

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

A STORY OF WAITING.



THE COMPANION OF THIEVES, AND AN OUTCAST FROM SOCIETY BY HIS OWN ACT.

CHAPTER V.

THE woman I had seen talking to Mr. Donaldson was very poor. She had come down in the world, and was now reduced to earning a precarious livelihood by encouraging the spread of typhoid and similar diseases; in other words she sold stale fish in the winter, and in the summer stale fruit. It was reasonably fresh when she bought it, but she did not renew her stock until what she had was exhausted. This woman, Mrs. Bilkins by name, occupied, in company with a lean cat, a very diminutive apartment at the top of a very large house, and of such a shape, that if the cat lay at one end and happened to raise its tail with any sudden-

ness it swept a cobweb from the ceiling, while Mrs. Bilkins could, if she had chosen (but she didn't), have easily kept the opposite end of the ceiling clean by stretching up her arms.

Mr. Donaldson had sent me to call upon her and take her the liniment she required for her rheumatism, and when I arrived I found her confined to bed, that is to say, to the floor, a dilapidated quilt, and—I wish I could keep it from you—the piece of sacking which ordinarily was flung over the goods on the barrow. She had nothing to sell because she had no capital to lay out, and as she had “shooting pains,” she had judged it wiser to remain where she was. She invited me, however, to be seated, pointing to a cane-chair, the seat of which was conspicuous

by its absence. However, I poised myself precariously on its framework, and, the cat fixing a suspicious and somewhat scornful eye upon me, gave her the messages with which Mr. Donaldson had entrusted me.

In the midst of our ensuing conversation she suddenly lifted a skinny finger as a sign to me to stop, at the same time saying "Hush," and raising herself slightly in bed.

"They're at it again," she said.

"Who?" I enquired, slightly alarmed.

She said, "hush," a second time, and thus compelled me to silence. There was nothing for me to do, but to watch her in surprise and some anxiety.

She leaned over on her side, and raised the piece of sacking. Then I saw that quite near her head a bit of the flooring was broken away, and that there was a gaping hole. I could now distinguish a murmur, evidently the sound of voices in the room beneath.

The old woman put her ear to the hole, and remained in a listening attitude, I gazing at her face, which, though full of expression, was yet inscrutable. It must have been quite ten minutes if not longer, before she raised her head, and lay back, stifling the groan the movement caused her to give.

Then she looked at me, and her eyes twinkled.

"You're wondering what I'm after, miss."

"Well," I admitted, "It does seem a little curious to be so interested in what other people say."

She shook her head with a decided negative.

"Not at all cur'ous when you ain't no company to speak on, but a dumb crittur, or leastways one as can't orig'inate conversation, although he appreciates it. I was always one as took an intelligent interest in my neighbours. There wouldn't ha' been no sense in the Almighty makin' so many of us if we all kep' ourselves to ourselves."

I saw that I had annoyed her, and endeavoured to make my peace, not without success.

"I expect it didn't seem rispec'ful of me to go interruptin' you, miss, as I did, and you might well say as I had company, and so my excuse don't hold. And nor it wouldn't. Only you see I've took to listening to them downstairs, and I've heerd that which makes me want to never miss what they says when they comes near enough for me to catch it. I've about concluded that my bed head ain't far off from their fire-place. That's why I chose it partly. It's convenient at nights when you feel lonesome. These last lot hasn't been here much over a week, and" she added in a voice even lower than that in which she had previously spoken, "they're here for a purpose. Stop, there they are again," and her eyes lighting up with excitement, back went the head, not however for so long a time as before.

I ought perhaps to have rebuked her for eaves-dropping, but I caught the infection of her interest sufficiently to enquire:

"Who are they then?"

Her answer was an enigma. She regarded me doubtfully, and said—

"There's things as seem wrong and ain't; but

you can make 'em so. And yet, perhaps," she added pensively, "it's wronger not to do the wrong."

"What do you mean?" I asked her, not without reason.

"It's this way, miss. Me listenin' don't do no one any more harm than if I was a readin' in a book. But if I go telling on 'em, its mean, don't you see? for they don't reckon on me hearing so keen, nor the flooring up, nor the bed head bein' just there."

"That is true."

"But then, contrariwise, if I happens to overhear something as 'd do harm to others, maybe I'd ought to up and speak, and take the consequences."

"I suppose so, too."

"And yet I don't know as it concerns me. Society aint done much by me that I need trouble my head about it. It's got them as ought to protec' it and look arter it. I don't know as I hadn't best go on my ways, just me and Thomas there, a carin' for each other, and not worriting about the affairs of outsiders. And for all I know, them below may be more needin' of sympathy than t'others. It ain't for me to say..." She paused. "Well, I'll just rub in this 'ere liniment, and will you thank Mr. Donaldson kindly, and tell him I'll step round with the bottle as soon's ever I can."

But though I rose in obedience to what was evidently a dismissal (for except in stories, the Mrs. Bilkinses of life do not as a rule feel the favour lies on your side when you first call upon them, however much they may change afterwards) my curiosity had been aroused by her mysteriousness, and I could not refrain from asking her if she would not like to consult Mr. Donaldson about the matter which evidently exercised her.

For a minute she hesitated. Then she said—

"I don't know as I'd ha' done it if it hadn't happened just on your visit, but as it have, you might say as I don't want him to put hisself to inconvenience, but if he was down this road soonish, afore I'm out agin, soonish, mind, it won't be no use otherwise, ther's a subjec' as I might lay afore him."

"Very well," I said, and held out my hand to say good-bye!

But I had not reached the door, near as it was, before she called me back.

"Miss."

I turned my face.

"Yes, Mrs. Bilkins."

"P'raps you'll resoom that seat a bit. Or are you hurried?"

"I can stay a little longer. I am not wanted this morning."

"Well, maybe I'll spare Mr. Donaldson a comin', unless he sees fit. I know he don't have the time to go gallivantin' around, though as I've always said, it's the busy people that has most time to spare; they are used to dealin' with it, and knows how to cut it to advantage. It's the lazy ones as cuts to waste, and never has enough."

"Still," I said, with my hand on the back of

the chair again, "Mr. Donaldson at any rate has so much to do with his fragments, that if I can spare him, I'd rather not make further demands on him."

"That's so. Sit down, my dear. I'm afraid that chair ain't over comfortable for you. I had a bit of wood as I used to put over it for a seat, but I had to break it up for firing. I expect the legs 'll go next, unless I'm took before I need it. I'd half a mind to mention this when I come to Mr. Donaldson," she went on, I having disposed myself for listening, "but for one thing, you interrupted, and for another, the half o' my mind that was uppermost at the time, seemed to keep t'other out o' sight, and so I didn't. And yet you see, the thing's in his line, so to speak." She bent towards me, and said in a whisper, "They are thieves."

"Who are?" I enquired.

She jerked her thumb downwards. "Them underneath. They've took the room for a bit because they want to be in the neighbourhood. Them sort o' people changes their quarters about as frequent as a cat gets hungry, or pretty much," she added, feeling that the first simile which had occurred to her was not a very satisfactory one, from the point of view of her own feline companion. "About a week ago, here they come. It seems from what I can make out by the voices as two stays here, and others, one or two o' 'em, pays 'em visits occasional. If I weren't so 'cute at hearing, and if the last lodgers hadn't had a way of speaking lowish, I mightn't have made out all I have. As it is there ain't much as they've kep' from me."

I could not help being interested. My attention pleased my garrulous hostess, and she continued, still in the half-whisper which she had adopted for safety as well as for mysteriousness, though there was no likelihood of our being overheard:—

"One night they came in, and there they sat a'talking of ways and means, and it seems there's a house in one o' the squares near you as they've had their eye on some little time. The master is goin' out of town shooting or summat, and then they intends burglarin'; and, bless you, to hear the way they knows that house inside out is something surprising. They can tell you wheer every think's kep, and the rooms as has the most valuable things in 'em, and just wheer they're situated. You might think you was listenin' to some o' them descriptions in the penny novelettes, down to the very chairs in the drawing-room, which is gold himbossed velvet."

She glanced around her own apartment with a critical eye, evidently making a mental comparison.

"It's when I thinks o' that himbossed velvet," she said thoughtfully, "and the silver things for candles, and the jewellery which the young lady wore at the party, that it don't seem as if I cares to interfere. P'raps, after all, stealin' is only a way of making things fair: takin' from them as won't give. And you see," she added, looking at me with eyes into which there had come a sudden gleam of cunning, "I could easily get my share from 'em if I let 'em know what I'd heard."

Then her eyes cleared. "But, no, I've kep' honest through a good deal. I guess I won't go soilin' my hands at my time of life."

"And," I said quickly, "you don't know that these people of whom you speak are not kind and charitable. Because people have beautiful homes they are not necessarily selfish. It is not wrong to have lovely things about one; it is only wrong to keep them all to oneself. Besides, probably the owner has worked harder to earn them than your thieves who mean to take them from him."

She regarded me with some little surprise. The warmth with which I gave my views had been unexpected. Those who visit the poor are often so much their advocates and so blinded by their desire to be and appear sympathetic that they omit to defend the rich man from the abuse which he does not wholly deserve. Dives was not tormented simply because he had had good things in his lifetime, for God is as much the God of the rich man as of the poor; it was only because the deceitfulness of riches had deadened his soul; prosperity had rendered him callous and unsympathetic, and he had enjoyed his good things at the expense of his spiritual nature. Those among the poorer classes who claim to be Lazaruses have very often nothing in common with him but his poverty; not the faith, and patience, and love which got him into heaven. Compulsory poverty is not in itself a merit, though its endurance can be made meritorious, any more than acquired wealth is a sin, though its abuse may amount to sinfulness.

"Well," said Mrs. Bilkins, meditatively, after a brief interval of silence, "that may be so. It hadn't struck me, though now I thinks of it I've done charin' in fine houses years ago, and seen ladies as wasn't above carin' for the poor and helpin' on 'em. And there's you, for instance."

"Go on with your story, will you? And so they have resolved to rob a house."

"That's so. I'm inclined to think there's a kitchen-maid as I'd like to give a piece of my mind to, and sho've let these chaps into the ins and outs of things; and though they can't set to work just yet, it won't be so very long before they will. There's other things they're engaged on, but this is the chief. They plans it very careful."

"It must be prevented," I said.

"Well, of course one can give the folks warnin', only I can't rightly say exactly which house it is. And besides," she added, with that curious admixture of honourable scruples which so strangely accompanies actions usually considered dishonourable, "it wouldn't be fair, having found out what they're up to unbeknown to them to let 'em set to work unconscious-like, and then be nabbed. And that's why I thought maybe if Mr. Donaldson got wind of it, he'd p'raps know what was best to do for all parties concerned. He is used to dealin' with sort o' chaps like this you see, and indeed for all I know, there may be some o' the ones as he's trying to better, and as belongs to that club of his, among the number."

I went away feeling somewhat important, because my morning's errand had led to unexpected issues. As I reached the bottom of the rickety

flight of stairs which led to Mrs. Bilkins' room I paused, for a door on the landing opened. I shrank back against the wall, for it occurred to me that one of the very men of whom we had been talking might emerge, and though I was not afraid of anything that could happen to myself, being already somewhat inured to rough characters, and knowing that even burglars can be mild when not engaged in their evil business, and possibly in private life, polite, yet I was not desirous of coming to close quarters with a being whose secret I held and meant to betray. It seemed as if he must know it, so that instinctively I waited for him to come out and descend before me.

What was my surprise when in place of the ruffian I had expected to see, there emerged a little creature of not more than four years old, very fair and sweet to look upon, and dressed in a fur-trimmed pelisse like that of a lady's child.

Even if I had mistaken the room my surprise was not unwarranted. Nothing could have been less in keeping with the surroundings than the vision of this child, who had not, could not have, my excuse of having come on an errand of mercy.

I moved forward; as I did so the child, seeing me, gave a little cry of delight, and running to me took hold of my dress. At that moment the door was flung back further, and a man came out. I could then perceive that there were two other men in the room, but almost immediately the one who had left it slammed the door behind him.

I gently tried to disengage the child's hand. She was looking up at me with charming confidence, and had already begun, somewhat to my embarrassment, to draw the attention of her companion to me.

"Look papa," she said, "at the pretty lady."

"Come, Louie," said the father, "leave go of the lady's dress. It is rude."

I turned to the speaker. He was standing somewhat in shadow, so that I could not see him as distinctly as the child, but yet even so I experienced a sort of shock that he should be her father. He was a middle-aged man, with a haggard, dissipated face, in which there was yet something to prove that he had fallen from a better estate, a hint of nobleness, a suggestion that roused pity rather than disgust. The clothes he wore were in strange contrast to the dainty garments of the little one; they were torn, shabby, discoloured. I took all this in at a glance; it is now photographed on my memory. Truth is indeed stranger than fiction; the unexpected in life is more than unexpected, never led up to even by a hint of possibilities. Had I known or faintly guessed who it was that was standing so near me in the dim passage, the companion of thieves, and an outcast of society by his own act, how widely different would have been the sensations with which I then regarded him! But I had no premonition of the truth. I sometimes wonder now, whether, if I had known Eric Donaldson, if I had recognised the guest for whom my dear friends were waiting, I should have ventured to speak to him of them. But I had, naturally, no suspicion

that here, near me, and not far from them, was the being whose advent we longed for, they for his sake and I for theirs.

The child ran to him, and I, turning to smile at her, moved away, and descended the stairs. They followed, he carrying her in his arms, and she prattling to him the while.

When we reached the door it was closed. I had scarcely begun to fumble at the handle when the man said, "Allow me," and turned the rusty knob. For an instant we stood side by side in the sunlight. If he had been alone perhaps I might have been afraid of him and hurried away, but with the little creature clinging to him (he had set her down on the pavement and she had clasped both her hands about his wrist) I could have no such feeling.

"Thank you," I said gently, and I looked up at him, for one moment wonderingly, pityingly: it seemed so dreadful to conceive that this fellow creature might be destined for the convict's cell, so strangely pitiful to think that the little innocent child must look to him for protection and for training.

He turned away his gaze, and he and the pretty girl went in one direction while I hastened home in another to tell of my morning's visit and its interesting outcome. I can see now, through the dividing years, the strange picture, so full of light and shade, and of hidden interest, the man stained with sin and marred by wickedness, yet, as I intuitively felt, and afterwards learned, not lost to good; the child whom he loved and who loved him; and the girl who unknown to him had whispered his name to their common Father. Near, very near, are all human souls—they touch, but feel not the thrill of contact. . . . When I saw Eric Donaldson again it was under very altered circumstances.

I told Mr. Donaldson all about Mrs. Bilkins and her eaves-dropping, and the meditated burglary which she had discovered, and felt it her duty to betray. He listened with great interest, and resolved to take an early opportunity of going to the house and trying to obtain an interview with the men. If there were any of his "friends" in the gang, he did not despair of exerting his influence over them satisfactorily, but he had reason to believe that most of those known to him, were leading honest lives, or paying the penalty for past short-comings in prison, and so these were probably strangers, even from a distant part of the country for all he knew. That there was danger in going to them, especially if he proved himself the possessor of their secrets, he was well aware, but he was too used to carrying his life in his hands to feel any great alarm. Besides, where he saw a duty plain before him he thought only of that duty, and not at all of self.

Yet, though he called two or three times, he never found any occupant of the room under Mrs. Bilkins at home. He began to be afraid that the burglary would be committed before he could take steps to prevent it, or that he must give warning to the police before speaking to the would-be perpetrators; for the date which Mrs. Bilkins said they had fixed on was growing

very near. At length, she overheard them arranging to meet for discussion one night (as it chanced, the night but one after Arthur's wedding), and she sent a message by me to Mr. Donaldson to that effect.

He resolved that he would go to the house that very day, and see if he could not get an interview with one of the men. It may seem that it was rather a foolish plan, and that the simpler way would have been to speak to the authorities and wash his hands of any responsibility: this he would do, as a matter of fact, but only if other means failed. He had prevented robberies before, getting hold of the thieves and converting them, for his power over this class of men was immense, almost miraculous. And though he submitted to the laws of his country, yet he was in reality opposed to any punishment

that was not really remedial, and I have heard him say that prison-life, and the consequent slur on the prisoner's character, was calculated to confirm a man in evil. "When a fellow is branded as a thief, it is ten to one he will be true to the mark on him. It isn't so much his knowledge of his delinquencies as *other* people's knowledge that is the stumbling-block to his improvement." I do not know if this is so, but it was a verdict given after many years' experience, and was his justification for caring less about the penalty of wrong-doing, than a man's enlightenment to the moral consequences of his deeds.

And so he did not think he was doing a Quixotic or unusual action when he set off to talk to the thieves whom Mrs. Bilkins had tracked. Neither did any of us foresee the consequences that would follow.

Sermonettes for Young People.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D.

APPLES OF GOLD IN PICTURES OF SILVER.

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."—*Prov.* xxv. 11.

IN your bedroom, over the mantelpiece, many of you have what is called an illuminated text, by way of ornament. A short verse of Scripture is painted in coloured letters on cardboard, and surrounded with pictures of bright flowers picked out in gold. Such a mode of putting the words catches and pleases the eye, and fixes the truth contained in the text in the memory, and makes you often think of it in its beautiful setting. If you look into one of the old manuscript books which the monks used to write so laboriously on parchment leaves, before the invention of printing, you will find at the beginning of each chapter what is called an illuminated initial, upon which the writer spent all his skill and taste, and which he adorned with the most charming designs in shining gold and brilliant colours, which are as fresh to-day as when they were laid on hundreds of years ago.

My text is one of those illuminated initials or texts that arrest the eye of the most careless reader, and by their beauty awaken thought. It is taken from the Book of Proverbs, which embalms in its imperishable amber the short and pithy sayings of Solomon and other wise and pious men of his time; sayings in which they summed up the whole lessons of their lives. When I was a boy, the Book of Proverbs, bound up separately, was the reading-book in almost every parish school in Scotland. I got a lesson in it every day; and I had to commit large parts

of it to memory. I sometimes felt this to be a great hardship; but the truths were stored up in my mind, and I have never forgotten them, and they come back to me now illuminated by the sweet associations of boyhood. Solomon called proverbs "the words of the wise and their dark sayings;" and no doubt some of those in the Bible are often dark to us till their meaning is brought out by something that we ourselves have seen or heard or felt. The proverb of my text is one of these dark sayings. It glitters, indeed, on the surface, and attracts us by the beauty of the language. It seems full of poetry; but as it stands in our version it is not easily understood; we do not see the full force of the truth which it conveys, even when we have a glimmering of its sense. I must therefore explain it to you; and I hope when I have done this that you will hang it up as an illuminated text in the picture-gallery of your memory—to be often looked at in imagination and deeply pondered, and above all made practical use of every day.

Let us look first at the meaning of the phrase, "a word fitly spoken." The term which has been translated "fitly" is a very curious one in the original Hebrew. It occurs nowhere else in the Bible but in this verse. It signifies "wheels;" and you will find in the marginal reference that the literal meaning of the phrase is "a word spoken on his wheels." Our translators imagined that it had something to do with going round, like the earth round the sun, and so making the

seasons of the year; and therefore they first rendered it "a word spoken in season, or at the fit or right time." That is no doubt a very true and important meaning to bring out of the text; but it is not the one that it was meant to convey. In the highly poetic language of Eastern people, a word spoken on its wheels was intended to express a word that rolled smoothly and pleasantly from the lips of the speaker to the ears of the hearer.

You know how easily things move on wheels in comparison with things that are drawn along the ground without them. You are so much accustomed to seeing conveyances of all kinds on wheels, that you find it difficult to believe that in our own country in ancient times the carts had no wheels, and most things were carried on horseback. There were no roads, and the carts were put on long shafts, the two ends of which rested on the ground, and were dragged along by the horse with great difficulty, making deep ruts in the ground. I have seen during my holidays in the far north, a farmer bringing home a load of peats or rushes in this laborious primitive fashion, all downhill. The first wheels that were used in our country were very clumsy and rough. They were made of one solid piece of wood, and the axle was fixed in them, so that the whole went round together. You can imagine how wheels constructed in that simple fashion would creak and groan as they moved slowly, and with difficulty along, and what deep ruts they would make in the road. How different are our light wheels made of separate parts and materials ingeniously fitted together, and revolving so smoothly and swiftly around the well-greased axle, that you can drive along in your carriage with the greatest comfort and ease. The modern bicycle or tricycle, with its noiseless elastic tyre, by which you speed rapidly over the ground and get a delightful exercise, is the very poetry of motion. Many bicycles are now made in such a way that the axle of the wheel, instead of running in a socket, revolves in a casing of eleven steel balls, which yield with great ease to the whirling axle, and thus greatly lessen the friction. Well, the wise man says in his beautiful proverb that each of your words should be like a vehicle on such wheels as these; that it should be so smooth and courteous that it would produce no jar or shock either to speaker or hearer; that it would not hurt by any harshness or roughness, or leave a painful rut behind in the memory.

You know in the East the people are remarkable for the grace and courtesy of their speech. They carry this sometimes too far, and are guilty of insincerity and exaggeration. In saluting each other when they meet, they use much flattery; and even in business when making a bargain or drawing a legal document, a great deal of time and a good many words are wasted in unnecessary compliments. But if the people in the East err in making their speech too smooth, so that it runs away with them as it were, and carries them too far in one direction, we, in this country, are apt to go to the other extreme, and make it too rough and harsh, fancying that we cannot be true and sincere if we are

polite. We are not so careful of our words as we ought to be. How often do we wound each other by hasty or angry or rude words, and say things that cannot soon be forgotten by those who hear them, and for which we ourselves are very sorry afterwards. You know the tongue of the lion is very rough. If it were to lick you, it would take the skin off your hand. So I am afraid that the tongues of too many boys and girls are so rough that they are apt to hurt severely the delicate sensibilities of those to whom they speak by their rudeness and impatience; and a great deal of unnecessary suffering is caused in this way.

Now the Bible directs your thoughts, in the remarkable poetic form in which it is put in the text, to the surpassing excellence of gentle and kindly speech. How is it that what is called good cultivated society is so pleasant to live in? Is it not because the people who move in it have learned to control their tempers, are polite and forbearing to each other, and do not say things that grate upon the feelings and leave a sting behind. There is a natural grace of speech and behaviour about the well-bred which others feel it difficult to attain; but if you mix with good society, you will acquire this charm as the pebbles of the sea are rounded by the friction of the waves. Now while good society gives this outward artificial politeness, which is said to be "the appearance of all the virtues without possessing any of them," the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus gives true inward refinement and civility. It teaches you to honour all men, and to do to others as you would wish that they should do to you. It enables you to be truly considerate, bearing with the failings of some, overlooking the weaknesses of others, and having a good word to say to every one. It puts a wheel on every one of your words, so that they may all glide along smoothly, and carry your thought or wish to your friend without any jarring or jolting. And you may feel it as pleasant to speak to your companion, and your companion may find it as agreeable to hear your courteous words, as if you were pushing him along in one of the little light spring carts which you see so often used by children on the pavements in the suburbs of a town.

There are persons who grudge to say a word of praise to others however deserving, fearing lest they should give away what they think belongs to themselves, and they should be less esteemed in consequence. Don't you be among the number. Frankly praise what is worthy of praise; and your words will be sweet and pleasant to yourselves as well as to others, and will often cheer and encourage many a timid and self-distrustful heart. There is a temptation to be clever and say smart things, and to use words of sarcasm or ridicule at the expense of those who are not so quick-witted as yourselves; but you should make a strict rule to keep within its sheath such a sharp weapon, for it is two-edged, and will cut yourselves as well as those you strike. And if you do not wish to play the part of an east wind on the tender shoots of Spring, putting a strain on the sweetest tempers and

souring less sunny natures, refrain from all snapping, sarcastic, sneering words—from the angry accusation and the sharp retort. Though it be unfortunately too often true, that those who have the sharpest and quickest tongues get most of their own way, and as the shrewd Scotch nurse said: "It's no the cleverest head that rules the hoose, but the warst temper;" yet this power that is conceded to you for the sake of a quiet life, will grow by what it feeds upon, and will in the end prove destructive to yourselves.

Some of you, I daresay, when passing by a bowling green, have stopped to watch the game. You notice how smoothly the bowls roll over the level turf, and even when they touch one another, how gently in most instances they do so. Act with your words as a skilful bowler would do with his bowls. Let them be fitly spoken; let them roll on smoothly and pleasantly till they reach their end, and do what you want them to do. Always give the soft answer that turneth away wrath, and endure the contradiction of sinners against yourselves. Even when you have occasion to find fault, do it with words that go on wheels, rather than with words that drag and rasp on the ground, and make deep ruts which cannot be mended. Imitate the example of your Lord in His epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia; begin always by praising the good points which you cannot fail to find, if you seek, in every one, and then gently insinuate what you have against them with tender tact and delicacy. For we are all too ready to forget many a good trait in the character of the offender, and perhaps even many a kindness done to ourselves, and we allow our attention to be fixed too much upon the fault that has offended us. Remember what the natural tendency of finding fault with people is; and let it make you all the more careful about the way that you do it; so that instead of making the offender an enemy, you will make him a dearer friend than ever. Animals rend the wounded animal; and many human beings wish to get their fingers into a hole that has been picked in a person's reputation in order to make it larger, and to tear the piece altogether. Let it not be so with you. When a person was accused before the ancient court of Areopagus on Mars' Hill, where Paul, you remember preached to the men of Athens, and the evidence was not clear in the case, the members of the council voted for or against his acquittal by putting black or white pebbles in an urn. When the numbers of the pebbles were equal, a casting vote was given in favour of the accused being acquitted; and this casting vote was a white pebble called "Minerva's pebble," because she was the goddess of wisdom, and her decision could not but be the right one. And so in every doubtful case of accusation, be ready to give the pebble of Minerva, the benefit of the doubt to the accused. Show him by your tenderness of dealing that you have his good at heart. Speak the truth in love; and your lowly gentle, brotherly words will awaken responsive feelings in his heart, and all will come right at last.

Now that I have made clear to you what the word "fitly spoken" is, let me explain the image

with which the wise man compares it. It is, he says, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." There can be no doubt that the word in the original translated "apples" meant, not the fruit that we call by that name, but oranges. Apples are very rare in the Holy Land, except in the colder, northern parts, and are not at all good. Whereas oranges are very common, and exceedingly good, and are very highly esteemed. And, therefore, in nearly every case where the Bible speaks of apples, you must understand that it is the orange that is meant. And what a much deeper significance does the image of the text get by this change of word; how much more beautiful does it become! The orange tree has a very remarkable peculiarity which very few other trees possess. Its flowers and fruit may be found together on the tree throughout the whole year. The leaves also are evergreen, and of a cheerful glossy green, and the flowers of a brilliant white, with a most delicious scent. You cannot imagine a lovelier sight than that which I have often gazed upon with great admiration in the sunny south—an orange tree laden with its rich ripe golden fruit, peeping out from among its shining green leaves, surrounded with clusters of pure white blossoms, perfuming all the air. It was a sight like that which suggested to the Eastern imagination the image of the text, the apples of gold in pictures or fret-work of silver; for the fruit of the orange is golden, and the flowers of the orange, growing often on the same branch, are exactly of the colour of dead silver used in filigree ornaments in the East.

What a lovely image it is! Like an orange tree with its golden fruit, surrounded by its pure white fragrant blossoms, and its rich green glossy leaves, one of the most beautiful and perfect things in nature, combining all excellences of colour and form, of smell and taste, satisfying at the same time all the senses; so is the exceeding comeliness of a wise and gentle employment of your words.

A word fitly spoken can administer an all round delight in the same way. You have often felt when a tender, encouraging or loving word was spoken to you, how its music lingered in your ear, how its taste was sweet in your heart, how it made you happy all the day, and disposed to be kind to others, and to make them happy too. You speak about the language of flowers and of flowery language. It would be well if there were more of this attractiveness in your speech. I wish I could establish in your minds such an association between the oranges so familiar to you, and the proverb of the wise man, that every time you see or eat one you would be reminded of the lesson which it teaches.

The old Athenian laws required that a newly-married couple when they were alone should first eat a quince together, in token, as this fruit was the symbol of goodwill, that their conversation should be mutually pleasant. And so your blessed religion requires, in all your intercourse with one another, that you should first eat the quince of goodwill, and be careful in choosing smooth

words that have no sharp edges to cut and wound, that roll easily and pleasantly on wheels without making any jars or ruts. The eating of an apple brought alienation into the world, and made Adam lay the blame of his sin upon his wife. You remember the old classic story how Eris, the goddess of discord, not having been invited to the marriage of Thetis and Peleus, avenged herself by casting into the assembly a golden apple with the inscription on it, "To the fairest." The three rival goddesses, Juno, Minerva, and Venus, each claimed the apple for herself, and they referred the matter to Paris,

the Trojan prince, who decided in favour of Venus; and this fatal decision led to the siege and destruction of Troy. Over against these apples of discord that cause alienation and strife and misfortune, set the golden apples of gentle, kind considerate words that will win all hearts around you, and sweeten the air, and smooth all the rough things of the world. May the Lord Jesus give each of you that kind of wisdom; for "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her!"

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT IN SWITZERLAND.

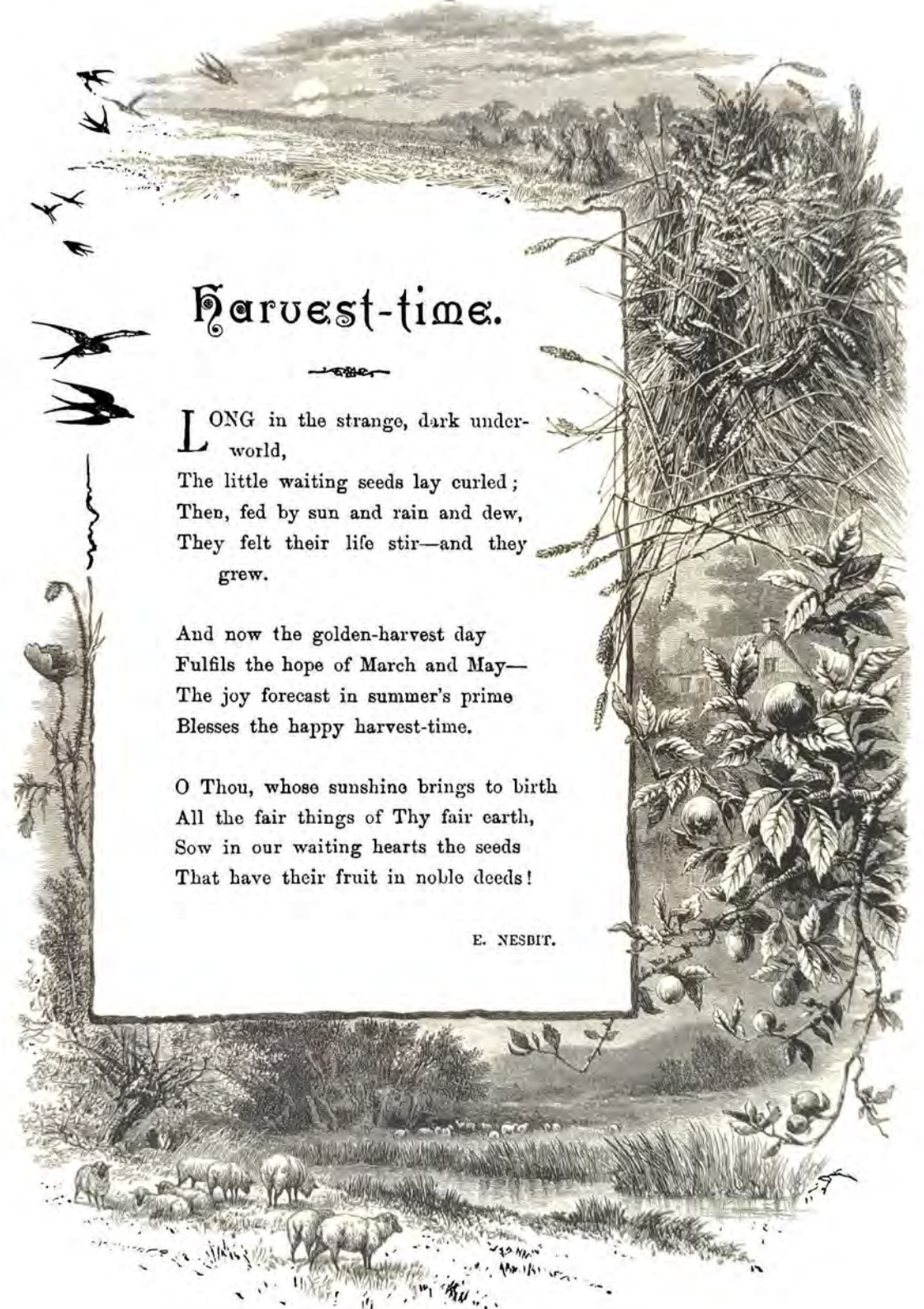
II.

TURNING from these painful conflicts, amidst which it would almost seem as if the national churches of Switzerland were likely to become, if they have not already attained to that position, institutions for the destruction rather than the promotion of the religious life and spirit, let us glance at the work which the living church in Switzerland is seeking to accomplish. Instead, however, of singling out and classifying the various religious institutions, let us rather glance at some of the principal centres of Christian activity, and while recalling some of the influences and associations amid which the present generation has grown up, let us glance at the position they hold and the undertakings in which their Christian zeal and love are displayed.

To begin with GENEVA, than which few cities have more interest for the Christian student of history. Its sombre cathedral still seems to echo with the voice of Calvin, denouncing the libertines and proclaiming the sovereign rights of Christ, while from the little island opposite, with its statue of J. J. Rousseau, comes the Savoy vicar's confession of faith, stripping Christ of His royal robes and His priestly functions. From Geneva to Ferney is not far, and between Rousseau's faint and sentimental praise of Christ and Voltaire's determination to crush Him, the distance is less than it seems. Geneva has gathered within its precincts the friends and foes of Jesus and honoured them all in turn. In the present century it has been the theatre of memorable conflicts. The battle has raged long respecting the nature and work of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the field of operations being so small, the varied movements of the contending parties have all been visible. One may say that the whole history of the Christian Church during the last hundred years has been epitomised in Calvin's city.

At the opening of the century, a few Moravians were the only representatives of spiritual

Christianity. Gradually a breath as from on high was felt by some in the ranks of the National Church, and a Bost, a Guers, a Neff and a Malan stood forth to witness for Christ. Then came Robert Haldane, sent of God, and gathered around him some of the students of divinity, who knew something about Seneca and Plato, but little or nothing about Isaiah and Paul. Several were converted, and became faithful preachers in France, Belgium and Denmark, as well as in Switzerland. So the Word of God grew mightily in those days. A Free Church, as we have already mentioned, was formed, and in the National Church a new spirit took possession of many. To-day large congregations assemble in the Oratoire (Free Church), in the *Salle de la Réformation*, and in national churches also where Christ and Christ crucified are the preacher's theme. A service for mutual edification and the Lord's Supper (a lay elder always presides), gathers many Christians desirous of more spiritual communion than is to be found in the regular churches. As regards practical work, we can only select a few examples. Stimulated by the example and success of Dr. McAll in France, M. Ernest Favre and his friends have for some thirteen years carried on (in six *salles*) a work of popular evangelisation. The extraordinarily mixed character of the population, the vast influx of foreign elements, often of the worst character, make their task one of extreme difficulty; but Christ has been brought home to many hearts, and a society, *Le Lien* (at present one hundred and sixty members), has been formed for the purpose of instructing the converts more fully in the ways of God and of bringing them into fellowship with each other. The Evangelical Society of Geneva, founded in 1831, has done and is doing good service, on an extended scale, as a Missionary and Colportage Society in France. Hospitals, orphanages, refuges, and other benevolent and philanthropic institutions abound. Professor Bonvier, in the "Modern Review" for January, 1884, said that the "Philanthropic



Harvest-time.

LONG in the strange, dark under-
world,
The little waiting seeds lay curled ;
Then, fed by sun and rain and dew,
They felt their life stir—and they
grew.

And now the golden-harvest day
Fulfils the hope of March and May—
The joy forecast in summer's prime
Blesses the happy harvest-time.

O Thou, whose sunshine brings to birth
All the fair things of Thy fair earth,
Sow in our waiting hearts the seeds
That have their fruit in noble deeds !

E. NESBIT.

Annual" for 1879 gave their number as 268—large and small. A modest effort—the only one of its kind we believe, in Switzerland—is being made by Pastor Cl. de Faye to preach to deaf people. By the help of a blackboard, on which are written the text and the heads of discourse, and by most careful shaping of the lips in the enunciation of the words, persons are enabled to see and so to hear. Nor must we omit a reference to the late Alexandre Lombard, a banker, who set on foot and pursued with untiring zeal a crusade against Sunday labour and desecration. Familiarly known as *Dimanche Lombard*, he pleaded in season and out of season for the Sabbathless railway-men, and indeed for all classes of the community to whom every day is alike in point of labour. The work is still carried on, and is meeting with support in unexpected quarters. Already some relaxation of toil has been granted to many. The history of this crusade demonstrates over again the force which one man of determined energy may set in movement.

One word must be said about the two Faculties of Theology, National and Free. The majority of the students being Frenchmen destined to exercise their ministry in France, the influence of these Institutions, whether for good or evil, extends far beyond the limits of Geneva. Of the many conflicts of opinion and struggles for ascendancy that had occurred in both, we can only refer to the memorable period when Gaussen, Merle d'Aubigné and Scherer were the prominent professors of the Free Faculty, and when the last-mentioned withdrew, and to the sorrow of all, gradually lapsed into agnosticism, not however, until in conjunction with Colani and others he had founded the *Revue de Strasbourg*, and inaugurated a movement which for many years did so much to check the advancement of evangelical religion on France.

In connection with the University of Geneva, we cannot forbear to mention M. E. Naville, formerly Professor of Philosophy, whose remarkable lectures on Eternal Life, the Heavenly Father and other subjects, demonstrated that science and faith are capable of happy combination.

Yet one more fact and we pass on to other cities. Among the Professors of the National Faculty, were (both are now dead) H. Oltramare and L. Segond. French-speaking Protestants have never had an authorised version of the Bible. Martin's, Ostervald's, and other versions were used, but all were felt to be unsatisfactory. Many years ago several pastors and others in the Canton of Vaud, stimulated to the attempt, we believe, by Mr. Darby, the founder of the Brethren movement, produced what is called the Lausanne version, based on the principle of literal interpretation, and therefore not likely to be accepted as a substitute for the versions in use. Then Professor Rilliet translated the New, and Pastor Perret-Gentil the Old Testament. Each of these versions, as also a recent one of the New Testament by Professor Stapfer of Paris, has its value, and is a help to a better understanding of the Word of God. But it is agreed on all

hands that they are surpassed in correctness and in beauty of diction by Professor Segond's translation of the Old Testament and Professor Oltramare's translation of the New Testament. Many have felt in reading Professor Segond's version of the prophets that at last these ancient writings have been presented in a thoroughly intelligible and attractive form. Among other marks of distinction therefore borne by Geneva, not the least is that of being the city of Bible-translation.¹

In the CANTON OF VAUD we come upon the scene of Viret's labours—Viret, the colleague of Calvin and Farel. But the name now most redolent in Lausanne is not that of the tailor's son of Orbe, but that of Alexander Vinet, sometimes called the Chalmers of Switzerland. And truly, like the great Scotch divine, he was the founder of a Free Church; but it is as the founder of a new school of Christian thought that his name will chiefly be remembered. His tomb is at Clarens, "sweet Clarens," as Byron calls it, but his true monument is to be found in the renovated thought and lofty aspirations of whole generations of students and ministers. Even Ste. Beuve, the famous *littérateur*, felt the spell of Vinet's prelections on French literature, and was almost persuaded to be a Christian. It is hardly too much to say that Vinet has become the spiritual guide, by whom many a seeker has been drawn into the temple of truth and compelled to bow in the presence of Christ.

The Free Church has held on its way and maintained its position, but without adding largely to its numbers. At the time of the disruption the large majority of the clergy (228) resigned, but only some forty churches constitute this separate and independent communion. At the outset it established a Faculty of Theology, of which, of course, Vinet was the leading spirit. A succession of able men have filled its chairs, and have educated for the ministry a number of young men who, in France and Belgium, are steadfastly labouring in the cause of evangelical Christianity. Next to Vinet stands in point of eminence Charles Secrétan, *par excellence* the Christian philosopher, as Vinet was the philosophic Christian. It has been said that Switzerland has no national literature, because the able works that have issued from its presses have been reckoned as part of the literature of France or Germany. But Vaud has had the honour of giving to the world not only the distinguished men above-named, but a considerable number of others who, in the several departments of poetry, fiction, history, philosophy and religion, have produced works which, if not spoken of as among

¹ The following is the opening sentence in the preface to Professor Oltramare's version of the New Testament: "One of the solemn obligations (*pieux héritage*) devolved by the sixteenth century on the Church of Geneva, was the mandate calling on its spiritual directors (*chefs*) to bestow continual care on the perfecting of the version of the sacred Scriptures." And the *Compagnie des pasteurs* goes on to say that to the fulfilment of this obligation "our church owes a series of versions and editions of the sacred Books, the nomenclature of which forms an important chapter in its history."

the world's classics, nevertheless form a useful and healthy contribution to French literature.

In NEUCHÂTEL we find the same religious activity as in Vaud, and fomented by the same conditions; the presence of an Independent Church and of an Independent Faculty of Theology. Christian rivalry is good rather than evil when conducted in the spirit in which, for the most part, these several churches act towards one another. Farel, who may be called the Reformer of Neuchâtel, has no successor. This ardent and impetuous Frenchman was adapted to the times in which he lived. The Swiss clergy are of a calmer temper. Religion with them and their people is not a matter of feverish excitement, but of calm and serious reflection. One can well understand, therefore, how distasteful to them must be the methods of the Salvation Army, and how unlikely they would be to hold out to them a hand of welcome. At the same time it must not be thought that the fierce opposition and violent attacks which the Salvationists experienced in Neuchâtel were instigated or approved by the Christian public. Any and every manifestation of unusual religious fervour and proselytising zeal has always aroused the wrath of the ungodly masses in Switzerland. It was so in Geneva and Vaud in the days of the revival. Moravians, Mômiers, and other titles, really or intended to be offensive, were applied to the innovators. Their conventicles were attacked; and sometimes the authorities, while not wishing to favour lawlessness, showed by their repressive measures that they had no true understanding of religious liberty. So far as the laws are concerned, the battle of freedom has been won, but the spirit of hatred of all démonstrative and aggressive piety is not exorcised. The Salvation Army has its forts here and there, and is able to pursue its battle against sin in its own fashion; but ever and anon there is an outbreak of animosity when some new district is attacked. Even temperance reformers are sometimes assailed as destroyers of the customs of the people and as wishing "to turn the world upside down."

Chief among the professors (now in consequence of advancing years only honorary) of the Independent Faculty of Theology is Dr. F. Godet, whose commentaries have obtained a world-wide reputation. Like Bengel, this Neuchâtel professor seems imbued in his whole soul with the spirit of the Gospel; his exegesis is not merely a clever explanation of the letter, but an unfolding of the spirit and purpose of Divine truth. But these commentaries are not Dr. Godet's only contributions to biblical literature. Under his presidency a company of pastors in Neuchâtel has been formed for the purpose of giving to the French-speaking world an *Annotated Bible* with all the most recent results of sound criticism and careful translation. The prophetic books have been published and the historical books are now in progress. Thus, while Geneva is the city of Bible translation, Neuchâtel may be called the home of exegesis.

It is not a little remarkable that in the three cantons of Geneva, Vaud and Neuchâtel, with a

Protestant population of not more than 300,000, there should be no less than six Faculties of Theology, three national and three free. The proximity of France accounts in some measure for their existence. French Protestants owe much in this respect to their Swiss brethren. Many of their oldest preachers have been in the past, and still are natives of Helvetia, while many of their own sons have sat at the feet of Swiss professors. It will also be seen that the Christians of *la Suisse Romande* are determined that their preachers shall be men of education and fully abreast of the learning of the day.

Coming now to GERMAN SWITZERLAND, we find ourselves in a somewhat different world. As already stated, no Free Churches have been formed there. The living spiritual forces of that region are striving to stem the current of unbelief and to extend the knowledge of the Gospel among their own people and throughout the earth. In Bâle, the great Missionary Society and the Institute of Crischnona, though largely supported by German Christians, are channels through which Switzerland is seeking to advance God's kingdom in the wide world.

But home-needs are not neglected. Through the example and devotion of several wealthy families, who have always been on the side of evangelical truth, a large amount of Christian work is attempted. Bâle may, indeed, well compare with Geneva in this respect. Almost every kind of method is used. Lads from the workshops are brought together and instructed on Sunday afternoon. The working-classes, generally, receive much attention. At the railway station is a room where addresses are given to the employés who are there on Sunday. Much use is made of religious literature, and the *Volksbote* and other papers have a wide circulation.

In Zurich, the Athens of Switzerland, with its splendid educational establishments, the Reformist party is no longer in the ascendant. In the Synod, at present composed of pastors only, the evangelicals form the majority. A movement is on foot for the introduction of laymen. Unfortunately, the Synod can only propose laws, and the government, which always sides with the minority, generally sets aside its proposals. Tradition is very strong in its hold on the people. On the four sacramental days, including the day of humiliation (*Bussstag*), shops and inns are closed, and the churches are thronged.

The Evangelical Society, established fifty years since, pursues its labours with much earnestness, and, in conjunction with the Evangelical Church Union, supplies means of instruction and edification for many. An evangelical pastor is maintained and gathers a large congregation on Sunday mornings in St. Anne's Church. Five town missionaries go from house to house. In the country districts Bible readings (*Stunden*) are held by regularly appointed agents. At Nœmünster there is a deaconesses' establishment with 115 sisters, and in Zurich itself are homes and Christian inns for working men and others.

In Borne a better state of things prevails. The

greater number of the pastors belong to the Mediation School, and of the rest the orthodox are more numerous than the Reformists. The city and canton are the theatre of manifold activity. The sects, as they are called, regard Berne as their centre in Switzerland. The Methodists (Episcopal) are the most numerous. In the valleys of the Simmen and Emmen, in Frutigen, in the district of Lyss, and other places, they are to be found preaching with their wonted earnestness. New and old Baptists, Irvingites, and others are pushing their several views. In the city of Berne some ten different religious bodies are represented. One result of these varied forms of opposition to the State Church has been to arouse the regular clergy, or at least the more evangelical portion of them, to greater activity, and it is thought that at present the various dissenting bodies are not making progress. One reason of their existence has doubtless been that the National Church has not furnished opportunities for Christian fellowship, and thus many good people have welcomed the simple and hearty services of the dissenting churches, with their attendant opportunities for spiritual communion. The Evangelical Society of Berne with its nineteen Evangelists is doing good service, especially by the spiritual help it affords in parishes where rationalism has the upper hand, and as the persons thus benefited naturally draw together for fellowship, the society is regarded by some of the clergy as likely to promote sectarianism. Even the evangelistic services of Pastor Schrenk, from Barmen, are viewed with suspicion by some, although there can be no doubt that many people have by this means learned to understand the real meaning of life and to lay hold of the Saviour.

Looking at the National Church¹ itself, the general conviction is that there is progress. Where the pastors are faithful men the churches are often filled to overflowing. This is the case in the Oberland, especially in the winter. In the valley of the Emmen, in Ober-Aargau, and in Berne city, the congregations are good. Church attendance is stated to range from eight to ten or fifteen per cent. of the population, and even to 25 per cent. in some small parishes. In some places, however, it is as low as 5 per cent. and even lower. Such figures are not very encouraging in themselves, but still there is progress in this as in other respects. In the matter of temperance there is decided advance, thanks to the persistent and devoted labours of Pastor Arnold Bovet and other friends of the temperance cause.² Statistics show a decrease in alcoholism, as it is called, while the bad times have compelled

many to abandon their favourite resort—the public-house. Temperance cafés are now at work in Berne city and other places, and the 1400 recruits of the cause in the canton are the nucleus of an army which we trust will increase from year to year and gradually overcome the drink demon, which in this region has perhaps had more victims than in any other part of the world.

From this summary review of the religious situation in Switzerland, it will be seen that the spiritual condition of the several cantons varies greatly. In some, Rome reigns supreme. In others Protestantism is the dominant body, but divided in doctrines. In Aargau Evangelicalism and Rationalism have about an equal number of followers. In Zurich the latter prevails, while in Vaud and Neuchâtel orthodoxy, mostly of a liberal type, characterises all the churches. The democratic spirit, as we have seen, has thrown open the pulpit of the State churches to all and every kind of doctrine, and has not promoted the building of new churches to meet the needs of the growing population. Indeed, the increasing love of pleasure, and the multiplication of festivals on every conceivable pretext is doing vast harm to the body politic, and rendering religious teaching more and more distasteful.

In these circumstances the work of the evangelist and pastor is one of extreme difficulty. Earnest efforts to proclaim the Gospel and to awaken men to a sense of their need are often met with positive hatred, if not violent opposition. Aggressive evangelism has much hostility to encounter. Nevertheless, many brave souls are doing this work in spite of reviling and opposition. The evangelical party are more and more conscious of the importance of a wider and more determined effort to win the land for Christ. The battle is being fought. Many a valley and mountain resound with the shouts and songs of the combatants, and the day we trust is not far distant when Switzerland will send forth her sons not as in olden times to be mercenaries ready to fight on behalf now of this king and now of that, but as loyal and true-hearted soldiers of the Captain of Salvation.

Things New and Old.

BENEFITS.—There are two ways of giving a cup of cold water. How many a substantial kindness—nay, act of self-sacrifice is spoilt by the manner of its doing? It loses half its value; it is a good thing, but damaged in the transit. While a kindness of infinitesimal value, perhaps, as compared with it, gracefully offered—not conferred—is thrice blessed. It blesseth him who gives; and, doubly, him who takes. What you do, do graciously.—M. T.

FAITH.—Each step in life is a leap in the dark—into the unknown; an effort of faith. Well for us if we can “trust the unknown for the known.” An invincible optimism: a true belief in the Unseen,—this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—M. T.

¹ A well-informed correspondent says: “In the canton of Bale, of the twenty pastors in office, only six are Reformists. There is but one in Schaffhausen. It is only in the cantons of St. Gall, and perhaps Thurgau, Appenzell and Glarus, that the Reformists constitute more than half of the pastoral body. In most of the German cantons the helm of the Church is in the hands of the Mediation School, now largely affected by Ritshl's teaching.

² The total number of adherents, more or less pledged, of the Blue Cross in Switzerland is stated in the “Blue Cross Almanack” for 1892 (*Bern-Agentur des blauen Kreuzes*) to be nearly 6000.

PEACE-MAKING IN NEW GUINEA.

BY THE REV. JAMES CHALMERS.

WE are now at Motu Motu, or Toaripi, in the Gulf of Papua, the only place west of Hall Sound where an anchorage can be found in all weathers for a vessel, and that a small one. The anchorage is a few miles west of this, and is known as the "Alice Mead Lagoon." It was first discovered by Mr. Goldie, a gentleman who has done much to make New Guinea known, and named by him after his vessel.

Boats, and our small mission vessel, the "Hana-moa," or "Blessing," can get up to the village by the river. Sometimes it is very dangerous work getting through the surf on the bar, and care and nerve are required.

I have an excellent surf boatman, and it is really wonderful how he manages a whale-boat. He is a native of Maioa, a member of the church, and now preparing to go as an evangelist to his countrymen. It is a sight to watch him dodging heavy seas, and when overtaken to see how well he gets through. He is an excellent swimmer. I remember one night, a few months ago, we saw a light at sea, a mile or more away from the mission house; having been some time without a mail, we thought it might be a boat with letters. There was a heavy sea breaking, and several lines of breakers between us and the light. Naima came and asked if I wanted to communicate. I should have liked to do so, but there seemed no chance. A number of natives and our teachers were standing about, and they all pronounced it impossible to get out, and no native would venture. Nothing more was said, and we went to bed. About eleven o'clock there was loud talking near to the house, and on going out I found Niamé and a few natives by the verandah. I asked what they wanted. Niamé replied: "The light is from a large canoe with Henere (our Hall Sound teacher) on board." "How do you know?" "I have been off and stayed with them a little, and have just come back." I was very angry. He had swum off alone, but said he, "I found no difficulty until returning; then the current was very strong, and likely to carry me away."

One night at Maioa he saw our light outside at midnight, and he came off through the boiling surf to tell us it was impossible to land just then. In the early morning it was better, and we got ashore with a wetting. The boating from Hall Sound west is the most dangerous work we have, and uses up the boats very quickly. We have two at present, and neither of them first-rate.

It was at this place where Tauraki lived, the teacher who was murdered by the Moveaveans, and who could have saved his life if only he had left his crew, and with his wife and child gone on board a Moveave canoe. He would not abandon his own people, and he, his adopted child, and five of his party were murdered. It was a horrible crime, and one for which the tribe is now heartily ashamed.

A young chief here, named Lahari, had a brother, cousin, and sister-in-law of the five who were murdered. Lahari was a great warrior, and the terror of the Moveaveans; he was held in great respect by his own people as a brave, really fearless fellow. He was much attached to Tauraki, and often assisted him in the first days against the threatenings of the people. Several times he armed to avenge what he considered insults offered to the teacher, and he warned all that Tauraki was his friend, and any one annoying him would have Lahari to reckon with. He is a chief by virtue of his strong character and bravery. When news of the murder came to the village the young men waited to hear Lahari's call from the platform in front of his house.

It is the custom at night, when all is quiet, to sit on the platform and communicate all you wish to be known on any subject, important or otherwise. Another favourite hour is just before daylight. A stick is beaten loudly on the platform to call attention. First a few preliminary coughs, then clear the throat and hold forth. Sometimes the natives really do wax eloquent. I have often thought such a plan might be used to make known the Gospel. I once tried it at Port, but my knowledge of the language failed me, and I could not keep it up.

Early morning came, and still Lahari was silent—not a word of revenge. What could have happened, asked old and young. The sun rose, and Lahari was seen dressed in the few foreign things he had, sitting on his platform in great distress. No grand get up for war, no paint and feathers, no bow and arrows, club or spear in readiness for the fray.

The people gathered round in wonder, and wanted to know what it all meant, and the only answer of the great warrior chief was, "I fight no more, I have promised Tauraki, and I am now for peace." Many were very angry, calling him "Only a woman;" and saying, "he has got a woman's heart." "Yes, be it so, I am only a woman." He is not a Christian; makes no profession; but I fancy he has learned a Christian virtue, that many Christians need to learn.

One Saturday, shortly after our arrival, Lahari came splendidly dressed in savage finery, and we could not but admire him; he looked the noble savage to perfection. The next day he was present at service, but in what a rig! We certainly had no admiration for him in it. He had an old torn shirt that once was white, a pair of trowsers immensely large, torn and dirty, a pair of Blucher boots, about three sizes too big for him, and very much worn; his hat was an old pith helmet, that had done good service years ago on some white mau's head. He was a perfect guy, and certainly terribly spoiled. The perspiration rolled down him, and though evidently proud of his Sunday clothes, he

looked most uncomfortable. He made no appearance in the afternoon, and passing his house I enquired for him, when he called out from the inside that he had sprained his foot. Walking across the platform with the big heavy boots on, his foot twisted and he fell. He was a prisoner some days, and since then I have not seen the boots, and not often the old rags.

I remember once at South Cape, a man-of-war was coaling, and several natives assisting. The captain was ashore, and we went off together to breakfast. When we got on deck, four natives appeared in shirts and trousers, the oldest and worst the stokers had. The captain was vexed, and gave orders they should be immediately disrobed, and that never again was old, ragged, dirty clothing to be given to natives. A native only wants a bit of cloth to cover his nakedness, and to me his savage finery is not unbecoming, far better to look upon indeed, than the dirty cast-off clothes of white men, which they are so delighted to get hold of.

We called at Lese on our way here, and met a Bocra lakator (many large canoes lashed together, sometimes twelve or sixteen) full of sago, returning home from the gulf. They put into Lese for stress of weather. These large unwieldy lakatois only sail before the wind, and as the wind was most of the time dead ahead, they had to wait. We gathered from the people on board that they had had a very hard time of it. They went to Maipua, a large village in the cannibal district of Naman; crossing the river bar they were very much strained, and on getting in, were boarded by so many anxious to secure the pottery and other things brought to purchase sago, that most of the pottery was smashed, and tomahawks and the other things stolen. When they reached the village, my old cannibal friend, Ipaivaitani, received them kindly, and helped them much. When he heard what had occurred, he was very angry, and made the people get new large canoes, and when these were finished and lashed together, he insisted on sago being made, sufficient for a good cargo.

On their leaving, Ipai', accompanied by his two wives, and his little daughter named Tamate, took passage with them, and so I met my old cannibal friend. He told us he wished to visit Port Moresby, and hoped to see me there. I asked him, through an interpreter, if he had given up eating human flesh; he only laughed. The Boerans replied for him that during their stay he and his had eaten one woman and two children. Since then I have seen a good deal of them, food was scarce at Port, and they returned here the first chance, and stayed three or four months close by us. I hope the chief will not return to cannibalism again.

The wives were bright, intelligent, and rather good looking women. They are not accustomed to any kind of clothing, but had good grass petticoats presented to them at Port, which were a great improvement to their appearance; during their stay here they learned to make them for themselves. The child, Tamate, is a bonny lively little girl, and extremely dear to her father. If

he went fishing, she must go; in the canoe she would have a miniature paddle, assisting her father to pull. Once he was away for a few days, and the child was miserable all the time, and after his return they were inseparable. We wanted her to stay with us; she would if her father did, but not otherwise.

On the Sunday after our arrival we held three services during the day, all attended by large numbers in full native dress. It was a strangely fine sight, so many stalwart fellows, in elaborate feather head-dresses—shells, flowers, and variegated leaves; with large carved belts, the carving filled in with red, white, or yellow; armlets, garters, and anklets, made of shell, or curiously-plaited grasses, with numerous tassels hanging from them. Their faces were painted in many styles. The long plumes, made of very pretty feathers, looked much finer than those worn at home at reviews, and other grand assemblies.

We were told the Motu Motuans were going up to make peace. Lahari had arranged with Moveaveans that peace should be established. Shortly after my return from England, I had made peace and friendship with them for ourselves, but would not insist on the natives doing it. I asked Lahari then if he would accompany me, but he said: "No, I have given up fighting; but I have lost Tauraki, and five relatives, and I cannot now make peace and friendship." I felt he could not, and so did not press.

Since our coming here to stay, I had not mentioned the subject to any one, so of themselves they had arranged it all. We heard a day or two afterwards that it was done because we were now living with them.

Early in the morning we were astir, and, after breakfast, away in our whale-boat up the river. We took several short cuts, some of them only just broad enough to let the boat go through. It was very pretty, the ins and outs of sunshine and shade, the latter made by nipi, sago, and coconut palms, and various trees on either side of the narrow creeks. From these winding short cuts we emerged into a fine broad swift stream, which connects two large rivers. A short pull along it, and then into the creek which led us to the village.

On landing we marched through the village to the western end, where our friend, Antu, since dead, gave us a regular New Guinea welcome, with coconuts, sago, and arecca-nuts, and betel-pepper, and abundance of cooked food. To get away from the crowd and suffocating heat, we ascended his dubu, and squatted on the large platform, eighteen feet from the ground, where we felt it cool and pleasant.

We were ahead of the Motu Motuans. About an hour afterwards, our teachers and Lahare made an appearance, the latter splendidly got up. I wish we could have got a photograph of him then. Many years had slipped away since Lahari was there last and now the people made much of him.

In a short time many Motu Motuans were seen all over the village, and the canoes in charge of armed men were in the river waiting the result of negotiations. The only difficulty was that Moveave would not give a girl to marry some

young swell at Motu Motu, and so mark and cement the peace. The difficulty was got over, however, our presence on the scene being considered enough. In making peace, girls are often given in exchange to be married. I have met women in various places who had been so married, and had become quite contented members of their husband's tribe.

About one o'clock we returned to the boat with presents of sago and nuts. The left bank of the creek as we went down was lined with Motu Motu natives, all armed, and on the alert, ready for a surprise. Lahari's canoe came close behind our boat, and at a word from him they all rushed away to their canoes, which had been left in the river in charge of others.

Getting into mid stream, we could see down both banks of the river. They were lined with gaily-decorated canoes, well filled with natives, finely dressed and armed. We pulled over to the right bank, into the shade, and waited. On Lahari's coming out into the river, standing up in his canoe, he gave some orders in a very quiet manner, which were passed as quietly all along the lines, and a general movement took place, the canoes drawing together in close regular lines. Every one seemed to be watching a bend of the river about a quarter of a mile away. Hallo! what is that coming round the bend? Why a large flotilla of double canoes pulled by swarthy, highly-dressed natives. The paddlers were all standing in the canoes, and the time kept was beautiful. In the centre on the platform of each, numbers as gaily dressed, and with an abundance of green leaves, were drum-beating, conch-blowing, shouting and dancing vigorously. Away they go, dashing past us in splendid style, and in line pull up opposite the Moveave creek, then divide and return to the banks of the river to lie by quietly. Following these came two more large canoes, with about forty young women in each, who were paddling, singing, and dancing, as heartily as the men. They, too, were dressed in their best; their new petticoats, made from the young frond of the sago palm, and dyed various colours, looked well; and besides they had sprigs and sprays of pretty shrubs, and croton leaves stuck in their hair, ears, armlets, and round their waists. The upper part of their bodies was profusely anointed with red ochre and oil. They certainly pulled a splendid paddle, and shewed what they could do in the future, when, settled down in married life, they would have to pull and not for pleasure. Each canoe had different plants and leaves, no two decorated alike.

One of the largest canoes closed on the bank, on the Moveave side at the mouth of the creek, and an armed native sprang ashore with a shout; and then a Moveave native rushed forward with a shout, and met him; and together they went through a sham fight, each one shouting or singing praises of himself and friends the while.

Then a number of women came from the village carrying bundles of sago; and canoes approached, received the sago, and gave shell-fish in return. This continued a long time, and became very monotonous. Some of the Motu Motuans were

dissatisfied with the quantity of sago, and were inclined to be troublesome, but Lahari and Hore soon stopped them.

Presently Lahari and another young man got into a small canoe, and both standing on the platform, they were pulled up the lines, and into the creek, to where a large body of Moveavans were assembled. There he harangued them, telling them of their crime, and his reason for not avenging it, and that now it was peace and friendliness, that it was right, and that they were returning home. Turning to his own friends who had left their canoes and were on the opposite bank, he told them to go back to their canoes and return home.

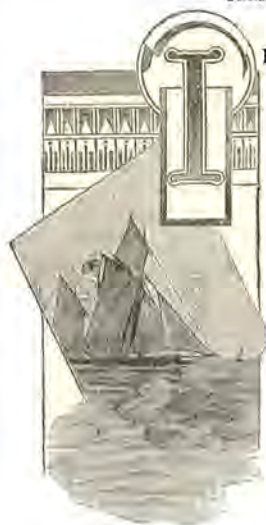
It was a grand sight to see this young savage chief in his full dress, the powerful warrior of former days now declaring for peace. As he came down the creek, standing erect on his canoe, tears were in his eyes. The western sun shining full upon him, his fine muscular, well-knit frame and noble bearing were seen to advantage.

The crowds on each bank listened attentively to all he said. We admired him greatly.

It was a beautiful picture, a most interesting scene, and gave rise to many thoughts and wishes for the future.

A MYSTERIOUS LETTER.

CHAPTER I.



"If you please, ma'am, the postman has just brought these letters," and so saying, the servant handed quite a large batch of missives to his mistress.

Aunt Madge quickly took possession of the packet, and leisurely began to open one after the other.

"What in the world is the matter with auntie?" thought pretty Vera to herself, as she watched curiously that lady's face turn suddenly pale.

And then the very same instant Vera's quick eye caught Rupert's.

One glance was enough. They understood each

other in a moment. The brother and sister guessed, pretty quickly too, what each was thinking about.

Somehow, that last missive that dear old Aunt Madge had opened had served to distress her greatly. She was actually trying not to cry, as Vera thought to herself, and all the while fidgeting with her pocket-handkerchief, more than was at all necessary.

Again, she read the letter through, very quickly, however, both Vera and Rupert thought; and then she rose up hurriedly, caught up the entire bunch of letters, and popped them all into her pocket.

"I have important letters to write, children, up in my own room," she said, "and wish to be quiet. Don't disturb me, either of you, on any account."

"Very well, auntie," answered Vera, laying her pretty arm affectionately against the soft dress of her to whom she spoke.

"And don't, when you play this morning, go beyond the outer garden gate. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, auntie. Why not?" and there was at the instant, an air of keen disappointment visible upon the children's faces.

"Well, then, simply," and again Auntie Madge applied the handkerchief to her eyes, as if her heart was still sad about something, "simply because the servants tell me there is a large encampment of gipsies in the broad open space just on the other side of the lane, and they are sure to be coming about, asking you a lot of questions. I wish you children to have nothing to do with them."

"Cook told us all about them," came demurely from rosy-lipped Vera. "She told us even——" and then a sudden glance from Rupert caused her speech to come to a standstill.

"Well? And cook told you what?"

Vera had for the moment quite forgotten that Rupert had promised cook, on behalf of both of them, that not a word of what she had told them should be repeated to auntie.

Vera had not actually promised herself, that was certain; but then, as she was thinking, ought she, or ought she not, to abide by the bargain which cook had specially contracted with Rupert?

Auntie, however, promptly settled all her doubts on the subject.

"And you don't wish to tell me what more cook said? You have some reason for hiding it, children. You may think how sorry I am even to think this."

Vera's face was already hid within the folds of auntie's dress, and handsome Rupert looked decidedly puzzled and uncomfortable.

"I must know what cook said," came quietly, but resolutely. "I am here in your mother's place, darling children," and there was an accent of keen pain in the words as they fell, "and am, therefore, fully justified in requiring to know everything that concerns you."

"I'll tell you, then, auntie," and sweet Vera now lifted up her face, quite boldly. "But you won't be cross, will you? Cook said," and her voice shook just the very least in the world, "that if the gipsies could only manage to get hold of us—certainly, at any rate of one—they would be only too glad."

"Cook ought to be ashamed of herself for talking such nonsense," came sternly, in reply. "I really thought she had more sense."

Vera's face became quite flushed as auntie spoke; and Rupert, too, looked decidedly ashamed of himself for having been foolish enough to believe in such nonsense.

As he said presently, when that lady had quitted the room, he knew perfectly well, all the time that cook was only trying to frighten them, and also making a little fun at their expense; which wasn't fair, after all.

"But auntie herself, evidently, does not wish us to go near these gipsies—that's very clear also. She has some particular reason of her own, I suppose, for this?" he added.

Vera nodded her head an instant, pretending to look somewhat wise on the occasion.

"And we won't go beyond the outer gate, that's very certain," she said.

"Not an inch," came stoutly from Rupert. "We can just peep at them through the railings, you know, should any of the party be passing along on the outside."

"Delightful!" exclaimed Vera, clapping her hands; "so now we shall see something of the gipsies, after all."

Both children rushed from the room gleefully. They had hit upon such a delightful plan, they both thought.

Vera, however, stopped suddenly.

A letter lay right in her path, and as a matter of course she stooped to pick it up.

"Auntie has dropped one of her letters," she exclaimed.

"There, Rupert, run upstairs with it, whilst I fetch my hat."

Away ran Vera, and Rupert caught up the letter.

It had slipped from the envelope, evidently. Any one might read it—that's of course if they thought it right to do so—for the writing lay uppermost, and was all open to view.

There only seemed to be two or three lines of writing, either, as Rupert quickly thought; and then he did that which he knew full well no one in this world should ever do. He was seized with a sudden impulse of curiosity, and was trying hard to make out the words that were written. He never once paused to think of the dishonourable act he was thus committing, well-knowing, as he did, that those words were addressed specially to auntie, and not, most assuredly, to himself. There was a moment's pause. Fortunately—or at least so he thought—the penmanship was very clear indeed. And thus Rupert had little difficulty in satisfying his curiosity.

It was such a short, funny sort of letter, as he thought to himself.

"I wonder what the people, whoever they are, have got to write about."

The next instant Rupert had started violently, and his face had become quite pale.

"Cook was right, then, after all," he half-gasped to himself.

And then Vera came tripping lightly in, rosy, and also breathless, with the haste she had made.

"It's all true, Vera," he burst forth excitedly, "about the gipsies. Listen! only listen!"

"But Rupert—oh, Rupert! you don't really mean it?" exclaimed Vera, in a tone of utter astonishment. "You haven't been reading that letter belonging to auntie, have you?"

"I have, though," fell stoutly. "And it's a good thing I have, too. It concerns us—both of us—I can tell you, far more than it does auntie herself; or any one else, in fact."

"Concerns us!" ejaculated Vera.

But Rupert did not even stop to answer her. He was already reading aloud the letter, short as it was; and Vera meanwhile, who was the younger of the two, was trying to make out the words over his shoulder.

"We shall come and take away the children on Thursday. Have them ready. We have plenty of money to pay expenses.—GIPSY."

KEY TO THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PAUL.—IX.—p. 704.

- (1) Acts xxvii. 2; xix. 29; xx. 4; Col. iv. 10; Phil. 24; (2) That Luke was with Paul; xvi. 10-17; xx. 5; xxi. 17; xxvii. 1 to xxxiii. 16; (3) (a) xxvii. 3, 43; (b) vv. 23, 24; (c) vv. 21, 34; (d) 31, 34; (4) v. 38; (5) Because of the equinoctial gales. The fast was the day of atonement: Lev. xxiii. 27, 29; (6) xxviii. 3; (7) Luke xiii. 1; John ix. 2; (8) Acts xiv. 12; xxviii. 6; (9) vv. 16, 30; (10) Eph. iii. 1; 2 Tim. i. 16; Philom. x. 13.