THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER III.—"WHEN CHARLIE COMES."

"WE SHALL NOT HAVE MANY MORE CHANCES OF WELCOMING YOU," SAID ALICE TO MR. DURRANT.

IT was after the colonel's death that Barford received the shock already mentioned. The soldier had been a general favourite: his kindliness had no sharp edge, and his mildly-sarcastic humours never left a wound, so that, when he came to die, it was felt that an obituary notice in the "Barford Chronicle" was the least of his dues. All the village went to his funeral, and listened while the vicar, in a moved and broken voice, read the sublime words of hope which for eighteen hundred years have robbed death of its sting.

Allie's tears fell under her crape veil, but they were tears of a thankful heart. It was scarcely like leaving home to lay him in the quiet churchyard at his own gates, and Allie took a dim

comfort in the reflection that she could visit the spot every day.

Charlie was still abroad, and his address unknown, so that the news could not be sent to him, and, when tidings were sought at Oakdene, it was found that Captain Vivian, Charlie's friend and fellow-traveller, had been equally silent.

Miss Vivian herself rode over to Battle House to give expression to the family sympathy and concern for Jim's carelessness.

She had meant to leave a message, but when the maid invited her to go in, saying Miss Lindsell was at home and alone, she threw the reins to the groom and dismounted. To go on a visit of condolence wearing a riding-habit seemed scarcely fitting, even to Honoria Vivian, who preferred the society of her horse to that of any human being; but she knew Alice Lindsell, and she felt that the merely conventional aspect would never strike her at all. You might have gone in a scarlet bonnet, and she would only have thought gratefully that it was very good of you to go at all.

She received her visitor in the old-fashioned drawing-room; her flowers were renewed in their vases, and Allie made no parade of grief to embarrass the guest.

"Thank you for coming," she said, looking up into the girl's beautiful, haughty face. "It was very kind—it is a long way."

"I love riding," said Honoria quickly. "Papa wished me to say how annoyed he is not to be able to send you Jim's address—he has not troubled himself to write even once to us. Young men are so very thoughtless," said the girl, as if she were a matron of sixty; "they never consider others. However, Jim's furlough is nearly over; he is due to rejoin his regiment in a week's time, and no doubt Mr. Lindsell will return with him, or, at least, Jim will be able to tell us where he is."

"Yes," said Alice; "in a week he will know, and he will be very sorry. I am glad he should have one more happy week."

Honoria Vivian guessed that she was hinting at trouble beyond the present sorrow—at calamity that would fall heavily on the young man's light-hearted ignorance. Rumour—always busiest in quiet places—had reached Oakdene that the soldier's affairs were hopelessly entangled, and that there would not be sixpence left for his heirs.

The rich London banker, who was taking a brief respite from business in his splendid country mansion, had made the report the text of a little sermon which he had preached to his wife and daughter at the breakfast-table.

"It's neither more nor less than criminal," said the banker—"immoral and criminal. A man has no right to bring children into the world and turn them over to others to support. I'm told he even allowed his life insurance policy to lapse, and there won't even be that left out of the wreck. And what is to become of his daughter?"

"I suppose the grandson will have to leave the army?" asked Mrs. Vivian. "Jim will be vexed; he has never taken to any one so much as to this young Lindsell."

"The army? He ought never to have been there—and in the most expensive branch of it too. It's no profession for paupers," said the banker, conscious of the demands his own son made upon him.

Honoria had listened with great indifference to the talk between her parents, being absorbed in affairs of her own at the time, but she remembered it now. She glanced round the room where nothing had been renewed for twenty years, and it seemed to her eyes, used to splendour and luxury, as if poverty had crossed the threshold already. What would it be to be poorer still and have nothing?

"I hope," she said, obeying a rare impulse, and bending to take Allie's hand, "I hope you will not have any more trouble."

"Whatever comes, I shall always have the past," she said. "Nothing can change that. I have had a beautiful life for thirty-eight years. That is a long time to have been happy in, isn't it?"

"I have only lived for twenty-three years," said Honoria; "but I don't think I've been particularly contented or happy."

"It will come," Alice spoke kindly; "I think you were meant to lead a happy life."

Honoria Vivian rode home at so reckless a pace that the following groom could scarcely keep her in sight. She had some impatience, some querulousness to throw off, and the exercise seemed profitable towards that end. She presently drew rein and took matters more soberly.

"I don't often gush," she said to herself, with some contempt for her recent behaviour. "How was it I came to talk to her like a silly, sentimental school-girl? She says she has been happy all her life; I wonder if she knows what it means, or if she is content to take the pale reflection for the reality? Could one be happy day after day and year after year in that poky room, with the faded carpet, and the Indian gods grinning at one, and Barford for society? And I am to be happy too; I suppose that means that I shall marry Lord Reigate, unless some higher suitor turns up. Marriage is the gate to liberty, and that is the only sort of happiness I covet."

When she had gone, another girl, dressed in shabby black, had stolen up to Alice, and laid her cheek against that other cheek in close embrace.

"Janey, my dear, how good it is of you to come!"

"Don't say that, Allie," the girl remonstrated; "that's what you said to Miss Vivian. It may be good of her—though I doubt it—but it is only good for me. How splendid she is, Allie—like a princess; but I don't think I could care for her. And they say she is going to marry that horrid old Lord Reigate."

"Perhaps it is only a rumour; I think she will be true to her better self."

"Allie, you believe in everybody. If you had not believed in me, oh, what an unhappy girl I should have been to-day! But now that we are

to be together always, I shall begin to think I have a better side too, if I could only find it."

Alice drew her closer.

"Janey," she said presently, "Charlie will know in a week. I think if we were ready—if we had our plans prepared—it might not be so hard for him."

"We can begin at once. I am free from to-day. Mrs. Palmer gave me my wages"—she held out a little purse—"and she threw some advice into the bargain. 'I think you are better fitted for a nursery-governess, Miss Warner; my daughters have scarcely made the progress I expected.' That means that they have not imbibed French and German with a perfect accent without the aid of grammar, or learned to play and sing like professionals. They have only been taught to write decent English, and to spell and to know something of the history and geography of their own country. Oh," she broke off suddenly, ashamed of her vehemence, "how can I be such a brute as to bring my peddling worries to you when you have so many real troubles to bear?"

"The big troubles help one to understand the lesser ones, dear. Don't grieve any more, Janey; you did your best and it will not be lost—one's best is never lost, even here—come and have some tea, shall we have it under papa's tree? and then we can begin our task."

The tea was brought out to them by the colonel's man who had been with him since he was a lad. A man and a maid made up the service of the modest little establishment, and now the time had come when even these were too many. Allie had told them at once with that spirit of fairness which characterised her, that she could no longer afford to keep them, and there had been unfeigned regret on both sides at the prospect of parting.

Allie's tears brimmed over when each came to her separately and begged to remain in her service, waving aside the question of wages as if it were of no consequence.

It was hard for her to tell them that even for love she could not keep them, that she could no longer remain in Battle House, that she must go somewhere else and do something. She said this vaguely, not knowing in the least, as yet, what she should or could do, only knowing that work was a necessity.

"I will try to find good homes for you," she said, realising with a sudden pang that she herself must soon be homeless.

It was through the servants—grieved and indignant on her account—that rumour of the colonel's affairs first sped. The banker's version was true to the letter—the colonel's means which might have sufficed to keep his daughter and grandson after his death in simple comfort, had all been muddled away. There had been no premeditated waste or extravagance, but the soldier had that curious incapacity for business common to many of his profession, and bad investments, evil counsel, and an easy leaving of things to chance, had done the rest. Mr. Vivian had pronounced sentence when he called this behaviour criminal and immoral; and Barford, in its first hot indignation, was scarcely less severe in its judgment of the dead man. But Allie's gentle heart never harboured so much as a passing reproach. All her memories of her father were sweet and tender and good. If you had told her that the soldier had been an immoral and criminally self-indulgent man, she would have drawn up her slim little figure with silent dignity and answered nothing, but she would probably have thought you had taken momentary leave of your senses.

Even when the family solicitor, to whom it falls to reveal so many unpleasant truths, had told her that she could count on nothing but fifty pounds a year, the interest of her mother's little fortune which was invested for her under trust, she was only staggered for a moment. She had always had that fifty pounds, a very little of it had sufficed for her dress which was not much better in quality and variety now than in her girlish days, and all the rest of it had been spent on secret charities. She could not realise as yet what the actual descent into privation implied, indeed the most active imagination cannot forecast the daily and hourly calls to self-denial and heroism which a face to face acquaintance with poverty wakes into active life.

Perhaps it is as well for the comfort of those whose daily bread is secure, that this hunger of grinding need cannot be vitalised by the fancy, and yet if it could, there would be less of purple and fine raiment, of soft going and dainty feeding—for very shame's sake there would be less of these.

If you had asked Janey Warner what poverty meant, she would have given you one version of it.

"It means," she would have said, "a life of bondage; it means a life which is never for one whole week free from haunting care. It means being a companion or a teacher or a copyist or a type-writer, or a poor author of minor fiction; always poor, mostly solitary, and afraid every hour of the day and night that something or some one will come to sweep away your work and take your place. It means being never sure, never sure that if you chance upon a kindness it will last; if you have a little bit of success that it will not be followed by a long season of despair; it means trampling on and murdering all those instincts that are not wrong in other girls: the desire for dress, for travel, for entertainment, for new books, for music, for pretty things; and it isn't only foolish and frivolous longings you have to put out of your heart, you have to stifle generous impulses too. You can never help anybody else: you can't buy little presents for birthdays, or Christmas; you can't even buy a penny flower to gladden somebody else's eyes, because every penny and every half-penny you can scrape together is needed just to keep you alive and strong enough to go on fighting."

This was how Janey would have discoursed on poverty from a girlish point of view a few weeks ago. And she would not have spoken ignorantly, because for six years, ever since her father, too, had died and left her penniless, she had tried all the experiments above enumerated, even to the

minor fiction which was the most disastrous of them all. Janey's father had been a scientific man, and so there was, perhaps, a little more excuse for him than there was for the colonel, because one does not expect learned men to be practical.

All this Janey would have poured forth a week or two before, but now her views of poverty were much less sombre, they were almost rose-coloured. For she was to have a comrade in the fight, and every one knows how the courage rallies and hope comes back and defeat seems impossible when some chosen companion keeps step with one on the march.

Alice, whom Janey loved with the impulsive, fervid affection of girlhood—girls have their seasons of hero worship too, and often the hero is of their own sex—was going out into the world with her: they had made no definite plans as yet, but in such cases the world generally means London—the great throbbing heart where, to the simple ignorance of the village mind it seems so easy to get in touch with all stirring activities.

Janey was thinking with a springing of the heart of this new boon in her life as she and Allie sat under the apple-tree at tea. Almost the last of so many teas taken there with the kind old soldier and his daughter, for in a week Charlie would be home.

That was the way in which they always alluded to the impending change—when Charlie comes home, the uprooting was to begin. Only two weeks since her father had died, and in one more Allie must leave the home made sacred by the tenderest ties. She looked across the lawn to the cypress, there was no one now to rest under it and take delight in its green shade. Oh, how desolate it looked and how empty was her heart; even this warm young love could not fill the vacant place. But hers was one of those meek, unobtrusive natures so ready always to think of and care for others that even in grief there was no room for self.

Except for her changed expression and the sadness of her face in repose, her sorrow made no display, and even when she spoke to Janey her tone was always cheerful.

"You will stay with me, then, Janey, since you are free?"

"If you will have me."

"Your little room is all ready. Shall Martin fetch your box?"

"Mrs. Palmer was to send it here. I thought you would give it and me room till Charlie comes. Mrs. Palmer said I might stay with the girls for another week—my board to be taken out in teaching"—there was a little gleam of humour in Janey's eyes—"but of course I'd much rather be here, that is, if I can be of any use. Allie, I can pack better than I can teach."

"Yes, we must pack." Allie stifled a sigh. "There are some things I could not leave behind, and there are the things which belonged to his father and are now to be Charlie's. Mr. Lewis told me about them—and—his grandfather's sword."

"It will be very hard for you, Allie."

Alice did not answer. Only a woman, perhaps, can understand the wrench that may lie in parting with the lares and penates—the inanimate things that long use and custom have invested with a kind of life. Her chairs and tables, her linen stores, her little household treasures of one kind and another are far more to the woman than they can ever be to the man.

She did not answer because on looking up she saw the vicar entering by the little gate that divided the churchyard from the garden.

"There is Mr. Durrant," she said, rising and going to meet him.

Mr Durrant, already past middle life, had a curious, blundering, absent way, as if he lived in a world of dreams and only woke now and then with a start to the realities of life. The village had a store of sly little jests at his expense; it told how he might be seen holding up his stick when it rained with some vague idea that he thereby protected his weather-beaten wideawake from the storm; how, when he set out for London, he somehow found himself at York, and only realised the mistake when he had vainly enquired his way to Lambeth; how when he was asked for charity (and every beggar knew that an appeal in this quarter was sure to be responded to) he would give his purse and retain the sixpence he had meant to bestow; and yet though his blunders were his sister's despair and his friends' amusement, there was no one who was more respected or better liked, for in all things that concerned his people's spiritual needs he was thrillingly alive and keenly responsive.

The conventionalities of life, the dressing and masquerading with which we drape it, might have little meaning for him, but for human pain, for inward struggles, for assailing temptations, he had that quick insight and ready sympathy that clothe the preacher with power. Often and often from that quiet, earnest, faithful voice, Alice had drawn strength and comfort, and she went to him now as to a long-tried friend who had never failed her.

"I was seeing old Mary Barton at the almshouses," he said, "and in passing your garden I thought I might find you at home."

He paused suddenly and glanced in a bewildered way at his hands which were both occupied, so that he could not free one to take her's. Then he laughed with an edge of embarrassment.

Alice smiled in sympathy, for he had carried off Mary's old-fashioned square work-box, instead of the worn Bible out of which he had been reading to her.

"I'm afraid I'm beyond correction or amendment," he said, shaking his grey head over himself, "it almost amounts to kleptomania, doesn't it?"

"Except that you always leave something more precious behind than you take. Let me send it back for you, and come and have some tea. We shall not have many more chances of welcoming you."

"Have you settled on anything finally?"

He was quite awake now and he looked down on Allie's sweet, sad, face with a gathering force of expression in his own, a blending of

eagerness, anxiety and hope that hung on her answer.

"You will stay with us?"

She shook her head. "That cannot be. I had a letter from Mr. Lewis this morning and he tells me that a client of his may very likely rent the house and would, in that case, buy some of the furniture. He advises me to close with this offer—it would be a little sum for Charlie, this change will make such a difference to him, poor boy—and if he has this money he might not have to leave the army."

"Charlie must stand alone." The clergyman spoke with unusual decision. "Poverty isn't a bad thing for a young fellow; it gives his courage and endurance a chance, and brings out the stuff that is in him. I have been poor, you know," he said, with his quaint, sudden smile, "and though nothing very sublime or heroic came out of it, I can testify that it doesn't hurt a man. Charlie will do very well. This furniture—I'm afraid I don't know much of the value of such things—" he stared round him as if he were appraising the apple-trees. "I'm afraid I didn't give proper heed to the question when we came here, but the money that it fetches ought to be used for your needs, that is what the colonel would have wished, I think—that is, if there be any necessity to part with the property at all?"

"I'm afraid there is," said Alice, smiling sadly as she handed him a cup of tea, "you know we women cling to our furniture and feel like losing a bit of ourselves to see it go into strange hands, but I should no longer have any use for it, and we must think of what is best for the boy."

"I counsel you to do nothing hastily," he said earnestly, while he absently kept on putting lumps of sugar in his tea. "There may be ways, there may be openings—our lives are sometimes arranged for us in ways we cannot foretell."

"We will decide nothing till Charlie comes."

Janey, who had taken no part in the talk, looked from the clergyman's face, charged with a subtle consciousness, as unlike as possible to his usual dreamy abstraction, to Allie's, which was lit with friendly warmth and sincerity.

What did he mean by other ways? Allie was pledged to her and the bargain must not be broken.

Then she put her doubts away with the oft-repeated formula, "When Charlie comes."

THOUGHTS AND BY-THOUGHTS.

BIRD-MUSINGS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE," ETC.

THIS is the first day of March, on which I am writing, but not "The first mild day of March." No, the Autumn, after the wet Summer, was spared to us till nearly Christmas, by the relenting year. No Spring had we; no Summer, and a fine late Autumn came to make us what amends might be made. So the flowers rejoiced, as children do, allowed to stay up later, and the winter-blossoms, arising from the brown earth-covering, looked wonderingly on the summer-blooms, staying with us still. The purple and the purely white Christmas roses looking up out of the dark, rich, green, of their hand-like leaves, might see the beds of summer flowers; verbenas, scarlet and purple, with white eye, geraniums with kaleidoscope leaves; even the heliotrope that the first hard frost blackens into death. There they still were, till near to Christmas; there they still were, though abashed somewhat, and inert, and the summer splendour gone. After these were removed, and the beds had been tidily made, and the bulbs put to sleep under the brown earth-blanket, it was some time before the coverlet of the white snow was laid over the beds, and Winter but tardily advanced his pale flag, to take possession. And now it is the first day of March, addressing which month the poet sings—

> And thou hast joined the gentle train,
> And wear'st the gentle name, of Spring.

However, it is a December scene that we see from our windows on this March morning. All day long on February's last day but one, did the small snow fall, and far into the night, and, so now, snowdrops, early primroses, hepaticas, pink and blue, and pushing crocus-gold, are all buried under the pure and dazzling pall of the snow. Sweet virgin flowers, unmarried as yet by the dormant bees, the white befits them well. Beautiful snow, always beautiful, albeit not so welcome now, as when we called ourselves young. Well may Ruskin doubt whether, "in the range of inorganic nature, any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh deep snow-drift, seen under warm light." The perfect and changeful curves, how they fascinate, casting each its clear distinct shadow, the shadow pale blue, sharply defined, under the bend of the overlapping edge of the sunlit snow. The snow-drift that seems a keen-edged wave, arrested and turned into parian, even as it thinly curved to the foam-fall. Or as though it were cast into an

enchanted sleep, until the kiss of the sun come to break the charm. What fairy caves and columns of purest white, glitter, as marble newly carven, in the bank built up of the finest siftings from the snow-stores, welded into solidity by the careful assiduity of architect Wind!

One by-delight of the snow I can enjoy, however, sitting in the warm room, in my study chair. And that is, the society of the birds. Seldom can one have so choice an opportunity for studying their tricks, and manners, or for noting movement, grace of shape, hues of plumage. Especially is this so in the case of the rarer, shyer birds, that now, their dinner being all under, instead of on, the great table-cloth of snow, are impelled to come, modest pensioners, to the Buttery-Hatch into which I have turned my window. What is the choicest museum of deftly preserved birds, compared to this seeing them, bright and alert, with wings that flutter, and with eyes that glance?

I love the birds, every one of them. There is grace in every movement, elegance in shape, sweetness in voice, prettiness in ways, beauty in even the duskiest colour. The good God loves them, and the Lord tells us of His care for the ravens, and of His tender regard for the ending of even the homely sparrow's brief life. And it is well to love God's pets. He cannot have made these darlings of creation without having done His work most lovingly. And (words familiar, yet not over-familiar):

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things, both great and small,
> For the dear God, who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

Robin; and chaffinch, crested and diversely hued, with his plainer clad mate. Blackbirds, how jet and gold-billed against the snow! Thrushes, and sparrows a-plenty. Tits: tom-tit, great and tiny, and dainty little cole-tit; sometimes, a flitting wren; sometimes, a pied wagtail (not, that I remember to have seen, the grey, or the elegant yellow-bird). These common visitors are to be seen readily on the sill, throughout the winter. But a great snow gives us the treat of some rarer visitors. I have even had a jay, with his lovely plumage; and, once, the spotted wood-pecker. But, at this time, the hero of the window is the nuthatch; aye, three or four of these. They creep up the sill, and appear, quick, eager, versatile candidates for crumbs. Not only crumbs, for the bright idea has occurred to me of ranging hazel-nuts along the stone ledges, and we have been well rewarded by seeing the long beak seize nut after nut, and our bird fly off, very soon to return. Not for long does a pint of nuts last our friends; and besides nuts, they take crumbs, not a crumb, of what use, if so, the vantage of so long a beak? No, one, two, three, will the bird pack in that beak before its departure. Beak dreaded by all the other birds, which, perforce, give precedence to its owner. Beak that we may hear, if we will listen, tap, tap, tap, at the nut fixed in the rough walnut bark, not far off, which sound is indeed that mistaken by the many for the sound of the "woodpecker tapping the hollow beech-tree," whereas *this* bird mostly drives its bill into the soft decayed wood. So busy is our nuthatch, that we may, if we will, even see him at his work, utterly in earnest, and absorbed in it; weight of body and beat of wing assisting the force of each stroke. Then back again with quick motion, and bright eye, dull, buff-red breast, black streak continuing the black slender beak, as it were, across the eye to the wing, and another swift-laden flight.

Indeed it is a delight, which I marvel that so few share, to make the acquaintance of the birds. I could envy almost the privilege of those who may every year expect the white, red-legged stork to build on their very houses. Too seldom have I the rare enjoyment of seeing the solitary heron musing, motionless, on one leg, at the edge of a reedy fen. Starlings that build in our water-pipes I love not in that they build there, chiefly am I aggrieved by the scolding of the parent birds, in harsh grating rasps, when I want to saunter about what is (after all) my own garden, and enjoy what are (really) my own flowers. But I like to see these birds walk in little troops, walk, not hop over the green lawn. And I like to see those vast wheeling starling clouds that come and pass, high over the stripping trees of November. Of course I love, and welcome

> Swallow and martlet still that haunt our eaves,
> To guard our roof from lightning and from thieves.

And, in a hard frost, it is a fresh experience, in a walk beside meadows, to note flocks of the pee-wit, or lapwing-plover, known to denizens of towns rather by the eggs (olive brown blotched with black) than by the graceful crest and winnowing wings. Also to note, wheeling in the air, or settling on the meadow or plough land, the white gulls, flocking with the jetty rooks. It has the pleasant incongruity of a snow-drop in June, or a warm rose at Christmas, to see the snowy bodies and crooked wings inland, and away from "the hollow ocean ridges, roaring into cataracts."

There are many often-noted lessons to be learned from God's "fowls of the air;" but, turning from the more obvious thoughts, we may, if we will, find by-lanes for pleasant and profitable sauntering.

Ut migraturus habita.

I do not know whence this motto comes. But it is full of suggestive thought in connection with our bird friends. They dwell with us as strangers and pilgrims, and depart as they that seek a country. They eat and they drink, they pair, they nest, they sing in the blue days and are silent in the dull. Joyously they sing at first, in the time of pairing and of nest building; and the glad male bird cheers his mate with bright anticipatory song, while, meek-eyed, she sits upon her neatly-ordered eggs, white, speckled, brown, or blue. And the year, though with neither speech nor language, responds with sweet accompaniment of opening buds, and crowding flowers, to the singing of the minstrels of the air. But the impulse of growth is checked, as the year matures, and the glad bird-song sinks into

silence. Aye, all was not as hope at first flattered: there is blight on the flower-bud, and worms at the root of the gourd: and of the eggs, some were addled, and many were taken, and sometimes, alas! the nest, by rude hands, broken down. And some of the young birds died, and some vexed the parent's heart with cuckoo-greed: and at the best, all the time, and all the pains, were needed to supply the growing wants of the growing brood. And then the anxiety and care of getting them out in the world: dangers from weakness of wing, perils from hawks that hover, from stoats or lurking weasels, from green-eyed feline monster, seeking whom he may devour. No time, little heart, for singing.

Besides, as all men know, singers lose their voice here, as time waxes with them. So who would go on singing when the tuneful voice that enchanted the world breaks, and is growing harsh? It is sad for the hearers, as one tells us, in quaint pathetic strain, concerning the break-down of the one bird who tries to prolong, after his voice is gone, his joyously-greeted notes.

> And the cuckoo piped away—
> How I love his simple lay,
> O'er the cowslip field of May
> As it floats!
> —May was over, and, of course,
> He was just a little hoarse,
> And appeared to me to force
> Certain notes.
>
> Since mid-April, men averred,
> People's pulses, inly stirred
> By the music of the bird,
> Had upleapt:
> It was now the end of June;
> I reflected that he'd soon
> Sing entirely out of tune,
> And—I wept.

And all these things are as presage of a change. They say to these glad beings that, we may fancy—when sweet Spring made earth lovely, and their hearts were full of song,—expected permanency of delight: "No; this not your home; these things will not last beyond the need of the hour. They will pall on you, and an instinct will carry you far away into the Unknown Land. Here, kindness, and love, and wisdom had provided well for the brief sojourn. Trust to that love and kindness still in the untried 'To come'—'*Ut migraturus habita.*'"

That which has been here written is transparent—the meaning easily shows through it. The interpretation is interwoven with the parable, "*Ut migraturus habita.*" It is God's word to His favourite creature—man. God's word writ on leaves that bud and fall, on birds that come and go, as well as on the pages of the Book. Abraham understood it, when, even as the birds that come to us in Spring, he, with simple faith in the wisdom and care of his Maker, "obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went." And arriving in the Land of Promise, he yet looked beyond its milk and honey, ever led by the voice, to expect "greater things than these." So there he lived, as a sojourner merely, and passed away to the Unknown Land, "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and having been persuaded of them, and having embraced them," he, and his, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

> Where is the land to which the ship would go?
> Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know;
> And where the land she travels from? Away!
> Far, far behind, is all that they can say.
>
> Night gathers fast; adieu, thou fading shore!
> The land we look for next, must lie before;
> Hence, foolish tears! weak thoughts no more rebel,
> Farewell, farewell, a last, a last farewell!

So, *mutatis mutandis*, we may speak for the passenger birds, and for the passing souls of men. A plunge into the Unknown; but with One there, at any rate, Who hath reassuringly said, "I go to prepare a place for you."

"*Ut migraturus habita*," then, oh, trembling soul! Nor fear, when the shivering days of Autumn come (or if, in the favour of the Lord, it be for thee, the hopeful days of Spring), fear not to wing thy way, angel-accompanied, across the vast of unknown waters, to the Summer-Land.

Voices change and grow harsh, here and now. But fulness of voice shall come, with fulness of joy, in the glad Summer-Land, where God shall "make all things new."

We may get, however, of music, and of His delight in it, one of our glimpses through the veil, in the thought of God's creation. I know that, properly speaking, bird-songs cannot claim to be music. Of harmony and thorough bass the nightingale even, knoweth naught. Still, the birds are songsters, and God gave them their notes. Diverse, yet never clashing, they sing the great part-song of the woods. And God has given us on earth music since Jubal's time. It is very soothing to the soul, and exhilarating to the heart.

Music will make you, as it pleases, or dance, or weep, or march to battle. As witness, I call into the box, Dryden's celebrated Ode. And is it not strange (yet is it?) that this art of all, should assert its peculiar right to the name "music." For music is but μουσικὴ τέχνη—any art over which the *muses* presided. Of History, Painting, divine Poetry, they were, in old Greek lore, the patronesses. Why should the science of sweet sounds be specially and emphatically named, *the* musical art—music?

Well, there is a power in it, subtle, inexpressible. And "the man that is not moved"—(we know what Shakspeare says)—but this man, at least, misses a foretaste—yes, a foretaste of Heaven. There shall be "harpers harping with their harps," and there, a new song ever before the throne.

Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, can their music be surpassed ever—even there?

I think *themselves* might surpass it, in the Unknown Land.

Yes, even in the chief intellectual delights of

"THE PART-SONG OF THE WOODS."

earth, it may be for us, in this new thing also, the motto, "*Ut migraturus habita.*"

> Else were permanent
> Heaven on earth, which its gleams were meant
> To sting with hunger for full light.

And again:

> God filled, did not exceed, man's want
> Of beauty in this life. But through
> Life pierce,—and what has earth to do,
> Its utmost beauty's appanage,
> With the requirement of next stage?

And to be in tune with the music we hear—eh, that is sometimes wanting to our listening here! "I am never merry when I hear sweet music," says beautiful Jessica. But I do not think that Lorenzo's was a deep enough mind to be intended by the poet to give the right reason. Is it not rather that all sweet sounds are echoes of the songs of Zion, and that such echoes bring in upon the heart—we know not how, by a vague, strange instinct, the sense of exile? Sweet music may soothe, or madden.

> How can ye sing, ye little birds,
> And I so weary, fu' of care?

And—

> It's ill piping to a sad heart.

And the well-known lines of Burns are but condensed Shakspeare:

> The little birds that tune their morning's joy,
> Make her moans mad with their sweet melody,
> For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy,
> Sad souls are slain in merry company;
> Grief best is pleased with grief's society:
> True sorrow then is feelingly sufficed,
> When with like semblance it is sympathised.

But there will be perfect melody, and perfect *listening* sympathy, in the Unknown Land.

THE LATE WILLIAM FLEMING STEVENSON, D.D.

"THE life of a clergyman is not the life of a man who fills his barns and dies in plenty, but of one who trusts in God to satisfy very moderate wants, whose first wish is to do his work, and who sets an example of humility and faith. It might please God to keep me poor, but I trust it will never please Him to keep me idle."

So wrote the late William Fleming Stevenson, almost at the commencement of his career. His own life was much more than these words express, yet the spirit of his abounding service appears in them. The diversified activities of succeeding years all bore witness to his own "first wish," for his richly-cultivated nature was given without reserve to the ministries of the gospel. To these he brought a rare discernment, and an industry which never seemed to tire in its quiet constancy. The commonplace channels which to some men become routine were to him channels of ever-growing influence, so that in the prime of his days his heart gave pulse to large numbers of people. No man of these times could more truly have said, "For me to live is Christ." His biography[1]—written by his wife with admirable taste—is one from which the dullest reader may catch some inspiration of duty, for it is not so much the talents he possessed, shining though they were, as the use he made of them in common ways, which gives impressiveness to the narrative.

His earlier years were remarkable chiefly for their harmonious unfolding. Born at Strabane, in county Tyrone, in 1832, William Fleming Stevenson received the main impulses of his life from a godly home. One sad incident threw a shadow on his student days. An elder brother studying at Edinburgh went out one evening to visit some friends and was never seen again. No clue to the mystery was ever obtained; and he himself, bereft of the companionship he had eagerly anticipated, instead of Edinburgh, was sent to the University of Glasgow. From the first he was an enthusiastic student, but his pursuit of knowledge overleaped prescribed subjects, and took a wide range. After taking his degree, he spent three sessions in the New College, Edinburgh, to prepare himself for the work of the ministry; and, on completing his theological course there, gave some time to study and travel in Germany, passing from the University of Berlin to finish his studies at Heidelberg.

Among his most intimate friends in Scotland was the now well-known Adolph Saphir, who gives us a glimpse of his inner life at this period. "While he was inwardly rooted in the truth, and living a life of communion with God in prayer and study of Scripture, his theological views were as yet undeveloped, and he felt, as most thoughtful students do, the disturbing effect of modern speculation and of neology. His mind was candid and active. His temperament was calm. He was determined to examine carefully and slowly and to collect material diligently .... He was very sensitive to any want of justice and candour in the treatment of divergent views, and still more to any want of reality or delicacy in the expression of spiritual experience .... Although his time was so fully occupied, he undertook the visitation of a district in the poorest part of Edinburgh. Most diligently did he fulfil his duties; and we have known him, when suffering severely from rheumatism and unable to walk, take a cab to his district and climb with difficulty steep stairs to see the sick

[1] Life and Letters of William Fleming Stevenson, D.D. Minister of Christ Church, Rathgar, Dublin. By his Wife. (Nelson and Sons.

and suffering people. Stevenson thought that he was called to the work of evangelisation in the West of Ireland. He was very fond of his native country. He loved to remember the bright light of the missionary heroes who in olden days went forth from the Isle of Saints."

In Germany, Mr. Stevenson met many notable men. No one seems to have interested him more than Immanuel Wichern, whom he sought out on first reaching Hamburg. In his visit to the famous Rauhe Haus may be traced the beginnings of his "Praying and Working," a book which, in its presentation of the less familiar types of piety, did much to stimulate Christian activities. His letters were at all times remarkable for their fulness of easy, flowing narrative, and thought; and at this period they give many pleasant glimpses of religious life on the Continent. Here is a characteristic note relating to Berlin:

The professors address the men as "fellow students." In that single form of address you have one of the great points of the relation subsisting between the two great classes of the university. The professor puts himself at once on your footing. That he has a title and an office does not interpose any barrier; he is still, and must to the end of his life continue —as he believes—just what the young man entering college is, and resolves to be—a student. We are all students, he knows, and when we die we have most to learn. So those German professors think, and in this spirit they lecture. Elected as the best of us, they strive to "impart the gift of seeing" to the rest of us; a nimbler runner may take the torch they carry, and bear it farther than they were able to go. In that hope they teach; and when it is fulfilled they rejoice for the truth that is won; they do not murmur that another is the winner.

Here is a sketch of one of the professors, Nitzsch:

Nitzsch comes in noiselessly like a spirit, and with a slow, solemn step glides up the room and to his desk. An elderly man, spare, of middle height, with greyish hair, and an eerie look about him, as if he were not of this world, as indeed he scarcely is. With his manuscript lying before him, he rests his chin on his hand as he begins to speak in a low, thoughtful voice, perhaps two fingers playing with his under-lip, his small bright eyes looking far away as if he saw visions, and as if he were receiving, like an old prophet from the Invisible, the thoughts he uttered. Though his voice is low, and passes frequently between his fingers, it is remarkably distinct, and one wishes that his meaning were as easily intelligible as his language. He is the "hardest" theologian in Germany, but also the profoundest; and when one understands him, which indeed is oftener than I expected, it is a rare delight. Always you can pick up multitudes of detached and profound thoughts that drop from him with a marvellous prodigality, but the difficulty is to find the link that binds them to each other, and which, evidently clear and present to his own mind, is too often present to no other.

And here a charming picture of Pastor Gossner:

Went to-day to hear old Pastor Gossner, a marvellously hale and hearty man in his eighty-third year, of good height and erect air, who himself trains his own vines and lives quite alone, and who this morning not only read out the hymns line by line with a powerful voice, but the liturgy, and, besides, had his own prayers and a sermon of forty minutes, delivered, it is true, sitting. He wears a little black skull-cap, and his white hair streams out from under it on each side of his head. He has a sweet, intensely calm and peaceful, loving and spiritual face. On every Sunday and feast-day he holds a service at nine o'clock in the Elizabethan Kranken-Haus, chiefly for the deaconesses, though others may attend; and I am told through the last severe winter he never missed a Sunday. His address was on the epistle for the day—the preaching of repentance by John the Baptist. It was beautifully simple and affectionate, like the voice of a man whose heart was lifted up to God. Dear old man! One could fancy it was a little room in Ephesus eighteen centuries ago, and that St. John was addressing his little flock.

One other portrait we may transfer, that of Tholuck, as he found him at home:

The little keen man in his study, his face set in an expression of constant pain, his manner brusque and abrupt, his caustic remarks, his intolerance of "mere ideas" his biting satire, applied as readily to a first visitor as to any one else—this is no ideal, but a real, every-day man, living in an every-day, practical world. When I first saw him he did not, beyond the coldest greeting, show that he was aware of my presence, but talked fitfully for half-an-hour with two young trembling students sitting on the sofa. Once, indeed, he turned round after a fit of absence to ask how long I had been in Berlin, and, when he heard, said quickly, "Hope you learned something there," and continued his catechisation of the two youths. By-and-by he relented, his coldness thawed, and before we parted he was even genial, and had asked me to accompany him on one of his walks the next day. When I called again I found him writing a letter of introduction for me to Heidelberg, and singing over his work. When he had finished his letter and the song together, we went out, first into his garden, along one wall of which runs a covered arcade to serve as walking ground in wet weather. He takes immense, quick strides, and might be known at the distance of a mile by his long coat, old hat, and peculiar gait. We walked furiously about the suburbs, and the conversation became more and more animated. At last he fell into a vein of meditation, of thinking aloud, that was very like hearing him read a new chapter in the "Hours of Devotion." With his blessing and a hearty shake of the hand I parted from him. . . . He walks twice a day, each time for nearly two hours, and never unaccompanied. It is one of the necessary sacrifices he must make to secure even tolerable health, and he uses it as a means of doing all he can for the students and of bringing them into contact with him.

The deeper thoughts that intermingled with his studies took often a shade of greater solemnity as the young man contemplated the work before him. It was too high, too noble, too arduous, too painful, until he remembered that we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. "My dear mother's perfect trust and confidence," he wrote, "that God has a work for me to do, has greatly strengthened my weak faith, and helped to banish these perplexing misgivings." In 1855 Mr. Stevenson returned to Ireland. He had begun to preach occasionally, when the sudden loss of his father, stricken down in a moment, one Sunday after morning service, when walking round his garden, shattered the peaceful home of his youth. Other duties soon absorbed him. The missionary sympathies already strong within him began to find expression. He offered himself to the Belfast Town Mission for work among the poor

and outcast, and it was not long before he was busy in the lanes and alleys where poverty and sin had chiefest place.

There were in those days no such agencies of amelioration as are now common. He had himself to carry the burdens he found in visiting from house to house. Many a time did he give his own dinner to feed the hungry. He shrank from no exposure or fatigue in his efforts to minister to soul as well as body. But his labours were sharply interrupted. Visiting in an alley where typhoid fever raged, and where every case had proved fatal, he was himself attacked by it, and brought to the verge of the grave. In the delirium of the fever he was frequently heard praying for his poor people. He recovered, but for some months remained in a condition of great weakness. When his strength returned, he sought the refreshment of change in temporary duty at Bonn, where for six months he filled the place of an absent pastor over a congregation of English residents. It was a time of inward growth. "Our life," he wrote to his mother, "should rather be day by day with Christ in the present than in either the past or the future. This will keep us in a steadier joy, and more in the way of doing God's will." On his journey homeward he visited Kaiserwerth and other religious institutions, and spent also a day with George Müller, at Bristol. These glimpses into other fields of Christian activity were of great service to him. But better than travel, more than university education, were the lessons of his own experience in the work to which he had given himself at Belfast. Problems which had troubled him found in this sphere their solution; many a dark question had its answer when he came into contact with the sins and miseries of men; while his own time of sickness and waiting wrought in him a still tenderer sympathy, which was often afterwards to be as healing balm to wounded spirits. On his return to Belfast, he became the minister of a small mission church in Alfred Place, and some months of happy labour followed. But a larger sphere was opening for him.

The full strength of Mr. Stevenson's ministry was given to Dublin. When a Presbyterian church was constituted in the suburb of Rathgar, in 1860, he became the pastor. Christ Church, as the new building was called, soon became a centre of influence. To the usual duties of such a position he brought more than usual powers and a spirit of devotion that could not be surpassed. Combined with great breadth of Christian sympathy, there was unceasing care for individual souls. While zealously cultivating a missionary and philanthropic spirit among his people, he was still more concerned for their spiritual life. In some forms of usefulness, he was a pioneer; of all that was doing he was the centre. In one of the letters belonging to this first period of his ministry, we find him saying, "It is unspeakably solemn to realise that you are speaking for God to men," and then, after a touching allusion to "people who sit in the same seats for years without believing in Christ," he continues: "Probably they go home and groan over the stupidity of the preacher, which is true, or he would have made them think of the sermon instead. I see their faces often on Sunday night if I lie awake, always in accusation." And characteristic is another sentence: "It is a fight that ends in tremendous issues; and perhaps you have to fight all the time with your own wish to say fine things and send the people away saying, 'What a brilliant sermon.'" Yet, at the end of his career, one of his biographers testifies that his preaching seems to have been impregnated with the spirit of Martin Boos' motto, "Christ for us, Christ in us." "It was impossible to frequent his ministry without gaining the most attractive views of the person and character of Christ."

"The centre of his work," says Mr. Sinclair, "was the public worship of the sanctuary. In conducting it, all the spiritual and intellectual force that was in him seemed to be called into exercise. Conspicuous above everything was the sense of the presence of God. . . . This was felt all through the service, the announcement or reading of a psalm or hymn was not a formality, but a solemn summons to the people to enter into God's courts with praise. The reading of the word was to him the delivery of a Divine message, and it was a part of the service he never shortened. In his prayers he seemed to lead his people into the Holy of Holies, and then to plead the case of every soul before him."

The following sentences touching pastoral visitation occur in one of his letters, and are significant: "I cannot bear religious commonplaces, and if people drop into religious phrases, and religious voice, I change the conversation to the flattest and most directly secular subject. I determined from the beginning to wait, no matter how long, until the heart would be touched, and the crust of phrases disappear; for it is an awful temptation, both to me and to them, to be satisfied with a gloss of words."

To his many ministrations in more personal form we can but allude. The abounding sympathy of such a man had numerous sequestered channels. In one year, which happens to have been noted, he is known to have paid more than nine hundred visits. His letters were sometimes efficacious where his words could not reach. With children his relations were charming, and many a simple and beautiful epistle attests the intimacy of his sympathy with them. It is recorded how, in one instance, he left Glasgow, hurrying from the platform at the close of one of his Duff Lectures, crossed the channel to Belfast in the teeth of a storm, and hastened on to Dublin, in order that he might see a young girl of fifteen who was dying, and then, after two hours spent in her sorrow-stricken home, started back to fulfil his next engagement in Scotland. This was but characteristic of an energy that gave itself without stint. The same quick sympathy would sometimes prompt him to sit up all night with a wakeful invalid.

Mr. Stevenson's letters are testimony to an inborn faculty of expression. His busy life did not allow of any extended services to literature, but he was a contributor to various magazines.

Some of his biographical sketches were the basis of his volume on "Praying and Working," which has been translated into several European languages, and is to the general public perhaps his best memorial. He was an authority in Hymnology, and had contemplated a work on "The Hymns and Hymn-writers of Germany," which was never completed. Still more important were the preparations he made for a work on Missions.

It was truly said by the late Bishop Steere that missions cannot succeed without a healthy life in the church behind them. On this principle no better man could have been found than Mr. Stevenson to direct the work of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland in its mission fields in India and China. His whole career had given the lie to those who teach that missionary interests are hostile to nearer claims. In him it was seen that the charity most energetic at home may be the most energetic abroad. There is no "Thus far and no farther," in the gospel of Christ. His appointment as "convener" but brought into focus his life-long aims. We can here, however, but barely indicate the nature of the services he rendered in that capacity. It has been said of him that he seemed to work for the Mission as if he had no other work to do. His enthusiasm kindled enthusiasm. "It was his custom to write long monthly letters to the mission staff generally, which were passed on from one missionary to another. But sickness or trial always drew forth the special letter that, as one of their number wrote, 'showed a perfect comprehension of our difficulties, and a brotherly sympathy in our sorrows.' Another says, 'He seemed to come close to us then, to write as if he were one of us; and so, indeed, he was.'" These letters were not simply letters of counsel, but often personal and newsy like those of friendship.

A visit to America, in 1873, at the call of the Evangelical Alliance, had secured him many warm friends. He was now to make acquaintance with a larger circle. In 1877, he was requested by the General Assembly to undertake a visit of inspection to the stations in China and India. The necessary arrangements were accordingly made, and he set out, with his wife, on this journey round the world. His mission was carried out in no narrow spirit; it was rather the kingdom of Christ that he kept in view than any sectarian purpose, and everywhere he was received with cordial welcome. As in his sphere at Dublin, so now, he did not spare himself; and the fatigues of the way sometimes told heavily upon him. His letters at this time are alive with various detail. When he came back in the following year, his speech before the General Assembly made a deep impression. "Many, after an interval of years, have said that it was the noblest piece of Christian oratory to which they had ever listened." Far more important was the quickened interest which closer knowledge brought.

The current of public life was now about him, restless and strong. Space is wanting to detail his engagements. Ever the range of his influence seemed extending. In 1879, he was appointed a senator of the Royal University of Ireland. In 1881, the University of Edinburgh, conferred on him the degree of D.D. The same year he was chosen Moderator by the General Assembly of his Church. One session he filled the chair of Evangelistic Theology at Edinburgh. Another year he gave the Duff Missionary Lectures in Edinburgh and Glasgow, repeating them in Aberdeen. A Lectureship at Derry also claimed him.

A list taken from his pocket-book in the last year of his life shows him as member of seventeen committees, besides holding nineteen other offices. It is not to be supposed that these all involved any onerous duty, but taken together they strikingly show how many claims may be made even upon a man of "single eye." Have the churches no undeveloped reserves that they exact so much from their leaders? How much else fell to Dr. Stevenson is seen in the fact that during the previous year the letters written and received by him numbered eleven thousand. Coincident with these more constant demands were the innumerable calls for sermons and speeches such as come to most men to whom Fame attaches that fatal word "popular."

One great gift had remained to him from early years, the faculty of sleeping at any time, almost at will. In student days he had encroached upon the nights, relying on nature's easy restoration. In the prime of his years at Dublin, he sat up late at night; for he was an orderly worker, and made each day fulfil its round of duties. He seemed, in his exuberance of energy, to require less sleep than other men. He rarely took more than four consecutive hours of rest during the year of his moderatorship. But there came a time when overwork oppressed him. Still, if remonstrance came, he would reply, "The work is laid upon me, and I must do it." His natural buoyancy led him rapidly from one duty to another. Thus, he would sometimes appear at the meetings of his Young Men's Association, bag in hand, fresh from the railway station; and he has been known to lecture in Limerick one evening, take flight by night, and lecture again in London the next.

During all these busy years there was one spot of sacred ground in which rest could always be found. His home was encompassed with the mild radiancy of sanctified affections. "A very child among children," says his biographer, "delighting in fun and frolic, it went hard with him to pass the nursery door without looking in for a romp, or, if time failed, for a bright greeting. Each child's character was carefully studied, and their different traits watched over and guided. Scolding in any form was a thing unknown; if anything went wrong, a quiet, loving talk in the study, and the pain the child felt as well as saw in its father's face made a far more lasting impression." All through his life he sought to awaken and direct their thoughts to whatever was beautiful and true and good. How he succeeded in dealing with the question of the children's Sunday, so perplexing in many households, may be inferred from a remark made by

one of them to a friend: "We call Saturday our silver day, because we have a holiday then, but Sunday is our golden day." His letters to his children are delightful reading, very simple, but full of bright description and wise counsel.

How often has it been said—

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial—
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
Life's but a means unto an end—that end
Beginning, mean, and end of all things—God.

Judged by such maxims, William Fleming Stevenson was a patriarch at death, but he numbered only fifty-four years as men carve them on a tombstone. The summons to eternal rest came suddenly. Signs of exhaustion appeared; the sense of weariness grew more painful. After his missionary tour, an interval of entire repose was enjoined; and in the midst of subsequent labours the frailties of this mortal body began from time to time to harass him. In the autumn of 1886 there came a season in which the resolute will was overmastered. A week's holiday in North Wales seemed to recruit him; he insisted on fulfilling an engagement in Liverpool, preached, and returned to Dublin. Two or three days later, a lovely September morning (Thursday the 16th), he abandoned himself to a day in the country, driving with his wife and nieces to the valley of Glen-na-smoil, and returning in the glory of a golden sunset. After reaching home, he had a romp with his little boy who was going to bed, it was interrupted by his being called to tea: "Never mind, Will," he said, "we must finish the game to-morrow." But that morrow never came. At family prayers that night the hymn sung was one of Charlotte Elliott's, beginning——

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
My Saviour, my eternal rest,
Then only will this longing heart
Be fully and for ever blest.

Friends came in, and conversation followed, almost the last words of which were expressions from him "of strong confidence in the ultimate triumph of Christianity over the nations." He retired to rest. "We were chatting as usual in our room," says his wife. "He stood a good while watching baby, who looked so rosy as he lay asleep in his little cot, then kissed him, and said, 'Dear little man!' I told him of a talk I had had with a young girl who was perplexed as to whether her present occupation was the life Christ meant for her, and who had said to me, 'If I knew the Lord Jesus were coming next week, I would not go on teaching.' 'That is simply a morbid feeling,' he replied. I said, 'Why, would you?' He answered very emphatically, 'I would go straight on doing my business.'"

How the story of that last day, in its strangely prophetic harmonies, reads now like a rounded poem. Sunset, and solemn song, and simplest love, and confident hope, and this ever-present sense of patient, abiding duty as the best preparation for the future! There is a Divine Voice in it. A few minutes later, and the stroke of death was upon him. His breath began to fail him, he paced the room, stopped suddenly;—there came a wonderful look into his face; he put his arms round his wife, said good-bye, and in a brief space passed away.

We have said that his heart gave pulse to many. Letters of sympathy poured in from all classes, and every quarter of the globe. For six months they never ceased to come: "from America and Germany, from Italy and Holland, from India and China and Japan, and from loving toilers in distant corners of Australia." In the unflagging industry which wove so many bonds, we are reminded of the words of the stout-hearted Arnauld of Port Royal, when he replied to the remonstrances of his companion Nicole, "Rest? have I not all eternity to rest in?"

W. S

Things New and Old.

THE VALUE OF SYSTEMATIC WORK.—Mr. Frith, in the third volume of his "Reminiscences," gives a hint which is of value not only in secular but in many departments of religious work: "Believing, as I have every reason to do, in hard and constant work, I earnestly desire to warn the student against waiting for a disposition to work. Nothing is more common than for a young man—or an elderly one, for the matter of that—to say, 'Oh, I couldn't work to-day; somehow or other I could not get the steam up; I set my palette, but the inclination to work would not come.' My reply to that is, 'You should have set to work, whether you were in the humour or not,' and you would have found, before you had been painting half-an-hour, that an 'exposition' of work had come over you to such a degree as to carry you on successfully through the day. I, who speak, have experienced the truth of the above hundreds of times. I don't think I ever allowed myself to be stopped from regular work by any of the qualms of disinclination. When I have urged my views on the question of steady and continuous industry on some volatile natures, I have been told that 'a man must wait till his genius prompts before he can work, and that painting done against the grain can be but poor stuff.' For myself, I must admit that, if I had waited till 'genius' urged me on, I should be waiting at this moment; my pictures would not have been painted."

GAMES AND SPORTS.—Games and sports which call for physical exercise or for physical restraint are profitable. The young lad at school, or the clerk in an office, or the student at the university is largely benefited by the cricket-field and the boating-club; for not only is every physical power God-given and sacred, and therefore to be developed, but athletic training demands abstinence from late hours, from intoxicating liquors, and from excess of any kind. Many who have gone out to the mission-field have found their training in the cricket-field a help and not a hindrance. But, though bodily exercise is profitable, and each of us should try to have the "*mens sana in corpore sano*," it is only profitable for a little, when compared with what is within our reach if we exercise ourselves "unto godliness." The physical strength will soon pass away, but the powers of loving and serving, won through prayer, will fit us for serving among the angels.—*The First Letter of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. A Popular Commentary*, by Alfred Rowland (Nesbit).

BIBLE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"S. B." writes: "Will you say whether 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35 and 1 Tim. ii. 12 really mean that women are forbidden to speak in the church, and that it is a shame for them to do so? I have heard that the original Greek does not mean this: is it so?"

We may in the first place assure our correspondent that the original Greek of these passages is quite fairly represented in the Authorised and the Revised Versions, which do not here materially differ. In interpreting the terms employed, however, it is necessary to be exact. For instance, "the churches" in which women are forbidden to speak are plainly the *public assemblies* for worship and exhortation; also for asking questions, a form of speaking which the passage in 1 Corinthians plainly recognises. In all this the women were to keep silence. Yet from the same Epistle we learn that there were meetings, evidently of a more private nature, in which women did both "pray" and "prophesy" (ch. xi. 5), after the manner of Philip's four daughters (Acts xxi. 9). To this the apostle has no objection, only to their engaging in these exercises with uncovered head. In the same way we must interpret the prohibition to teach in 1 Timothy. From the days of Priscilla at Ephesus there were women teachers in the church: Euodia and Syntyche "laboured" with St. Paul "in the gospel." Only in the public assemblies they must not be teachers; that function was for the other sex.

There was a special reason in the days of the early church for insisting upon this reserve. The social condition of women was very different from that which the influence of Christianity has brought about. Jewish and Gentile communities alike so held to the inferiority of the female sex, that for women to preach or teach publicly would have been regarded as a grave scandal. The underlying principle of the apostle's words is, therefore, that the habits and usages of society, where not sinful, must be respected. How far these were based upon the essential and immutable relations of the sexes is another question. The argument in 1 Timothy ii. 13, 14, has been thought by many to decide the matter. Others have maintained that in the altered conditions of society, and according to the principles of Christian liberty, women may now take a more public place in religious work than would have been right or possible in apostolic days. Certainly their work of this description is a *different thing* from what it would have been in Corinth or Ephesus in the first century. We must go behind specific rules to essential principles, and so must decide the question for ourselves. It belongs, however, to Christian ethics rather than to Scripture interpretation.

"H. W." writes: "In Job xxii. 30, how are we to understand the words, 'He shall deliver the island of the innocent,' or, as in the margin of the ordinary Bible, 'The innocent shall deliver the island'? I see that the Revised Version has, 'He shall deliver even him that is not innocent,' but adds in the margin, 'Many ancient versions read: "him that is innocent."' How is all this contrariety to be explained?

The Hebrew word for *island* (*i*) is also used as a negative particle. Thus *i-chabod* (1 Sam. iv. 21) means "no-glory." So in this verse of Job *i-naqi* means "not innocent," as in R.V. The point of the speaker, Eliphaz, is that if Job would but return to God he would be enabled to help others, *even the guilty*, by his intercessions. The Septuagint misses this thought by omitting the negative: "He will deliver *the innocent*"; but what special power would there be for this in the intercession of Job? The deliverance of the *guilty* is the wonderful thing. Without hesitation therefore, we adopt the rendering of the Revised Version. With regard to the identity between the word for *island* and the negative particle, we should adopt the distinction made, we believe, by the clear mind of Whately, with regard to similar cases in English, that it is the same *combination of letters* ('ℵ), but not the *same word.*

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER III.

VICTOR AMADEUS did not obey King Louis without a struggle. He was content with his Vaudois subjects; they were industrious, and law-abiding, and they were a valuable defence against invasion from the West, and a check upon the bandits of the Alps. Why should he harry and hunt them forth to soothe the sore conscience of that tyrannical old man in Versailles?

But the French ambassador put the matter in a light which speedily convinced Victor Amadeus. His master, he said, King Louis, had resolved that heresy should be stamped utterly out. He would send an army to the Savoy valleys, an army quite strong enough to accomplish the purpose. The Duke of Savoy need not trouble himself at all. The work should be done, and thoroughly done by the French alone, but—and the addition had a strong and grave significance—but the King of France would retain the Piedmont valleys for his trouble!

What could Duke Victor say? These Vaudois, after all, were heretics; his own father had done exactly what King Louis was now urging upon him to do; hesitation might be another name for lukewarmness in a holy cause. And at all risks he must avoid giving Louis an excuse for making good his footing on the soil of Savoy.

Therefore the proclamation was signed.

A terrible proclamation it was. It ordained complete cessation of every religious service, save that of the Romish Faith: the immediate destruction of the churches; the banishment of the pastors, and the baptism of every child by Romish priests, who were henceforth to educate and control all young people.

The punishment for disobeying or evading this edict was death.

Dismay entered all hearts. Rome was once more to whet her savage sword. And the mountaineers, helpless, defenceless, could only die, since submission to such edicts could not be.

They remembered 1655, and the way in which a handful of men had beaten back Pianezza and his hordes.

The courage that had nerved Janavel and his heroes was still alight in the valleys. They too would fight for their homes and their churches, for the honour of their wives, for the faith of their little ones.

So entrenchments were thrown up in the ravines, and turf and rough stones piled up on every point of vantage; stores were hastily collected, and the cornstacks were threshed out. The women did their part, even the children were busy as bees.

Henri Botta heard the careless laughter of a string of boys and girls as they ran up the steps of the mill, carrying each one a burden of wheat or rye, and his grave face grew sterner still as he hearkened.

"Little they know! little they know!" he muttered in his beard. "Laugh! 'tis the last laughter that will sound in Lucerne for many and many a day."

The horrors of the months that followed cannot here be told. Is it not an awful thing that men have committed atrocities of which one cannot speak—that living bodies and tortured souls have borne what our ears cannot suffer to hear—what our minds cannot endure to conceive? Frail women, modest and gentle girls, the babies too young to know the terror of the sword that slew them, the old men whose white hairs were but signals for scoff and insult—all these helpless ones were the butt and playthings of the brutal soldiers, whose most merciful dealing was death. Aye, happy were those whose doom was *only* death!

Botta and his two sons fought at the barricade which crossed the road above Casiana. Emile was amongst the first to fall. His father saw him stagger, and rushed forward to his help; but, as he reached upwards to where Emile lay on the ridge of the earthwork, a second ball crashed into the prostrate figure. The boy was shot through the heart.

"Let him lie there," muttered Botta with a quietude more sad than tears. "Let him lie there on the crest of the barricade. Even in death he shall defend the valleys."

Yet the heroism and devotion so lavishly poured out in those days and weeks of struggle was in vain. Once more the Valleys were swept from north to south, from the Palavas Alps to the Po River—once more the red flames raged and triumphed above the cottage roofs; and over the fields, and by the swift torrent water, the flying people were hunted down and slain.

It was the end of April, 1686. The home of the Bottas was a blackened heap of ruin; the orchards, where the tufts of pink apple-blossom should be already showing, were hacked and hewed away, and the down-trodden vines lay in long trailing lines amid the wrecks of the village.

A few soldiers lounged and laughed in their encampments hard by; they were roasting a goat that they had shot for their supper, and their rude jokes, as they did so, roused noisy mirth. Their task of blood and cruelty had brutalized them to a degree hard to believe, did not one know how low human nature can fall when riot and licence cut away the cords of gentleness and justice, and the blood-thirst is awakened—that thirst which men share with the tigers.

Henri, the house-master, was gone from Rora; where, none could tell, for the Vaudois troops had been scattered like clouds before the tempest. Gaspard had come back alone, creeping up the passes in the night, hiding, and groping his dangerous way to find out what had befallen his mother and Rénée.

He knew every nook and crevice of the ridges that rose grim and almost inaccessible between the ravine and Villaro; somewhere hereabouts he hoped to find them, unless—indeed ——

And the young man's haggard eyes gleamed with the look that it is ill to see on mortal face as he counted out what that "unless" might mean.

His search was long, and his heart grew heavier hour by hour. Perhaps they had already been driven off to prison in Turin; or, perhaps—and if he were not to find them Gaspard knew that he ought to pray that it might be so—perhaps they had already joined Emile in the land where fighting and desolation and death is over for ever, where God Himself will give comfort and the calmness of His peace.

The dawn was breaking, the glad sweet dawn of the spring morning, and Gaspard slowly dragged himself beneath the shelter of the pines. He must not stand there, exposed, under those shafts of clear keen light, unless he were willing to take his chance of a musket ball from the duke's soldiers, whose orders were to clear the country as a broom sweeps over a floor.

There was a cavern here, up under the cliff, a place where he might lie and rest, and eat the crust of bread he carried in his wallet. Rest—food—they were sorely needed, yet he felt as though rest were impossible, and food would choke him.

He lifted the ivy trails and stood a moment, peering into the dimness. These mountain caves held strange creatures now and then.

From out of the darkness came a sudden cry.

"O Gaspard, O Gaspard! is it thou?"

GASPARD AT THE CAVE.

He staggered. He was worn and faint, and just at that moment the hope was dim of finding those he sought. His brain whirled round; he put his hand to his eyes, bewildered.

Then a woman's arms reached out to him, and confused words, and little cries of joy, and short sobs came in broken gusts and silences.

"Gaspard! Oh, thanks be to God! Thou art living then, Gaspard! Mother, mother, awake! here is he, our Gaspard." And Rénée clung to him and hid her face against his breast.

They were safe then, as yet! And his voice came back to him as he knelt to kiss his mother's hand and cheek.

Ah, the swords of the duke were sharp, the desolation of the valleys was drear, the house-father was an exile, and Emile lay in his gory grave, but an offering of heartfelt praise went up to God's throne as the reunited ones held each other's hands and thanked the Lord that day.

There was much to hear on either side, and the women's faces grew very grave when Gaspard told them what had happened in the valleys of Lucerne and Angrona. Cannon and cavalry had been too much for the mountaineers in the villages and on the roads, and treachery had beguiled them from the entrenchments on the heights to which they had fled. The Savoy general had offered in the duke's name safe and honourable treatment for themselves, their wives, and children, if they would throw themselves on their conquerer's clemency. The words were fair, the terms all they dared expect. They trusted the promise and laid down their arms.

How their trust was betrayed is a long and shameful tale. Some were led in chains to the fortresses of the plains, some were executed then and there, many were destroyed by the brutal soldiers, and two thousand little children were handed over to Roman Catholic families to be trained in that religion.

Thus it was that Victor Amadeus conquered—for the same thing had occurred in all the Valleys, although Gaspard only knew what had happened near at home. Perosa and San Martino had been treated with like barbarity and deceit. The scenes at the rocks of Vadolin were to the full as heartrending as what Gaspard could describe.

"And thy father?" Madeleine's eyes asked the question which her lips could scarcely frame. "Thy father, what of him?"

Gaspard rose to his feet and leant against the rock where the dark cave-shadow almost hid his countenance.

"Ah," he said, "I have been well-nigh torn in twain betwixt my desire to find you, to know that thou and Rénée were out of the clutches of yon ——"

"Name them not, my son," said Madeleine; "hard words hurt only the heart from which they come."

"Words? Aye, it is not with words I would meet them," the young man said between his teeth.

"And thy father?"

"He is wounded. He was thrust at with a lance when trying to defend Marie Rozel. You remember old Marie? the widow who gave us goat's milk when we were lost in the hill-mist long ago, Emile and I, and Rénée—thou wert a tiny child then, Rénée. They—well, they killed her at last, in spite of all that my father could do."

"Where is he?" Madeleine Botta had come close to her son and was holding his arm. "Oh, Gaspard, ill, wounded, as he is, surely he is not alone? Let us go to him."

"Mother, to cross the valley, to go down by the river in broad daylight—it is death, certain death, or worse. Nay, I will creep back to him, and bring him word how you fare. He will revive when once he knows that you and Rénée are safe. It was to get news for him that I am come. But how have you lived, here? Have you food? fire?"

So they showed him their store, the bag of rye-bread Rénée had stolen down to Rora to fetch from a secret hiding-place; the dried grapes, the chestnuts, the flour—which last was useless since they dared not light a fire; and then, stepping forward, the girl called softly once and again. Presently two or three goats came pushing their way through the ivy, rustling beneath the glossy leaves, and nodding their sage sharp heads as they came.

"The others have been killed, I suppose," said Rénée sadly; "but these give us milk enough and to spare."

Gaspard watched her as she stroked the creatures that were pressing against her knees. All dumb things seemed ready to love Rénée, and it was no wonder.

Madeleine sat silently. Her heart was full; her lips were quivering; the iron was entering her very soul. God had required much from her—her happy home, the quiet contentment of her failing years; then the life of Emile, her eldest born; and now Henri, the husband of her youth, her strong Henri, was stricken. Was his life to be taken too?

This woman had come of a race of martyrs: she had been cradled in terror, and reared amongst dangers and blood-spilling. She knew, none better, what it meant to take up Christ's cross and follow Him along the path that leads to where the shadow lies across the shining Threshold. Her nature was brave, as befitted a child of the hills; her soul was filled with a high and sacred faith that had been lighted by God's gospel and nourished by His grace.

But now, there, in the cavern, the grief, the pity, the despair of it well-nigh overcame her.

"Oh, Lord, how long, how long? Must Thy people be outcasts for ever? for ever down-trodden and slain? Canst Thou not hear in Heaven Thy dwelling-place, and when Thou hearest wilt Thou not aid?"

Just now, in her hour of agony and sore dismay, she was too near to pain to see its glorious crown, too close to the shadow of death to behold the shining gate. Not only for her and hers that crown and shining should be, but for ever unto the uttermost ages the Church of Christ is fairer for what then the Vaudois bore! Not a tear nor drop of martyr blood fell then unmarked, for not only on earth but in heaven is the death of God's saints held "right dear."

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE QUESTION.

NO. I.—P. 160.

1. Elijah and Elisha.

2. Jeremiah exhorted King Zedekiah to submit to the Chaldeans (xxxvii., xxxviii.), the people of Jerusalem to do the same (xxi.), the nations that bordered on Judea (xxvii.), the captives at Babylon to live there as good citizens (xxix.), also the king and people in general to observe the laws of their God (xxii.). Jonah exhorted the king and people of Nineveh to repent of their sins. Haggai and Zechariah exhorted the Jews who had returned from captivity to rebuild the temple.

3. Isaiah encouraged Ahaz to resist the league between the kingdoms of Syria and Israel (vii. 4–9). He encouraged Hezekiah to resist Sennacherib (xxxvii. 6); and rebuked him for displaying his treasures to the King of Babylon (xxxix.).

4. (1) Jotham, son of Gideon, rebuked the men of Shechem for supporting Abimelech (ix.); (2) Nathan who reproved David for taking Uriah's wife (2 Sam. xii.); Gad, who reproved him for numbering the people (2 Sam. xxiv.); (3) Shemaiah (2 Chron. xii.); (4) Micaiah rebuked Ahab and described how, in a vision, he had foreknowledge of Ahab's death (1 Kings xxii.); (5) Ahijah denounced Jeroboam's iniquity, and foretold the death of his son (1 Kings xiv.); (6) Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, rebuked the king and people for their neglect of religion after Jehoiada's death.

5. Jasher (Joshua x. 13); Gad and Nathan (1 Chron. xxix. 29); Ahijah and Iddo (2 Chron. ix. 29); Jehu (2 Chron. xx. 34).

6. Deut. xviii. 18–20: 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

7. By Stephen (Acts vii. 37).

8. Enoch (Jude 14, 15).