but at least Tom was now treading the narrow path, and perhaps, in fullness of time, a fresh outpouring of blessing might be given to him.

So it was in a very humble spirit that Tom reached the destination for which they were bound, and rode with his companion through the imperfectly-lighted streets of Nottingham.

"We will go to Mary White's," said Nelson. "She is a godly woman, and hath a comfortable house where we may conveniently lodge, and a room where we may see the brethren and hold a meeting for prayer and praise. I have lodged with her before, and doubtless she will look for us again. Some of the Society know that we are coming this way at this time."

It was very interesting to Tom to see with what eagerness and delight his companion was welcomed at the small and unpretentious house where they presently stopped. It was plain that they were expected, for the door immediately opened, two or three men stepped out to take the horses, and Tom found that there was an assembly of full a score of persons awaiting the preacher in the large parlour of the house.

Although the travellers had ridden forty miles since morning, and had scarce broken their fast all that time, Nelson immediately declared it his intention of addressing the little assembly; and his exhortation was followed by a prayer-meeting of no small duration of time, in which almost half the persons present were engaged at some time or another in prayer; and, to his own great astonishment, Tom Heron felt powerfully constrained to uplift his own voice in a short but very earnest supplication. It was the first time that the need of utterance had ever been felt by him, and it startled him more than it surprised any of those present. His words were few, but they were eloquent with deep feeling, and when the little company rose from their knees, many shook him by the hand and hoped that they would hear him again.

The young man felt confused and abashed. He had had no intention of thus distinguishing himself, and felt utterly unfit to pray or to preach

before others: but his friend Nelson, as at last they sat at their much needed supper together, told him frankly that if it pleased God to give him the faculty of speech, he must not shrink from using it to His glory: and he went on to tell him of his own reluctance in his early life to address his brethren, and how unfit and unsuitable he had felt for the task: but that he had obeyed the behests of those who were his own teachers, and had found that grace was always given sufficient for the task in hand.

Tom listened in silence, secretly hoping that no such charge would ever be given to him, and feeling that a less suitable man to teach others could scarcely be found on the face of the earth: but no more was said upon the subject then, and the weary travellers retired to their beds and slept the sleep of those who have earned their repose, though at dawn they were up and about again, preparing for the day's work.

This work, as Tom was now to find, was no sinecure. The little Society in Nottingham was in the same need of guiding and feeding, and directing, as was the case in all places where the Methodists had been. There had been a complete split in the camp here on the vexed question of election and free-will, and a small party had entirely divided from the rest, to set up a small meeting-room of their own, no longer owning the sway of John Wesley, but calling themselves disciples of Mr. Whitefield.

Nelson attempted no dealings with these persons, though he held a heated argument with their delegates, who came to see if he had not abandoned the errors of his way, and come to their way of thinking.

Tom listened with some satisfaction to his master's eloquent asseverations of the saving virtue of faith in Christ, as he quoted passage after passage to prove that Christ had died for all, and that if men were born to fore-ordained damnation or salvation, there could be no need to preach the Word to them in any form, for God's decree could not be altered, and that for the damned ones to call upon His name was the very mockery of fate. It seemed to the young neophyte that his leader came off with flying colours in the strife: but there always was a painful impression left upon his mind that there were certain arguments on the other side not answered, but only evaded. Tom was too clear-headed not to see that certain texts quoted by the Calvinists with regard to predestination were never really explained away. He did not like to admit this even to himself: but he was dimly conscious of it, and always came away from these discussions with the uncomfortable feeling in his mind that in some slight degree the Bible was divided against itself. His own faith in faith never wavered. But he wished that instead of quoting multitudes of texts in favour of saving faith, its champions would answer and refute those passages in which it certainly appeared as though God had taught the doctrine of predestination to damnation or salvation. But when he tried to ask this explanation from Nelson, he was met with another of his outbreaks of weighty Scriptural statements appearing to

bear on the other side, and it seemed to him as though this were the only way out of the difficulty—to weigh the balance of argument for and against, and to find, as he and his friends had done, that it preponderated vastly upon the side of free grace and salvation by faith.

If the method was not entirely satisfactory, at least there was little time to think about it now. Already many hours had passed by in meetings with the brethren, and in holding discourse of various kinds with them; and now the time had come for a preaching in an open place in the town, which preaching might at any time be interrupted by the mob. Tom walked beside the preacher as he threaded the narrow streets to the market-place, and he placed himself near to him when he took up his position there to address the crowd. Tom Heron's voice was very serviceable in leading the hymn with which the service commenced; and at its conclusion Nelson preached one of his bold and rugged sermons, holding his audience spell-bound, and causing many to tremble and become overwhelmed with the conviction of sin.

There was no open demonstration of hostility, though Tom, who was keenly watching the aspect of the crowd, saw many scowling faces on the outskirts, and several times felt certain that some outbreak was about to commence. However the preaching passed by peaceably, and he and Nelson had returned home to the house, and were talking over the events of the day, when there was the sound of a tumult in the street, followed by a loud knocking at the door.

"It is the constable—and a mob of people at his heels," cried Mary White putting her head in at the door; "Oh, dear sirs, will you not escape out by the back door, whilst I answer the summons at the front?"

"No, no, good Mrs. Mary," answered Nelson smiling. "Let the officer in at once. If he asks for me, show him in hither. I will answer him gladly and fearlessly. I have broken no law. I am ashamed of no man."

"What will he do?" asked Tom as the woman slowly withdrew: and he, it must be confessed, would mightily have enjoyed knocking down this emissary of the law.

"Nay, I know not—bluster and swear perchance, and talk great swelling words about prison, and the stocks, and so forth. I have been so threatened many times before, but save that once I was pressed for a soldier and had hard work to get off from serving as such, no harm has ever come to me. The war is over, and men are not being carried off in that fashion now. And here comes our good friend the constable. Sure that is his tread in the passage without."

"Where is the preacher?" asked a voice thick with drink, as the door of the room was burst open, and half-a-dozen men entered.

Nelson at once rose to his feet.

"I am he, sir. What do you desire of me?"

"You must come with me before the mayor."

"Where is your warrant?"

"My staff is my warrant. Come, lads, help me: for I will make him come before the mayor."

There was a rush amongst those behind, who

came forward with many profane oaths, swearing and cursing, and plainly half drunk. Tom Heron set his teeth, and a dangerous light shone in his eyes, but Nelson's restraining hand was on his arm. His voice rose above the tumult, and the other voices died into silence.

"I am not afraid to go before the mayor, but it is your business, Constable, to take up these disorderly and profane swearers. And if you do not do your duty it is in my power to make you pay a fine of forty shillings."

But without heeding these words, which only incensed them more, the constable and his attendants hauled away the preacher, and as Tom refused to be parted from him, they roughly conducted them both through the streets of the town, followed by a hooting mob. It was Tom's first experience of the kind, and he would dearly have liked to lay about him, and to clear a way for his master through the press. But he knew that this would be worse than useless; so he contented himself by walking onward, very erect and bold, showing very plainly that he was not ashamed of the cause in which he was embarked.

As they neared the house of the mayor, they were stopped by a fine gentleman, who demanded whither they were going and what was the matter?

"It is the mad Methodists, my lord," answered the constable obsequiously; "they have been preaching again without licence. I am taking them before the mayor."

"Don't do that," said the fine young gentleman with an oath, "for the mayor is their friend, and says he will put in the house of correction any one that disturbs them. Wherefore carry them instead before the alderman H—; he will do for them."

With that the constable quickly turned his prisoners round and commenced marching them in another direction, but Nelson stopped short and said—

"I insist on being taken before the mayor."

"But I will make you go where I please," bawled the constable, and the crowd responded with loud shouts.

"You told me you would take me before the mayor," returned Nelson; "you are in truth a strange officer of the law, for here are you encouraging swearing and disorder in others, and telling lies yourself. Is that how you perform your office?"

But the constable bawled out louder than ever, "Help us, good folks, to carry the Methodist preacher to the house of correction," while the mob, taking up the cry, raised such a tumult that Nelson's voice could no longer be heard, and he and his companion were roughly hustled along till they came to the alderman's house.

By this time there were several hundreds following and making a noise. The house was quite beset, and the two prisoners were pushed through the door into the presence of the master of the house.

This functionary came forward with a scowling face, ill-pleased at the tumult about his doors. On learning the cause he turned angrily upon Nelson and his companion.

"I wonder to see you here again. Why cannot you stay in your own place without going from town to town stirring up strife and riot? I should have thought by this time you would have been convinced that the mob of Nottingham will never let you preach here."

"I beg your pardon, sir," answered Nelson quietly, "but I did not know before that Nottingham was governed by a mob: for most such towns are governed by magistrates."

The alderman's colour rose at this and he said impatiently—

"Tush, man. Do you think that we will protect Wesley or any of his pack? I believe you have been the cause of all the rebellion and commotions in this land."

"Sir," answered Nelson, "can you prove that one amongst us ever favoured the Pretender?"

"Well, it has always been observed that there was always such a preaching, brawling people before any judgment came upon the land."

"That is the goodness of God towards His people, in sending messengers to warn them to repent, that they may escape His judgments here and the torments of the damned hereafter. Sir, you may as well say that it was through Jeremiah that the Chaldeans destroyed Jerusalem because he told them it would be so. No, it is not through praying and preaching that evil comes upon a land, but through swearing and cursing, drunkenness and debauchery; for op-

pressing the poor and denying the Lord that bought us. These are the people that bring the sword and pestilence into the land."

Here the constable, seeing that the alderman was silent, broke rudely in—

"Do you think we will take warning by such fellows as you?"

"If you do not, you must feel the blow when God shall pour out His judgments upon the earth, as He will do shortly."

"Come, come, my good fellow, you must not preach here," said the alderman, waking out of his reverie, "yet I verily believe you are a good man, and I will not have you molested. Constable, see this man safe to his lodging. Mr. Nelson, I wish you well wherever you go."

Tom and his leader shortly afterwards found themselves in the street from which the crowd had melted. Tom looked with surprise into the face of the preacher, but he answered with a smile:

"It is so often the way: said I not that the Lord stood by us? 'The fierceness of man will He restrain,' it is not by hard blows that we prevail—ever remember that, good Tom—but by the might of the Word which we proclaim. I am glad you have been with me this day, for you will see how it is that though in perils oft, we so rarely come to hurt. 'The Lord is about my path and about my bed, and spieth out all my ways.'"



Death's Vindication.

SUGGESTED BY THE DEATH OF H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

"**P**ALLID Death, with equal foot," walked solemn
Through the great city and the hamlet lone;
Wheresoe'er he passed some broken column
Told how his touch wrought, on the breathing stone.

Here in the cradle lay the ivory casket
That held the jewel of an infant-soul;
There with crossed palms, oft vainly raised to ask it,
The weary found their rest, the spent their goal.

With equal step and free, 'mid high and lowly,
Death roamed, and filled the wintry air with wail;
Spared not for Yule-tide mirth or anthem holy,
To lay new victims 'neath earth's saintly veil.

The winds bore near and far the Requiem dirges
Of mourners gathered round the funeral bier,
Where beats the city's heart, or ocean surges
Bring thoughts of the Unseen we dread, too near.

So said I, "Think not Death has come unkindly,
To make sad havoc of our precious things;
Eyes that are filled with tears can judge but blindly;
They miss the light wherein the seraph sings."

Ah, there are many waiting for that Angel,
To whom Life shows not the kind face of God;
They have not heard the Yule-tide's glad evangel,
Down-trodden thralls beneath Oppression's rod.

Look where the children swarm in yonder alley,
And 'mid foul refuse seek their scanty bread;
Think you the narrow stream, the shadowy valley,
Have power to fill their little hearts with dread?

"Kind Death, come to us," shrunken forms are saying,
"We are but born to suffer curse and blow;
Mad rage affrights us even in our playing,
And the wolf Hunger gnaws—a cruel foe."

Night cometh: Death is busy, see him mingle,
With his black poppies the oblivious bowl;
His are no random guesses, he will single
For the strange potion the world-orphaned soul.

Ah, see him draw anear that tired woman,
Whose brows contracted show the strain of pain;
Borne down was she by fierce griefs and inhuman,
The bruised reed in her will not rise again.

So set her free from misery, Death, and send her
Where angels will speak welcome up the heights,
Where naught unholy shall again offend her,
But God shall minister her pure delights.

Not so; Death turned aside, as if to number
Days added to the near run lease of life;
And as he paused gave willing place to Slumber
Discoursing dreams upon a magic life.

I knew where one sweet saint had long lain crying,
"Why do the Master's feet so long delay?"
Surely, methought, *his* hour is come, and sighing
With all the former things is passed away.

But not for him did Death vouchsafe to linger,
His face was set as from a purpose stern,
Beseeching looks were answered by a finger
That pointed upward to the blue eterne.

"My errand is not to the child of sorrow,
The spirit grown awcary of its mate,
For whom all promise lies in God's to-morrow,
No gold line written in the book of fate.

"It is to Joy I bring the wakeless slumber,
For Rank the fatal arrow leaves the bow;
Cold dews creep o'er a brow no cares encumber,
Pleasures disperse before the march of woe."

With equal foot Death held his course, where meekly
A youth stood on the steps that bore a throne;
Ah, who could see such gentleness, and weakly
Envy the treasure all around him strown?

Who could dispute his royal right, or falter
In asking blessings on the future King?
His happy eyes see newly dight the altar
Where he shall consecrate the nuptial ring,

And pledge his troth to her so lately given
To the heart's long desire and duteous prayer:
The golden links of mutual love are riven,
No shadow falls upon the prospect fair,

When, hush—the merry bells for Death are tolling,
A thousand cries go up to Heaven as one;
The jewels from a broken diadem rolling
Reflect the mockery of a glittering sun.

"Why hast thou dealt thus hardly, Death, and hasted
To dash a cup of life so full and sweet?
Had'st thou no ruth for her who leaves untasted
The wife's high duty to a consort meet?"

Then answered Death: "Weep an ye will, but dumbly,
Forbear to ask of me 'What doest thou?'
Unwelcome oft my presence! yet right humbly
Let king and peasant to that presence bow!

"For though I ne'er may enter Heaven's portal
I sped the happy ones who reign above,
I am a servant of the King Immortal,
Do but His bidding! and His Name is Love."

SARSON C. J. INGHAM.

THE BEST MAN IN A PANIC.

AT eighteen, I was sent to a London hospital to "walk" there for three years, and to complete my medical education. I had spent a couple of years with a country surgeon, and then went up, a raw youth from the provinces, to be introduced to newer and stranger

scenes, and to be thrown into contact with many different minds.

Some of my fellow-students were very clever, hard-working fellows; equally good at study, and at play. Others were idle, vain, dissipated, and given to fast living; while yet a third class

was known as "plodding,"—"slow,"—far from brilliant, but conscientious. Charlie Stokes belonged to this last class, and it is of him that I am about to write.

Charlie was an orphan lad, having lost both his parents. He was brought up, I believe from infancy, by his grandfather, an old half-pay officer who had served under Wellington, and had fought at Waterloo. The lad having manifested a desire to become a doctor, Captain Stokes had given way, thinking it better that he should have some profession which he thoroughly liked than be forced into one which he could only accept, because of his grandfather's predilections. So after a similar preliminary training to my own, Charlie was sent for three or four years to attend lectures, and to walk the wards of the hospital.

He was a sober sort of fellow, most thoughtful, somewhat reserved, full of curiosity, eager to be in the operating room whenever anything was going on; and just as eager to take his full share of work in extra turns. It was my fortune to lodge and board at the same house as Charlie Stokes, and although we did not occupy the same rooms, we saw pretty much of each other, nights and mornings, as well as in the lecture-rooms, and wards of the old hospital. Two years of steady work passed by in this manner, and Stokes began to be regarded by the hospital authorities as one likely to make his mark in the medical profession.

I cannot say that Charlie was very popular among the students. He was too thoughtful and sedate to be popular with a certain class; while many others who made no pretensions to religion were offended at his very real and sincere, yet manly piety. And although he never offensively paraded his principles or his feelings before us, we could not help seeing that the fear of God was the guiding principle of his life. He would engage in nothing doubtful or mean, or wicked; he never hesitated to say "No" to invitations of a doubtful sort. We knew, too, that, as far as his duties permitted, he kept each returning Sabbath "holy unto the Lord." And as good Sir Matthew Hale found it, this day so kept became to him a good "beginning of days" for all the week.

While we were in the third year of our course, the dreadful cholera broke out in London. It was the hot, unhealthy summer of 1849; and, as in many similar cases, people were scared out of their sober senses. The panic seemed to have shaken both health and common-sense out of thousands of people who should have kept clear heads and quiet minds. Emergencies of this nature try all the manhood there is in a pestilence-stricken city. We read of the revelry that went on in London, during the time of the Great Plague of 1665, revelry alternated with despair; and although we saw no such reckless manifestations in London during this later time, we yet were cognisant enough of much hopeless fear, and of terror-stricken homes, where patients were being prepared for the fearful pestilence without, as it seemed, a chance of escape. Many of us were called upon, in turns, to assist neighbouring medical men in the press of cases. Among these were Charlie Stokes and myself.

This was the time to try the mettle of our students. As for myself, I never had thought much about sacred things; I wanted to study the disease, and, while taking every precaution against illness on my own part, determined to stick manfully to my post. I must own too, that Charlie Stokes' demeanour shamed all the cowardice out of me.

The weeks and days went on. They were sultry, plague-stricken, and full of woe. Our duties at the hospital grew apace; there was more to be done, and there were fewer men to do it. Some of those who had determined to brave all dangers had broken down. These were of course at once recommended to go down into the country for a time, while the medical staff strove to do its best with the diminished number that remained. Sometimes I felt as if I should break down, too; but at such times Charlie's steadfast, calm adherence to duty roused me up to work again.

One day, as we snatched an early breakfast, before beginning our day's work, Charlie opened his mind to me a little. We mostly took our breakfast together, during those weeks, because we felt more drawn together than of yore, by the oneness of our interests; and it really was the only meal we could command in any peace. On this particular morning we had been roused from heavy slumber by our landlady, who had strict orders to call us at a fixed time, whatever the hour for retiring. It sometimes happened, as in this instance, that we had not been able to leave duty until after midnight, but we did not grumble, could we only save life, or alleviate suffering. We were pretty well used up however on this morning, and looked so. Our landlady expressed her sympathy with us by bringing an extra couple of eggs to table, and by making our tea of extra strength, under the idea that she would thereby assist in keeping up our nervous power.

"I say, Charlie!" was my first salutation, "If things go on this way, we shall soon be used up quite. Rogers and Hughes fell out yesterday—sick."

"Did they? That means two less to work; and it seems to me that the need for all our services grows with every day," he replied.

"And you mean to stick to it, do you, to the end?" I queried. Truth to say, I was beginning to feel fagged out in mind and body.

"Yes, Bywater; my grandfather taught me when only a little four-year-old mite, that a man's chiefest honour lay in doing his duty. And since I have got old enough to think for myself, I wish to do my best, from a more Christian motive. Beside, I can be spared better than most fellows; I have no parents, and, except my grandfather, few will mourn for me, should I be cut down." He spoke very sadly.

"I feel desirous to see it to the end, Charlie, but I am beginning to experience that 'done-up' feeling which generally, if not always, precedes breaking down; and this morning comes a letter begging me to go home and not run risks for which they think me unequal."

"Well, possibly your friends have a first right

to your life and obedience. Naturally, they rank your profession next. But I shall remain. I suppose you will communicate with the authorities at the hospital to-day?"

We parted, not to meet until evening. That day was a very busy one at the hospital; the hours flew by almost unheeded. Towards dusk, I found that I could be spared. I said my farewells to the surgeon-in-chief, and matron, and went off to find out Charlie Stokes. They told me that he had been summoned to some cholera patient in the neighbourhood of the Seven Dials. Thither I went in search of him.

I found him after a while in one of the worst dens of that dismal locality, which has since been so transformed. He came out on hearing my voice calling his name somewhat loudly. I was compelled to shout, for the tenants of the house were vociferating frantically, or reveling in equally noisy drunkenness. This was their way of meeting death, should it come.

"Stokes! you look like a ghost!" was my first exclamation. "Why, what is the matter with you? Have you had any food since the morning? Are you ill, or what is it?" My first idea was that he had caught the infection.

"I did snatch a cup of tea, and a sandwich before I came here," he said, "but the strain is sharp. A costermonger here is down, and all his people have fled. I must see him safely through, whatever comes."

"But it is absurd, Charlie," I broke out. "Do you imagine that you can conduct a crusade single-handed against this pestilence, in the favour of everybody who needs a helping hand? Your life is ten times more precious than this fellow's!"

"Stop, Bywater; I have promised to remain; and I will keep my word. God knows best what is right for me—whether life or death. I am in His hand. So, good-bye, old fellow. Remember that we meet above, if we don't meet in the wards any more."

I seized his hand, and wrung it almost fiercely,

and I am not ashamed to own that the tears blinded my eyes many times that evening as I returned home.

I heard nothing of Charlie for three or four days. Then I wrote a line to the house surgeon, begging to know how he was getting on, and how the patients fared. Back came the reply:

"Charlie Stokes is dead of cholera, caught from a poor patient. He will be buried to-morrow. Can you come and bear Captain Stokes company at the funeral?"

Could I? I would do it, whether or no. Not all the entreaties of friends could detain me. I went off like a frantic man, absorbed in the one thought, that my hero had fallen in the strife! I travelled by the next train to town, and arrived just in time to accompany the aged Captain to his grandson's last resting-place. I was thankful to be able to support the old gentleman's tottering form, but, as I did so, I felt it would not be long before grandsire and grandson would be re-united. It was an unspeakable comfort to the old man to know that Charlie had nobly died at his post, doing his duty. For the rest, he knew him to be safe, trusting in the Lord, whom he loved and served.

At the hospital, I learnt the particulars as far as anybody knew them. Charlie had passed the night with the poor, old, death-stricken costermonger, nursing him, instructing him, and pointing him to the Lamb of God, slain for sinners. As morning broke, the old man passed away, and Charlie Stokes went home to die. One of the hospital nurses tended him, as soon as they heard he was stricken down: but the conflict did not last many hours. He passed away, entirely trusting in the Saviour. Was I not right when I said that Charlie Stokes was our best man in the cholera panic? When we got back to our hospital-duties again, his name came to us as that of a saint; the wildest fellows of us all spoke it with a solemn reverence, as that of one who gave his life for others.

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT IN HOLLAND.

II.

HAVING followed the course of Calvinism in Holland from 1619 to the present day, it will now be well to show amid what fierce struggles it has had to pursue its way in recent times. The renewed interest in religion that began to manifest itself shortly after 1820, created a stir in the whole theological world of Holland, and at each of the four universities there was a new departure in the treatment of Christian doctrine.

The movement began at the University of Gröningen. Attention was diverted from the old dogmas of the sixteenth century to the person of Christ, and Christology thus became the central point of theology. The New Testament was made the subject of special study, and also Church History as the continued revelation of

the Saviour's work on earth. Gradually, a new school of theology arose, and is now generally known by the name of the Intermediate party. To the old orthodox this party is especially objectionable, because rejecting or modifying many of the doctrines of the creed, and especially because it has assumed the title of Evangelical. Professor Hoofsteede de Groot is at present the chief representative of this school.

At Leyden far different tendencies soon revealed themselves. The doctrines of Baur and the Tübingen School were eagerly discussed, and under the direction of Professors Scholten and Kuenen, what is now generally known by the name of the *modern* school was formed in which all that is supernatural in Christianity is

eliminated. Like their compeers, the Reformists at Zürich, they have sought to rob the Church of Christ of all its priceless riches, and have made the pulpit the rostrum from which to proclaim the morality taught by Christ as the only means for the uplifting and regeneration of the world. Happily, many who held with Pastor Busken Huet, the leader of this ultra-radical section of

best of our ability, but at the same time the inviolable unity of doctrine and life is placed emphatically in the foreground."

Amsterdam University is the training place for theological students of the Reformed, the Evangelical Lutheran and the Mennonite churches. (For many years, too, the students of the Remonstrant body were sent here, but since 1873 they have gone to Leyden.) The doctrines of the Modern School, we may perhaps say of the left section of that school, are taught here. Professor Looman, of the Reformed, and Professor Hoekstra, of the



LEYDEN UNIVERSITY.

the Modern school, have either relinquished the ministry and become journalists, or else have joined the small, but thoroughly liberal Remonstrant body.

At Utrecht the course of thought has been mainly in the direction of a more enlightened conception of the Gospel. Under the teaching of such men as the late Van Oosterzee and Professors Doedes and Beets, "the most amiable of Dutchmen," as he has been called, "the banner of Christian Supernaturalism," to quote Van Oosterzee's own words—"not at all to be confounded with the antiquated *doctrinaire* Supernaturalism of the last century—has long been gladly held up, though not without important modifications. The truth and divine character of the Christian revelation of salvation are maintained to the



GRÖNINGEN UNIVERSITY.

Mennonite Church, being the prominent teachers. By these two theologians the doctrines of the Leyden school have been carried to their natural conclusions. Christianity in their hands disappears entirely as a revealed religion, and is presented as only one of the religions invented by man.

Happily these negative and destructive teachings are now largely discredited. For the last ten years the Moderns have been losing ground.

The number of theological students at Leyden and even Groningen is now very small, while at Utrecht there are a hundred and fifty. The Moderns indeed acknowledge that they have been defeated.

It is now time that we glanced at the Dutch Reformed Church, which Dr. Kuyper is so vigorously assailing. Previous to this conflict nine-tenths of the Protestant population professed to belong to it, and it may therefore be styled the National Church. Its constitution is virtually that ordained for it by the State in 1816, but with this important difference that at present its only bond of connection with the State is a financial one. It is perfectly free to choose its own theological professors at the universities (two at each), and to regulate its own concerns. It is thoroughly independent, and in this respect it enjoys a freedom granted to no other State-paid Church in Europe, except the little one in Belgium.

Its basis of doctrine is the Belgian confession. Its form of government is Presbyterian. It has its general synod, its classes, and its consistories. The basis of the whole is the community (*Gemeente*). Parochial divisions are unknown. The largest city has equally with the smallest village but one community. Thus, in Amsterdam, there are twelve churches and twenty-eight pastors; in Rotterdam six churches and sixteen pastors, and yet only one *Gemeente* in each city. The pastors preach in turn in all the pulpits. A certain district, however, is assigned to each for pastoral work, in which he is assisted by elders and deaconesses.

Into the complicated and somewhat conflicting arrangements for the election of the various officers of the church we shall not enter. The Dutch people themselves say they can hardly understand them. But one or two points are clear, and are of interest, as showing the method of procedure. Every male member of the community who is twenty-three years of age is an elector in Church matters, irrespective of his religious character. He is called to take part in the election of pastors, elders, and deacons, who together form the consistory or ruling body of the community. When a post becomes vacant, ministers are not allowed to offer themselves, "nor can a pastor in possession of a living be invited to preach with a view in a vacant church"! In order to the supply of preachers for vacant parishes, of which in January last there were three hundred and seventy-two, the pastors of the town, or it may be of several adjacent villages form a circle (*ring*), by whom the necessary arrangements are made. When a pastor dies leaving a widow or young children, there ensues a year of grace during which the bereaved ones receive the full salary, and the services are conducted by the pastors constituting the circle to which the departed belonged. The religious instruction of the catechumens, and the general arrangements for the pulpit are attended to by a pastor of the neighbourhood who is appointed to act with the consistory. He is called a consultant.

Next to the consistories come the classes by whom a directing body is appointed to deal with questions of order and discipline raised by the

communities, and also to deliver, after examination, diplomas to the catechists who teach sacred history, and the first elements of the catechism in families and in schools. There are no provincial synods as in France, but in their stead provincial directions, ten in number, composed of pastors and elders selected by the class assemblies, in the proportion of two pastors to one elder. One important office they have to perform, is to examine candidates for the ministry in all branches of theology.

The synod consists of thirteen pastors and six elders, together with a perpetual secretary, and two professors of theology, chosen in turn by the four Universities. It meets every year at the Hague, and as the business to be transacted is very voluminous and very complicated, its sittings often last for a whole month.

Such in brief and simple terms is the machinery of the Dutch Reformed Church. Its working involves great friction and much loss of power, with three distinct parties in the church: the moderns, the evangelicals or irenical party, as they call themselves, and the orthodox. It will readily be seen that there must be much conflict, and as the people enter very heartily into the discussions, the excitement and divisions in the communities run very high, and are often intensified by discourses from the pulpits. In the synod, the moderns, who form but a minority in the church, have thus far the majority, and this fact tends to produce something like a dead-lock. It has been proposed that they should withdraw, taking with them their portion of church property, and continuing to receive state pay. Others wish the large communities, e.g., in Amsterdam, to be divided. Others again desire a fairer representation at the Synod, for, at present, the provinces of Drenthe and North Brabant, where the number of Protestants is very small, send as many members as the province of South Holland, with 840,000 inhabitants, most of whom are Protestants. In districts where the pastor is an earnest and evangelical preacher, elders of a corresponding spirit are generally chosen, and thus the spiritual work goes forward. In the elections also it is found that the pious members of the community generally carry their candidates, as the people indifferent to religion take as little part in these matters as they do in public worship. In spite of divisions, and in presence of heated disputations, evangelical religion advances.

Protestant worship in Holland is not very attractive. The churches are often large, and always cold and bare in appearance. They are, if possible, more destitute of ornament than dissenting chapels were in England sixty or seventy years ago. The type of service is distinctly Calvinistic. There is but little worship. The service begins by a layman reading a portion of Scripture from a desk in front of the pulpit. Meanwhile, the people are assembling, and the noise of their footsteps, and the talking that often goes on, almost drown the reader's voice. The lesson over, the minister ascends the pulpit and offers an extempore prayer. Then follows the discourse. Dutch sermons, as a rule, are elaborate and diffuse, though the old plan of having two

introductions, then the interpretation of the text, followed by the application, and lastly, in many cases, a peroration is no longer strictly adhered to. In the middle of the sermon the preacher gives out a Psalm or hymn, so that he may be said to preach two sermons. The first as well as the second part is followed by prayer, and the whole service which generally lasts two hours is concluded with the benediction. Except in the singing, which is congregational, choirs being unknown, and slow and plaintive, the people take no active part in the service. Their powers of hearing, and their patience, however, are unique, far beyond any-

of church-goers like Scriptural sermons, and as a rule the clergy conform to this predilection on the part of their hearers; and fortunately so, for "modern" preachers, however eloquent they may be, have had their day. The Ethical or irenical section of the clergy are characterised by a certain vagueness and obscurity in their style of preaching. On the other hand, there are preachers of



KAMPEN. DISSIDENTING REFORMED CHURCH (THE SCHOOL).

thing now to be met with in England or Germany.

Generally speaking, the Dutch, in spite of their phlegm, are open to eloquence, but it must be of a stirring dramatic kind, and such the sermons generally are. Dutch is thought to be a rough language, but it is sonorous and powerful. One drawback of pulpit delivery in Holland is that preachers are often declamatory and their gesticulations too frequent and too violent. The majority



UTRECHT UNIVERSITY.

the orthodox party with broad and comprehensive views, whose interpretation of Scripture is sound, whose dogmatic statements are clear, and who seek to apply the truth to the heart and conscience. With such, party-strife has not narrowed their spiritual vision.

Two collections are made at every service, and sometimes three. Two deacons go from pew to pew with a black bag attached to a long pole, and sometimes furnished with a small bell. The money is taken for the church buildings and for the poor. At the afternoon service the Heidelberg Catechism, divided into fifty-two portions, or "Sundays," forms the subject of discourse. Till within a few years it was the custom in many country parishes for the children to repeat the portion for the day before the sermon began.

The Lord's Supper is administered in the Reformed Church four times a year, the participants sitting at tables, presided over by the minister who gives a short address as each table is filled up. A preparation service precedes, and

a thanksgiving follows the celebration, the latter being held in the afternoon or evening of the day. In country parishes, more especially, the communicants are very few. In some places whole congregations, except two or three of the members, are known to absent themselves from the Lord's Table. Baptism is always administered in public. The minister reads the form from the pulpit, and the parents and witnesses (god-parents are unknown in Holland) nod assent to the queries. The rite is then administered by sprinkling. Dutch ministers are very scrupulous about the religious instruction of the young. At the age of eight years, it is customary for children to attend a weekly class—*catechisatie*, where the minister instructs them in the history contained in the Old and New Testaments. Then, later on,

doctrinal subjects and church history are dealt with. These weekly lessons are continued up to the age of eighteen, when confirmation usually takes place. In one of the large towns there is a minister who has no less than 1100 catechumens of various ages all instructed by him every week. And this is doubtless not a solitary case.

In the principal cities and towns Christian families, more especially in the upper classes, have imbibed influences from without. Thus a deeper love for the Word of God has been instilled into the young, and English hymns, sometimes in the original tongue, which is so well known by the educated Dutch people, are sung, and Bible-readings and prayer-meetings are held. By some, too, evangelistic work is carried on, much as in England.



“PLATED! ABOUT NINEPENCE.”

“BUT wouldn't it look lovely?” The self-questioning words ended—long, happy musing; yet something like a sigh half parted the young girl's lips, as she stood for a few minutes, one small brown hand lifted to the slender throat, before the little oval glass, in deep gold-beaded black frame, that hung opposite mother's cherished sampler, above the low window-seat from which she had quickly risen.

Again she gazed from her open casement, through clustering plummy-crested clematis and rose-sprays, upon the wide common, furze and bramble-clumped, that stretched in the pale mists, to meet the shadow of dim wooded steep. Long she leant out, the little head resting on her hand, listening to the murmur-talk of the many-channeled river, that had sung its way through the enfolding hills, from far purple heights above; with a curious seeking glance, she looked towards some point in the stealing shadows, just where the shallow grey waters, rippling out from their dark windings beneath the old wooden bridge that crossed their breadth of shingle-bed, and caught through a rift in the dull crimson cloud-mountains one wonder-gleam of living gold. A gladder light was on the dear child-face, than was given from the sunset sky—a ray-smile of the heart's quiet laughter, over bright plans and hopings, that came before and reached far beyond the thought that had, unbidden, outburst in the words which begin our fragment of homely story.

“Amy, Amy!” Had the little feet been ever so tired, no second summons from mother's voice had been needed; but the reverie was so glad and sweet! With careful haste, the girl hid her treasure-secret in the folds of her dress, and danced down the narrow stairs to get father's supper, only deigning a happy, saucy little smile

to her brother's wondering question, “What ever has come to Amy?”

* * * *

The old watchmaker laid back in a corner of his tray, where rested its bulky case and stumpy hands, the big silver watch, from which, with a satisfied “Humph!” he had just extracted the mainspring's quivering broken coils; put down his tweezers, and screwing his glass into his eye, bent a keen, brief glance upon the small locket handed to him with a bright look and a word of eager inquiry—giving it promptly back, as the glass fell from his unlifted eye, and he resumed his tweezers, with three decisive, half-contemptuous words, that brought a chill of disappointment to the heart of the young girl leaning over his littered counter, and a shadow of pain upon the shy home-face:—“Plated! about ninepence.”

And ever since that evening, when at the Long Bridge-end, as she came off the wide common, on her way home from her weary day's work at the mill, she had picked up the worthless trinket, the poor child had been carrying it about with her, overy now and then taking it out of the papers, in which it was carefully wrapped, to admire her treasure, and build up lovely castles in the summer air:—We caught something of their brightness, when last we saw the little face, full of its happy secrets in girlish gladness leaning from her chamber window. For some time, indeed, the joy of her possession was shaded by kindly regret for the one who had lost it;—some young girl, it might be, like herself, who had thought much of it. She felt sorry for her, and would have liked to make her happy, in giving it back. But nobody claimed or inquired for her treasured locket, and she might keep it, without misgiving, for her very own. She was

sure it was gold—worth, oh, over so many shillings—perhaps a whole sovereign! She must not think of wearing it, though it was so pretty, and the other girls would so envy her. She might lose it; and there were so many things wanted in the poor home, that this wondrous find of hers would buy. She would pause long at the stile, or more often, on "that dear old bridge," or seated upon the low bed in her little room, for the delicious pleasure, that came always fresh, of thinking over all the things it was going to procure.

Such a long, hot walk it was, from the rose-clad cottage on the common's edge to the town, that hoped and waited for holiday afternoon. She had often to sit down and rest; but then—the corner of the handkerchief was unrolled, and the precious trinket that was to do so much, glittered in her hand beneath the bright warm sunlight; and the young girl laughed, as she thought what a little light thing it was, and how many presents she would have to bring home! They would make a heavy bundle, but, oh, she did not mind carrying them all a bit. There would be the box-iron for mother, and those strong working boots father had long badly wanted—there were splendid boots, so cheap, they said, to be had at the new "stores." Then, there would be a warm cross-over for granny, and something for each of the others, down to the baby; perhaps she might have a pair of Sunday gloves, or a hair-ribbon, for herself—she should see; there would be the tea—she had forgotten that, and some other little things. *Wouldn't* they all be delighted? "Why, Amy! how ever have you got all these beautiful things?"—And mother would be so pleased that she had not wanted to wear the locket.

The five miles seemed nothing, though she did drag her feet rather wearily past the low whitewashed houses, and crowded door-steps, that stretched row after row—should she ever get to the end of them? up to the market square. Yes, there was the corner shop she had been told of, close to the Post Office, with the watches in the window. She must not stop to look at those beautiful things—there were all the home presents to buy.

Poor child! she stood for a few sad minutes, those three words—they seemed so cruel, ringing in her ears; looking dreamily, with the heavy pain at her heart, and fast-filling eyes, at her rejected locket, that lay where it had been thrown back to her, on the edge of the counter; half unconsciously comparing it with those others, so like it, all with tickets of various values, arranged in the case. She had glanced at some in the window, as she entered the shop, and had thought hers as pretty as any of them—and it was worth "about ninepence!"

The old watchmaker had taken up the big watch again—he had not even looked towards her:—"Timidly she asked, "Would he give her the ninepence?" It would at least get her a little needed refreshment, after her long, bootless walk. Only an impatient gesture of refusal; and with a deep sigh, and a lingering look at all those proud

lockets in the case on which the unlifted wrappings yet lay (why should hers only have no value?), slowly she left the shop, the worthless thing held in her half-closed hand, to retrace the weary, weary miles, past all those interminable houses, where the people in the door-ways all seemed happier than herself, and looked at her, she thought, as though they pitied her as she passed.

Yet half an hour before, she had, in the overflowing of her own warm gladness, wished that those ill-clad, lounging girls, had each a locket like hers. Out on the wide, dreary, sunny common, where the larks would keep on singing—still pressing on—to sit down and think now, would be worse than the poor, tired feet. With a quickened step and an averted eye, she crossed the old bridge—it had never seemed so long before—on to the blank home entering, that was to have been so full of glad surprises.

Through years of changeable life, whose trials outnumbered its joys, the heavy chill and shadow of that summer afternoon might never be forgotten.

A very simple bit of sad story—of a weary walk, and a worthless carrying. Something, not so unlike it, you and I know of. Some of us have had a rather longer walk than others; the precious trinket you have in many wrappings is worth, it may be, a few more pence than what I so carefully carry:—"No difference," when the tired feet turn heavily from the door. Yes, you say, it was sad for that poor child—quite too pitiful; you don't think you would have cared to tell the story,—but you really are unable to appropriate its pathos. Just so: I wonder what each of us has, wrapped up in our closest affections, wound about with our firmest hopes:—"Will you untie my wrappings? May I loosen yours?"

You cannot say it is anything so especially valuable—"Plated," of course. Perhaps I'll be careful in opening your package? No need, is there, of such great care over it? If I may venture—Mine, I am quite aware, is nothing very lovely, but—My dear friend, just look at its edge! You did not exactly offer it for my criticism. I ask your pardon. There, I have put it carefully up again. Thank you for letting me see it. Shall we say the values are about equal? You are for the City; so am I? Shall we have a bit of talk along the way? Will you?—well, then, I must, I suppose, do the talking.

Our treasured things may have come to us on the bare commons or bleak hillsides of life—suddenly found hopes, lighting their far dreariness into beauty. A never dreamed-of precious love, that the lone, uncared-for heart holds with frightened joy; or a swift surprise of success and fame, when the long toil had no promise, and the walk was weary. Treasure trove, that shall still aching yearnings, and satisfy each meagre need! Or they have been pleasantly, almost unconsciously, possessed from our earliest remembrance; too familiar to claim from us any gleeful admiration—things so much of course, that they seem ours almost of right; yet, held closely, sufficing to brim our shallow capacities for

happiness. However come by, no disturbing doubt rises as to the value of our treasures; it will be given us when we reach the City—what do we want with opinions and tests, on what so many admire, and not a few envy?

"And they're all plated? no value, any of them?"

We will not say that; they *have* a value: plated things are not shams, so long as we do not pass them off for sterling gold and silver. Their design may be choice; and they may have in them all the wear required of them; only, let us make out clearly how far that requirement goes.

A film of real gold may over-lay these carefully-wrapped trinkets of ours, and though we cannot make anything but "best electro" of it all, they may be worth a deal more than the "ninepence." And there may be no tarnish of selfishness upon them; the thought of some whom we are going to make glad, may lighten the dreariest miles of a weary life-walk. The love possessed—so prized, so precious, may gladden many a weary wayside heart with its own overflowing fullness. From the vantage-ground of your given success, you may lift into light some who are hopelessly struggling towards its dawning.

A well-known beautiful hymn says, "This life's a dream, an empty show." Now, though in comparison of "that bright world" spoken of in the next line, it is, perhaps, "a dream," we may yet doubt whether this wonderful first bit of our life be in itself, quite so poor a thing as the hymn says. "This life," surely, is not altogether "empty;" it holds for us splendid possibilities of service, that can eternally out-widen into glory-certainties. It is God's gift to us, and He gives only real things. Its delicately inwrought beauty of character and of genius—its death-strong love, and high-doing, and brave suffering, are no shams. In the City of the Great King, indeed, a standard-mark that only His most fine gold can take, determines that realm's currency, yet we may get good value for this life's treasure—along the way—ay, even for its actual coinage-wealth, though of all our "plated" possessions, it, least of all, may be complacently regarded on the journey. One poor sovereign, held to the eye, it has been eloquently said, "shuts out all the purple heaven and golden stars:" and in the close, fond look, whatever of dignity and reverence there is in "image and superscription" is blurred and lost.

There is a deal to be done in this old world of ours—our pleasant meadow-path will ever have a near fringe of desert. We may not "napkin" anything we have, in brain-bag, work-bag, or even money-bag, since it can only be used on the way.

And here comes a thought, that may have some comfort in it for you and for me. We have nothing whatever to do with other people's lovely things, or wonderful doings. "She is a worker, she must give away hundreds a year: they do

say that she sent all her jewels—I don't know what they were not worth—to those Homes."

Well, that dreadful impersonal personal pronoun is not altogether trustworthy, but for its own sake, and her sake, and the "Homes'" sake, we will hope "they" say truly. What you call your "little, poky, hole-and-corner work," and your last month's pocket money, which "they" will never trouble themselves, or herself, or himself about, may have filled up a particularly nasty hole and lighted up a very dark, grimy corner, and may have the record of as true and loyal service, as those beautiful, very valuable Homes, that were opened by two Royal Highnesses, and have the gas laid on in every room. It is so nice to know that God can do as much with a little girl's penny, as with a prince's pounds, that run on into any number of ciphers. The heirlooms of historied centuries, or "the mug that was mother's," the mildest village reputation, or a European renown—in Heaven's balance and atmosphere, the weights will be equal, as, freed from the upholding force of air, nuggets and feathers fall side by side.

We should so have enjoyed making that dear child's face bright, by giving her for her locket the value that her happy hopes had set upon it:—Our trinkets, it may be, shall be priced, some of them beyond our keenest hoping; but do not let us be for ever taking them out, and giving them an affectionate polish, and telling them we're sure they are gold. They're "plated"—not the shadow of a doubt, but yet a glad surprise may be ours:—yet must we ever remember, it is no transaction with a merchant, but largess from the King.

But one more thought, to end our bit of travel-talk, which the brief story of a pathetic walk has given us. *Our* walk may be so much shorter than we think! Suddenly, as without a fear or doubt, we make our way through wreathing mists, and laugh out our hopes that soon we shall be in the warm, pleasant sunshine again, our feet may meet the chill of those waters which none may ford alone—"that lave the glad city's jasper walls"—and plunge down to the rayless gloom. From the dim shore the moaning cry is reaching us: "We thought it had been so much farther." Are we quite, quite sure that our ear shall hear the loving whisper, "I am with you?"—our hand be held in the dark, unstaying river?

We will not now ask one another what each has, so carefully wrapped—only this: Have we, in very heart-realness, come to Him who has promised He "will be our Guide"—"through the waters"—in whose meeting touch, our plated things—all that we may keep—become God's gold, that shall bear His image, and be set among His treasures? If we have so come to Jesus, it matters little how near the riverside—how shadowed and steep the path—how poor the weary carrying:—there can be no heavy-hearted walk back!

S. G. PROUT.

IMMORTElLES.

CHAPTER IV.



IN a low-wheeled chair which Miss Wards had succeeded in borrowing for her use, Rosie Carver was having her afternoon drive. It was Saturday, and cousin Jack, with whom, boy though he was, Winnie was now on friendly terms, had devoted his half-holiday to help to take his little cousin for the longest ride she had yet had. They were on their way to the nursery, where her father was foreman, and their coming to fetch him home was to be a grand surprise. Arrived at the entrance gate, they could see no one about; and Jack, after making the tour of the place, came back with the strange announcement that the men had already all gone home, except one deaf old fellow who had muttered something about the hands having been paid off that morning. Rather soberly the three wended their slow way homewards. While Jack, by way of keeping up their spirits, hazarded the most improbable conjectures in explanation of the old gardener's statement, the girls could not help being uneasy, as they recalled the grave anxious face their father had worn during the past few days, which until now they had put down to the headache of which he complained. Their evil forebodings were all too soon realised. Late that evening, Robert Carver returned home with the bad news that his former master at the nursery was bankrupt, that he had lost his situation therefore, and that, although he had been the livelong day seeking employment, his search had been utterly unsuccessful.

One morning, a day or two later, Mrs. Carver, needing Winnie's help in the kitchen, went upstairs in search of the little girl of whom nothing had been seen since breakfast. Opening the door of the tiny room shared by the two girls, Mrs. Carver found Winnie dressed in her shabbiest out-of-door things kneeling on the floor, and, with hands that seemed to tremble, hastily making up a small bundle of clothing.

In answer to her foster-mother's astonished question, Winnie lifting up a tear-stained face, "I'm going away," she said, hurrying over her words. "You see the father can't get work. Soon there will be no more money to buy bread. And I can't help being awfully hungry. I tried this morning to believe I wasn't one bit, and turned away my head not to see the loaf, but I saw it all the same, and I just grew hungrier and hungrier. So I'm going back to London to be a flower-girl. I daresay Miss Annette, she's so good, she'll give me some flowers to begin with, and, and"—here the brave voice faltered a little, "when I've made some money, I'll come back with it and see you all."

Without a word Mrs. Carver removed Winnie's old hat and jacket. Drawing the child into her arms she said, "You are not going back to London. We can't do without you here. You are going to stay with us for always. But now you must choose how it is to be. Either you will be my hired girl, and I will pay you wages for minding Rosie and helping me in the house, or you will be my ain bairn,

and let me go on mothering you, as I do now. Which will it be, dearie?"

Winnie hid her face on the mother's breast. "Oh!" she sobbed out, "it's too good just, too good to be true, how can it be for me?"

Mrs. Carver had to wipe away her own tears as well as Winnie's before she could reply. "I think, my bairn, that Miss Annette would say that it was another of God's 'immortelles' for you. "'When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'"

All that day Winnie was so much quieter and graver than her wont, that Rosie, watching her uneasily, grew afraid lest some fresh trouble had fallen upon their once happy home. She waited anxiously for the evening, when she and Winnie often had a quiet chat together over the events of the day. "She will tell me then," she said to herself, half fearfully. But it was not as she thought. Just before bedtime the opportunity came for which Winnie herself had been watching. The two girls were alone for a short time while Mrs. Carver was preparing her husband's supper. As soon as the mother had left the room, Winnie solemnly announced, as she carefully shut the door, "Rosie, we're going to have a prayer-meeting, you and me. We can make one by ourselves, us two, for look," pointing with her finger to the leading verse for the day on the invalid's text-roller which hung above her sofa, "it says, 'where two are gathered together,' that means two's enough for a prayer-meeting. And see, in the very next verse God promises that if two of us agree about something we want, He'll give it to us. That's an 'immortelle,' you see. So we'll agree together to ask work for the father."

The prayer-meeting was very simple, very short, but none the less solemn and comforting. So bright was Winnie's face when she went into the back kitchen afterwards, that Carver, who had come in tired and spiritless after another fruitless search for employment, was struck by it.

"Little one, you look happy," he said with an attempt at cheerfulness.

"We've been asking God to send you work, father, and we're happy, Rosie and me, because we know He's going to answer us."

"Prayers don't always bring answers," rather gloomily returned Carver; but, as he saw the shadow which fell upon the child's face, he could have wished his words unsaid. "Leastways," he added, "the answers are sometimes long in coming."

Winnie's face brightened. "Perhaps that's just because we keep God waiting till we hold out our hands, but Rosie and me we're holding out ours, and so I think the answer will come very soon."

The next morning as Miss Wards, on her way to pay Rosie a visit, came up the garden-path to the cottage, she found Winnie sitting on the door-step looking thoroughly out of sorts. In answer to her teacher's questions as to what was the matter the little girl replied with a touch of something like petulance in her tone, "I'm waiting for the voice to tell me what to do, Miss Annette, but it's of no use, I can't hear it." She had to explain her words, for Miss Wards waited with a rather grave look in her eyes which her little scholar did not like to see, somehow it made her feel uncomfortable.

"Rosie and me have been praying for something. I think

the answer is sure to come to-day, and I want, oh, ever so much, to be at home when it comes. But mother, before she went out this morning, said if I didn't mind would I go a message for her to the Hill Farm. I do mind very much, and I darsay another time might do for the farm, but, Rosie says that, when there are two ways to go, and when we don't know which to take, God has promised to let us hear a voice, 'this is the way,' so I'm sitting here waiting for the voice."

"Are you quite sure that you are really listening for it? What if the self-voice of Winnie Markham is drowning the sound of the other voice?" The words were gently spoken, but they brought a hot flush into the little girl's cheeks. Miss Wards softly passed her hand over the bowed head. "Winnie, dear, suppose you take the way which looks most like the right one. If it should prove to be wrong, you know God has promised to speak and turn you back."

There was a moment's pause. In the street close by were many voices, women chattering, children calling to each other at play. Winnie did not hear them. She was listening now to a voice that sounded louder than any of these in her ears. To listen was to obey. "I'll go, Miss Annette," she said, slipping her hand within her teacher's, as together they went into the house. It was hard to keep her word: the harder because of having to leave the visitor with whom she would dearly have liked to stay, and it was with rather a sober face that she fetched her hat and basket, bade good-bye to Miss Wards and Rosie, and set off on her solitary walk to the Hill Farm.

The hot sun made the way seem long, and she was glad when at last she reached her destination, and found herself sitting in the cool farm kitchen with a glass of sweet milk to refresh her.

"And how are you all at home, child?" asked Mrs. Graham, the kindly farmer's wife, as she packed into a basket the butter Winnie had come to fetch.

"Rosie is better, ma'am, and the rest of us are quite well, thank you, but the father hasn't got any work yet."

"Your father out of work? Dear, dear! and why didn't we know that sooner? There's my good man been nearly distracted for want of somebody to take off his hands the market-garden he's had to see to himself ever since his poor brother was took so sadly, and I know there's not a man in all the country-side he'd like so well as your father. It was just last week, says he to me: 'If I could get hold of a fellow like Robert Carver now, I believe we'd make a good thing out of it.' And just to think that he might have got Carver himself, if he'd only known!"

"But you'll tell Mr. Graham now about the father?" eagerly interposed Winnie, her eyes shining with a glad hope.

"Dear, dear! But it's too late, child, that's the worst of it. This very day my husband has gone off to the market at Oldford, three miles off and more, to pick up somebody, 'the best from among the bad' he said to me it would have to be, he's mighty particular, you see. And, even if it would be in time to stop him, I haven't a creature to send after him, for every living soul is in the harvest-field," and Mrs. Graham, passing through the rose-covered porch, shaded her eyes with her hand, as she looked up and down in the vain hope of seeing some one who would act as messenger.

Winnie, laying down her but half-emptied glass, followed her. "I'll go," she said, and before the astonished Mrs. Graham could utter a word of remonstrance she was gone, hurrying almost at a run down the steep path leading to the main road.

A SCRIPTURE ELLIPSIS EXERCISE.

NO. III.

— if God so loved us we ought also to love one another. My little children, — not love in word neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and — — — — —.

We shall be like Him; — we shall see Him as He is. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His — — — — — perfected in us.

This is the love — — — — —, that we keep His commandments.

He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, — God in him.

Ye know that — — — — — doeth righteousness is born of Him.

He that — his brother abideth in the light.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ — — — — — every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him.

He that — — — — — heareth us.

Find the missing words in these passages. When set in order they form a verse from the epistle in which all the texts are to be found. L. T.

SCRIPTURE VERSE.

NO. II.

This verse records a judgment which fell upon one who "withstood" God's servants. The judgment came by "the hand of the Lord," as to the men of Ashdod, but is foretold in the beginning of the verse by one "filled with the Holy Ghost," who "set his eyes on" the "false prophet" and called him a "child of the devil." The speaker had suffered the same affliction himself, but with very different result. A word occurs in the verse only found in three other passages in the same book, and another only found in two other places in the Bible; one is in Gen. ii. 6. Another word very often used by St. Mark, is found in the middle of the verse. The "false prophet," of whom two names are given, and who had been full of "subtily and mischief," was silenced and made helpless by his punishment, trying to find someone to do for him what Jesus did for a man at Bethsaida. The miracle astonished and convinced a great man who witnessed it. The verse contains forty-six words. L. T.

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. XIV.—p. 270.

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| 1. L ove | 1 Cor. xiii. 13. |
| 2. U z | Job i. 1. |
| 3. K orah | Numb. xvi. 1. |
| 4. E sther | Esth. ii. 17. |

NO. XV.—p. 270.—GETHESEMANE.—Mark xiv. 32-37.

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|----------------------|------------------------|
| G alilee | Matt. xxviii. 5-7 |
| E gypt | Matt. ii. 13, 14. |
| T homas | John xx. 29. |
| H erod | Luke xxiii. 8. |
| S imon | Luke vii. 36-44. |
| E lias | Luke ix. 30, 31. |
| M artha | Luke x. 40. |
| A nnas | John xviii. 12, 13. |
| N icodemus | John iii. 7-9. |
| E mmaus | Luke xxiv. 13, 30, 31. |