THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

OF ALL DEGREES.

BY LESLIE KEITH, AUTHOR OF "THE CHILCOTES," ETC.

ALICE WANTS CHARLIE TO BE GOOD THAT SHE MAY LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE SINGING.

CHAPTER I.—THE NEW COMERS.

IT was a thing that nobody in Barford had expected, and Barford resented the unexpected.

This does not refer to Colonel Lindsell's death, because, being an oldish man, and always more or less an ailing one, there was nothing surprising in the fact that he should die. Barford's angry surprise did not busy itself over the soldier's surrender to the last summons, though it missed him as a notable figure in village circles and a gentle and genial friend; its concern was given to the astounding revelations regarding his possessions which were made public property by the lawyer's measured phrases.

In little places where no very stirring events take place, people like to know everything about a neighbour, and take a lively interest in reckoning his income and his expenditure and in settling the terms of his will.

The old soldier had come to Barford so long ago that there had been time for a very solid growth of opinion to gather about him and his affairs, and if you had hinted to any one in the village that which the lawyer's unemotional tones proclaimed aloud after the funeral, you would have met with an indignant incredulity for your pains. The colonel had come to Battle House—appropriately enough named as the home of a soldier—after his retirement from active service in India, and that was in the time of the Smithsons, and the Durrants, and other "oldest inhabitants" who, in their long ownership of the ground, presented such a formidable front to new comers. He had brought with him his only child, a daughter named Alice, and a little boy, an orphaned grandchild.

Alice, according to tradition, had been a slim, pale girl in those days, with a shy manner and rather wistful blue eyes—who was very badly dressed and had nothing to say for herself. She and the ayah and the little boy Charlie used to walk about the lanes looking chilled even in the July sunshine, and the little procession roused an unflagging interest whenever it appeared.

A real black woman in native costume was not to be seen every day: there were all sorts of whispers about the poor stranger—it was said that she worshipped idols and believed in fetishes, and performed strange rites and ceremonies in the seclusion of Battle House in which the lanky girl and little boy joined her. The rumour gained the greater credence because no member of Battle House had appeared in church, though a pew was allotted to their use; and though the vicar had been persuaded by his sister and housekeeper to call almost before the great boxes that cumbered the narrow hall of Battle House were unpacked.

The colonel was a good deal from home at first, living mainly at his club in London, and when he ran down to Barford it was to superintend the rearrangement of the bungalow, as he called his new quarters. It was an old house without much pretension, but it the better on that account suited a poor soldier's purse, as he genially remarked, and old houses, as those who live in an age of revived Queen Anne know to their cost, have great capabilities in the way of snug and wholesome comfort.

When the large cases were unpacked, many objects of a rich and barbaric splendour to native eyes came out of them; black chairs and tables from Bombay, carved in intricate designs, oriental draperies, ivories, peacocks' feathers, nick-nacks, curiously wrought and diffusing a faint scent of sandal-wood. Barford could only think of the Queen of Sheba; the æsthete had not had his day then, and nobody had seen the like before. There was some little scoffing among the envious, but on the whole it was felt that a great distinction had been conferred on the village by this addition to its forces.

The coming and the taking possession by the strangers, however, soon grew to be almost matter of history; the ayah, at least, was a mere myth to the younger generations, for long before the winter nipped the trees, she had gone back to India.

After that Alice was seen alone in the lanes, walking hand in hand with the little boy, and sometimes carrying him, though he was a great deal too heavy for her. One afternoon in late summer the pair appeared in church, slipping into a back seat, the child staring wonderingly about him with bright, bold eyes, and Alice blushing painfully under the general scrutiny. She had on her lanky dress and her old garden hat, and had forgotten her gloves, perhaps because the church was so near her home that to walk across the garden and the little grave-yard scarcely seemed to demand a toilet. But the girl seeing before her all those starched muslins, all those best hats and bonnets, with astonished faces gazing at her from under them, felt that she had made a blunder.

When the service began, however, she forgot her distress in an absorbed wonder and delight. The clerk poked a prayer-book at her but she did not know how to thread her way through its intricacies; she let it fall and listened with all her heart in her ears.

Charlie sitting on the floor at her feet, and thus out of sight, behaved at first pretty well, playing with the books and talking murmurously to himself, but he presently grew restless, and she had to take him out before the sermon began.

"Charlie, dear," she said, depositing him on a flat tombstone within a stone's throw of the little porch; "will you be good and play here for a little, so that Allie may listen to the people singing?"

Charlie wriggled from the stone, and finding a hollow under it which represented a wonderful cavern to his imagination that fed on fairies and giants, consented to the proposal; but though Alice strained her ear, she could not catch a word of the preacher's monologue.

"What is he talking about, and why do people go to church?" she was saying to herself; "papa never goes."

"What do they mean by saying 'Lighten our darkness'? It is not dark; it is pretty even here with the pale sun on those yellow trees, though it is so cold."

Then the preacher's voice ceased, and presently the organ notes were heard in a prelude and the voices rose in unison. Alice left Charlie head and shoulders buried in the cavern, and fat chubby legs sticking out to view, and crept nearer the porch.

"Lead, kindly Light" came the words clear from many lips, the shrill voices of the choir and the deeper bass of the clerk rising above the others.

> Lead, kindly Light, amidst the encircling gloom.

It was Newman's pathetic cry, that cry which has found an echo in so many hearts—that they were sending up to heaven on that still, sunny autumn afternoon. Once again that suggestion of darkness; once again that supplication for light—Alice listened in timid perplexity.

"Far from home" they were singing: the young girl's thoughts flew to India, which was still home to her; but these people who all lived here—why did they sing as if they were wandering in a great desert and did not know the way?

Charlie's cry roused her from her reverie; the little man had hurt his head in wriggling out from his new play-place and was howling vigorously enough to frighten Allie's anxious heart. She forgot everything in soothing and comforting him, in kissing the wounded place to make it well, in using all her simple consoling arts. Finally, before the singers had finished the strain, she carried the boy off to play in his own garden beyond the grave-stones.

On the next Sunday she came alone to church and remained till the service was ended—her wistful, shy blue eyes fixed anxiously on the clergyman, trying to understand his message.

She slipped out early from her place near the door, for though poor Allie had recognised her debt to convention and wore a pair of cotton gloves, she was still shrinkingly conscious of many alien looks directed at her. She had not reached the gate, however, which divided the Battle House garden from the churchyard before the vicar's sister, bustling down the aisle and between the yew trees, had overtaken her.

She laid a hand on the girl's shoulder, and Allie started timidly.

"My dear," she said, "I was very glad to see you in church, and I hope you will come always. Come and sit in our pew; I am all alone, and there is plenty of room, and it will be less lonely for you. Jones tells me," she went on kindly enough, so as to cover the girl's embarrassed silence, "that you have no Prayer Book——"

"I never saw one till I came here."

"Then, I suppose," Miss Durrant went on with faint disapproval, "you went to chapel in India? There are Presbyterian chaplains at some stations, I know, and they are often good men"—her conscience forced her to the admission.

But to Allie this was only an increase of the mystery.

"I never went anywhere at all," she said shyly. "Charlie and I used to go and hear the band, and sometimes when he was alone papa let us dine with him."

Miss Durrant looked genuinely shocked. Here was a little heathen of fourteen, who had never been in church, perhaps never even christened; the thought was too dreadful. And what an example to others!

"My child," she said very gravely, "it is right for us all to worship God. He has commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath day. You must come and see my brother and he will explain"—Miss Durrant always upheld her brother's authority—"he will show you how very sinful it is to spend the Lord's day in frivolous amusement. He has a class at his house on Tuesday evenings at seven o'clock. Will you come to it?"

"I will ask papa," said Allie who had listened timidly and with a downcast head. If it was wrong not to go to church, why did not papa go?

The colonel came down from town on the following morning and she made her appeal to him as he sat smoking on the lawn. She was very fond of her father who was invariably kind to her and the boy, and whose comings made a jubilee for both.

"Go if you care about it," he said, "by all means go—so long as you don't ask me to go with you, my child."

"But, papa, Miss Durrant said it was very displeasing to God if we did not go to church."

"Ah!" said the colonel with a smile, "she is the parson's sister, and from her point of view no doubt she is right."

"But I can't leave Charlie." Alice produced another difficulty, though the first was by no means wiped away.

"Charlie must stay with me or his nurse," said his grandfather with more decision than usual; "I decline to have Charlie's creed shaped for him at three years old. Religion and church-going and that sort of thing, are very becoming in your sex, Allie, and I like them the better for it, but I won't have the boy made into an old woman."

Allie found this argument a little comforting. Perhaps Miss Durrant meant that God was angry when women didn't go to church and pray and listen to sermons. There were so many things men might do which were not allowed to their daughters and wives and sisters—even Allie's slender opportunities of observation had taught her that.

With this reflection to console her she went to the week-day class and to church, and very soon she forgot to balance the question of right and wrong and was wholly absorbed in the message she found waiting her there.

God leads us by many and devious ways to Himself: some He saves as by fire, and to a few the revelation comes as the breaking of a summer's morning. She had not been conscious of her darkness any more than we are conscious of it on a June night in the north, and yet we welcome the dawn.

Love divine seemed now to crown the human love, and she expanded under it as a flower at the kiss of the sun. To such a nature as this, goodness easily comes; the hard wrestlings and fightings with opposing impulses which others have to endure are unknown to it—the speculative questionings which make a spiritual loneliness in so many lives have no meaning for it. Alice had not the mental force or grasp to make intellectual difficulties a part of her burden; these never shadowed her serenity. She accepted the wonderful story coming from the clergyman's earnest lips as a joyful reality. It was scarcely with her that process of mental change, that new poise of the mind which we call conversion; she was conscious of no supreme moment of revelation, only of a gradual and beautiful broadening and brightening of her life under the new influences.

The village very soon forgot the day when she had been a stranger in her Father's house, she was soon at home there and happier than in any other place. And yet Alice's was by no means an unhappy girlhood; she was wholesome-minded

enough to feel that all the good things of this life are but the better and more precious because we take them as gifts lent us for our using.

As the shy, lanky girl grew into young womanhood, her world blossomed in many directions: she made friends—not perhaps very easily, for she was always timid—but those she took to her heart did not allow themselves to slip out of it. In her home—that dainty home with its faint odours of the east, she reigned as mistress and queen, and it was a rule of love.

There was enough for any girl to do—even a girl whose education was left pretty much to haphazard. Charlie and Alice, dear comrades and friends, had lessons together out of school hours from the village schoolmistress; and while the little man rebelled over his pot-hooks and hangers, Alice conscientiously studied the history and geography of her country, and learned to be an excellent arithmetician. She could also do plain sewing to perfection, and she had had lessons in music which she loved—though she never grew proficient in the art—from the organist in the little church. This was her only accomplishment—a slender one at best—if we may except a certain skill in the manufacture of wax flowers, at that time considered by Barford to meet to the full a woman's yearnings after art.

But apart from the furnishing of her mind, there were so many things to do for others. Even when Charlie went to school her love followed him in letters, and her hands busied themselves in preparations and surprises for his return. He was a fine, handsome, high-spirited boy, and his grandfather and young aunt had a great deal of pride in him.

"We must make a soldier of him, Allie," her father would say; "all the Lindsells have been soldiers—it runs in the family blood."

"Only that means that he must leave us," Allie said.

"Pooh! you can't tie the boy to your apron-strings, my dear. A man must face the world and fight his way there. I've been thinking Charlie had better go down to the Lee's next holidays. General Lee has asked him often enough. He is a very good friend of mine, and he may be of use to the boy. Write and tell him he may accept the next invitation from Herbert Lee, Allie. We must think of his good, my dear."

Allie wrote the letter very reluctantly, but she never thought of disputing her father's wishes. She wanted Charlie to come back to her, and she had a momentary feeling of disloyalty towards the family profession, which was beginning already to make such heavy demands on her affection.

Allie would have had Charlie to think of the church—to become a soldier in the great warfare against sin and impurity; but a man may be a follower of Christ in any profession, she reflected, and she thought of Havelock and of Gordon, of whom she had heard, though the world as yet knew little of that heroic soul whose witness for Christ it will not allow to perish.

Perhaps the one shadow on Alice's content was the knowledge that neither her father nor Charlie shared those hopes and joys that had blessed her life. She knew now that the great sacrifice was made for all, and that God would have every one whom He has created to turn to Him. The two whom she loved most in the world refused her spiritual kinship, but, though it grieved her to know it, she never lost hope.

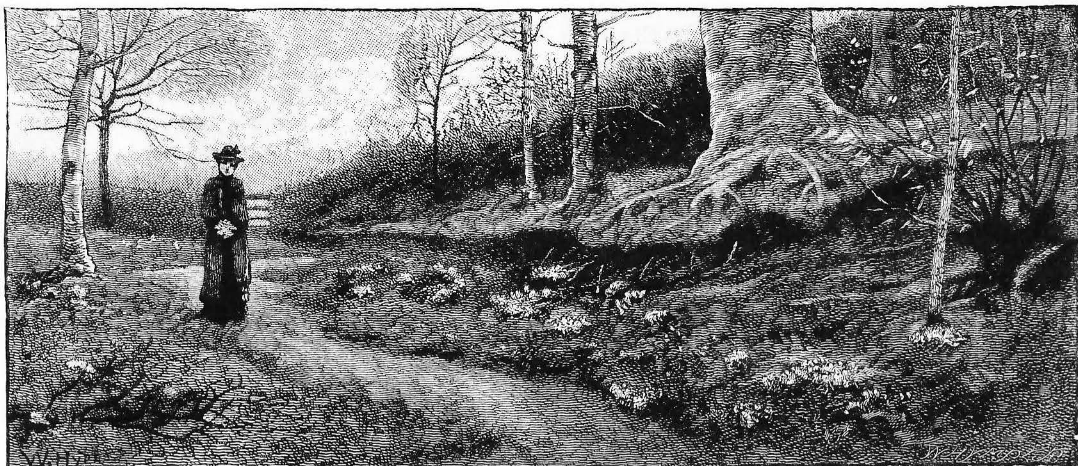
"Some day they will understand," she said to herself, as she went to the little church to pour out her heart there in entreaty or in thankfulness.

"O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad in Thee all our days." That was the psalmist's prayer, but it is not every life that realises its blessedness. To Alice full measure had been given in the spring of her youth; but for some the years go by unsatisfied and empty, spent in a vain groping for the light which comes at last but as a pale sunset gleam before the end.

The villagers passing over the highway to church had been shocked and scandalised at first by the sight of the colonel, with his yellow face and long moustache, sitting in the summer-time in his garden, clad in a wonderful loose garment, and smoking a cheroot, or even reading a newspaper, while Charlie played at his feet. If that was the behaviour of those in authority, what was to become of the morals of the lower classes? It is generally the lower classes whose welfare is considered to be imperilled in such cases. It was even suggested, by the people who are always so ready to point out another's duty, that the clergyman should remonstrate; but Mr. Durrant was a quiet, absent, and very modest man, and he very likely thought that example might work more powerfully than precept; at any rate, though he went often to Battle House, blundering in at odd times, early or late, and often sitting silent—but always cheerfully welcomed by the colonel, who liked and respected him—he did not remonstrate; and in time the church-goers got used to the spectacle of the non-church-goer, and even condoned the offence.

For the colonel was undoubtedly a favourite, and he had a quaint, lazy, philosophical habit of mind that somehow made those who listened to him feel clever, and everybody likes to feel clever. He was ready to lend his newspapers and his books, or to give away his cigars, or to do anything for a neighbour that did not involve a great amount of trouble or exertion. Some of the languor of India clung to him still, and people said he was lazy. But bustle and activity made no part of life in the sleepy little village, so that to be an idler there was not counted against a man as a fault.

ALF COOKE LEEDS.



SOME AMERICAN POETESSES.

IN every age the best thought of the time tends to express itself in poetry; and religious poetry has well been called "the holy of holies of literature." What subjects, indeed, can more powerfully stir the heart of a poet than those inspired by the Christian Faith? "The mighty hopes that make us men;" the aspiration after a Divine Ideal; the praise of Infinite Perfection, Infinite Love; the longing of the heart for its only satisfaction, its eternal Rest—it is difficult, in view of the sublimity of themes such as these, to tolerate their expression in ordinary and commonplace language. And yet it would be unjust to wave contemptuously aside all writers of devotional verse who are not poets in the highest sense of the term. They too have their uses; and among a vast number of uncritical readers, their modest work bears fruit in thought and in life.

The first representative of American poetry, devotional or otherwise, was a woman, Mrs. Anne Bradstreet, and her countrywomen have for the last century done worthy service in producing sweet and earnest religious verse. Some, indeed, rise to the poet's rank. It is of course impossible within the limits of one article to enumerate all whose poems are worth reading, but hints may be given that will lead to further study.

It would be ungrateful to overlook Lydia Huntley Sigourney, the first poetess after Mrs. Bradstreet who attained any great degree of popularity. A memorial tablet has been recently placed in Christchurch, Hartford, Connecticut, above the pew she long occupied. It contains these lines, written by Whittier as an epitaph:

> She sang alone, ere womanhood had known
> The gift of song which fills the air to-day;
> Tender and sweet, a music all her own
> May fitly linger where she knelt to pray.

Mr. Whittier, in enclosing the epitaph, bears testimony to her kindness of character. "I knew Mrs. Sigourney well when, as a boy, I came to Hartford. Her kindness to the young rustic stranger I shall never forget."

"She sang alone." In this lay much of Mrs. Sigourney's power. It is impossible to avoid a comparison between her and Mrs. Hemans, whom she greatly admired. Both were precocious children, writing verse at a very early age; both occupied a position singularly free from rivalry; both wrote with great ease, fluency, and rapidity; both were loving students of Nature; both were in their private character good and amiable women; both kept up literary work continuously throughout domestic and maternal cares; both were accustomed to dwell on homelike and familiar themes; both were most voluminous writers, Mrs. Sigourney having issued fifty-nine books in all. Brainard's expression, "Every decent matron grace" might be said to apply to them both. Even as to the choice of individual subjects they frequently agreed; and Mrs. Sigourney's lines on Felicia Hemans may be quoted as a fair specimen of her powers

> Therefore we will not say
> Farewell to thee; for every unborn age
> Shall mix thee with its household charities;
> The sage shall greet thee with his benison,
> And woman shrine thee as a vestal flame
> In all the temples of her sanctity,
> And the young child shall take thee by the hand,
> And travel with a surer step to Heaven.

As she so generously honours her English sister, it is a little ungracious to insist on her inferiority; but after all, one must acknowledge that the faint praise of Mrs. Sigourney's countryman, Mr. Griswold, well sums up her merits: "The religious and domestic character of her productions has made them popular with the large classes who regard more than artistic merit, the spirit and tendency of what they read."

Perhaps the best fragment of Mrs. Sigourney's

poetry is that entitled "Death of an Infant," but recollecting that the quotation given from her predecessor, Mrs. Bradstreet, was an "Elegy on a Grandchild," we forbear. The remark made in a former article as to the prevalence of topics of bereavement in early American poets is specially applicable to poetesses. The infant mortality in their pages is something quite harrowing. On turning through any large collection of verse, one is continually coming to poems on the death of little children. One wonders if these reiterated assertions that it is best for the babies to die really came from the bereaved. The resignation of a heart-broken mother is, perhaps, the most sacred thing on earth, but one can hardly think it would utter itself in poetry of this kind. And the thought of our age is tending rather towards the belief that it is better the babies should *live*—live through the observance of God's own laws of health—live to do good service for the Saviour, who called children to His knee, for many a long year before they yield their souls to His keeping. The noblest ideal is shadowed forth by Shakespeare's lines on the Christian knight, who gave his body to the earth,

> And his pure soul unto his captain Christ,
> Under whose colours he had fought so long.

"Whom the gods love die young," was, after all a heathen, not a Christian proverb.

There is no unhealthy sentiment in the poems of Anne Charlotte Lynch, afterwards wife of Professor Botta, of New York University—a lady who has won a well-deserved reputation. A sound practical tendency is noticeable in her poetry, mingled at the same time with fervent devotion.

"Show thy love to the Saviour by love to humanity," is a lesson she emphasises. In "Christ Betrayed," she points out that those who hate and scorn the deed of Judas may, all unknowingly, crucify their Lord afresh to-day. And the lines "To the Saviour" illustrate the tone of her teaching.

> Oh Thou who once on earth beneath the weight
> Of our mortality didst live and move,
> The incarnation of profoundest Love;
> Who on the Cross that love didst consummate—
> Whose deep and ample fulness could embrace
> The poorest, meanest, of our fallen race:
> How shall we e'er that boundless debt repay?
> By long loud prayers in gorgeous temples said?
> By rich oblations on Thine altars laid?
> Ah, no! not thus Thou didst appoint the way,
> When Thou wast bowed our human woe beneath,
> Then as a legacy Thou didst bequeath
> Earth's sorrowing children to our ministry—
> And as we do to them we do to Thee.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe is of course one of the foremost religious poets of America, although possibly the fame of her prose works may have diverted the attention of English readers from her poems. Her best known hymn is that beginning:

> Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
> When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee.

Two of the best verses are usually omitted in English hymn books.

> Alone with Thee, amid the mystic shadows,
> The solemn hush of nature newly born!
> Alone with Thee in breathless adoration,
> In the calm dew and freshness of the morn!
>
> As in the dawning o'er the waveless ocean,
> The image of the morning star doth rest,
> So in this stillness Thou beholdest only
> Thine image in the waters of my breast.

The popular hymn "Knocking, knocking, who is there?" is also from Mrs. Stowe's pen, but it has been strangely twisted about to suit the music. Those to whom *Songs and Solos* are familiar, will be glad to see a fragment in its original form.

> Knocking, knocking, ever knocking,
> Who is there?
> 'Tis a pilgrim, strange and kingly,
> Never such was seen before;—
> Ah, sweet soul, for such a wonder
> Undo the door.
>
> No,—that door is hard to open,
> Hinges rusty, latch is broken,
> Bid Him go.
> Wherefore with that knocking dreary
> Scare the sleep from one so weary?
> Say Him, no.
>
> Knocking, knocking, ever knocking,
> What' still there?
> O sweet soul, but once behold Him
> With the glory-crowned hair;
> And those eyes so strange and tender
> Waiting there.
> Open! open! once behold Him,
> Him so fair.

There are two authoresses, each known to the majority of English readers, by *one* poem alone. The one poem in each case is of such good quality that it is matter for regret there are not more of the same degree of merit. The first is Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Miles, who wrote the well-known hymn, "Looking unto Jesus."

> Thou who didst stoop below
> To drain the cup of woe,
> Wearing the form of frail mortality;
> Thy blessed labours done,
> Thy crown of victory won,
> Hast passed from earth, passed to Thy home on high.
>
> It was no path of flowers
> Which through this world of ours
> Beloved of the Father, Thou didst tread.
> And shall we in dismay
> Shrink from the narrow way
> When clouds and darkness are around it spread?

The second is Mrs. Elizabeth Lloyd Howell, to whom is due the honour of being occasionally mistaken for Milton. She wrote "Milton's Prayer for Patience," which was actually included in an Oxford edition of the poet, as a new-found poem by him!

Of more uniform worth are the poems of two sweet singers, Miss Eliza Scudder and Miss Lucy Larcom. Deep spiritual insight, grace of expres-

sion, and true poetic feeling mark their compositions. From the pen of the former we have a beautiful hymn on the Love of God.

Thou Grace Divine, encircling all,
A soundless, shoreless sea
Wherein at last our souls must fall!—
O Love of God most free!

When over dizzy heights we go,
One soft hand blinds our eyes:
The other leads us safe and slow,—
O Love of God most wise!

And though we turn us from Thy face,
And wander wide and long,
Thou holdst us still in Thine embrace,—
O Love of God most strong.

"Who by searching can find out God?" is another fine poem.

I cannot find Thee! still on restless pinion
My spirit beats the void where Thou dost dwell,
I wander, lost, through all Thy vast dominion,
And shrink beneath Thy light ineffable.

Yet high above the limits of my seeing,
And folded far within the inmost heart,
And deep below the deeps of conscious being
Thy splendour shineth: there, O God, Thou art!

The music and tenderness of Lucy Larcom's religious poetry is well illustrated by "Meeting Again."

When for me the silent oar
Parts the Silent River,
And I stand upon the shore
Of the strange For Ever,
Shall I miss the loved and known?
Shall I vainly seek mine own?

'Mid the crowd that come to meet
Spirits sin-forgiven,—
Listening to their echoing feet
Down the streets of heaven,—
Shall I know a footstep near
That I listen, wait for here?

Then will one approach the brink
With a hand extended,
One whose thoughts I loved to think
Ere the veil was rended,
Saying, "Welcome! we have died,
And again are side by side."

Saying "I will go with thee,
That thou be not lonely,
To yon hills of mystery;
I have waited only
Until now, to climb with thee
Yonder hills of mystery."

Can the bonds that make us here
Know ourselves immortal,
Drop away like foliage sere
At life's inner portal?
What is holiest below
Must for ever live and grow.

The "Still Hour" is a beautiful record of communion with God.

In other of Miss Larcom's poems there is a delight in the beauty of Nature, and a recognition of the Creator through these works of His hand, that remind us of her countryman, William Cullen Bryant.

But of all American poetesses none are winning more sure and loving appreciation in England than the sisters Alice and Phoebe Carey. They were born on a farm near Cincinnati, Ohio—Alice in 1820, Phoebe in 1825. Alice, who was mainly self-taught, published her first volume of poems at the age of eighteen. Her sister became associated with her in literary work, and for twenty years they lived together in New York, supporting themselves by writing. Their house was a pleasant resort for literary society. Alice died in 1871, and Phoebe only survived her a few months, dying, it is said, of sheer grief at her sister's loss. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

"No American woman has evinced in prose or poetry anything like the genius of Alice Carey," said the *Westminster Review*. She is not exclusively a religious writer, but it is with her devotional poems that we are concerned. And it is impossible to deny that there is a quaint charm of originality, mingled with force, about these productions that at once arrests attention. Take for instance the "Fire by the Sea."

There were seven fishers with nets in their hands,
And they walked and talked by the seaside sands:
Yet sweet as the sweet dew-fall
The words they spake, though they spake so low,
Across the long, dim centuries flow,
And we know them, one and all;—
Ay! know them and love them all.

Seven sad men in the days of old,
And one was gentle and one was bold,
And they walked with downward eyes;
The bold was Peter, the gentle was John,
And they all were sad, for the Lord was gone,
And they knew not if He would rise,—
Knew not if the dead would rise.

The whole story is beautifully told, with a simple freshness in the words.

Sometimes Alice Carey brings George Herbert strongly to mind, by her quaint directness mingled with earnest devotional feeling. Take for instance "My Creed."

I hold that Christian grace abounds
Where charity is seen; that when
We climb to heaven 'tis on the rounds
Of love to men.

This I moreover hold, and dare
Affirm where'er my rhyme may go,
Whatever things be sweet and fair
Love makes them so.

'Tis not the wide phylactery,
Nor stubborn fast, nor stated prayers
That make us saints; we judge the tree
By what it bears.

The same lesson is insisted upon in "Nobility."

True worth is in being, not seeming;
In doing each day that goes by
Some little good—not in the dreaming
Of great things to do by-and-by.

For whatever men say in blindness,
  And spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
  And nothing so royal as truth.

We cannot make bargains for blisses,
  Nor catch them like fishes in nets,
And sometimes the thing our life misses
  Helps more than the thing which it gets.
For good lieth not in pursuing
  Nor giving of great or of small,
But just in the doing, and doing
  As we would be done by, is all.

No mere morality, apart from Christianity is taught by Alice Carey. Her loving faith is strong, and the "Hidden Way" well expresses this.

I cannot plainly see the way,
  So dark the grave is; but I know
If I do truly love and pray
  Some good will brighten out of woe.

For the same hand that doth unbind
  The winter winds, sends sweetest showers,
And the poor rustic laughs to find
  His April meadows full of flowers.

I said, I could not see the way,
  And yet what need is there to see
More than to serve Him as I may,
  And trust the Great Strength over me?

Why should I vainly seek to solve,
  Free will, necessity, the pall?
I feel, I know, that God is love,
  And knowing this, I know it all.

Phoebe Carey, joint authoress with Alice of their volume of Poems, and also of one on her own account, is best known to English readers by the lines, "Nearer Home," written one Sunday after church, beginning;

One sweetly solemn thought
  Comes to me o'er and o'er.

She has written much that is superior to this hymn in poetic value, though nothing, perhaps, more fitted to appeal to Christian hearts. The very tune to which the words were set, hummed in a gambling den in China, is said to have revived home associations so powerfully in one victim of dissipation that he was stopped short in his career and reclaimed to better things.

As might be expected from their early rural surroundings the two sisters are both intense lovers of Nature. There is a sweet poem by Phoebe Carey, entitled "Field Preaching," from which the last two verses may be given:

So with a book of sermons plain and true
Hid in my heart, where I might turn them through,
I went home softly, through the falling dew,
    Still listening, rapt and calm
To Nature giving out her evening psalm.

While, far along the west, mine eyes discerned
Where lit by God the fires of sunset burned,
The tree tops, unconsumed, to flame were turned,
    And I, in that great hush,
Talked with His angels in each burning bush!

Her religious poems are evidently the fruit of deep experience. "Via Crucis, via Lucis," is a summary of her faith; and with a brief quotation from its verses, we must unwillingly bid these sweet singers farewell.

Questioning, blind, unsatisfied,
Out of the dark my spirit cried,—
Wherefore for sinners, lost, undone,
Gave the Father His only Son?

Clear and sweet there came reply,—
Out of my soul or out of the sky
A voice like music answered:—
God so loved the world, it said.

Could not the Lord from heaven give aid?
Why was He born of the mother-maid?
Only the Son of Man could be
Touched with man's infirmity.

* * * *

Yea, and still from the heavens He saith
The gate of life is the gate of death,
Peace is the crown of faith's good fight,
And the way of the Cross is the way of light!

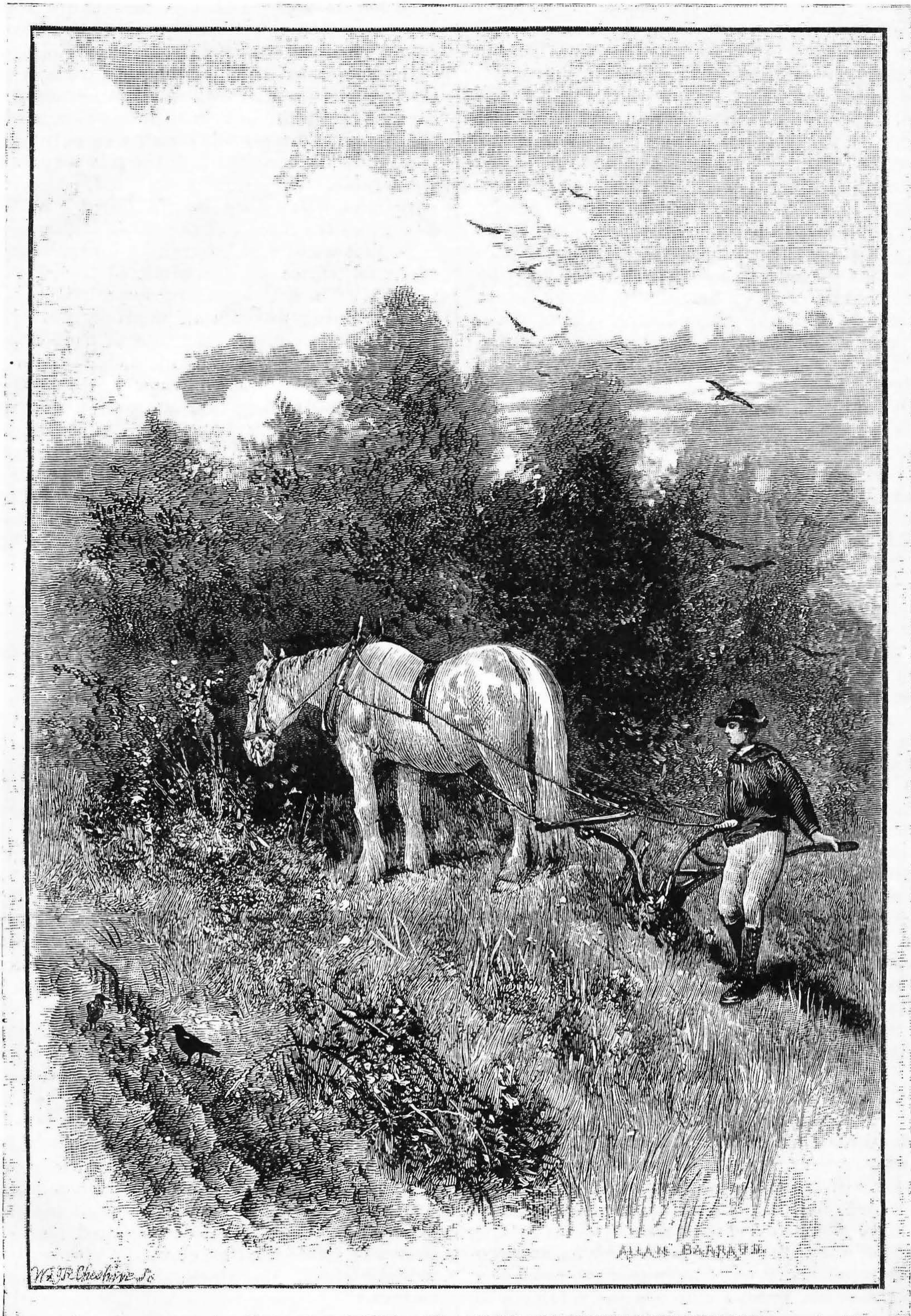
LILY WATSON.

THE END OF THE FURROW.

IN the course of the world's long history, man, trying to read for himself the great mystery and problem of life, has likened it in its brevity and uncertainty to many things, the simile taking colour from that in nature most familiar to him. A voyage across a stormy ocean towards an unseen haven, a vapour that rises and vanishes, a bird's flight, a shadow that fleeth, the grass of the wayside; "a rose" that in the morning "is fair and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb's fleece, and towards evening begins to put on darkness and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age like the waning life of a man."

In its aspect as a grant of time given for the fulfilment of an appointed task, the illustrations are equally numerous, and of all the images that flash across the pages of recorded thought there are none more frequent than those that are drawn from the husbandman's art. Ploughing, sowing, reaping, the threefold act embraces all life.

If we go through the world with our eyes open, everything may help as a new revelation, a means of giving freshness to an old truth. The ploughman who goes forth to plough, as well as the sower who follows him, may serve our turn to point a moral and mirror the world for us; and



THE END OF THE FURROW.

indeed the points of resemblance are so many, the comparison is so natural, so obvious, it comes so spontaneously that the dullest cannot miss it. In the clear, crisp winter days while we pause a moment to watch the red-brown earth turning up under the share, is there one of us who has not felt passingly—" Here, in this breaking up of the fallow ground, in this baring of the soil to the sweet influences of sun and rain and wind and weather, in this warfare against noxious weeds, is a picture of the life I am called on to lead. I too a labourer with my field, little or big, to cultivate, my acre to make ready for the sower's hand." Everything helps the image, the stones and rocks that obstruct the plough, the stubborn clay that will not yield, the sun that beats and the storms that descend on the husbandman's head; the furrows that go even and, most typical of all, the furrows that go crooked.

If the art of furrowing were easy, if the guiding hand were unerring and the lines always went straight without a waver to the end of the field, the picture would lose half its value for us; for however it might fare with us if we set ourselves to master the uses of the coulter, share and mould-board, and tried our 'prentice hand at the stilts, it is certain that in the cultivation of our life's field a great many furrows go awry. The tasks begun hopefully and soon dropped in despondency, the brave intentions that are " dispersed among hindrances," the duties heaven never designed for us and which we rashly take upon ourselves, those other duties lying near us which we despise and neglect—is there any spiritual and moral acre undisfigured by failures such as these?

There are difficult chapters for all of us in the great art of living; days and weeks sometimes when the burden seems too heavy and the appointed part too hard, when the sky is black overhead and the obstacles gather at our feet, and the furrow will not run straight. Even the brightest optimism fails and flags at such seasons and no cajolement of the fancy will make drudgery seem divine, or anything indeed but mean and sordid. We are but mortals, easily depressed, easily made afraid, more ready for the most part to despond than to hope, to record the defeats rather than the triumphs, the pangs rather than the blisses, and so, as needs must, we have our dark days when everything seems amiss.

No one will pretend that duty is always pleasant, or that the common task and the daily round are constantly stimulating and inspiring any more than one can assert that the ploughman is never weary or out of humour with his business. Indeed, those of us who have more than a mere butterfly acquaintance with life, and who have not allowed conscience to make the neglect of our task an easy matter for us, must be able to recall many wakenings to new mornings when the spirit groans and the body refuses to go into harness and to tread the old round. The will rebels against the allotted rôle, whether it has to be played in shop or office or study or within the four walls of home. Having put one's hand to the plough, one would fain turn back and leave the field fallow.

But because duty often wears an unlovely face and speaks with a harsh voice, we dare not therefore argue that we are permitted to shut our eyes to its signs and our ears to its appeals. Duty is inexorable, it is not to be escaped, we can never, strive as we may, be free from obligation —the field must be tilled whether we will or no. Our actions have irrevocable consequences, but so, though we are apt to overlook this, have our inactions. To repel one's task will only make it more difficult, to accept it is the sole way to make it tolerable. And rightly accepted, peace, if not happiness, will follow its fulfilment " as waves flow in on the furrow of the ship's strong keel."

In that wonderful book, the " Journal Intime " of Amiel, where we are admitted to the inmost recesses of a soul agonising for a faith, and for ever straining towards an unattained ideal, we find the writer after a moment of deep despondency over the poverty of his achievements and of revolt against the pledges life exacts from us all, strengthening himself with words which we too may find inspiring. In a find passage he says: " Duty lies in performing the microscopic task allotted to us. The problem set before us is to bring our daily task into the temple of contemplation, and ply it there, to act as in the presence of God, to interfuse one's little part with religion. So only can we inform the detail of life, all that is passing, temporary and insignificant, with beauty and nobility. So may we dignify and consecrate the meanest of occupations. So may we feel that we are paying our tribute to the universal work and the eternal will. So are we reconciled with life, and delivered from the fear of death. So are we in order and at peace."

Perhaps it is the young who are the hottest rebels and the fiercest strugglers against the humdrum commonplace in which the life of work comes dressed for most of us; young folk, who are all for an epic and a dramatic atmosphere, and who would fain live at the pulse's fullest beat. But the daily work of the world would get on but indifferently if we were all called on to play the part of heroes, and doers of mighty deeds, and we have to reconcile ourselves sooner or later to be content with the minor rôle, the hodman's business, the ploughing of the field which another is to sow.

It may be some consolation to the youthful, as it certainly is a compensation to those who are not youthful, to know that time and practice and use and wont make the compassing of one's daily portion easier. The shoulders get used to the burden, one learns to sit still—a great point, that—even in time to hug the monotony of the never varying task; and we make fewer demands on the world, and come to be more patient, to expect less. To fall back on the old simile, one learns to guide the plough with a steadier hand, to make less ado over the hindrances that obstruct, to take the chilling winds and the lashing rains as part of the business, and bear them without complaint, to be less easily beguiled by allurements on this side or that, and so by slow and patient effort to reach at last the end of the furrow.

It is well soberly and with sense to recognise as early as we can that much of the ordinary

business of life must necessarily be prosaic, though the highest motives may animate our doing of it; but it is well too, and wiser for ourselves, if we do not lose sight of the ideal in the practical. Sentiment which softens the hard outlines of life, that halo through we read the past and the future, that colour and vividness which the fancy gives to common things, are a part of God's good gifts to us, as much as are His flowers and His sunshine. The cultivation of the imaginative side of our nature helps us over many a difficult place.

The French have a fine word of praise, when they say of a woman or man "he has kept his illusions." To keep our early freshness of outlook, our ready belief in goodness and greatness and beauty, unimpaired through all discouragement, to feel the glow of a common aim and endeavour with all the struggling multitude, and to be helped and inspired by it, is nobler than to learn patience and endurance through experience, and there is no gilding like it to transform the dusty deeds of life and make them shine.

But it would be unfair and ungracious, even in such random thoughts as these, to dwell exclusively on the darker side of our life's toil, and to forget its many bright hours--hours when our work brings us the purest delight, when the world possesses charm and savour, when to exist is a joy, when all achievement seems possible and easy. The sun shines for us then, the lark soars and sings, the clean fresh scent of the upturned earth is a perfume, the winter is over and gone, and spring's great festival is at hand; we plough in hope. The barrenest, poorest lot must needs hold many such serene and shining moments, bright landmarks by the way to look back on, kind promises for the future.

Even in those more prosaic hours when we neither greatly hope nor fear, neither exult nor despond, but doggedly plod on, there is cheer in the thought that diligent and persevering effort bring us to the end of the furrow at last.

An American man of letters, busy over a great work for the world, used to say at the close of each day's portion with a smile that those of us who saw it have not forgotten, though it will greet us no more on this side of time, "Another child's face washed!" Another little bit of the big lesson learned, another mile of the journey accomplished. Small continuous efforts, not great isolated acts make the sum of life, just as small deeds build up character, just as time is told by minutes. The lesson meets us in nature too: we see the smiling meadows in the spring-time, but before that tender vivid green can refresh our tired eyes a million seeds must germinate, a million blades sprout in the darkness and pierce the heavy clods; so with our duties. If we take them singly we have strength and courage to face them, they will not overwhelm us. If the whole of our life's work were spread before us at the outset, if we saw every hidden rock and stone under this acre given us to till, if we could forecast the faintings and discouragements, the moments of stress and darkness, is there one of us who would not prefer death to life?

But just as the ploughman takes furrow by furrow, one ended before another is begun, so our duties come to us not in battalions but singly; our life's plan, if we read it aright, is beneficently designed; we are not abandoned to blind chance; confusion and entanglement can only come by our choosing to refuse guidance and to shape our lot for ourselves.

So it will seem to us when we have come to the end of it and can look back—a divinely ordered whole which even our failures cannot mar, for God only asks of us our best and bravest, and if we give Him these we need not grieve overmuch if some of the furrows refuse to run straight. The failure may be success after all as far as our own discipline is concerned. To do one's honest best and then move on is the true philosophy.

Death and life lie so close together that we cannot come to the end of our furrow without remembering that the summons to drop the hand from the stilts may come for us before the weeds are uprooted by the share and the field made ready for the harrow.

But when the hand falls from the plough is the task at an end? Surely the very fact that so much of the work of the world is left unfinished and incomplete when death calls is an unanswerable argument for that immortality in which we believe?

The knowable is so vast and the time to learn so short, our researches into nature and art and science are but mere gropings about the outer edge of the matter, our knowledge of the deep things of God but the child's spelling of the alphabet. The cup of wisdom is scarcely raised to our lips before it is dashed from them—are we never to have a fuller draught?

Our very failures may be an answer to our doubts, evidence of a time when we shall neither faint nor fail, when the acre will be freed from weeds and ready for a fair harvest. For in the midst of our saddest blunders we have visions of higher things, unfulfilled aspirations, cravings for growth, and these will be satisfied, every one of them. We who have tasted the bitter fruit of the tree of knowledge are meant to inherit the tree of life, and somewhere else the task dropped here may be taken up and made good.

"He that ploweth, should plow in hope!" It was to the followers of Christ that St. Paul spoke and they of all men have a right to this hope. For though another may sow and still another reap the field that we have ploughed, we have the promise that plougher, sower, and reaper, alike, "shall rejoice together."

ANDREW FERGUSON OF KENTUCKY.

A NEGRO PHILANTHROPIST IN HUMBLE LIFE.

WHEN wealthy capitalists give or bequeath large sums to objects of religion or charity, the press makes the world ring with the name of the philanthropist; but in the eye of Heaven many a deed in lowly life may shine with greater lustre. The old instance of the widow's two mites, seen by Him Who "stood over against the treasury where the rich were casting in their gifts," is often illustrated in real life; and never more notably than in the history of a native of Kentucky, once a poor slave, who has lately built and endowed a church and school for the use of the coloured people in that State. The story is worth telling, for there are some who still regard the coloured people as an inferior race, and not capable of displaying the same high qualities as those who, till lately, kept them in ignorance as well as in bondage.

Andrew Ferguson was born in October, 1820, a slave, in the family of the Rev. Andrew Todd, of Paris, Kentucky; a cousin of Colonel S. Todd, of Lexington, Mrs. Lincoln's father. Towards the end of the year 1852, during the agitation of the African Colonisation Scheme, then earnestly advocated by Henry Clay and others, who saw the increasing difficulties connected with slavery in the United States, Andrew was given his freedom, on condition that he would at once emigrate to Africa. By habits of industry and thrift, Andrew had saved six hundred dollars, his master having allowed him to work for himself at overtime. The first thing he did was to purchase the freedom of his sister, and with her he set sail, on New Year's Day, 1853, from New Orleans. Yellow fever broke out on shipboard, and the vessel lay to for some weeks near Tibu Island. In this lonely place he buried his sister, whose freedom his hard-earned savings of thirty-three years had secured.

He reached his destination, Monrovia, the chief station of Liberia, on March 28, 1853. He was soon stricken down with the fever which is so fatal to new-comers, and from which coloured people are not exempt. For six months he was invalided, and unfit for labour, although he soon was able to read and improve his mind, and was known as a man of earnest faith and humble piety.

At the end of eighteen months he had saved enough, by gardening, to purchase two small lots of land in Clay-Ashland, a settlement near Monrovia, so named in honour of Henry Clay. The deeds of this property were signed by "Joseph J. Roberts, President of the Republic of Liberia." The climate, however, was not such that he could remain without peril, and, having obtained a passport, he returned to Kentucky, going to the house of his father and mother, who were still slaves. Being told that he was liable to be re-arrested and re-sold into slavery, he went to beg for leave to remain a short time with his parents. The magistrate happily was a kind man, and granted to him a legal permit, the terms of which it is interesting now to peruse, as an illustration of the procedure in those days of slavery:

"State of Kentucky, County of Bourbon, *sct.:*

"I, Richard J. Brown, clerk of said county, do certify that Andrew Ferguson, a citizen of Liberia, a free man of colour, who has his passport from J. W. Lewis, Secretary of State of Liberia, states that his business here is to visit his father, mother and relatives, and I being satisfied that his business is laudable and lawful, do authorise the said Ferguson to remain not exceeding thirty days.

"Given under my hand, this 5th day of January, 1855.

"R. J. BROWN.

"Clerk Bourbon County Court."

At the expiration of his permit he made his way across the Ohio River to Cincinnati, where he found work as porter in a bank, and there he remained till the war broke out, and till the Emancipation Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln made it safe for him, as a freedman, to return to Kentucky. With his savings while in Cincinnati, he now purchased the freedom of his younger brother Benjamin, still a slave in Paris, Kentucky. The President's right to make such a proclamation of freedom, without consent of the State legislature, was still disputed on the Border States. It was one of Abraham Lincoln's sayings, that, "If he had broken the constitution, it was to save the constitution, and to save the Union." The march of events, with the success of the Federal army, soon decided the question, and now there is not a slave on the whole continent of North America. Had poor Andrew Ferguson waited a short time, his brother would have been free, and the purchase-money saved.

Returning to Kentucky at the close of the war, he found work as janitor of the Bank of Kentucky, with about a dollar a day as wages. As soon as he had saved enough, he bought a home for his mother, his father having before died. He lived with his mother, and at her death he gave the property by deed to his younger brother for a home. Meeting with an aged coloured man, no longer able to work, he bought a small house and lot, and allowed the poor man, with his family, to occupy it free of rent.

These and other deeds of kindness might never have been heard of had it not been for a later gift, which became known from the fact of its being necessary to make public announcement of it. This was the gift of the church and property already alluded to, which was made over to the Presbytery of Louisville, Kentucky. The church,

called the "Knox Presbyterian Church," is fitted with every convenient furniture, including a fine organ. The property is vested in trustees as a place of worship for coloured people. The donor gave absolutely his whole substance, all that he had, to complete this gift. He had to return to his own self-denying thrifty way of living; occupying a small attic room, doing his own cooking and domestic work, and earning his own scanty means.

It was only by much coaxing that one of the ministers of the Presbytery induced him to give this brief record of his former life, which was sent to the "New York Observer," as an example of generous beneficence. The name of Andrew Ferguson deserves to be honoured in the "short and simple annals of the poor" as a noble Christian philanthropist.

Things New and Old.

BETTING.—Every young man who bets thinks that he has "information" which will lead to his success. Whence does such information come? From some one interested in deceit? from some one whose profession it is to give information in the assurance that, if he varies it enough, some of it will be right? From some one—this is perhaps the most favourable supposition—who has a *boná-fide* knowledge of the secrets of the stable? In the first cases it is absolutely valueless; in the last it must, *ex hypothesi*, be of less use to him than it is to the owner or owners of the horse. In no one case can he take benefit by it. Owners of horses, never making a bet except on a horse meant to win, and with a good chance of winning, have found betting unprofitable. Clever men devoting themselves to a painstaking study of the performances of all the principal horses, understanding the conditions of each race, and carefully collecting and weighing every fact that the public can know about the state of health and powers of the horses competing, have found betting unprofitable. What possible chance can the outsider have, who acts on what he is told by a paragraph written in a newspaper, or by a horsey gentleman with a bird's-eye scarf in a club or a public-house? But more is lost than money. And George Selwyn left out one thing, when he said that gambling consumed time, health, money, and thinking. Gambling, as Charles Kingsley says, is almost the only thing in the world in which the honourable man is no match for the dishonourable man. The scrupulous man is weaker, by the very fact of his scruples, than he who has none. When a man begins to bet or play, he will probably only have a high feeling of honour, a strong moral sense, and his surplus time will be devoted to his new pursuit .... Little by little, he will recede from the standard of behaviour to which he once clung. Gradually will he whittle away the high moral sense which once controlled his actions. Slowly his character is undermined, and happy is he if the whole structure does not fall with a crash which whelms him in its ruin . . . This is no imaginary picture. The records of the courts of law abound with cases in point. In some of them bankruptcy alone has followed failure. In many more a heavier penalty is incurred. The present state of things is a scandal to our cities—a grave danger to our position as a nation. It loudly calls for the anxious thought of all who care for the welfare of the people. And well would it be if some of the energy devoted to more questionable reforms were employed in an attempt to remedy a mischief which, serious as it is, is not beyond cure.—*Quarterly Review.*

TRUTH IN THE WELL.—Truth is said to lie at the bottom of a well, for the very reason, perhaps, that whoever looks down in search of her sees his own image at the bottom, and is persuaded not only that he has seen the goddess, but that she is far better-looking than he had imagined.—*James Russell Lowell.*

BIBLE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"S. K. D." requests an explanation of Rom. v. 7: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

THE Revised version gives a more accurate rendering of this important passage: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for peradventure for the good man [*or*, marg., for that which is good] some one would even dare to die." This margin the American revisers propose to omit, and it seems to give a turn to the passage unwarranted by the context; we therefore leave it out of account, and suppose the apostle to be speaking of "a man" in both cases; first of the righteous, or the just man: can no one be found to die for him? We cannot answer absolutely *No*, for the thing is possible, but rare. *Scarcely*: for there is a case in which it may happen: that is, when the righteous man is also good or benevolent. The good man then is a righteous man, distinguished also by the special qualities that win affection and devoted service: for such a man, as many a true story proves, "some one would even dare to die." "But," and this is the great application of the statement, "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners [not even 'righteous,' much less 'good'] CHRIST DIED FOR US."

1 *John* v. 13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." "E. C." asks: "How are we to understand the latter part of this verse, *that ye may believe*," etc.?

THE difficulty is that the persons addressed *already* "believe on the name of the Son of God;" and yet the Epistle is said to be written to them in order that they "*may* believe." The probable explanation is that the text as it stands in our ordinary version is altered from what the Apostle really wrote. The earliest MSS. of the Epistle, and the chief ancient versions give a different reading, adopted by the best modern critical editors. Thus the Revised Version reads the verse: "These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life; *even* to you that believe on the name of the Son of God." It is the object of the whole Epistle to show that the life eternal follows upon believing. To believe *on the Name* of the Son of God is the acceptance of Christ Himself, in every character that His Name denotes—Messiah, Saviour, King.

If the ordinary text is adopted, the last clause can only mean "that ye may *continue to believe*," *i.e.*, may stand fast in your faith. But this explanation is a little forced: and, as we have seen, we need not resort to it.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

A STORY OF THE VAUDOIS.

BY CRONA TEMPLE.

CHAPTER I.

It is nearly two hundred years since the long persecutions of the church in the Alpine valleys ended in their "Glorious Return" from exile, and their gain of liberty of conscience and freedom from the yoke of Rome. It is but right that in 1889 Protestant countries should unite in offering sympathy and brotherly help to the Waldensian Church in its time of commemoration. Two hundred years ago, Britain, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and the Protestants of France vied with each other in showing their generous love for these sorely-tried children of God. And in these happier times it is well to turn back the history page to learn what it was that stirred the hearts of our forefathers; to learn what manner of woe it was that the Vaudois endured; to read how the God they served did not suffer them to be tempted beyond what they were able to bear, but—giving them the high honour of bearing witness to His truth, He comforted them at last with His gifts of freedom and of peace. It is in such memories that nations may learn their lessons of truest wisdom. Christianity should be national as well as individual: the Heavenly King demands service from nations as well as from hearts. And it is right that though the Waldenses are foreigners, and a people of but small account on Europe's muster-roll, their bi-centenary, soon to be celebrated, should waken echoes in England; such echoes as God wills that noble deeds should stir throughout all time.

MAY NOT THAT LIGHT BETRAY?

THE sunlight was fading from the hills, and the pine-forests were growing grey in the creeping shadow. A northerly breeze had been blowing from the mountains, but it had died down as north winds do with the sun setting; a great stillness had fallen upon the valleys.

One could hear the torrent as it leapt from the snows above, rushing and gurgling in the gorge it had graven for itself on its way to the Pélice river. One could hear too, faint and far away, the cry of the ravens as they circled over a meadow; and one might catch the jarring call of a night-hawk as it woke from its daylight sleep.

But these sounds rather blended with than broke upon the silence. And there seemed besides no sign of life or motion in all the width of the valley.

There were traces of cultivation on the hill-sides, where careful hands had terraced and tilled the stony soil, winning from the wilderness fields for pastures and for corn.

There were also buildings that had the semblance of cottages, a group of ruins here by the stream-side, and single ones standing yonder beyond the spurs of the pine-woods.

But in those fields were now neither flocks nor herds, nor any sign of corn; and from those broken chimneys no smoke-wreaths drifted to tell of human lives about the warm hearth-stones.

It was the year 1687, and the valley was the valley of Lucerna in the Piedmontese Alps.

This was the country of the Vaudois, and it was indeed desolate after the bitter persecution which had followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Storms of cruelty and the bitterness of superstition had swept the valleys at various times, but never a storm so devastating and terrible as this. From Fenestrelle to Rora, from the Pra Pass to the plains of Piedmont, fire and sword had driven forth the remnant of the Vaudois. Hundreds had fallen, fighting for their faith and for their homes; hundreds had perished under the white pall of the winter snows; and hundreds more had died on the scaffold, or in the prisons of the plain.

And the remnant, the poor harried and hunted souls, had gone forth to seek an asylum—if such there might be found—where they might worship their God according to His word.

The sun sank lower yet; the line of light retreated farther up the mountain-peaks. The ravens sullenly stooped and settled on the rocks. The torrent kept its noisy way charged with the blue snow-water that came glancing from the hills.

Suddenly a woman's voice rose on the air, clear, and very sweet. It came through the sprays of creeping plants that veiled a crag so steep that one might marvel how human being could have climbed there. It was a haunt fit only for the chamois or the hill-sheep; and on either hand spread dense forests and ravines where the snow-wreaths lay yet unmelted.

The song rang forth. It was no wavering strain, no uncertain sound, but a chant of triumph that held, also, a note of defiance—

"God's Name is great!
He breaketh the arrow of the bow,
The shield, the sword and the battle.
Thou art of more honour and might than the mountains of prey.
Thou, even Thou art to be feared.
The earth trembled and was still when God arose
To help the meek upon the earth.
The fierceness of man shall turn to Thy praise,
And the fierceness of the violent shalt Thou refrain.
God shall refrain the spirit of princes.
The Lord our God is terrible unto the kings of the earth."

The voice ceased; as the last note died away the last sun-shaft touched the highest peak. The day was done. Night had fallen on the valley of Lucerna.

Behind the ivy-sprays and the clinging rock plants there was a path on the face of the cliff widening as it rose, until—some fifty feet above the stream—it spread into a platform or tiny amphitheatre completely hidden from any prying eye that might search the cliff from below.

From above one might perhaps peer into its recesses; but then no living thing ever did look from above, save the falcons and the ravens, or perhaps a wild goat tempted by the tufts of mountain flowers which bloomed against the edges of the snow.

Presently, far back in the hill-cleft, a small red flame leaped up, fed on dried grasses and fir-cones.

"Rénée, Rénée," called a woman's voice, "thou art too rash, dear child. May not that light betray us after all?"

"Oh, no, mother! No one comes here now; we are safe, quite safe. And see where Tutu creeps forward to the blaze! Thou art cold, my poor Tutu? Then rest thee, none will harm thee here."

A dormouse lifted its beadlike eyes to the speaker's face, as if well understanding that it was loved and safe. It was a sort of friend to these poor refugees, here in their mountain hiding-place, a creature even more weak and helpless than themselves.

Again the woman's voice was heard.

"Dear child, be not stubborn. Have we endured so much only to perish now for lack of a little further patience? A fire even by daylight is rash, at night its glow is almost certain to be seen."

The girl she addressed stood silent for a moment, the flicker of the fire fell on her slender figure, and on the graceful lines of her head and throat. Then she stooped and flung earth upon the flame, treading out the scarcely kindled heap, and scattering the fir-cones till their brightened edges died into little rims and coils of grey.

Rénée Janavel had learnt how to obey and how to suffer, but to-night one word of pleading forced its way from her lips.

"It is in the night," she said, "in the dark night that we need the cheer and the warmth. Oh, mother, I lit the fire to keep away my fear ——"

The words sank in a broken whisper; it was strange for Rénée Janavel to speak of fear.

The woman paused in wonder.

Why should Rénée be afraid of ought but the danger which the blaze might bring—the danger of cruel men who were thirsting for their blood: men who had sworn that no remnant of the proscribed race should be left in the valleys, and who had swept the fields and forests again and again in their search for any Vaudois in hiding there. Rénée, child of the mountains as she was, why should she fear anything but this? The winter was past, and the prowling wolves had withdrawn themselves; the shy black bears that haunted the hills were not creatures to be greatly affrighted at. What ailed the girl?

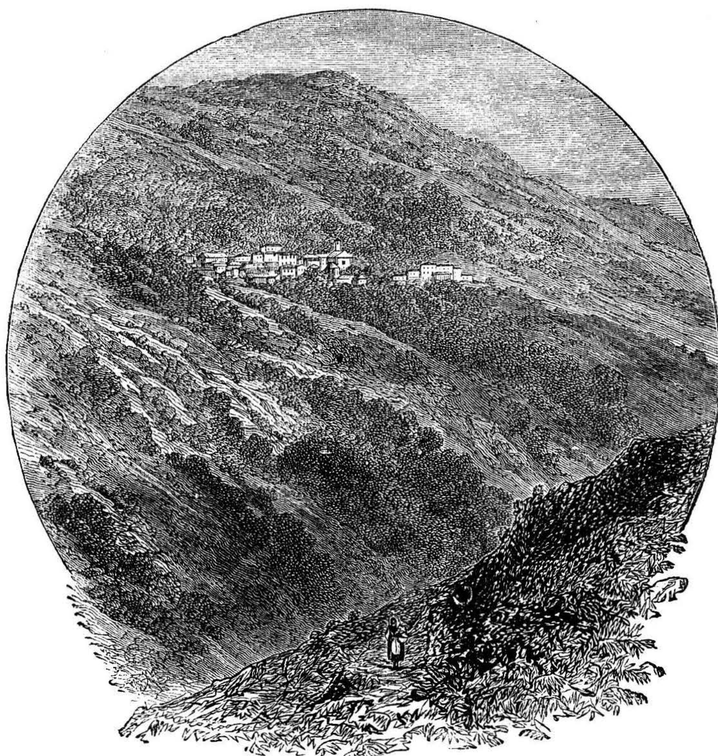
Rénée came to her side, and hid her face against the woman's knee.

"It is so lonely," she murmured brokenly. "Lately, at night; I have thought over many things, terrible things—and I have been frightened even to turn my head, too frightened to call to you. Oh, mother, mother dear! will these days never have a ceasing? Shall we never be happy again, Gaspard and you and I?"

"I know that it is cowardly," she went on in pathetic appeal. "But, mother, you are well now, almost quite strong again: could we not creep away and gain the Swiss country where the rest are gone; and see the dear friendly faces, and sleep in peace, afraid of no man?"

She stopped, for her throat was full of sobbing, and her head sank lower yet upon the trembling hands.

Just then some remaining spark of fire was kindled into blaze by the wind that swept into the cave, and the dried grass leapt into a red flame that threw dancing gleams and shadows on the rocks around, and touched the trunk of a pine overhanging the place with a glow as of deepest orange.



RORA.

Little Tutu, the dormouse, curled himself up in soft satisfaction, a nut which Rénée had given him held tight in his tiny paws.

The woman looked at the fire, but she did not again ask that it should be extinguished.

"Rénée," she said, "it is out of all possibility that I should climb the hill passes. I can never see the Swiss country. And, indeed, here in mine own land, I would choose to stay, that my last earthly look should rest on the valley I love so well. And for yourself, dear child, how could you go all that long and dangerous way? It was for my sake that you stayed, Rénée. But now—I would not keep you, child, if it were possible for you to gain safety, to reach friends, there in the land where one may worship the good God in peace. But as it is ——"

"Mother! do not speak so! Never, never can I desert you! You know I will not leave you while life holds us together."

She rose to her feet. One might see the stateliness of her figure as she stood betwixt the fire-glow and the twilight, her head erect, her face full of the strength of love and trust.

"Sing it again, mother," she said, "the hymn that you sang just now. And forget that Rénée has been afraid of shadows."

The woman took her hand and held it tenderly between her own.

"Tell me, Rénée," she said, "why were you frightened? Has any new thing chanced?"

"No, no; it is the long weariness, the uncertainty, the remembering—oh, it is just everything! Whilst you were ill, mother, I had no time to be frightened; but now, when we sit and watch the sun go down, I remember all that has happened, and I turn sick at my very heart."

She shuddered. They had passed, those two women, through terror enough to try any mortal nerves, and privations sufficient to exhaust the strongest frame· it was small marvel that Rénée trembled as she remembered the past.

"Sing, mother," she said again, "Gaspard was always wont to say that your songs uplifted his courage."

So "The Psalm of Strong Confidence" was chanted once more, the notes of the woman's voice filling the place with its rich volume of sound. The quick blaze had died down, and the dark shades fell across the cavern. But without, beyond the stooping pines, the sky was brightening. The stars stole out on the deep vault of blue, those glittering stars which tell through all speech and language that the statutes of the Lord are true, and that in keeping of them there is great reward.

And the two women sat, hand in hand, serene in spite of trouble; content, although they were homeless and hunted on the earth. Nay, just now they were more than "content!" they could rejoice that they, like their martyred ancestors, were found worthy to bear the cross of suffering for their Master's sake.

Rénée Janavel was an orphan. Madeleine Botta, the woman she called "mother," was bound to her not by ties of blood, but by the stronger ties of love and gratitude. She had inherited a name which was known throughout the length and breadth of the valleys. Her grandfather, "the hero of Rora," Joshua Janavel, had led the patriot bands who battled against enormous odds in the persecution of 1655, and the few following years. Her father had been sentenced by the Inquisition, and if he were not dead his miserable existence, chained to an oar as a galley-slave, was worse a hundred times for him than death itself.

Her young mother had perished in the prisons of Turin, and Rénée, a mere child when the Duke of Savoy stopped for a time those terrible deeds of blood, had lived always at Rora with the Bottas.

Madeleine Botta had lost her own daughter, and she had taken Rénée to her heart instead, loving and cherishing her until the desolate child almost forgot that Madeleine was not in very truth what she always called her, "her mother." And was she not Gaspard's mother? and were not Gaspard's people to be her people? his life, her life? She would have been Gaspard's wife at Easter-tide had not this new time of death and danger come upon the valleys. Now he was swept off with the fighting men, none exactly could tell whither; and she was here, hidden in the rock ledges, seeking shelter with Madeleine from the ravaging hoards that had sworn to "exterminate the heretics as they would exterminate all other sorts of noxious beasts."

The home at Rora was a heap of ashes; the peaceful days when Rénée drove the goats down the hill in the shadowy afternoon, or sat busily spinning the flax at Madeleine's knee, were gone for ever. There had been troubles then, of course, but troubles so tiny that now in comparison they seemed to be positive pleasures.

Henri Botta, the house-master, was a hard-featured man, whose rare words were sometimes wont to be hard; he looked on the world as a vale of sighing, a place where evil reigned, and no man should desire to be happy. Rénée used to shrink from his warning words, and strive to avoid his grim glances. Now how glad she would have been to have heard the sound of his voice, or to have seen the outline of his rugged face!

Then there was Emile, the elder son, almost as hard and silent as his father; and even Gaspard had a trick of shutting his lips tightly together and frowning till his black brows met when the talk was of the future or the past.

But Gaspard had never been hard to Rénée—never. He had been to Turin learning his trade, a carpenter he was, and the best carpenter, as Rénée proudly said, in all the commune. He was away for years, for such delicate work as his is not learned in a hurry, and on his return he found the child Rénée grown into a fair and gracious maiden, the realisation of the dreams which had haunted his young manhood.

And so he loved her, and wooed her, and won her; learning from her gentleness to unbend his sternness, teaching her girlish heart to be staunch and earnest.

They had built and plenished their future home in the simple fashion of the valley folk. Rénée was already stitching at the wedding gear, and Madeleine Botta had proudly piled the homespun linen which was to be her marriage gift to the girl who was already as her dear daughter.

And then—

But the tale is dark in the telling. One must go back some way in Europe's history to understand how such deeds came to be done; how such devastation fell ever and again on the devoted people of the Vaudois Valleys.

A CITY OF SCRIPTURE.

NO. IV.

1 We read of children who "spake half in the speech" of this city.

2. A general who once came up against Jerusalem fought against it and took it.

3. A king who began to reign at sixteen broke down the wall, and built cities near it.

4. God said, by His prophet, "I will cut off the inhabitant" from this city: also that it should be driven out "at the noonday."

5. There were palaces there, and an idol-temple.

6. The gospel was preached there, but the city then bore an altered name.

7. The ark of God was taken there.

8. The people felt "the hand of the Lord heavy upon them."

L. T.