

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

THE ANDERSONS: BROTHER AND SISTER.

BY AGNES GIBERNE, AUTHOR OF "THE DALRYMPLES," ETC.



"LETTICE, I'VE A GREAT MIND TO TELL YOU SOMETHING!"

CHAPTER XIV.—A DISCOVERY.

LETTICE, away in her western home, had no such comfort as Prue; no loving mother-arms to enfold her; no gentle mother-lips to kiss away heart-ache. Those who have never

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known this sweetest of all earthly comforts cannot realize the emptiness of not having it; and the grief of conscious loss is not theirs. But Lettice did sorely feel the need of some such love and sympathy.

She had comfort: the highest comfort: a love

PRICE ONE PENNY.

deeper than even mother-love; a tenderness purer than even mother-tenderness; because the love and the tenderness were Divine. But while Divine comfort is itself all-powerful, it cannot do away with the human need for human sympathy. The Son of God Himself, as Man of Sorrows, though He had angels to comfort Him, yet experienced this lonely human craving; and so much the more fully He can understand its strength in the "children of earth." True, we never need stand where He stood; because, while He was absolutely cut off from all human sympathy, while there was literally "none" among His brother-men to comfort Him; we may have always, in unlimited measure, the most Human sympathy of Jesus, our Lord and Master, yet truly our Brother-Man! But the full realization of this fact is not to many so vouchsafed, as that it shall entirely take the place of need for other human sympathy.

And Lettice was very lonely. Dr. Bryant's confidence in her had broken down under the stress of Theodosia's discovery. He now steadily looked upon Lettice as guilty of the theft.

It was to him a bitter grief: scarcely less, if indeed not more, than to Lettice. For she had the full consciousness of innocence to bear her through; while he had the pain of believing himself utterly disappointed in her.

Once only he spoke on the subject; and that was on the morning after their excursion. Gravely and sadly he avowed his now fixed belief, refusing to hear denial. "No other view of the matter is possible," he said. "Assertions are useless, unsupported by the slightest evidence. What have you to bring forward in your defence? Absolutely nothing. All these weeks you have not even attempted to clear yourself, and I have endeavoured to trust you in the face of all appearances; but this is too much. The very fact that you will speak now, when you would not before, seems to me an additional argument against you. Your past silence I do not understand, coupled with your present denial; but whatever your motives may be, or may have been, I can feel no doubt whatever as to your guilt."

"I did not take it," she said, her lips hardly able to frame the words.

"Hush! No more useless denials. At least you can abstain from further untruth. For the present the matter must be dropped. When you can resolve to confess freely what you have done, then I will hear. Then you shall have my forgiveness, though you can never again be to me what you have been, because the old trust is no longer possible. But until then, you are under my displeasure."

A sob broke from her. "Oh, it is hard! How can I confess what I have not done?"

"Hush!" he said again. "No more of that. The proofs are unhappily too strong." He paused, looking into her agitated face. "It will be better and happier for us both, when you speak out. . . . This is a great sorrow to me, greater than you imagine. At least, you can make it possible that I should forgive, that I should take you to my heart again! . . . Wait a moment; do not speak hastily. Think of the sin against God, and of

your need that He should forgive. If you do not confess the truth to me, how can you look for His pardon? You will have a hard fight to get back to your old standing, after so grievous a fall. The first step must be full confession. That is absolutely essential. Why put it off? Why not speak out now—at once—looking on me as your father?"

"I do—oh, I do!" sobbed Lettice. "You have—always been—"

"Then treat me as a child should treat her father. Tell me freely, openly, how you came to take such a step, and what led up to it."

Lettice mastered her distress with a great effort, and lifted to his her straightforward glance. "But, uncle, I did not take the bank note. I do not know in the least how it came to be in my box."

Dr. Bryant turned, and coldly left the room, without another word. From that day a frigid barrier of separation divided the two, robbing their intercourse of all its old sweetness.

Theodosia was at last satisfied. At last she had obtained her wish. And perhaps in all England no more unhappy woman could be found. Such gratification of the heart's desire carries its own vengeance with it.

As wilful injurer to injured, she naturally showed small kindness to Lettice; and but for Keith, the girl would indeed have been solitary. His affection never varied; yet at times the boy seemed constrained, and not fully himself; while before his mother he was more careful than ever to hide his feeling for Lettice.

Once upon a time Susanna, the parlour-maid, an old and tried servant, of weighty influence in the household, would have been entirely on Lettice's side; but, Susanna, like Dr. Bryant, could not stand against the discovery of the note in Lettice's box. The collapse of her trust was severe in proportion to its previous sturdiness. "Anything short of that!" she avowed to her confidante the cook, "and I'd have held out still. But bank notes can't walk, nor open locked boxes; and that box, I know for certain, wasn't never left unlocked. I don't say Miss Lettice wasn't drove to it by some as ought to know better. She's had a deal to bear; but there's no manner of excuse for dishonesty. I wouldn't have believed, short of seeing; and when I did see, why, you might have knocked me down with a straw. And I'm sure, to see master's face, it just goes to my heart. He did think a lot of Miss Lettice, and no mistake. But, anyway, Miss Lettice took the money; more's the pity; and I'll never be certain of nobody again in this world!" Susanna ruled the kitchen view of matters.

Lettice had not now the consolation, which had been hers earlier, of enduring for the sake of Felix. Her present suffering bore no fruit of advantage for another; at least, so far as she could see. It may be that all undeserved pain, borne meekly for Christ's sake, does bring advantage to others: but this we cannot yet perceive.

Still, the trouble was permitted; was God's will for her. So much she could know with unquestioning knowledge. She had to bear, because the burden was laid upon her; she

had to bear bravely, because by so doing she would please God. If she had done the thing she was accused of, she would have been required as a simple duty to take the blame patiently, deserving no praise whatever for the same. But "this" quiet endurance of hers, because it was endurance of unmerited blame, did deserve praise, being "acceptable with God." Lettice found consolation in the thought. Others might look coldly and sternly; but her Heavenly Father saw, understood, and was pleased. He would set all right in time. He would clear away the cloud. He would establish her as blameless. Whether sooner or later, whether in this life or the next, the truth would be made manifest. Till then she would not murmur, but would put her trust in Him.

She wrote no word to Felix of what had happened, beyond the early intimation which he had never so much as answered. Doubtless to him, absorbed as he was in his own work and prospects, it had seemed an unimportant matter. To tell him now how matters stood would only be to arouse useless anger in him. He could not clear her; and she resolved to wait until they should meet, and she could explain all by word of mouth. He did not very often enquire by post if she were well or happy; but he sent full particulars of his move to London, and of his new surroundings. Lettice wrote cheerily in answer, showing no sign of depression.

A letter came from Prue one day. "Your brother has been to call," she said, "and we hope to see something of him. He is in lodgings near us. Will not this tempt you to pay us a visit? Our present home is small—very different from the Farm—but you will not mind, when Felix is at hand. For his sake come if you can. A sister may have power over a brother; and it seems to me that he has been too long alone, with no softening home-influence. You will forgive me for saying this! I am not finding fault with your brother; only I cannot help seeing that there is a need. Will you not give us a month or six weeks? Would Dr. and Mrs. Bryant object? Your last letter was very sad—so sad that it gave me a heart-ache. Has anything been troubling you very much of late?"

"If I could go! Oh, if I could!" murmured Lettice, a wild desire taking possession of her for kind looks and loving voices, in place of the cold indifference which now fenced her in. She realized all at once how long it was since she had seen the Valentines, how complete the separation had been between herself and Felix for years. Was it right that she should stay away if by any means she could get to her brother? What if the character of Felix should undergo permanent deterioration, for lack of the sisterly softening which she might have power to supply? "And there is no real reason! I am of no use here. I may just as well be there!" she uttered aloud. "Prue does love—does care; and I think Felix does too, down below—if I could only get at him. If I only might go!"

"Go where?" demanded Theodosia by her side. Lettice had not known anyone to be

present; and she turned a stirred face to Mrs. Bryant.

"I did not mean to be heard. Prue Valentine asks me again to pay them a visit."

"Where are the Valentines?"

"In London. Close to Felix. I should see him too."

"Well, go, if you like. Why not?"

"You always said I could not. I thought it would be the same now."

"Go, and welcome." Theodosia spoke shortly.

"But the journey. I have no money."

Theodosia sneered.

"Perhaps you meant to spend part of the 20*l*. in that way."

Lettice neither flushed nor whitened. She had reached a stage beyond such demonstrations. Her clear eyes looked into Mrs. Bryant's.

"I did not take the note," she said. "I do not know how it came into my box."

"Perhaps you think I put it there." Theodosia had so accustomed herself to the present state of things, and to continuous deceit, that she could say such words without a change of colour, almost without a twinge of conscience. Conscience, habitually unresponded to, becomes in time deadened, and loses its power to speak. Theodosia had set before herself a certain end, and that end she was in a fair way to attain. She had not indeed yet found out what were the terms of her husband's will, but she had brought about estrangement between him and Lettice; and for the continuance of their estrangement, nothing perhaps could be better than Lettice's absence. This dawned upon her in a flash; and it was at once subversive of her previous policy with regard to Lettice's friends.

There was a pause, Lettice looking earnestly at Theodosia; and the change of colour, which had not come with Theodosia's own utterance, began under the pressure of that quiet gaze. Lettice noticed, but attached little meaning to the flush. "No," she said, slowly, "I should not like to accuse you or anybody of such a thing, unless I were very very sure. It is too terrible, and I know too well how hard it is to bear being falsely accused. Sometimes I almost think you know a little more than you will allow,—I mean, that you could perhaps help to clear me, if you would. . . . But I do not know how. It is only a feeling. . . . Why do you dislike me so? I have tried hard to please you ever since I came here; and it seems of no use."

"If not you—then your brother—"

"You do not suspect him, really," Lettice answered, with the calmness borne of long endurance. "If you did, you would have spoken long ago. Felix was not once in my room after lunch that day; so how could he possibly have put the note into my box? But talking does no good. I cannot clear myself yet. The truth will come out some day. Do you wish me to go to the Valentines?"

"Yes."

"For a month or six weeks?"

"For as long as you like."

"When?"

"Whenever you please."

"I will ask Dr. Bryant."

"There's no need to trouble him. I shall explain, of course."

"He would have wanted me to speak——"

"Before he knew you to be a ——." The lying word stuck in Theodosia's throat.

"I shall speak to him all the same," Lettice answered, resolutely. "If he wished me not to go—but I think he will be willing. To-day is Monday. I can ask if the Valentines would like to have me on Friday or Saturday."

Theodosia merely said, "Very well," and walked away. Dr. Bryant entering immediately after, Lettice put the question before him.

"You wish to go?" he said, in the measured voice which had become habitual.

"If you do not mind, uncle?"

"No. It is quite as well. Fix your own plans; and I will supply the money."

She looked wistfully into his face, longing for a touch of the old kindness. "If I thought you wanted me, I would rather—rather stay here."

No softening came into the set features. "I could wish it on one condition," he said. "That condition, you know. When you resolve to speak out, in plain confession—but until then intercourse is only pain to me. It is better that you should be away."

Then as usual he broke the conversation off, and Lettice had to struggle with rebellious tears. The change in him was hardest of all to bear.

Keith, now nearly ten years old, but small, pretty, and childish, not to say babyish, for his years, made no small outcry over the prospect of losing his playfellow. She never minded trouble, and was always unselfishly ready for an active game, whenever it suited him; and perhaps nobody had realized, Lettice least of all, what a difference her absence would make in the boy's life. Keith himself saw it instantly; and from that moment he flung aside his usual caution, lavishing kisses and caresses upon her, in a manner which brought chronic blackness to the brow of Theodosia.

For years Theodosia had done her best to spoil the child. It never so much as occurred to her that, in later years, she would herself pay the penalty for this unwise mode of training. She could not endure to part with him, even for his good; and she sent him daily to a small second-rate school, a mile off, instead of consenting to place him, as Dr. Bryant wished, at a first-class Bristol school. At home she gave in to all his fancies, seldom enforcing obedience. Theodosia counted that she and she alone had main possession of her boy's heart; but suddenly now she found that, despite all her efforts, his chief delight was in Lettice. In his indignant distress at the thought of losing his companion, he made no secret of the fact, but openly declared that "nobody" could be what Lettice was. Even while afraid of consequences, Lettice could not but find pleasure in the avowal.

She spent some serious thought over her answer to Prue. If the Valentines knew of the cloud under which she lay, would they wish to have her still? True, the accusation was un-

deserved, and she could scarcely be bound to tell of it: but she chose the safe side, and a touching little letter went off:—

"I shall love to come, if you will have me," she wrote. "I could get away on Friday or Saturday, if that is not too soon for you. But I must explain first about what has happened lately. They believe here that I have done such a dreadful thing. I am accused of stealing a 20*l.* bank-note. Mrs. Bryant left the note lying about, and it disappeared, and after some time it was found locked up in one of my boxes.

"I did not do it, Prue dear: and I cannot imagine how the note came there. Only, there it was: and even my dear uncle now thinks that I took it. I have been very unhappy. Will you believe me? or had I better stay away? I do long for your kind faces: only I could not bear to come among you all, and to have you doubt my word, or think that I could do such a thing. So please tell me what to do.

"I have not mentioned this to Felix, because I knew how much it would worry him."

Prue's answer, by return of post, was decisive. "Come, and you shall have a welcome," she wrote. "Come on Friday, by all means. I have told my mother of your trouble, and no one else. We believe you perfectly. Poor child! how you must have been tried."

Lettice had hardly finished reading the letter, when Keith rushed in. He had been kept at home for a slight toothache, which vanished so soon as school was given up: and he wanted Lettice in the playroom. "Come! come along," he cried, clinging round her waist, regardless of the fact that Theodosia was present. Lettice tried in vain to loosen his grasp. "It's no good; you can't make me," he cried. "I mean to have all I can of you—every day—and there's lots of things for you to do. You don't mean to be long away, do you? I wish you wouldn't! When is it to be?"

"On Friday."

"Oh-h-h!" The boy made a kind of indignant howl.

"Pray stop that noise!" ordered Theodosia. "You make yourself quite ridiculous. The sooner Lettice leaves, the better, if you behave in this absurd way."

"It isn't absurd. I wouldn't care if anybody else went. I only want Lettice. She's never cross."

"Hush," whispered Lettice.

"But I don't mean to hush: because I hate to lose you. You are the dearest old thing: and I shall be all alone. Come along to the playroom, do! I want you to myself."

Lettice yielded, in fear of worse to follow: and she really did not dare to look towards Theodosia. The boy dragged her upstairs, clinging all the way to her waist: and when the playroom was reached, he flung himself upon her afresh with boisterous affection.

"I say; what makes you do such a stupid thing? Why can't you stay at home?"

"Why should I? Nobody wants me."

"Yes, they do. I want you. I want you a great deal more than anybody else. I want you

always, and always. Lettice! I say, you're not crying?"

Lettice dashed aside a bright drop, trying to smile. "Haven't I some reason to cry?"

"Why? What do you mean? Because mamsie doesn't like you?" Theodosia encouraged him to keep up still the old baby-term, when strangers were not present.

"Because I am accused of doing a thing I did not do; and no one will believe me."

"But I do. You didn't take the money."

"No, I didn't, of course. Only I can't prove it. Do you believe me, really, truly?" She longed to feel that at least one in the house, even a child, put faith in her still: longed it the more, because she was going away.

Keith laughed. "Why, I know you didn't," he said.

"How do you know?"

"Why, I know! I know quite well. Mamsie won't let me say you didn't: but I do say it, all the same. She can't guess why I'm sure. But I know it, all the same. I know it perfectly."

Lettice stooped to kiss him, and was subjected to a bear's hug.

"I shall tell her I'm quite sure, if she says anything again. I'll declare you didn't do it."

"No good, I am afraid. Keith, you'll be a little sorry to have me gone? Just a little! Nobody else minds."

"Father does."

"No; not now. He would have minded—once."

"Father minds!" positively. "Mamsie doesn't. And of course I do. I should just think so. I shall count and count the days till you come back. How long will you be? More than a month! O, I say, that's too horrid! . . . Lettice, I've a great mind to tell you something! It's such a shame!—and I don't see why I

shouldn't!—only—you must promise you won't tell anybody else! Not a single person."

"Why?"

"Oh, because I couldn't tell you, without. And I have nobody else to say it to. I want to say it to somebody. Promise, won't you—like a dear old girl!"

She could not withstand the coaxing affectionate manner: and his complaint of "nobody else to say it to," appealed to her own loneliness. The pretty boyish face looked up into hers. "Let me tell you," he entreated. "Do, Lettice. It's so horrid not to have a fellow to speak to; and I shan't, when you're gone. Only you've got to promise most faithfully that you'll never say it to anybody else—not to anybody! And more particularly, not to let mamsie know."

"I'll do anything you like, so long as it isn't wrong. Yes, I promise not to repeat it to anyone, without your leave, unless it is something that I ought to speak out about, for somebody else's sake. And then you must give me leave."

His hand came over her mouth. "But it isn't! It isn't! It won't hurt anybody, except you."

"O then that does not matter. I can't have much more to bear than I have had lately. What is it?"

"You promise not to tell?"

"Yes."

"Promise faithfully!"

"So long as it is right."

"Not to tell mamsie—"

"No."

"Or anybody?"

"Not unless you let me."

He glanced at the door apprehensively, pressed nearer, and whispered—

"Mamsie put that bank-note into your box, herself!"

MINISTERING SPIRITS.

"THE Angel of the Lord." How often even in the many thousand years which precede the advent of Christ, do we hear of this ministering spirit sent forth from Heaven on some high errand of consolation, hope or admonition.

To Abraham and Hagar, to Lot and Jacob, Gideon, Joshua, Elijah, Daniel and Zechariah, these angelic manifestations were vouchsafed, but it is when we turn to the New Testament that we see how large a share, how deep an interest these celestial inhabitants took in the affairs of men. Gabriel, angel of the Annunciation, "messenger of God," was sent to salute Mary; angelic voices raised in music such as never human ear heard before announced the birth of the Redeemer and sang His cradle song; an angel warned Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt, angels ministered to Him Who was tempted like as we

are yet without sin; an angel strengthened Him in the agony of Gethsemane; angels guarded the open tomb in the garden on that first great Easter morning.

They no longer take palpable shape; we see them no more, these guests from Heaven, as Jacob, asleep under the stars, saw them descending from the world of light on their silent offices of love; God no longer reveals His purposes by the mouth of Cherubim or Seraphim, for a greater than the brightest of that heavenly host came to dwell among us, Himself the Intercessor, the Interpreter of our needs.

And yet, strange as it would seem to us now if one of these spiritual beings appeared before us, how simply and naturally their visits are set forth in the Bible. There is nothing in the recorded description of these sons of God to tell us that they differed much from the men and

women they came to serve; the three whom Abraham entertained at Mamre were but distinguished strangers in his eyes, till their tidings were revealed, and we do not hear that Hagar trembled or was afraid when the "Angel of God" appeared before her in the wilderness and comforted her; and to pass to the New Testament story, three out of the four Evangelists describe the angels who watched by the sepulchre on the Resurrection morning as young men, though their white and shining raiment, and some awe and majesty, not of earth, in their demeanour, strangely impressed the affrighted women.

And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep.

Science will no longer allow us even this consolation. Our dreams, it tells us, are solely to be explained on physical grounds and owe their origin to some external or internal influence which affects the sleeper. They reflect our environment, character, tastes, habits of thought, and are but the outcome and continuation of our waking life. There is neither "mystery, potency, nor prescience" in the phantasies of sleep. For all that, many an untaught mother, bereaved of her child, and mourning its loss, has wakened comforted by some vision of the night in which she sees again her little one cradled in an angel's arms.

Have they kissed her—
The angels that bend down to pull
Our buds of the beautiful,
And whispered their own little sister?

No dream to her, in truth, but a living presence, sweet foretaste of the re-union for which she yearns.

That these "noble essences" in heaven should feel a tender pity and protecting love for the little ones who are nearest on earth to God's kingdom seems so natural that we cannot wonder at the widespread faith, shared by almost all nations, in the angels as tutelary spirits and guardians of innocence and purity: but Scripture affords no warrant for the belief, unless we may put this interpretation on the warning of our Lord:

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.

The early Christian church was perhaps influenced in adopting the idea of angelic guardianship and in sanctioning the invocation of angels by the example of their heathen neighbours, who believed in the presiding care of tutelary deities, for as the author of "Religio Medici" points out:

"It is not a new opinion of the church but an old one of Pythagoras and Plato," and he adds, "there is no heresy in it, and if not manifestly defined in Scripture, yet it is an opinion of a good and wholesome use in the course and actions of man's life, and would serve as an hypothesis to solve many doubts whereof common philosophy affordeth no solution."

Thus the great mystic. But though it is not well to be wise above that which is written, we know that if the angels have withdrawn from our ken, they are still busy, these elder brethren of our fallen race, in the service of humanity, "sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation," and who shall dare set a limit to their holy offices?

These purer beings of a brighter world, a little higher than man, and yet his servants, have ever offered an attractive theme to poet and artist. Dante, in that wonderful journey through the antechambers of the celestial world, leads us to the empyrean, "the palace and court of God," and there, seeing by his poet's vision that which never mortal eye has looked on, describes for us the white-robed hierarchy "their wings of gold, their faces radiant as of pure flame, as they flutter among the company of redeemed souls" at one with them in worship and in praise.

And to the majesty of Milton's genius we owe the most splendid description both of the sinless legions above and the rebel fallen spirits, "princes, potentates, warriors, the flower of heaven," cast out from God:

To waste eternal days in woe and pain.

The angel used as a similitude, has called forth some of the finest passages in literature. Who can forget the lines from the "Merchant of Venice" that begin—

Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim.

Or this, from Milton's "Comus"—

O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings.

Or, take this passage from Gray, where we are transferred as on Dante's pinions to the heaven of heavens—

He passed the flaming bounds of place and time;
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze.

As avenger, as recorder of men's deeds, as guardian of his destinies—in each of these aspects, literature has portrayed the heavenly visitant. The famous passage from "Tristram Shandy" occurs to one at once:

The accusing spirit which flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in, and the recording angel as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word and blotted it out for ever.

May not Campbell have had it in his mind when he wrote—

But, sad as angels for the good man's sin,
Weep to record and blush to give it in.

Protecting guardianship is implied in the lines from "Hamlet"—

Angels and ministers of grace defend us.



ALF. COOKE, LITH.

"A MOTHER'S DREAM"

From the picture by A.E. Emslie, RWS

And even the familiar hymn-writer sings in his cradle lullaby—

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed.

But, perhaps, it were safer for us if we recognised with Fletcher that—

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

To descend from the heavenly to the earthly; how often has woman, when the subject of the poet's rapture, been compared to an angel? Would that she ever deserved all that has been sung of her, from Spencer's:

Her angel's face,
As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in a shady place—

To Scott's gallant apostrophe—

When pain and anguish wring the brow
A ministering angel thou.

Or Rogers—

A guardian angel o'er his life presiding,
Doubly his pleasures and his cares dividing.

Could praise be more graceful than this from the Earl of Rochester:

Angels listen when she speaks.

And what delicate flattery is hidden in Otway's—

Angels are painted fair to look like you.

Many of the sweetest saints and martyrs in the Romish Calendar are distinguished in art by the symbol of an angel. Legend ascribes this honour to Cecilia, whose music drew listeners from heaven; to Theresa, patron saint of Spain; Dorothea of Cappadocia, Clotilda of Burgundy, to whose vision France owes her Fleur-de-Lys, to Francesca Romana, wisest and womanliest of them all, since she "found God in her household affairs"—we see them crowned with roses, accompanied and watched over by heavenly guides.

No less than the poets the painters have ever loved to depict for us these citizens of a brighter world. From the days of Cimabue and Giotto, on through all the great periods of Italian religious art till we reach the sixteenth century masters—Michael Angelo, Raphael "the divine," del Sarto, Titian, da Vinci—there is scarce an event portrayed in the life of our Lord, or in that of the Virgin Mary—not a miracle or a temptation of the saints—but we find the angels represented as interested spectators or participants. They look at us with their calm, friendly eyes from out the clouds, or wing their way from the world of light to share more closely still in the human drama. In fresco, in mosaic, in bas-relief; set free by the stroke of the sculptor's chisel we meet with them everywhere; in the dim old palaces, in the churches and galleries of

storied Italy; terrible as in the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, mystically sweet and quaint as they light the gloomy convent walls where the visionary Fra Angelico called them into being long centuries ago; charming and captivating as in the cherub heads which no one but a Raphael, unless it were the Spanish Murillo, could paint.

One recalls them too, sentinels at many a tomb, as if awaiting that final fellowship when we shall be no longer "a little lower," but equal with these elder members of one family in the new kingdom, where sin will no longer divide us.

And as we set them to keep for us the gates of death, we love to associate them with the innocence and helplessness of opening life. Surely it was with some underlying thought of their pure and holy guardianship that Thorwaldsen sculptured the white-winged kneeling angel who holds the font, where the little ones are baptised in His name before whom Cherubim and Seraphim stand with veiled faces.

"Endeavour," writes an old divine, "to be in love with the felicities of saints and angels, and to be once persuaded to believe that there is a condition of living better than this; that there are creatures more noble than we; that above there is a country better than ours; that the inhabitants know more and know better, and are in places of rest and desire, and first learn to value it, and then learn to purchase it, and death cannot be a formidable thing, which lets us into so much joy and so much felicity."

And yet another teacher cries: "Watch, then, disciple of life, watch and labour towards the development of the angel within thee!"

All that is noble, helpful, and good, all that we fain would attain to and be, we picture to ourselves these purer creatures who, though not yet subordinated to us, fulfil the Divine will in ministering to us. But high as is their mission, is not the destiny of redeemed man higher still?

Lower now than these spirits of light, a day will come when, crowned with glory and honour, humanity will be exalted above them for, strange and awe inspiring mystery:

Know ye not that we shall judge angels?

Already how highly has man been privileged. No new world was created for these hosts of heaven, no Saviour, stooping in compassion for their fallen estate, bled and died for them; sinless, they can never experience the joy of pardon.

For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren. . . . to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

An angel with sword of flame drove our first parents from Paradise Lost, but neither angels, principalities, nor powers shall separate us in Paradise Regained from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS OF EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH is a city of many monuments and many statues, but it has no outward memorial of the man to whom Scotland owes more than all others, the great Reformer, John Knox. He died there, and was buried near the Cathedral of Saint Giles, the funeral being

to remind his own countrymen of their greatest benefactor, and the man of whom they have most reason to be proud.

But the thoughtful readers of history, and those who know Scotland best, will not regret the absence of a monument to John Knox in



DOOR AT ROSLIN CHAPEL.

attended by the Regent Morton, and all the nobles then in the town, and a vast concourse of people. When his body was laid in the grave, Morton pronounced over it the brief and memorable epitaph: "There lies he who never feared the face of man!" No monument marks the spot nor any sign, save the initials, J. K., trodden under foot of passengers. One of the houses where the Reformer lived, is a well-known show-place to tourists and strangers, but there is little

Edinburgh. They will remember the lines which Milton wrote when it was proposed to raise a memorial in London to Shakespeare, whose honoured bones needed no such tribute—

Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.

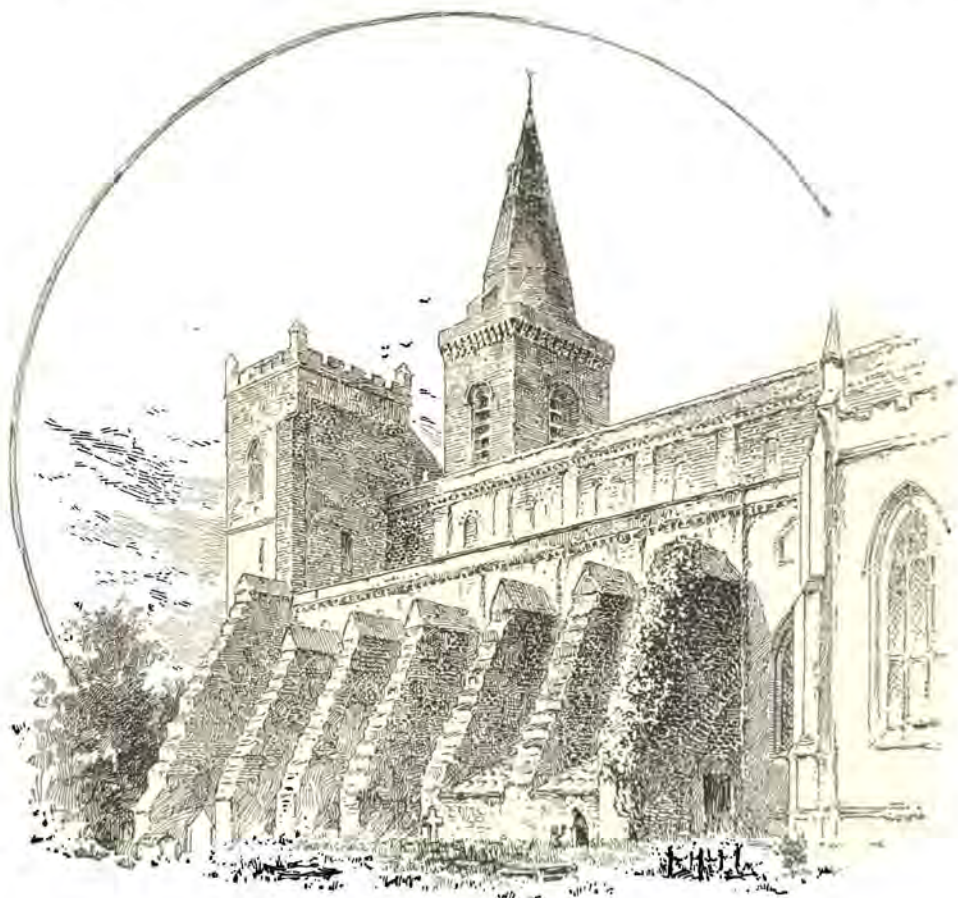
Here is what has been said by one of the

greatest of the fellow-countrymen of Knox, Thomas Carlyle—

"In the history of Scotland I can find properly but one epoch: we may say, it contains nothing of world-interest at all but this Reformation by Knox. A poor barren country, full of continual broils, dissensions, massacres; a people in the last state of rudeness and destitution, little better than Ireland at no remote day. Hungry, fierce barons, not so much as able to form any arrangement with each other how to divide what they fleeced from their poor drudges. It is a country as yet without a soul; nothing developed in it but what is rude, semi-animal; and now at the Reforma-

in many circumstances; first of all the Saxon stuff there was to work on; but next, and beyond all else except that, in the Presbyterian gospel of John Knox."

This is the testimony of one who knew well what all other Scotchmen have done, Robert Burns and Walter Scott, and a hundred more, in times before or since the Reformation. To John Knox he gives the unquestioned supremacy. Edinburgh may have no statue to him, but never were the words more fitly used, *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*.



DUNFERMLINE ABBEY.

tion the internal life is kindled, as it were, under the ribs of this outward material death! . . . Honour to all the brave and true; everlasting honour to brave old Knox, one of the truest of the true! That in the moment when he and his cause, amid civil broils, in convulsion and confusion, were still but struggling for life, he sent the schoolmaster forth to all corners, and said, 'Let the people be taught: this is but one, and, indeed, an inevitable and comparatively inconsiderable item in his great message to men. His message in its true compass was, 'Let men know that they are men created by God, responsible to God, who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity.' This great message Knox did deliver, with a man's voice and strength, and found a people to believe in him. The Scotch national character originates

The life and work of Knox can be told in very few sentences, but must not be wholly omitted, because it is too much forgotten by his countrymen, and is little known to others. Born in 1505, not far from Edinburgh, at Gifford in East Lothian, he in early life embraced the reformed faith, then beginning to spread in Scotland. He was a fellow-student of the famous George Buchanan, the man of learning who was afterwards classical tutor to James VI. He also formed a strong attachment to George Wishart, whose execution at St. Andrews did much to strengthen the reformed cause. The death of Walter Mill, an aged priest, above fourscore years of age, who was burned at the stake in

1558, roused the whole of Scotland to throw off the yoke of Rome. He was the last of the Protestant martyrs, and, as the historian Spottiswoode says, "his death was the death of Popery in this realm." Knox had, before his conversion, entered into priest's orders, and when he was in the castle of St. Andrews, after the assassination of Cardinal Beaton, he was unexpectedly called upon to officiate to the Protestants who had sought refuge there. The castle having surrendered, he was sent with other prisoners to the galleys.

On regaining his liberty, he went to England, and remained there until the death of the good prince Edward VI. During the short reign of Edward, he laboured successfully to establish the new faith in England, and was offered the bishopric of Rochester. He often preached in Amersham parish church, in Bucks; and in many parts of England, up to Newcastle and near the borders. He assisted in the preparation of the Prayer Book, and to him are due some rubrics, which give a Scriptural interpretation of services not universally approved by the reformers. When the fires of persecution were kindled again in the reign of Queen Mary, Knox retired to Geneva, and was minister of the English congregation in that city. His heart was ever in Scotland, and as soon as possible he resolved to help the reformed cause in his own beloved country.

He arrived at a critical time. The Queen Regent was resolved to suppress the Reformation, and the leading Protestants, who now began to be called the "Lords of the Congregation," saw the necessity of combining and arming themselves in self-defence. Knox threw himself with ardent zeal into the contest. In June, 1559, it was determined to commence operations. The Earl of Argyll, and Lord James Stewart, afterwards Earl of Moray, prior of the Abbey of St. Andrew, met Knox in Fife, where he preached at Anstruther, and other places on the way to St. Andrews, where he caused it to be announced that he would preach in the Cathedral. The Archbishop said if he dared to appear in the pulpit, he would be met with a dozen of culverines. As the Queen, with a French army, was at Falkland, only a few miles distant, the companions of Knox hesitated. But the intrepid preacher said that he had been called to the ministry in St. Andrews, and he would preach again there, come what list. He appeared in the pulpit, and preached without molestation, and with such effect, that the magistrates, harmoniously with the people, agreed to set up the Reformed worship in their city. And this first step was soon followed through all Scotland. The Reformation was firmly established in the land, although the high designs of Knox for the thorough education of the people, by parish schools, and high schools, and colleges, were only partially carried out, because of the selfish greed of the nobles and gentry, in seizing the larger part of the wealth which ought to have been used for the cause of education and of true religion.

After the death of the Regent, the young and beautiful Queen Mary came to Scotland from France. Having been married in early life to

the Dauphin and educated in the Court of France, she had been nursed up in blind attachment to Popery and arbitrary power. She had been taught that it would be the glory of her reign to bring back her new kingdom to the obedience of Rome, and to act with the princes who were plotting for the universal extirpation of heresy. Arriving at Leith in August 1561, she was received by the good people of Edinburgh with demonstrations of joyous loyalty. She was accompanied by a popish court, and able popish counsellors. Scarcely was she settled at Holyrood, when orders were issued for the celebration of Mass in the private chapel. This would soon have been followed by the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion throughout the kingdom. The reform party took alarm, and Knox said that, "sooner than one public Mass, he would see an army of ten thousand Frenchmen in arms landed in Scotland." He felt that his place was now in Edinburgh, to watch over the cause of the Reformation. At that time there was only one place of Protestant worship, St. Giles' Cathedral, and Knox was the sole minister. Here he preached Sunday after Sunday, about three thousand of the citizens listening to his fervid and eloquent words.

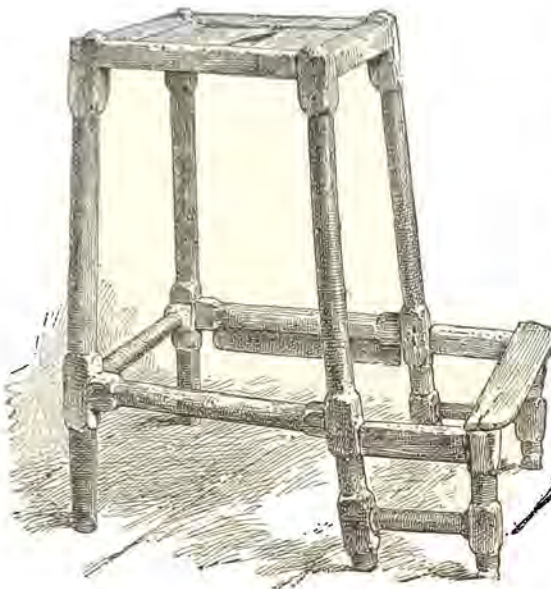
The Queen soon saw that it would be prudent to confine her support of Popery, and her practise of its rites, to her own chapel of Holyrood. But she heard all that passed at St. Giles', and Knox was several times summoned by her to conferences at the palace. The Queen's advisers felt it would be unsafe to attempt to resist the public sentiment. Yet she gradually gained a large number of the nobles, and by her fascinations obtained great influence. Knox was accused of high treason, and had to leave Edinburgh for a season. But her own acts sealed her fate. The death of her husband, Darnley, and the speedy elopement with the murderer, Bothwell, raised popular indignation against her. After a time of brief trouble she was obliged to abdicate the throne, and take refuge in England, where she was ultimately executed by order of Elizabeth.

The good Earl of Moray was appointed Regent of Scotland on the Queen's abdication, a man universally respected and beloved. Attached to the Reformation from the beginning, he restored the reformed religion to Scotland. Knox returned to Edinburgh, and aided by his colleague, John Craig, resumed his labours with renewed ardour. Occasionally he went to St. Andrews, and it was there that James Melville in his Diary, describes him as he appeared in 1571, so feeble that he had to be supported by good Richard Ballanden his servant, and lifted into the pulpit, "but ere he had done with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads, and flie out of it."

Very touching is the account of the last days of Knox in his house at Edinburgh. He caused to be read to him every day the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel, the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and a portion of the Epistle to the Ephesians. And there were charges to his colleague, and the elders and deacons assembled in his room, faithful and earnest words, such as John Calvin

spoke to the ministers and magistrates of the Swiss towns, at Geneva, before he was leaving the world for his eternal home.

There are many opinions about the personal



STOOL OF PENITENCE.

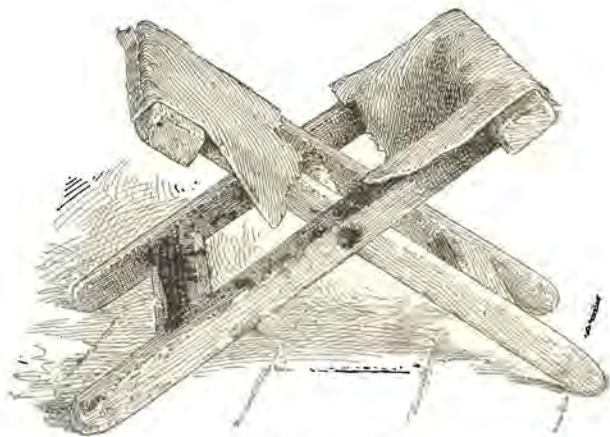
character and the actions of Queen Mary, and about others conspicuous in the affairs of Scotland in those times. But with none, except the very ignorant or deeply prejudiced, are there any questions about the high-toned principle, the manly patriotism, and the noble character of the great Scottish reformer, John Knox.

In the generations succeeding Knox there were many controversies and many troubles, but more about Church government and worship, than about doctrine. A species of secular episcopacy was upheld by the Court, though the Church continued by law Presbyterian. There were disputes also about the civil and ecclesiastical powers and about various matters pertaining to the rights of the patrons of livings, and the liberties of the people. These things were all discussed in assemblies. But the principles of the Reformation were no more questioned in Scotland. In worship, there was a good deal of liberty, for Knox himself had sanctioned a liturgy, and his successors had authorised a "service-book," for the help of ministers.

King James was fond of arbitrary power, and did not easily brook interference with his pro-

rogatives. He said one day that they ought to have bishops in Scotland as they had in England, and the reply was, "ye may have bishops here; but remember, ye must make all ministers bishops, or ye will never content us." He professed however general adherence to the Church of Scotland, "barring their not keeping Pasch and Yule, and such things," and he joined the Kirk in signing a solemn league and covenant against Popery. After his accession to the English throne, he drew off more completely from Presbyterian control, and asserted the supremacy of the crown, by appointing prelates, and thwarting the assemblies of the Kirk in every possible way. "No bishop, no king," was a favourite saying with him. The famous gunpowder plot, however, showed him greater perils than those to be feared from Puritanism. And he continued a Protestant though not a Presbyterian king.

So things proceeded during the early years of Charles I., who was also much given to interfere with things ecclesiastical, and who in his first visit to Scotland was attended by Laud, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury. Laud was greatly shocked by what he saw of the Scottish Church; "no religion of any kind that I can see," was his account of it. With the king's sanction, he determined to introduce a new service-book and new ordinances. The opposition of the people of Edinburgh, and the riots resulting from the attempt to enforce the new service-book, are familiarly known to all readers of history. The identical stool which Janet Geddes, a market woman, threw at the Dean of Edinburgh in St. Giles' Church, may be seen in the antiquarian museum. "You false villain, saying the Mass in my lug," is the traditional version of the words of the irate Janet Geddes, and it repre-



JENNY GEDDES' STOOL.

sented the general feeling through the nation. The attempt to force the innovations had no little part in commencing the war which for many a year desolated the kingdom. In England the parliamentary party rose to redress grievances civil as well as ecclesiastical, but in Scotland the

affairs of the Church formed the chief point of dispute. The resistance to the king culminated in the meeting of the celebrated General Assembly of the Church, held at Glasgow in 1638, under the presidency of Alexander Henderson. The king had a royal commissioner there, the Marquis of Hamilton, with an armed escort, but the Assembly paid no attention to his order to close their meeting; and proceeded to depose the bishops, to restore presbytery, and to renew the liberties of the Church. A large number of the nobles and the representatives of the commonwealth of Scotland were there with armed retainers to support Henderson, and the cause of the Church was again triumphant. The scene of the signing of the Covenant in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh, was long memorable.

persecution which Scottish history marks as its blackest epoch since the Reformation. The ministers who would not conform to the prelacy imposed by the Stuarts were banished or imprisoned, and the people were "dragooned" into submission to the emissaries of the English Court, aided by lawless and mercenary soldiers. The sufferings of the Covenanters in the years of persecution are remembered in Scotland with more sympathetic interest even than the martyrdoms of olden times. The "tomb of the covenanters," in Greyfriars Churchyard, is still an object of veneration, and Sir Walter Scott has made the graves of these men, scattered through the lonely moors, and on the mountain sides, famous to all the world in his "Old Mortality." These suffering men were not rebels but true



GREYFRIARS CHURCHYARD.

The Scotch nation took the side of the parliament throughout the civil war, until the king threw himself upon his ancient subjects and himself took the covenant in order to deceive them as to his adherence to their cause. The same step was taken by Charles II., when he was crowned at Scone, on the 1st of January, 1651, as the successor of King Charles I., "the martyr."

This is not the place to narrate the dissensions and disasters that overtook the Church of Scotland in the ensuing years, nor the wars that Montrose, with his savage Highland and Irish auxiliaries, kept up for the royal cause. The strong arm of Oliver Cromwell, after the close of the Civil War, maintained peace in Scotland as well as in England, and it is on record that "true religion never flourished more in Scotland than in the years between the end of the war and the restoration of Charles II."

Then followed the long period of trial and of

patriots, and even Hume, though a prejudiced writer, admits that but for the heroism of the Covenanters, England would not possess the civil and religious freedom which is her highest boast among the nations. The darkest time is that before the dawn, and after the fiercest persecution under James II., instigated by popish advisers, the advent of "the glorious revolution," under William III., proclaimed king at Edinburgh Cross, was hailed throughout Scotland with tumultuous joy.

Principal Carstairs, of the University of Edinburgh, was the personal friend and the adviser of William III. in all matters ecclesiastical in Scotland. In his time the Church continued to flourish and was prosperous. In the later years of Queen Anne, efforts were successfully made to reduce the Church to greater submission to the secular power. The act of restoring lay patronage, which had been suspended for a time, was one of the chief means for the enslavement

of the Church. The troubles caused by the resistance of the people to enforced settlements grew in strength and frequency, until the hitherto united Church of Scotland was torn by secessions and divisions. The larger part of the devout and faithful Presbyterians left the old Church, and worshipped with the Secession ministers. Gradually there fell on the Scottish Church, as it did in the English Church in the eighteenth century, an epoch of formalism and of scepticism, relieved in both countries by the godly example and earnest preaching of a few faithful men who remained in their parishes.

It was long before this "eclipse of faith" passed off in the north—long after the age of the Wesleys, and Whitefield, and the revivalists of England. The visits of Whitefield to Edinburgh are memorable in history, but the record is not very creditable to the ecclesiastical authorities of the time. At his first visit in 1742, soon after the secession of the Erskines, he shocked these worthy Presbyterians by telling them that "if the Pope himself would lend his pulpit, he would be glad of the opportunity to preach Christ there." He preached to vast multitudes on the Calton Hill at Edinburgh, and it was when he heard him there that David Hume declared he was the most eloquent and impressive preacher he had ever known. The common people heard him gladly, and many were converted, but the effect on the churches was not great. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland continued to meet annually, but the evangelical party, whether ministers or laymen, remained a feeble minority. The leaders of the Church ridiculed all spiritual religion, and home and foreign missions of every kind. In the autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Carlisle, minister of Inveresk, a leader of "the moderate party," as it was called, a most graphic account is given of the condition of the Scottish Kirk during last century. There was, however, in Edinburgh itself, a succession of faithful men, whose names are still memorable in the religious history of those times. Conspicuous among these was Dr. Erskine, who was colleague of Dr. Robertson, the historian, in Greyfriars parish. It is of him that the story is told, when in a debate in which the undertaking of foreign missions was opposed as not required by Scripture, addressing the Moderator and pointing towards the clerk of assembly, Erskine exclaimed, "Rax me the buik," and commenced his speech by reading portions of Scripture, commanding missionary action as the paramount duty of the Church. It was he who, when his colleague had preached a sermon, in the moral-essay strain, about the beauty of virtue which all men on seeing must approve, began the afternoon sermon by saying, that "they had all heard that morning a discourse on the beauty of virtue, which all men must adore and worship. But what in fact did men do? Virtue appeared on earth, incarnate, in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and men, instead of worshipping and owning Him as their Lord, crucified and slew Him!"

There were not a few men of the spirit of Erskine—Buchanan, and Davidson, and others, in

Edinburgh,—whose memory is still cherished in circles where their influence extended. And although the rulers of the Church were too often unfaithful, there was ever kept alive throughout Scotland a devout spirit, such as Robert Burns himself has described in his "Cottar's Saturday Night," a picture of his own worthy father's home. This was but a sample of what might be seen in every parish and town of Scotland; and the people who crowded the churches of the few evangelical preachers in Edinburgh proved that there were many thousands who in the darkest times knew and served the Lord. The preaching of the brothers Haldane, and of Aikman, the predecessor of Dr. Lindsay Alexander, and the visits of Rowland Hill, and of Charles Simeon, who addressed tens of thousands of earnest listeners, widened and deepened the channels of Divine grace, until the time came when the minority in the Church, under the leadership of the Luther-like Thomas Chalmers, became the majority, and a new epoch of Christianity was inaugurated in Scotland.

The formation of the Free Church of Scotland marked the beginning of better days, both in home and foreign mission work. It is now fifty years since the memorable event of "the disruption," of which all Scotchmen may well be proud, whatever their opinions may be of the causes which led to such a display of earnest faith and devoted self-sacrifice. The revival of religion was not confined to any section of the Christian Church, but has been as marked in the Establishment as in the seceding body; and among Episcopalians, and all denominations, a new era, fruitful in good deeds, has been witnessed. There are now, as in the days of the Reformation, few divisions in points of doctrine or of practice, and all the nation agrees in maintaining old "use and wont" in matters of religious education and of Christian activity. Well would it be if there were more of outward and visible unity, and common action in all that pertains to the defence of the Protestant faith, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

Rejoice that your Names are written in Heaven.

[This sonnet was suggested by the beautiful humility of the Italian painter, Botticelli, who, in a representation of nine choirs of angels, put his own name in microscopic characters on a tablet borne by an angel of the lowest grade.]

YE angel choirs that circle evermore
The throne of light ineffable, and sing
The glory of the ever-blessed King,
Whom all your shining ministries adore
With perfect praises that unceasing pour
From hearts unstained by thought of evil thing.
While age on age speeds by with gladsome wing,
Adding fresh treasure to your songful store:
Let but my humble name be written small
Upon some tablet which your lowliest bears
Before that Lord who knows and loves us all,
And I am amply blest; my highest prayers
Are fully heard: henceforth no fears appal,
And life is light with all its griefs and cares.

W. TAYLOR SMITH

WIFELY WISDOM.

IT was the day of rest. The sun was shining with double its usual brightness; the air was balmy and laden with odours; all Nature looked glad, wearing her Sunday garments and a crown of blossoms like a bride on her wedding morn. But the more joyous the outside world, the more gloomy things seemed within in that cottage beneath the flowering pear-trees. Even the housewife who had been wont to wear a bright face, going about her work cheerfully early and late, sat with a gloomy look at the breakfast table, not touching the meal; and the husband who watched her furtively saw her rise with a sudden burst of tears, making for the door as though overcome with grief.

And indeed it had appeared for some time that Trouble had made her dwelling in that little house. There had been dearth instead of plenty, crops had failed, trade was bad, and even this husband, although he was a hard-working thrifty man, saw penury before him, if things would not mend. He had said so over and over again, adding in his despair he would seek death rather than submit to the starvation that stared him in the face; and there could not be a God in heaven else He would never let an honest workman come to such beggarly pass. He had been willing to put faith in Him while there was a blessing he could see; but there seemed nothing but misery now, and his trust was gone. The wife did her best to put better thoughts into his heart, he would not receive them; and no admonition of his friends, no spiritual or worldly comfort availed ought in his gloomy distress. "God had ceased caring for the poor," he said.

Who could blame the wife then, if she also lost heart at last, and her natural cheerfulness no longer had power to uphold her. But not so, and even her present sadness was welling up from a faithful heart. For when the husband saw her tears and that she seemed bent on hiding them, he caught her hand as she was opening the door, saying, with something of his former tender care of her: "You shall not leave the room without telling me your trouble!"

She was silent awhile, hiding her face, and then she said, sobbing all the more: "I have had such a dream, husband! I dreamt the Lord God had died. I saw a host of angels all ready for the funeral!" And she burst out crying anew.

"Nonsense," said the husband, "how can you let such a foolish dream work thus on your feelings! Why, God can never die, as even the children will tell you; so stop your tears, you foolish wife. He is above us still."

And through the cloud on her face, a great radiance broke forth as she took hold of her husband's hands, saying, "He cannot die, you tell me, and is above us still?"

"To be sure," said the husband; "how could you doubt it!"

And she looked at him solemnly, a deep light

illuminating her face as she said: "Husband dear, if the Lord God is not dead as you tell me, but is above us still, why do not we trust Him, why do we not believe where we cannot see? Is He not the same God still who does not afflict willingly, who clothes the lilies and feeds the sparrows, who giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry unto Him?"

But these words of hers smote the man in his despair; it was as though the scales fell from his eyes, as though the ice which had bound his heart had thawed suddenly, yielding to the beneficent power of the sun. A smile rose to his lips and to his eyes, and he thanked his wife for having caught the real significance of his words. He felt he was condemned out of his own mouth, and saved from infidelity. The love and faith of her own heart had conquered the moody despair of his. The Sabbath sun went on shining, filling that cottage with a heavenly radiance, which was reflected from faces on which lay a new-born trust; all Nature offered up her incense from the wealth of her blossoms, the song of birds swelled with a burthen of thanksgiving, and hearts of faith were uplifted to the Father everlasting of men.

J. S.

Things New and Old.

THEY GOD.—There are many occasions on which it is well for Christians to feel their common interests in "Our Father in heaven." But there are also times when it is profitable to realize the truth of the words—"I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years in the wilderness." The Lord's goodness to each of His children individually, by events of daily providence, and especially by each individual's experiences of answered prayer—these are a special means of spiritual strength and encouragement, as they are remembered and turned into occasions of thanksgiving. Some of the principal "evidences" of the reality of God's existence and presence, are those which are afforded by these experiences of His grace manifested to His children, one by one, in their individual capacity. And every child of God can thus realize that, quite compatibly with the Divine Government of the universe, by general and unchanging laws, He still works miracles of goodness in answer to faith and prayer. Neither His presence, nor His inspiration, ceased with Bible ages, but have continued to be manifested to His children ever since to this hour. But this presence and inspiration are only accorded to the faithful, to those who seek for and obey the manifestations of His omnipresent Holy Spirit revealing the identity of the Christ of the Gospels with Himself. Thus are given precious evidences, that in the service and seeking of God, His children follow no cunningly devised fable, but solid realities more enduring and substantial than even the visible things of scientific truth and transitory worldly life.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.



MILDRED heard from her father that he was going to drive over to Milton to fetch her mother home, and that he would take either herself or Robin, her first feeling was one of great delight; for she was the elder of the two, and a girl, and the offer came to her first as a matter of course.

Mildred was seated in state at the head of the breakfast table, behind the coffee pot and the cups. It was a position of great dignity, for in the absence of her mother she had to do the honours of the table, and to see that her father

had everything he wanted. They were alone in the breakfast room, for it was holiday time, and the governess had gone away for a while, and Robin was delayed upstairs over some temporary difficulty in his toilet. Mrs. Cartwright was not often away from home, and even the dignity of representing her mother did not make up to Mildred for the loss she felt during her absence. She was longing to have her home again, and the idea of going to fetch her with father made her little heart beat with pleasure. Her cheeks flushed and she clapped her hands. "Oh, how lovely, Daddy!" she exclaimed, and then she stopped and her face became more serious. "Couldn't Robin go too, Father?" she asked in a quieter tone.

"No, I can only take one of you," answered the Colonel; "you must sit between me and Mother. John and Emma will go behind."

Mildred didn't quite see why one of them shouldn't sit behind between John and Emma, but she did not like to ask her father again, and she became altogether more serious.

"I think Robin had better go, Daddy," she said after a while, in a lower tone.

The Colonel looked up from his paper at his little girl sitting thoughtfully behind the big coffee pot.

"I can't take you both, Milly," he said; "if Bobby goes you must remain at home."

"I think I will stop at home, Father," Milly said; "I can take the dogs for a walk."

"Very well!" said the Colonel. "If you would rather take the dogs out for a walk then go with me to fetch your mother, I have no objection; Robin shall go then."

The tears started to Mildred's eyes. How could Father think she would rather go for a walk than meet darling Mother? She had not meant that at all. A tear found its way down her cheek and dropped into her plate, but her father did not see it, for he had returned to his paper, and just then Robin came into the room. He opened the door rather diffidently, for he was ten minutes late, and the Colonel liked punctuality. He was dressed in a sailor's suit which had come home only the night before, and he had put on part of it hind part before, so when his father had laughed at him, and Mildred had put him straight, he sat down to the breakfast table, and nothing was said about his late appearance.

"Would you like to come in the phaeton with me to fetch Mother, Bobby?" asked the Colonel as he laid down the paper, dropped his eye-glass, and devoted himself to an egg.

Robin jumped with delight—like it! Indeed he would like it!

"You must be ready at ten o'clock sharp, then, my boy, or I shall have to start without you," said the Colonel.

"Is Milly going?" asked Robin.

"No; there is only room for one of you, and Milly prefers to stop at home."

"Oh, Milly, not go to meet Mother!" exclaimed Robin, rather ungrammatically, gazing at her in astonishment out of his big blue eyes.

Mildred looked wistfully at her father.

"I should like to go, Daddy," she said; "couldn't I sit behind with Emma?"

"No, little girl," said the Colonel, decidedly. "You must learn to make up your mind. I asked you if you would like to go, and you said you would rather take the dogs for a walk. It is too late to change your mind now."

At ten o'clock precisely the smart phaeton drew up before the door, drawn by its pair of handsome bays, and at one minute past the Colonel was bowling quickly down the avenue with Robin's curly head by his side, and John, the groom, cleverly twisting himself into his seat behind, while Mildred was left standing on the top step, a pitiful little figure, with flushed face and quivering mouth underneath her broad-brimmed garden hat, watching them out of sight.

However, she did not feel so miserable for long. She was ten years old and would have considered it very babyish to cry, although she would dearly have liked to be sitting by her father's side in the carriage on her way to meet dear Mother. And yet it would not be long before Mother came home, for her father had said they would all be back to dinner, and Milly would see her before she went to bed. Besides, she was glad her little brother had the treat, and although the poor little girl's motives in giving up her place to him had been somewhat misunderstood, yet she knew that she had done it out of pure love to him, and Mother would understand. This was a great consolation, that "Mother would understand," and it made her almost happy again.

After this Milly rubbed her eyes with a tight little ball of a handkerchief, till they smarted, and ran round to the stable yard to get Tiger and Bruce unchained. When the groom had done this for her she took them down to the pond in the spinney.

Bruce was a beautiful black haired retriever, her very own; she had not had him long, and the joy of possession had not yet flagged. It was the great delight of herself and Robin to send the "curly old darling" into the pond after sticks, and they would play with him for an hour together, Mildred all the time feeling very proud that Bruce was her dog, and Robin respecting her rights, but taking chief part in the direction of affairs.

But to-day somehow she did not enjoy playing with Bruce quite as much as usual. Robin was not there, and it was rather dull alone. And then Tiger, who seemed more than usually clumsy this morning, would insist upon rubbing his great wet body against her clean frock, which she knew would cause constraint in the nursery. So after half-an-hour or so she took the dogs back to the stables and returned disconsolate to the house.

"I wish Mummy were at home!" she sighed a dozen times, as she wandered about the house, in and out of every room. But "Mummy" would not be home for some hours

yet, and Milly had to make the best of her solitude for the morning, and the whole afternoon.

The morning went somehow. It was very hot, and Milly took her favourite doll and a story book on to the lawn, in the shade cast by the big cedar by the rose garden. But the story book was uninteresting, and "Violet" was stupid, not to say naughty. She insisted upon keeping one eye open when she was laid down, while she went to sleep with the other in the orthodox way. It looked so foolish, and Milly could not break her of the habit, though she smacked her body, shook her and even poked the offending eye with a stalk of grass. She could not nurse a great thing like that all the time, she ought to have known better at her age, and as Violet refused to go to sleep with more than one eye, Milly at last sat her up on the other side of the tree and told her to stop there till she could behave better. But when she had looked through the pictures in her book once more, and read another page, there was nothing left to do that she could think of, and she felt very dull. She could not help thinking of Robin who was by this time at the Castle, and was perhaps talking to Mother, or being made much of by his aunts, or down in the meadows with their kind old grandfather poking the mild, gentle-eyed short-horns in the ribs with his chubby fist, or watching the woodman cut down a great tree, and picking out the largest chips as they had done the last time they went over together. Mildred heaved a great sigh, and clasped her hands over her knee, leaning forward to look wistfully into vacancy, with her pretty head on one side, and her long brown hair falling over her shoulder. It was very lonely at home with no one to talk to, but still Mother would be home before very long, and it was already dinner time; the morning had passed somehow, and Milly caught up her book and ran into the house, quite forgetting poor Violet, who sat in disgrace on the other side of the tree until the afternoon sun drew the shadow of the cedar across the lawn away from her, and her simpering wax face became somewhat blurred; and by-and-by she slipped down and lay on the grass with one eye closed, and the other gazing up into the sky, until all of a sudden it closed with a click, and she slept a dreamless sleep, until she was found the next morning by a gardener with her beautiful complexion quite gone and tears of wax still on her face.

When Milly got indoors there was a bitter disappointment for her. As she went up the broad stone steps, lying white and hard in the glare of the sunlight, into the spacious cool hall, she met a telegraph boy who touched his hat to her. Inside the open door stood the butler with a telegram in his hand.

"Is it from Father, Roller?" inquired Milly, with a little flutter of alarm.

"Yes, miss," answered the butler. "They are dining at the Castle, and will not be home till late." Poor little Milly! It was a great blow. Her bed-time was at eight, and although she might have sat up for half-an-hour to see her mother, she knew that, if they stayed to dine at her grandfather's she would have to go to bed long before they came home. She could not restrain her tears, and went up to the nursery crying. There was not much consolation there, for nurse's sympathy was lessened by the fact that Tiger had made Milly's pretty white frock in a great mess, so that it would be quite impossible to wear it any more this week, and to-day was only Tuesday. So the poor little girl ate her dinner in great tribulation, which was only a little lessened by the butler, who was kind-hearted and had seen her cry, laying three glasses for her just as if she was grown up, and arranging in one of them a wonderful looking table napkin folded after quite a new pattern.

The rest of the day wore away somehow, until the

shadows of the trees lay right across the lawn, and the birds went to their nests, still twittering in the twilight, and it was time for Milly to retire to her own little white nest in the night nursery, somewhat cheered by the thought that the day was over at last, and that it could not be very long now before Mother came home, when she would be sure to come upstairs at once and kiss her little girl, and then all would be well. Milly thought that she would take great care that sleep should not overtake her before she heard them all come in.

But it was nearly eleven o'clock before the crunch of wheels was heard on the drive, and the Colonel pulled up before the door; and by that time, tired out with waiting and listening, Milly had unconsciously allowed her eyelids to droop, so that when her mother did come into the nursery very softly, shading the light of her candle with her hand, the little girl had been asleep nearly an hour.

But it made very little difference, for as her mother was bending over her she woke with a start, and threw her arms round her neck, kissing and hugging her, so that it was with some little difficulty that Mrs. Cartwright put down the candle she was carrying on the little table by the bed.

"So my little girl did not want to come and meet her mother," she said, half in jest; but Milly took it quite in earnest and burst out crying and sobbing bitterly. It was too much for her that her mother, whom she had expected to have divined at once her reason for not going, and to have been pleased with her, and made the thought of having stopped at home far sweeter than the going would have been—that her mother should so have misunderstood her and thought that it really was because she wanted to play alone that she had not gone. Wretched dogs! For the moment she almost hated them. They had been a very poor solace for her loneliness, and she had only mentioned them at first because she did not want to make anything to her father of her giving up her place to Robin.

"Don't cry, darling!" said her mother, wiping her eyes gently, and kissing her hot cheeks. "I didn't mean it; I know you would much rather have come. You gave up your place to Robin; wasn't that it?"

"Yes, Mother," sobbed Milly, "didn't you know?"

"I knew quite well, my darling!" answered her mother, "and I am ever so pleased with my little girl. I would not have stopped to dinner if I could have helped it, for I wanted to get home to you, dear. But you mustn't cry any more."

After her mother had left her, Milly lay in the dark, consoled, but still sobbing a little under her breath, when all of a sudden there was a flutter in the room, and a little white figure jumped into the bed and put its arm round her neck.

It was Robin. "I wanted to come before," he explained, nestling his soft warm cheek against Milly's wet one, "but nurse wouldn't let me. You were a darling to let me go, Milly, dear. I thought you didn't want to till Mummy told me. I have brought you a crystallised orange. Grandfather gave it to me at dessert, and said I should choke because I had eaten it so fast, but I dropped it down inside my jacket and kept it for you." And Robin opened his hot little palm, which was quite sticky with the sugared fruit, and slipped the orange under Milly's pillow. "And Father is going to take us both into Norwich to-morrow," he went on, "and you shall hold the reins when he gets down, Milly dear. And Father said he was going to buy you a new collar for Bruce with his name on a brass plate. Don't cry any more, Milly, darling!"

But Milly's tears were no longer tears of sorrow, and when Robin had run back to his own bed again, she made up her mind that she was very glad that Robin had fetched Mother home instead of herself.