

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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



GRANDFATHER'S BIRTHDAY.

LITTLE ATTENTIONS.

A GERMAN writer has thus beautifully addressed the heavenly Father :

"Oh, kind God, thou sowest pleasure everywhere, and givest to every object a charm that it may present it to us again. Thou dost not invite us only to great, overpowering and tumultuous joys; thou attachest delight to the smallest object, and an aroma of pleasure to everything that surrounds us."

This being so, and except in seasons of persistent east wind, or cases of confirmed melancholia—we think nobody will be found to deny it, does it not occur to us, that our Father who delights to associate us with Himself in every particular, who wills that we work as He works, and hands us His gift of harvest or mineral wealth through the labours of our own hands, must further desire that we be joined with Him in this crowning function of giving pleasure, increasing the happiness of others, and thriftily husbanding every possibility of human joy or well-being?

We are too apt to regard the giving of pure pleasure, the spreading of true joy, as something apart from the Christian life and not absolutely essential to it. Some of us are in special danger of thinking that our religion is sufficiently expressed outwardly if we strive sincerely to fulfil our obligations, and to "owe nothing to any man," forgetting the last clause of that injunction "to love one another." Duty is a grand thing—the very rock on which life is reared, and any "love" professing to exist apart from it, is worse than nothing—a mere house of cards which will presently tumble down and overwhelm those who try to live in it! Yet duty without love is but a foundation without a superstructure.

Just try to imagine a house or a community wherein everybody did their "duty," and nothing more. All would be neat and clean, all debts would be paid, old people would be fed, children would be taught, business would be despatched. But no smiles, no innocent merriment, no flowers on the table, no birthday visits or tokens, no twilight talks of remembrance, no wisdom "wrapped in fairy tale." It would be intolerable!

There is no direr mistake than to imagine that Christianity is above or apart from the little graces and tenderesses of life. On the contrary, the brotherhood of man—the warm sympathy with every human need or claim—is never secure till it is anchored fast to the Fatherhood of God.

Intellectual pursuits or business occupations must not crowd out the little sweet secret services of love. It is something worse than a mistake—it is a culpable blunder, such as only a perverted nature can make, when it is imagined that any amount of substantial "benefaction" can atone for the absence of these. Is the parent, the ancient friend, or the old servant "provided for?" Is the annuity or the annual gift paid promptly, regu-

larly, and made as safe as anything can be in this world? May be. But is this all? Is this the just return for years of devotion and kindness? Who can put a cash value on nursery coaxings and songs—on midnight vigils by sick beds, on year-long agonisings over youthful follies and sins, on the provident forecastings of experience and counsels of wisdom? Why, if these had not been, you might not be now in the world. You don't owe for them only a poor tithe of your cash, you owe for them a bit of your very life! Love can only be paid with love. Pay the annuity regularly; send the post-office order promptly, but don't forget the visit, the letter. Remember the old joke, the old story. Those good folks' own world, the world of their love and joy is now reflected only in your mind. Let them see it there. Perhaps you cast a shadow across it once. Think of the anxious hours you gave your mother when you were caught playing truant and robbing orchards. Think of the pain these good folk endured when you formed that baneful friendship or entered that dangerous connection! Anyhow, they gave up many a pleasure for your sake. Your mother sat at home many a time when she would have liked to have gone out with your father, because she would not leave you to the servants. The old friend gave up a delightful holiday with his own dear ones, to undertake the mission of extricating you from the mesh of folly in which you got involved at college. The nurse would not leave you (in the critical stage of typhoid) even to say farewell to her sailor boy, ere he started on that voyage from which he never returned. Is it fair that to-day you cannot spare a few frequent hours from your household warmth to cheer their loneliness? Where your shadow fell once, be careful to throw your sunbeam now. Do not let your tender remembrances only begin outside a grave. In such cases as Jean Paul Richter suggested it might be well if "a man should consecrate a half hour daily or weekly to reckoning up and considering the virtues of his friends: so that their perfections may not first, at their death, press together to a burning focus."

And among the wider circles of genial acquaintanceship there is often a lamentable want of gentle consideration and the exercise of that true tact, which is nothing but a genius for putting oneself in other people's places. How few people remember punctual enquiries after the absent members of a family. The sons or daughters who have gone out to far lands? And how ill-judged are many of the enquiries which are made! "Does he write regularly to you?" They ask the mother concerning her absent son, while if they doubt it that is the very last form their question should take! Imagine forcing her to reply "No," and so probing a wound that must be already painful enough! Can they not simply enquire how he was, when she heard last, leaving her to indulge herself, if she can, in the

pleasure of reporting from the letter by last mail.

How few people, in the hey-day of their own fortunes, their accession to property, the splendid reviews of their new book, or the first year of their married life, can forbear proclaiming after the style of the "Little Jack Horner," of the old nursery rhyme, that the world is an excellent world for really deserving people, thoughtlessly flaunting their own bran-new prosperity as if it sufficed to answer and quench all the agonies and doubts of others, who may have recently buried in silence the last dear, dead hope of a long lifetime.

Some of the bitter turns taken by such thoughtlessnesses — poisons generated where perfumes should be distilled, seem almost incredible, and many of those who perpetrate such discourtesies would be the first to condemn and disclaim them, like King David when his own sin confronted him in a parable.

It is not tender, it is not true, to enjoy the pleasure of people's sympathy and fellowship and even help at some great crisis of life, and then allow ourselves to be carried away by the tide of little circumstances, little temptations, little hindrances, so that we do not turn back and sit down by the friend's side, and make it clear that we remember there is something between us which is not of to-day, nor even of yesterday. Some of us do not arrange the perspective of the heart according to the values of affection, but keep whatever is latest in the foreground. Let us fulfil all our social functions as well as we can, but if something must be omitted, let it be the full dress call of ceremony rather than the kindly visit to the friend of many years, who was, perchance, the solace of our darker days. Sometimes one witnesses the casual meeting of those who once were often together. On the one side, there is a "gush." "O this is like old days! But what can one do now? I am always so busy! Well, of one thing we may be sure that hearts do not change, though now we meet so seldom!" On the other side, there is a pained expression, perchance a quivering lip, the heart is secretly asking: "But why do we meet so seldom? Is there any reason, except that you will not take a little trouble, to keep up old acquaintanceship!"

Another common failure of Christian "attention" is to neglect to apprise those who have trusted and returned our affection, of events occurring in our lives, leaving them to hear the news from the chatter of chance acquaintances. In their simple loyalty, they may refuse to receive the tidings, judging them to be idle gossip, saying: "If this were true, I am quite sure So-and-so would have told me herself!" But it proves true, and the acquaintance returns with a knowing laugh, and whispers: "After all I was right, was I not?" There is nothing more apt to chill and change affection. It does not only affect the present and the future, it seems even to stultify the cherished past, which may have been fondly clung to, though its glory had departed. It seems actually to creep backwards and poison and falsify other confidences given and received when friendship looked like a

living growing thing, and not like a mere toy or fashion.

This matter of great and ready love manifest in little things has on life something of the effect of sunshine on the world! What a difference it makes if, when you are tired and puzzled in some strange place, the stranger of whom you ask your way, answers gruffly, "Third turning to right, fifth to left, and then straight on;" or if he pauses, and describes your course to you with the little landmarks by which you may verify it, or perhaps even turns back to guide you by the perplexing corner where so many ways meet. How welcome you feel in a strange church, when one person opens his pew-door and another hands you his hymn-book. Ministers do well to incite their congregations to these little hospitalities, for none can know how much of his own spiritual power may depend on them.

"Smiling in your brother's face is a charity," says the sweet Eastern proverb. Aye, and we know not how vast a charity. For it may cheer him for the effort that shall save his life—perhaps even his soul—from destruction.

A character is seldom more clearly seen than in its manner and modes of giving. Presents are a trouble and a labour to some people, they are always at a loss "what to give." Such a difficulty may certainly arise from want of opportunity for knowing the recipient. But more often it is due to deficient sympathy, interest and observation, on the part of the donor. Of course, the inclinations and the circumstances of the receiver, are the first things to consider. We do not say that the giver is to be always guided implicitly by the former. This would lead to the bestowal of finery, frippery, and jewels, exactly where they would do most harm. But consult the best taste of the person to be considered. Many a girl who is too fond of dress, also likes pretty books. Give her one, wise and good, and yet perhaps full of fun and frolic, and made tempting by dainty binding and illustration. Or give her something which will encourage her music, her sketching, or her needlework. As for the bookish boy, whose mother's means are not too wide, look in your purse, make up your mind what you are prepared to spend, and then go out and make the best bargain you can, though it be at a second-hand book-stall!

Nearly all of us have had—or have—some friend whose gifts are strangely opportune, going straight to what we think to be our secret wants or wishes. It only means that they have been tenderly watchful of us. Perhaps one day we went shopping together, they noticed over what we lingered, considering, and reluctantly left behind. They remembered the masterpiece we admired in the gallery, and here is an etching to fix some of its beauty to our own wall! They noted our favourite author, and lo! here is his new book! To the emigrant boy, they send a beautiful set of pictures of the land he left behind him, grateful now to his home-sick heart, and tending to keep his home memories green. Or they get the latest appliance for our favourite hobby. If their gift takes the form of personal ornament or household decoration, it is

always touched with personal association, choice, or industry. If they give what is called a "practical" present, that is something intended to spare the money of the recipient, and which from the nature of things, must be soon worn out or consumed, it is never without some little grace cunningly superadded to the intrinsic value. Into the pocket of the useful housekeeping purse, there is tucked an ancient or foreign coin. To the handle of the umbrella is tied a home-planned and home-painted card of loving message. They could not send even a basket of apples without putting in a flower at the top.

In short, they give no gift without bestowing a part of themselves with it.

Why is this? Because it is the involuntary testimony of their own joy in the exercise of their pure love.

And let it be always remembered that, unless this is the case with the giver, his gift or his service is less than nothing. We know that—

"To a noble mind
Rich gifts grow poor, when givers grow unkind."

And "unkind" is only a compact word for coldness, or indifference. The little attention which is so cheering and inspiriting when bestowed by watchful love, might be absolutely irritating if tendered as dictated, suggested or hired duty.

We must never forget that mere benevolence is not love. Benevolence must rise into love, before it can hope for love's powers and privileges. There are natures, so rich that they go out, even to the unknown fatherless and outcast, with a warmth and a tenderness, far greater than another man feels for his own children.

We must always give and serve for the satisfaction of the cravings of our own love—the living spring welling up within us—before our gift and service can really reach another's heart. The element of condescension, of patronage, of manifold

beneficence, will spoil any good work, because it reveals the absence of this simple love.

Let us end our paper with a little story bearing on this point.

There were a certain young minister and his wife, who sought to enlarge and deepen the sphere of their usefulness by bringing stray members of their congregation into their own social circle. Sometimes these people were not quite of the society stamp of those they found there. One honest man, looking down the bright supper-table, and conscious probably of a stubborn awkwardness that had found the evening rather slow, remarked to his next neighbour—

"Well, this is a real nice spread, and if I come back two or three times, I think I'll get to like it."

Now, unfortunately, this next neighbour seems to have been one of those shallow people, who are quite unnecessarily conscious of their ability "to elevate and humanise" and to improve every occasion of depressing others to a depth from which their own height will be palpable. For she remarked—

"But do you not think how kind it is for Mr. and Mrs. X. to go to all this expense and take all this trouble in the hope of giving you pleasure and being of some service to you?"

The worthy man looked puzzled and pained for a moment, and then he turned to the minister's wife herself, and asked simply—

"What else do you get your stipend for?"

Aye—that was unanswerable. And it is the question for every one of us. Whatever gift of health or wealth, genius or skill, influence or wisdom, we may possess, is simply the "stipend" God has given us, expressly that we may joyfully lay it out for the good of others, till in the end He may receive back His own with increase. And if we fail to accomplish this, His will, we are but unprofitable and wicked servants, and all the joy is already vanished from the good things God has wasted on us. ISABELLA FVIE MAYO.

A Pastoral.



THE rosy dawn creeps down the mountain side,
Touching with light, green copse, and grassy lea,
The world to life is wakening far and wide,
And songs are heard from every bush and tree.

Come, let us hasten where the white-thorn blows,

Or to the meadows where the cowslip grows.

Up! up! The fields are fresh with dews of night,
And hear you not the strains of Corin's flute?
They take the purple hills with such delight
That not an echo in the glades is mute;

And earth, and air, and sky are filled with sound:
Great Nature's hymn, sweet, passionate, profound.

Come 'neath the temple of the morning sky,

And let us pay our orisons to heaven;

The lark is singing as she soars on high,

Leaving the nest to which she dropp'd at even.

If only prayer and praise be pure and true,

They too will rise into the vaulted blue.

What shall our organ be? The winds that blow;

And what our choir? The breeze's silver chime;

While clear-voiced streams that, rippling, gently flow,

Will move with us in sweet melodious time.

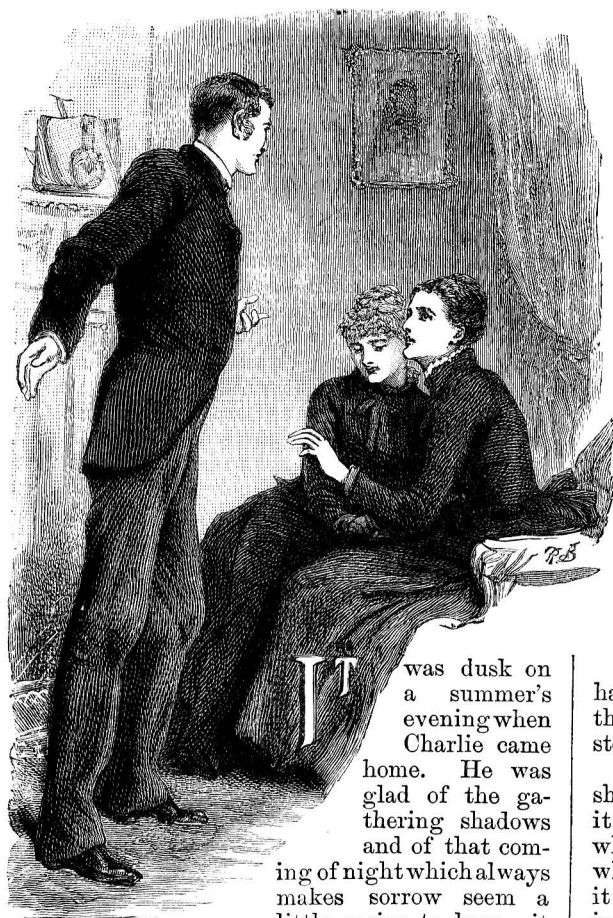
Oh come, and we shall keep glad festival,

And heaven's high gates will open at our call.

CHARLES D. BELL, D.D.

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER VI.—THE TRAVELLER'S RETURN.



It was dusk on a summer's evening when Charlie came home. He was glad of the gathering shadows and of that coming of night which always makes sorrow seem a little easier to bear; it

is an instinct even of the dumb brutes to hide their wounds in the dark.

Charlie mourned his grandfather very truly, the two had been comrades as old and young may be when affection bridges the years, and it added to Charlie's grief that there had been no word of farewell to cheer him on the outseting loneliness. To the lad, affectionate and warm-hearted as he was, it seemed so terrible a thing that death could thus strip him, rob him secretly as it were, while he was at his happiest and merriest, fearing no evil. Why had no voice whispered a warning, no premonition come in vision or dream as it had come to others?

"It's a back-handed blow," he said, with a forlorn smile to Vivian when he broke the news; "of course I didn't expect the dear old man to live for ever, but I wish I'd been there."

He paused when he came to the churchyard-gate and looked back irresolutely. The grey road winding between the tall hedges was empty of any human presence. He had met no one on his way from the station except the old doctor,

whose offer of a seat in the dog-cart he had refused almost irritably.

"I couldn't have behaved decently to him if—if he had talked," he said to himself. The wound was too raw yet to bear even a kindly touch. He swung open the little gate, and went quickly up the path between the sombre yews. He knew the spot in which to look for his grandfather's grave, for it had been chosen long ago, but he would have known it in any case by the red of the upturned earth. In a little while nature would hide the rent and drape it with green, in a little while, too, the wound would cease to ache in Charlie's heart; but in the first shock of loss, the terrible rawness of the happing clods, where not a weed or a blade of grass had had time to spring, seemed to sharpen the edge of grief. So little awhile ago was the dead laid there, and yet so immeasurably far had he travelled beyond love's power to reach him. All that the heart knows at such moments of desolation, of regret, of baffled desire to pierce the unseen, of compunction for many little lapses and transgressions Charlie knew.

If there was aught to forgive—to forget—he had no thoughts for that as yet. Nor did he think of it when he crossed the dusky garden and stepped in at the open drawing-room window.

Allie was not waiting for him at the door as she had always waited, it was a little thing, but it marked and accentuated the change. Janey, who had been on the watch, flew to her room when she saw the tall young fellow striding as it seemed, with an additional decision and haste in his step up to the house, and Allie and he met alone.

"I wish I had been in time," Charlie said once more huskily, and that was nearly all. "You might have sent for me, Allie."

"He would not let me; he did not want to spoil your holiday; and we didn't think it would be so soon."

"Well," said Charlie, speaking with a steady effort at cheerfulness, "the holiday is done with now."

Alice looked up at him, a question in her eyes which were full of apprehension and love and sorrow.

"Yes," he said, answering the look; "I know about it, Allie, Vivian told me. Old Smithson would have begun about it too, only I couldn't stand it from him. There's nothing—we're paupers, in short."

"He didn't know," said Alice, the colour rising in her cheeks. "He trusted others, and they failed him; you will never blame him, Charlie?"

"No," said the boy, sombrely; "he was always

awfully good to me; I owe him everything. Only if one had known——”

He was thinking dimly of certain extravagances, of certain debts which he had always held himself easily able to discharge. As yet it was himself he blamed; the time when he should slide away from self-dispraise, and find in his grandfather's lapses sufficient excuse for his own misdeeds, had not yet come. A wiser than Allie might have foretold that it would come; it was a difficult thing, a high thing, this that she had asked; for forgiveness does not lie in one isolated effort—if that were so, it might be more easily possible to all of us. Day by day the altar fires must be lit, and the sacrifice offered up anew: day by day in the stress of changed circumstances, under the pressure of disappointed hopes, in the embittering experience of a face to face acquaintance with poverty, privation and anxiety, would Charlie have to cease from blame of the dead; and who without the grace of God in his heart is able for this?

“Forgive us our debts,” Christ taught His disciples to pray, “as we forgive our debtors;” but of all the millions who for eighteen hundred years have offered that petition at Heaven's gate, how many could abide by the bargain? “Not as I forgive, but as Thou wouldst have me to forgive, so do Thou blot out my transgressions.”

Allie went up to the lad and put her kind arms round his neck. Her cheeks were red and her eyes bright.

“Oh, I knew you wouldn't blame him,” she said, “I knew you wouldn't;” and yet her very gladness spoke the underlying doubt that had tortured her, and the immensity of the relief. “It would have grieved him so dreadfully if he had known how things were to be—and I've been thinking of many things, Charlie, many plans. It may not be so hard for you as we thought at first, and when we leave this house——”

“Must you leave the house?” It had not occurred to him before that poverty could mean exile.

“Yes,” she said, hastily, “but you know I've been so little of a traveller that I've never been in London longer than a day or two at a time, and it will be a new experience.” She made as though it had been the longing of her life to live in the capital.

“To London,” said Charlie, staring, “to live there alone, Allie?”

“Not alone, Janey Warner will be with me. She is here with me now. Shall we talk about it to-morrow, dear? It will be time enough to-morrow.”

“Yes,” he said, rather drearily, with a new sense of oppression, “let us hold a council of war to-morrow.”

“Yes, you must rest to-night. Come and have something to eat. Janey is waiting for us in the dining-room.”

Janey received the young man rather shyly. Sorrow gave her old playmate a new dignity in her eyes, she felt sure that he must be suffering, though he suddenly assumed a good deal of his old vivacity and rattle, talking diligently of

the adventures that had befallen him in travel, though with a pang of underlying shame to find that he could still laugh and had not lost his appetite.

This quickness of emotion and instinctive defiance of it belongs especially to youth, and Janey had intuition enough to understand it. She faced her own troubles much in the same way, fighting them and suffering a double retribution at their hands. So she said at night to Allie:

“He feels it dreadfully—it is all put on, that light way.”

Then Allie in her turn confided how Charlie had promised he would never blame his grandfather in his thoughts, and together they extolled him for a hero.

But, alas, the morning sees many of us dis-crowned, and the brave resolutions of the night melt before the chill of dawn. Charlie came down in the morning feeling like a young Atlas with a world weight on his shoulders. In the dining-room he found breakfast set out for him, but there was no one to wait on him as he was used to being waited on and made much of in this house. The shabby big easy-chair by the hearth was empty. Allie was not to be found, not even Janey came to pour out his tea. He had been awakened early by an unwonted bustle in the quiet house, and had had time for some dark reflections.

Alice came to him while he was disconsolately helping himself to toast and bacon. She greeted him tenderly, but her manner was a little agitated and tremulous.

“I hope you weren't disturbed, dear,” she said. “I told the men to be as quiet as possible.”

“What men, and what were they doing?”

“It is only some of the Indian things,” said Alice, trying to recover cheerfulness. “The new tenant doesn't want them, and Mr. Lewis thinks they will sell better in town. He sent his men to pack and remove them.”

Charlie got up and crossed the passage to the drawing-room. The cabinets, the carved tables and chairs, the grinning gods, the silver bowls that had given Allie many a burglar-haunted night, were all gone. The room looked desecrated, the shabbiness of the worn carpet and furniture showed up forlornly in the unwinking light, for the curtains had been removed too.

On the mantelpiece, sole survivor of its comrades, stood a little chased silver mug. Alice crossed the room and lifted it.

“It is yours,” she said, “your baby mug. I wouldn't let them take it; everything that he gave you has been saved, Charlie, and he left you his ring.”

Charlie let the cup drop from his fingers to the floor, it seemed as if it scorched him.

“Was this necessary?” he said, rather sternly, “or has Lewis been meddling? He ought to have waited for me.”

“It was thought best; and you know I shouldn't want these things in London.”

This was the beginning of that enlightenment which the day was destined to bring to Charlie. He had not that personal affection for the up-

holstery of his home that a woman has—a bit of Allie's heart went out of the house with the chairs and tables—but to him the despoiling was only a confirming sign of the changed future he had tried to realise and could not.

Young people, unlike old ones, generally look forward to change in the coming years, but it is always to be a change for the better. Life is to unfold itself, and beautiful and wonderful things are to happen. Here was change, but it was all the other way—change downwards. A thousand little hints and suggestions told of the altered days. Brown, the soldier servant, who had brushed the young master's clothes and waited on him ever since he could remember, was gone. A hired helper had replaced the kindly woman who had shared Allie's nursing tasks in those remote days when stirring, mischievous Charlie had taxed the resources of both. An air of confusion, of preparation, of melancholy bustle, prevailed in the house where everything had been so peacefully ordered, and the boy felt jarred and fretted by it.

The high purposes and resolves which had sustained him on the homeward journey no longer supported him; they fell broken-winged about him and refused to soar; and by the evening hour when at last there was leisure for that family conference already determined on, a grim resolve to face the worst and bear it as best he could was all that was left him.

Alice and Janey had put everything off till the moment when Charlie should come, and yet now that he was here it was upon them that the burden of suggestion fell. They sat, a forlorn little party, in the dining-room, gathering themselves at the open window, with their backs turned on the gaps and blanks in the room behind them.

"Lewis doesn't propose to grub up the trees and flowers, I suppose," said Charlie at last, "or has he got the new tenant to bargain for them too?"

Then Janey made a little jest about planting the back yard of a London street with the bountiful produce of the country garden, and declared that it would be an innocent theft which the incoming tenant would not have the heart to punish.

"A little bit of Barford would sweeten wholesomely the Euston Road."

"The Euston Road?"

"Janey knows of good rooms there," Alice took up the theme, "where we can be very comfortable. It is a central situation and it will be convenient for our work."

"It's a tolerable corrective to good spirits," said Charlie, trying to laugh, "as far as I remember it. And supposing you find yourselves there, what do you mean to work at?"

"Oh," said Janey, with magnificent vagueness, "all sorts of things. You don't know what vast resources we have within ourselves."

"And we shall be near you, Charlie, you will be able to come often from Aldershot, far oftener than here. You know, dear," Allie went on, a little hastily and timidly, "there's no need at all for you to make any change. It may be a

little harder for you to manage, but you are brave and you won't mind that, and of course you will be promoted very quickly, and every year it will be easier. Janey and I have ample for our wants—there is my mother's money which I have always had (she spoke as if it were a vast fortune), so that we may become workers or not just as we choose, and Janey has a little too. And there is a small sum for you, dear boy, which will yield almost as much as you have always had."

"So you are to live in the Euston Road, and I'm to remain in her Majesty's service."

"And to become a general," said Janey, as if that were the first and easiest step for a second lieutenant, "and a great hero. As for the Euston Road, your tone is too disrespectful."

"It will be nearer you, Charlie," Allie chimed in, "and that will make up for everything."

"And when you become a retired general, home from the wars and crowned with glory, we'll keep house for you."

Then Charlie got up from his chair. If it no longer seemed quite easy to be a hero, either present or future, it was always possible to be a man.

"Look here," he said, looking very tall and important as he glanced down on his audience, "I suppose I'm the head of the house now, and it's for me to settle things and say what's to be done. As for letting you go to the Euston Road or any other road in London, I'll take a day or two to consider the matter. I'm not going to say anything off hand one way or the other. Meantime, Janey, you can give me the address."

Janey rose quite meekly and fetched it from her workbox. Charlie put the folded paper in his waistcoat pocket.

"I'll have a look at the diggings, to-morrow," he said, "when I go to town to see Lewis—that won't hurt, and I'll let you know when I've seen them, so you needn't pack your traps yet. As for my own plans, I'll tell you about them too, in very good time. I can't settle anything till I've seen Lewis—women know nothing of business, and he ought to have consulted me. Allie, will you see that I'm awakened in time to catch the express? Lewis had no right to touch anything till I had seen him, but I'll have it out with him to-morrow"—Charlie's voice had an edge of offended irritability, but when he next spoke after a little pause, it was almost harsh.

"If you think I'm going to live on your money," he said, "or on the money those sticks they carted away to-day will fetch, you will find yourselves mistaken."

And with that he walked from the room and banged the door behind him.

The two women looked at each other with half dismayed, half admiring glances. They loved him the more for his masterful ways, and yet if he should disappoint them after all? Poor kind hearts, they did not know in their innocence that all those carefully plotted sacrifices and renunciations must have been without avail in any case. Charlie had had an allowance of two hundred pounds a year from his grandfather.

An officer in an expensive regiment, even if he be but of modest rank, can scarcely serve his queen and country honourably on six and eight-pence a day, and must needs command some private fortune, and by some feminine arithmetic, Alice and Janey, knowing this, had settled that Charlie was to continue in the enjoyment of his annual sum.

The proceeds of the sale were to be laid aside for this purpose. The calculation had been based on very hopeful grounds, the pictures, curios, &c., were to fetch so much.

"Let us put it low," said Janey, "and then we can't be disappointed."

So they—not considering what a surprising difference there is between buying and selling—put it modestly, and they added to the summation half of Allie's £50.

"We can work, you know," said Allie; "and there is your little sum, Janey."

Janey had humour enough always to laugh over this allusion to her wealth, which consisted of £5 a year.

"My brains are my fortune," she said; "and they may fetch £50 by governessing. It is wonderful how very little one can live on in London. Oh, we shall manage beautifully, and it will be enough for both of us to be ambitious for Charlie."

And now Charlie was turning round and threatening to upset all those innocent calculations which they had somehow hoped to hide from him. He was to be made to understand that the money was there, and it had seemed quite easy to the plotters to avoid inconvenient questions on his part.

Perhaps it would have been easy a little while ago, for Charlie had been ready enough to accept the good things that came to him as if they were his right; but now his eyes had been rudely opened.

"Mr. Lewis will tell him everything," said Janey with dismay.

"It is quite right that he should know," said Alice. "Perhaps we were wrong to wish to

keep it from him, Janey. He is the head of the house now, as he says"—she repeated the words with pride—"but he was always a good boy. He will do what we think is best for him, never fear. He will not foolishly give up his career. The Lindsells have always been soldiers."

Charlie, wandering moodily in the dusky garden, could have laughed over those simple devices if his heart had not been so sore.

As if he could live on the pittance they could scrape together and save, when he had never found his allowance sufficient as it was,—as if he would if he could!

A little streak of bitterness begun to creep into his musings. That longing to have been present at his grandfather's death-bed was changing already into a feeling of injury that he had not been told what was before him.

"It would have been easier never to begin than to give up now," he said to himself; "and I suppose it will come to that."

For he knew that he had no choice. It was impossible for him, with the obligations he had incurred, and his present habits, to live honestly on the slender pay of a second lieutenant, the utmost self-denial would find the task too hard. He must leave the army and try some humbler walk in life; but because the sacrifice was inevitable, it was not, therefore, robbed of its bitterness. He could not resign himself—could not be patient in the face of this great renunciation; but is not the experience too common for us to visit it against him?

Progress in meekness is a hard-contested battle, and the victory is not won at twenty-three. At thirty-eight Allie knew something of it. Charlie, hiding his wounds in the garden, could hear her gentle voice reading within—words of Divine hope and consolation. He knew that she was praying for him; that all her heart was going out in pleading for blessings on him, but he could not join her.

He was wrestling in the darkness with God and the world alike. There was no healing of his wound.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF SAMOA.

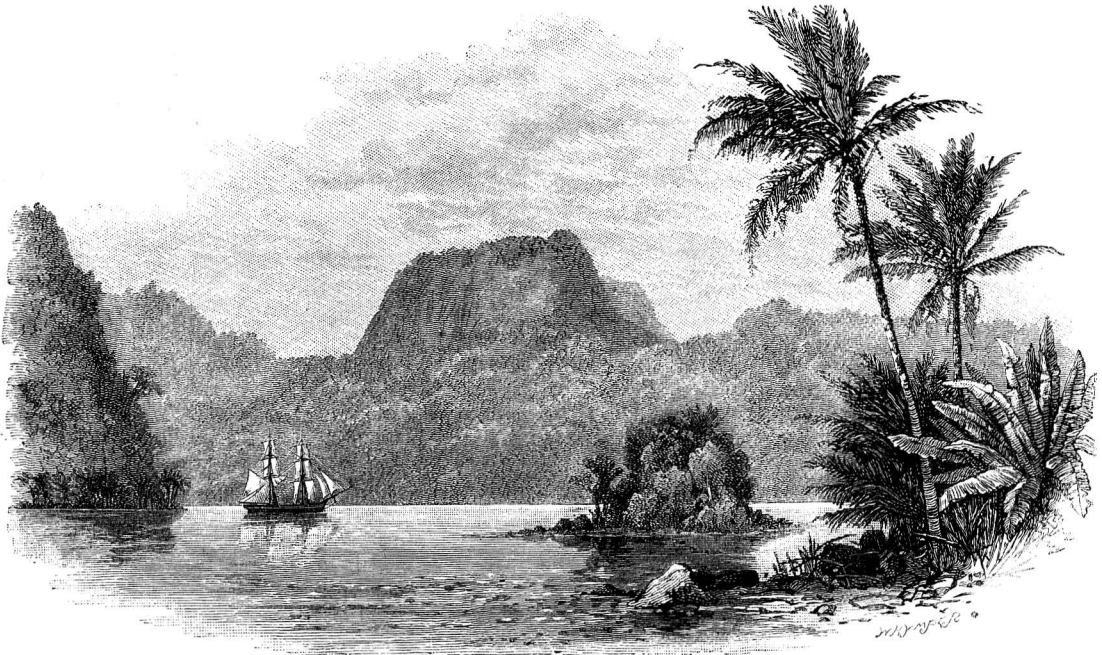
FIFTY years ago missions to the South Seas were in their glory. Islands previously unknown were emerging into the light of day. John Williams and his noble compeers were sailing from island to island, from group to group, stationing missionaries or native teachers as they went. And marvellous to relate, wherever they did this, the idolatry that had hitherto held undisputed sway, succumbed almost without a struggle. The gospel triumphed, and the natives placed themselves under Christian instruction forthwith.

Surprised and delighted as our fathers and grandfathers were at the changes thus wrought,

it was after all not so much to be surprised at. The mere presence of white men in their midst filled the childish savages with awe. Coming from a world they knew nothing of, borne across the sea in strange vessels so unlike their own canoes, the missionaries were looked up to as gods rather than men, and their influence was supreme. Added to which, the paltry fetichism and superstitions of the Polynesians lacked all force and vitality. They fell like a house of cards before a gust of wind. The islanders were in gross moral and spiritual darkness. Light came streaming in upon them; the darkness fled; and for the time their eyes were completely dazzled with the

brightness. No sooner had their foreign visitors mastered the grammatical construction of the dialect and acquired a sufficient knowledge of their vocabulary than at once they proceeded to give them a translation of the Word of God. Without a written language or any knowledge

“stone age” of human progress. Some of their neighbours are in it still. To-day, without any intermediate stages, they are in direct contact with our nineteenth century civilisation; they live in a world in which iron, steam, and electricity are dominant. Bemoan it as we may, we



PANGO-PANGO HARBOUR.

of letters hitherto, they were initiated into the mysteries of reading in order that they might at once become acquainted with the best of all books: from the lowest depths of mental destitution they passed at a step into the possession of rich stores of wealth. No wonder that their joy was intense; no wonder that the story of the work carried on among them reads like a romance.

But half a century has passed by since then, and what do we find to-day? Let us endeavour to realize the situation: Christian teaching was grafted upon an idolatrous trunk; and never yet in the history of man has a nation shaken off its superstitions in a day, or even in a generation. Moreover the new life had to encounter opposing currents of inherent heathen corruption, of inherited, persistent tendencies, of the old physical, social, and political environment. What is the result of the conflict? Which force is now triumphant, the old or the new? How too are these simple races bearing the aggressive energy of Europeans? Commerce, colonial expansion, schemes of annexation and appropriation are becoming mighty factors the wide world over; and at this particular crisis the Pacific is exposed to all the dangers, and is on the eve of receiving the possible gains, suggested by the foregoing terms. From a humanitarian point of view we may deplore this. We would gladly have begged for a little more time for the South Sea Island converts. Only yesterday they were in the

cannot shield them from all that this contact involves. We cannot put the clock back. For good or for ill, the world is drawing nearer together, and the entire human race, white, black, brown, and yellow, is intermingling and amalgamating as never before.

With such facts present to our minds, we propose to sketch the history of one mission field. The complex and difficult problem indicated is being worked out at this very moment in the Samoan Islands, and of them we write. No apology can be needed for selecting these islands as an illustration, for Samoan affairs are well to the fore in these days, and Samoa furnishes an instructive example of the development and the struggle we wish to consider.

I.—SAMOA IN ITS HEATHENISM.

Samoa is not one island, but several. It is the native name of a group of volcanic islands in Central Polynesia, which lie between 13° 30' and 14° 30' S. Lat., and 169° 24' and 172° 50' W. Long. The group consists of three large islands—Upolu, Savaii, and Tutuila—a trio of small islands sixty miles to the east called collectively Manua, but each having a name of its own—Tau, Olosenga, and Ofu—and two yet smaller ones named Apolima and Manono, situated in the channel that separates Savaii from Upolu. There are a few lesser islands, but these eight are all that need be mentioned.

Upolu is in the middle of the group, and from an outsider's standpoint is the most important. Its geographical position, and its harbour of Apia, make it the natural centre of commerce. Vessels of all kinds bring produce to Upolu from the other islands. It runs east and west and has a circumference of 130 miles. Savaii, its western neighbour, is slightly larger, being 150 miles in circumference. The mountains of Savaii tower aloft to a height of 4,000 feet, and can be seen by passing vessels fifty miles away, their slopes richly clothed with luxuriant tropical vegetation as far up as the eye can reach. Tutuila is forty miles to the east, Manua more eastward still. Upolu and Tutuila also contain mountain peaks

native who had gone out to the vessel in a canoe was guilty, or was suspected, of some trifling act of pilfering. It was thought well to make an example of him, so there and then he was shot at and otherwise brutally used. When this man was carried off to the shore bleeding and dying, enmity and a thirst for revenge seized the people, and attacking with slings and stones the French boats which had taken landing parties to the beach, they killed two officers, one of them named De Langle, and ten of their men. La Perouse branded the Samoans as a set of treacherous and bloodthirsty savages, ignoring altogether his own unjust and cruel conduct. In consequence of his reports the Navigators' Isles were for many years



SAMOAN HOUSE.

which rise to a height of 2,000 and 3,000 feet respectively. In general appearance, fertility, verdure, and beauty, they resemble Savaii.

The European discovery of these islands is supposed to date back to the year 1722, when some Dutch vessels are said to have first observed them. French navigators called in 1768 and 1787, on the latter occasion coming into deadly conflict with the natives. Bougainville, who commanded the French ship that visited them in 1768, struck with the way in which the islanders incessantly moved about in their canoes, gave the group the name of the "Isles of the Navigators," a name still in use in geographies and maps, but rapidly yielding to the superior claims of the native name. La Perouse's visit in 1787 was attended by circumstances more discreditable to his own crew than to the Samoans, although the latter were made to bear all the blame. A

carefully avoided by European ships, though in 1791 they were visited by H.B.M. ship Pandora. Captain Cook had heard of them from the Tongans in 1793, but had not reached them.

The Samoans belong to the widely scattered Malayo-Polynesian race, a people found in Borneo, Sumatra, and the islands of the Malayan Archipelago bordering the Indian Ocean on the east, in New Zealand, New Guinea, many parts of the Pacific, and, strange to say, also on the western side of the Indian Ocean, where they inhabit the island of Madagascar. The course, time, and manner of their migrations is one of those in-

teresting ethnological puzzles which still await solution. The Samoans belong to the light brown or tawny-coloured branch of this Malayo-Polynesian family.



THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS.

As regards their physique and general bearing we cannot do better than quote from Mr. Prout's *Life of John Williams*. He thus describes them: "Of all the Polynesians whom he had seen, Mr. Williams pronounced the Samoans the most symmetric in form, and the most polished in manners. And of this they were themselves aware, and no means were neglected which, in their estimation, could set off or enhance their personal attractions. The toilet was a shrine before which the gentlemen, no less than the ladies, daily offered incense to their own vanity. A pair of portraits from the pencil of Mr. Williams, sketched from life upon his journal, will enable the reader to form his own idea of the people amongst whom he had now arrived. 'Picture to yourself a fine, well-grown Indian, with a dark sparkling eye, a smooth skin, glistening from the head to the hips with sweet-scented oil, and tastefully tattooed from the hips to the knees; with a bandage of red leaves, oiled and shining also, a head-dress of the nautilus shell, and a string of small white shells around each arm, and you have a Samoan gentleman in full dress; and, thus dressed, he thinks as much of himself, and the ladies think as much of him, as would be the case with an English beau fitted out in the highest style of fashion. A Samoan lady, in full dress for a ball, wears a beautifully white silky-looking mat around her loins, with one corner tucked up; a wreath of sweet-smelling flowers around her head, a row or two of large blue beads about her neck; her skin shining with scented oil, and the upper part of her person deeply tinged with turmeric rouge. The ladies

spend a considerable time in preparing themselves for company, as much so, perhaps, as their more enlightened sisters in Christian and civilised lands, and two or three "lady's-maids" will be required to assist in these decorations. They are not tattooed like the men, but many of them are spotted all over.'"

Oppressed with the heat and humidity of the atmosphere the Samoan wanted but little clothing and in that respect is little changed even now. The ease with which he could obtain the necessaries of life made him the victim of indolence. He had no need to exert himself. Everything ministered to his laziness. Bread-fruit and cocoa-nuts grew freely at his very door and could be had for the gathering, the latter not even requiring the exertion of cooking. Bananas too abounded, and the yam, and the highly relished taro, were easily cultivated. Both grew rapidly and luxuriantly. Then for animal food there were fish from the sea, various edible creatures from the coral reefs which encircle the islands, and choicest of all—the flesh of the favourite pig. As an ordinary beverage, they had the sweet, slightly acid, deliciously cool and refreshing liquid found in the young cocoa-nut; for special occasions the intoxicating kava juice, an infusion of the chewed root (the duty of chewing the root being specially assigned to the girls of the family) of the ava or kava plant, a species of pepper.¹ Living under such conditions the Samoan became a slave to sloth, with an inveterate dislike to continuous, sustained exertion.

His dwelling was of simple plan and construction. That still in general use is a slightly improved form of the house built by his progenitors in bygone days. It is a kind of huge bee-hive, thatched with reeds, and containing one single apartment which has to serve for all purposes. The house itself consists of a framework of posts about four feet apart with cocoa-nut leaf blinds for walls. During the day these blinds are pulled up, and the house is left open to the light and air of heaven; but at night they are let down. The interior is then sub-divided by the erection of five or six low tents, under whose protection the inmates can sleep safe from the stings and bites of lively and voracious mosquitoes. Each native builds his house on his own plot of ground. He does this without the least reference or thought to neighbouring houses; the result being that no such thing as a row of houses is to be found, no attempt to secure order or regularity attempted.

But we must leave these secondary matters and pass on to the consideration of the moral and religious condition of the Samoan in the days of his heathen darkness. In some respects he was far less degraded than the inhabitants of other groups. John Williams was much impressed with this. He found none of the temples, idols, altars, priests, and sacrifices, which abounded elsewhere; and although the prevalent superstitions were equally gross, they seemed to be less demoralizing and cruel. It was also obvious to him that idolatry had not so firm a hold upon

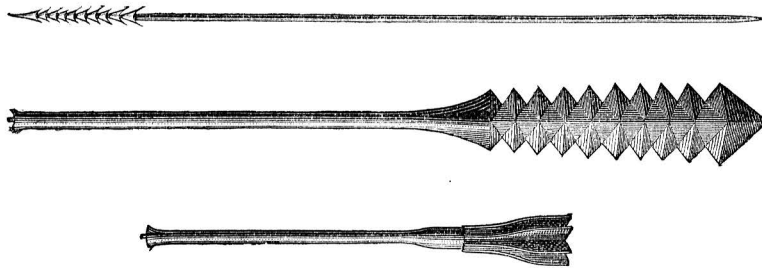
¹ *Piper methysticum*.

their affections as it had upon others whom he had visited, a circumstance he tells us, which, with the absence of the more palpable symbols of idolatry, had obtained for them from other islanders the epithet "godless." But this adjective was misapplied, for though they did not worship idols of wood and stone they practised zoolatry, deifying and reverencing the beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles by which they were surrounded. Still, the absence of an interested, sanguinary, and powerful priesthood filled the heart of this noble pioneer missionary with great hopes as regarded the future of the Samoan people.

Long continued heathenism, however, had wrought terrible evils among them, had warped and misled their thoughts, and together with climatic and similar causes, had begotten great corruption, impurity, and depravity. They delighted in war, were quick to take offence, and of a quarrelsome disposition. Polytheism had shut out from their minds all knowledge of the Living and True God. Each district, each village, each family, even each member of the family was supposed to be under the protection of some special deity, and one and all were guarded by the god of war. Infanticide as practised in other regions of the Pacific was unknown in Samoa, but in a specially horrible and unnatural

form which cannot be further described in these pages it was prevalent to a melancholy extent. Chastity was but a name. The thing itself did not exist. Obscene and filthy conversation was heard and indulged in by young and old alike. The marriage tie was of the loosest character, divorce easily obtained, concubinage and polygamy indulged in by the chiefs and richer men. Many native customs, such as the ceremony of tattooing, night dances, etc., were attended with unbridled licentiousness. Being "past feeling" they gave "themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness." There are always redeeming features in the life and character even of heathen races, but the moment one penetrates beneath the surface and discovers their awful and loathsome corruption, a feeling of shame and pain overwhelms one, and the insight obtained fills the heart with sorrow and sadness. Vice and immorality alas, are common enough here at home, but in heathendom they are not only common, they are universal, they are in perfect accord with the prevailing sentiment. Nobody is ashamed of them, they are condoned, yea, approved of and commended. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint."

But let us turn from this dark picture to one of brighter colours and witness the blessed changes effected by the Gospel of Christ.



SAMOAN CLUBS AND SPEAR.

MRS. TRIMMER AS A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

II.

AS schools multiplied in the district around Brentford, Mrs. Trimmer became a constant visitor to them. She soon saw that the boys and girls were taught to commit verses to memory without being trained to think. She set herself to work to supply the ever-growing demand for suitable books. It was a matter of special gratification to her when these won the approval of the bishops, and were admitted to the catalogues of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In a letter, dated September 24, 1788, she gives a pleasing glimpse of one of her school visitations. She had been staying that summer at some town in Norfolk where she looked in after

church to see the Sunday scholars. Their neatness and good behaviour in the public service had already much impressed her. The presence of the clergyman, as well as several ladies and gentlemen made her fear that if she examined the children in her own way it might appear officious. When she got into the boy's room, which was larger, she took courage and asked a little fellow who had read the seventeenth of St. John very well, whose words those were. "They are in my book, ma'am," was his reply. When she called his attention to the first verse the boy answered correctly, and said that Jesus Christ was "our Saviour." Another boy who read the

eleventh chapter of the same gospel was posed by the question, What is the resurrection? He was sent to his seat to meditate, but did not get light. Nor could he tell what would become of him when he was laid in the grave. Do you know your Creed? Mrs. Trimmer asked. He replied that he knew it every word, and was then urged to learn the meaning of its words. This glimpse of Mrs. Trimmer in a Sunday-school shows that her constant aim was to open the minds of the young to the truths they were taught. She had good hope that those bright Norfolk boys, who were able to learn anything, would be more skilfully taught as a result of her visit. "I mentioned to the company my wish to see the minds of those poor children opened to religious truths, and hope a different plan will be adopted."

In a letter written on June 8, 1787, Mrs. Trimmer, after referring to the general joy which prevailed among the managers of Sunday-schools at the queen's patronage of the movement, adds that ladies who were "blessed with the means of doing good," often applied to her for information about the work. Such a company of ladies made several visits from Richmond to Brentford in the November of that year. The incident seems to have been quite overlooked, but a letter from the Hon. Mrs. Frances Boscawen has been preserved which shows that the school at Brentford was the mother of that at Richmond. Mrs. Boscawen was writing to her friend Mrs. Delany, who in early life had been an intimate friend of John and Charles Wesley before their visit to Georgia. Edmund Burke said that she was "the highest bred woman in the world, and the woman of fashion of all ages." She enjoyed the special friendship of George III. and his consort, who made arrangements for her to live near them at Windsor that they might have as much as possible of her society. Mrs. Boscawen, the widow of Admiral Boscawen, writes from "Rosedale." The house is in Kew Foot Road, Richmond, looking over into the Old Deer Park. It has had a memorable history. The poet Thomson had lived there fifty years before. On his death the cottage was bought by Mr. George Ross, who spent nine thousand pounds in enlarging it. Then came Mrs. Boscawen, who carefully secured every relic of Thomson, and wrote an inscription for his favourite alcove. "Here Thomson sung the 'Seasons' and their change." After her day it was bought by the Earl of Shaftesbury in 1805. His son, the future philanthropist, used to come here for his holidays when a school-boy, feeling that home was scarcely less distasteful than that Dotheboys Hall for young aristocrats at Chiswick which he so greatly dreaded. It is now the Richmond Hospital.

From this house Mrs. Boscawen wrote one Monday morning to Mrs. Delany:—

"December 10, 1787.

"I depend chiefly (for visits) on Mrs. Sayer, who has been much occupied with Mrs. Fullerton and two other good ladies about our Sunday-school, which I hope we have happily achieved, and yesterday our children were ranged at church for the first time, and behaved extremely well.

We have had it much at heart, for her Majesty (of whom we may well say, there is nought too low for her care or her goodness) was pleased to express her desire that there should be a Sunday-school at Richmond, and our endeavours have been exerted to bring it to effect. Indeed, I should not say ours, as if I had been active, but the four ladies who have, very judiciously, repaired to Mrs. Trimmer for instructions, and repeating their visits are become good proficient in their business, I flatter myself, and as they reside here all the winter, will carry it on under their own immediate inspection."¹

Mrs. Boscawen little thought when she wrote that letter, that she was becoming the chronicler of the school. It shows us that Queen Charlotte's interest in the establishment of Sunday-schools was not confined to Windsor and Brentford. Richmond Lodge, almost facing Mrs. Boscawen's house, had been a favourite retreat for her in her first years in England, and Kew Palace was still one of her best-loved homes. It was fitting that she should thus become the founder of Richmond Sunday-school. The four ladies would go along the newly-made Kew Horse Road, which skirted the royal gardens, till it reached Kew Green, then they would cross the river to Brentford. As we know that these first teachers were Mrs. Trimmer's pupils, we can tell what were the methods used. Richmond school must have been modelled on that of Brentford. The picture given by Mrs. Boscawen of the deliberate preparation, and the happy sight which greeted the eyes of the parishioners on Sunday, December 9, 1787, is one for which all lovers of Sunday-schools will thank her. Thomas Wakefield, who was for thirty years the clergyman of the old church, must have felt no little joy as he looked on those lines of boys and girls. His monument describes him as "pure, just, beneficent, liberal and pious, upright with man and humble with God."

Mrs. Trimmer herself pays a happy tribute to the new school. In the Appendix to the first volume of her "Economy of Charity," she deplores the failure of the spinning and knitting in the School of Industry at Brentford. She thinks that, if better mistresses and a more skilful inspector than herself had been secured, the result might have been different, "and this opinion is confirmed by the success of the school at Richmond, which set off upon the same plan, under the management of ladies who still continue to attend them with unremitting zeal."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Trimmer died suddenly. The husband was taken in 1792. The previous year had been one of much trouble. Mrs. Trimmer lost a son in his seventeenth year, whom she had fondly hoped to see a minister of the Church of England. Mr. Trimmer also had one or two dangerous attacks of illness. One night, in May, 1792, his wife was aroused by a choking sound, and found that he was in a fit. In a quarter of an hour he had breathed his last. He was a gentle, earnest, Christian man, who daily enjoyed the blessing of the peace-maker. The night

¹ Life and Letters of Mrs. Delany, vi. 465.

before his death he had been busy writing letters to bring some parties who were at variance to a better mind.

Mrs. Trimmer survived him eighteen years. They were busy years of growing usefulness, blest with all that should accompany old age—

As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.

On the 15th of December, 1810, whilst sitting in her study, in the chair she used for her writing, "she bowed her head upon her bosom, and yielded her pure spirit into the hands of her Creator and Redeemer." She had been reading the letters of a deceased friend. The notice in "Greater London" (i. 40) says that she died in the house in Windmill Lane, where she "lived many years." This is scarcely consistent with her letter to her friend, Mrs. Denward, on July 8, 1803, in which she speaks of her removal from

the old home endeared by so many memories of her married life. She found a happy retreat, however. "It is a very neat and convenient house, and particularly delightful to one at this time, as it stands in the midst of a garden, which is literally a garden of roses. From my upper windows I look beyond it into surrounding fields, in which the hay is now making in great abundance, and the scent of it, mixing with the odour of the flowers, fills the air with fragrance." Oddly enough, however, she adds that she never had any sense of smell.

Sarah Trimmer laid the homes of England under no small debt by her constant endeavours to promote true education and religious feeling. But the Sunday-schools of Brentford and Richmond are one of her best monuments. She was buried in the family vault at Ealing on January 5, 1811.

J. TELFORD.



THE GOD OF THE LIVING.

"He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living."—*Mark* xii. 27.



WHEN God appeared to Moses in the bush, He said: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Nineteen hundred years after, our Lord reminded the Jews of this, and still spoke of God as "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." But the patriarchs had long been dead. Even in Moses' time Abraham had been dead four hundred years, and in our Lord's time, above two thousand years. Yet both the Lord to Moses, and our Saviour to the Jews, spoke of God as being still the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; not as having been so once, long ago, when they were living in the world, but as being so then. When God spoke to Moses, He was the God of Abraham; when Jesus spoke to the Jews, He was so still.

But our Lord said, "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." What follows? That Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living; living when God spoke to Moses, and living when Jesus spoke to the Jews. It was so indeed. And not only so, but they are living now. Yet we think of them usually as long dead and gone. We look back through hundreds and hundreds of years into ancient history; and there, far back in the early ages of the world, we find the account of their lives and deaths. The very title we give them—patriarchs, the heads or founders of a race—seems to place them in the distant past; and so we generally think of them. Nevertheless, they are living still; and God is still their God, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; as much their God now as ever He was, as much their's as ours.

Where are they living? The veil was lifted by our Lord Himself (*Luke* xvi.). When the beggar

died, he "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Abraham therefore was alive, and alive in a place of rest and happiness. He was on the happy side of a great gulf that separated him from the wicked, and from all sin and evil and sorrow; he was alive, he could know and speak, he was able even to comfort another. He was in Paradise, the soul's place of rest. Abraham was there, and Lazarus was there; and there, we may be sure, were Isaac and Jacob; and how many more! They were there when our Lord spoke; they are there now; in Paradise, at rest, waiting; not dead, but living; and God is their God still.

But it is their souls that live, not their bodies. Abraham did truly die, and so did Isaac, and Jacob. We even know their graves. Abraham, we read, was buried in the cave of Machpelah; and there, in their turn, both Isaac and Jacob were laid. Their bodies were laid in the grave; but their souls went to Paradise, to God. They were never parted from Him; not for a moment. He was their God, the God of the living, always, without a break. The very moment their breath ceased, their souls were with God; and they have never left His presence since. They are there now; living in perfect rest; waiting there for the resurrection, when soul and body will be joined together again, to be for ever with the Lord.

And not they only. Millions have joined them there, all who have died in the Lord; Old Testament saints, and New Testament saints; those who were men of faith under the old covenant, and all believers under the new. "The spirits of just men made perfect" are all there together; they form a vast assembly—all living, happy, and waiting. They are there in that happy place now. While we are yet in the

body, they are free; while we are in the warfare below, they are at rest above.

If we are indeed believers, if we are in Christ by faith, then, in the fullest sense, God is our God. We are included in the covenant, the better covenant, the covenant of grace. Through Christ our Saviour we can lift up our hearts to God, and say, "O God, Thou art my God!"

He is our God now. He is "the God of the living." While we live here below, amid trials, difficulties and temptations, He is our God. He is with us in this our life; our God, while we are living in this world. This is our unspeakable comfort—that we are not here without Him. If we were, then this would be a dreary world indeed! But He is our God here, the God of the living.

When our life ends, and we are called hence, He will not cease to be our God. Not for one moment will the union be broken. Not for one moment shall we be parted from Him. This union is an eternal union, unbroken and endless. Jesus said to the disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"; with Him for ever, and not without Him even at the parting moment, even in the passage. He said to the thief on the cross, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou

be with Me in Paradise"; the moment the breath left his body, his soul should be there. God is "the God of the living," while they live here below; their God, at the moment when the soul parts from its house of clay; their God, while it lives apart from the body. We know but little of that state; but this we know, that, for all who believe, "to depart" is "to be with Christ," living with Him, at rest and happy.

Thus we may think of those who are gone before. God is "the God of the living," the God of us who are living here; the God of those whose souls are living in Paradise. We are one in Him still. Our God is their God.

This union with God—never to be broken—must be formed here; this spiritual and never-ending life, in which God will be our God, the God of the living, must be begun now: is it begun in you? Are you joined to Christ by a true and living faith? Can you say, "O God, thou art my God"? This is a solemn question. Ask it of yourself; ask it seriously and in earnest. If you have any doubt, set that doubt at rest without delay, while yet living in a day of grace. Make sure that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, be your God now and for ever. Wait for nothing. Christ calls you. Even now He calls once more.

F. BOURDILLON.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER VII.



EXILED.

THE autumn had come, the snow already whitened the Alpine passes; soon the glittering mantle would lie thick on all the hills, and the whirling winds would form deep drifts and the avalanches come thundering down, and the passage of the Alps would be dangerous exceedingly.

But the order came, imperious, unevadable—the Vaudois were to go.

They would rather trust themselves to their own mountains, to the ice and the snow, than stay in those fated prisons; but disease had enfeebled them, imprisonment and bad air had poisoned those whom death had spared. It

was a woeful company that set out upon that long and dangerous road.

One of their own historians¹ writes thus of that terrible journey :—

“The Vaudois travelled in companies, escorted by the soldiers of the duke. They had been promised clothing, but only a small number of jackets and socks was served out to them. It was five o'clock in the afternoon, at Christmas-tide, when their liberation was announced, with the addition that if they did not set out forthwith it would be out of their power to leave at all, for the order was to be revoked next day. Fearful of losing the chance of liberty, these unfortunate persons, wasted by sickness, set out on their march that very night. There were old men amongst them, worn down by sufferings as well as by years, besides women and children of the tenderest age. That night they marched three or four leagues through the snow, in the most intense frost.”

This first march cost the lives of a hundred and fifty of them. Was it wonderful that these died?

A few days later on at Novalèse, at the foot of Mount Cenis, a troop of the prisoners noticed that a storm was rising on the mountain; they knew well what mountain snow-storms were, and they begged the officer who was in charge to let them stay at Novalèse for a while, out of pity for the weak that were to be found in their ranks. If their request caused delay, they said, they would not ask for food; there was less danger in going without food than in travelling in the face of the storm. The officer refused. The company was forced to proceed on its march, and eighty-six sank in the drifted snow; they were the aged, the worn out, women, and some little children. The bands that followed days after saw the bodies lying frozen on the snow, the mothers still pressing their children in their arms.

Henri Botta would never have survived that journey of toil and horror had his son Gaspard's arm been less strong and his heart less brave.

Gaspard devoted himself to his father with the whole force of his silent nature; it seemed as though his love for Rénéé, pent up and baffled as it was, sought an outlet in this older, less selfish love, and touched it with an enthusiasm which was glorious to behold.

No fatigue seemed to weary the young elastic frame, no privation had power to damp the calm courage which was always ready to cheer and brighten the dark hours of trial.

He had made friends with one of the guards, a soldier whose people he had known in Turin, and from him he managed to get now and then an extra bit of bread, a blanket, and some handfuls of roasted chestnuts, poor and pitiful provision for such a weary way, but to Henri Botta it made, perhaps, the difference between life and death.

Down the steep hill-passes the Vaudois came, troops of gaunt and toil-worn men, large-eyed, weary women, and children who had already learnt the lesson so strange for childhood—to suffer and to be silent. Down on to the shores of the Geneva lake, where the winter sun was shining on the ripples until they flashed again like liquid diamonds. Along the ancient roads where many an army had passed before them, but never one so disconsolate and poor; and up to the gates of the town, whence the citizens came hurrying with eager welcome.

They were generous in their kindness, these people of Geneva. Not only welcoming words, but help, food, rest, comfort were freely given to the outcast children of the Alps. Company after company came winding down the mountain sides, but instead of being frightened at such claims upon their charity, the Swiss contended among

themselves for the honour of aiding these, their persecuted brethren.

Once more we translate from the Vaudois historian, for the simple statement is more eloquent than modern words can be :—

“Two thousand six hundred Vaudois were received within the walls of Geneva, the feeble remnant of a population of from fourteen to sixteen thousand. Moreover they were either sick or worn out with fatigue and anxiety, and but ill-protected from the rigours of winter by the old garments they had worn in prison. Some there were whose lives ended the very moment their liberty began; these expired between the two gates of the city, too weak to bear the strange sense of joy. But in proportion as the wounds to be dressed were deep, the loving kindness of the Genevese rose high. They contended with one another who should take home the most destitute; if the invalids and sufferers had any difficulty in walking, men carried them in their arms into their houses. The heavy charge to the state and the people was cheerfully accepted. From the time they had heard of the cruelty of Louis XIV., and of the edicts of the Duke of Savoy, the Swiss had been preparing to offer aid; and when they knew that the Vaudois were to be exiled, and coming to Switzerland these preparations were redoubled. Five thousand ells of linen were made into garments, and an equal quantity of the woollen stuffs of Oberland. Hundreds of pairs of shoes were laid up in depôts. The different cantons distributed the refugees amongst them in a fixed proportion, and the liberality and compassion knew no bounds.”

There was a letter written in July, 1688, signed in the name of the Vaudois by Daniel Forneron and Jean Jalla, a letter yet existing in the archives of Berne. “We have no language strong enough,” it runs, “to express our gratitude for your favours; our hearts, penetrated with all your acts of kindness, will publish in distant parts the unbounded charity with which you have refreshed us, and supplied all our need. We shall take care to inform our children and our children's children that all our posterity may know, that, next to God whose tender mercies have preserved us from being entirely consumed, we are indebted to you alone for life and liberty.”

In Geneva, in the early days of 1688, there were aching hearts as well as those that were joyous and thankful. It was delightful to be at rest, to see the sun rise and set, to feel the pure air, and to wander free beneath God's sky. It was strangely sweet to meet together in the churches to sing the praises of the God who had helped and delivered, to hear His word read in the tongue the people could understand, and know that at last they might worship Him without fear or hindrance.

But the pain that mingled with the gladness was very sharp.

Husbands searched through each arriving company for the wives they had been parted from in the days of the fighting in the valleys. Mothers sought for their sons with hopes that grew fainter with each day that brought refugees indeed, but not the familiar faces they longed to see. Parents sorrowed for their little ones who had been torn from them and handed over to the Romish convents and schools—the children would grow up to despise both them and their religion, and in the coming time, these who were flesh of their flesh, would be ranked with their enemies.

And how many lay dead, away there beyond the white peaks rising like a giant's rampart against the eastern sky! Dead, in the nameless prison-graves, or beneath the winding-sheet of Alpine snows.

¹ Monastier. Translated from the French.