

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.

BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN, AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S BROTHERS," ETC.



"MIKE!" HE CRIED, "HOW DID YOU COME HERE?"

CHAPTER XXII.—OLD FACES IN NEW PLACES.

TOM spent a fortnight in the house of Master Annesley with great pleasure and profit. Refinement and cultivation of mind were by no means lost upon the young blacksmith, who had generally met the deepest religious convictions in men as rough and uncultured as

himself—men who knew not how to clothe their thoughts in appropriate words, and were generally forced, as he was himself, to fall back upon Bible phraseology, which gradually became so stereotyped in their conversation, as to lose something of its freshness and beauty, and even the significance with which, in the beginning, it had seemed charged.

Master Annesley put into words of his own

the innermost thoughts of Tom's heart—thoughts of which he was hardly himself aware, till he was startled by hearing them reproduced by his host in fresh and beautifully appropriate words. His mind seemed to expand, and his soul to drink in great draughts of refreshing every hour of the day. Time flew by as if on wings, and it was with a start of surprise that the young man discovered that he had been two whole weeks beneath the shelter of this hospitable roof.

"You have been very kind to me, sir," he said, when this thought recalled him to the recollection of his own duties, "but I must not tarry longer. The winter is well nigh upon us; and I must be up and doing. There is work enough and to spare."

"Your time has not been wasted, my young friend, the body needs rest and the mind likewise, and you are only just fit for the saddle again. But tell me now—what do you purpose to do to these next inclement months? See, the tops of the hills are already white with snow. In a few more weeks we may look to be more or less weather-bound in our lonely moorland homes. You cannot continue your roving life then. What will you do when the winter comes?"

"I had not thought of changing my ways," answered Tom. "Other men have travelled summer and winter—and why not I?"

"Your enemy the rheumatism will soon answer that question for you, my friend, if you persist in tempting him back," answered Master Annesley, smiling, "whatever other men may be able to do—whatever you yourself may find yourself able to accomplish in years to come, when you may have got the better of that bad illness which nearly cost you your life two years ago, it is very plain that for this winter at least you must exercise care and prudence. If you take the advice of an old man you will just go home and rest quietly there till the spring comes and you can travel about once more."

But Tom shook his head and looked troubled.

"I cannot go back to Sax—I dare not," he answered in low tones, "I did so before—and I fell back into sin. It might be so again. I dare not trust myself."

"Good: in that will lie your great safeguard. Perhaps the last time you did trust yourself and your 'new religion' to keep you from all temptation."

"I believe I did," answered Tom, humbly enough. "I can see now how many mistakes I made, and how self-righteous I was. But, apart from that, I do not wish to go to Sax. There is no work for me to do there. Mr. Wesley himself in passing through would not preach to the people. He told them that there was no message he had for them which they could not and did not hear from their own clergyman. It is to the lost sheep we are sent—to the sheep who have no shepherd. I must do my Master's work—and it does not seem to me that He has anything for me to do in Sax."

Master Annesley smiled as he answered:

"Well, well, my dear lad, I never myself found the place where the Lord's work might not be done; but each man must judge for himself. At

least, the world is wide, and in large cities there are always perishing souls to be found by hundreds, ay, and thousands. Go, then, to some great town for these winter months—go to York, since you have friends there, and whilst you are trying to save the souls of the ignorant multitude, you can take such reasonable care of your own body as prudence and common-sense demand."

But Tom's face was still troubled and perplexed.

"I cannot bear towns," he said, "I have been in them before—and there is always the same thing everywhere."

"What thing?"

"Contention and strife and disputing," cried Tom, speaking quickly and vehemently, "and it makes my heart sick to hear it," and forthwith he poured into sympathetic ears the story of his own troubles with regard to the irreconcilable split in his own party, together with his hatred of controversial strife, and his misgivings that there were discrepancies to be found in the Scriptures.

Master Annesley listened with his thoughtful smile, and then he said to Tom:

"My dear lad, the same Holy Spirit dictated the whole of that sacred Book, and though I have studied it closely these many years, I have never felt any misgivings such as trouble you. Take yon Bible in your hands and let us for a moment discuss these troublous passages, and see if we cannot find some way of reconciling them one with another."

Tom eagerly took the sacred Book and opened to a certain place. Master Annesley looked over his shoulder and smiled as he saw the words:

"Ah, that passage from St. Jude: 'Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.' If, my young friend, you had asked Mr. Wesley the true meaning of those words, he, as a scholar of the original tongue, would have told you—what any scholar will tell you—namely, that the real significance of the passage in the original is that there had been words of prophecy spoken of old, that such men as these should trouble the church in the later days. That God has ever foreordained any man to eternal damnation is a thought adverse to the whole of the Biblical teaching from the very beginning of its history."

Tom was eagerly turning the leaves of his Bible, and pointed out the much-disputed passage in the Epistle to the Romans at which Master Annesley did not even need to look. The smile deepened on his face. He quietly recited the following words, very slowly and impressively: "'For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate,'—predestinate to what?—let us see: and observe, my young friend, that the words go straight on without any stop, and read thus: 'He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.' Now, Tom Heron, if you quietly and seriously study those words, I think you will see that whatever else the election of God may mean, it means this above all else—to be conformed to the image of God's Son—to be Christlike in word and in deed. We must strive

in all things to be like Him, not asking, 'Am I elected?' but, 'Am I striving to be conformed to the image of the Son of God?'

Tom's eyes were fixed earnestly on the speaker: and Master Annesley continued with a thoughtful smile:

"And we must not ask this selfishly—we must think not alone of the salvation of our own souls; but of acting as God's firstborn to our brethren around."

"How?" asked Tom almost under his breath.

The clergyman smiled slightly:

"Ah, Tom Heron, I am not sure that I can answer that question, for God acts in His own way, and we do not always know what that way is; but of one thing we may be very sure, namely, that of us Christian people—baptised into the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ—some work will here or hereafter be demanded. The doctrine of election, as it seems to me, after careful study of the Scriptures, carries with it always this idea—that some are called or chosen for the blessing of others. We see this principle running throughout God's dealings with man from the very creation. Seth and his descendants were chosen above sinful Cain's (though he and not his sons had sinned) yet Cain's descendants were to be blessed through the Promised Seed. Abraham was called of God, not for himself alone, but that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The Jews were a chosen people set to be a light to the nations around (had they but lived up to their high calling) and through them came the Messiah into the world—the Light—to lighten the Gentiles. Like a golden thread running through Holy Writ is this thought—that God calls out some for the blessing of the rest—that He elects, as it were, His firstborn; but looks to them to enlighten and bless their brethren. It is for us Christians to ask: 'Are we doing our part in this God-given work? We are called after the name of Christ; are we conforming ourselves to His image?—not merely to obtain our own salvation, but to strive to be a blessing to our brethren?'

Tom's face was gravely bright.

"I think I follow you there, sir; but what of the elect and their falling away?—can they fall away?"

Master Annesley made a gesture that arrested Tom's farther words.

"With that, my friend, we have nothing to do. Who are ye to judge another man's servants? to their own master they stand or fall. How much more true is this of the servants of God? He alone is Judge. St. Peter bids us make our calling and election sure; and for myself I can only see one meaning to that injunction, which is that we stand or fall—live or die—according as we accept the great Atonement and conform ourselves to the image of the Son of God. But, my dear young friend, avoid controversy wherever it is possible. Try to see in all men brothers and fellow-workers in the vineyard of the Lord. Be sure of your own ground; when questions savouring of doubt arise, seek out godly men who may help to explain away the difficulty and

enable you, if the occasion arise, to help men in like difficulties; but do not rush eagerly into controversy and strife. Remember that men are almost never convinced against their will by argument—least of all in matters of religion. Do not be afraid to go amongst your brethren, but avoid contention as far as it may be possible."

The end of all this was that November saw Tom back in the city of York, occupying a humble lodging in the house of Brother Holdsworthy, and labouring heart and soul amongst the poor and ignorant and degraded population within the walls, and finding that he possessed powers both of preaching and exhortation above any that he had asked or hoped.

York was of course a military town, and there came in due course a request from some of the soldiers that Tom Heron might come and address them at a certain place at a certain time. The officers were in the main averse to Methodist influence in the ranks: but the present Colonel was a man of high principle and wide toleration. He had condemned the opposition made by the younger officers and had said that he would permit a preaching to be given in the barrack yard at a certain time on Sunday afternoon.

Tom was very willing to respond to the invitation received. He had got over his first shyness at preaching. His natural gift of rude eloquence had been developed and trained, and practice had given him confidence. He was especially successful in addressing himself to men, and the rougher his audience the more successful he often proved. Soldiers were for the most part rude enough and ignorant enough. He had seen enough of their ways during the past weeks' residence in the town to be well aware of that. The swearing, the drinking, the immorality amongst them was fearful to witness. Tom, who always thought carefully over any address before he delivered it, had no intention of sparing his listeners. It was not the fashion of his teachers to mince matters—the hideousness of sin and the terrible retribution which it called down upon its devotees was a favourite theme with the Methodist preacher, and Tom remembered too well the blackness of his own degradation to attempt to palliate vice in any form whatever.

His tall muscular figure, his handsome striking face, now refined by thought and suffering, and stamped with the unmistakable impress of lofty purpose, his clear ringing voice, the flash of his dark eyes, all helped to make his words doubly impressive, whilst something of the unusual history attaching to the man always gave an additional interest to his words.

It was well known that Tom Heron had led a life of wild and unbridled license in his youth. He had not been ordinarily, but extraordinarily wild and reckless, and he was never backward in proclaiming the fact. It was useless for any one to urge that he was too far gone in sin to be saved. Tom would unfold to him the darker pages of his own history, and ask if his companion could match them.

"If Christ can't save you, then you are stronger

than Christ," he would urge, "and if you are stronger than Christ, then Christ is not God, and we are all lost creatures together. If you don't want to break off your sins, if you don't want to be a sharer in His most precious Atonement, say so straight out like a man. The devil is close by, waiting to carry you away. But don't delude yourself by thinking that you want to be saved, that you want to have your sins washed away, but that you are so wicked that Christ can't or won't save you, because that only shows that in your heart of hearts you don't trust Him, and perhaps you don't even want to trust Him. It's the work of the devil there at your elbow, making you think you are kept away by a sense of unworthiness, when all the while he is luring you farther and farther away from the Cross, which is your only hope. I have been through it all. I know what it is like. But with Christ there is plenteous redemption. If He died for the sins of the whole world, surely He is strong enough to save you."

So Tom spoke to-day amongst the soldiers who pressed around him afterwards to ask his help and tell of personal difficulties.

He had spent more than an hour in this way and was about to leave the place, when he felt himself taken by the arm, and turned round quickly to find himself face to face with Jos Dawson and Michael Portway, both dressed in the garb of soldiers.

"Jos, Mike," he cried, wringing them by the hand, "how did you come here? and in that guise too?"

"We have been soldiers this past three months," answered Mike, "and we were resolved to hear you preach, Tom, and set the fellows on to ask; but we wouldn't let you see us till you had done. Man, what a gift you have! I wish Mr. Latham could have heard you. You know that he is dead? Had you not heard? He died in September. And after that we could not bear Sax; you had gone, and then he was taken, and so we went for soldiers, and we are in Captain Fortescue's company, and are quartered here. Folks say that the ministers in Lunnon are going to have the army reduced, and perhaps we may be sent home before very long. But it's good to see thy face again, Tom Heron. Who would have thought in old days that thee'd turn preacher?"

It was a great delight to Tom to see the familiar faces of his old friends, and to hear all the news of Sax. Molly, he was told, was growing up into quite a pretty maiden, so helpful and handy that it was hard to believe she was blind. She was still at Ernscliff, in some capacity, waiting on Mrs. Mary it was believed. Tom could hardly believe that the little one was nearly sixteen, she had always been so small and stunted and childlike. But years had sped by, and she had shot from childhood into maidenhood, and Jos Dawson declared that his mother, who took a deal of notice of her now, was fond of saying that she was a handier lass and a quieter and better behaved one than half the girls with eyes in their heads. It was plain that Jos felt an honest liking for Molly, and he spoke of her with pride and satisfaction.

Tom saw as much of his old comrades during the next weeks as his duties would allow, and as these latter had been under the influence of religion for some time, and had serious views of life and its responsibilities, there was much to draw them together. They came to Tom for advice and assistance in their difficulties and temptations, and it was a keen pleasure to him to learn that to him and his conversion, and the impression it produced upon them both, these men dated the beginning of a striving after better things themselves. Tom had hitherto looked back to his life in Sax as the most wretched and unprofitable part of his existence, to find that it had been of service to others, there was a source of unspeakable joy to him.

Christmas had come and gone, the new year had commenced when his friends once more sought him out with faces full of consternation.

Jos and Mike were both about to return to Sax. The fiat had gone forth that some companies were to be disbanded. The country had more soldiers than it required, and economy demanded an abatement. The two recruits were not altogether sorry to hear that they were to return home. They had not found the life in barracks as much to their liking as they had hoped. Now that they had grown used to the blank at home, Sax might be pleasant to them again. The good time of the year was coming round. Jos knew his parents would welcome him back, and it was not on account of the approaching separation from Tom that their faces looked so full of dismay.

Hastily taking him apart into his own small sleeping-chamber, they poured into his ears a tale which sounded wild and improbable enough, but which in those days of highway robbery and lawlessness might prove too true, and it excited Tom's profound indignation.

Jos and Mike had learned the details of the proposed plan from the body-servant of their Captain. Young Fortescue, who had fallen into debt, and was in desperate straits for money, had resolved that at all costs he would force himself upon Mary Ernscliffe as a husband. He had been wooing her for years, but not with real ardour, as it was her money, not herself he really cared for, and she had always received his advances with such marked coldness that he had never been able to come to the point. Now, however, his mind was made up, and as he knew that his chance were small if he wooed in the ordinary way, he was resolved to try and win her by a bold ruse, and if that failed to exercise a certain amount of force.

It had come to his knowledge, through his sister, that Mrs. Mary was forced to take a winter's journey to visit the property just over the Scotch border, which had passed into her hands a year or two ago. Mrs. Ernscliff would of course not be able to be with her, and she would only have servants in attendance. The Captain's plan was to disguise a certain number of trusty fellows as highway-men, to make them attack the carriage, make prisoners of the servants, and carry them and their lady to a small wayside cottage,

deserted and empty, where they would believe themselves in actual peril of their lives. Then he, the Captain, would effect a rescue, apparently at the peril of his life, and he reckoned that in the gratitude of the moment the lady would listen to his impassioned pleading, and surrender herself to him, or if not that he could contrive to accompany her across the border, and force her into one of the all-too-easy Scotch marriages,

which were the terror of guardians, and the peril of maidens in those days.

Tom listened to the details of this plan in silence, whilst the veins on his forehead swelled with the old anger that was still ready to boil up within him. At the close of the story he was silent a moment, and then between clenched teeth he said—

"It shall be my part to put a stop to this vile plot; and you lads will help me to do it."

MR. SPURGEON'S PREACHING.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS.

MR. JOHN BRIGHT, in one of his letters, has some striking remarks on the intellectual strain caused by any conscientious attempt to meet the demands of the modern pulpit. Of the effort to prepare and deliver two (or three) sermons weekly, he expressively says: "I wonder how any man can stand it!" Yet spoken sermons, we know, may be preached again; or at least the same matter may be used in new combinations. *Publication* involves a far more serious tax upon the powers; and the issue from the press, during thirty-seven years, of 2242 finished sermons by one preacher printed weekly is a fact likely to remain as unique as it is wonderful. Nor is this all. Now that the eloquent voice is silenced, we learn that from the same prolific source several hundred sermons yet remain unpublished, so that the weekly issue may possibly continue without a break, up to and beyond the close of the century. The discourses, notwithstanding their enormous number, are eagerly read; and, according to recent estimate, nearly fifty millions of copies have been circulated among English-speaking communities throughout the world, while translations into many languages raise the aggregate to some millions more. These sermons, again, are but a part of their author's literary activity; many volumes, requiring much thought and research, having proceeded from his teeming brain and facile pen; while he has edited his monthly magazine, with unflagging vivacity and vigour, for twenty-seven years.

Had Mr. Spurgeon, like many men, simply divided his time between his study and his pulpit, the enumeration of marvels might here cease. But, in fact, he has been one of the busiest men of his generation, finding time, amongst other matters, to superintend a college, almshouses, a large orphanage; while, in widespread personal relations, he has been notable for the readiness of his sympathy, never forgetting a face, and entering into the concerns of innumerable associates almost as if they were his own. When to all this we add that the latter part of his life was passed amid constantly-recurrent weakness and suffering, we shall have completed a picture of consecrated service in the cause of God and man, to which it would be difficult, since the days of Richard Baxter, to find a parallel.

It is undoubtedly as a preacher that Mr. Spurgeon will be best remembered. Whatever else he attempted, in literature or public work, the pulpit was the centre of his life; and the "Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" will remain his most lasting memorial. Much in his preaching could not be printed; and to readers who can recollect Mr. Spurgeon, the pages will recall, in a manner which none else will be able to realize, the incomparable resonant voice, the clear manly utterance, the "accent of conviction," in which the most unfriendly listener could detect nothing professional or insincere; with the gravely earnest, often half-humorous gaze of the preacher upon his congregation, and the occasional notes of an exquisite pathos, all the more thrilling because the prevailing tone was that of a dispassionate and homely seriousness. To reproduce all this is beyond the art of typography. Yet the essentials of the preacher's power are very traceable all through these thirty-seven volumes.

When it is said that Mr. Spurgeon was an uneducated man, we may reply by enquiring in what education consists. Certain it is that he was an assiduous and careful reader, that a prodigious memory enabled him to retain and to arrange his stores of knowledge, that a rigorous self-discipline and careful disposition of his time enabled him to improve every opportunity of learning, and that his technical and critical knowledge in his own chosen studies qualified him to hold his own even with accomplished scholars. "The Treasury of David" was no work of uninstructed genius: and all through the sermons there are touches which show a familiarity with minutiae of criticism and interpretation. The preacher wisely does not encumber his exposition with learning: he gives results rather than processes; but these results are the fruit of knowledge as well as of intuition. Perhaps the best of all sermons are those which are not laboriously written for the occasion, but are the overflow of a full mind in almost spontaneous utterance. I remember once after hearing a marvellous sermon from Mr. Spurgeon, preached on some emergency, that the speaker naively remarked; "I had but twenty minutes in which to prepare that sermon." "No," I could not help replying, "you have been preparing that sermon for twenty years."

It would be a fatal result of Mr. Spurgeon's career should it lead young men to suppose that they can become instructors of the age with no apparatus save a knowledge of the English Bible, with fervid piety, unquestioned orthodoxy, and much assurance. They may rely upon it that such was not the plan of their exemplar.

Mr. Spurgeon's language, accordingly, was something more than the spontaneous talk of an Essex lad. Unconsciously or consciously, he had studied the best models, and had framed upon them an almost unrivalled style of pure downright English speech. As we read we are often reminded of Bishop Latimer, often of Bunyan. His sincerity of thought extends to his language. Now and then there is a sudden splendour of diction, but this also is spontaneous, unforced; and the relapse into homeliness is no strange contrast with a preceding effort. Occasionally the speaker revels in beauty; but he checks himself; his great aim is to be useful, and words are wasted which do not directly aim at the conscience and the heart.

Wit and humour abound, but in strict subordination to the ruling purpose. In the earlier stages of his ministry he was stigmatised, with strange misunderstanding, as a pulpit buffoon. True, he startled many by his disregard of conventionalities: but we live in freer times; and, looking backward over those early sermons, in their boldest flights we discern chiefly the outbursts of a fine spirit, swift to observe analogies and incongruities, and alive to the humorous aspect of things by virtue of the insight which appreciated their seriousness and pathos as well.

In such hands Scripture yielded new meanings, and the very titles of the sermons are often a study. Thus, "The Echo" indicates the faithful man's response to the Divine call: "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." "A Sacred Solo" describes the Psalmist's glad outburst: "The Lord is my strength and shield; my heart trusteth in Him and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my song will I praise Him." "Robinson Crusoe's Text" recalls the favourite of our boyhood, in expounding the words "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." "A Drama in Five Acts" illustrates the text: "The fashion of this world passeth away." "I intend this morning," says the preacher, "to take you to a play. Strange thing for me to do, who have never crossed the threshold of a theatre on any occasion, good or bad!"

Passages of Scripture yield unsuspected stores of useful teaching. The cloak that Paul left at Troas with Carpus has lessons well nigh inexhaustible. The *self-sacrifice* of Paul for the Lord's sake—shivering there at Rome in the cold! *Utterly forsaken*: was there nobody to lend him a cloak? *Independent of mind*: he would neither borrow nor beg one. *Careless of appearances*: wanting only his old garment to keep him warm, he asks no more! *Mighty to resist temptation*: no employment of miraculous gifts to provide for his wants: leading to the reflection, *How precisely similar one child of God feels to another*: sensitive

to cold and wanting his cloak just as any one of us! Then the preacher goes on to "the books," and "the parchments," with lessons as apposite and as quaint.

Illustrations flow in from all quarters. It is as if all things on earth and in common life had messages through the preacher to the people. "I saw in Pompeii, on a shop door, the inscription *Eme et habebis*—'Buy and thou shalt have,' and I could not but think that if I were walking the streets of the New Jerusalem, I should have seen a very different device: 'Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.'" Again, in the great Luther Sermon at Exeter Hall, 1883, "the power of faith over God Himself" is illustrated by a charming little dog story.

"Do you ask me to retract that expression? Let it stand. I will explain it. Faith overcomes the Highest upon His throne. Faith in an inferior can hold a superior fast. Some years ago I was walking in the garden one evening, and I saw a stray dog, about whom I had received information that he was in the habit of visiting my grounds, and that he did not in the least assist the gardener, and therefore his attentions were not desired. As I walked along one Saturday evening meditating upon my sermon, I saw this dog busily doing mischief. I threw my stick at him, and told him to go home. But what do you think he did? Instead of grinding his teeth at me, or hurrying off with a howl, he looked at me very pleasantly, took up my stick in his mouth and brought it to me, and then, wagging his tail, he laid the stick at my feet. The tears were in my eyes: the dog had beaten me. I said, 'Good dog! Good dog! you may come here when you like after that.' Why had the dog conquered me? Because he had confidence in me, and would not believe that I could mean him any hurt. To turn to grander things: the Lord Himself cannot resist humble confidence."—No. 1750.

The ruins of Pompeii; the garden at Nightingale Lane: everywhere there is teaching for the open eye and the receptive heart.

By common agreement, the quality above all conspicuous in Mr. Spurgeon's manner of presenting truth was his intense, unquestioning belief in every part of his message. To young ministers it has been often said, "Do not preach your doubts." Mr. Spurgeon had no doubts to preach. It is true, he claimed to understand the attitude of souls perplexed amid the mysteries of human life and of divine revelation. There was a time, he has told us, before his conversion, when he was assailed by the terrors of scepticism. But these were rather boyish bewilderments than the conflicts of a man; seeing that he publicly professed his faith in Christ at fifteen, and never afterwards looked back. "Then," he says, "I began to be safe and happy; then I found out the secret of living; and had a worthy object for my life's exertions and an unfailing comfort for life's troubles."

It has been something to hear the tones of clear, strong, unhesitating belief in an age which seems almost to have taken for its motto the poet's half truth:

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

Even those who are themselves doubters or

unconvinced like to hear unhesitating words from their professed teachers. There is a certain comfort in the dogmatism of the evidently sincere.

In a sermon on "Broad Rivers and Streams" (Isa. xxxiii. 20-23: preached January 18, 1863), he takes the tone to which he ever afterwards adhered, respecting modern departures from the old simplicity of belief:

"Every day produces some improved divinity. Every now and then, to suit the times, a new edition of the Gospel is issued. Young gentlemen at college are taught not to preach the common ordinary doctrines, such as John Calvin, St. Augustine, and the Apostle Paul preached; they must go to Germany and muddle their own heads, and then come forth to muddle other people's; they must have some philosophical divinity, some novelty, something more refined than that which would attract the mob and gather together the common people. *Thinking* people must be cared for; sermons must be full of intellectual matter; the old apostles were but fishermen, and of course they could not preach more than fishermen's education would enable them to comprehend; but these gentlemen have taken their degrees, and can climb to far greater heights and descend into far profounder depths than plain Peter or illiterate John. Well, dear friends, we are content with the old wine since it is the best; Christ's gospel is no new gospel; and moreover, we are old-fashioned enough to believe that not one doctrine is to be altered, nor half a doctrine, nor the thousandth part of a doctrine, nor yet the form of a doctrine. We would 'hold fast the form of sound words'—not only the principle, mark, but the *words*; and not only the words, but the very *form* in which the words were moulded. 'Words, words, words,' says somebody; 'what is the use of words, and forms, and creeds? Why, these are old musty crusty documents, only sectarians care about them.' Ay, then let us be sectarians; let us hold with force and strength of mind the very form of sound words which has been delivered unto us. Not one of the stakes shall be removed, nor one of the cords thereof be loosened."—No. 489.

Such absolute unhesitating confidence in the message commends the messenger to the multitude. "Here, at least, is a man who knows what he is talking about." Mr. Spurgeon was fond of telling how a good old man silenced some atheistic questionings: "Is there a God or not? Why, I have known Him personally for fifty years!"

No doubt the nature of the doctrines avowed with such certainty had much to do with the effect of the preaching. Similar declarations, supposing them possible, of strong belief in Unitarian doctrine, must fall comparatively fruitless. The certainty would never spread like a contagion from soul to soul. Nor, on the other hand, would the equally dogmatic avowal of convictions based on Church authority. It is the impression of a direct Divine message which stamps the prophet in the eyes of men. "Thus saith the Lord!" awakens the response of assenting awe. Now Mr. Spurgeon believed, and he made others feel, that he had received his doctrine from God Himself through an infallible oracle, the Scripture, true in every word of it, true though it made out all the world's wisdom to be delusion.

Mr. Spurgeon's theology was, as all the world

knows, rigorously Calvinistic. With all his heart and soul he believed in personal election, particular redemption and irresistible grace. But it would be a mistake to suppose that this creed was at all a hindrance to his acceptableness with the masses. Apart from the question whether these doctrines are not the eternal truth of God, and therefore mighty, we recognize in them an adherence to the deepest religious traditions of the English people. They are the old familiar teachings which have fashioned the noblest part of our national life; and when freshly brought forth and associated with the appeals of a world-wide universal gospel, their power to attract is, even humanly speaking, irresistible. For it was the peculiarity of Mr. Spurgeon's preaching that, while the Calvinism was distinctly avowed, the appeals to the hearts and consciences of all were urged with a yet more passionate fervour. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." "There," says Mr. Spurgeon, "are two great truths; let us carry them both with us, and they will balance each other. I was once asked to reconcile these two statements, and I answered, 'No, I never reconcile friends.'"¹ So he declared both views with equal fulness—"the High and the Broad." Certainly the *Come and welcome to Jesus Christ* has never been uttered with a more comprehensive fulness, a more heart-moving earnestness. If any hearer should meet it with speculative difficulty, the preacher retorts in the language of common sense: "'Suppose I am not one of God's elect?' To him I answer, 'Suppose you are. Better still, suppose that you leave off supposing altogether, and just go to Jesus Christ and see. To go to Him is your wisdom; your immediate business, as laid down in His Word, therefore, delay not.' Instead of shutting myself out, as some do, because it is written, 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me,' I shut myself in, and say, 'Then I will be among them.' Why should I not?"

A great characteristic of Mr. Spurgeon's presentation of the Gospel was the great delight that he found in it. "Rejoice in the Lord" was the keynote of many sermons, musical with exuberance of gladness. We take a characteristic passage from a sermon on "The Minstrelsy of Hope:" Psa. lxxvii. 6, 7: "God, even our own God, shall bless us":

"The sweet bright-eyed maiden Hope—have you never heard the story of her matchless song? She learned in her youth a song, which she sings evermore to the accompaniment of a well-tuned harp. Here are the words of her enchanting lay: 'God will bless us, God will bless us.' She has often been heard singing this in the night, and, lo! stars have suddenly shone out of the black sky. 'God will bless us.' She has been known to sing this in the midst of tempests, and calms have followed the soothing song. Once on a time, certain strong labourers were sent forth by the great King to level a primeval forest, to plough it, to sow it, and to bring to him the harvest. They were stout-hearted and strong, and willing enough for labour, and well they needed all their strength and more. One stalwart labourer was named Industry—consecrated work was his.

¹ Sermon preached at Exeter Hall, 1885.—No. 1762.

His brother Patience, with thows of steel, went with him, and tired not in the longest days, under the heaviest labours. To help them they had Zeal, clothed with ardent and indomitable energy. Side by side, there stood his kinsman, Self-denial, and his friend Importunity. These went forth to their labour, and they took with them, to cheer their toils, their well-beloved sister Hope; and well it was they did, for the forest trees were huge, and needed many sturdy blows of the axe ere they would fall prone upon the ground. One by one they yielded, but the labour was immense, and incessant. At night, when they went to their rest, the day's work always seemed so light, for as they crossed the threshold, Patience, wiping the sweat from his brow, would be encouraged, and Self-denial would be strengthened, for they heard a sweet voice within sing, 'God will bless us, God even our own God, will bless us.' They felled the giant trees to the music of that strain; they cleared the acres one by one; they tore from their sockets the huge roots; they delved the soil; they sowed the corn, and waited for the harvest, often much discouraged, but still in silver chains and golden fetters by the sweet sound of the voice which chanted so constantly, 'God, even our own God, will bless us.' They never could refrain from service, for she never could refrain from song. They were ashamed to be discouraged, they were shocked to be despairing, for still the voice rang clearly out at morn and eventide, 'God will bless us, God even our own God, will bless us.' You know the parable, you recognise the voice: may you hear it in your souls to-day!"—No. 819. July 5, 1868.

With this joy in the gospel, it is not wonderful that there was, in the best sense, a spirit of optimism in the preacher's soul. Here is one of his many protests against the dark anticipations in which many good men are apt to indulge, and some of which overcast his own later days. His theme is "One Flock, one Shepherd" (John x. 16); which text, we need hardly say, he is careful to give accurately. Not "One Fold, one Shepherd" according to the familiar but misleading version.

"Doubtless these days are exceedingly dangerous, and I have certain brethren round me who never allow me to forget it, for they play well in the minor key, and dwell most judiciously upon the necessary topic of the general declension of the church and the growing depravity of the world. I would not stop them from their faithful warnings, although I can assure them that, with slight variations, I have heard the same tune for years. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up, and it has been good for me. I recollect hearing some thirty years ago that we lived in awful times; and, as nearly as I can recollect, the times have been awful ever since; and I suppose they always will be. The watchmen of the night see everything except the coming of the morning."—No. 1713. March 25, 1883.

Associated with this hopefulness there is a deep and glad recognition of the unity of all true believers. Here is Mr. Spurgeon's church doctrine—theory and sentiment alike.

"Set two brethren at prayer, the one a Calvinist and the other an Arminian, and they pray alike. Get a real work of the Spirit in a district, and see how Baptists and Pædo-Baptists pull together. Tell out your inward experience and speak of the Spirit's work in the soul, and see how we are all moved thereby. Here is a brother, a member of the Society of Friends, and he likes silent worship; and here is another who enjoys hearty singing; but when they get near to God they do not quarrel over this, but agree to differ: the one says, 'The Lord be with you in your holy

silence,' and the other prays that the Lord may accept his brother's psalm. All who are one with Christ have a certain family feeling, a higher form of clannishness, and they cannot shake it off. I have found myself reading a gracious book which has drawn me near to God, and though I have known that it was written by a man with whose opinions I had little agreement, I have not therefore refused to be edified by him in points which are unquestionably revealed. No, but I have blessed the Lord that, with all his blunders, he knew so much of precious vital truth, and lived so near his Lord. What Protestant can refuse to love the holy Bernard? Was there ever a more consecrated servant of God or a dearer lover of Christ than he? Yet he was most sorrowfully in bondage to the superstitions of his age and of the Romish Church. Are you not all one with him who sang—'Jesus, the very thought of Thee with sweetness fills my breast'?"

"The external church is needful, but it is not *the one and indivisible church of Christ*. Jesus as the life binds His church together, and that life flows through all the regenerate, even as the blood flows through all the veins of the body. Drop the external, and look by faith into the spiritual realm and you will see one flock and one Shepherd."—No. 1713.

The reference to Bernard reminds us how in Mr. Spurgeon's "Luther" sermon, already quoted, the orator, at the very height of his argument on the power of faith, burst into an impassioned quotation from Xavier's hymn, "My God, I love Thee." The effect was thrilling, as if for the moment the Jesuit missionary and the German reformer were seen to clasp inseparable hands.

It is pleasant to think that, as the great preacher sat in the very shadow of death, on the last day of the old year, amid the little company at Mentone, "breaking," as he affectingly says, "the long silence," by what proved to be only parting words, he reverts to the same theme.

"During the past year I have been made to see that there is more love and unity among God's people than is generally believed. I speak not egotistically, but gratefully. I had no idea that Christian people, of every church, would spontaneously and importunately plead for the prolonging of my life. I feel myself a debtor to all God's people on this earth. Each section of the church seemed to vie with all the rest in sending words of comfort to my wife, and in presenting intercession to God on my behalf. If anyone had prophesied, twenty years ago, that a dissenting minister, and a very outspoken one, too, would be prayed for in many parish churches, and in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, it would not have been believed; but it was so. There is more love in the hearts of Christian people than they know of themselves. We mistake our divergences of judgment for differences of heart; but they are far from being the same thing. In these days of infidel criticism, believers of all sorts will be driven into sincere unity. For my part, I believe that all spiritual persons are already one. When our Lord prayed that His church might be one, His prayer was answered, and His true people are even now, in spirit and truth, one in Him. Their different modes of external worship are as the furrows of a field; the field is none the less one because of the marks of the plough. Between rationalism and faith there is an abyss immeasurable; but where there is faith in the Everlasting Father, faith in the Great Sacrifice, and faith in the Indwelling Spirit, there is a living, loving, lasting union."—Address at Mentone. *Sword and Trowel*. February 1892.

S. G. G.



FIRST THE BLADE."—MARK iv. 28.

THE great lesson which this beautiful parable teaches, is that of progressive growth. There is a regular order according to which things must grow. The seed sown must produce in regular succession the leaf, the stalk, the flower, the fruit. That is the way in which God has fixed that every plant must unfold itself. There is a time when the corn is only a blade, another time when it is only a leafy stem, another time when it produces its green

flower on the top of the stalk, and another time when the ear hangs down from the stalk with its weight of ripe golden grain. You cannot have the seed at once producing fruit as soon as it is sown; you cannot expect when you see the green blade peeping above the soil, to behold immediately after, the full yellow corn in the ear. You must wait for the slow natural process by which the plant unfolds itself, and reveals its perfection of beauty and usefulness.

There is a beautiful legend in the east of Europe, which tells of an orphan girl left with a cruel step-mother, who treated her harshly and wanted to get rid of her. She at last sent her out of the house one bitter day in January, when the snow was falling and the ground frozen hard, and told her to go to the wood and get violets, and not come back without them. The poor girl wandered through the leafless wood in great distress, for she knew that no violets could be found at that season. At last she came to an opening where there was a fire, and a circle of twelve persons sitting round it on twelve stones. The first was an old man with a long white beard; and he asked her what she wanted. And when she told her pitiful story, he said to her, "I am January; I cannot give you any violets, but my younger brother March can." And he asked the third person sitting on his right hand, a fine young man, to exchange places with him. March came and sat on the stone of January, and immediately the air grew softer, the snow melted around the fire, the green grass appeared on the ground, and out of the soft moss a tuft of the loveliest and most fragrant violets appeared, which the orphan girl gathered, and brought home to her astonished step-mother.

Now, anything, you know, can happen in a fairy-story. But it sometimes seems in the real world, as if the order of nature were upset, as if you had March weather in January, and January weather in March; as if you had the flowers of spring at the beginning of the year, and the snow and frosts of winter in the middle of spring. But there can be no such irregularity in the growth of a plant; no such exchange of places among the different parts. Each must keep its own place, and appear in its own time. One stage cannot be leaped over in order to reach at once a higher stage. Each stage must be passed through in its own proper order according to the law of

growth. The plant must climb in turn each successive step of the ladder of its life, till it reaches the highest step of completeness and rest in the perfect fruit and seed.

Now, my dear young friends, you are at the blade stage of life; and what you have to produce is not the ear, nor the full corn in the ear, but simply the blade. That is all your work; the whole limit of your life; your little sphere of duty. You are to be yourselves, children, young people; and your character and conduct are to be suitable to your time of life. God does not expect an old head upon young shoulders, nor the ripe wisdom of sere and yellow old age from those who are in the green leaf of youth. He wants you to be natural and unaffected, and to grow naturally according to your years. This was the case in a wonderful manner with Jesus Himself. He who spoke the beautiful parable made it a living reality in His own life. He grew in wisdom as in stature, according to the natural law of growth. Each stage was perfect in itself, and perfectly balanced with that which went before, and followed after. He was perfect as a child, perfect as a boy, perfect as a youth, perfect as a man. There was nothing at any age out of keeping with what was characteristic of that age. He did not show when a child, a wisdom which properly belonged to later years; nor did He do things when a boy, which only a full-grown man could have done. Scripture tells us that when He was a child He was no youthful prodigy, living a supernatural life full of wonders. He spoke as a child; He understood as a child; He thought as a child. He was subject to His parents in Nazareth; and received instruction when He was twelve years old, from the doctors of the law, in the temple. He followed the divine order of human growth, as a plant follows the divine order of vegetable growth; first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

And the same thing is told of Samuel, who most resembled our Lord in his youth, and of whom, too, it is said, that "he grew on and was in favour both with the Lord and also with man." Samuel was peculiarly a child-like child. This is probably what is meant by the strange expression which is used regarding him when his mother first brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh: "And the child was young." This expression does not tell us merely—what is self-evident, that the child was young in years at this time; it tells us that the child was young in nature. The Hebrew word translated *young* is the same as that translated *child*; and therefore the literal rendering of the words is "and the child was a child." He was all that a child should be, with all child-like graces, gentleness and teachableness. He was submissive to his parents in all things, and was filled up to the measure of a child, with reverence and loyalty towards the institutions and the history of his nation.

These are the examples which you are to imitate. You are, at your stage of life, to seek by the grace of God to be what they were at that age. He who has made everything beautiful

in its season, has given its own special beauty to the blade. What can be lovelier than the soft green radiance of the spring grass, the first delicate freshness and transparency of the new life, unspoiled by heat or dust? Nowhere does the sunshine rest so tenderly and brightly as over the green blade that first springs above the soil under the light showers of the April sky. A perfect leaf is, in its own degree and order, as beautiful a thing as a flower or fruit. Indeed, we cannot tell when a plant is most beautiful, when it is in the blade or in the full corn in the ear. At each stage it has a beauty of its own, and is a special revelation of the wisdom and love of the great Creator. And so, too, there is a special charm about young human life. A child is the same everywhere. The child of a prince and of a peasant will recognise in each other their common nature, and at once be at home and play together. A young Greek or Jew is the same as a young Scotchman or Englishman; and the young people of whom we read in ancient history, are precisely the same as the young people we see to-day around us. Youth gives a unity to life, from which it starts and manifests the after distinctions and differences which separate grown-up people from each other; just as the plants that differ so much from each other in their flower and fruit, start from the same kind of leaf at the beginning. In the morning freshness of life, the whole world is kin. It is the youthful qualities of trust and love, of simplicity and innocence that lie at the basis of humanity.

Now remembering this, seeing you are in the blade stage, you are to seek by the gracious help of the holy child Jesus to bring out all the beauty of life at that stage, to be as far as you possibly can a perfect child, a perfect boy or girl. You are to be childlike while you are children, to be satisfied with the little round of duties and experiences natural to that stage. There are many young people in our day who have none of the qualities or graces which should distinguish young people. Many children are not children at all. They have lost all the charm and freshness of childhood. They care no more for simple and innocent pleasures; nothing makes them wonder; nothing interests them. They have already got all that the world promises, and they are bored in themselves and disagreeable to others. There cannot be a greater loss than the loss of childhood in young people, made artificial worldlings, old before their time in the world's dreary ways and experiences.

I know that young people who are in the blade-stage often want to be in the ear-stage. They look down upon children and everything belonging to children, and are impatient to be grown-up men and women, to get the freedom and advantages which they imagine to belong to that period of life. Young people are naturally impatient. They want things at once. They have no sympathy with slow gradual growth. They would like the acorn to become the oak immediately, and the blossom to produce the ripe fruit as soon as it has unfolded. The world of childhood is a world in which, like the eastern

juggler's trick, trees and fruits appear perfect and full-grown in a moment, as by enchantment. But the actual world is a world of delay, progress and fixed law. God does not produce ready made things. He plants seeds that will grow; and in anything if we try to go too fast we spoil the work. If we force the blade into precocious ripeness, it withers into weak and worthless hay instead of producing the green and milky ear. Childhood is, in reality, the most important of all ages. It is what is called the formative time; and it is in proportion to the length of that time that the after result will be. There is a wonderful connection between the advancement of life and the provision made for the young. The longer the childhood, the greater the progress of the race. The creatures that come most quickly to maturity are always the lowest. Man has the longest infancy of any creature, and therefore he is capable of the greatest advancement. It is his long childhood under the care of parents, and the training of teachers that has made him what he is; and you will notice that the more advanced races and classes of mankind lengthen out the period of infancy, and keep their children as long as possible under training and education. It is always God's way to have a long time of preparation for His greatest works.

There is a fable about a flower which grew in a wood in early May, and lifted up its beautiful blue blossom to the blue sky. Side by side with it two round leaves on a stalk had cleft the soil and opened themselves to the sun, without charm of colour or grace of form to attract the eye. The flower, proud of its lovely blossom, looked down with disdain upon its humble neighbour, and asked the twin-leaves why they dared to grow by its side. "'Tis but a month since my seed fell into the ground, and now I have grown to all this beauty; while you, lying here all the winter, have only managed to put forth these two poor leaves." "Yes," said the twin-leaves in reply, "the sun that called forth your beauty at a leap, will fade it as quickly; but the sun that slowly unfolds my leaves will shine upon them a thousand years hence." For the twin leaves were the first shoot of a royal oak, and the ministries of wind and sun and air were slowly preparing it by the discipline of its youth, for the glories of its prime. It is the law of nature that great and long-lived trees remain a long time in their young state, while annual plants shoot up at once. The aloe continues for years in the leafy condition; but when it flowers, it is a tremendous effort, and sends up a great candelabrum of blossoms twenty feet high. The corn itself remains much longer in the blade than in the ear, or in the full corn in the ear. It takes months to send up its blade a few inches above the soil, but in a few days it produces its ear, and in a few weeks it ripens its grain. Moses was kept a long time in training before he was fitted to deliver Israel; and Jesus Himself was thirty-two years preparing in obscurity for His public ministry of three years. But in the case of Moses and Christ, what a glorious full corn in the ear came out of that long continuance in the blade! The reason why you are so long children,

boys and girls, is that your after-growth may be higher and nobler. You are kept so long in the blade state that you may gather strength and wisdom, and acquire that training and those habits which will fit you for a useful career in life. This period of preparation should not be shortened; for it is a great injury to a child to send him out into life without being properly furnished for it. Value your childhood then, and seek to improve all its advantages and opportunities to the utmost; and be not impatient to push out of it into young men and women before the time.

The young blade contains within itself the future ear. It is out of the materials of the leaf, and according to the pattern of the leaf, that the ear and the full corn in the ear are formed. Naturalists tell us that every part of a plant is only a modified leaf, that is, a leaf changed in its shape and colour for that particular purpose; and also that the green leaf is the only part of a plant that creates food from the sunshine, and the air, and the rain, with which to feed the rest of the plant, and to form the flower and the fruit. All the rest of a plant consumes food; it is the green leaf only that procures food. The leaf is thus the foundation upon which the whole plant is built. What is the growth of a plant but just the gradual unfolding of a leaf after the pattern and from the materials previously formed? And so all your future life is formed out of your present childhood and youth. You are now gathering the materials of growth for your whole after career. Your youth is the pattern upon which your whole life will be formed. If the green leaf is withered by the east wind and insect-bitten, or if it fails for some reason or other to perfect itself as it should, you do not expect that out of the spoilt leaf will come a thriving and faultless flower. And so, if your childhood is injured by evil habits or influences, what can you expect but that the after-growth that comes from such a blighted blade should be blighted too. Young leaves are very tender and are very easily injured; and the injury in many cases can never be repaired. That thought surely gives you an idea of the importance of the stage in which you now are.

You have heard of young people sowing their wild oats; and some foolish people seem to think it natural for them to do so, as if in that way they got rid of perilous stuff in their constitution, and were better fitted to settle down into quiet respectable persons. But there is a law of growth which fixes that what we sow, that shall we reap, and no other; that out of the blade must come the ear and the full corn in the ear. If you grow the blade of a wild oat in your youth, then you will certainly reap a harvest that will not yield you bread but hunger, not joys but tears.

The blade of the tares is wonderfully like the blade of the wheat; it is difficult to distinguish them at that stage; but how different is the fruit! Look at the clover, nourishing the cattle with its leaves and the bee with its honey, and delighting man with its milk and fragrance; and then at the gorse or whin, which covers the waste

land with its useless growth, and is bristling all over with the most formidable prickles, as if it knew that it was an intruder and meant to defend itself on all sides; and yet both began from a trefoil seedling that appeared the same. The gorse, strange to say, has at first a leaf as tender and soft and round, as that of the pea or the clover. And how many persons in their childhood are tender-hearted, gentle, loving and inclined to all that is good! But as they grow up neglected and unloved, exposed to the rude attacks and cold experiences of the world, they lose all their attractiveness, and become useless weeds, thorny and rugged and hard in their nature. Look at an aged man, honoured and respected, and at a hoary beggar squalid and despised! How different are the two; and yet they started from the same point of innocent childhood! Every step of their course leads them farther and farther apart. What different harvests may grow from the same kind of blade! What gulfs of separation may widen between those who are brought up in the same home! The sainted Manaen and the impious Herod were foster-brothers.

Realising, then, the fateful consequences that

hang upon the stage of life at which you now are, ask Jesus to form your blade for you, to make it by His Spirit like what His own was; and so your goodness early begun, will grow with your growth, and increase with your years. Your life will have in it the beauty of a well-ordered youth, opening up naturally into the beauty of a useful and honoured manhood and womanhood. The good of boyhood and girlhood will remain in you as grown-up men and women. Happy indeed are you if you begin to serve the Lord Jesus in the blade-stage; if you begin young, and in little things to learn the lesson which it is God's will you should practice in great things! For you will thus have little to unlearn or undo throughout life. You will grow with the harmony and symmetry of those whose growth has not been injured or wasted, and who are ever acquiring a richer experience and a fuller power of usefulness. Success in life for you will be what the word literally means, "a coming up from under"—a passing from a lower to a higher state of things slowly and surely—safely and soundly, foot after foot on each round of the ladder in due order, climbing by the blade to the ear, and from the ear to the full corn in the ear.

WANDERINGS IN THE HOLY LAND.

BY ADELIA GATES.

XII.

IN about an hour and a half from Shechem through green valleys, and past villages, I came to Samaria (now Sebastiyeh), where we stopped for a little while, to eat our lunch. I could not afford to lose any time, so ate mine while walking about the town. It is beautiful for situation, being built upon a round hill that rises in the midst of a valley. "Omri bought the hill, Samaria, of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer; owner of the hill Samaria." Gradually the name extended to a large district of which this was the chief town. After many chances and changes it fell into the hands of the Romans. Herod, having received it as a present from the emperor, rebuilt it, fortified it, adorned it with fine buildings, a temple, a colonnade 3000 feet long, built upon a terrace that ran around the hill, and changed its name from Samaria to Sebaste. We do not thank him for the change.

There is little left to show that this was once a splendid city. The church of St. John, built by the crusaders, is now a mosque; the temple of Herod is gone, the beautiful colonnade is broken, and in places, partly buried. "So passeth the glory of this world."

The country as we go northward grows more and more fertile and attractive. Smiling valleys, hills with wide prospect, broad rich plains, villages amid their olive trees, such is the region

through which I passed in going from Samaria to Jenin. (Let me keep to the sweet old Bible name Samaria rather than Sebastiyeh.)

Jenin is a little village just beyond the mountains that separate Samaria from Galilee, and just on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon. In its neighbourhood there are fruit orchards, gardens they call them, and I saw a few palm trees, but I think they, like those seen here and there in the Jordan Valley are not productive. It is a tree that requires much heat and much water in order to fruit well. There is an Arab saying that "The palm tree wants its feet in water and its head in fire."

I have nothing to say of Jenin only that it seems a prosperous comfortable little town of perhaps 3000 inhabitants. There were yet two or three hours of daylight, which I spent in painting and in talking according to our limited possibilities with those around me. Yakub had brought me to a place a little way off the road, in the midst of greenness, with a spring near by. Myself and my belongings were nicely settled on an open platform, which, with its low roof, formed the frontage of a higher building which I did not enter. I suppose there were women and children within it, but I did not see them. I observed that food and drink were served to various persons on the other end of the platform. At evening my part of it was converted into a bedroom by means of a straw matting breast

high stretched along the front and end. Several persons slept on the floor beyond me, but without any shelter, except the roof. I was quite content, for I had pure air, a tolerably clean mat, on a tolerably clean floor, tranquillity, and no fleas. What could I ask beyond that?

Said Sancho Panza: "Blessed be the man that first invented sleep: it covereth a man all over like a cloak." In that cloak I wrapped myself, and lay in blessed rest until dawn. I think Yakub would have been glad of my cloak, for he had passed a restless night. He was flushed with fever, and anxious to get on, so we were off betimes. Seeing his case, and fearing that he might have contracted fever in some unwholesome lodging-place in Jerusalem, I gave up all thought of going to Mount Carmel, and determined to hurry on to Tiberias as fast as possible.

Cold swept the wind across the plain of Esdraelon, laden with vapour from the Mediterranean, which soon began to fall in rain. I did not much mind it, thanks to mackintosh and umbrella; and after seeing that my baggage was well protected by water-proof coverings (let no one ever trust this to others), I went on cheerily enough.

The Gilboa mountains, close to which we passed in approaching Zerin, the ancient Jezreel, are one more example of the mischievous effects of denuding a country of its wood. These mountains, once covered with forest, are now naked and useless; not fit even for pasturage, except on the south side.

These names, Jezreel and Gilboa, are as a wizard's wand, bringing up before us among other pictures, that of the great and disastrous fight, when "the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa; and the Philistines slew the three sons of Saul, and the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and to avoid falling into their hands he fell upon his sword and died." Following the sounds of battle there comes—what? David's song of rejoicing that his old enemy, Saul, who had always rendered him evil for good, was defeated and slain? No, it is lamentation for the inglorious fall of his foe, generous recognition of his courage and valour, and mourning for the Jonathan so faithfully loved. A brave high soul; a tender, loving heart were thine, O David!

Here in Jezreel wicked Ahab had his palace, from a window of which his queen, the equally wicked Jezebel, was thrown. Yonder, on the hillside, was the vineyard of Naboth, whose death was compassed by that Jezebel because he would not give up his inheritance to Ahab who desired to make it "a garden of herbs."

Standing on the watershed that sends its eastern streams to the Jordan, its western to the Mediterranean, Jezreel commands a fine view over the plain of Esdraelon, Mount Carmel, and the blue sea beyond it. Through a notch of the northern mountains I got my first glimpse of Nazareth, and to Nazareth we went on after a brief halt. Not more than three quarters of an hour beyond Jezreel, we came to Sulem, the ancient Shunem, where dwelt the woman whose son Elisha restored to life.

And now I see a little child,
His mother's sole delight,
God's living gift of love unto
The dear good Shunamite.
To mortal pangs I see him yield,
And the lad bear him from the field.



EASTERN SLEEPING.

Little Hermon is now the name of the hill on which the little village is built.

By turning off here a little to the north-west we might have passed through Fuleh, where in the last year of the last century a great battle was won by the French over a greatly more numerous Turkish army; and after which Napoleon went to his supper in Nazareth. I do not know why this should have been called the battle of Tabor. Another hour and a half brought me to Nazareth at about noon; and here our fellow-travellers leaving us, pursued their way to Tiberias. I went to the humble home of the gardener of the English orphan asylum, with a letter from their friends and mine in Jerusalem. In giving it they said: "These are good souls, who will be delighted to see you and hear of us: you must read the letter to them, for they are unlearned and of German birth, also they are poor and probably cannot offer you a bed." Delighted were they indeed to hear me tell of the friends they had lived with and loved. "We would never have wished a happier lot than to stay always with them," said the wife, "but we could

not live in Jerusalem on account of the fever there."

Nazareth! the name falls like music upon ear and heart. It is a pleasant picture too; its white walls, its cactus hedges, its olive trees, its verdant environs. It has suffered the usual vicissitudes of Palestinian towns, repeated destruction and rebuilding, until nothing remains of the Nazareth of the time of Christ. Of its five or six thousand inhabitants, perhaps a hundred and fifty are Protestant Christians. The gardener devoted the afternoon to going about with me. He took me to the highest hill above Nazareth, the Jebel-es-sikh from which I had a wonderful prospect. Nowhere in Palestine had I in one view so many points of interest. At my feet lay the city in a verdant depression of the southern slope of the hill—a pearl on its bed of green velvet; the great plain of Esdraelon stretched southward quite to Jenin, our starting place of the morning at the foot of the Samaritan mountains, and westward to Mount Carmel, on the Mediterranean. Beyond Carmel, and on northward, lay the blue sea. Above the low eastern hills rose green Tabor, and beyond that, beyond the from here invisible and low-lying Sea of Galilee, stood the blue hills of Jolân. Little Hermon was visible in the south-east. Turning to the north, I saw the lovely green plain of El Buttauf; farther north, Safed on its height, and yet farther, beyond intervening hills, or mountains stood kingly Hermon. Nain, Endor and Jezreel fill out the wonderful panorama.

The afternoon had been fair, the air fresh and pure, and I felt in all my being a delightful exhilaration. I had a half hour of conversation with the ladies of the orphan asylum; along with cakes and a "cup of cold water." The evening was passed in talk with my host and hostess. The seasoning that has made the dinner of herbs delightful in all climes and times was not lacking to our more varied repast. While the husband went about with me, the wife was "on hospitable thought intent;" and the supper table was laden with the proofs of her culinary skill. She called me to admire the convenient stove they had brought with them from America. Clean and shining and without a peer in Nazareth, that stove was the delight of her eyes, the pride of her German soul. We talked of their parents and early home, of their later life in America, of their still later life in Palestine, and of my own journeyings, and so the hours flew until it was time for me to go to Yakúb, who would take care for my lodging. They seemed so sorry not to be able to keep me, that I said:

"If you would really like me to stay, the lack of a bed need be no hindrance. Let me sleep on the sofa."

"Can you do that?" she asked, doubtfully.

"Indeed, I can; I have slept on a floor or on the earth oftener than in a bed, week after week. That sofa is luxury; and if you will let me consider your house as my hotel, I could ask nothing better."

"We will not quarrel about that, and I will make you as comfortable as I can."

So said, so done, and while Herr Gärtner ran to tell Yakúb of the new arrangement, so that he

need not wait up for me, the Frau Gärtnerin with joyful face prepared the sofa-bed in which I slept a dreamless sleep until morning. Not too early, but giving me good time for breakfast, came Yakúb with my horse. I was sorry he had not another for himself, he seemed so unable to "foot it." Frau Gärtnerin made the poor fellow come in and eat a good breakfast, and insisted on giving me a fresh supply of food; though I assured her that the Jerusalem friends had made me a provision quite sufficient for my journey to Tiberias.

"You must have some bread and cakes baked in the good stove that I brought all the way from America," she said, decisively.

When I tried to leave some money in her hand she refused it.

"But you said I might consider this as my hotel."

"No, I only said we would not quarrel about that."

"You must really accept a few shillings from me," I insisted. "You have to work for your bread."

"What would God think of us," she said with German seriousness, "if we took money from you who have come to give us news of our good friends in Jerusalem, and with whom we have had such a happy visit? What would God think of us?"

It was useless to press it further, and with many good wishes we parted. Good, honest, simple-hearted creatures. May God's benediction rest upon them! Though they cannot read an English letter, their name is, I doubt not, written on a fair page by one who is no respecter of persons.

I went down a steep rocky way, road it was not, and to Gabriel's spring, or Jesus' spring; the only one Nazareth possesses, but largely sufficient not only for the ordinary wants of the city, but also for watering its gardens and plantations.

There are no rival claims; there can be no reasonable doubt that here came the women of ancient Nazareth with their pitchers, and among them Mary, possibly with the hand of the Child Jesus in hers. Taller and stronger, and "obedient in all things unto His parents," He may have come alone to this spring, five minutes' walk from the city, to fetch water for His mother; and probably also when grown to manhood, He worked, along with other Jews, at carpentry in Joseph's shop; doing faithful work, and giving a practical lesson of respect for manual labour. Would not the relations of employer and employed become more amicable if this respect were general?

Before I leave Nazareth, I will mention, that though in the time of Christ it was a wholly Samaritan town, it now numbers among its six thousand inhabitants, not one of that sect. Christians of the Greek Church are the most numerous, after them come the Moslems, and then Roman Catholics, or Latins. Of Protestants there are less than two hundred. They are, I think, better liked by the Moslems than are the Latins and Greeks; certainly there is less friction between them. I was also told that the Moslems are scarcely holding their own, numerically, against those of other faiths, though their own officials try to make it appear otherwise.

CHAPPIE.

CHAPTER I.—PARADISE.

"The kingdom of heaven is within you."



WEETLY the children's voices rose and fell, as they sang the familiar words :

"Be present at our table, Lord,
Be here and everywhere adored;
These mercies bless, and grant
that we
May feast in Paradise with
Thee."

It was a strange, almost a sad, sight, for "grace" was being sung—not around a well-spread table, but in one of the girl's rooms of a large Board School, in a poor and densely-populated district of the East end of London. The room was lofty and well-ventilated, but had a decidedly dingy appearance, and the little singers showed by their pale, pinched faces, and stunted growth, that their "mercies," as far, at least, as food went, were not over plentiful. It seemed almost a mockery for these children to ask the Lord to "be present" at their tables, for few of them ever sat down to a regular meal. A hunch of bread and treacle, varied by bread and pickle, and sometimes by way of a treat, a bit of herring or bloater, formed the every-day dinner which these little ones usually ate in the streets, or in the school play-ground. Yet the children sang reverently enough, and stood with closed eyes, and folded hands until the "Amen" passed into silence. Then, after "good morning, girls," from the teacher, and the united reply "good morning, governess," the girls marched quietly from the room, down the stone stairs into the play-ground. There, order and quietness vanished, and the place resounded with shouts and laughter. Skipping, jumping, racing here, there, and everywhere went the poorly-clad "girlies," enjoying the freedom, and rejoicing in the freshness of one of the first spring days. Even there the sun shone, and shed a gleam of glory over the great building, and unconsciously the children felt its influence.

Little Sue Bennett did not stay to play, but hurried through the iron gate, and along the street, past the low-built uninviting shops, and then under a small archway between two houses, into a narrow alley. At most of the doors, women, with coarse aprons over their ragged dresses, and heavy hair like a thatch on their foreheads, gossiped with their neighbours. In the paved court played the babies who were too young to be sent to the infant class; while outside of the windows lolled the men with pipes in their mouths, waiting for the dinner-hour to pass, those of them, at least, who were not lounging within or without the public-house at the corner.

Sue passed into one of the open doorways, up the dirty staircase, and into a back room. Such a little room, but big enough for the furniture in it—an old bedstead, a deal table, two or three broken chairs, and a chest of drawers. A small fire burned in the grate; and in one corner on a kind of "shake-down" lay a sweet-looking boy of about

seven years of age, whose pallid face and sunken eyes told a sad story.

"Oh, Sue, here you are at last!" cried a weary little voice.

"Yes, Chappie, I'm sorry I'm so late," answered Sue, "but it's examination to-day, and we had to finish our papers."

"What's 'amination?" asked the child.

"Examination," corrected his sister, "why it's a-going over what we've learnt, to find out what we know."

"Oh," said Chappie in a disappointed tone, "then you've got nothing new to tell me about. And I'm so tired! my head does hurt so. Didn't you sing anything to-day?"

"Only 'Be present,'" answered Sue.

"Well, sing that, I don't feel the pain so when you sings to me."

Sue, standing as at school with bowed head and folded hands, sang "grace" in her sweet clear voice.

"What d'you shut yer eyes for?" asked Chappie, as the singing ceased.

"We always do at school when we sing 'Be present,'" answered Sue.

"Who's Lord, and where's Paradise?" questioned the child.

"I don't know. What a qucer little fellow you are, Chappie; you always want to know all about a thing."

"Well, you see, I lay here and think, while you goes to school. Oh, Sue, I wish I could go too!"

"So you shall, when you are better; and you'll soon be better now," and Sue's rough face shone with a tender motherliness as she stooped and kissed her little brother. "Why, Chappie, the sun is ever so bright to-day; maybe you'll be able to go out soon. But shall we have dinner? I'm hungry."

"I'm not," said Chappie wearily, "only thirsty."

"Mother's left the ha'penny for your milk. I'll run and get it," and Sue took a mug and ran down the stairs. She was soon back, and poured the milk into an old saucepau, into which she broke some bread.

"There," she said, "you like nice hot bread and milk, don't you?"

"Yes, but I don't want it," said Chappie.

"Never mind, eat it up, it will do you good," and Sue having cut for herself a thick slice of bread and dripping, sat down contentedly beside Chappie.

"I do wish you knowed where 'Paradise' is," said the little fellow presently. "'Feast in Paradise,' feast means nice things to eat, doesn't it? Perhaps grapes, like mother bought me one day. I wish I had some grapes now!"

"When mother gets in regular work again, perhaps she'll got you some more," answered Sue, "maybe she'll bring something nice home to-night. But I must go back to school now. I'll come straight home, and then I'll sing to you again. Good-bye, Chappie, don't fret." And once more the weary little sufferer was left alone.

Some bits of wood and a penknife lay on the coarse blue quilt, but although clever enough at making all sorts of

things out of odd sticks, Chappie was too tired to-day to do anything, and lay watching a tiny gleam of sunshine that found its way between the chimneys of the opposite houses, in at the curtainless window.

"I wonder who 'Lord' can be," he thought, "I wish if He's good He'd come here. 'Be present' means come, and I'm so lonely."

After a time the blue eyes closed and Chappie fell asleep.

Poor little fellow, his was a sad life! His father had died soon after he was born, and Mrs. Bennett had a hard struggle to keep herself and her children, for Sue was scarcely two years older than Chappie. She had worked at a fire-wood factory not far off, putting the pieces together and tying them into bundles. The pay for that was very poor, and the rent of even that one small room was three shillings a week, so it was, as she said "a job to make ends meet."

Her baby had never been strong, and had suffered so much by having to "rough it," that as he grew older he seemed to grow weaker. When the children were very young, the mother had been obliged to pay a neighbour to take care of them during the day while she was at work, but for the last few years she had left them alone, and been glad of the extra pence to buy food.

There had been a strike at the fire-wood factory, and for weeks Mrs. Bennett had been out of work, and had been thankful to do a day's charring when she could get it. She was a poor uneducated woman, who knew little of anything saving work and want. She loved her children, and did the best she could for them, but failed to see that her little son craved for knowledge and companionship, even more than for food. And indeed, had she seen his need, she would have been quite incapable of supplying it. The little fellow had grown used to keeping his wants to himself, and talked of them rarely even to Sue. She was everything to him, and he more than all the world to her. So on this particular afternoon, while Chappie wondered about Paradise, Sue was thinking of it too, and determined to find out where it was, and, if possible, when the summer came, to take her little brother there.

12. What special encouragement did Paul receive at Corinth?

13. For what purpose did he visit Jerusalem at this time?

A CHAPTER OF SCRIPTURE.

NO. III.

This chapter contains the words of God against His people on account of sin, with a promise of compassion and a warning of destruction. It begins with some questionings of the prophet who is perplexed with the same difficulty that puzzled David and Job; see Psalm lxxiii. 3, 12, 13, and Job xii. 6. Beasts and birds are mentioned as suffering in consequence of sin, and reference is made to the lion, the sheep and the horse. A river is named in which a leper found healing; also a false god frequently mentioned by Hosea. God calls Israel "My people," "Mine heritage," "My pleasant portion," "the dearly beloved of My soul," and also makes the same comparison that we find in Isa. v. 7; another figure is used found nowhere else. The prophet accuses Israel of the sin rebuked by our Lord in Matt. xv. 7, 8, and xxiii. A promise is given to the "evil neighbours" of Israel if they repent, and allusion is made to a prophetic warning in Lev. xxvi. 16, and Deut. xxviii. 38, which was then being fulfilled. A kind of grain is mentioned to which our Lord compares Himself, and a weed of which He speaks as choking the good seed. The chapter contains seventeen verses.

KEY TO THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—III.—p. 224.

- (1.) Acts xi. 26; (2.) xi. 29, 30; (3.) xii. 2; xiii. 5; (4.) xiii. 2; (5.) xiii. 3; (6.) Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos; (7.) Acts xiii. 8, 11; (8.) xiii. 13; (9.) xiii. 15; (10.) xiii. 34-37; ii. 29-35; (11.) xiii. 42; (12.) xiii. 47; Isaiah xlix. 6; (13.) Acts xiii. 50; (14.) xiv. 1-6; (15.) xiv. 9, 10; (16.) xiv. 11, 12; (17.) xiv. 17, compare answer (10); (18.) xiv. 19; (19.) xiv. 20-26.

QUESTIONS ON THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—V.

1. Mention the places Paul passed through between Philippi and Thessalonica.
2. What line of argument did he follow at Thessalonica and Berea?
3. Why did it produce better results at the latter place?
4. What was the charge made against Paul at Thessalonica?
5. How does Paul allude in one of his letters to his treatment there?
6. How did he quit Berea, to avoid further persecution?
7. What had Paul particularly noticed in the religion of the Athenians?
8. What particular doctrine aroused the attention and mockery of the Athenians?
9. What reasons did he give why men should seek after God?
10. What was it that threw Paul into the company of Aquila and Pricillas?
11. Which of his converts at Corinth is mentioned both here and in the Epistle to the Corinthians?

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. XI.—p. 240.—KING.

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|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Knowledge | 1 Cor. viii. 1. |
| 2. Idolatry | Col. iii. 5. |
| 3. Nicolaitanes | Rev. ii. 15. |
| 4. Gold | S. Matt. ii. 11. |

NO. XII.—p. 240.—TAKE ROOT DOWNWARD AND BEAR FRUIT UPWARD.—2 Kings 19, 30.

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| 1. Tribulation | John xvii. 33. |
| 2. Ashes | 1 Samuel v. 3, 4. |
| 3. King of Moab | 1 Samuel xxii. 3, 4. |
| 4. Earthquake | Acts xvi. 25-30. |
| 5. Red Sea | Exodus xiv. 21-28. |
| 6. Oppression | 1 Kings ix. 28; x. 11. |
| 7. Olive leaf | Genesis viii. 11. |
| 8. Tower | Genesis xi. 4. |
| 9. Dwelling in youth | Romans viii. 11. |
| 10. Omnipotence | 1 Kings xvi. 23, 24. |
| 11. Whence | 1 Kings v. 8-13. |
| 12. Name | Jer. (marginal) xxxiii. 16. |
| 13. Wealth | Luke xxiii. 28. |
| 14. A poor widow | Mark xii. 41-44. |
| 15. Reward | Acts xii. 5, 13, 14. |
| 16. Door | John x. 9. |
| 17. Aaron's rod | Exodus viii. 14. |