THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

A CHURCHYARD WHERE THE DAISIES GROW.

—"All the wood and meadow
with June's sunshine were ablaze."

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June.

Oh I'm weary of the town,
Where life's too hard for smiling—and the dreary houses frown,
And the very sun seems cruel in its glory, as it beats
Upon the miles of dusty roofs—the dreary squares and streets;
This sun that gilds the great St. Paul's—the golden cross and dome,
Is this the same that shines upon our little church at home?

Our little church is gray,
It stands upon a hill-side—you can see it miles away,
The rooks sail round its tower, and the plovers from the moor.
I used to see the daisies through the low-arched framing door,
When all the wood and meadow with June's sunshine were ablaze,—
Then the sun had ways of shining that it hasn't nowadays.

There are elm trees all around
Where the birds and bees in summer make a murmuring music-sound,
And on the quiet pastures the sheep-bells sound afar,
And you hear the low of cattle—where the red farm-buildings are;
Oh! on that grass to rest my head and hear that old sweet tune,
And forget the cruel city—on this first blue day of June!

The grass is high—I know;
And the wind across the meadow is the same that used to blow;
But if my steps turned thither, on this golden first June day—
It would only be to count my dead—whom God has taken away.
That grave-yard where the daisies grow—not yet my heart can bear
To pass that way—but oh, some day, some kind hand lay me there!

E. NESBIT.

RECENT DISCOVERIES AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY THE REV. GEORGE T. STOKES, D.D.

II.

NORTHERN Africa is a land of romance. We now associate Africa with the thoughts of negroes, Soudanese Arabs, desert sands, siroccoes, and other similar circumtances. We never think of it as men did twelve or fifteen hundred years ago, as the land of literature and of science, as at Alexandria; of religion, poetry, and speculation, as at Cyrene, under Synesius, at Hippo, under Augustine, and at Carthage, under Cyprian and Tertullian. While most assuredly we never remember Africa, associated in our minds with the religion of the Crescent and the False Prophet alone, as the chosen home of the religion of the Cross, and the special abode of devotion and piety. Yet so it was. During the first six centuries of Christian history Northern Africa and above all other parts, the land of Egypt, was the special home of the Christian faith. Let us here make a slight digression to illustrate this point.

Eusebius was the great Christian historian of the early church. He was in many respects a very poor type of a Christian bishop. He was a great courtier, a complete man of the world. He loved hanging about the court of the Emperor Constantine, and dearly appreciated the temporal blessings which imperial favour showered upon the church. He was very like two eminent men, William Carstares and Gilbert Burnet, who lived in the beginning of the last century, whose memories are now however lapsing into the forgotten past, and becoming part and parcel merely of the historian's stock-in-trade. Carstares was the most eminent divine and statesman of the Established Church of Scotland in the time of King William the Third, at which period Burnet occupied the same position in the Church of England. They were both much more of statesmen than of divines; much more anxious to patch up quarrels and present an appearance of external peace than to secure internal union and harmony within the church. Such as were Carstares and Burnet six generations ago, such was Eusebius at the time of Constantine the Great. He was a court bishop, very ready to cover the moral defects and shortcomings of the emperor, but ever anxious to utilise his varied opportunities to gather up information concerning the past history of the faith and church of Jesus Christ. He used his influence, for instance, to disseminate correct texts of Holy Scripture.

He did good work in another direction. He wrote an ecclesiastical history which is our great authority for church life and work during the first three centuries. In this history he describes the persecutions the church endured, the writers it produced, the progress it made; and in all these points he depicts Egypt as surpassing all other lands. In the great Diocletian persecution—which, roughly speaking, extended over the first ten or twelve years of the fourth century—the Egyptian martyrs carried off the palm for devotion and zeal. He tells us that he himself had seen the Egyptian Christians executed ten and twenty a day—yea, even sometimes sixty and a hundred were put to death at a time—the executioners relieving one another by relays in their hideous work, and the Christians pressing forward with exultation to gain the honour of martyrdom.

It is a most interesting fact that modern discoveries have brought to light many ancient documents completely confirming the testimony of Eusebius about the state of the ancient Egyptian church; for most certainly if ancient Egypt exceeded all others in Christian zeal and knowledge, modern Egypt has exceeded all others in the importance of its contributions to our knowledge of Christian antiquity, with the one curious exception of the barbarous and semi-Jewish Abyssinian church. Let us here offer a few words of historical narrative showing what these discoveries have been and how they came about.

The Abyssinian church and the ancient Coptic church came prominently before the European mind towards the end of the last century. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt some ninety years ago was over-ruled for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in many ways, and in none more than in the light thrown upon Egyptian antiquities. French scholars flung themselves into the investigation of Egyptian history, producing many works of great importance to the student of Christian truth. They brought to light the existence of vast literary remains, written principally on papyrus, and dating back to the remotest antiquity.

The first hint which the Western world received of possible discoveries in this direction came about in a curious way. The story is told in a narrative, little read nowadays, called Volney's Travels, which gives a picture of Egypt more than one hundred years ago, while Mahometanism bore there its ancient tyrannical sway, and Christianity led still a crushed and despised existence. Volney tells us that about the year 1778 the Arabs found fifty manuscript volumes in a subterranean place, near Memphis, the foundation of which celebrated town was ascribed by Egyptian tradition to the patriarch Joseph. They were enclosed in a case of highly-perfumed sycamore wood. The Arabs offered them for sale to a French merchant, but he refused to purchase them all, the price demanded being beyond his means. He fortunately bought one manuscript, however, the Arabs consuming the rest as tobacco for their pipes. The solitary volume which escaped this ignoble fate turned out to be a very ancient Greek manuscript describing the repairs executed in the second or third century of the Christian era upon the banks of the canal connecting Lake Moeris with the Nile. To this special point we shall return hereafter; we must now pursue our direct historical narrative.

The discovery of this manuscript excited considerable interest at the time among the limited circles who thought about such matters. But a century ago was very different from our own time in many respects, and in none more so than in matters of travel and discovery. The daily press and the electric telegraph have brought the whole world into speaking distance, and made literary discoveries the common talk and common property of the multitude. A few scholars then knew of such discoveries, but even they felt the time and distance, the expense and danger so great that they could lend no assistance in following the matter up, and this curious literary find led to nothing further in the way of direct result. Napoleon's expedition soon followed, however, and then Egypt began to be opened to the light. Manuscripts on papyrus and parchment began to pour in, and travellers began to turn their footsteps to the land of the Pharaohs. No great discovery of manuscripts was made till near the middle of this century, when the Hon. R. Curzon wrote a work on the Monasteries of the Levant which, even to this day, will be found useful, interesting, and important. I remember quite well reading the book thirty-five years ago, and how much as a boy I was struck with it, and his romantic adventures in search of Coptic manuscripts.

The publication of that work in 1837 was followed in two or three years by the great discovery of Nitrian manuscripts which created so much excitement between 1840 and 1850. Later discoveries have indeed so thrown that splendid find into the shade that we have little conception of the enthusiasm and expectations raised by these documents. Scholars like the celebrated Baron Bunsen hailed them as bringing to light the records of the primitive church, while the Apostolic Constitutions as found among them were regarded by him as revealing the customs, ritual, and ideas of the Apostles themselves. Time has indeed considerably modified the high hopes then formed, but yet the Nitrian manuscripts have been a vast help in shedding light upon the history of the earliest ages of the church. They naturally therefore form one of the greatest treasures and most extensive collections in our own great national repository—the British Museum.

The manner in which this collection was found is most instructive to all travellers. Mr. Curzon had heard of the fame of the Nitrian monasteries. He had equipped himself, as all travellers ought to do who wish to make a profitable use of their excursion, by a study of what previous travellers had done. Nitria was from the time of Josephus and Philo, that is from the time of our Lord, the resort of Jewish ascetics. In the third and fourth centuries it became the refuge of vast numbers who sought in the desert wilds

solitude for meditation, as well as safety from the sword of persecution. Throughout the middle ages Nitria was the original source and pattern of monasticism where vast literary treasures were accumulated.

In the seventeenth century there arose in England and throughout Western Europe a great enthusiasm for Oriental studies. Archbishop Laud was a munificent patron of them; endowing professorships at Oxford and Cambridge for the study of Arabic. Primate Ussher was the first Orientalist of his day, spending money lavishly in the purchase of precious manuscripts, and maintaining agents all through the east in pursuit of them. The letters of Archbishop Ussher fill two thick octavo volumes of 600 pp. each, and are crowded with curious and interesting details of eastern life and scholarship. Other influences combined in the same direction. The Church of England was then maintaining a fierce controversy with the Church of Rome; she was seeking for alliance and help in the Eastern churches, and trying vigorously to conciliate the Eastern patriarchs. One of them, Cyril the Patriarch of Alexandria, sent as a present to Charles I. the magnificent volume called the Codex Alexandrinus, now in the British Museum, where it constitutes one of the leading authorities for the text of the New Testament.

But perhaps the chiefest influence in the promotion of Oriental studies was the very commonplace one of trade and commerce. Our English merchants established factories, as they were then called, all round the coast of the Levant, at Smyrna, Beyrout, and other places. They were not satisfied with commerce merely, they also brought their religion with them, and established chaplaincies which were often filled by the most distinguished scholars of Oxford and Cambridge, anxious to perfect themselves in Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac. Pococke, for instance, was the greatest Oriental scholar of Oxford in the reign of Charles I. He spent two different terms of years as chaplain in the Levant.

In the reign of Charles II. Dr. Huntington left the same University and lived in the east for many years, faithfully ministering to his countrymen, devoting himself at the same time to the accumulation of Oriental manuscripts, a considerable number of which now adorn the Bodleian library. Dr. Huntington's Life and Letters lie buried in a Latin Life by a Dr. Thomas Smith, well known in the reign of Queen Anne, but now almost forgotten, save by the few students who ransack the vast manuscript collections of the Bodleian library. Few know, therefore, that the first Englishman to recall attention to Nitria and its hidden literary treasures was the same Dr. Robert Huntington, who approached these desert convents in the year 1678, seeking for manuscripts of the Ignatian Epistles.

From that epoch the eyes of scholars were turned towards Nitria as a spot whence much might be expected. In 1837, Mr. Curzon visited the monasteries, and his story as told in the work to which I have already referred must be read in order to be fully appreciated. His narrative shows that the Arabian desire for sweet-scented tobacco is not the only danger to which ancient documents are exposed. The monks of the east are no longer the learned men they once were, and so he found them in one place using precious volumes as hassocks and cushions on which they stood, protecting their feet from the damp, while in other places they were ignorant of their own possessions.

The Nitrian monks at first denied the existence of any manuscripts at all, but having opened their hearts by the judicious use of cordials, and aroused their cupidity by the offer of abundant money, Mr. Curzon was at last admitted into their oil cellar, where he found a room literally two feet deep in Syriac and Coptic manuscripts, the greater portion of which have now found their way to the safer custody of the British Museum.

Such was the origin of the Nitrian discoveries, but still another and even more extensive one has come to light within the past few years.

The Nitrian manuscripts taught the Coptic and Arabian public the market value of the documents lying hidden in Egypt. They have been ever since on the alert and watchful. About twelve years ago rumour began to announce some great discoveries made in the sands of Egypt, yet nothing definite could be found out. In 1877 a large quantity of papyri were offered to the German Consul at Alexandria; he purchased them and sent them to Berlin. These documents were represented as found in the province of Fayoum, a fertile district of Egypt lying fifty or sixty miles south of Cairo, whence that city now derives its principal supplies of fruits and vegetables. Curiosity was excited, and the great Egyptologist Brugsch—the author of that charming book "Egypt under the Pharaohs"—made excavations in the sands of Fayoum in search of documents, but with only small success. The Arabs knew the value of their secret, and were determined to keep it; some small finds alone were made, fragments of the New Testament and some remains of Aristotle and Euripides.

A short time afterwards the Archduke Rainer of Austria was travelling in Egypt. The reputation of his position, his wealth, and his interest in such subjects stirred up the cupidity of the Arabs; and they offered him a vast quantity of manuscripts of all ages, reaching from 1200 B.C. to the time of the Mahometan domination or about the year 900. These documents were found literally to number tens of thousands, and embraced all subjects and all languages, letters, contracts, imperial and royal edicts, texts of Scripture, liturgies, novels, classical works, in Hieroglyphics, Coptic, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Persian and Arabic. Such a vast assembly of documents naturally created a great sensation. They were removed to Vienna, where a special department was organised for their study, which has already found among them some most interesting remains of antiquity pre-Christian as well as post-Christian.

It may now be fairly asked how were these documents preserved? The earliest discovery a century ago was thus accounted for by the Arabs. They said they had found the fifty volumes in a

case of sycamore wood buried in the sand, affording an illustration of Jeremiah xxii. 14, where the prophet deposits documents in a similar manner, and addressing Baruch, says: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days." The Nitrian documents were preserved in the ordinary way in a library, where they suffered much through the ignorance and neglect of their custodians. The Fayoum manuscripts belonged apparently to the official registry of the district, which, after lasting for twenty centuries, was partially burned down some time in the tenth century of our era, and then covered up with sand. But we can only conjecture on this point, as the Arabs have hitherto kept their secret right well, knowing as they do now the money value of the treasure they have discovered. The fact is that from the nature of the case we may expect yet to find many important documents in Egypt. The sand preserves in a marvellous manner whatever is entrusted to it. Then again the numberless excavations made by the ancients have been utilised by successive religions and conquerors, Pagan, Christian or Mahometan to hide their valuables, and no one can tell what they may contain.

A story told by Mr. Curzon strikingly illustrates this point. He was staying at Thebes, where, in the easy-going times of fifty years ago, he had selected a rock-hewn tomb as his temporary residence whence he might pursue his search after ancient books. He made the acquaintance of a Coptic carpenter, who told him the history of the Christian church in that neighbourhood. After some hesitation the carpenter disclosed to Curzon the fact that the local library of the monastery was still in existence hidden among the tombs, though the monastery itself was ruinous and deserted. They arranged that they should visit the library by night, which they accordingly did. Mr. Curzon followed his guide to a retired spot in the vast necropolis of Thebes, where, after descending a place like a gravel pit, they entered the doorway of an ancient tomb.

They passed first into a great sepulchral hall, then through another door into another chamber, and thence through a third door into another "magnificent subterranean hall, divided into three aisles by four square columns, two on each side." There, surrounded by figures of ancient Egyptian kings and princes, he found the Coptic library which he proceeded to examine by the aid of a few candles.

His studies were suddenly arrested by an incident which seems laughable enough when told in cold blood, but which must have been terrifying when enacted hundreds of feet under ground, with nerves highly strung, and imaginations heated. Our traveller had just settled himself to the study of a ponderous volume, apparently the most ancient of the collection, when the whole cavern resounded again and again with the most terrific howls. The most courageous would have been appalled under such circumstances, so it is no wonder that the poor crushed and persecuted Copt was terrified. He took to his heels, followed by Mr. Curzon, who acknowledges that he likewise felt most uncomfortable. The candles were extinguished in their haste; the local knowledge of the carpenter, however, stood them in good stead and guided them right, but what was their astonishment to find upon emerging into the open air that it was a lost donkey belonging to the village which had strayed into the tomb, discovering the carpenter's secret, and disturbing the Englishman's equanimity and studies. The incident is a ludicrous one, but it is also instructive.

Mr. Curzon discovered documents fourteen hundred years old, some in an oil cellar, others, as in this case, in a tomb known apparently to one man only. The Arabs have found them buried in the sands. Who can tell how many similar finds may yet await the diligent investigator to illustrate antiquity, and to confirm the story of Revelation? For, in concluding this paper, we may observe that not a single document, nor a line of a document, has yet been found amid all the discoveries of which this paper has spoken, which contradicts or is inconsistent with the Bible and early Christianity.

Nay, rather, as we shall in the next paper show, we gain from these discoveries illustrations and confirmations innumerable of the faith of the gospel. Some of the discoveries too are most valuable because they teach mental caution, a quality in which modern objectors often sadly fail. Statements are made in the Bible which do not exactly tally with facts as we now behold them, or with our present state of knowledge. Men at once jump to the conclusion that the Bible is wrong, and they are themselves infallibly right. They are deficient in mental caution and modesty because they do not remember that the facts of nature or local phenomena may have altered since the Bible was written, or our own knowledge may be imperfect.

An interesting illustration of this mental danger is furnished by the documents of which we have been speaking. The patriarch Joseph is credited by tradition with the formation of the lake Moeris for storing up the superfluous waters of the Nile. That lake measured some hundred miles in coast line, and yet it has now so completely disappeared that its very site is a matter of dispute. The influences of nature, the encroachments of the desert have wiped that gigantic work out of existence. Yet it was in existence in the third century of the Christian era, for the one document which survived the Arabs of Volney's day turned out to be an official record of the wages paid to the labourers who repaired the banks of the inland sea which has now ceased to exist. Had the Bible asserted the existence of such a vast construction, of which no trace now remains, how incautious thinkers would have pointed the finger of scorn!

The more one investigates in the region of history, as in that of science, so much the more one is taught the lesson of intellectual modesty and humility, to abide patiently upon the teaching of facts, and thus gain that fuller light which is evermore poured from above upon all lowly and teachable souls.

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER IX.—"ARE WE NOT BROTHERS? SO MAN AND MAN SHOULD BE."

The next day Janey began the campaign, with whose vicissitudes experience had already made her familiar.

Five years before she had had to face it, as little anticipating the necessity as most girls brought up in comfort, and with never so much as a doubt as to their future. When one is young, everything is always going to be as it has been, only better and pleasanter. Parents who encourage this delusion, knowing it to be unjustified by fact, are surely no better than the thieves of their children's fortune.

So that Janey knew the way she had to tread very well, when she set out upon a Wednesday morning to barter her little stock of accomplishments for the highest price they would fetch. She had been educated carefully by her father, who took a pride in her parts and quickness, so that when she was left orphaned at eighteen, she was at least by so much better equipped than are most girls for the fight in which so many of them fail. But the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, and for a time it seemed as if the forces were arrayed against Janey.

"There are so many of us," she said; "the school holidays are over and everyone wants to get settled for the winter. We are all looking for the same thing, and there isn't nearly enough of it to go round. Wherever there is the faintest hope there is a rush. A lady came into the office to-day and she said she had had seventy replies to a single advertisement for a morning governess. No wonder that she grew exacting and critical when she discovered that the supply is so much greater than the demand."

"We must have faith, Janey," Allie whispered; "God will not forsake His children."

"I am not one of His children," said Janey bitterly, "perhaps that is why there is nothing for me to do. And you who are—what have you gained by being patient and believing? Hasn't everything you cared for been taken from you? Your home broken up—Charlie's life spoiled——"

Then Allie's grieving look smote her with remorse.

"Oh, forgive me, I didn't mean to hurt you, it is the pain of it all—for others even more than for myself—that makes me wicked. It is so hard to understand why it should be permitted. We are asking for nothing wrong—not even to be allowed to play, only to work. As for me, I've only begun and I'm strong, and there is a long time between us and starvation yet, but there are girls there who have almost come to that—I can see it in their faces, they are despairing, and they are so shabby that it is scarcely worth while struggling to be respectable any longer. And when you come to that"—she gave a half sob—"when you come to scarcely noticing that you are almost in rags, oh, then the end is very near! You wouldn't wonder how it is that women sink if you saw some of them as I see them every day. It makes us wicked; it makes us hate each other; it makes us full of envy and malice, and all uncharitableness! How can we help coveting another's luck when even a scrap of it falls to her share? I think some of these poor things would like to kill me because I'm fresh and strong, and so can hold out longer and have a better chance. And I don't wonder at it, I should feel just the same."

But it was not often Janey shocked and distressed her friend by revelations such as these, which saddened the older woman for a whole day.

For the most part she bore her rebuffs silently and even gaily. Alice had had better fortune, her dainty work finding a market without delay in a shop where it was still in demand, and the sight of her gentle face at the window often consoled and soothed Janey's wounded spirit after a fresh day of disheartenment.

There was in the same house a lodger—an old man who occupied a single room, and whose goings and comings seemed to coincide with Janey's. They met sometimes upon the street, sometimes upon the stairs. He was rather a fierce-looking old man, very tall and very thin, his shabbiness but ill-concealed by the long cloak which he always wore; but though he looked so unapproachable, Janey somehow was not afraid of him.

She fancied that he also must be in search of work, and fruitlessly so too, and the common misfortune seemed to draw them together and make a tie between them. Out of this there gradually rose a sort of friendship which was as yet without a voice. The old man would look at the girl from under his shaggy brows with a kind of grim inquiry in his glance; but she answered what she interpreted as his concern with a slight shake of her black locks.

"No success yet," this little negative movement of the head said as plainly as words could say it, though perhaps Janey's sad looks would have told the story of themselves.

But one day she came bounding blithely up the steps. Where was her languor, where the drawn, dogged look that had begun to settle on her face? It was irradiated, gay, smiling, instead, there was life in her walk.

The old man saw it and stood half aside in his own doorway; but with her gladness Janey found a tongue.

"I've got it!" she said, "I've got it! Oh, I hope it isn't cruel to those other poor things to be so insanely glad!"

She could not wait for his congratulations, she did not even know whether he offered them—she must go at once to Alice with her good tidings.

But when she got into the room and saw that patient face, with eyes of love and yearning turned upon her, her over-strained mood gave way, and she burst out sobbing and crying, her head buried on Allie's lap.

"It's for joy, dear," she said, "it's for joy," she spoke between her sobs. "I've got it, and there's no fear of our starving now. I've been so afraid, so wickedly afraid, for if this had gone on I should have had to leave you and try the country again; but now that is all over and I need not go away."

"You will not forsake me, Janey?"

"Never, never!"

What was this great prize which Janey had secured? It was fifty pounds a year, and for that there were four hours of daily teaching to be given to four pupils who had been neglected. That word neglected implies the need of much patience and sympathy, much skill, much tact on the part of the teacher, so that fifty pounds is not an over-generous salary, though it is quite a big plum in the governessing business. Janey, for instance, had never before had more than twenty, with her board and washing, and there are numbers who will thankfully do the work for even less, and fifty pounds, though there are girls who would scorn it as a dress allowance, goes wonderfully far, as she remarked, when you know how to spend it.

Alice and Janey had now a pound a week to count on, besides what Allie's needle brought in, and their joint savings, which in part were laid aside for a rainy day. There was also the small sum which the late colonel's effects had fetched; but that they both understood was not to be touched, since in their eyes it belonged to somebody else. They were quite in wealth without it; Mrs. Jelly's rooms had at least the merit of being cheap, and two women eat so little. What an undergraduate counts a light breakfast would more than serve them both for a whole day.

And Alice felt that one part at least of the prayer of faith had been answered.

You may be sure she made Janey's success the occasion of a very special thanksgiving, so that even Janey, who had been bitter and distrusting, was moved to confess that God had been very gracious. It is so much easier to believe in divine goodness when heaven smiles upon one and life runs smooth. For the matter of that, it is a great deal easier to believe in one's fellow-men too, and now that her path had been cleared, Janey began to entertain the natural inquisitiveness of youth concerning her neighbours.

While Alice sat and sewed she had time to consider so many things. Plain needle-work is at least good for this—so ladies assert—you can keep your mind quite disengaged from it, and the monotonous, half-unconscious movement of the needle seems almost to help the progress of thought.

Thus when Janey called in the aid of Mrs. Jelly, it was to ask questions to which Alice had found out the answers for herself.

"Who is the old gentleman as lives in the room at the back?" said Mrs. Jelly, repeating the question after a fashion ladies of Mrs. Jelly's order have. "Well, he isn't much, and not for the likes of you to take notice on, Miss Warner, though to be sure he works at the same trade. He's a perfessor of langwidges, they tell me, though how that can be when he can't speak English so that a Christian can make sense of his talk is more than I can make out."

"A professor," cried Janey; "why, I should be honoured by his acquaintance, Mrs. Jelly. That means that he is a very learned person. He wouldn't own me as one of his trade."

"Then I've a poor opinion of learning, if you ask me," said Mrs. Jelly. "It hasn't done much for him; he's been here this ten year come Christmas, and never another rag to his back but that old cloak that he wears, has he had winter or summer, nor a stick of new furniture but what he brought with him, and it fit for nothing but

to kindle the fire, as you would be the first to say yourself, miss."

"The world has always been very cruel to genius, Mrs. Jelly. I'm sure my old man is a genius."

"Well, if you was to ast me, I would say he was a Jew; but I dare say he's anything you like to name. That's always the way with them forriners; you never know where to have them, they're neither flesh nor fowl, nor yet good red-herring."

Janey suppressed a laugh.

"Is he a German?"

"He is a Dane," came a quiet voice from the window.

"Allie!" Janey pounced on her, "you've been stealing a march on me!"

"I only spoke to him once or twice," said Alice with apology. "His spirit lamp was out, and he let me boil his kettle."

"Oh, you've been boiling his kettle, and you've found out that he is a Dane. I don't think I ever knew a Dane except the Princess of Wales, and I don't know her so very well. And what more—or perhaps I should say who more, if you please?"

Then it came out that Alice had taken courage to cross the street and volunteer a visit to a poor old woman there, who sat all day long at the window propped up with cushions, and took her share of the world from that sad retirement.

"She is a great invalid," Alice explained, "or I shouldn't have ventured; and she received me very kindly. She has enough to live on, and a little girl to wait on her—but think what a lonely life it is! all those she cared for gone before her —as lonely as I should have been without you, Janey."

"You would always have had Charlie."

"But she has no Charlie. I suggested that she might grow stronger in the country, but she has lived in this neighbourhood since she was little, she says, and she cannot bear to leave it."

"Ah," cried Janey, "so even the Euston Road has a lover! Does no one go to see her?"

"Very few, I'm afraid; she is one of the desolate people of whom there are so many, but she has one Friend who never fails her."

Then Janey knew that Alice had found a kindred spirit, and that here was another good woman and sweet soul who had faith and love and hope enough to make even her sufferings seem light.

"I think," Alice went on, "we ought to try to make our prosperity a source of happiness to others if we can. It is lent to us to use for God, we ought not to keep it all for self."

Eighty pounds a year—for their whole fortune did not sum more than this—she called prosperity. What would the merchant princes of London say to this? And yet I think she was right, for to be able to work and to earn enough for one's wants, what is prosperity if this is not?

One's wants, of course, may be big or small, and perhaps it isn't to be expected that a very varied or stirring existence could be secured from that income; but happiness, fortunately, does not depend on a big account at one's bankers. These two women kept their desires so well within their income that they were able to save a few shillings every week to spend on others.

"What shall we do with them?" said Janey, counting them out like a miser. "Here they are, five of them; we've paid the rent a week in advance (how Mrs. Jelly loves us for that), we have coals, we have candles, and thanks to your good housekeeping, that joint will serve us till Wednesday. You have got a new cloak, Allie—you wanted it badly, my dear—and I have replaced the boots and gloves I wore out on my tramp, for a governess must be respectably dressed, if she has to starve for it. So here are our five shillings, absolute gain, to do what we like with. I feel as if somebody had left us a fortune."

"What should you like best to do with it, Janey?"

"It is you who ought to decide; but if you ask me, I being of a sociable turn would say, let us invite all our new acquaintances to tea. It will be a comfortable kind of start, and will take the stiff edge off our meetings. You can't get to know people easily if you confine yourself to nodding when you meet on the stair, or filling their tea-kettles for them"—this with a sly glance—"but when once you have taken salt together you have at least blunted the edge of distrust."

"You are thinking of the professor, Janey."

"Yes, and I mean to invite him myself; he was my prey before he became yours. We can't have your friend across the way, but we'll leave the blinds up so that she may look on and feel as if she were with us."

"Anyone else?"

"There's Miss Lemming—another of your conquests."

"Do you think she can spare the time? A servant's dressmaker earns so little, and has to work so hard for that little."

"Then a rest will do her all the good in the world. Dressmakers and all sewing-women—though it won't be allowed in your case—sit far too much; it's a pity they can't sew and walk at the same time. If Miss Lemming is very busy she can bring Mary-Jane's bodice or skirt with her, and I'll give her a help with it, I'm good for that."

"And for a very practical plan too. We shall have our 'at home,' Janey; have you come to the end of the guests?"

"Our acquaintance isn't unlimited yet, Allie, though where it will end in your case I couldn't presume to guess. We shall soon have the whole of the Euston Road on our visiting list, I dare say."

"Only those who need us, dear, or whom we might help in ever so little a way. It is the solitary people I think of chiefly, the old and the lonely. Where there are fathers and mothers and children, or brothers and sisters set in families, we single folk are not wanted, but we may be able to help each other."

"There is Mr. Augustus," said Janey with mischievous eyes; "do you think he comes under your definition? He is old, and he is the only Mr. Augustus in the world, and in that sense he

is solitary, but on the other hand he is Miss Lemming's lodger. Oh," she said, growing grave in a moment, "there is one more I want to ask. It is a governess who comes to the house next mine. I spoke to her in the garden one day, and she is quite lonely enough even for you. She is an orphan, like me."

"We must certainly ask her."

"I don't know her name; but that's a trifle, since I know her history. It was it's likeness to my own that drew me to her, but I am richer than she, because I have an Allie."

She was inclined to pity every one who had not this sweet treasure of friendship, and yet she smiled to think how soon and how surely she should share it with others.

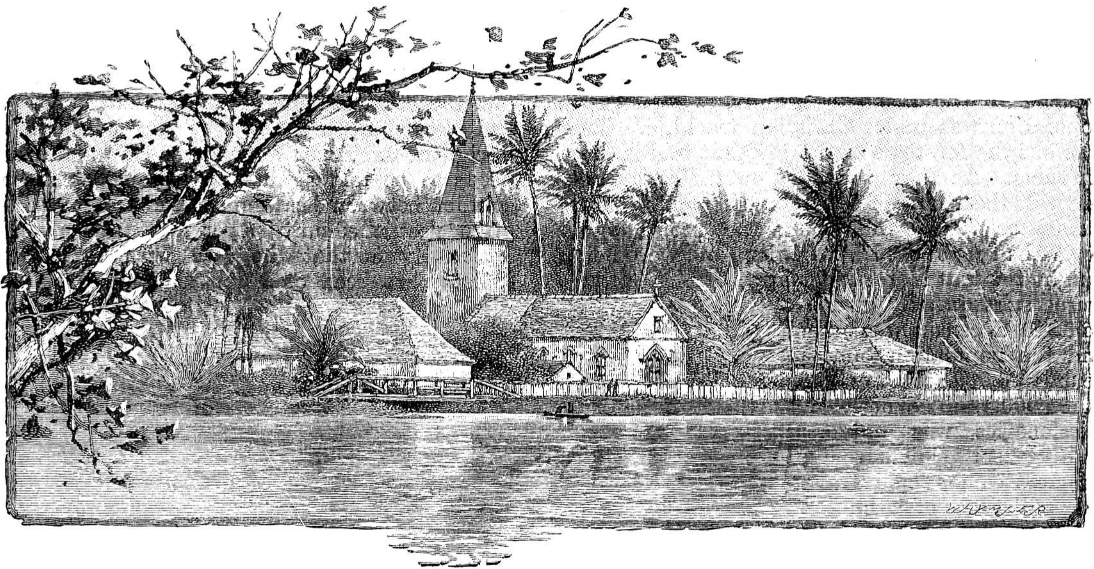
For Allie, who had all her life been given to unobtrusive charities, must needs gather the poor and the forlorn about her wherever she went. She did it so quietly and with so modest and unconscious a tact, that it was always they who seemed to bestow, and she to receive. It was her love that won the way, and indeed there was scarce one who repulsed her rudely, though some there were who did not know how much they lost in shunning her overtures.

But for the most part those who were afflicted in mind, body, or estate, came to her willingly, and where she could not comfort she always sympathised.

Janey was right in thinking that she had secured a treasure in this friend.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF SAMOA.

III.—SAMOA UNDER MISSIONARY PUPILAGE.



APIA.

THE idols were abolished; Gospel teaching of an elementary character had been introduced. "A great door and effectual had been opened, but there were many adversaries." One is thankful to record that the form of opposition just referred to was of short duration. The intrepid, large-hearted John Williams came home to England shortly after that second visit to Samoa, and, by his fervid eloquence and graphic descriptions of the work, evoked such an outburst of missionary enthusiasm as is rarely seen. He was listened to with profound emotion. The missionary spirit rose to a height never known in England before, and, in some respects, never witnessed since. Money from all quarters poured in; volunteers for the work came forward; missions to the South Seas became the rage, and Samoa was one of the earliest gainers by this extraordinary movement. In 1835 six missionaries, with their wives, were appointed to the group; in 1836 they reached their island homes when, without resistance, the religious pretenders gave place to them, and discontinued their grotesque and wicked hypocrisies.

In the spring of 1838 Mr. Williams returned to the Pacific with reinforcements. He sailed in the missionary ship Camden—a vessel which had been obtained by his own pleading and exertions in Great Britain. After calling at the Cape and Sydney, the Camden proceeded to the islands. On arriving in Samoa the party of missionaries were fairly amazed at the complete overthrow

of idolatry which had taken place. Near the landing-place at Leone, in Tutuila, and on the site of the original chapel previously mentioned,

MR. MARRIOTT'S HOUSE AT MALUA.

they found a half-finished house of prayer large enough to hold 1,500 hearers. The entire population was under Christian teaching. That was but the foretaste of the joy that was in store for them. As they proceeded on their way they learned that, out of a supposed population of 60,000 or 70,000 inhabiting the group, about 50,000 had renounced heathenism, and were being taught the truths of Christianity. (These figures were subsequently revised. In 1843 a census was taken, and the population found to be only 33,900; it now stands at 35,000.) The desire for missionaries was universal and intense. Chiefs from all quarters came, some travelling a distance of a hundred miles, some double that distance, all eager to obtain a white teacher to settle in their midst. Inter-tribal jealousies were of course a potent factor in these urgent appeals, but the eagerness was a favourable symptom notwithstanding. Had there been twenty additional labourers at disposal, instead of three, suitable stations could have been found for them. The dejected looks of unsuccessful applicants, we are told, were painful to witness. While the Camden was still there, four large buildings, with accommodation for from twelve to eighteen hundred persons each, were set apart for public worship. On Upolu alone there were eight or ten chapels of that size, besides other smaller ones; and, as an example of the progress made, we may state that the missionary at Manono had under his superintendence a district containing some twelve or fourteen thousand people, scattered in villages along a line of coast seventy miles in length. His brethren had similar districts. In walking from village to village, as they were in the habit of doing, they found their physical strength severely taxed, but their devotion and zeal bore them through all trials, bodily, mental, and spiritual, and their one aim and desire was to do the work to which God had called them.

And let us clearly understand that their difficulties were yet to come. A crisis had occurred in the history of Samoa. A blessed change had taken place. The people who had sat in darkness had seen a great light. They who had lived in sin without knowing or with but the faintest consciousness that it was sin, had started upon a new pathway of purity and uprightness. True; and yet the Christian church needs to be told again and again that the real conflict between heathenism and the new life is often postponed until after nominal conversion. Especially is that the case with those whose idolatry has been of a debased and feeble type.

STUDENTS' HOUSES.

We need not question the perfect sincerity of the converts, even though they subsequently betray much weakness and imperfection. The simple

fact is that time, careful discipline and enlightenment, the cultivation, yea, in some directions, the creation of conscience, the training and development of moral firmness and self-control are all as much required as the honest acceptance of truth; and it is as thoughtless as it is unjust to expect heathen tribes to pass at a bound from the foulness of their former degradation to "the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ." The "fruits of the Spirit," against which "there is no law," will undoubtedly appear, but "the works of the flesh" will likewise make themselves manifest; and as in the individual believer, so too in the nation, the conflict between these antagonistic forces will be continued. Oh! for something of the infinite patience and long-suffering of God, not merely in palliating the blemishes and stains that mar our own Christian character and conduct, but also, and in like degree, in judging those who belong, as we arrogantly term it, to the inferior races. Our faults may not be theirs; theirs not exactly ours. But simple fairness demands that we should look at home before sitting in severe judgment upon them.

To return from this digression. The missionaries' difficulty in Samoa was not in overthrowing idolatry, not in bringing people quickly to see the vast superiority of Christianity to fetichism; not even in making public worship a delight, not in securing the punctilious observance of the Sabbath, but in building them up in Christian knowledge and Christian life, and in helping them to conquer the evil traditions, sentiments, tendencies, and habits which ages of sensuality, indolence, strife, and untruthfulness had engendered.

With much tact, tenderness, and yet with whole-hearted consecration did they give themselves to this task, and for half a century they have continued their efforts. The six brethren despatched in 1835 were reinforced by three more in 1838, one of whom was a printer, and another a normal schoolmaster. In a tropical mission station changes in the staff are frequent, and many who are sent out are compelled, from failure of health and similar causes, to retire from the field. Since the London Missionary Society commenced operations in Samoa it has sent out nearly forty different missionaries and as many wives. To select names from such a roll-call is somewhat invidious, but those of Murray, Pratt, Drummond, Turner, Nisbet, and Powell certainly deserve special mention, as men who, by long-continued service and marked ability, contributed largely to the shaping and to the success of the work. Once firmly established, the mission was carried on in a systematic manner. The islands were divided into districts. Dwelling-houses were erected in suitable centres, and the work of superintending the native congregations carried on with as much regularity and orderly method as possible. Making allowance for breakdowns, the effective staff usually numbered from ten to twelve, though it has reached fourteen. By methodical superintendence of their districts, by constant teaching and preaching, by efforts to influence for good both the young and those of riper years, the Samoan missionaries faithfully strove to mould the islanders into a vigorous and intelligent Christian community.

In two directions they made special efforts. The first was in providing their converts with an accurate yet idiomatic version of the Word of God. As soon as a sufficient knowledge of the vernacular had been acquired, it was reduced to writing by means of the Roman alphabet. Primers and other lesson-books, a grammar and dictionary, were prepared and printed. Then, with as little delay as possible, the onerous task of translating the Scriptures was undertaken. A beginning was made with the New Testament. Book by book this was translated and issued to the Samoans, who from the very first were trained to purchase the Scriptures with their own money. The New Testament completed, the Psalms followed, and at various intervals, the remaining books of the Old Testament, until the Book of books was finished. Since then, from time to time, that early translation has been assiduously revised and perfected, until at length an edition has been secured which possesses the full confidence of those best fitted to appraise its correctness and has been stereotyped. Furnished with marginal readings, bound in calf, and ornamented with gilt edges, the Samoan Bible is an object of pride to both missionaries and natives. Some twenty other books—commentaries and educational manuals—are also in the hands of the people, besides a large number of pamphlets and tracts.

Another similarly energetic and successful effort was made in training native preachers and teachers. Young Tahitians, as previously narrated, were the first to labour in Samoa, and prior to the settlement of English missionaries, had gathered large congregations together. Nor did the Samoans themselves lose much time in exercising their national gifts. As a race, they were fond of talking; and whether properly equipped for the office of a preacher or not, were quite ready to undertake it. The missionaries gladly recognised the power, but as prudent men saw that this must be controlled and guided. Two hundred villages looked to them for instruction, and the plan they adopted was to select a preacher and teacher from their most intelligent church members and appoint him to the charge of one of these villages. The missionary kept his eye on the preachers, had classes with them, gave them their instructions, and supervised their work. Even the sermons the men preached were to a large extent furnished by the missionary of the district.

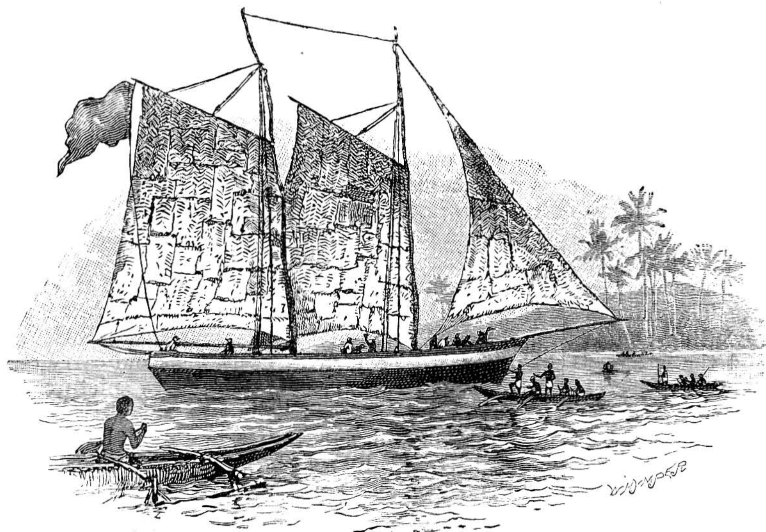
But something of a more permanent and more efficient character was soon felt to be necessary, and in 1844, the Revs. Chas. Hardie, and George Turner, were selected to establish and carry on a missionary seminary at Malua, a picturesque spot in the island of Upolu. In 1855, Mr. Hardie retired from mission service, and first Mr. Murray, then Mr. Stallworthy, and subsequently Mr. Nisbet were associated with Mr. (now Dr.) Turner. The latter maintained an unbroken connection with the Seminary until 1882, when he withdrew from active labour in the field, and

its prosperity is largely due to his unwearying devotion and toil. Malua in its early days was an imposing settlement. How much more so now! It consists of an estate of three hundred acres, on which there are twenty-two stone cottages arranged like houses in a barrack square, also five-and-twenty other cottages, two stone houses for the tutors, and a class-room sixty feet by thirty feet. The surrounding land is cultivated by the students, who usually number a hundred, and the institution thus made self-supporting. By setting apart one day in the week as an "industrial day," the cottages have been built by the students themselves; they are kept in repair, all necessary furniture is made, food for the entire settlement is cultivated, and the property, which has become very valuable, maintained in good order and condition. Many of the students are married, and have their wives with them. A four years' course of instruction is given, and an average of twenty students per annum are sent forth to fill the vacancies in the Samoan pastorate and mission stations, caused by death, infirmity, and old age. Besides the students proper, there is a kind of high-school for youths, which serves as a feeder to the Seminary. Many of the pupils subsequently become students, in which case, they are eight years under tuition.

This Malua institution, so admirably arranged, and so ably conducted, has proved a great blessing alike to the group and to distant islands. The general results achieved were summarised by Dr. Turner at the Missionary Conference, held in London last June, in these words:—

"Of these students of former days, many are dead, a number have retired from active service, some have become local governors, magistrates, secretaries, or are otherwise in official or commercial service, and upwards of two hundred are now ordained native pastors. We call them Pastors, and not Reverends, and so distinguish them from the European Missionary. These Samoan pastors preach, and manage church affairs, they have boarding and general schools, and are supported by the people in the villages where they labour. They have the oversight of six thousand church members, and congregations, embracing over twenty-five thousand, all in Samoa. In the sixteen out-station islands, from two hundred to two thousand miles to the north-west of Samoa" (the Ellice, Tokelau and Gilbert groups), "our native pastors have the care of two thousand five hundred church members, and of a population exceeding ten thousand; and farther still, while the better qualified and ordained native agency has increased, our European staff of missionaries has decreased from fourteen to seven; and the time may not be far distant when little more European help may be needed for the group and its out-stations, beyond a well-sustained institution at Malua. And thus we think, that the problem has, there at least, been fairly solved, of a self-supporting educational institution."

But mission work in Samoa is not exclusively in the hands of the London Missionary Society. The Wesleyans have agents there, and the Roman Catholics are present in strong force—Marist fathers and a staff of Sisters. Wesleyan native teachers from the island of Tonga found their way to Samoa when it was first emerging from heathen darkness, and in response to the appeals of these Tongan teachers English missionaries of the same faith and order were appointed to join them. After a time, however, they retired, leaving the group to the London Society. But when the Australasian Conference became an independent organisation, other counsels prevailed, and missionaries were once more sent out, and they are there to this day, working on similar lines to those of the other Protestant Society. The superintendence of churches and schools is carried on with vigour, and in the District Training Institution there are about forty students training for the ministry. The Marists entered the field in 1845. They have erected numerous handsome churches, conspicuous among them the church at Apia, have established schools, convents, and a college. A large number of girls have received an excellent education in the convent school at Apia, and several have taken the vows and been admitted to the Sisterhood.



THE MESSENGER OF PEACE.

Sometimes the Roman Catholic and Protestant chapels are seen side by side. This is the case in Leone. The Roman Catholic church is after the European model. Its white spire rises from the centre of the town, and is a landmark visible at a great distance. Close beside it stands a large London Missionary Society chapel, built on the model of a native house, the only difference being that, instead of posts and cocoa-nut blinds for walls, you see stone and mortar. In "My Consulate in Samoa," Mr. Churchward describes at con-

siderable length an imposing Romanist function which he had witnessed, and expresses his astonishment, that with all that splendid parade, so dear to the hearts of the natives and so continually before them, the entire group does not become Roman Catholic. And yet, as he adds, they do not. The Romanists number but one-fifth of the population, he says, and do not increase. Is the reason so far to seek after all? Whatever the weaknesses of Samoan Christianity may be, its deficiencies are certainly not in the direction of ignorance of the Bible; and when, we should like to know, have a people who were rooted and grounded in the Scriptures ever turned from the open Bible to embrace the ceremonies and forms of Romanism?

About 5000 Samoans are under the care of the Wesleyans, a similar number under that of the Romanists, the remaining 25,000 under the London Missionary Society. It is computed that, since the mission was founded, upwards of six thousand have died believing in Christ. An equal number are earnestly following after Christ to-day. There are day-schools with 4289 boys and 3590 girls in attendance, Sunday-schools with an aggregate of 6583 scholars. Prayer-meetings and Bible classes are constantly held. It is said that you could hardly find one house in twenty in which there is not a copy of the Word of God, and in which family worship is not conducted every day of the week; and Mr. Albert Spicer, the Treasurer of the London Missionary Society, who recently visited Samoa as one of a special deputation, tells us that the young people of those islands are better acquainted with the Bible than the average scholar in an English Sunday-school. Finally the Samoan Christians generously contribute to the maintenance of their own church organisations, and also raise a sum of above £1200 a year as contributions to the Missionary Society. In contemplating such fruits of toil there is abundant reason for thanksgiving and good cheer. "What hath God wrought!" are the words that fly to one's thoughts.

LESSONS OF A LUNAR ECLIPSE.

BY THE REV. NEWMAN HALL, LL.B.

IN a clear sky, the full moon in all her brightness was calmly moving in her orbit, with nothing to indicate her approach to the invisible shadow of the earth. Suddenly it seemed as if a thin cloud was creeping over her eastward disc. This gradually spread till the whole surface was overshadowed. Then a distinctly marked dark segment was seen cutting off a small portion of the eastern circumference of the moon, over which it slowly traversed, till the whole was darkened. Yet the moon, though nearly obscured, might yet be seen of a very dark copper-colour. After the lapse of more than an hour the penumbral appearances returned, in reverse order, and then a thin crescent of light appeared, where the first obscuring of shadow had been seen. The moon now appeared as new in the first quarter, gradually increasing to the half moon, until the full moon returned in her former beauty. Every month the moon "withdraws herself;" but on this one night she went through all the changes of the month, withdrawing gradually into total eclipse, and then re-appearing. In describing the glories of the latter day, the inspired Prophet says, "The moon shall not withdraw itself."

The eclipse proclaimed God the Creator. It was accurately anticipated by astronomers. At the very moment calculated, the first and the last contact with the earth's shadow took place. Formerly an eclipse was regarded with terror. Superstition attributed it to fate or accident, or as a proof of the anger of the gods. Physical Science has superseded such fears. The great laws of the universe are supposed to account for all such phenomena. We talk glibly of propulsion and attraction, of centripetal and centrifugal forces, of Kepler's great discovery; that the power of gravitation varies inversely with the square of the distance, &c.; but mere laws cannot work. The laws of England imply the makers and the executors of law. The laws of the universe imply a Creator and a Ruler. Physical laws are only His methods of operation. At the back of all facts and theories of science is the ultimate fact set forth in the first four grand words of the Bible "In the beginning, GOD." If the commencement of the creation of the stars was a nebula, still "In the beginning, GOD." A watch which was moved every instant by its contriver would not more prove his agency than if he so constructed it that being once wound up it would keep time, for twenty-four hours, or days, or years, or centuries. Who gave the moon its first propulsion and direction? Have ye not known who it is that "sitteth on the circle of the earth, that by His Spirit garnished the heavens," and "sealeth up the stars?"

The eclipse illustrated utility. The Creator placed the stars in the heavens "for signs." Travellers on the great ocean cannot tell where they are by any land-marks; but they can look up to the heavens as to a clock or a map. By the elevation of these "signs" above the horizon they calculate the latitude; and by the difference between local and solar time, their longitude. As the sun's daily apparent journey of 360° round the earth occupies twenty-four hours, in one hour he travels 15° or about 900 miles. If I could

travel eastward with the sun, 900 miles in twenty-four hours, it would be noon with me at eleven o'ctock. If then, I found the sun on the meridian, when my watch stood at eleven o'clock, I should know I was 900 miles east of London. But suppose my watch did not keep true time? After some months at sea, it might lose or gain, and my reckoning being false, I might suffer shipwreck. Suppose I could be told by telegraph, the exact time at Greenwich? No wire can tell me; but the eclipse can. In the almanack the exact moment of the eclipse is given. I can thus set my watch right, and be preserved from perilous mistakes in navigation. There are greater dangers to be avoided. In the journey of the soul we are liable to be deceived and suffer shipwreck of conscience. Some say, "I can trust to my sense of right, my consciousness, my moral chronometer." But the Bible says: "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool." We are all liable to make mistakes. It is well to compare our own supposed time with that of heaven. Let us look up to the "bright and morning star," even Jesus. Not to earth-born meteors, not to the world's opinion, or even the sayings and example of professing Christians as if they were infallible; but let us look up to Christ Himself; His teaching and example, His cross, His throne; and comparing our course with His truth, we shall best correct our errors, and secure a safe voyage.

The eclipse gave a warning lesson. The heavenly bodies are obedient to their Creator's will. Man is gifted with volition. Thus God made man in His own image. Man is able to stand forth in the sight of the obedient moon and stars and say to the Creator "No!" Every deliberate sin is saying to God "I will not." If the moon could do this and break away from its orbit, destruction would follow. And so if we wilfully break away from God. Before the moon was eclipsed there was no sign of the shadow into which it was inevitably moving and then was plunged. So it was with the antediluvians; so with Sodom; so with all sinners. They say "Where is the promise of His coming? all things continue as they were." But as sure as that eclipse, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Let us keep in the light by faith and obedience; and avoid whatever would hide from us the Sun of Righteousness; so shall we be safe from any fatal eclipse.

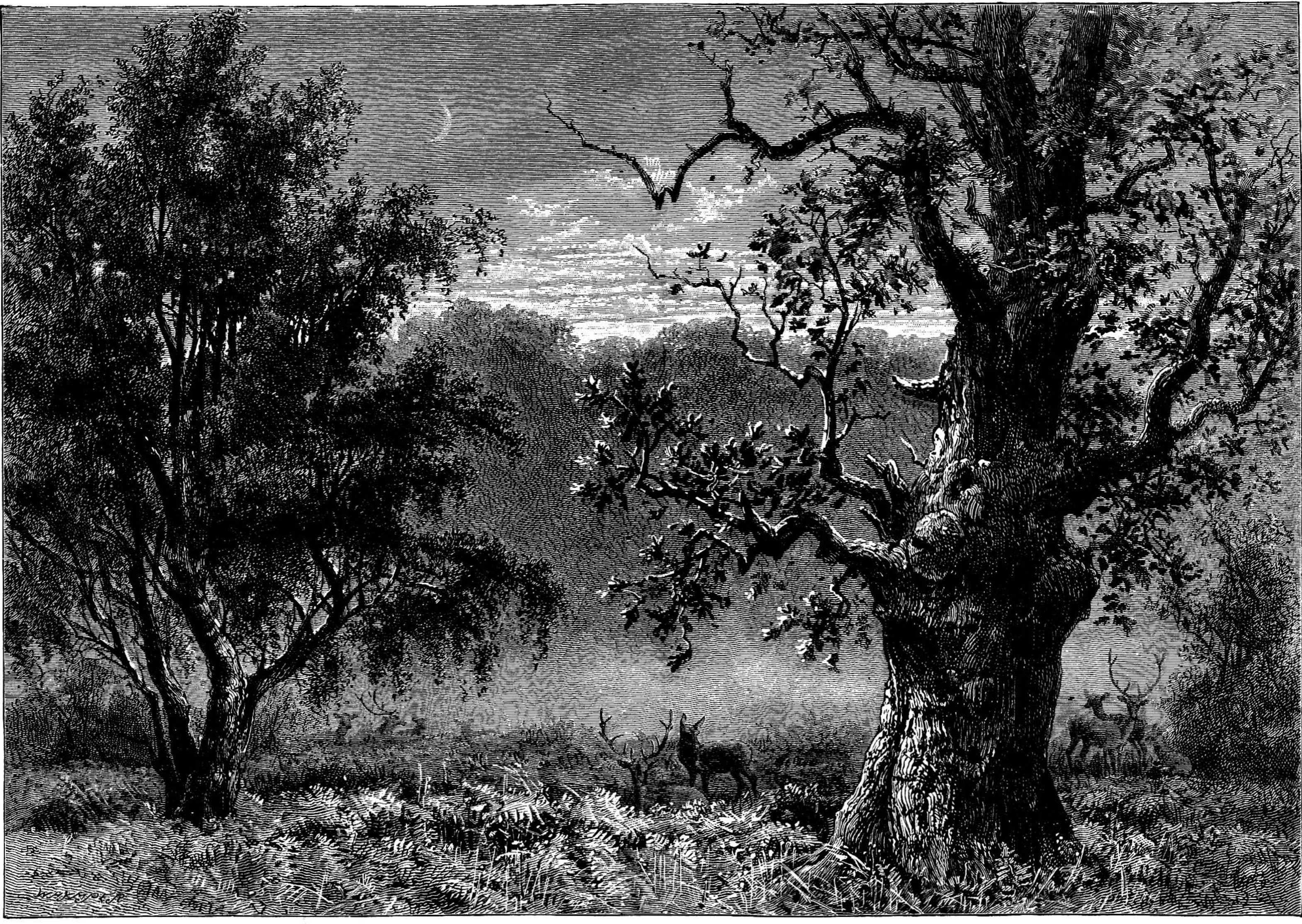
There were also lessons of consolation. The eclipsing shadow was entirely from the earth. So our sorrows arise from our present life. The physical conditions of humanity involve death, disease, decay. Our spiritual welfare necessitates discipline. We are taught not to think it strange that we should suffer. Afflictions are "common to men." But like the shadow that eclipsed the moon, they belong only to the earth, not to the sun. They may occur in the midst of prosperity as the eclipse to the moon in its full brightness. Sickness, poverty, bereavement, death, may darken our life suddenly. Let us always be prepared by trust in our Father: yet let us not be over-clouded with fear, but go forward day by day rejoicing in present sunshine, sure that whenever it may be darkened, our Father will overrule for good every eclipse. We are not to anticipate sorrows. Ignorance of the future is a great blessing. How over-clouded would many a long life be if every calamity were seen beforehand, and if we felt that every hour was bringing us nearer to eclipse!

> Heaven from all creatures hides the book of Fate,
> All but the page prescribed, our present state:
> O blindness to the future, kindly given
> That each may fill the circle marked by heaven.

Our joy is that every eclipse is ordained and regulated and overruled for our good. As the lunar eclipse was under the law of the Creator, so our trials are not accidents, but according to the purpose of God: not governed by physical unfeeling powers, but by our Father, whose love is never more active than when His children are "in heaviness through manifold afflictions." The sun was still shining all through the eclipse, though the earth hid the light; so in every soul, in our darkest seasons, God's love is still shining. Even in the totality of the eclipse some solar rays reached the moon, owing to refraction by the earth's atmosphere, so that the moon was still visible. So in the trials of the believer, God's light is never totally absent. When He who shared our sorrows exclaimed during His eclipse, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me"?—there was the light which cheered Him to say, "My God! My God!" But often the times of darkest eclipse are seasons of brightest sunshine; eclipse of earthly joy, brightness of Divine consolation; as "sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as dying and behold we live;" for "though our outward man perisheth, our inner man is renewed day by day."

Another consolation is that the eclipse does not last long. The two or three hours of the moon's obscuration are short compared with the years which will elapse before another eclipse occurs. Most people will confess that their days of sickness all put together are brief compared with the months of health. And in cases where the whole of this life is darkened by sorrow, comparing the present with the future life, how brief is the season of shadow compared with that of unfading brightness! "These light afflictions which are but for a moment," are brief compared with the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The eclipse did not injure the moon, which emerged, without any mark of the shadow, bright and full as before. God's children are not only unhurt, unstained by trial, but purified and brightened. They come forth from the eclipse like gold from the furnace that separates the dross. And the final eclipse which we call death will usher in the final and perfect glory of heaven. We sometimes think of death as lasting long as the grave. Not so. It is obscuration, not from the light of heaven, but only from the view of earth. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord;" for ever in the full glory of the sun shining in all his radiance beyond the reach of any shadow cast by this world; when "the sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself."



EVENING IN RICHMOND PARK.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER IX.

ARNAUD'S first care was to gather up the scattered threads of the Vaudois powers, and to unite them, as far as might be, into one cord—a cord which should be firm enough to hold out against the sharp tension that must come.

He had himself been to Holland to confer with William of Orange, the hope of the Protestant world. To him he had unfolded the Waldensees' darling project, a project that seemed wild and hopeless enough when put into words. But Dutch William's soldierly heart warmed as he listened, and for once he threw his diplomatic caution to the winds, as he said: "Try it, and may God prosper you! If events that I foresee come straightly off the reel, I may be presently in a position to give you aid, a better position than I have now. Go on! trust in yourselves, and trust in God!"

Arnaud recalled those concluding words many and many a time in the months that followed. It would not be timorous and divided hearts that would win the end they held in view; it must be brotherly trust in one another, devoted trust in their fathers' God, that alone could lift them on victoriously.

It was on the 16th of August, 1689, that the rendezvous was fixed on the wooded shores of the upper lake.

The summer foliage was thick upon the forest, dense enough to hide the bands of men who came trooping there from all parts of Switzerland. They had to avoid the eyes not only of enemies but of friends; the magistrates of Chillon and Aigle and Nyon were all on the watch to stop the passage of the Vaudois as they had stopped the former attempt; but so quietly did they gather, so carefully did they keep their counsel, that the deep woods sheltered more than nine hundred men before the sun went down that day, and that without any suspicion having been excited amongst the Swiss.

Nine hundred men; a small army to attempt the conquest of the valleys, where the soldiers of Savoy were holding the passes, the bridges, and the forts. Undisciplined and ill-armed they were, without stores, or means of transport, and without money. Well they knew the dangers that were before them, the privations and fatigues, the scorching heat of the low-lying lands, the bitter snows of the mountains; but in all that crowd of resolute men there was not one who quailed or shrank.

"Father," said Gaspard, standing by the old man's side and watching the rugged face wistfully as he spoke, "Father, wilt thou not abide here and let me strike thy blow as well as mine own? This arm is surely strong enough; and the thought of thee here, and my mother and Rénée yonder will nerve it to double strength. Can it not be so? Wilt thou not return in peace to Geneva?"

Henri Botta shook his head; his words were few at any time, fewest when deeply moved.

"Nay," he said, "the sons of the Vaudois are but a remnant now, each hand must do its best. Our cause is just. As Israel of old seized sword and buckler to keep hold of the land the Lord had given, so we will fight for the land where our fathers held high the standard of the truth which is in Christ Jesus, the land which is our rightful heritage."

Gaspard would have urged his point yet further, but the old man would not hear; and in his heart the son knew how impossible it was that Henri should stay at Geneva, feebly trying in loneliness and longing-heartedness to accomplish the task that should earn his daily sustenance. The worn-out body would flag, and utterly fail if he were left behind while the rest marched out to regain, if so it might be, their fatherland.

And yet, worn and aged as he was, how was he to battle through the dangers that lay before Arnaud and his band?

The sun set; the sweet summer night was silent and serene; the water lapped the flowering rushes and broke in ripples against the rocky shore; a star or two shone in the gleaming sky, and beyond the far horizon-line the shimmer of moon-light was creeping up the east.

The men stood in groups among the trees, strange thoughts thronging about their hearts—a solemn sense of present peril, and eager longings to take the first step of their great enterprise; but they stood quietly for the most part. Such times as these are not times for talk, and the trouble-trained Vaudois had learned to possess their souls in silence.

It was two hours from midnight; presently a voice broke over the stillness—it was the leader, Arnaud, and his words were words of prayer.

Kneeling there in the shadow of the trees, his eyes lifted to that growing eastern radiance, he poured out his pleadings—he asked for Divine help where other help was small and scant; for Divine guidance where a guiding hand would be so sorely needed; for Divine strength to fill the failing hands and brace the feeble knees. "Thou hast helped our fathers throughout the long ages, O God of our Hope! help us still according to Thine ancient promises. Be favourable to the simple and the needy, and preserve the souls of the poor; that our tongues may talk of Thy righteousness, and the mountains bring peace to Thy people."

Gaspard heard the deep tones of his father's "Amen." The old man's face showed sharp against the gleam of the sky, and upon it was a look that silenced Gaspard's fears. Henri Botta was asking for the strength that is greater than all human powers, the strength that is never denied. One sharp pang shot through Gaspard's heart, and then the bitterness of his anxiety was gone for ever. Failure, death itself might be before them; but he felt, he knew, that God would care for His aged servant, and lift him safely

to the shores of that Country where the nations shall be healed.

Across the still stretches of the Geneva water, over the sleeping lake into the shadow of the further shores; then, landing on the Savoy side, and marshalling their ranks in such brave battle-front as they could show, these nine hundred men began their march.

Their historian[1] says: "They were a small company to attack Savoy—a company, on the other hand, far too numerous for the slender means of sustenance to be found in the by-places through which they intended to go; an untrained assemblage formed of persons of every age, hardened it is true by toil, but yet strangers to military discipline and manœuvres. What would become of them as they pressed on, forcing their way against an armed resistance, through inhospitable tracts and deep defiles, by the sides of precipices, and over rocks crowned with eternal snow? Now alone on the strand of the lake they have just crossed, they tread on the soil they are about to bathe with their sweat and their blood. No illusion deceives them; the hard reality with its dangers and privations is before their eyes, stern as the truth. But no one draws back. The prize of the conflict seems to them worthy of the highest sacrifices; it is a terrestial home, to the recollection of which they have attached their faith and hope of salvation in Christ Jesus. In setting out, sword in hand, to reconquer it their hearts are at ease, for their cause is just. . . . They desire to remain under the observation of God the righteous judge, and beneath His holy protection. They hope to repeat on their march, and in every encounter 'Jehovah is our Banner.'"

* * * * *

The blessed summer-time brought beauty once more to the Valleys. The flowers shone again in the deserted gardens, and the garlanded leaves of vines hid the breaches in the shattered walls of Rora.

Madeleine Botta came of sturdy mountain race, and her vigour came again to her with the throbbing, teeming life of the summer world. It was Rénée now whose strength flagged, Rénée whose eyes were lustreless, and whose footsteps were slow.

The months, long weary months, had told on her courage, and broken her spirit; it was in the spring of 1687 when the thunderbolt of desolation had fallen on her home, when the house-master and Emile and her own Gaspard had gone out to keep the barricades. It was high summer-time when Gaspard had crept away from their cave shelter, and she had dashed the tears from her eyes that her vision might hold him, clear and unbedimmed until he had turned that sharp angle of rock where the broken bridge lay damming up the stream. It was again the summer when Madeleine lay so nigh to death, and she in lowliness and sore distress fought with the fever that threatened to rob her of her "mother."

And now again it was summer time. Was the brightness but empty mockery? Was the sunshine to gladden all the world save the homes of the Vaudois, and the heart of Rénée Janavel?

Madeleine watched her in silence. She knew something, and guessed more of this heart-sickness that weighed upon the girl's elastic nature until her Rénée seemed as limp and nerveless as one of the unpropped vines in yonder ravaged valley. She did not sympathise nor seek by word of counsel to probe or heal the hurt. She waited with the trustful patience that was part of her character until her spoken sympathy could be followed out by help.

Some semblance of peace had come to the country-side; the professors of the "new religion" had been driven out with sword and with fire: and there needs be cessation of persecution when none are left to be persecuted. Even such refugees and stragglers as had hidden in the mountains had mostly perished or been seized ere this, and even the priests and preaching friars were content with their finished work, and let their energy in heretic-hunting slacken down.

Madeleine and Rénée ventured occasionally into the empty villages, and walked abroad upon the upper slopes, even by daylight. There were some cottagers dwelling on the foot-road to Casiana, who, although Romanists, were as friendly as they dared to be; and from them Madeleine now and then heard stray scraps of intelligence; she had been kind to them in years gone by, and even the fury of the death-decrees that had desolated the Valleys had not quite extinguished their memories of gratitude.

Indeed, during the last winter they had given more than kind words—many a great cake of black-bread, many a bag of chestnuts and handful of barley-meal had found its way to the refuge on the cliff; and when the two women had expostulated they would be told that it was but part of the produce of their own lands, which had been divided amongst the Catholics by the duke. "And," the kindly words would finish with, "and if you are so very particular Henri and Gaspard shall pay us for all when they come back again."

But Rénée shuddered when she heard that: she had hoped for long and long, but now her hope was dead. Neither the house-master nor Gaspard would ever come back!—so she believed in her dreary despair.

In the long June days Madeleine heard news which made her decide on trying to light again the dead hope in Rénée's heart. Some rumours of what was happening in the great centres of life, in Paris, and Vienna, and Turin, penetrated as far as Lucerna, and echoes reached the friendly cottage on the Casiana road, and finally were heard by Madeleine.

Savoy was stripped of troops; the duke had need of all his soldiers in Piedmont; the King of France was fighting with the emperor and the Dutch; and the Vaudois were massed in the cantons of Switzerland, looking with longing eyes at the hill-ranges of their native land.

"Child," said Madeleine, "once, long months ago, you spoke of creeping away to the Swiss country, to live in security where God has granted freedom to serve Him unchidden. Do you remember, dear? and how I felt I could not face the weary journey, nor bear to see you go alone? And——"

"Mother!"—the interruption came with a flash of the girl's old spirit—"mother! would it be possible for me to have left you?"

"Dear child! but there is now no question of leaving me—we will go together, Rénée; and it may be we shall find our dear ones yonder; and God's sun shall shine upon my eventide, in those blessed lands where there is yet the daylight of His truth."

[1] Antoine Monastier.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. IX.—P. 270.—EBENEZER.—1 Sam. vii. 12.

E-lisha	2 Kings xiii. 16.
B-ildad	Job xxv. 5.
E-lijah	1 Kings xviii. 36.
N-athan	2 Sam. xii. 7.
E-liezer	Gen. xv. 2; xxiv. 39.
Z-eresh	Esther v. 14.
E-liphaz	Job xxii. 1, 9.
R-ebekah	Gen. xxvii. 11-13.