THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

HOW KING DAVID REFUSED THE WATER OF THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM.

"NEVERTHELESS HE WOULD NOT DRINK THEREOF, BUT POURED IT OUT UNTO THE LORD."
2 *Samuel* **xxiii. 16.**

ON this occasion King David was carrying on a campaign against the hereditary enemies of Israel, the Philistines, who harried them in those days much as the Danes did the Saxons in the time of King Alfred in England. He was "in hold" in the cave of Adullam. This was a rock fastness amongst the hills, often used by him in his old outlaw state, when, like an eagle from

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its eyrie, he swooped down upon his prey, and then again returned to it for concealment and for rest from his pursuers.

Three of his "mighty men," that is, his most valiant military officers, had paid him a visit.

It was the hot weather of harvest, and all the pools and rivulets amongst the hills were dried up. And the king sat with parched throat and dry lips. He thought of a certain deep well of cool water, near the gates of Bethlehem, his native town, of which he had often drunk as a boy.

We read that "David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is outside the gate!" These three heroes of his army heard him, and what did they do? They took a water-vessel, and girded on their weapons, and made their way to the well. Then, in spite of the garrison of Philistines in the town, they filled it with water; and in spite of the troop of Philistines camped in the plain, they bore it back to the cave. But when the water was presented to the king, he would not taste it. The relief of such a refreshment had been purchased at too great a price. He "poured it out unto the Lord, and he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it." The cost of its procuring was too exorbitant. He could not profit by it. He could bear his thirst more easily than he could do so great a wrong. It was no longer water to him. It was the imperilled blood of his comrades in arms. So "he poured it out before the Lord" upon the ground.

This was an act of a noble and unselfish nature. Whatever David was at other times, here his better self triumphed, and "the good tree," according to its nature, readily and thoroughly produced "good fruit."

As such it is well worth our consideration.

We see the Use of our Desires in the economy of Human Nature as ordained by God.

David in that hot weather, with dry lips and parched throat, longed for cool water. These natural longings for something outside ourselves, which, if won, would refresh and satisfy us, are the chief mainsprings of our activity. If there is no longing, then there is no action. Where there is longing, there is the spur to activity, industry, discovery, enterprise, adventure.

Some of these desires are *selfish.* Our desire for food prompts us to break up the land—to cultivate it—to plough, and sow, and reap our harvests—to dig our wells or provide our aqueducts. Our desire for knowledge urges us to read and travel; to the formation of libraries and the multiplication of fleets. Our desire for fame incites us to an ever-increasing skill, and refinement and application of talent.

Some of them are *sympathetic.* Our longings to satisfy the wants of those who are dear to us or dependent upon us, are more powerful still. As in this case with David's heroes. They admired and respected their king, and were ready and glad to do all they could to satisfy him. Some of the most wonderful deeds in the world's history have been done to help or gratify those who were dear to the doer.

Some of them are *spiritual.* These are often the latest; but always the deepest and the loftiest of the whole number. They are the longings of the soul towards God. The eternal goodness, the one wisdom, the absolute perfection, the Heavenly Father. To find Him, to serve Him, to please Him, to love Him, to be sure of Him, here are the deepest and loftiest longings of the inward life. All desires are good in themselves, but this is best. David was conscious of it when he cried, "My soul thirsteth for God, even the living God! when shall I come and appear before God?" St. Augustine felt it when he wrote, "The heart is restless till it finds rest in Thee." Our Lord refers to it in its possible fulness of satisfaction when He said, "This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

But, although all men may have a consciousness of God, it is not all men who have a longing for God. Our early, elementary, fleshly desires may have most power over us. They may grow up and choke down the later, nobler, spiritual ones; and so these desires, good in themselves and good in their place, must needs be restrained, denied, directed, if we would escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Our ideal should be "the greatest good of the greatest number." "Live and let live," and help others to live more happily and prosperously, should be our precept. Otherwise the "*least* good of the *least* number" may become our aim. The good of a class rather than the good of a nation. The good of a family rather than the good of a neighbourhood. The good of an individual rather than the good of a family. And our highest notion of good will be of an earthly and transitory kind.

Thus all noble and generous feelings may dwindle and die in our souls. We may cease to be like David—a man here royal in nature, as well as in station. He could not bear to think that three brave men had perilled their lives for the sake of the temporary physical gratification of one man, although he was a king. We may become like the octopus, spreading forth our hands only to gather nourishment for our own mouth, stretching forth our thoughts only to catch substance for our own purse.

Therefore we need some such rules as the following, suggested by this fragment of history, for the preservation of an unselfish and noble nature.

1. *There is the Safety and Dignity of Silence about our own individual wants.* David longed for water. The weather was hot and trying. Thirst was painful; the imagination of the cool water in the Bethlehem well inflamed him. He spoke out at last, thoughtlessly and impatiently, "Oh that some one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem that is beside the gate!" He did not mean or wish that the three heroes sitting by should imperil their lives for his sake. But they did, and they might easily have been slain in their enterprise.

How often friends, relatives, rulers, are urged and goaded by the petulant, incessant pleading of those dependent on them to foolish and even perilous courses. The reiterated cry for dress,

or dainty, or travel, or ornament, or change, or amusement, has often sent those who were dear to us, and to whom we were dear, upon hazardous enterprises and into dangerous company.

If we cannot conquer our own selfish longings, at least we can refuse to put them into speech. We can keep them to ourselves. The safety and comfort and pleasure of others should be, at least, as important to us as our own.

2. *There is the Sensibility to the worth of Life as held by our social inferiors and subordinates.*

David himself was a king, and a king in those days meant much more than it does in these. The three "mighty men," heroes though they were, were his inferiors; of much less value socially and politically than himself. Yet David recognised in them the right to life and the value of life.

They had gone for his selfish gratification "in jeopardy of their lives," and he could not bear to allow that. The three sacrificing themselves for the one was injustice. It is well for us to bear this in mind. There may be many around us inferior to ourselves in dress, education, accomplishment; they may be subordinate to us in monetary means or social position. But, so far as life goes they are our equals. They have a right to live as well as ourselves, and to live as happily and safely as we do. They, like ourselves, are the works of God. For them, as for us, the Spirit strives. Their flesh and blood is as ours. They have within their bodies a soul, a true self, a real life, which, at least, to the individual owner, is worth more than the whole world. And in how many of them, as in these heroes of David's, there is a courage to which we can lay no claim; a hardihood and energy of which we know nothing; a swift spontaneous sympathy with the wants and woes of their fellows—of which, perhaps, in its range and intensity, we as yet have not so much as dreamed.

3. *There is the distinct Refusal to take either our pleasure or our profit at such degree of Risk as makes the providers liable to death or mutilation.*

King David could not drink this water, desirable as it was in itself, willingly as it was won and offered by his captains. It was to him as their blood. When they put it into his hands, and he knew what had been done, he cried out, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it." He poured it out upon the ground. Here is our lesson plainly enough presented.

If we know that in the preparation of our food our fellows are exposed to fatal physical conditions, do not the dainties on our table bear upon them the mark of blood?

If, in accelerating or extending our means of travel by trains or trams, steamers or omnibuses, in the railway races, ocean races, furious competition races, without Sunday's rest or even proper night's rest—our fellow-creatures are exposed to fatal risks of body and of soul, is not our travel spotted with human blood? If, in securing cheap dress, or gorgeous dress, friendless feeble people, women and children, have to work from 6 A.M. to 12 P.M. and even 3 A.M. sometimes, and only gain then 4*s.* 6*d.* or 5*s.* 6*d.* per week—all half-starving, and some driven to robbery, shame, despair, suicide, is not our raiment crimsoned with human blood?

Is it not all bought with the very life of the worker? the many working thus for the few and for the mere bodily benefit of the few, surely the price of purchase is too great for us to give.

4. *There is the recognition of God, and our individual responsibility to Him as our Eternal Sovereign and All-righteous Judge.*

It was the Lord, the Eternal One, of whom David first thought in this matter. When the water was put into his hands, and the opportunity was in his reach to gratify his eager thirst, all his lesser longings were killed out by his sense of God and his clear duty to Him. "He poured the water out before the Lord." It was not his property, and he returned it to the only true Owner. He cried out, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this!" That act, so fraught with latent and potential evils, was abhorrent to him in its very nature, and he appealed to God as the ever-present witness and judge to make it always impossible to him.

Here we have the most august and regnant rule for an unselfish and considerate conduct to our fellows. The Eternal God, and our enduring personal responsibility to Him in all things. To relinquish this is to open the door to all manner of weaknesses, mistakes, miseries, and wrongs. The soul becomes like a steamer in a storm with open ports in her side—the sea comes in by steady gushes as she rolls, by degrees the furniture of the cabins is ruined, and presently the ship herself sinks and is lost beyond recall.

The more we reverence God in His eternal greatness and goodness, the more we shall be able to restrain our own selfish, sensual longings. The more we recognise God as the one pure, just, infallible Judge, before whose tribunal we every day appear, the more we shall strive to act tenderly, considerately, and justly to all our fellow-creatures, however inferior in position or ability they may be to ourselves.

ALFRED NORRIS.

Thyself and Thy Brethren.

(*From the German of Carmen Sylva, the Queen of Roumania.*)

"I WILL withhold it"—never say:
"For others 'tis too good by far,
To those who cold and stupid are
It shall not fall an easy prey."

Doth Nature not her best each day
Bestow upon us freely here,—
With fragrance, song, and beauty cheer,
Though they unheeded fade away?

Veil every ill-done work of thine,
Henceforth deceive thyself no more,
Nor build unto thyself a shrine;
Too high thy spirit cannot soar.

Scarce can *the best* that is in thee
Of these thy brethren worthy be!

JOHN KELLY.

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER II.—IN A GREEN GARDEN.

HIS laziness or his inertia, as you like to call it, grew as the colonel advanced in years. Probably it was an obscure hint of internal malady that took this form, and made him more and more inclined to the quiet and peace of his country home, more and more unwilling to face "business" or exertion of any description.

He had been active, as a soldier needs must be, and he still carried himself uprightly, but he took fewer walks or rides abroad, and contented himself with Allie's society in the village or the garden.

The tie between father and daughter grew very close and beautiful in these years of their companionship. In some respects the nature of their relationship appeared to be reversed, and it was she who protected, counselled, cared for him, and he who leaned on her; yet if you had told her that she was the stronger of the two it would have seemed to her an infidelity.

For a long time he bore no outward signs of failing health, his step was light, his cheek ruddy, his appetite good, thus Allie had no disquieting fears to trouble her, and she could take the full good of her father's society: there was no society like it to her thinking.

"I'm glad you gave up soldiering," she said; "think how lonely I should be without you, papa, with whole continents between us and nothing but fears and alarms, for my share. We have done enough for our country, and now we have given it Charlie."

"Soldiering gave up me," said the colonel, with his quiet smile, "though it's very polite of you to put it the other way, my dear. Do you remember that legend of an island where they drown all the old people to make room for the young ones?"

"Papa, you mustn't talk like that—as if you were old—or past work! If there were any need, you would fight for your country still."

"If we had lived on that island you would have been alone, Allie, you and the boy."

"Papa, you are cruel, think of what that would mean to me."

"I'm afraid I haven't thought of it, Allie," he said, a shade of remorse and anxiety crossing his face—"I'm afraid I haven't thought of what is to become of you when I answer to the roll call——"

But she would not allow the shadow to remain there.

"Here is a letter from the boy," she said; "he is coming home in a fortnight, think of that!"

Time's thievish progress had stolen the years away; they had slipped by silently in the green garden, in the long, low room with its sandalwood faintly scenting it, its oriental draperies, its black furniture fresh as when they were first unpacked. Time had made no difference to them, but it had shot baby Charlie up into a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, eager and athirst for adventure and life and movement; it had brought a stoop to the colonel's shoulders, a feebleness in his step, a withered, pinched look about the mouth. It had changed Allie too, though less radically, and everything that might be said to belong to the period of her youth was done and ended.

Lovers belong to youth, and though two of these had come her way she had no response for either. When she refused the last curate who had been appointed from Barford to a living of his own, the village (quick always to scent such affairs) knew that her chances were over.

"She isn't so very young," said Mrs. Smithson, the old doctor's wife, "and no young woman can reasonably expect more than two offers; it's misappropriation in Barford to have so many."

"Couldn't you have thought of him," her father asked when the curate had gone away sadly, "couldn't you have thought of him, Allie?" His voice was again rather distressed and anxious. "He's the sort of fellow that women like—and every woman wants a home of her own——"

"Well, I have one," said Allie gaily; "I couldn't wish a better."

"Was it that you did not care for him?"

"It was because I cared for you more," said Allie, with a blush; "you and I are quite enough for each other. Papa, you must be content to keep me always, since Mrs. Smithson says I must never hope to have another matrimonial offer."

Mrs. Smithson proved herself a true oracle, no other suitor came to be dismissed. Barford had not many eligible young men to offer, and Allie wanted none of them. She had her father and Charlie. So the seasons flew, and they made Charlie into a second lieutenant in the—Hussars, and they made Allie into—thirty-eight.

Allie had never thought much about her years, she felt young, much younger than thirty-eight, and she looked it, being fair and slight, with delicate, small features and kind confiding blue eyes; but on this day, it was her birthday, she knew that she had bid good-bye to her youth, for on this day she first realised that she was soon to lose her father.

He had been ailing a little, and she had sent for the old doctor, who had attended at Battle House since Charlie's baby complaints first brought him there. He was almost past work now, but she had confidence in his judgment. She was so little anxious on this occasion that she went to meet him with a smiling face.

"Papa isn't very well," she said, "a little cold.

I fancy; but I thought it would be a comfort to him to see you——"

"I'll go up and have a chat with him," said Doctor Smithson, who had not many pressing claims on his time now that he had secured a young and vigorous partner.

"That will please him," said Allie cheerfully; "he always enjoys a talk with you."

She went out into the garden to await his report there. It was a June day, and the roses for which Barford is famous were all ablow. Their sweetness was in the air, there was sunshine, and the happy noon-day twitter of contented birds. Alice went to a bed of Scotch roses, which she knew to be favourites of her father's, and was hoveringly making her choice, scissors in hand, when the doctor came out to her.

Something in his gravity and in the slowness of his walk woke a vague sense of alarm in her. A faint fear seemed to chill her, though the sun was beating on her unprotected head.

"You think my father really ill?" she asked.

Then he told her.

He was very sorry for her, and he was sorry too for himself, but what could he say or do? The fiat had gone forth and he could not alter it. The doctor, if he is faithful, must deal many wounds as well as heal them. Dr. Smithson could not point her to the only true source of comfort; and surely in this he forfeited his highest privilege. But Allie knew the way thither.

Only at first she could not think at all. She was stunned, overwhelmed. She did not hear the old man's broken words of kindness, his faintly expressed hope. She went dizzily out of the gay garden into the churchyard, and sat upon that stone where Charlie had played as a baby, while she listened to Newman's hymn.

Oh, the darkness was around her now, pressing her on every side, hemming her in. She could only put out her hands gropingly and say: "Lead Thou me, for the waters have gone over my soul."

By-and-by, however, she aroused herself, and remembered, with a thrill of remorseful pain, that her father might be missing her.

"It may not be immediate," the doctor had said; but how precious every moment seemed now that they were numbered. She went with stumbling, hastening feet back to the house, and crept up to her own room. She looked anxiously at her face in the glass, fearing that it might betray her, and it was then that she knew that somehow she had left her youth behind her among the June roses. It was a subtle enough change, but it was there—little lines on the forehead, a weary look about the eyes. The beautiful serenity of her life was shattered not to return.

And yet in the week or two that were left how much there was given to her. Alice would not have been Alice if she had not used them to persuade, to entreat, to point to the love that made even submission to the Divine will easy; her own life had spoken silently, and perhaps its influence had not been all lost.

"I have led a careless life, Allie," the colonel said, with his gentle slow smile, "I've fallen out of the ranks, and now that I've got the summons to surrender, don't you think there's something rather mean in making terms with my Creator?"

"Dear father," said Alice, her voice broken with emotion, "it is never too late to turn to Him—His mercy is infinite, it can overcome everything, our past carelessness, our present unbelief: we have only to trust Him, and He does all the rest, to put our hand in His and He leads us home."

"It makes you happy to believe this, Allie?"

"Yes," she said, the tears streaming, "it makes me happy, it will make you happy too, dear papa, and—and—it will make it almost easy to give you up. Think if we had to say goodbye here—on this side of death and not to meet again"—she shuddered, and the sunny garden seemed to be blotted out by a sudden darkness.

The colonel sighed, but he smiled too.

"My dear," he said, "I don't think I would do it, if I were God. I think it a poor bargain—the last hours of a sick and broken man, instead of a life's service——"

"Ah," said Allie, "He does not bargain with us; if He did, who is there that could pay his debt?"

Very gently and lovingly she went down with him into the valley of shadows, comforting, cheering, leading him by the hand. He was well enough to go out with her most days into the garden, and they sat there among the June fragrance while she read to him and expounded her simple creed.

Charlie was employing a holiday in travel with an old friend and neighbour in Norway. He had written gaily of his doings—he had found some relations over there, he said, the family of that Lindsell cousin who had migrated to Scandinavia a generation earlier—and they had made him welcome. He was having very good times; if they did not hear from him again, they must put it down to the eccentricity of the post in those regions, and to the fact that he was saving up everything to tell them when he came back.

"Charlie never loved his pen," said the grandfather smilingly; "I dare say the sword will become him better."

"You would like him sent for, dear papa?" said Alice, forgetting in her anxiety that she did not know the lad's address.

"By no means; let the boy enjoy himself. Why should you bring him back to look on while an indolent old fellow dies by inches? I feel that, like King Charles, I ought to apologise to you for the unconscionable time I'm over the business, Allie."

Alice laid her hand on his; she could not still the trembling of her lips to answer him; she dared not think of what her life would be without him.

Everybody was very kind and sympathetic, and many were ready with offers of help, but she refused them all. There was little for her to do, but love would not be deprived of a single service.

One hot afternoon the invalid chair had been wheeled out under the shade of a spreading cypress that made a cool green canopy above the sick man's head. Alice had been reading the

sublime narrative of the crucifixion, and when her faltering voice ceased, there was a long silence. The book lay shut in Allie's lap, her hands folded over it. The still air was full of the drowsy melody of bees; the swallows skimmed round the church tower, and darted in and out of its battlements; the sunlight flooded the world and made it very fair—the world which Christ gave Himself to redeem.

The sick man opened his eyes and gazed at it.

"It's a beautiful story," he said, "the highest moral revelation the world has ever known. I used to think it was that and nothing more, but now—Allie," he said after a pause, "if you were to pray I think I could join you."

Without a word she dropped down there on her knees beside him; she forgot everything; her own timid fears, her coming sorrow, in this moment of deep spiritual joy. Her face was radiant, transfigured; it was a thanksgiving rather than a prayer that she uttered in those simple, fervent words, and when she rose and kissed him, something of heaven's own peace seemed to rest on him too.

But soon his look grew troubled.

"There are other things," he said, "I'm leaving them all undone. I've been a poor idler, Allie, and I've let business and everything go. I have not set my house in order, as becomes a dying man. You will have much to forgive me, my child."

"Do not trouble, dear father," she said. "I have had your love, and that is all I have ever wanted. What does everything else matter? The way will be made plain, I have no fears."

"I trust it may be so," he said, a little comforted; "but it should not have been left to trust."

"Don't think any more about it now," she said persuasively, "to-morrow, if it would ease you to see Mr. Lewis, he shall be sent for. Could you not rest here a little where it is cool, or will you come to your room and lie down there?"

"I will rest here. I think I could sleep. One couldn't wish for a pleasanter spot to face the experiment of death in."

She wrapped him up warm, and feeling that he had had excitement and agitation enough and was best alone, she left him.

Her mind was full of an exalted wonder and delight at the goodness vouchsafed her; she regarded him as given to her in answer to her prayers. The voices of the church bells calling to a week-day service seemed to be the expression of her own thankfulness. She saw the little choir boys straggling in at the churchyard gate, the tall vicar with his stooping shoulders and bowed head following them, and her heart went with them into the temple of praise.

In half an hour or so, when the shadows began to slope across the lawn, she went back to her father. The bells had ceased, but the little congregation was singing, and the refrain came out to her quite clearly in the shrill young voices of the choir: "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war."

It was a favourite melody of her father's, with its stirring trumpet call, and she wondered that his light and fitful sleep had not been disturbed by its strains.

"Waken, dear papa," she said, stooping over him; "it is time to come in."

But he did not waken.

In the church the little men were still shouting triumphantly of the glories of the march and the joys of victory; but the poor, tired soldier in the green garden had laid down his arms and was sleeping in death.

SCOTCH PREACHERS IN REFORMATION DAYS.

BY PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., AUTHOR OF "THE PREACHERS OF SCOTLAND," ETC.

KNOX AND HIS BRETHREN.

IT is singular to think that John Knox, of whom when he was buried the Regent of the Kingdom said, "Here lies one who never feared the face of clay," was overwhelmed with distress and anxiety at the bare thought of being a preacher. And this was not in boyish days, as in the case of many a shy youth, to whom mounting the pulpit-stairs for the first time is something like mounting the steps of the gallows. For Knox was turned forty before he ever opened his mouth to a public congregation. His feeling was more like that of Saul when he hid himself among the stuff; or, to come nearer to the particular case, that of Gregory Nazianzen, when, on being ordained, in order to avoid the responsibilities of his office, fled to the wilderness; or that of Ephrem Syrus, when he feigned madness; or that of Ambrose, when, to shock the people, and make them think him unfit for the bishopric, he caused shady characters to be brought to his house as if in his company. The suspicion of heresy under which Knox had fallen, and the known desire of Cardinal Beaton for his life, had brought him to the humble vocation of domestic pedagogue—a kind of "Dominie Sampson" in the house of a Protestant gentleman, Hugh Douglas, of Longniddry. To the duties of this humble calling, however, Knox applied himself with all the energy and thoroughness of his nature. And in particular he sought to make the Bible lesson and the catechism interesting and impressive. And it was when, for safety, he

took refuge in the castle of St. Andrews, and, being there, taught his boys in a public place, and when laymen, like Sir David Lindsay the poet, and Henry Halnaves the lawyer, saw how admirably he did this work, that they became convinced that the making of a good preacher was in him, and solemnly called him to become their pastor. Knox, to use a common phrase, was dreadfully "cut up;" the very thought took the life out of him for days; he could neither laugh nor talk, but went about in desolation and misery. It was neither want of physical nor of moral courage that oppressed him; but a sense of his unfitness to undertake so solemn an office, and to deliver God's message to his countrymen at so vital a crisis of their history.

If any one doubted his courage, he should have heard him a short time after, in the parish kirk of St. Andrews, when he preached his first sermon, after having undertaken to prove "that the Roman Kirk, as now corrupted, was but the Synagogue of Satan, and the 'Pape' thereof was the man of sin spoken of by the apostle." It was an occasion of great excitement and expectation. The text was from the seventh chapter of Daniel, about the king that was to wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and seasons. Knox did not mince the matter. The ashes of his beloved friend George Wishart had hardly been swept away from the neighbouring street, and the terror of his fate might well have kept more timid men, if not silent, at least temperate in their language; but Knox despised all such considerations. On this, the first occasion of his opening his mouth in public, the crimes and blasphemous pretensions of the papacy received as withering and scathing an exposure as ever they got in the heyday of Protestant ascendancy. Among his hearers were the professors of the university, including the celebrated John Mair, also John Winram, superior of the Priory, and many canons and friars of various orders, to all of whom he gave a challenge that if they alleged that he had said a word contrary to Scripture or to history, he would go fully into the matter with them, and convince them that he was thoroughly justified in it all.

The retribution on Knox came in a form that he did not expect. St. Andrews was taken by a French fleet that had come to the assistance of the governor; Knox was committed to a French galley, and for more than a year endured the miserable fate of a galley-slave. But though reduced by severe illness to extreme weakness, when at last he was set at liberty he went bravely at his preaching again. And it was not long before he got the honourable appointment of chaplain to King Edward VI. Of anything that he said when his words fell on royal ears, we have no direct information, but it was impossible for him to be anything but bold, honest, and brave. As it regarded the papacy, his message to the young king would doubtless be the echo of his first sermon. But that would only be on particular occasions. Knox had a gospel of salvation by free grace, which, like Luther, he delighted to proclaim. He had a theology of redemption, the value of which he knew personally right well, and which was in his eyes unspeakably glorious for the children of men. He had much to say of the beauty and glory of Him, "by whom alone" (to use the prayer of his communion service) "we have received liberty and life; by whom alone God does acknowledge us His children and heirs; by whom alone we are possessed in His spiritual kingdom to eat and drink at His table; with whom we have our conversation presently in heaven, and by whom our bodies shall be raised up again from the dust, and shall be placed with Him in that endless joy, which Thou, O Father of Mercy, hast prepared for Thine elect before the foundation of the world. And these most inestimable blessings we acknowledge to have received of Thy free mercy and grace by Thy only beloved Son Jesus, for which therefore we, Thy congregation, moved by Thy Holy Spirit, render Thee all thanks, glory and praise, for ever and ever."

Queen Mary could never be induced to hear Knox preach. This was a great disappointment to the reformers. It was a dreadful grief to them that the young queen was so stiff a papist; but they clung to the hope that if only she would hear the protestant clergy, she could not but change her views. The Mass was the great bugbear of the reformers, and Mary's persistent demand to have it celebrated in her chapel was a bitter pill. It is well known that Knox made little impression on her in private, and that the tears he drew from her were tears of disappointment and vexation, and by no means of penitence. When we consider that nearly all who heard the reformed doctrine in those days became persuaded of its truth, with the exception of persons who had a personal interest in the maintenance of the old cause, we need feel no surprise at the sanguine expectations entertained respecting the queen, if only she could have been persuaded to frequent the kirk. But her education had been too decided, her will was too firm, her interests in the Catholic cause too deep, and her relations and advisers too bigoted to have made it likely that even Knox would have changed her views.

Knox appears to have been one of those preachers that are very calm in the first part of their discourse, but that warm into extraordinary vehemence towards the close. In the first part he laid down the Scriptural foundations for all that he said. His one object was to bring out the divine warrant for his message. This he appears to have done in a calm, deliberate, orderly way. Like other preachers of the olden time, who thought that the Christian commonwealth should be as like as possible to the Hebrew theocracy, he made much use of the Old Testament. This eminently biblical style of preaching gave to the Scotch people an extraordinary interest in their Bibles, and at the same time took a great grip of their consciences. And when the preacher felt that he had a strong foundation in Scripture, he made his application with tremendous emphasis. In the case of Knox, all the resources of his natural eloquence gushed forth at the end. One of his comrades gives a graphic account of his preaching, even when he had a foot in the grave. It was at St. Andrews, to which place

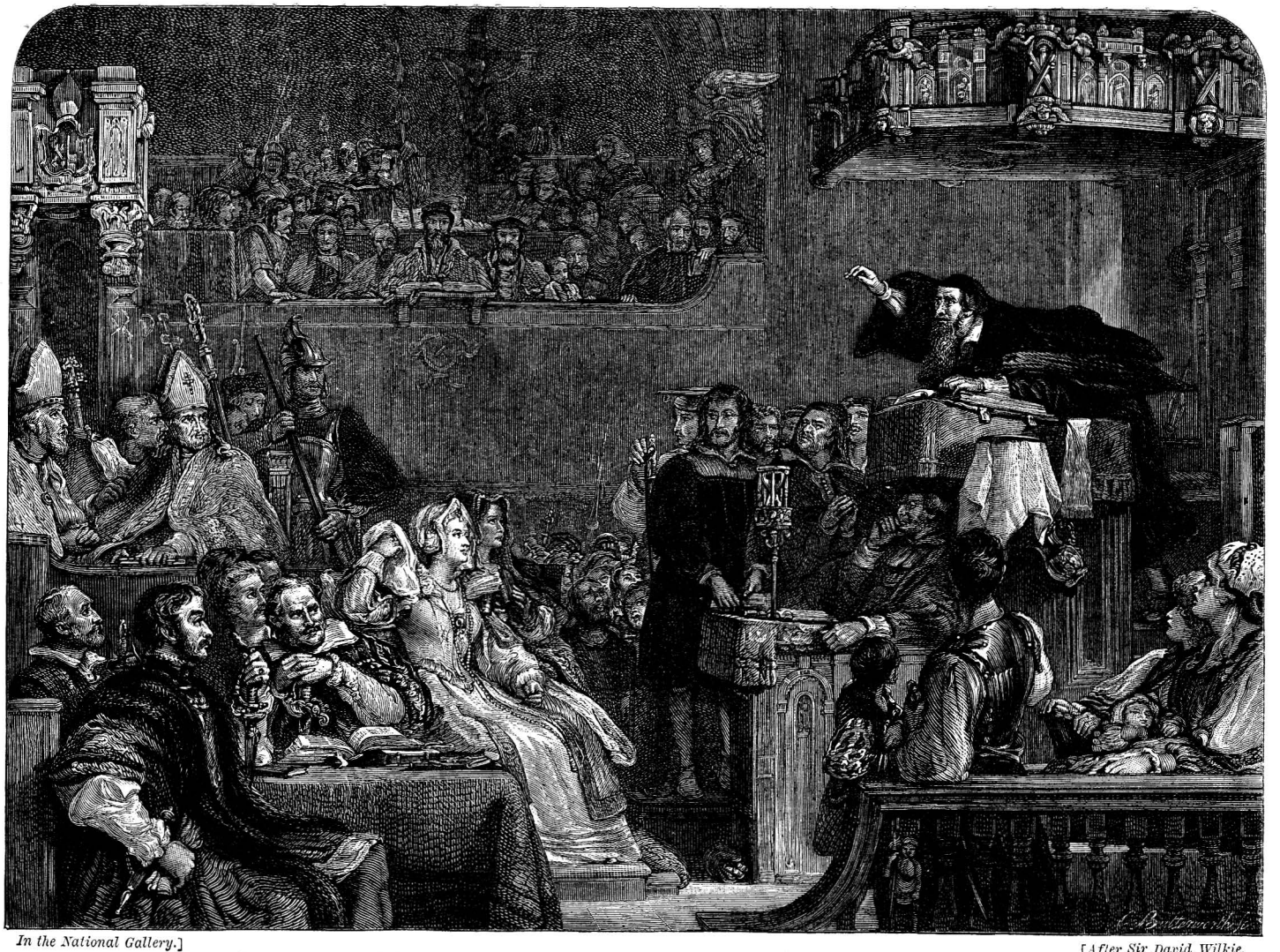
he had retired shortly before his death, Edinburgh being hardly safe for him. He describes him creeping along to the church in the decrepitude of age with a fur collar round his neck, a staff in one hand, and his servant, Richard Ballenden, with his hand under his arm supporting him on the other, and after being hoisted into the pulpit, being so weak that he had to lean over it to regain his breath. We are not prepared to be told that after half an hour's quiet preaching, he so woke up at the end that he was like to knock the pulpit to pieces and leap out of it. Yet in this vehement old man there was a very saintly element. He chose as the subject of his last sermon, the crucifixion, on purpose to end his ministry "at the cross." The passage he asked his wife to read to him when dying, was the seventeenth of John, where he had "first cast his anchor." After one of his seasons of meditation, he declared he had been in heaven, and tasted the heavenly joy. It was a triumphant death-bed; his last words were, "Now, it is come."

Of the preachers who followed Knox, the most remarkable by far was Robert Bruce, son of Sir Alexander Bruce, of Airth, near Stirling, one of the ancient barons of Scotland, who claimed connection with the royal family of Bruce. Robert was educated at Paris for the law; he had begun to practise in Edinburgh, and with so great promise that a design was formed to give him the place of a Lord of Session, the highest that his profession afforded. But all the while a strong feeling was working in his heart that he ought to devote himself to the ministry. He struggled against the feeling, knowing how much the change would offend his father and his family, till, one night, in his father's house, he had an experience in bed that obliged him to give in. "It pleased God," to use his own words, "to smite me inwardly and judicially in my conscience, and to present all my sins before me in such sort that He omitted not a circumstance, but made my conscience to see time, place, and persons as vividly as in the hour I did them. He made the devil accuse me audibly, that I heard his voice as vividly as ever I heard anything, not being sleeping, but waking. So far as he spoke true, my conscience bare him record, and testified against me very clearly; but when he came to be a false accuser, and laid things to my charge which I had never done, then my conscience failed him, and would not testify with him; but in these things which were true my conscience condemned me, and the condemnator tormented me, and made me feel the wrath of God pressing me down, as it were, to the lower hell. Yea, I was so fearfully and extremely tormented that I would have been content to be cast into a cauldron of hot melted lead to have had my soul relieved of that insupportable weight. Always, so far as he spoke true, I confessed, restored God to His glory, and cried God's mercy for the merits of Christ. Yea, I appealed ever to His mercy purchased to me by the blood, death, and passion of Christ." Before morning the weight was entirely removed, and Bruce had begun to know the peace of the forgiven.

The anecdote is a very characteristic one. It shows what profound views both of sin and grace prevailed in those days; and it shows also very clearly that the cross of Christ, the atoning work of the great Redeemer, is the only provision that can meet the case of a conscience torn by a sense of sin. Bruce's views of truth were, all his life, very thorough and profound; it took a deep, firm hold of himself, and this enabled him to preach it so that it went deep into the heart of many a hearer.

Bruce had a remarkable reputation for wisdom, in consequence of which, early in life, he was called to two remarkable positions of trust. In 1588, when the country was agitated by the news of the Spanish Armada, and before he had begun his ministry, he was appointed Moderator of the General Assembly; and the following year, being then an acting minister in Edinburgh, on occasion of the king's going to Norway to bring home his bride, he was named one of the king's councillors or commissioners for managing the kingdom in his absence; and in this office, amid many difficulties, he managed matters with such skill as to receive the very hearty thanks of the king on his return. But the royal favour was of short continuance. Bruce was too faithful and fearless a preacher to be always a favourite at court. Some minor differences had been in a manner settled; but in 1603, for refusing to give thanks for the king's deliverance from the Gowrie conspiracy in the very terms the king desired, he and other brethren were banished from Edinburgh. And the banishment proved a perpetual one, so far as the capital was concerned. Bruce led a wandering life, doing great spiritual service as a preacher, both in the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland; the only indulgence granted him being liberty in his old age to preach in the church of Larbert, near Stirling, his patrimonial estate of Kinnaird being situated in that parish. Four years of his banishment were spent in Inverness. The magistrates and others were very unkind to him, but his popularity and success as a minister were amazing. The Highland love of strong, searching preaching must have received a great impulse under him. The kilted mountaineers came from far distant places, sometimes crossing arms of the sea to enjoy the privilege of his ministrations. The testimony borne to his power by distinguished writers is remarkable. "He was a terror to evildoers," says one, "and the authority of God did so appear in him and in his carriage (bearing), with such a majesty in his countenance as forced fear and respect from the greatest in the land, even those who were avowed haters of godliness." "No man, in his time," says another, "spoke with such evidence and power of the Spirit; no man had so many seals of conversion; yea, many among his hearers thought that no man since the apostles spake with such power. . . . He had a very majestic countenance, and whatever he spake in public or private—yea, when he read the word, I thought it had such a force I never discerned in any other man."

In the words of an old biographer, we give two anecdotes, the one illustrating the source of



In the National Gallery.]

THE PREACHING OF KNOX BEFORE THE LORDS OF THE CONGREGATION.

June 10, 1559.

[*After Sir David Wilkie.*

his preaching power, the other the calm repose of his dying soul on the word which he had proclaimed so well.

"When he preached at Larbert Kirk, there was, near by, a chamber, where he used to go in between sermons. One day some noblemen and gentlemen who had been hearing him, wearied between sermons, when he stayed longer than usual. They having a good way to ride after sermon, they called for the bell-man, and desired him to go to him in the little room where he was retired, and knock softly at the door, and, if he opened, to acquaint him they desired he might begin as soon as conveniently he could, because some of them had far to ride. The bell-man did as he was commanded; but Mr. Bruce was so taken up in wrestling, that he did not hear him. However, the bell-man, when at the door, heard some of Mr. Bruce's words, which, poor man, he did not understand; and so he came back to those that sent him, and told that he did not know when the minister would come out. He believed there was somebody with him, for he heard him many times say, with the greatest seriousness, 'that he would not, he could not go, unless he came with him, and that he would not go alone'; adding that he never heard the other answer him a word."

The biographer adds that that afternoon he preached with remarkable power, to the great benefit of many.

The anecdote of his death-bed is as follows: "When his sight failed him, he called for the large house Bible, and caused one of his family to put his finger on the twenty-eighth verse of the eighth chapter to the Romans, and told them that he died in the faith of what was in that chapter, and firmly believed that all things, even death itself, should work together for his good; and, in a little, slept in Jesus."

Another very notable preacher in those times was John Welch, of Ayr. His father owned a property in Nithsdale, Dumfries-shire, but the first we hear of his son is that he associated himself with a band of border thieves. It was not long before he had had enough of that life. When he found his way back to his father's house, it was not to be welcomed like the prodigal son. An aunt interceded for him, but with little success at first, the father remarking, in answer to her question whether he had lately heard anything of John, that the first news he expected to hear of him was that he had been hanged as a thief. The change that came over the boy was memorable. He became one of the most devout and holy men of his time. When he became a minister, he is said to have spent a third of his time in prayer. At night, when minister of Ayr, he would retire to the church, and spend hours in earnest prayer for Scotland. It was even said, that his knees became horny because he was so much upon them. When he first settled at Ayr, his earnest religion was so offensive, that none of the people would let him a house. The people were so wild, that fighting in the streets was not uncommon. Welch would rush out with a helmet on his head when he heard of a fight, go between the combatants, and in God's name, entreat them to be reconciled. Ere long, the spirit of the people changed, his ministry was most effectual, and the dislike of the people changed into warm regard and affection. But through the troubles of the time, his connection with Ayr soon came to a close.

Welch, who was a strict Presbyterian, was one of a number of ministers who had met at Aberdeen as a General Assembly, in opposition to a royal proclamation forbidding the meeting. For this offence, he and others were sentenced to be hanged. After an imprisonment in Blackness Castle, the sentence was commuted into one of banishment. On the 7th of November, 1606, he sailed from Leith for France, accompanied by his wife, who was a daughter of John Knox, a great crowd attending at two o'clock in the morning, in the depth of winter, to witness the embarcation, and bid him and the others farewell. They sang the twenty-third Psalm, the last that Welch ever joined in singing in his native land. Welch resided in France for sixteen years. It is said that on one occasion, when spending a night in an inn, the room which he occupied was divided by only a thin partition from another, which was occupied by a priest. During the night the priest heard his neighbour in such earnest communion with God, that he made himself known to him in the morning, and was converted through his instrumentality. Welch was minister of the town of St. Jean d'Angely, when it was besieged by Louis XIII. in person. He helped to defend the town with conspicuous bravery. A shell having burst in the room where he was, he refused to leave it until he had knelt down and given thanks. Another time, when carrying powder to a gun, a cannon-ball carried off the powder-ladle from his hands; on which he coolly took off his hat, filled it with powder, and carried it to the gunner, who directed his shot with such precision that the enemy's cannon was silenced. When the town capitulated, and the king entered it, his majesty expressed his displeasure, because Welch continued to preach. The Duke d'Espernon was sent to summon the preacher into the royal presence, but on appearing at Mr. Welch's house, the minister, in a voice of authority, called on him to sit down and hear the word of God. The duke obeyed, and Welch addressed to him a solemn message. When the king demanded of him how he dared to violate the custom of the nation by preaching where the court was residing, he told his majesty that if he knew what he preached, he would not only come and hear it, but make all France come too. Then he explained how he preached the gospel of grace, and not salvation by works; and moreover, how, unlike the priests, he preached that in France the king was above the pope, and that the pope had no jurisdiction in his kingdom. For once the king appreciated Protestant doctrine. Louis was much more friendly to Welch than his own sovereign. In 1622, he came to London, and asked to be allowed to return to Scotland. Among those who interceded for him was his wife. The king asked her who she was? She said, the daughter of John Knox. "Knox and Welch," said the king, "the devil never made such a

match as that." "Very likely," said she, "for we never speired [asked] his leave." The king said her husband might return if he would submit to the bishops. Holding up her apron, she said, "Please your majesty, I'd rather kep [catch] his head there."

Knox, Bruce, and Welch are notable specimens of the ministry that reared the Reformed Church in Scotland. They were intense students of God's word. They had got far above the fear of man, and were marked by a spirit of energy and daring that no terrors could daunt. It was a rude age and a rude country, and, judged by modern standards, their language and hearing often seemed unjustifiable; but nothing has ever been proved against them that can show that they were not true lovers of their country, and faithful servants of their God.

M. ROSSEEUW SAINT-HILAIRE.

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH INSTITUTE.

IN the obituary notices of the "Times," one morning in January, the following telegram appeared:

"M. R. Saint-Hilaire, one of the last survivors of the eminent Sorbonne Professors of Louis Philippe's reign, died last night at the age of eighty-seven. He was born in Paris; was a Lycée professor from 1829 to 1842, and then became Professor of History at the Sorbonne. He wrote on Rienzi, Spanish history, and other subjects. Though not a Protestant by birth, he was a zealous Protestant, and took a great interest in the McAll Mission, for the annual reports of which he generally wrote a preface. He was a cousin of M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, ex-minister of foreign affairs."

The readers of the SUNDAY AT HOME will like to hear something more about the eminent Frenchman who has passed away. He died on the 26th of January.

In recent years he has been chiefly known to us, in England, as a most earnest and active evangelist; very busy with his pen in preparing gospel letters and tracts for publication; and also, in previous years delivering addresses to the audiences in the halls opened by the McAll Mission. These halls in many parts of Paris are chiefly attended by the working classes, who take the utmost interest in the simple informal services of the various evangelists and missionaries who conduct them. Sometimes the leader of the worship is one of the regular ministers or pastors of the Reformed Church; but, in other times, especially at the week-night services, the people are addressed by earnest, faithful laymen. On such occasions M. R. Saint-Hilaire took delight to assist, as long as his strength allowed; and it was a gratifying sight, and of good augury for France, to see the honour paid to a preacher of Christ, whom all knew by repute to be one of the most learned and distinguished men of letters of the time.

The scene at his funeral was a remarkable testimony to the estimation in which the good old man was held. A great company of his Protestant friends attended, but there was also an official deputation from the Institute, including M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, Jules Simon de Vogüe, Picot, and other notable men of the French Academy of Letters. By the express desire of the departed, no *éloge* was pronounced at his tomb. He wished that all thoughts should be turned to God at such a time. It is one of the striking sayings of Bossuet—although he did not himself always follow the counsel—that "we ought to praise nothing in man which death can take away from him!" Later, there was a special funeral service held at the evangelical chapel of the Luxembourg, when M. Hollard gave an interesting address on the life and character of the departed, and M. de Pressensé, in the name of a friendship that he had enjoyed for about forty years, eloquently spoke of the noble and grand virtues of the good man who had passed from them, and left all the churches to mourn his loss. One of the most eloquent of modern Frenchmen, M. Bersier, has since written for the journal, *Christianisme en XIX^e^ Siècle*, an article, reprinted in M. Réveillaud's Protestant newspaper *Le Signal*, from which, and from *L'Eglise Libre* of February 8th, we gather the following facts.

As already stated, M. R. Saint-Hilaire had no relation to Protestantism by birth or early training. After his studies at the university, he was engaged in political journalism, and was employed in writing for the journals of the opposition under the monarchy of July. In the *Constitutionnel* he was an able defender of the policy of M. Thiers, who was then his intimate friend. About the same time he commenced a History of Spain, a work for which he collected materials throughout most of his life. It is noteworthy that this long study of the most Catholic nation of Europe deepened in his heart a hatred of all religious oppression and persecution. About 1850 he was appointed assistant professor of history at the Sorbonne, and his public reputation commenced from that time. In 1856 he was appointed professor, in succession to M. Lacratelle. The loss of his wife soon afterwards greatly depressed him, and in his sorrow he felt the need of religious consolations firmer than the philosophical deism which had till then satisfied him.

Soon after this he made the acquaintance of a

young Swiss lady, Mademoiselle Landry, an accomplished artist, and a Protestant. His marriage with her brought him into an association quite new to him, that of the Free Church of Lyons, of which George Fisch was then pastor. He was greatly struck in observing the influence which the Gospel in its simplicity exerted on the hearts of the worshippers. He used afterwards to say that one of his greatest surprises was to see the artisans of the Lyons factories reading and relishing St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, a book which to him "seemed to be only a treatise of rabbinical dialectic." He, too, studied earnestly the treatise of St. Paul. His sympathy was soon drawn to the faith of the Gospel, through that epistle, which presents the very essence of Christianity. Sin and grace, these were the two points which to him became the foundation of his evangelical belief. As he continued in this study, all his intellect, his heart, his will, became bound to the service of these new convictions, till his whole soul was filled with living faith, of which his life became thenceforth as apostolate.

His love of historic study, and his teaching at the Sorbonne, where he was now a professor, were not interrupted, although he felt everything to be secondary to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. For twenty-eight years he continued his lectures on history. It was not so much in the severe methods of critical research that he excelled, as in the vivid portraiture of individuals, and in the analysis of character. Whenever an opportunity presented itself he strove to communicate to his hearers the sacred flame of elevated feeling which glowed in his own heart. An eminent Hungarian historian told M. Bersier that, in his case, it was in M. Saint-Hilaire's classroom the sceptic became a believer.

The unconcealed and earnest religious fervour of the professor after his conversion did not lessen the cordiality of his colleagues at the Sorbonne. Villemain, Gerusez, Garnier, men of calm, philosophical minds; Saint-Marc Girardin, brilliant and elegant, yet with great judgment and good sense; Prévost-Paradol, then in the flush of his rising celebrity—all these retained the warmest friendship for M. Saint-Hilaire, and though they might sometimes wonder at his new conviction, they could not but respect his absolute sincerity, and they loved and honoured their old comrade.

M. Saint-Hilaire was not satisfied with his academic activity and influence. He longed to be engaged more directly in evangelical work. Along with a friend, M. Keller, he built a chapel in the Rue Madame, the affairs of which occupied much of his labour and time. For theological system and ecclesiastial order he had comparatively little regard; he was chiefly concerned with the direct relations of the Gospel to human nature. What most excited his sympathy was the condition of the people, the people of Paris especially, in whom he was always interested, in spite of their inconsistent and volatile ways. In the political world, and even the world of arts and literature, he ceased to feel much interest, and this the more that he saw of the narrowness of coteries, the personal ambitions, and party intrigues of men whose thoughts and aspirations were only of this world, and bounded by the earthly horizon.

It was the love of the people, the working classes, which drew him to a hearty support of the efforts connected with the McAll Mission. When advancing years had led to his retirement from the professorial chair, he was more active than ever in delivering those popular addresses on subjects nearest his heart. He used to say that the evenings spent in the meetings in a faubourg of Paris gave him truer joy than when he used to speak to learned and admiring audiences at the Sorbonne. When he could no longer speak publicly with effect, he continued to use his pen for the people, and the production of tracts was his latest ambition, and the favourite occupation of his latter years. The Religious Tract Society had the privilege of assisting him in publishing many of these works.

Of the last days of M. Saint-Hilaire, a most touching account is given by M. Bersier. Old age is a testing time of character. The aged are often morose and testy; they are apt to feel as if their merit was not duly appreciated, and are too ready to claim the attention of others. Our friend had a beautiful old age, for God had given to him much of the admirable grace of serenity. The proofs of this calm, tranquil spirit multiplied as the evening of life drew on. He lost a loved and charming daughter, the comfort of his heart, and the light of his home. For a time he was afflicted with total blindness, and when this was relieved by surgical skill, he was more busy than ever with his writing. Nothing discouraged him; nothing damped his zeal in the cause of Christ. He was always cheerful, patient, submissive to the will of God. He had much suffering, but this did not hinder his blessing and adoring up to the close of his days. His was a peaceful and beautiful sunset of life.

Most of the numerous tracts by M. R. Saint-Hilaire have been written for French readers, and published by societies in France. Not a few, however, have been translated into English, and are familiar to our tract readers and distributors. One of them, "On the benefits and blessings of affliction," has appeared in the SUNDAY AT HOME, and has also had a large circulation in separate form. We give not a literal translation, but the substance of a more recent tract, on a subject of universal interest, and suited for thoughtful readers of all classes, not least for those who know the contrast between the light afforded by natural religion, and that of Divine revelation. It may be headed

MORS JANUA VITÆ.

Dread of death is one of the deepest instincts of human nature. It is a feeling innate in us, which reason, although it may oppose and condemn, cannot destroy. And why? Because man feels himself made to live and not to die; and death is a strange phenomenon, contrary to a nature which aspires to life as its essence, and tends to return to the Creator who gave it. Here on earth, and around us, all creatures, whether in the animal or vegetable world, are born only to

die; the earth itself which they inhabit must perish; but man alone has in him, united to his perishable body, a life destined to immortality. Man alone possesses a soul created after the image of God. This immortal part cannot and ought not to disappear with the body which encloses it, nor return to the dust from which that body came. It must subsist after death, and must receive its destiny, either punishment for sin, or reward for righteousness, the last being given without merit, but through faith in the Deliverer revealed in the Gospel. It is the fear of the future judgment that is to thoughtful men the real cause of the dread of death.

"Well," but one may object, "when you speak of fear of death, do you not see how common it is to find it subdued by natural courage? Do you not see the soldier on the battle-field, the sailor in the tempest, the physician in an epidemic, not only devoid of fear, but actually appearing to court danger and to defy death?"

Yes, I hesitate not to acknowledge this. There are manly and robust natures who are without fear; and custom gives a courage to men who, from familiarity with danger, take no account of death. I will give an instance. In the year 1825, I went to Naples, in a poor merchant craft, for at that time there were neither railroads nor steam-ships. When opposite the Tuscan coast we were assailed by a tempest, the most terrible that I have witnessed during my life. Our sails were torn to shreds except one, and the masts quivered like reeds. Our gallant captain had only one anxiety at the moment. This was to escape a rocky reef, marked in our charts, but impossible to be descried from the deck on account of the lofty waves. He asked the five or six sailors who formed the crew, if one of them would volunteer to go to the mast-head, to look out for and signal the reef. All were ready to go, and one fine young fellow was soon aloft, and had lashed himself to the mast, where he kept his post, till he could point to the place of danger, and the vessel was saved!

What do we conclude from this? That there are some privileged natures, strong in courage; and there are others who may be perhaps devoid of fear because utterly unaware of danger; but this does not contradict the fact that the general instinct of humanity is to shrink from death, an instinct shared alike by the savage and by the civilized man, the exceptions only making more marked the rule, as to the dread of death by beings made to live and not to die. Truly a poor lot would it be for man, if he was destined to perish, soul and body, leaving no more trace than the insect born for the day, or the leaf which fades and falls in autumn!

I would say more about the fear of death, in its natural aspect, apart from revelation. The young and the thoughtless often have least fear; those who have most fear are men who are alarmed by the prospect of future retribution—a feeling which points to instinctive belief in a life to come. Another class of men I think of with profound sympathy, those whose spirits are broken by affliction, caused by the death of beloved ones. What consolation can these men have from philosophy, in the disappearance of parents, wife, or children, and the end of the affections, hopes, joys, and interests of life? I have known such men: honest, devoted, who seemed made to trust and to love, and who yet knew nothing of any firmer and more enduring objects of these master faculties, love and faith, than the fleeting and uncertain relationship of time! It is sad to think of such separations, the more painful as the happiness has been the purest and unbroken. Death is the dark end of all these mere earthly affections; but how different when the Christian regards death as the door opening upon a life which then only begins in a world of light and peace and happiness. All that God demands of us is so to live as to be waiting for the salvation of which death is the messenger, salvation from the troubles and sufferings, and the sins of this world, and entrance into a world bringing eternal enjoyment of all that has been best loved and most worthy of love in this life.

What does Holy Scripture say about this fear of death? The Old Testament on this point is in accord with the New. "Yea, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil:" says David, "for Thou art with me." From the depth of his distress, we hear the voice of Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that after my body has perished, in my flesh I shall see God." Isaiah and Daniel, the two prophets of the old law who have most clearly announced the doctrine of the soul's immortality, unite their testimony. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, . . . for the earth shall cast out her dead." (Isaiah xxvi. 19.) Daniel says (chap. xii. 2, 3): "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

But the Gospel is full of light on this great subject. Read the Epistle to the Romans, chapters five to eight, and the whole counsel of the Most High is unrolled to the human mind. In a few verses of the fifth chapter the whole of the Gospel is summarised. We are told how death entered by sin, and how sin was made to abound by the law, and how when sin abounded, grace much more abounded, in the gift of life eternal through Jesus Christ!

Thenceforth, on receiving these truths in the heart, everything is changed for the believer, both for this world and the world to come. Freed from the law of sin and death, he can repeat the song of triumph of St. Paul—Christ is my life and death is gain to me. A free salvation has been brought to the door of all, of poor and rich, of unlearned and learned; but this salvation, the gift of God, is not imposed upon any, all are free either to accept or to reject it. Through faith, death itself for the Christian is changed; it is a terror for the worldly and the unbelieving, but for the ransomed of the Lord it has become the entrance to a new life, the blessed beginning of never-ending happiness.

But never let it be forgotten that to live with Christ, we must die to sin; for the "old man," the old nature, is crucified with Christ in those who are to live. We do not mean that complete deliverance from the presence of sin can be attained, but its power is broken, though the conflict between the new and the old nature must endure to the end: the power of evil more and more subdued by the power of the Spirit of grace. Death will be the time of deliverance from all this trouble and conflict, as well as from every ill that flesh is heir to. It will be the entrance into the presence of the Redeemer and of the redeemed, and into the possession of the inheritance of the saints in light. Other glorious prospects for the church and for this earth are presented in prophecy, but so far as each believer is concerned there will hereafter be a state of pure and lasting joy, of which no adequate idea can now be formed. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things prepared for those that now love and serve God. With such prospects, how can the Christian have fear of death?

Having this hope, the believer will gradually come rather to desire death than to fear it; willing to serve, but longing to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. In former times of trial and of persecution it was a common event to witness the triumph of faith, in bonds and prisons, amidst cruel sufferings and tortures, when the hymn begun at the stake, or on the scaffold, was only completed in heaven. The times of persecution were the times of the most glorious manifestations of the grace of God. The blood of the martyrs was truly the seed of the church, and the richest harvests of glory were gathered in these dark seasons of trial.

The days of persecution are passed in our lands, thank God, although it is possible that they may return. But the consecration and devotion of the life to Christ, day by day, in every form of service and self-denial, must ever be the proof of our faith and love. To live for God, to work for Him, in whatever position we are placed by His providence, to serve till the time comes of being relieved by Him, this is the Christian's duty, and I know no duty nobler and more delightful. Under one form or another to devote our life to Him who gave it, and to be ready to sacrifice it, for His sake, is a happy and gainful condition, for it is to change a precarious and perishable existence for an eternity of happiness, though we do not disguise the fact that, whether we die in our bed, or by violence, as the martyrs did, it is through suffering that we must enter in to glory. But then, our light affliction is but for a moment compared with the eternal happiness to follow.

Why, then, should there be fear of death for the Christian? It is to him the haven after the stormy voyage of life; it is the home where the Father, with arms and heart open, and pardon and welcome on His lips, is waiting to receive the penitent and returning prodigal. To live well is the secret of dying well; to consecrate the life to Him who gave it, this is to build on the rock, and not on the sand, and to sow not for time, but for eternity!

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER II.

THERE are sad pages in all histories: there are tales in every land, the telling of which must awaken deep feelings of horror. Man's inhumanity to man has always been the dark stain upon God's earth.

But no cruelties of the ancient days—not even the ghastly enormities of a Nero, or the evil deeds of the "dark ages"—can exceed the terror and trouble, the fiendish works, the rage and oppression which have reigned in the Vaudois valleys.

From primitive times those Valleys in the Savoy Alps have been the refuge of Christians who only asked to be allowed to live, harmless and insignificant, tending their mulberry trees, their vineyards and their corn; with liberty to serve God according to the simple faith which had been handed down to them from their fathers. They had books which they greatly prized,—portions of God's word, poems, commentaries, and their own "Noble Lesson." This celebrated book was written or compiled about the year 1100, in the Romance language,—and in this language they also possessed the text of the Psalms, and several books of the Old and New Testaments.

They themselves declared that it was the persecutions of the Roman Emperors which had driven the first Christian settlers to the Valleys; and if it were so the little church, born of persecution and nourished by martyrdom, had learned from the first to endure all things as good soldiers of its Master Christ.

From the earliest times there have always been faithful hearts humbly following the steps of the Lord, seeking, above earthly wealth and weal, to know and to do God's will. And such there will ever be until the Master comes again. Evil may seem triumphant, and pride and arrogance lift prosperous fronts, but the Lord knoweth them that are His, and there shall never lack a remnant to watch and wait for Him.

It is not needful to trace in this story the growth of the pomp and power of the Bishop of Rome; nor to tell at length how the "successor" of St. Peter ceased to be either humble or faithful. The Empire of the West had crumbled away, the ancient seat of the Cæsars was empty, and gradually the bishop became the most important person in the city, claiming one thread of power after another until the "Sovereign Pontiff" asserted rule and right over the length and breadth of Christendom.

It was strange that such pretensions could be based on the Gospel of Him who took on Himself the form of a

servant, and whose first words of teaching were a blessing on the "poor in spirit." Perhaps it was partly a dim consciousness of this that made Pope and cardinals wish the people not to read the writings of the apostles, and the words of the Lord.

But reading in those days was no easy matter.

Books were scarce and costly. Learning was difficult. The bulk of the people only heard God's word through the mouths of those whose gain it was to suppress and distort its simple teaching. Men and women lived and died believing that pope and priest could forgive sins and wipe off all offences, and that a handful of gold pieces could purchase their entrance into paradise.

It was through these dark days that the Light of the Truth burned clear in the hearts and homes of the simple race dwelling on the confines of Savoy, where the frontier lines of Switzerland and France met on the white hill-peaks.

And this race it was, this "nest of heretics," that the Roman power resolved to crush and kill.

The first persecution that was regularly organised to destroy them root and branch took place at the end of the twelfth century. In addition to those slain outright, the number of those carried into captivity was so great that the Archbishop of Avignon declared that he had "so many prisoners it is impossible not only to defray the charge of their nourishment, but to get enough lime and stone to build prisons for them."

From this time onwards the history of Valleys is one long tale of persecution. The intervals when "the churches had rest, and were edified," were so short that the accounts of suffering and martyrdom must have been handed down verbally from father to son. Thirty-two invasions were endured, invasions of troops filled with the remorseless rage of religious fanaticism.

But it was in the year 1650 that the bitterest storm broke over them.

It was a time of extraordinary "religious" feeling, and councils were established in Turin and other cities having for their object the spread of the Romish faith, and the utter extirpation of heretics. The plan on which they worked was just the old barbarous way of force and fire, and the worst weapon of all, treachery.

Once again the Vaudois fled before the soldiers hired to butcher them. The caves and dens of the rocks, the mountain passes filled with snows that April suns had had no power to melt, the natural fastnesses and citadels of the hills—these were the places to which the villagers escaped. And as they went they were lighted by the blaze of their burning homesteads, and followed by the shrieks and groans of the weak and their helpless defenders, whom the ruthless murderers overtook, tortured and slew.

It was then that Janavel of Rora came to the front.

He had but six men with him when he first made a stand on the heights above Villaro, where the mountain track leads over the Collina di Rabbi to Rora. He lay in ambush, resolved to do what he could to stop the foreign soldiers from ravaging his home, and in his desperate mood ho had no thought save to sell his life as dearly as he could: what could seven men do against hundreds?

But in that narrow place seven men could do much. The simultaneous discharge of their muskets threw the soldiers into confusion. No enemy was to be seen; the troops could not be sure that those rocks and trees did not shelter scores of Vaudois.

They faltered, then fell back.

Again the musket balls came crashing from the hillside. It was more than hired courage could stand! The troops of Savoy turned and fled, leaving sixty or seventy of their number dead on the ground.

They fled only to return. The next day six hundred picked men ascended the mountain by the Cassutee, a wider, more practicable path. But here also Janavel was ready for them. He had now gathered eighteen herdsmen, some armed with muskets and pistols, but the greater number having only slings and flint stones, which they knew very well how to use! Their ambush was well chosen. The column advanced, only to be assailed flank and front with a shower of balls and stones. Again this invisible foe was too much for them to stand. They thought only of escaping from the fatal defile; once more Janavel was victorious.

The Marquis of Pianezza, the Savoy leader, was furious at these repulses. He hastily collected his whole force, sending for his lieutenant, the impetuous and cruel Mario, to bring up the rear-guard, together with some bands of Irish mercenaries who were specially fit for dashing and dangerous service. Rora should surely be carried this time! Every soul there should rue the hour in which they had dared to oppose Pianezza!

But Janavel and his heroes were armed with a strength on which the foe had little calculated. For the third time victory rested with the weak. For the third time the soldiers were driven down the mountain-slopes, hurling one another to destruction in their mad flight.

But this could not last for ever. Eight thousand soldiers and two thousand popish peasants were marched on Rora, and this time the work of death was done.

Janavel and his friends, who had been decoyed to a distance from the village, escaped with their lives, and for many weeks they carried on the struggle, only to be beaten, at last overpowered by numbers. But the name of Janavel was reverenced far and wide as that of a good man, "bold as a lion, meek as a lamb," rendering to God alone the praise of his victories, dauntless in his faith and love while tried as few are tried. His wife and daughter had fallen into the hands of Pianezza,—spared for the time from the massacre at Rora;—a letter from the general reached Janavel offering him his life, and their lives, if he would abjure his heresy; but threatening him with death and his dear ones with being burnt alive if he persisted in his resistance. "We are in God's hands," answered Janavel; "our bodies may die by your means, but our souls will serve Him by the grace that He gives to us. Tempt me no more."

And much the same he wrote thirty years after, when he and pastor Arnaud first planned out the Glorious Return.

It was no marvel that Rénée, Gaspard Botta's betrothed wife, blushed as she spoke of fear. The blood of her heroic grandsire ran in her veins. She too could trust in God, and for His sake endure.

There was a time of peace after that terrible persecution.

The whole of Protestant Europe had remonstrated against the cruelties and horrors that had taken place. Oliver Cromwell then governing England, sent an ambassador to Turin to enforce if possible his indignant demand for mercy. Holland, Switzerland, the German Protestant powers, and even a large number of French subjects, all sent messengers to the Duke of Savoy. And they sent also large sums, more than a million francs, to relieve the most pressing necessities of the homeless and the destitute.

The Duke of Savoy died, and under the rule of his son Victor Amadeus II., the Vaudois had some years of peace. They showed their gratitude for this forbearance by loyally defending the frontier against the Genoese, and by eagerly helping to quell the banditti infesting the mountain passes. They sought to prove with a devotion that borders upon pathos that they also could be good subjects, that their

allegiance to their God only heightened their loyalty to their sovereign.

It was then that Rénée Janavel sang as she sewed the long seams in the linen store that her foster-mother had spun. It was then that Gaspard would whistle as his plane cut through the white plank, and the shavings fell, silky and shining, about his feet.

GASPARD AND RÉNÉE.

Even the grim house-master would let the suspicion of a smile lurk under the straight moustache of iron-grey that almost hid his lips. He could remember the times of terror—Oh, yes, he could remember them only too well!—but ferns and wreaths of mauve auricula were now growing about the ruins that had then been made so fearsome; and the mulberries were flourishing again; and it was a comfort to see Mother Madeleine about and well after her sharp attack of fever a year or two ago; and Emile and Gaspard had grown sturdy and strong—the finest young men in all Rora; and Rénée—the child was always singing when she was not laughing; what a gay sweet heart it was, to be sure! And all things considered, it was no marvel that Henri Botta now and then forgot all the ghastly doings of the past, and let a smile dawn upon his lips or glimmer in his eyes.

"Shall it be in the spring time, dear?" Gaspard said, as he stood in the house that his hands had builded for his bride, and let his glance rest lovingly on her bright face. "Say, dear, shall we light our fire on this hearth when the snows melt on Mount Friolent, and the flowers bloom under the hedges yonder?"

If she did not answer him in words he was nevertheless well contented. And it was settled that so it should be: for not even the neighbours could disapprove of such a marriage. Were not the two born for each other? he so strong and dark and staunch, and she so fair and sweet! And was not Gaspard the best workman in the whole commune, with his earnings all safely saved since he came back from Turin?

Why should there not be a marriage procession along the stream-side to the little white-walled church when the flowers bloomed? Why not, indeed? And wide and long should be the festive wreaths woven of those very flowers to do honour to the grand-child of the hero Janavel.

It was the close of the year 1685. There had been twenty years of freedom in the Valleys—twenty calm years of liberty and peace. The horrid sounds of massacre had died away before Rénée was old enough to remember, before Gaspard was old enough to understand. And so they looked into one another's eyes, and thought that life and love and earth and heaven were smiling on their troth.

But far away, beyond the French Alps, beyond the vineyards of Burgundy and the Lyonais, an old man sat in his splendid palace, a wretched and restless man, who had something to say to the plans and the promises of the simple folk in the Savoy valleys.

For he was the King Louis XIV., Louis surnamed the Great, Louis the husband of the bigot Françoise de Maintenon, trying in his old age of repentance to atone for the guilt of a misspent life. Madame de Maintenon hated heretics as her cold calculating heart hated nothing else; and she loved the approval and the flattery of her courtier priests far more than she loved the king.

"Revoke the edicts giving liberty to the Protestants, sire," she said to her husband. "Crush heresy, and so purchase your peace with God."

Louis listened. He was aged and ailing; his sons were dead; his friends—such friends as he had—were dead too. He also must soon appear before the Throne that was greater even than the glories of his own. It was time he hearkened to the promptings of the Church: Popes and priests must know best about these things; he would do their bidding, and do it thoroughly as a king should!

So the edicts were revoked throughout the land of France. All the civil rights of his subjects belonging to the Reformed Faith were taken away. The heretics must be converted, or go, or die.

Thus he ordered.

And even then not quite content, he forced his neighbour, the young Duke of Savoy, to do likewise. To the Valleys also the persecution should extend.

And Gaspard set his teeth hard as he brightened up his father's sword; and Rénée's tears fell fast as she folded away the snowy linen she had bleached so fair.

When the violets bloomed in the hedges long processions passed that were different indeed from marriage-trains. Trumpet-calls and the tramp of troops echoed from the hills and rocks; and the white walls of the church had been splashed with crimson, and were now blackened with fire.

Once more Rome had sent her "terror" to the Valleys. Once more faith was to be tried to the death, and steadfast souls to win their martyr crowns.

GASPARD SHARPENING HIS SWORD.