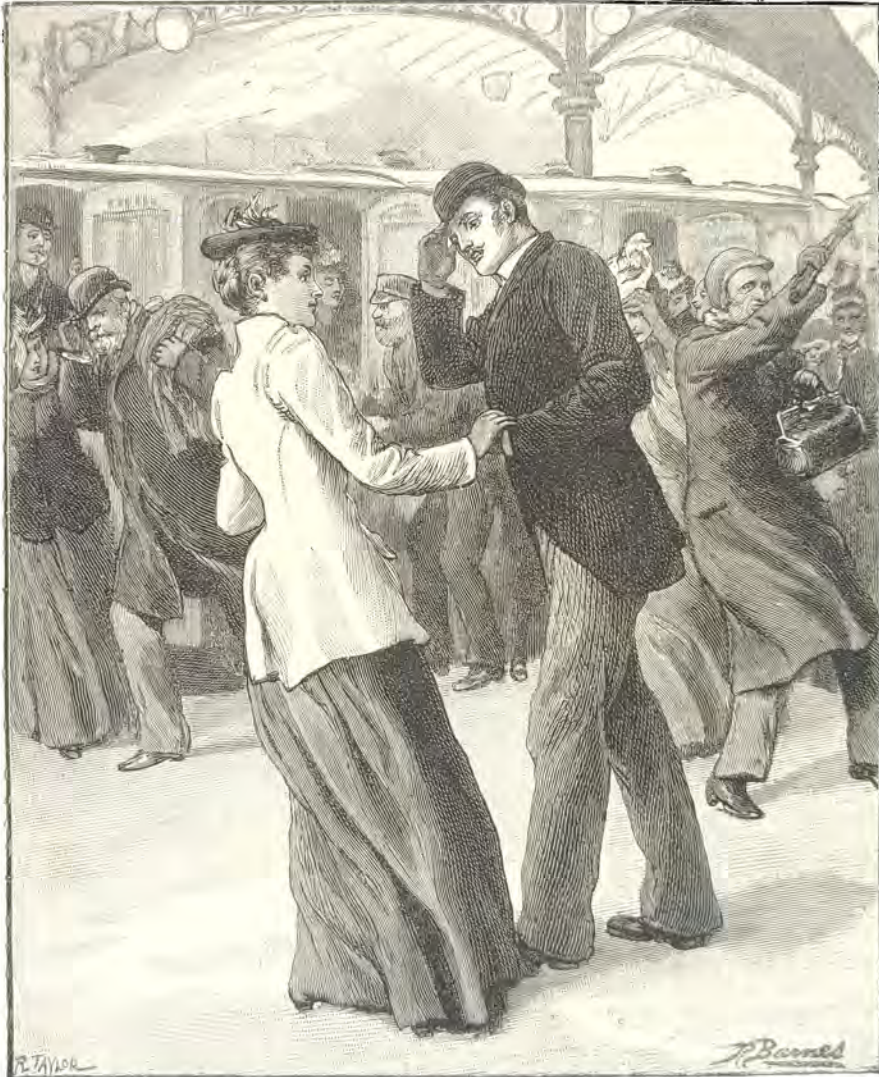


THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

THE ANDERSONS: BROTHER AND SISTER.



"HOW DO YOU DO?" A SOBER VOICE SAID.

CHAPTER XVI.—A PERSONAL APPEAL.

AS the train came in, Wallace gazed about for the delicate shy child of his recollection; and failing to find her, he laughed at himself. Of course she was a child no longer. He had to find a young lady; and what particular type of young lady, it was impossible so much as

No. 1990.—AUGUST 20, 1892.

to guess. For awhile nobody presented herself who could in any degree answer to the mental picture which he failed to banish; and he began to think that she must either have failed to arrive, or have betaken herself off, when a gloved hand touched his.

"How do you do?" a sober voice said; and Wallace's curious gaze met a pale girlish face,

PRICE ONE PENNY.

with brown eyes, wistful and sad as ever of old. Late trouble had brought back the look which he knew, which a few weeks earlier would have been lacking.

"How do you do?" she repeated, with a faint smile, into which some amusement stole.

"I'm very sorry. I ought to have seen—I mean, of course, I couldn't know you," apologised Wallace, trying to take her bag.

"Am I so altered?"

"Well, yes—no—I'm not sure yet. Will you have a cab?—I mean, of course you must have a cab. What luggage have you got?"

"Only a trunk and a Gladstone bag. A porter has gone after them."

"Hadh't we better go after him?"

"Thank you."

Lettice walked by his side, and then stood dreamily outside the throng into which he plunged. She had a semi-bewildered sensation, for crowds were new and somewhat overpowering after years of country life. All through the earlier part of the journey a load of distress had pressed her down. How to endure the secret let out by Keith; how to bear with patience the false accusation from which at any moment she might clear herself; how not to loathe Theodosia with a detestation which should darken all her spiritual life;—these problems had been of absorbing interest. For awhile they had filled her whole horizon. But as the train rushed on, each moment widening the distance between herself and Mrs. Bryant, each instant bringing her nearer to Felix and the Valentines, a sense of quiet relief crept into the turmoil. First, the old comfort—old, yet always new; God knew, God loved, and it was the will of God. In His love and in His knowledge He permitted this; therefore it was well. Then followed pity for her injurer; pity that Theodosia could so act, could so debase herself; pity that Theodosia's child should know what must slay his esteem for her; and a child's love is largely a love of esteem, because it is almost of necessity a looking-up love. Verily, Mrs. Bryant had prepared a sharp scourge for her own future. All this came to Lettice as she was borne swiftly eastward, and the wrath and loathing died out, till at length she only felt bodily weary and mentally bruised, like one who has gone through a heavy conflict.

"These two yours?" asked Wallace, coming up, with an indication towards the articles in question. "That all?"

"Quite all, thank you."

"I say, you've found the journey awfully tiring, haven't you?"

She smiled up at him in answer—the old child-like smile, and Wallace at once said to himself, "She's not a bit spoilt, and hardly a day older."

"I'm a little—tired, I suppose. What a windy day it is!"

"Regular gale. Haven't seen anything like it since we came here. Tiles are flying about like snowflakes."

"Oh, not quite!"

"Well, of course that's a figure of speech. I didn't get knocked down, but I might have been; anybody might be. I was glad I had promised to

come, so that Prue could stay indoors. Nan meant to meet me, but she hasn't ventured."

The drive was a long one, and much of it was performed in silence. Wallace had not a great deal to say, and Lettice had a great deal to see. Once only had she passed through London before, and the vision of that day was strong, as the cab rattled noisily through street after street.

"Nearly there now," Wallace said at length.

"Are we? I'm glad."

"You want a good rest." Wallace had been studying her fitfully, without seeming to do so.

"I want to see them all again"—with another smile.

"Well, just in a minute you will. Nan's sure to be on the look-out. Here we—Holloa! what's wrong?"

Lettice had a bewildered sense of something unusual; of a dense crowd; of a policeman stopping the cab; of Wallace's exclamations. She said nothing herself, waiting to learn what had happened. Then Wallace flung himself out of the opened door, and Prue's face appeared.

"Lettice!" There was a kiss exchanged, despite the gaping crowd. "My dear, I am so glad to see you. But only think—such a thing has happened! Just within the last hour our stack of chimneys has been blown down, and the house is uninhabitable. Nobody is allowed to go near for fear the remaining chimneys should fall. The police have made a regular cordon."

"O Prue, I am so sorry!"

"It is unfortunate—to-day of all days. We have gone into some lodgings over the way, the only ones we could find empty near at hand, and I have been keeping a look-out for you. Everyone is so busy. Drive to No. 15, please!" Prue said to the cabman, stepping in.

"I don't see—where is Wallace?"

"Gone off with my father. There are men at work bringing out the furniture."

"Out of the house! But didn't you say nobody might go in?"

"Nobody except those who are actually doing the work. Quite enough things are destroyed already. They will save as much as they can. I am so glad to see you at last, Lettice."

"I wish I had not come to-day. I shall only be in the way. I am so sorry!"

"We must think what to do. It is a little awkward, isn't it,—just at the moment when we are turned out of house and home? Awkward, I mean, because we had hoped to make you so comfortable, and now— But nobody is hurt, and that is such a comfort. The chimneys fell on the back top room and smashed through floor after floor, carrying everything with them. Anybody on that side of the house must have been killed. But my father was in the dining-room, and mother and Nan and I were in the drawing-room, and both servants were in front. Nan would have gone to the back in another minute. Think—if she had been underneath! All the rest is nothing in comparison."

"No, indeed!" murmured Lettice.

"This is the house where we are lodging. Come and find my mother. It will do her good

to see you. She is wonderfully composed—wonderfully little upset by it all."

Lettice thought Prue no less marvellous. She was ushered into a shabby little lodging-house parlour, there to be affectionately received by Mrs. Valentine.

"This is a most unpleasant welcome for you, my dear," the old lady said kindly, with her placid look. She and Prue were actually less pale and shaken, though they had been on the spot at the moment of the catastrophe, than was Lettice coming in afterwards to hear of it.

"I am only so sorry! If I had not fixed on to-day!"

"No one can tell this sort of thing beforehand. It is all quite right," Mrs. Valentine said calmly. She looked at Prue, and added—"The cabman?"

"Yes; I told him to wait for a minute."

The words startled Lettice. "The cabman—I forgot," she said hurriedly. "But what ought I to do? I might—could I not go back to-night? If there is a train early enough——"

"No, dear. That is quite out of the question," Prue said at once. "It would be wrong, for the sake of Felix. And we could not let you go after dark, alone. You are not used to manage for yourself. You poor child! how tired you are! Take off your hat."

"But the cabman——"

"Only an idea, that we might use him for something! On second thoughts I will make him bring in the boxes, and send him off,"—with an expressive glance at Mrs. Valentine. "Take off your hat, and lean back."

Lettice was glad to obey, merely delaying to hold out her purse. "But I don't know what I ought to do. If I knew——" she said, when Prue returned.

"Tea first," Prue answered cheerfully. She sat down by Lettice's side, and kissed her brow. "You dear child! how exactly the same you are! It is nice to see you again."

"But I can't stay. If I don't go back to-night, I must go to-morrow." What Theodosia would say Lettice dared not think. "I must," she repeated. "I could not stay to be a burden to you all; and you can't have much room in these lodgings."

"No, not much. That is the difficulty."

"I don't see how you can, even one night."

"I wish I could get some tea—that poor little head of yours is so bad. All the world is distracted just now, and the water won't boil."

Lettice tried to laugh, and nearly burst into tears. "It doesn't matter! I'm only—it's only—thinking about——"

"Don't think just yet. We'll talk over plans presently."

Lettice was fain to submit, and Nan burst in upon them with sensational details of what was going on across the street. The wrecked house could just be seen from their windows; and Nan had also been hovering about near at hand.

"What's going to be done with Lettice?" she blurted out.

Nan received a "hushing" until after tea, and then she was banished from the room. "I suppose we must consider plans now," Prue

remarked, taking a seat by Lettice. "You see we are rather cramped here. There is one bedroom for my father and mother, and another for Nan and me. Wallace will have to get a bed somewhere else."

"You can't possibly keep me, Prue."

"I don't know about the 'possibly.' If it were needful, we could. But another idea has come to us. We happen to know that a spare bedroom is to be had at your brother's lodgings. Nan went round to ask, and the woman said it could be ready in half-an-hour. Now I do not see why you should not stay there for at least three or four days, or perhaps a week; and by that time I hope we shall have something arranged, so that you can come to us. My mother thinks the same."

"If Felix would like it——"

"It would be so good for him, and surely he would be pleased. Don't at all events settle hastily against the plan. We are not attempting to send word to your brother. Far best to let him come home and find you there. A short telegram could not make clear what has happened."

"I don't know what to think. If I could be sure that he would not mind——"

"I think he would not. He has seemed to look forward so much to seeing you again. What if this were the right step for you to take, Lettice?—a means for getting back into your old place with him? You two have been apart so long. And really this afternoon you have almost no choice. We literally have not room for you here. Of course I could put you to sleep with Nan, and go somewhere else myself, only——"

"O no, indeed! I wouldn't let you do it."

"But"—in an undertone—"I don't quite like to be away from my mother to-night, after all this. And for you to go to your brother seems such a simple and natural plan. Don't you think so?"

"Yes; I'll go, Prue. I don't think he will be vexed."

"He ought to be delighted."

"Yes. I dare say——"

"You are unnerved by all you have gone through lately, poor child."

"I've grown so used to nobody wanting me"—with trembling lips.

"It will not be so here, Lettice."

She put her arm round the girl, and held her affectionately. Mrs. Valentine had moved away, and was looking out of the window.

"Shall I go now?"

"There is no hurry. I do not suppose your brother will get home for another hour or two. The only question is, whether you might like time just to unpack and settle in—and to have a little rest. I should like you to look rather more fresh when he comes in and finds you there."

Lettice shivered; then tried to laugh. "What will he say?"

"I know what he ought to say. My dear, you will be only two streets off—quite close to us. If he did not want you, you could but come back at once. But I am not afraid, and I don't think you would be either, if you were not so weary."

"Perhaps not. Prue, I'll be brave. And I think I had better go at once. I shall feel more cowardly if I wait; besides, you must have enough to see after."

A fact undeniable: nevertheless, Prue insisted on seeing Lettice, with her luggage, to the lodgings.

Felix had two rooms by this time—a small bedroom and a diminutive front sitting-room. After saying good-bye to Prue, who had to hasten back, Lettice inspected her bedroom under the landlady's guidance, unpacked so much as was needful for the night, and then went downstairs.

The abrupt collapse of pleasant plans could not but be depressing. She had not the slightest doubt that three or four days at most would see her once more at her uncle Bryant's. Felix would not want her longer; and she could not be a burden on the Valentines in their trouble. She tried to believe that the seed of some unexpected good might be hidden in this withered flower of disappointment. Had she only felt sure that Felix would give a hearty welcome, the delight of even one night under his roof might have sufficed to outweigh all else; but severe doubts assailed her as to what he might say or do. It would mean additional expense; and Felix was wont to calculate his outlay to the penny.

Suppose he gave her no welcome? Suppose he were annoyed, even angry? Lettice scarcely knew how to face the possibility. To be repelled here, and then to go back, unwelcomed, to her lonely life in the cottage—she hardly knew which of the two was worst. A wave of loneliness rolled up anew and overpowered her. She was so thirsting for love and kindness. Her thoughts went back to his old promise of a "little home" when he should be able to provide it—a promise, the repetition of which had flagged of late. Did he wish to provide for her still? The dullest home with Felix would be sweet, because it would be her own—not merely somebody else's home to which she was admitted on sufferance. "But only if he really wanted me," she murmured.

A recollection came up of the dear old Brighton days, and with it a craving for Cecilia. The years between faded to nothing, and she seemed again to see Sissie's face, to hear Sissie's voice, to feel Sissie's touch. Little jars or misunderstandings of that period had died into unimportance. Only the love remained.

Lettice dared not yield to this mood. She was shaken by it to the core, and her head began again to ache intensely. With a desperate effort to put away thought, she strolled round the little sitting-room, examined the titles of a row of books on the prim chiffonier, took another look out at the window, then, deciding that Felix could not reach home for another hour, she resolved to follow Prue's advice and her own resolution, and to have a rest. It was, to say the least, undesirable that she should greet Felix with dull looks, or with the smallest tendency to feminine tears. So thought Lettice, weighing the matter soberly. Sleep might not be possible;

but at least she would lie still, and would control the vagaries of her mind.

The latter intention might not have been easy of fulfilment in her unstrung condition; but the resolute quietness took happy effect. In ten minutes Lettice was sound asleep.

Felix, wending his way homeward somewhat late, partly by omnibus, partly on foot, had not the remotest idea of what awaited him. He knew that Lettice would be at the Valentines' house, and he meant that evening to go in and see her. Some words of commendation, spoken to him by one of the heads of the business, had put him into good spirits. It would be pleasant to tell this to Lettice. Though Felix never made an effort to win a friend, he did sometimes wish for a friend. It is not good for a man to be alone, and Felix was alone. Not merely sleeping alone in lodgings, as many have to do, but literally living alone, apart from other men, neither giving nor receiving sympathy. This is a terrible kind of solitude, and the worst that can happen to a man is to grow so used to it that he ceases to wish for aught else.

Felix had not reached so far, though he was on the high road to it. On this particular evening, rather curiously, a twinge of loneliness assailed him. Perhaps it was born of the consciousness that nobody in London cared for the praise he had received. Nobody would look the brighter for it—unless Mr. Kelly. It mattered to nobody except himself whether he succeeded or did not succeed—unless to Lettice. But the question arose involuntarily—Did he work now with any view to Lettice's future? Well, anyhow she would be glad—unselfishly glad. He wished he could see her alone, not surrounded by a crowd of people who were nothing to him. This curious unwonted sense of solitude and of desire for his sister deepened as he entered the narrow passage, politely called "a hall" by the landlady. He hung up his overcoat, and entered the back parlour, opening the door with no peculiar gentleness.

There he came to a standstill, petrified by the sight he beheld. Work lying on the table, a travelling-bag on a chair, and on the sofa Lettice asleep!

She did not wake with the jar of his entrance. It was as profound a sleep as Felix had ever seen. One hand supported a pale cheek, the other lay carelessly on a shawl which half covered her. The eyes were closed, the brow peaceful.

Felix shut the door softly, and stood gazing. He did not know what had brought her there, and at the moment he did not much care. There she was, and his sense of solitude was gone. It was enough for him to stand and look. Presently he brought a chair to her side, moving with great caution, and sat down, to continue watching.

The extreme quiet of her face was entering into him, invading the cold crust which had been building itself around his heart. For that was a living quiet, not a frozen stillness. It had in it warmth and life underlying. The parted lips—not dropping open, but just parted—were full of sweetness. Sometimes the brow became dented, as if with some kind of pain or distress; and then

another wave of calm would smooth it out. Felix wondered if she were dreaming.

Perhaps the steadfastness of his gaze disturbed her, for the troubled look recurred. She stirred restlessly, and her lips grew sorrowful. "I did not do it!" she said aloud. "It is so cruel! I did not take the money!" Her eyes opened, and looked full at Felix. "Tell them I didn't! O please, please believe me!" Then she slept again, but no longer profoundly. The restless movements continued, and she clenched her hand. "Please believe me! please believe me! I did not take it! . . . Sissie would believe me! Sissie would know! O Felix! O Felix, take care of me!"

The last words were cried out sharply, in a voice of fear, and the open eyes again gazed blankly. Felix had not for years been so stirred. The personal appeal went home, for it seemed that in trouble she had habitually turned to the thought of her brother. Somehow he had never pictured Lettice as needing help. He had been content to take it for granted that all was right in that quarter, since she did not complain.

"Wake up!" he said. "You're only dreaming. Nothing is wrong. See—I'm here! and there's nobody going to touch you."

"Felix! Oh, don't let them have me!"

She clung to him, confused still with the sudden awakening, and scarcely conscious of her whereabouts. He could feel the quick beating of her heart against him. "But what is it all about?" he asked. "Why are you so frightened? Nobody's in the room except ourselves. Who did you think was going to take you?"

A sigh of relief came. "It must have been a dream. But it did seem so real."

"Well, here you are, safe and sound! I don't know yet why you have come, only I know you are in no danger from anybody."

"I thought they were taking me to prison—because of the banknote. And Mrs. Bryant looked so dreadful. I wanted to scream, and I could not. It was like a sort of nightmare."

"You did call out pretty loud. What is that about a banknote?"

"You will believe me, will you not? I couldn't bear to have you think it! Will you believe me, Felix? It has been so hard to bear. And I did not know what you would say, to find me here. If only you can believe me, I don't think I shall mind anything."

"Of course I shall. What do you mean? Speak out, and tell me all about it."

JAMES SMETHAM.

A STRUGGLING painter who won the warm friendship of John Ruskin and Dante Gabriel Rossetti can have been no ordinary man. James Smetham had, indeed, the rare gift of gathering round him a circle of devoted friends, who still lovingly cherish his memory. The volume of his letters recently published¹ shows what rare gifts, both as poet, painter, and letter-writer, this unassuming Christian artist possessed. He was the son of a Wesleyan minister, who taught him to walk in the fear of God. The painter's ecstasy laid hold of the little fellow at the age of two, whilst he stood outside his father's garden gate looking at the distant blueness of the hills in a Yorkshire valley, and feeling the wind lift his hair as it passed on to shake the laurels. When eight years old the moonlight had a sort of enchantment over him, as he listened softly to the noises of the night. At Congleton he became the happy possessor of a box of water-colours, "which ought to have cost fourpence, but which, by my frequent asking the price, the good woman let me have for threepence." The boy had now formed the design of becoming a painter, and had won his father's reluctant consent.

After leaving school he spent some years with

an architect at Lincoln. To the youth's delight, his master set him to draw the figures in the Minster, where he spent a grand solitary year at this congenial work.

In 1843 he came to London as a probationer at the Royal Academy, but, through some carelessness in drawing, failed to get a student's ticket at the end of the three months' trial. He sent in another drawing, which gained him readmission, but he was then suddenly called away into the country.

As yet the young painter was a stranger to the joy of personal religion. The manner of his awakening may be told in his own words:

"The death of my brother (a Wesleyan minister in London) cast a great shade over my wild dreams and extravagant ambitions. I did a great deal for his approbation, and when he had gone my spirit followed him. I perceived that to attain to him was not a matter of fancy or speculation, and the 'commandment' came to me. A complete uproar and chaos of my inward life followed, and I fell into the 'Slough of Despond.' The beauty of nature mocked me, my fancies became ghosts. I felt my discordances with the spiritual universe; and it was not till my father also died that my soul was stilled and set in order."

He had found the pearl of great price. Henceforth all his gifts were consecrated.

Smetham resumed his work with new zest.

¹ Letters of James Smetham. With an Introductory Memoir. Edited by Sarah Smetham and William Davies. Macmillan.

He went on painting portraits, and interspersing them with fancy pictures, earning money enough to live, and then snatching a precious month or two for study. He exhibited pictures first at Liverpool in 1847. In 1849 he painted the Flagcolot (a country lad piping on the grass), Christ at Emmaus, and the Bird Catcher, all of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy. Henceforth life was a strenuous strife after excellence.

The letters give a graphic sketch of a painter's difficulties:

"Where first of all the mind within is taxed to conceive, to feel, to suffer, or excitedly to enjoy every new subject, and then has to search the earth over for ever-new materials to enable it to realise the idea, materials lying wide apart in the most different associations. . . . He wants a gourd; he goes to Kew, and spends his day, but the gourd is not growing, and his picture must be at the exhibition before the gourd blossoms. He wants a costume, and has to find it and haggle about it with a Jew, or hunt through Marlborough House Library for it. He wants a sailor's head, and goes to St. George's-in-the-East—not easily—to find it; to walk much and idle about much, and then only imperfectly to accomplish his object. The primroses for his bank blow in the woods of Kent, and the anemones and hyacinths. The millwheel turns slumbrously round miles and miles away in another direction."

How eagerly he used every opportunity of improving himself by study of the great masters in the National Gallery and elsewhere we learn from his letters. He contrasts the scant opportunity of tasting such delights which earlier painters possessed with the privilege enjoyed by those to whom all the arcana of other days are now laid bare.

"All this is such a store of wealth to the painter that tongue cannot utter it. Certainly, as I write, the pleasure grows 'for ever rising with the rising mind,' and I am led to recall almost in a spirit of devotion the inscription so appropriately gilded round the dome of the Royal Academy—

"The hearts of men which fondly here admire
Fair seeming shows may lift themselves up higher,
And learn to love with zealous humble duty,
The eternal fountain of that heavenly beauty!"

Yet Smetham did not believe in a narrow horizon. He was not merely a painter.

In November 20th, 1871, he refers to Allan Cunningham's "Life of Wilkie," which his father had given him in 1843, at the beginning of his career as a painter. To Smetham it proved "one of the most secretly delightful books in all the world," read and re-read till he knew every detail of the great artist's work. That biography raised questions like a flight of fieldfares—questions so solemn, so practical, so home-thrusting, that "he often felt as if he were before some judge and jury, and bound to go through them all in self-defence." He asks what Wilkie's success cost him. He did nothing but paint. His life was commonplace, except within the circle of his art. "I see no evidence in his

writings that in his youth or manhood his soul was ever awakened within him." Such was not Smetham's ideal of life.

In 1851 he became teacher of drawing at the Wesleyan Normal Institution in Westminster—a post which he filled with great delight for twenty-six years. He told Mr. Ruskin in 1854:

"The staff of teachers then became my circle, the objects of the institution part of my life; and I completed the connection six months ago by marrying the teacher of one of the practising schools there, who still retains her position. Our united salaries make us for the present independent of painting as a means of livelihood, and I have five days in the week for picture-making."

We now reach the beginning of his happy friendship with John Ruskin. In 1854 Smetham attended one of Ruskin's lectures at the Working Men's College, and showed the lecturer his books of drawings. Ruskin took them home. He wrote: "I am quite amazed, almost awed, by the amount of talent and industry and thoughtfulness shown in these books of yours." On the first opportunity he brought the sketches before his class, and drew special attention to the great originality of a drawing on the Lord's Supper. This led Smetham to prepare his picture, The Hymn of the Last Supper. It was exhibited in D. G. Rossetti's studio, and drew from Mr. Watts, R.A., the verdict: "It must be considered a great picture, though it is a small one." When exhibited at the Royal Academy it attracted considerable attention. In February, 1855, Smetham visited Ruskin, who was then living with his parents at Norwood, in a large house glittering with pictures, chiefly Turners.

"His father," Smetham says, "is a fine old gentleman who has a lot of bushy, grey hair, and eyebrows sticking up all rough and knowing, with a comfortable way of coming up to you with his hands in his pockets and making you comfortable, and saying, in answer to your remark, that 'John's' prose works are pretty good. His mother is a ruddy, dignified, richly-dressed old gentlewoman of seventy-five, who knows Chamounix better than Camberwell; evidently a good old lady, with the *Christian Treasury* tossing about on the table. She puts 'John' down and holds her own opinions, and flatly contradicts him; and he receives all her opinions with a soft reverence and gentleness that is pleasant to witness."

The old gentleman amused the guest by standing over him and enlightening him as to his own merits:

"I never saw anything to equal them," he said of Smetham's sketches. "I wonder you would trust them with John; you paid him a great compliment to send them at all. I wouldn't. I have not let them come down out of the study for fear wine or anything should be spilt on them." Ruskin "spent some time in this way. Unhanging a Turner from the wall of a distant room, he brought it to the table and put it into my hands; then we talked; then he went up into his study to fetch down some illustrative print or drawing; in one case, a literal view which he had travelled fifty miles to make, in order to compare with the picture. And so he kept on gliding all over the house,

hanging and unhangings, and stopping a few minutes to talk."

Over the fire the two artists talked about many sacred themes. Smetham acknowledged that in one dark time he had been obstinate and discouraged, so that he could not pray. "But," said Ruskin, "was there no one near you to tell you that prayer is often long unanswered?" No wonder the struggling painter felt in a sort of soft dream all the way home.

Mr. Ruskin's permission to quote his letters concluded with the characteristic sentence:

"I never wrote a private letter to any human being which I would not let a bill-sticker chalk up six feet high on Hyde Park wall, and stand myself in Piccadilly and say, 'I said it.'"

In 1856 Smetham removed to Park Lane, Stoke Newington, his home for more than twenty years. His happy toil was darkened by shadows of ill-health, but cheered by warm recognition from such men as Rossetti, who secured him some good customers. "Your pictures," he said, "have quite delighted and astonished me by their rare beauty. Indeed, they are in colour, sentiment, and nobility of thought, only to be classed with the very flower of modern art."

Some notes on Colossians iii. will illustrate Smetham's Bible studies:

"What a rich, full chapter! Surely it will transform the whole mind, well and prayerfully to study such words. This is the way of peace, and to find it let us only *receive* these words, study them, roll them over and over in the mind, and, as oil makes the paints supple, so shall we feel our spiritual nature penetrated with the strength of the words spoken to us. I think, seriously, that we are too superstitious, in our want of simplicity, in our wish to be independent, original, and that we even miss *that* aim. Let us first produce the intense summer calm of spirit which ought to dwell in us richly through the Word of Christ, and then in the brooding light of heaven all knowledge will be simple and easy, and our minds will play freshly, and pluck no crude or unripe fruit. The only truly grand people I have known are those whose moral simplicity licked up like the sunlight, the fetid, exciting, sickening, uncertain torch-flames of intellectual pride."

The painter's religious experience finds voice in a beautiful description of the peace of God:

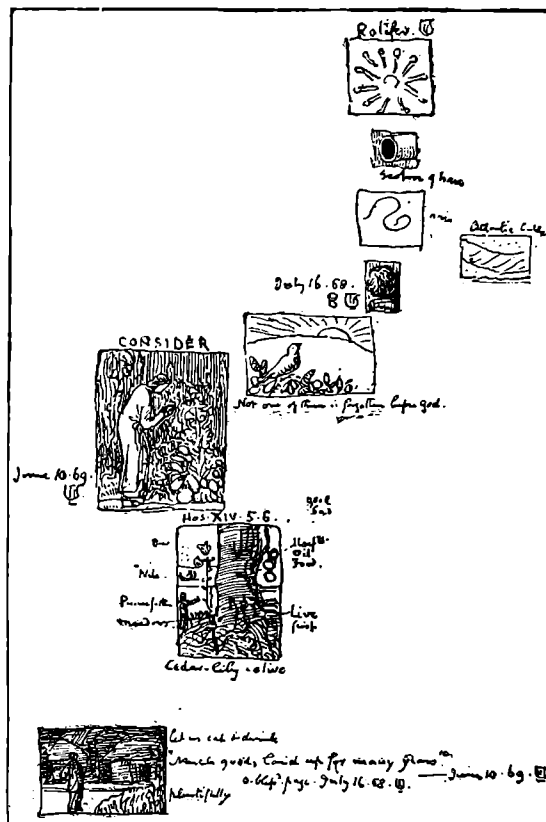
"It lies round you like an atmosphere. It dwells in you like a fragrance. It goes from you like a subtle elixir vitae."

He lingers in another letter on Archbishop Usher's saying, "One word for Christ."

"Any person," says Mr. Smetham, "acquainted at all with Christ, ought to be ready to speak of Him whenever he has leisure for anything else. At first one's conceptions of Him are abstract to a great extent; they ought to become more and more concrete. To find ourselves any nearer the belief that we have an High Priest, once a man, now passed into the heavens, and whom the heavens will contain till the restitution of all things, ought to be a glad thought. We feel His workings, His efficacies. I thought to-day, when I was weary, of His saying, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace?'"

On August 28th, 1853, he says

"Last night I had a walk twice round Vincent Square by starlight (after the prayer-meeting, which I assure you is a source of much hale and calm enjoyment to me). . . . I am beginning to enjoy my life with a more direct and unquestioning will. I have had so many great inward shocks (something like the overthrow of the 'Palace of Art') that I have touched the joys of existence with a timorous finger. Health, love, friendship have seemed to be, not unreal, but more than I dare use for my own



A PAGE FROM SMETHAM'S ANNOTATED BIBLE.

delight. The thousand-fold web of life had to be woven; the anchors, 'entering within the veil,' had to be thrown out; the foundations and ramparts of study had to be dug and builded. I seemed like a pilgrim in spirit; I dared not tarry in all the plain. . . . I want not fame, but *life*; the soul's calm sunshine; Life in the eye of God."

He kept himself constantly in touch with the godly poor. No doubt that contributed much to the simplicity and fervour of his own religious life. In one letter he describes a visit to an old woman, the wife of a cobbler. She had no words to express her joy and gratitude. "She is afraid to boast for she feels herself so sinful; but, then, looking to Jesus is so easy." She is "never lonely, night or day." Here is a soul to whom "an abundant entrance" is being administered, and here is a life that has fulfilled life's noblest ends.

Such a man was an unspeakable blessing to others. His own modesty scarcely allowed him

to form any adequate idea of the influence his example and words exerted on others. In July 1861, he writes:

"'To save a soul!' I can't somehow realise the idea that I should ever be so honoured of God. To save my own soul, and wear through the long fight without losing my own crown, and without bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ, these have seemed the limit of my hope. I can go on working; I can sow a little; I can add my labour to the heap in hope that among other agencies I may help rather than retard the work of Christ. But to save a soul, as the direct result of my own direct effort, has scarce ever entered

Eugénie Guérin which had just appeared in *Cornhill*. This sets Smetham moralising. Some people might think it would be better to write for the press, but he saw nothing better than to have communion with his friends.

"Why need a man speak to a crowd if he has a little audience who understands him, and which he understands? A man ought to have a strong call before he intrudes into the region of literature in these over-pampered days, when high public rewards ought to be given to men who won't print their thoughts. What is the use of arrows fired in the air in comparison of arrows shot at a mark? Dissipation of



[From a Sketch by James Smetham.]
IF THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND.

into my contemplation. I shall be glad if both he that soweth, and he that reapeth rejoice together. Though 'a son in the Gospel,' must be a pleasant relationship."

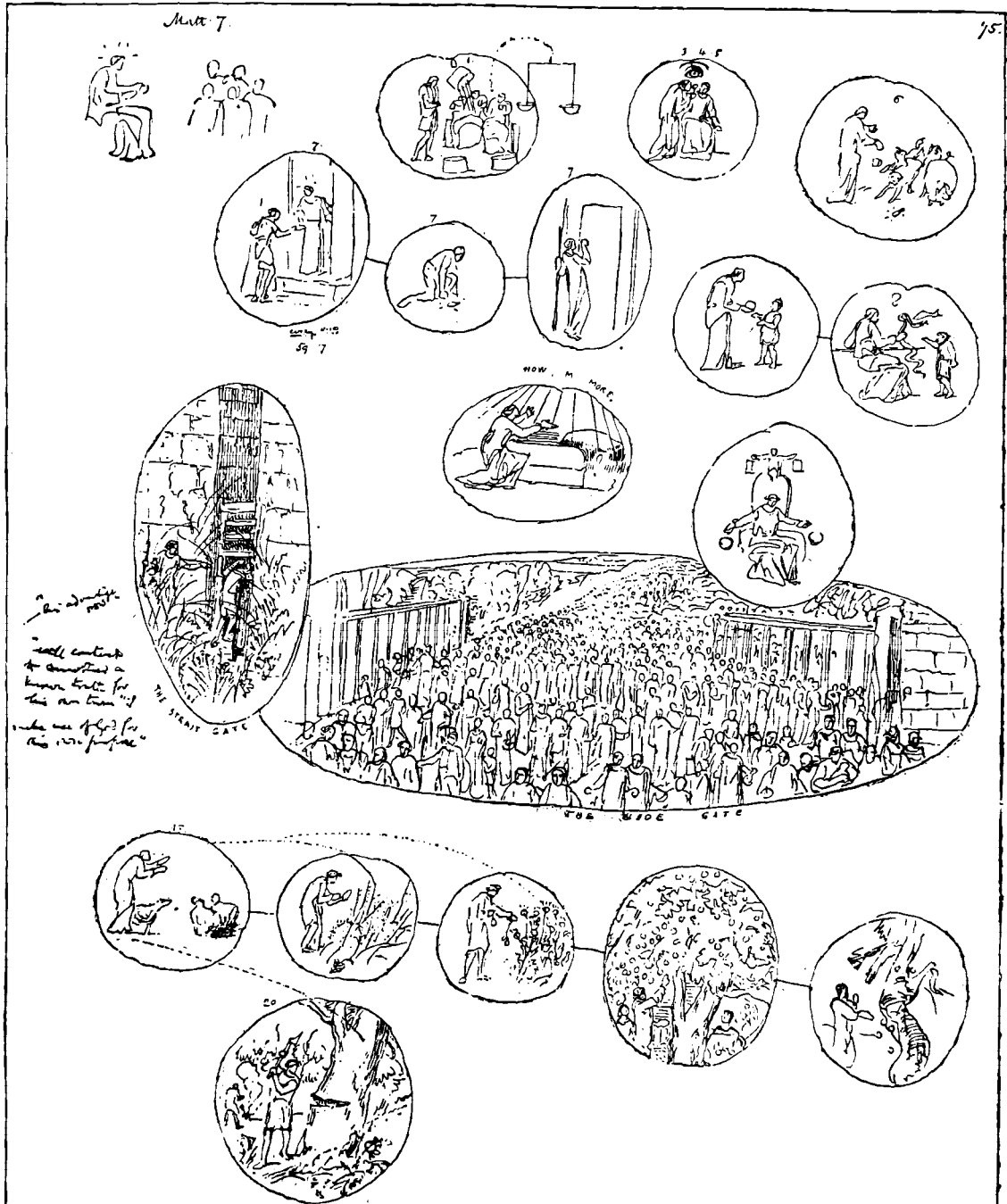
With such words in view it is pleasing to learn that there was scarcely a social meeting of the church to which he belonged where his name was not mentioned. One night a gentleman said, "I shall praise God to all eternity that I was ever led to Mr. Smetham's class; I owe all the good I have to his teaching and influence." He felt it his greatest honour to be thus used. It was also a constant delight to him to feel that he could bring great truths home to humble folk.

Under date, 2nd June 1863, he says he has been reading Matthew Arnold's clever sketch of

thought, aimlessness, multitudinousness, are some of the faults of our age. It is the difference between the ball-room and the homestead; the one all sparkling and irritating, and superficial and dangerous, the other all profound, and calm, and healthful and mighty. To 'study to be quiet and to mind their own business,' is one of the first correctives the people of this generation need. Why did the Saviour remain in obscurity for thirty years? Why did He choose one by one, two by two, His humble disciples till they amounted to twelve; a small class for His esoteric teaching in Gethsemane under the olives, where 'He often went with His disciples,' and the seventy for a small congregation of scholars. Why did He so frequently complain of the crowding, and long for to seek the desert, and take moonlight rambles near the foxes' holes and the silent nests in the palms? He left us an example that we

might tread in His steps When He wanted to plant His kingdom, He carefully grafted in the hearts of Peter and James and John those living words which after His death were brought to their remembrance by the Holy

changing and complicated tests" of life. Religion seemed to grow simpler to him as years rolled by. In his darkest moods he could still say, "Well, if the Bible is not true, I don't know anything that is



A PAGE FROM ONE OF JAMES SMETHAM'S NOTE-BOOKS.

Ghost. How personal He was. He loved Lazarus and Mary and John. He took a strong vehement interest in Peter, and followed him with love, and pity, and prayer; and He said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy hand,' so that Thomas said, 'My Lord and my God.'

He learned "to go on peacefully, meekly, hoping against hope, and acquiescing in all these

more so, and nothing so adapted to what I want." He therefore clung to it in simple faith. Here is his description of the effect of close study of an epistle like that to the Hebrews:—

"It gazes, it speaks, it moves with ease, simplicity, and power; it is warm, glowing, attractive, influential at every part. It is mighty through God. It arises and stands upon

its feet." "Is not," he says in another letter, "our conviction as to the credibility of the Gospels and Epistles practically based on this subtle moral instinct? This must be true. It is impossible that either fool or rascal could have invented the fourteenth of John or the twelfth of Romans. They are honest to the bone."

One night after reading Carlyle's "Niagara," he heard James Calvert, the noble missionary of Fiji, who died last March, tell what simple faith in Christ had done among men-eaters and murderers.

"I see nothing in Carlyle that I don't see much better said in the New Testament, and with the unspeakable advantage of an infallible recipe for doing it. . . . I will back James Calvert of Fiji against a troop of Carlyles for the actual accomplishment of the chief good. All this with much admiration of Carlyle nevertheless."

himself by his art. He had many trials, especially when his attempts to follow a high and useful



Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.



How can this man give us his flesh to eat

Here is a paragraph on the true function of art and philosophy.

"The fact is that poetry is to delight and adorn and supplement the happiness of man; it is one of the good things which God will not withhold from them that love Him. Painting has no mission but to make men happy, teaching what truth it can steal from the eternal fountains. And philosophy is to pass round by the Cross and be baptized, and then it is to make the intellect happy by throwing glorious magical light on truth. But the Regenerators are not these. . . . Nothing for it, my brave boy, but war to the knife and to the death, with every other gospel, though an angel from heaven preach it. Not half poetry and half gospel, nor half philosophy and half gospel."

Religion taught James Smetham that secret of true content which St. Paul tells his friends at Philippi that he had learned. No lesser inspiration would have saved Smetham from despair. From the age of eighteen he had to support

line of work seemed baffled.

In 1877 the light of his rare intellect began to fade, but it was not till February 5th, 1889, that he was laid to rest in Highgate Cemetery.

We may add some verses written in early youth which show that Smetham was not only a painter but a poet.

Oh, let me die at dawn,
The stir of living men
Would call my waving spirit
back
Unto its home again.



This is an hard saying - who can hear it?

But at the early light
Existence seems afar,
Back in the depths of parted time,
As fading planets are.

Let me go forth alone,
Before the sun uprise,
And meet the springing of the morn
In its own distant skies.

Yes; let me die at dawn,
The stir of living men
Would call my waving spirit back
Unto its home again.

James Smetham was a constant student of the Bible. Every day he gave an hour to its pages. Many of his annotations took pictorial form. He delighted to embody his thought in minute sketches—more or less finished—in a way which he called “squaring,” from the rectangular lines in which he enclosed them. A part of one such page we give from an interleaved copy of the Gospels. A passage in one of the Letters (page 189) gives a clue to the interpretation of these tiny figures (see illustration on page 663):—

“Yes, these squares were enclosed seven years ago, perhaps; and that little one three-quarters of an inch long—I don’t remember when it was first made, as the thought, contained in it, tolled like a bell high up in the starry midnight of Thought. It was rude at first; the merest germ. A line now, a line then, have made it more and more distinct. But still it is rude and obscure to the outer eye; to the inner eye (which is ‘the bliss of solitude’) it represents a close farmyard, and a bordering wheatfield over which the twilight is ‘falling brown,’ and ‘some one pacing there alone.’ What is this? and who is he? I know him well. In a hundred even-falls he has rebuked me when ‘the cares of this life,’ if not ‘the deceitfulness of

riches,’ crowded round me to choke the good seed and render it unfruitful. When I was inclined to murmur at my lot—to make haste to get rich, to let the lusts of other things entering in to displace the life of God, I felt—and as I, pausing for a word even now, shade a very little in between the darkening bars where there is laid up much goods for many years—I feel as if the square were a Holy Thing, a solemn and sad thing! for as a living voice to me is the voice of that man in the twilight, like a late bird chirruping: ‘Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;’ because I know he is singing his death-song, and that he will come no more to the haunts where he has worn out and expended the life of his spirit.

“But above it is another, and over it the word ‘Consider’—a figure stooping reverently over a tall lily (to my eye all graceful and finished as if Jan Van Huysum had but his pencil in his secret studio, bringing it to me finished as by miracle). . . . And above that a little bird on a spray, ‘Not forgotten before God;’ and then a head—shown in the back view because the point of the record is that ‘the very hairs of your head are all numbered.’ And then a single hair, and then the section of a hair, and then, above that, a square with the rude sketch of the wheel of a Rotifer. (That awful sight I saw one day in Mr. Budgett’s microscope has haunted me ever since. I see it now! Those transparent ciliæ whirling round and round and making an infinitesimal vortex; each mysterious spoke, no doubt, as hollow and organic as that tubular hair, which to the spoke-tube would be as huge as the large main drain-pipes to the leaden pipe from our cistern. And the spoke-tube, no doubt, as large relatively to the other tubes in the microcosm as the cistern-pipe to the hollow hair.) Then a bit of the Atlantic cable lying in the ooze and bottom of the sea among the forms of life brought up by lines of endless fathom in a bit of sludge.”

We reproduce from a private memorandum book a page on the seventh chapter of Matthew, and a few miscellaneous sketches, as illustrating his mode of vivifying the Scriptures to himself.

ON THE CORNISH COAST.

A VANISHED TOWN.

BY G. NORWAY.

“YOU are fond of ancient places,” said my young Jehu, on a lovely May afternoon.

“I will take you to-day to a township which used to return two members to the House of Commons before the great Reform Bill, and which is mentioned in Domesday Book.”

“I should like to visit such a place extremely. Have you patients there?” for Jehu is a young doctor in a Cornish seaside town.

“Not many—you will see.” So we start, and, soon leaving the steep main road, plunge downwards through a deep winding lane, decked with loveliness on every side. Cowslips nod their jewelled cups in golden profusion; the purple orchis raises its richly coloured spike among them, “priests’ sprinklings” as they are called

in Catholic localities, from the supposition that, wherever the drops of holy water fall from the little whisk used to scatter its blessing over devout crowds, there the sacred moisture dyes the upspringing blossom with the hue of Christ’s blood, dashing the green leaves with white at the same time. The blessing must have been broadcast over the land at some former period, for there are neither crowds nor priests to distribute holy water now. But little reck the orchid spires; they lift their dainty heads in dignity, and den their robes of royal purple above their spotted leaves, spring after spring; silent witness of the blessing shed for man centuries ago, yet patent still.

Hawthorn bushes are there, dense masses of

ivory blossom, with long wreaths tossing freely in the air, and scenting it far and wide with delicate perfume; pink campion raises its pretty coloured lamps in abundance beneath its shade; clusters of pale green fern fronds spring up from the edges of the silvery streamlet babbling on its way by the edge of the lane; delicate embroidery of stichwort and blue veronica runs through the grass, while daisies and buttercups enamel the meadows where the purple clover does not overgrow them.

We have plenty of time to enjoy each blossom of spring in its turn as we slowly climb the hill, step by step, for it is collar work for the pony all the way, and he does not hurry himself. Plenty of time is there to note the young blackbirds hopping from spray to spray; listen to the linnet singing on the thorn bush; enjoy the musical upspringing of the joyful lark; watch the newly-born butterfly drying its sulphur wings in the sunny air; but we attain the summit of the hill at last, and look down upon a vast sweep of cultivated land, like a mighty bason lying beneath us, parcelled out into divisions of many shades.

There the red earth is sparsely shot with green, where the wheat has hardly begun to show itself above the ground; there some earlier crop has already covered the soil with tender verdure. Now the deep-hued grass is dotted over with sheep and playful lambs; and again, cattle browse, or rest, chewing the cud of peaceful enjoyment. Trees, whose foliage is yet bright and thin, cluster here and there, and soft shadows from fleecy clouds slowly drift over the sunlit scene.

By the road-side on the hill-top is a narrow strip of rough land left to waste by the receding hedge. There are some small mounds, briar-decked and tangled there; a few large stones in another corner, lying loose, and on the opposite side of the road, somewhat farther on, a grassy heap, too regular in shape to be formed by other than the hand of man, though not a vestige of its use now remains.

A never-failing spring of water, clear as crystal and as cold, issues from a mossy, fern-hung cavity in the hedge, and runs gaily down the hill until some obstruction turns its stream across the road at the bottom, and causes it to spread out into a watersplash to be forded.

It is a pretty ragged patch of waste ground, but why pause to regard it with such interest, when beauty yet greater is met on every side in this lovely country? Why wave your hand around, as if introducing an audience to a sight?

"You have hit it exactly," quoth youthful wit. "This is a site to which I introduce my audience of one. This is all that remains of the vanished market-town, which, up to the date of the great Reform Bill, returned two members to the House of Commons. Here are its mighty water supplies, celebrated as unfailing; there is the base of the Market Cross, the centre of the town, where all markets and fairs were held."

"What do you mean? This a town? This a market cross? Why, here is nothing—nothing at all! Not even a ruin!"

"Nothing at all! The last two or three hovels were burnt down by accident a few years ago. Being built but of clay and thatch, those few stones, which were probably doorsteps or something of the kind, are all that is left of them; and the granite cross was broken up by the economical parish to mend the road. Only the name of this town exists, and that to the antiquary alone, for you may seek its history from the country people about, and be told that they never heard of it."

"Is it possible? It is almost beyond belief! The great Reform Bill was passed no longer ago than '32."

"The place had probably dwindled down very much before then. There are other towns—Church towns as they call them here—now dwindling, at this time, that were of considerable importance when war and protective duties rendered smuggling profitable as it no longer is. What were, at the beginning of this century, centres for the distribution of illicit merchandise, brought in under cover of the fishing trade, are no longer wanted. The population has lessened year by year; emigration has depopulated them; houses, grown decrepit, have been pulled down and never replaced. As this town is now, so may many another place be in another century, unless the wave which now carries all the young population of the country side up to the centralisation of large towns, recoils once more and brings people to reside among the now neglected beauty and health of these delightful spots."

"It is strange, too, to consider that a town, once so important, should have been not only destroyed, but forgotten in so comparatively short a time, when the names and deeds of the heroes of ancient time should be watchwords in our hearts after more centuries than one can well count. If this place were marked in the Domesday Book of the eleventh century, think of Isaiah, Solomon, David, who lived so much longer ago, yet are living influences upon us still."

"Ah! and there are nameless people who never have been great, perhaps not even good, whose lives are unrecorded and deeds unknown, who are believed yet to exercise influence over mankind, for weal or woe."

"What do you mean?"

"Cornwall is full of belief in them. There is the river called the Gannel, about a mile or less, away over there. It is full of quicksands; and the tide rushes up its channel with great rapidity twice in the twenty-four hours. At the ebb it is shallow enough to be forded by a horse, and crossed on foot by a plank bridge raised about two feet from the ground. But woe to those caught by the flow of the tide there, or who try to cross to right or left of the track. So many have perished there, that their souls are as a cloud of tiny birds which flit like lightning itself athwart the bed of the stream, to indicate the safe path. Those who follow their course never become entangled in the quicksands, for they are permitted to expiate the sins among which sudden death overtook them there, by acting, until the Judgment Day, as guides to warn others."

"My dear boy!"

"I do not say that I believe it, or ask you to believe it, though there are more things in heaven and earth than are met with in your philosophy. But there the flocks of tiny winged creatures are; and there also may be heard at night the terribly shrill, plaintive cry of something never seen, which warns the traveller of the approach of the tide and its danger. I have often heard it, wild, eldritch, blood-curdling, circling in the air, but uttered by a creature known by none."

"My dear, you make me feel quite creepy."

"Ah, mother, the meaning of these things comes home to one while walking or driving about these wild and lonely places in the gloom of night. Belief in these stories is all founded upon the innate recognition of Divine love. Even the most obscure life which has sought to do its duty in this world, and been lost in consequence, does not fall without due recognition from its Author, and is often given its mission. When I watch those vast flocks of tiny dusky birds so swiftly flying, I am reminded of the brilliant glory of the host of witnesses surrounding God's throne in the everlasting city. They too, are nameless on earth, but their names are recorded for ever there. Their heroism may never be known in this life; but will always meet with its reward in that to come."

"Even that poor wailing soul, uttering its everlasting moan, and which it is said was too wicked to be allowed entrance into heaven, too pure to deserve eternal punishment in hell, even that unhappy spirit is working out its meed of chastisement because its Father loved it. If the glory of this world passes away, these things are types which point out to us the facts that deeds of love and purity have their influence for ever. Things tangible things, made by the hand of

man, perish utterly; things spiritual remain, acting as encouragement or warning, in one guise or another for ever.

"Old George Herbert only gave one half of the truth when he sang:—

Only the good and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But, though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

"Just so. I would rather that my spirit, when disembodied, acted as encouragement rather than warning. But, these people around us here, live very much in the spiritual world. I find this out continually. Why should you suppose that funerals here are so largely attended? Even babies in arms, and little children that can hardly toddle, follow the dead who is not even related to them, under their mother's guidance. Apart from reasons of respect and sympathy, there is often also a firm belief that the souls of those thus complimented will watch for those of the people who attend them to the grave; meet them in the unknown world when their time comes to cross the Stygian river, and lead them to their God."

"So firmly grounded is this belief, that when I first lost a patient here, I was warned to attend the funeral. Ignorant of the custom—superstition—call it what you will, I remarked that, being very busy, I feared I could hardly make time. My friend, a kindly-disposed villager, remonstrated:—

"Ah, Zur, 'ee did ought to follow if it be only to show 'ee baint afeerd of un."

Some people may smile at this as ignorant folly, but it has its pathetic side. Happily multitudes of Cornishmen have a happier and brighter faith.

TALKS WITH WORKERS.

Unpopular Causes. A wise and suggestive saying is attributed to the American poet Whittier: "Identify yourself in youth with some righteous, unpopular cause." The maxim is more than justified by that heroic roll of pioneers who in all ages have dared to join the great minority of "God and one man against the world." "The end of religion," as Bishop Boyd Carpenter tells us, "is character." "Talent is formed in solitude," says Goethe, "but character in the stress of life." And there is no grander discipline for the will, the conscience, the faith, and the temper of a growing man than to bear in youth the reproach of an unpopular crusade.

The Limits of Sympathy. We are perpetually troubled, in our dealings with erring fellow-mortals whom we would fain raise to a higher life, by the difficulty of knowing where to sympathise, and where to reprimand. One man, oppressed with the sense of his own weakness and shortcomings, needs the consolation of the gracious promises of God's pity and aid. Another is more concerned about the outward results of his errors, and thinks too lightly of their effect upon his spiritual life. He

comes to us with his burden of guilt, telling us of some fault and its consequences, over which he desires our counsel and sympathy. Nothing reveals character more clearly, as a wise teacher recently remarked, than the way in which a man accepts the consequences of his own actions. But we Christians have blundered so badly in the past in the direction of harshness and uncharity, that now, in our eagerness to retain our friend's confidence, we sometimes show a greater tenderness than his condition requires. He goes away relieved, but perhaps a little lowered in spiritual tension. If we had taken his wrong-doing more seriously, we should doubtless have hurt him more for the moment—and that is the sharpest pang to ourselves—to wound where we would have comforted. But a timely word of grave and gentle reproof will often brace the wavering conscience when an unwise leniency enervates it.

Christ's Classification of Sins. In this as in all other perplexities we must seek "the mind of Christ" wherewith to discriminate between easy leniency and godly long-suffering with sin. It is remarkable that His severest denunciations were always reserved for hypo-

crisy, cruelty, pride, and the wilful breaking of known moral laws. With more blundering and stupidity, with sins of ignorance and incapacity to receive a higher ideal, He was infinitely patient and merciful; but deliberate "sinning against the light," failure to follow the highest duty when once that duty was known and understood, invariably drew His sternest reprobation.

"I can't imagine anybody so wicked!" "I can't understand a man doing such a thing!" "It's a marvel to me how you could have been so foolish!" How we pride ourselves on not being able to understand folly and vice! We should never dream of yielding to such a temptation. We cannot conceive a state of mind that would be open to it. So we go on cherishing that besetting sin of Christians—the lack of imagination; of that sympathetic insight into human character which shows us why and how our brother fell, and reveals at the same time the darkest possibilities that lurk within ourselves. Why should we think it unaccountable that this man should have sinned just so?

Alas! we are only disclosing the shallowness of our own religious experience, and the narrow limits of our sympathies, when we fail to "imagine" where the flesh was weak, the will diseased, and the judgment all astray. Humility, born of long watchings and fastings, and conflicts with the enemy within, knows the pitfalls of the soul and body only too well. "Imagination" of this kind is not merely a natural gift. It is a Christian virtue. "The great majority of the uncharitable judgments in the world," says Mr. Lecky, "may be traced to a deficiency of imagination."

A little band of Christian helpers were once asked what was their greatest difficulty in the carrying on of rescue work, not only in the most degraded ranks of poverty, but among the fallen and vicious in higher social circles. One of the party was a lay preacher in West London; another a "slum sister" from Liverpool; a third the chaplain of an inebriates' home. They all agreed that to preserve an unwavering enthusiasm for individual cases—to retain a firm belief in the personal worth of every fallen brother or sister—was always the crucial strain put upon the faith and patience of the worker. To forgive the chronic drunkard until "seventy times seven," and yet not to despair of his ultimate reclamation; to set the erring sister on her feet again and again, and still to hope for her final victory over temptation; to discern hidden possibilities of goodness in the most unpromising specimens of humanity, and dormant springs of conscience to be reached, if not by gentleness, then by severe and even stern measures rather than left unsought—here, indeed, is the test of the true missionary.

"We talk too glibly," said the sister, "about faith in God—little realising what that includes and demands of us; but perhaps the most fervent prayer of all workers who know anything of the awful discouragements that await them is that they may not lose their faith in men and women."

What we need more than anything else to sustain us in the practical difficulties and discouragements of Christian work is—as one has quaintly expressed it—"the sense of *worth-while-ness*;" the deep-down assurance that neither the toil nor the pain of any child of God is ever fruitless, and that the Father does verily "count unto us our tears." So the painful prayer, "the soul's sincere desire" that some harvest may be ripening in God's unseen fields for all our sowing, turns gradually to hope; the hope to a strong conviction; and the conviction grows at last into that all-compelling faith which Cardinal Newman once defined as "a divine kind of

venture; an out-leap of the man upon something that will respond to his need."

The late Professor Elmslie once made a list of some "Despondent Sayings of Great Men"—words wrung from hearts that had yearned most ardently over the world around them. Isaiah: "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought." Elijah: "It is enough, Lord; now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." Paul: "Myself a castaway." St. Bernard: "I have done almost nothing." Calvin: "All that I have done has been worth nothing." St. Francis Assisi: "My order is more than I can manage." Bacon: "Men are not worth the trouble I have taken for them." Marcus Aurelius: "I shall die, and people will say, 'We are glad to get rid of this schoolmaster.'"

If we mourn in such wise, we may take comfort that we mourn in good company. We share the sorrow of the saints of God.

LUCIA'S LETTER.

II.



It was evening, and the sun was setting gloriously over the beautiful Bay of Naples. The world holds no fairer spot than this crescent-shaped bay, with its blue sea and semicircular city. But the good Mattei did not pause to gaze at the cloudless, effulgent sky, the sun-gilt waters, or the massive buildings of the town; its cathedral, palaces, and two hundred churches were, at the moment, indifferent to him, for he was hurrying down to the chiaja or quay, in search of Signora Cornelli and her children. They were "living stones" in the midst of that vast area of marble and stucco. He found them in a small house in the quarter crowded by boatmen and their families, and introduced himself to Marta, the mother, as a friend of her late husband. He was met on the threshold by Lucia, who clasped her hands and whispered—

"I pray you, signor, say nothing of our letter."

"You are not well, signora," he said, when seated.

"I am very ill; I can do no washing; I am in despair," replied Marta.

"We must not despair. The good God sees us, and the blessed Jesus saves us."

"That is what the missionary says in his letter which he writes for Paolo. A fine letter it is, and full of sense."

"May I see it? I am a missionary also in some sort, for I write letters full of good advice."

Marta took from a pocket in her apron the treasured letter, and gave it to Mattei. She was dressed in her native costume, with the flat head-dress, full bodice, short, coloured skirt and abundant sleeves, and wore the earrings and necklaces which had come to her as heirlooms. As she reclined on a sort of rough couch, she looked very picturesque and handsome, but very ill. She watched Mattei as he read the letter; and so did Lucia.

"I know the good missionary long ago," he said cautiously when he had finished. "He is English by birth but lived years in Naples. He teaches the Italians in London how their souls are to be saved, and helps them in many ways. Perhaps he would send back Paolo and Maria if you asked him."

"They have gone to make their fortune, signor. I shall never see them again."

Marta began to weep, and suddenly, from behind the couch, where he had hidden himself at sight of a stranger, Pietro appeared. The three children surrounded their mother, and Mattei took the opportunity to copy the missionary's address. This done, he emptied some capacious pockets of various articles of food that he had purchased by the way.

"Who is for *confètturi*?" he cried, and immediately the children surrounded him.

But they forgot the sweets at sight of the food, and looked hungrily at Mattei. So did Marta, who jumped up from her couch as if a miracle had been worked upon her.

"For the children, signor? May God bless you!" she exclaimed.

"Polenta! focaccia! maccheroni! caffè! pan fresco!" cried the children with bated breath.

"Eat, my children. One cake each. Then, Lucia, prepare coffee for la madre. She will eat also. We will soon cure you, signora, so that you leave us not before you see Paolo and Maria," said Mattei.

"And Monnina!" put in Giovanni, his mouth already filled with focaccia, the sweet cake he loved.

Lucia began to prepare the coffee, but her mother set her aside, and did it herself. The fragrant steam soon pervaded the little chamber, and in less than no time, the family, with Mattei included, were drinking that inspiring beverage.

"Ecco!" exclaimed Mattei, when they had completed this pleasant task. "Behold the *confètturi*! Which will you, Giovanni? Monnina or the sweetmeats?"

"Monnina!" replied sturdy Giovanni, averting his glance from the tempting bait.

"We must bring back the monkey anyhow," said Mattei. "Now we will thank the good God for our food, and then I will read to you in a book the words that the missionary puts in his letter."

He drew a small Testament from his pocket, and read aloud some verses.

"That is what Paolo writes!" cried the astonished mother.

"Yes; he quoted from the Holy Bible. I will read you the chapter, because you know it is God's Word."

Mattei read a portion of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew. But before he had finished, he perceived that Marta sank back, exhausted, on the couch, and he was made aware that her sudden revival had been caused by excitement at the sight of his good cheer.

"I wish I could see Paolo and Maria before I die; but they are making their fortune, and I will not hurry them home," she said.

"I shall fetch the doctor, and he will soon patch you up," cried Mattei, leaving the house.

He speedily returned with a medical friend, for he seemed to know everybody, and everybody knew Signor Mattei. They found Marta in a faint, and Lucia trying to restore her with the remains of the coffee.

"Want of nourishment!" pronounced the doctor.

"I will see to that," responded Mattei.

Then the doctor bade Lucia come with him for some medicine while Mattei cheered up the fainting mother.

"But for the good missionary," she breathed, "I should never have heard of my children. Those English must be good Christians to help the poor Italians."

"Yes, and to send them home when possible. Our consul helps them there. You see if Paolo had learnt to write, you would have heard often. Why, there are thousands of our country-people in London, and I am told

they sell halfpenny ices, and wander about with music and monkeys, till the English would gladly be rid of them."

"But, signor, we have English also in Naples, and they say Florence and other cities are full of them," said Marta, offended. "Even their queen has been in Italy."

"È vero, è vero. But here comes Lucia and the draught."

"Ask for a blessing on the medicine, my children. The good God will surely hear you," said Mattei.

"Please to bless mother's medicine, good God," ejaculated Giovanni.

"Ho has sweets in his mouth," said Lucia, giving him an admonitory push.

"I will come again to-morrow. May the blessed Jesus be with you all!" said Mattei, seeing that Marta had recovered.

"Mille grazie—a thousand thanks—God bless you, signor!" followed him as he left the house.

Before he went to bed that night he wrote two letters, one to the Italian consul in London, the other to the missionary.

III.

"I WILL go in first, my children, and prepare the mother."

These words were spoken by Mattei some weeks after he had written those two letters. They were addressed to a boy and girl whom he held by the hand, outside Marta's cottage. But he did not go in first. A monkey, seated on the boy's shoulder, broke loose, leapt to the ground, and preceded Mattei, dragging his chain after him.

"Monnina!" reached the ears of the attendant children.

The next moment Lucia, Giovanni, and Pietro rushed out shouting, "È Paolo! è Maria!" Oh! the embraces, the welcomes, the excitement that followed, who shall describe them? And who shall describe Monnina with her arms round Marta's neck, jabbering and kissing her, and clinging to her as if she, too, were one of her children.

"Monnina!" was all Marta could say, as she clasped the happy beast, and rose to meet Signor Mattei.

"Your children have come home. You will be quite well now," he said.

"Mother! Mother!" was the next cry, and Paolo and Maria shared Marta's embraces with Monnina.

A burst of tears prevented the inevitable swoon.

"My children! Bless the Lord!" she said, and sank down upon the couch. "But you are ill! Your clothes are worn out! What has brought you home?"

"Have patience, and you shall hear; but first give them to eat," said Mattei.

A great bustle ensued, and soon the deal table was covered with all the edibles the cupboard contained. Mattei sent Lucia off to buy macaroni, which soon graced the board, hot and steaming. Paolo and Maria were fed, and so was Monnina, to whom Giovanni gave dainty morsels, as she sat, the happiest of happy monkeys, on the table.

"And where is the Uncle Giacomo?" asked Marta.

"He went to sea and left us," replied Paolo.

"Left you!" shrieked Marta.

"Yes, in the care of Michele Angelo and the missionary in Ledger Lane (Leather Lane)."

"Where is that?" asked Mattei.

"The quarter where the Italians live in London, signor."

"They have a quarter to themselves?"

"Sì, signor. They go all over London with organs, pianos, hurdygurdies, monkeys, guinea pigs, and ices. Oh! they are so many—so many! Michele had an organ, and Monnina and I used to dance and collect the money. Monnina got most. She has saved some for thee, madre mia."

"And Maria, what did she do?"

"She went to the studios as model.

"The artists like to paint the Neapolitan costume, and used to give me food when I was tired," interrupted Maria. "I have hidden from Michele some of the money they paid me, and have kept it for thee, dear mother."

"Your costume is soiled and worn, my child; your beads are tarnished, your bodice is torn. And how we spent the last farthing to send you off 'a perfect specimen,' as the uncle called it!" moaned Marta. "But what brought you back?"

"The letters of Lucia and the good gentleman," said Paolo. "The missionary took us to the consul, and he sent us home, God be praised!"

"My letter! it was my letter!" cried Lucia, unable to restrain her delight. "Signor Mattei wrote it for me, and he is teaching me to write for myself. I am going to school. I am becoming wise; it is all due to Signor Mattei. Paolo, Maria, it was he brought you home."

"And brought me the doctor and the food, which has restored my strength," said Marta. "Now I see you again, my children, I have new life. I resume my washing, Maria helps me, Paolo goes to the quay, Lucia and Giovanni fetch and carry the clothes, Pietro and Monnina run the messages, and we are happy all the day."

Signor Mattei glanced from one to another of the joyous family.

"This comes from knowing how to write," he said. "I am going to teach you all; but Lucia is to be my particular pupil. I shall teach her everything, so that she may become a school-mistress and instruct others. This is what you want, eh! Lucia?"

"Yes, Signor; I will then write letters for all who cannot write for themselves, so that every one, all over the world, may hear of their friends."

"And to-morrow he will write to the good missionary," said Mattei.

"I will write to him!" cried Paolo. "He gave me a New Testament and some books, and told me that my namesake, the great evangelist, wrote long letters from Rome, and that all the Italians should read them. He called him the first missionary."

Paolo took from his pocket a book on which was inscribed *Il Novo Testamento*, laid it on the table, and then pulled from some obscure corner of his bright waistcoat a small bag which he danced upon the deal board. The contents made a clinking noise, and he laughed and showed his white teeth; while Monnina jumped upon the table, grinned, chattered, and seized the strings of the bag.

"She thinks it is hers," laughed Paolo, helping Monnina to unfasten the strings.

Between them they turned out the contents.

The whole family gathered round the table, for English coins lay heaped upon it. Pence and silver reposed comfortably together. Monnina's paw was stretched out, for she was about to claim her portion. Paolo prevented her.

"It is for the Madre, Monnina; the silver is Maria's, the coppers are ours," he said.

"We will exchange it for Italian money to-morrow," broke out Mattei, while the children swept the coins into their mother's lap, and Pietro knelt down to look at them.

"Bless you, my children!" sobbed Marta.

"And let us thank God for all His mercies," said Signor Mattei.

"And for my letter which brought them home again," said Lucia, seizing the good man's hand and kissing it.

Those few shillings seemed a little fortune, and the children and Monnina danced about for joy, while Marta tried in vain to count the foreign coin.

QUESTIONS ON THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—VIII.

1. What body of men escorted Paul to Cæsarea, and where did part of them stop?
2. Who accused Paul before Felix, and what was the chief charge made against him?
3. State the main point of Paul's answer.
4. Which speaker flattered the judge?
5. How much liberty was allowed to Paul by Felix?
6. What reason had Felix for expecting money from Paul?
7. Mention some passages in Paul's epistles in which these matters are alluded to.
8. What were the subjects of discourse that made Felix tremble?
9. How does his story show the folly of delay?
10. On Festus' arrival what new danger threatened Paul?
11. Why was Paul compelled to appeal to Cæsar?
12. Why did Festus wish Agrippa to hear Paul's account of himself?
13. What satisfaction was this to Paul?
14. What prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled in Paul's case?
15. Point out a resemblance between Festus and the people of Athens.
16. What was Agrippa's final speech to Paul, and how did Paul answer?
17. Relate Agrippa's judgment on the whole matter.

ANSWER TO BURIED TEXT.

NO. III.—p. 592.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—*Heb. iv. 16.*

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER.

NO. I.—p. 608.—JEROBOAM.

(1) 1 Kings xi. 28; (2) 38; (3) 40; (4) xii. 3, 4, 14; (5) 25; Judges ix. 41-45; viii. 13-17; (6) 1 Kings xii. 28-33; xiii. 4-6, 24; (7) xiv. 9; (8) 17, 18; (9) 2 Chron. ix. 29; (10) xiii. 6, 7; (11) 20.

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. XXVII.—p. 608.—PAUL.—Acts xvii. 1.—ROME.—Acts xxviii. 31.

- | | | | | |
|------|--------|---|---------|------------------|
| 1. P | raye | R | | Luke xviii. 13. |
| 2. A | bedneg | O | | Dan. iii. 19-26. |
| 3. U | ri | M | | Num. xxvii. 21. |
| 4. L | am | E | | Acts iii. 2-8. |

NO. XXVIII.—p. 608.—REST.—Matt. xi. 28.—PRAY.—1 Thess. v. 17.

- | | | | | |
|------|-------|---|---------|------------------------------|
| 1. R | ca | P | | Gal. vi. 9. |
| 2. E | stho | R | | Esther. ii. 7; vii. 6. |
| 3. S | amari | A | | John vi. 7, 29. |
| 4. T | imoth | Y | | 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 15. |

ANSWER TO A CHAPTER OF SCRIPTURE.

NO. V.—p. 608.—Matt. xii.

The withered hand healed, and the blind and dumb cured: Mark iii. 1-5; Luke vi. 6-10; xiii. 10-16; 1 Kings xiii. 1; Verses 42, 3, 17, 40, 7; Hosea vi. 6; Verses 46, 42, 41, 3, 4. Shewbread: Ears of corn: Gen. xli. 1, 5; Luke xi. 14. "Jesus knew their thoughts:" Chap. vii. 17-20; iii. 7; Verses 43-45; Luke xi. 24-26; Verses 46-50.