THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER XIII.—"UNTO THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN."

HE TURNED THE PAGES WITH A CERTAINTY THAT BESPOKE FAMILIAR ACQUAINTANCE.

AFTER this little episode Janey, though still surprised, was less startled than she would have been earlier in the evening when Alice asked Mr. Augustus before they separated to read a few verses and offer up a prayer.

She glanced at Alice in some wonder. Mr. Augustus might have a kind of prim benevolence, even towards gutter children, and a touch of what he would himself call "our common humanity" lurking behind his starched front, and yet have

no "religion" as Alice understood it. Janey had been used to place many things on, at least, as high a level as the fear of God and the doing of His will, but Alice had a different standard. Would Mr. Augustus meet it?

She looked at him, half hoping he would refuse, but he consented at once, and Janey rose and fetched the large Bible, out of which Alice read nightly, and placed it before him. He drew a pair of spectacles from his pocket and slowly adjusted them. Though his movements were deliberate, he turned the pages with a certainty that bespoke familiar acquaintance with them. The book was no unpathed wilderness to him. Janey noticed all this wonderingly, though indeed Miss Lemming's folded hands and air of calm expectancy might have enlightened her.

He chose that passage in the New Testament that describes the marriage feast in Cana—that feast which has set the Divine seal and consecration on all wholesome pleasure while the world lasts. The opening act of our Lord's public life on earth was to ennoble with His presence a marriage rejoicing; is there not in this a rebuke for the rigid asceticism that frowns on happiness and gaiety, and innocent jests, and the mirth of little children, and would have all the world turn monks and nuns?

Janey guessed dimly at the purpose that underlay his choice, but she wondered more when Mr. Augustus closed the book and knelt to pray. For now, as if he felt the nearness of the great Presence, he lost that artificial note to which he set his talk, and became simple and direct as a child. Just as some men of stammering speech grow eloquent in prayer, so Mr. Augustus grew natural; he forgot himself and remembered only the need he was pleading. And Janey forgot him too. The candles were lighted and the blinds drawn up, and over the way another light burned in answer, and another heart, no doubt, went up with them in that inarticulate cry that is the voice of our common longing.

Then when they had risen from their knees a strange thing happened, for Mary Grainger did not move, and Janey stooping over her in some alarm found her in a dead faint.

For a minute or two there was a great bustle and confusion; Miss Lemming flew to her reticule for smelling salts, and called for burnt feathers and other time-honoured remedies. Alice was terribly agitated and quite useless. Mrs. Jones, who appeared at sound of this clamour, was equally infertile of resource, and added her outcry to the general confusion; and though Janey did her best, she had never fainted in her life and scarcely knew how to meet the emergency. Mr. Augustus, after a bewildered pause in which he appeared to be galvanised, while the women fluttered helplessly round him, suddenly woke and bolted off for the doctor.

He came back after what was really a very short interval, though the time looked interminable to the agitated watchers who could not conquer the death-like swoon. Mr. Augustus ushered the doctor up the dark stair, but remained himself modestly on the outer mat. The old foreigner, drawn forth by this unusual bustle, politely invited him to pass the time in his apartment, and Mr. Augustus with an equal politeness declined the invitation. To see the pair must have been something of a comedy, two royal personages could scarce have been more ceremonious.

The doctor who entered as one to whom all doors are open, was a young man, carelessly dressed; but with a resolute, rather hard face, and keen bright eyes that took in the room and its occupants at a glance. He carried the sick girl into the bedroom and laid her on the bed, and then he ordered the frightened women to remove themselves.

"The least incapable may stay, but the others must go," he said, sarcastically leaving the choice to them. "We want air, and you are using it up."

"You had better keep me," said Janey, a trifle defiantly, "that is, I mean to stay. I can be of use."

He looked at her a little more discriminatively and a half smile crossed his lips.

"Then open the window and bring me some water," he said.

Janey obeyed him silently, and under his care the girl presently revived, the death-like hue left her cheek, and a faint colour stole back to it. She opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she asked feebly, trying to rise.

"Lie still," said the doctor, "you are very comfortable where you are."

Mary looked up at him with wide frightened eyes, and Janey stepped between.

"You are here, Mary," she said, stooping down over the pillow, "safe with Alice and me, lie still and rest. Alice is getting you some tea."

Mary seemed too weak for wonder, she accepted the explanation silently, and the tired lids drooped over her eyes.

"Tea?" said the doctor, as he followed Janey out of the room, "that's what you women always fly to; it's your one idea, your cure for all the evils Pandora let loose."

Alice, who had been struggling with the decaying fire and had only just coaxed the kettle into a premonitory hum, turned round on him a flushed but gentle face. "If there is anything else, sir, that would be better," she said, "please name it, and we shall get it. We have no wine in the house, but it can be got very near at hand."

The doctor's glance took in the remnant of the little feast still spread upon the board—the room with its brave air of straitness lightly borne, the young girl's dark, angry face and the older woman's patient dignity. Very likely his experience of life, which had been tolerably varied, helped him easily enough to diagnose the case.

"Poor and genteel and proud," he said to himself, but his voice perceptibly softened when he answered Alice.

"I shall be passing a shop on my way back," he said, "and I'll send in some extract of beef. You must give her very little at a time, but as often as she can take it."

"Can you tell us the nature of her illness, sir? it has alarmed us much," Alice asked him.

"That's not difficult to do," he said brusquely, "you allow the girl to starve herself and then you wonder that she faints—and now you will probably do your best to kill her by overfeeding."

Janey, who had with difficulty restrained herself hitherto, now gave the rein to her anger.

"You shall not talk to Alice so," she cried, "as if she were to blame. Alice never saw the girl till to-night; she knows nothing at all about her, but I do. She is a governess, a poor daily governess, like me; I dare say you know how handsomely daily governesses are paid, and how constantly they are in work, and so, of course, if she had too little to eat, it must have been because she liked it. Oh, it was a mere whim, be sure; some women think it so interesting to fast."

Janey's breast was heaving and her dark eyes flashing, but when Alice went to her and laid a hand on her shoulder she checked herself and hung her head.

"We do not know Miss Grainger's circumstances, but we know that she is ill and in need of our care," she said quietly; "of course, she remains here, and we will do our very best to make her well again."

The doctor's lips, which had curled into an amused smile while Janey hurled her bolts at him, grew grave again.

"She is very fortunate to have such friends," he said; "I dare say we shall soon pull her through, but she mustn't play such pranks with her constitution again; she hasn't the stamina to stand it."

He proceeded to give Alice a few simple directions, and promising to look in next day took his leave.

He found Janey, who had left the room while he was instructing Alice, standing at the open door leading to the street. She had her hat on, and she carried a little basket on her arm.

"Miss Warner," said the doctor (he had learned her name from Mr. Augustus), "I always think it a foolish waste of material when two people do the work of one. The road to my house leads me past the shop of the grocer who sells the only brand of beef-tea I can recommend."

"I am not going to the grocer's," said Janey promptly, and still with offence, "and we will not trouble you to get the beef-tea, for Mr. Augustus and Miss Lemming have already gone to fetch all we want. That is the beauty of living in an ungenteel neighbourhood, you can shop quite easily up till midnight."

"But even in an ungenteel quarter young ladies can't go prowling in the streets alone at midnight without some risk to themselves."

"Oh," said Janey, with uplifted brows and a feigned air of surprise, "I should scarcely have thought you would concern yourself about such a trifle as the possibility of a woman being insulted or rudely spoken to. We do not need to cross our own thresholds in order to meet with incivility from people who call themselves gentlemen."

The doctor laughed with perfectly frank good temper.

"Miss Warner," he said, "I humbly beg your pardon. I behaved like a brute, but the fact is, I meet hereabouts with such an awful lot of feminine incapacity that I've lost the power of discriminating; will you forgive me?"

"Not if you confuse Miss Lindsell with your other incapable females. You may think of me as you choose," said Janey, superbly, "but you shall respect her."

"Very well," said the doctor, still with the smile that made him look so young and boyish; "on that understanding, will you tell me where you are going?"

"Yes, I am going to Mary Grainger's lodging to explain that she is ill and cannot come back to-night."

"Wouldn't that keep till to-morrow?"

"To-morrow would be too late. The world of lodging-house keepers is not much more discriminating than the world of doctors confesses itself to be—at least where governesses are in question."

"Then may I walk with you?"

"No, thank you," said Janie a little coldly, "Mr. Augustus Steel is going with me when he comes back."

"Then I'll say goodnight," said the doctor turning off rather abruptly and walking very fast.

Janie looked after him with all sorts of emotions surging up and down in her. The girl's heart was hot and sore: she was always frank and outspoken, but one moment she accused herself of being overbold in thus rebuking a perfect stranger; the next she cried out that it was good for him that someone snubbed his over-weening self-confidence. But that for which she chiefly justified herself and arraigned and condemned him was the touch of cynicism he brought to sufferings that were deeply real in her eyes. Her own hot heart had burned with pity at the tragic light he had thrown on Mary's story, and the seeming levity with which he treated it, shocked her and kindled her anger. She was too young, too inexperienced to know that but for this surface lightness and indifference the task of alleviating the troubles of the sick poor could scarcely be faced at all. A man must steel himself with this armour lest his pitifulness overmaster him and the wounds that he would heal stab him to his own undoing.

Janie set out on her walk with Mr. Augustus scarcely in a mood to bear with patience his prosy platitudes and long drawn periods. And yet the good man had tact enough—his kind heart taught him the secret—to keep away from the troubles over which she was brooding. He had been born early enough in the century to remember the time when the silent squares which they traversed, now the haunt of lodging and boarding-house keepers, had been the home of comfortable prosperity and gentility, and Bloomsbury had vied with the west-end.

He told her who had lived in the tall, gaunt houses, and what ponderous feasts had taken place behind those shuttered windows; what wealth of gay dresses and jewellery had rolled in the fine carriages from door to door. He spoke of it—it was a little way of his—as if he, too, had gone solemnly up those steps and had been received with a flourish by black Sambo: had seen little

Emmy tripping down the wide stairs and Miss Swartz in her yellow satin train with diamonds glittering in her woolly hair, and George Osborne swaggering in at the open door.

"I should like to have seen the meeting between Mr. Augustus and grim papa Osborne," thought Janie and then she laughed at her own fancy. It was all nonsense, of course; Mr. Augustus had never been received in that home of the city magnate which is more real to most of us than are the houses where we are familiar guests. It was all nonsense, but yet it did her good by lifting her out of herself.

When they had convinced the unbelieving landlady of Mary's plight and had assured her that it was nothing "catching" of which she ailed, and had got home again to the Euston Road, Mr. Augustus said a few sensible words in farewell.

"You may put complete confidence in Walter Ellis," he ended, "I know him. He is an accomplished physician and a trustworthy youth."

"I'd rather rely on you," thought Janie, looking after the angular, gaunt figure as it walked away stiffly. Mr. Augustus had made no effusive offers of help and yet she knew he would not fail them. As for the doctor—Janie frowned away his claims to her regard. He was overbold and required to be taught his place.

She climbed the stair and softly opened the door of the bedroom. A dim light burned there, and by it she saw Alice seated close to the bed, the sick girl's hand clasped in her own. Mary was talking in a faint voice, and Alice was absorbed in listening—neither of them noticed the watcher by the door. Janie shut it noiselessly and went into the empty parlour. The candles had guttered down into their sockets and were burning with intermittent flashes, the fire was out, the tea-things still encumbered the table, the room had a sad forsaken air that chilled her. She blew out the flickering lights, and went and kneeled by the window; the outside traffic which had not yet ceased, though it had lessened, gave her a sense of companionship; but the time seemed long till Alice came out to her.

The light of the lamps without showed Janie's figure, and Alice, groping her way back, sat down by her. For a moment they said nothing, then Janie asked quietly—

"She has told you, I suppose; how was it?"

Alice's voice was very moved.

"She was out of work for months, and all her savings went—then her clothes and her books and the relics of home. Then she got into debt——"

"Oh, I know," said Janie with rather a hard laugh. "I've been through it all; there's an awful sameness about the story. I can finish this one for you—her landlady turned her out ——"

"No," interposed Alice, "she seems to have had some pity and forbearance. She let her stay on, and when Mary got this situation she began to pay off the burden."

"And starved herself to do it. What a pity it is," Janie went on in the same hard, light tone, "that governesses are not made different from other people. If a few of us could be set apart at birth and our anatomy arranged differently, it would be very convenient; for instance, if we could live without food. Mary has been trying the experiment, I suppose, and has failed like the rest of us."

Alice softly stroked the black hair thrown across her lap. She understood the sore heart that had its outcome in this flippant speech.

"Her great fear now is that she will not get well soon enough to keep this situation open. It is troubling her sadly, and I fear it will hinder her recovery. She is more seriously ill than she thinks. Her mother and sisters died of consumption."

Janey looked up and brushed aside her hair.

"Her work needn't trouble her," she said quietly, almost indifferently. "I'll see to that, of course. Tell her she needn't give it a thought. Most of her teaching is in the afternoon, and as mine is over by two o'clock, I can easily fit it in. As the families know each other, I dare say there won't be any difficulty about a recommendation, and I can at least keep the place warm for Mary."

"It will be a great deal of work for you, dear."

"Oh, as far as that goes, I haven't half enough to do now, so it will just make the balance right."

Alice stooped and kissed her.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these the least of My brethren," she murmured, "ye have done it unto Me."

"No," said Janey, starting up and speaking fiercely, "it's not for His sake."

Then she broke down and hid her face once more.

"Oh," she whispered, "If I could believe as you do, it would be so much easier; it might take the pain and the sadness quite away, but it is all dark, all dark."

"The light will come," said Alice in her loving voice, "be patient, dear, the day will surely break."

There was never so much as a question between them about their duty to the sick girl. Mary was ill, poor, friendless; that constituted her claim. For both it was enough, for the woman whom love to God taught her supreme pitifulness and compassion towards all His creatures; for the girl who was blindly groping way through the lesser to the greater—through the human love to the Divine.

A room which happened to be unlet had been secured at the top of the house and had been hastily got ready: there was a contest between the elder and the younger as to which of them should occupy it, but Janey's stronger will carried the day.

"For to-night, at least," she insisted, "you must sleep there while I keep Mary company. Oh, don't suppose you are going to get the best of it. Mrs. Jones's notions of comfort are, to say the least of it, rudimentary. You won't be too luxurious."

Then when Alice showed continued inclination towards rebellion, she clinched the matter by declaring that if she were kept out of the sick-room she should sleep on the door-mat.

"And think how nice and selfish that will make you feel when you are comfortably sharing the feather bed with Mary," cried the diplomatist, feeling that the cause was won.

WORKHOUSE LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

BY MRS. BREWER, AUTHOR OF "HOSPITAL SKETCHES AT HOME AND ABROAD."

I.

THE condition of the poor is a subject of the deepest interest, and, one that has taxed the powers of men in every age and in every nation.

Many difficult questions arise out of it. Those who devote their lives to helping the poor can tell us, if they will, how action is beset with difficulties and dangers both to the helpers and the helped.

Of one thing there is no doubt, and that is, that there is no work God has given us to do which is more binding upon us as individuals and as a nation than caring for the poor.

There is no work that requires more sympathy, more tenderness, more forgetfulness of self, more self-sacrifice, more capability of putting ourselves in the place of others, or more love to God; nor in anything is there greater need of His help.

It seems so easy to give a person food who is hungry, to clothe him if he be shivering, to give him money if he be in distress; but this sort of indiscriminate charity, supposing it to be the sum total of our contribution to the needs of the poor, may be but mischievous and luxurious self-pleasing. It is not the help, the loving care and self-sacrifice which is to be so rich in blessing. It is as unlike Christian charity as heathenism is to Christianity.

The worker in this kingdom of poverty is serving God in the persons of His poor, and he may bring to the work any talent he may possess—he may not have a penny in his pocket, but he may have health and a kind heart, let him use them. A little half-starved child may prove a true and valiant worker if he use hands and feet in the service of the infirm and bed-ridden. A woman weighted with cares and anxieties, may yet be able to help another who is even in worse condition. No matter what the talent, great or small, it may be put out to interest in the cause of the poor and will become rich in blessing.

If we only had the help of the rich it would reach no way in this kingdom of God's poor, that is to say, if it were only in money given hap-hazard; for this would not lift any of the sorrowful out of their anxieties, but rather complicate their difficulties, and possibly take from them their self-respect. The giving of money spasmodically as a check to poverty is like stopping running water with a sieve. It is often worse than useless, for it tends to weaken the self-helping efforts of those who receive it.

The one beautiful feature in this kingdom of poverty is the readiness of the poor to help each other; and in watching this we learn that it is not occasional doles of money or food, but sympathy which lessens the despair of poverty; and that it is the helping hand and hopeful word given at the right moment which go far to redeem the poor from pauperism.

It is real love in the heart of the helper which makes the help sweet. A heart full of kindness to the poor is a bank that never fails, and one that yields a perpetual dividend of happiness.

One of the greatest difficulties which has to be faced every day is how to help the poor without pauperising them; how to be kind and yet just; how to inculcate self-help among them even while you are giving aid.

Tenderness, sympathy, patience, forbearance, and an intimate knowledge are indispensable to those who would help the poor to carry their burdens. Having these qualifications, they will avoid any and every kind of charity which tends to make them inert and helpless; still more, they will do their best to keep hope alive, and to prove that industry is productive of comfort and enjoyment, while idleness is the father of misery and regret.

Whatever encourages habits of industry, prudence, forethought, virtue, and cleanliness is beneficial, and whatever removes or diminishes the incitement to any of these qualities is detrimental to the State and pernicious to the individual.

It is not a characteristic of our English poor as a rule to sit down calmly and eat the bread of idleness; and the industrious poor are often hurt at the little distinction that is made between them and the idle and profligate.

Never were so many thoughts directed to this subject as now, and yet with all the love and care bestowed upon the indigent, there are thousands who die yearly of starvation, and, do what we will, the ordinary joys and relaxations of life are unknown to multitudes whose daily life is a struggle for bread.

The anxiety of the country to improve the condition of the poor is every year becoming more apparent. Meanwhile, the workhouses, of which we are about to speak, are national institutions; they reflect the social life of great numbers of the people; they are an index to much that is of great moment to the body politic; and present features of especial interest to the Christian philanthropist.

Glancing backward, let us recall the fact that attention was arrested in the Middle Ages by the enormous yearly increase of able-bodied, sturdy beggars who became a tax and a terror to the industrious part of the community. The administrators of that time tried their best to meet the difficulty thus created, but being without experience they made a great many mistakes.

Then began the passing of law after law for the suppression of beggars and vagrants, who, in good health, were yet content to be maintained in idleness; but little good resulted, seeing that the root of the evil—the irresponsible almsgiving of the age—remained untouched.

The first real check came in the forty-third year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth just after the dissolution of the monasteries, when an Act was passed, called An Act for the Relief of the Poor.

Its purpose was not merely to relieve the indigent but to prevent indigence itself. It not only guarded against poverty and distress, but against vice and immorality also. It recognised the right of destitute people to be maintained at the expense of the community and imposed on every parish the necessity of supporting its own poor. It likewise ordered the erection of abiding places for the poor in the various parishes on wastes or commons at the cost of the parish—the origin of our workhouses. But upon sturdy, able-bodied beggars the Act had no mercy.

This Act is always regarded as the commencement of systematic dealing with the poor. It came but slowly into operation. It was centuries before anything like the present poor law system was developed.

This is not the place to trace its history. With every fresh effort to adjust matters, new difficulties arose. The poor's rate, ever increasing, seemed at one period to have been spent in destroying veracity, industry, frugality, and domestic virtue among the labouring poor, and the result was an alarming increase of paupers and crime. Relief was given in such a wholesale and irresponsible manner by the overseers that pauperism spread among the respectable mechanics and even among small master bricklayers and builders, who had never been known as applicants for relief.

It matters little whether we look in at the London or the country workhouses. In the earlier part of this century they were all equally bad. There was no classification of the inmates. Young and old, sane and insane, moral and immoral, healthy and sick were all huddled and dragged up together, and subject to the same treatment. As a consequence of this, the younger soon acquired all the bad habits of the elder and became for the most part as depraved.

An opinion given before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1832 was that in many cases the workhouse was a sort of almshouse in which the young were trained in idleness, ignorance, and vice; the able-bodied maintained in sluggish sensual indolence, and the aged, sick and more respectable exposed to all the misery that is incident to dwelling in such a society without government or classification.

Mrs. Park, whose husband was brother of the celebrated traveller, took a deep interest in the workhouse at Gravesend just fifty years ago, and this is what she says of it:

There were fifty females in the workhouse. Of these, twenty-seven were young, stout, active women who were never employed in doing any thing whatever. Five of these young able-bodied women were accustomed to go to bed in the forenoon solely to pass away the time. There was no separation of the sexes during the day, and the most frightful demoralisation was the consequence. Four old women did the whole of the cooking and the cleansing of the house. The girls and younger children were brought up much in the same way; they were educated by an exceedingly ignorant ill-conducted man, a pauper, who acted as schoolmaster. Girls and boys were brought up together in the same school-room and very great disorder prevailed.

The old women were also very ill-regulated. They made it a practice to send the children to the public-house for spirits—how they got the money for this it was impossible to say. On the whole, the workhouse was a frightful source of demoralisation to the labouring classes and of burthens to the industrious poor in common with the higher classes.

This lady, with a small number of friends, did what she could to bring about a better state of things. She taught the elder women knitting and the younger ones needlework—and certainly not before it was needed, for most of the inmates were in a state of rags and nakedness.

Hitherto, the authorities had purchased the most gaudy prints for the women and slop shirts for the men, while the young women were lying in bed idle. One of the pauper girls of about eighteen years of age, who absolutely refused to work, was dressed, says Mrs. Park, in a dashing print dress of red and green, with gigot sleeves, silk waistband and large gilt buckle, long gilt earrings, a lace cap turned up in front, with bright ribbons in the fashion of the day, and a high comb under the cap and an abundance of curls.

Another woman on being set to work, refused, saying, "the poor were not going to be oppressed by work," and the effect of the discipline introduced was that quite half the women left.

One of the good things effected by Mrs. Park was the partial separation of the very old from the young, which was deemed by the old people to be a great blessing. She tried to separate the very bad women from the others less depraved, but could not succeed.

During the time of which we are writing, the children in the workhouses were, next to the sick, the most to be pitied. There was no stimulus or food for the domestic affections; they knew nothing of a mother's love; they never heard the words of endearment, nor knew anything of the sympathy existing between parent and child.

One of the saddest sights I ever remember was a visit I paid to a workhouse in an agricultural district some twenty-five years ago, in order to see a boy whose life of nine years had been almost wholly spent within its walls.

The school-room was a low-ceilinged, bare-walled, dirty apartment, with about fifty children of both sexes, the very sight of whom made one's heart ache.

All that was pure, good and childlike, seemed to have been ground out of them to make room for cunning, deceit, and lying. Poor children! who had never heard of love. Paupers they were and with the disease of pauperism so strong upon them that it could be only by a miracle if

they ever shook themselves free of it. Yet here and there one's eyes lighted on a wistful, pale-faced child, who seemed to have missed his mother without knowing it.

The teacher, himself a pauper, was an irritable idle fellow, quite incapable of maintaining order, and who was dependent upon his cane for even the slightest obedience.

As I entered, the classes were seated and engaged, no doubt, in preparing lessons. One lad was biting something, with wolfish eyes turned towards the master, and trying to conceal his act by placing before his mouth a hand of extreme uncleanness. Another was cutting a hole in his desk with a nail sharpened flat. A third was inking a copy-book; a fourth was trying to scrawl with slate pencil dipped in ink on the back of the neck of his neighbour.

The hubbub was incessant, while the occasional cry of a child who had just received a harder blow with the cane than usual, was no more than a break in the irregular confusion prevailing everywhere.

The boy I had called to see, and for whom my interest had been roused by something I had learned of his family, was called out from among the others that I might speak with him. He was scarcely nine years of age as the years went, but the look of cunning defiance with which he eyed me made me hopeless.

"Come with me a few minutes," I said, taking his hand and leading him to a retired corner of the room. He was unwilling, and held back, but seeing he would have to obey, he felt frightened and rubbed his eyes with his knuckles, watching me all the time as though he expected me to pounce suddenly upon him.

"What do ye want wi' me?"

"I have come to do you good, if I can," was my reply. He looked cunningly at me and put his hands in his pockets.

I did not quite know what to say and began, "Have you no love for any one in your heart?"

The boy looked askant towards the girls' form and said "No."

"Have you no love for your unhappy mother?"

"Dun know," he said doggedly.

"Would you not like to be an honest workman, like your uncle, and earn your own living?"

"The parish must keep me till I'm 'prenticed," he said with a hard expression.

"Do you know who God is?" was my next venture.

"I should think I do; why lanky Dick knows that, and I'm four year older nor him."

"You say your prayers, then?" I asked.

"Shouldn't we catch it neither if we didn't?"

"What do you pray for?"

"'Cos the guardians got it down on the table, and the master says they won't do nothin' for us if we don't, but they must give us our wittles or the perlice would be down on 'em."

"But, surely, when you pray, you ask God to give you something?" I said.

"Ah! but He don't do it, though," retorted the boy.

"Did you ever try?" I asked anxiously.

"Yes, but I shan't tell you, fur you'd peach," was his remark.

"I should do no such thing," was my answer.

"Well," he said, with a look of mischief, "I asked God last week to kill the schoolmaster in the night, 'cos he beat me till my back bled; I asked Him ever so hard, but when I woke in the mornin' the master was alive, so I knows what I knows."

This was one of many conversations I had with the boy, and I give it in order to show the kind of teaching and bringing up even then too frequent. What could be expected of these poor children? Was it wonderful, that ladies declared they would rather a great deal take convicts into their houses as servants than girls brought up in workhouses. Oh! the pity of it, so many children wrecked for the want of homes, and so many homes sad for want of children.

No one could feel surprise that with such training, pauperism should become hereditary; the moral debasement springing from it ruined body and soul.

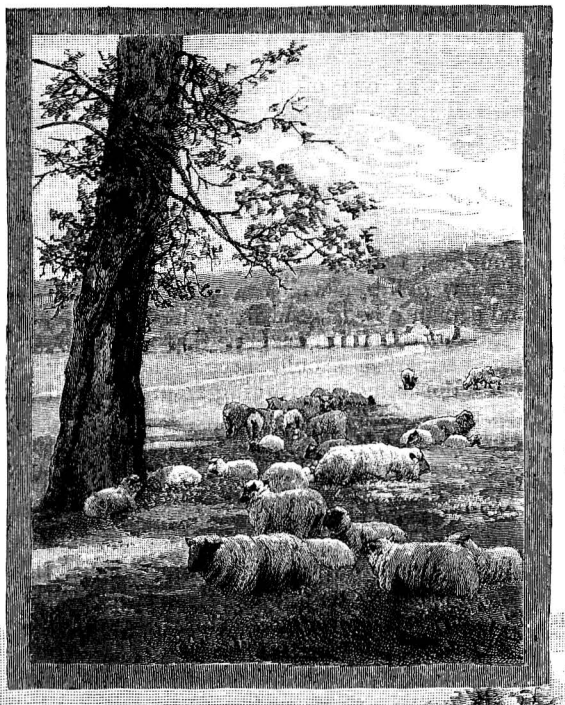
A clergyman of Spitalfields, some fifty years ago, described a pauper in very telling words: "He has been born for nothing; nursed for nothing; clothed for nothing; educated for nothing; put out into the world for nothing; had medicine and medical aid for nothing; has had his children, born, nursed, clothed, fed, educated, established and physicked for nothing. He dies a pauper, and at the expense of the parish he is provided with shroud, coffin, pall and burial ground. Paupers from the workhouse bear his body to the grave, and paupers are his mourners."

Can anything more clearly describe the irresponsible condition induced by pauperism?

It was not until 1865 and 1866, that a systematic inspection of workhouses took place, and the scenes it laid bare were appalling.

Things New and Old.

REMISSION OF SIN AND RENEWAL OF NATURE.—It is one thing to receive the Divine pardon, it is another to recover the Divine image. The first is the initial grace granted to the penitent sinner, the second is the glory of the perfected saint. That in the Divine order the forgiveness of sin, when sin is first confessed and forsaken, is always associated with the new birth in which the life of God is given to man, the life which is ultimately revealed in the consummate energy and beauty of moral and spiritual character, is not only true; it is so true that their inseparable association as the two great elements of the Christian redemption has been asserted, in varying forms indeed, but with unbroken unanimity and with strenuous earnestness, by the theologians and preachers of every church, of every country, and of every age.—*Dale on the Atonement.*



In the Shade.

Sometimes God leads His own—
So prone to linger in the blinding glare
Of earthly good—through narrow ways of care
And loss and hindrance heretofore unknown,
And in the shadow gives them space for thought;
But when the discipline its work hath wrought,
With thankful joy His children understand
The gloom was but the shadow of His hand!

Sometimes He leads His own
Far from the throbbing heat and rush of life,
Beyond the utmost echoes of its strife,
And in green pastures maketh them lie down
To rest awhile. O sweet and hallowed shade,
What dream of death should make their souls afraid?
The passing dimness that its presence flings,
Is but the healing shadow of His wings!

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

BY THE REV. PREBENDARY HARRY JONES, M.A.

NOTHING is more sure to occupy the thoughts and influence the lives of men and women, nothing affects them more profoundly throughout their course upon earth, nothing is capable of being more full of honest joy and gladness in the world, and yet there is nothing which suffers more from sheer worldly handling than "courtship and marriage."

Marriage, the relationship of husband and wife, a faithful union, marks the first human compact. The earliest recognised distinction between that which is lawful and that which is unlawful found its expression in marriage. In some places the old names for "law" and "marriage" are interchangeable. Whatever ceremonies may have accompanied it, however some (at all times) have evaded its obligation, the primæval conscience, the original human instinct, before the formation of any church or code, recognised the need of a "covenant" first in marriage. Around it laws have grown. It is no invention of legislators. It arose from the divinely implanted necessities of "human" life and a sense of its excellence above that of other animals "which have no understanding." Thus marriage grew to be called an "honourable estate," to be surrounded with ceremony and fenced with safeguards.

I need not tell you that these have varied from age to age, and in different countries. It would be beyond my present purpose to invite your survey of changing nuptial customs, however interesting and instructive. They reveal the respect in which marriage has ever been held. They are however so general as sometimes to produce in the thoughtless that contempt which follows familiarity. Thus I would have you notice that, though marriage is imperative and universal, man has perceived that it not only deserves the ornament of special ceremony, but claims the honour of august legal recognition. Other matters so important as to involve a survival of the human race, such as the satisfaction of hunger by food, are not thus guarded. They have gathered manifold customs around them, and are often controlled by sumptuary regulations, but they, and the indulgence of appetites associated with them, are not severely subject to the operation of stringent laws. This might help us to realise the universally recognised gravity of that which is often lightly handled, though God has ordained that thereby not only earth, but heaven should be peopled; since immortal souls are brought into the world when children are born.

I will now contract our view to the provisions made in England for the due celebration of marriage; and in so doing follow familiar lines, using chiefly those of the English Established Church. Notice, first, that, however legitimate, desirable, and deliberately planned, marriage cannot be had suddenly. The entrance into matrimony is checked by certain preliminary forms. The putting up of the banns, or procuring of a licence, may be the occasion of shallow raillery, and its significance may be misapprehended, but it is one of divers grave legal precautions against the commission of the most careless and disastrous mistakes which a man or woman can make, in other words against the light or wanton taking in hand of the holy estate of matrimony. And though with us there is no service of betrothal before that of marriage, the reiterated public announcement (involved in the publication of their banns) that such and such two persons are betrothed, the command laid on any one in the congregation to declare any just impediment why they should not be joined together in matrimony, the repetition of this open challenge to those present when the parties meet in the church, together with the last solemn appeal then made to them themselves, are a sufficient indication of the care provided by the ecclesiastical and civil powers lest marriage should be contracted hastily. For the "ceremony" is terribly, sternly valid. No misrepresentation as to worldly position or means can invalidate it, and, unlike all other contracts, it cannot be rescinded at pleasure. It is surrounded by imposing conditions which are by no means the product of meddlesome religious influence, since, curiously enough, marriages at a registrar's office are more stringently guarded than those in a church, the registrar being bound to have the written consent of the parents or guardians in case either party should be under age. The secular caution is greater than the religious, and it would be well if the "ecclesiastical" officers concerned in the celebration of weddings were bound to take the same care as the "lay" in so far checking the disastrous mischief of early heedless marriage.

This is only a small part of what might be said about the binding responsibility of marriage recognised by the civil and religious demands made upon those who would contract it. It is thus, without any display or affectation of sentiment, severely and conspicuously distinguished from an illicit union, however much that may be accompanied by sincere assurances of faithfulness and affection. So the human heart or instinct has discovered and determined. Though, as one says, at short distances the senses are despotic, moral qualities rule the world. No one is free to follow his or her own persuasion in this matter. In short, the voice of mankind, in many tones, and through age after age, has declared that love can be reckoned honest before God and man only when it is authorised, sealed and guarded by law; that is, by what, time out of mind, man has devised in order that society may be not brutal but human. The church has in truth only

accepted, refined, and set in sacred words, what the world had found out to be necessary for the right relationship of men and women.

This grave truth has, however (like other truths) been often resented or forgotten by froward souls. And their defiant gaiety has been so severely rebuked by cool and serious pastors and masters that the would-be teacher has often lost touch with the lusty pupil. Some grave monitors have even got into the way of discounting that which (in its recognition of courtship) ministers to the pursuits and interests of the young. I will not review any list of suggestive or distracting secular influences, but take one to illustrate what I am now aiming at. There are those who always speak reproachfully of novels and love-stories. I do not mean such as are distinctly impure. However secretly perused, these are not defended by public opinion; and they are condemned by law as well as by religion. I rather refer to the respectably sensational romances which use courtship and marriage as the framework and marrow of their narration. The plot of the popular tale mostly turns upon the course of true love. And some severe censors of society thereby object, saying that it is unwise to put such things into the heads of young people. It were well indeed for the framers of some social fictions, the scenes of which are laid in the dangerous borderlands of shamefulness, but which could not be interdicted or suppressed without pedantry, to realise the mischief they may carelessly do; but to say that a romance is objectionable only because it puts thought about human love into young minds is foolish, since they are there already, and nothing shows a more imperfect estimate of instructive Christian duty than to ignore, on religious grounds, the universal interest which is associated with courtship and marriage. The thought of them is of divine origin, and nothing is more shortsighted than to shift their treatment to the sensational writer, or to assume that it suits his business more than it does that of the Christian minister and teacher.

Did Jesus choose a funeral at which to manifest the first of His glory? No; it was a marriage; and it was by no chance that He was there. It was no wedding procession that He met by the way, but "both Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage." And they went. Be sure that God would have the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of true love and righteousness ever guide the conversation of His children, and never more than when they marry and are given in marriage.

They are not romances alone that are fit, and have been found, to record the tale of human loves. The Bible itself contains not a few. I need only remind you of those in which Rachel and Rebecca are the heroines, or that beautiful story, the last chapter of which culminates in the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. Though the true position of woman, and the best estimate of matrimony, may have been unperceived, and is undeveloped by the writers of the Old Testament, the Holy Scripture is a continuous channel of teaching about the relation of man and woman. It shows to us the worst side of that relationship as well as the best. But both in narrative and comment, in illustration and instance, in poetry and prose, in examples and maxims, in Proverb and in Psalm, the Bible, that part known as the "Law and the Prophets," is filled with man's doings and God's teaching about marriage; and in the "Gospel" we not only find (as I have said) Jesus begin the manifestation of His glory at a wedding-feast, but He made it the favourite parabolic vehicle of His teaching.

His disciples moreover who were called with Him to the marriage in Cana must have felt that Christian doctrine about matrimony was required of them. Their greatest assessor, St. Paul, had much to teach concerning it; their frequent spokesman, St. Peter, who was himself a married man, admonishes well all husbands and wives; and one of whom tradition says that he was the bridegroom at the earliest Christian wedding uses a bride as the best image whereby to picture the Church of Christ, and in the Book of His Revelation sets forth the final display of God's law and love as the marriage of the Lamb.

It is not therefore to be wondered at that, in the Church of England, the minister is especially charged to preach about matrimony. There are in the English Book of Common Prayer several services to be used on special occasions, beginning with that of the public baptism of infants; and in one, and one only of these, is the minister encouraged to "preach;" and that is the marriage service. He has a set form of advice to sponsors to be read after the "ministration of baptism." There is no opening afforded for an address by the bishop, or by any one else, at "confirmation." In the "visitation of the sick," there is no hint given about the improvement of the occasion in the interest of the sick person's family or survivors. In the service for the "burial of the dead," not a word is uttered about a funeral oration. But in that for matrimony it is assumed that there shall be a "sermon." Not only is there a warning homily read to the congregation at the opening of the service, but at its end the book says, "If there be no sermon declaring the duties of man and wife, the minister shall read as followeth." Then is printed the familiar address with which the wedding service is most frequently concluded. I call attention to this notable fact, in order to plead against an assumption sometimes tacitly made, that courtship and marriage are not the most conspicuously fit subject for treatment by the minister in church. I say they are. And the order of the English Prayer Book at least emphatically confirms my assertion. I also draw attention to the point that "courtship" as well as "marriage" is a suitable matter on which the minister should speak. For be it noticed that the address to be read in case there is no sermon, and which surely sets the line of the teaching desirable on the occasion, begins by saying, "All ye that are married or that intend to take the holy estate of Matrimony upon you, hear what the holy Scripture doth say as touching the duty of husbands towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands."

Let us look behind the letter and read between

the lines of this venerable exhortation. It may be that our familiarity with it has blunted our perception of its lofty spiritual tone, its keen social sense, and its shrewd perception of the things (such as bitterness and extravagance) which sometimes mar the relationship of husband and wife. By law, marriage is permissible without any religious ceremony. Its responsibilities and binding nature are none the less stringent when the contract is made in a civil office instead of a church, but most people feel that matrimony has a spiritual as well as a physical aspect. It should involve the union of hearts. The common saying that "marriages are made in heaven," though sometimes abused to palliate illicit unions, has its counterpart in the sentence that matrimony "signifieth unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His church." This has manifold applications. It transmutes the interchange of mortal promises into the mutual making of vows before God. It indicates the deepest eternal relationship. But among the most intelligible of its meanings is the truth that as our kinship with the Son of man is marred (not abolished) by failure in spiritual communion with Him, so those marriages are (not voided, but) imperfect where husband and wife fail to be, essentially, of one mind. The sentence I have quoted (that in which matrimony is said to be a symbol of God's union with mankind), means that true human love is divine. It is the profound, though perhaps unformulated persuasion of this which leads most men and women to the church or chapel rather than to the office of the registrar, when they would be joined together in marriage.

I will not now dwell further on the mystical import of matrimony, but ask you to notice the social and domestic line taken in the other church teaching concerning it. I have already noticed that since the minister is set to address not merely the newly married couple, but all those that are married or that intend to take the holy estate of matrimony upon them, the opening sentence of the last wedding address plainly covers both "courtship and marriage." Read it in the light of those words with which the service is begun. There all are told in homely fashion that marriage "is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly." Read it thus, and then think of the misery which often comes upon a hasty and improvident union. Why, even the animals which have no understanding and are held up in the marriage service as a deterrent foil or warning to the heedless among mankind, may set them a good example in this respect, for even the sparrow does not mate without an assiduous building of a nest.

But among so-called Christians, in this belauded nineteenth century, we see some young people marry with as little thought as if they were sitting down to a common meal. With them the beauty of that temporary but unique period of pure new born confidence which follows freshly plighted honest love is obliterated by a raw hastiness of marriage. True courtship is a season of Christian culture, when the finer qualities of manly and courteous devotion are called out. Then the youth passes into another atmosphere of life. The mysterious power which presides over creation comes to one of its innumerable *foci* in the case of two persons who find that they honestly love one another. Then every man who professes affection is especially bound to forecast the happiness of his betrothed; and he is a poor unmanly selfish creature who abuses her confidence by offering her a so-called home which in some cases mocks that sacred word in being hardly a place of decent habitation. I will say little (though, on moral and physiological grounds, I could not say too much) about the sheer selfishness and mischief of early marriages. They are as great a curse to the country, as they are a reproach and discredit to the Christian religion, the very centre and life principle of which is that we should not merely seek to please ourselves.

Though long protracted espousals are to be regretted or condemned, it is more than well in manifold respects that an adult young man and woman who are learning to trust one another should experience that peculiar "parenthesis" in life which precedes and follows betrothal. That period is one in which a confirmation or a cooling of first impressions may arrive. It is well indeed if the two persons concerned have then the courage to hesitate, or perhaps even to draw back. Possibly there may have come the revelation of some ominous infelicity of temperament, unperceived at the first blush of immature sensation. It is well that some, on better acquaintance with each other, should agree not to marry but to part. Anyhow, the decent pause which marks espousal is to be desired, for the sight of a heedless resort to the house of God in order to gratify a half-grown smirking and wanton mood, or a hasty union on sheer financial considerations, fills the Christian and citizen alike with sickening dismay, inasmuch as he sees in it the multiplication of more public scandals in middle or high life, and (amongst such as have to earn their daily bread) more drabbled and querulous couples, more spectacles of shame and bitterness in the workhouse and the magistrates' court, more stunted children in the muddy street, instead of that enjoyment and replenishing of human life which comes from duly ripened married love, and gives the best promise of influence and endurance to a professedly Christian people.

Let me now say a word more on selection. In face of the mysteriously blind influence of love it might seem not merely impertinent, but hopeless, to hint at those original motives which lead to the choice of a mate. And yet we cannot help doubtfully forecasting some unions when we see the circumstances in which their first impressions were made, and their so-called vows exchanged. It is foolish to depreciate any beauty of form or feature given by God, for the old proverb which tries to say what "handsome is" may be set aside as not merely rude, but fallacious. And yet comeliness (especially that of youth) is by no means an inevitable assurance of those qualities which make a good housewife. Moreover, the

consciousness of possessing the charming gift of beauty is sometimes accompanied by a vexatious indifference to the cultivation of those unquestionable and permanent excellences which take the shape of good temper and homely thrift.

I need not tell you that very much more might be said concerning this matter, but in glancing at some of the apparent motives which set up the action of what is called courtship, I cannot pass on without another word about that calculating aim or mood which plays with the sacred name of love for sheer worldly ends, and the acquisition of material comfort. Though a taking in hand of marriage when the foolish eyes of the betrothed are shut to the probabilities of indigence cannot be too strongly blamed, and if possible, hindered, a mere scheming suitor, however constant, has in him the makings of a heartless mate. For instance, though for a while (at least, in some cases) the wife may well contribute to the earnings of the modest household, the man who contemplates marriage mainly with an eye to the increment of income which his bride may eventually bring by her work, cannot be a true lover in the best sense of the word. The parody of courtship which he displays is perhaps most frequently seen among the rich where the improvement of worldly estate is a more prominent or public factor in the motives of marriage, but all sorts and conditions of men (and women) may well be jealous of the calculating spirit which (seeking chiefly dower, or the wages of toil) robs courtship of its charm.

I must now have done. Nevertheless, I once more recall your attention to the language of the well-known marriage service of the Established Church, which sets its note to the minister's teaching in this matter. Marriage is not past away when people are married, and thus all husbands and wives are addressed as well as the newly-mated couple standing in the midst. And thus, though the same pair cannot be joined again together in marriage, it may be well for them to recall some of the grounds upon which theirs can be blessed, or happy. They know that they have not married angels, but they sometimes forget the allowance which must be made for the mortal weakness of their helpmates. And their hearing of the old wedding service and exhortation may come amiss to neither of them. It is addressed to all who are married. Now though it be somewhat antique, and savours strongly of a Jewish period when the true character of marriage was undeveloped, and though there has been an advance in the Christian estimate of woman during these last years, the solemn English marriage service is full of homely reminders. It may touch a half-forgotten chord of tenderness in some with whom the wedding ring has grown thin with years.

Above all, it recalls the reason why a legally binding nuptial contract is accompanied by a religious service. That service tells us of a higher and deeper obligation than we can be under to any one, however beloved. It tells us not only of the duty of husbands towards their wives, and of wives towards their husbands, but of that which they both owe to God. And as they do that, each has the best assurances of the best happiness which matrimony can bring. The public Christian rite is a message both to those who have not yet reached, and to those who have long passed, their own wedding day. It may warn such as (under passing but strong impulse) might misapprehend the texture of true love, and drift gaily into a union in which affection becomes at last a mutually conventional tolerance, and it may touch an old memory of those pledges "to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, to love and to cherish," which are made at the altar, "according to God's holy ordinance," for life.

To both old and young it says that the service of the Lord, the pursuit after truth and righteousness, the loving of God with all the heart, is the surest forerunner of that wherewith those joined together in matrimony may love each other even as they love themselves.

TOMMY ATKINS AT HOME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GEORGE SILWOOD OF KESWICH," "LOVE FULFILLING THE LAW," ETC.

II.

THE hour's school always ends with about ten minutes' Bible-reading. Other books and papers are cleared away, and all sit together round one table whilst a few verses are read in turn. The specimens I have already given show how valuable this is. The men who come to the meetings hear a good deal of the Bible read, but they really need to be taught how to read it themselves. An uneducated or partially educated person seems to think that good reading consists in breathless rapidity and utter disregard of stops.

"What do you think the stops are for?" they have often been asked, to respond only with a look of blank ignorance. And then it is amusing to see the smile of interest and awakening when the idea follows:

"Why, to tell you to stop, of course."

Slow intelligent careful reading, especially of the little words which they misplace with charming indifference, can thus be taught to many men who know the actual words, but confuse the whole sense in one pauseless gabble.

And these short readings are not without their higher use.

"You mustn't say anything to R—— about his soul," said one of Miss Daniell's helpers in another of her Homes to the lady to whom she was handing over the work. "If you do, he'll

go. He comes to school, and I promised him nothing should be said to him."

"Very well."

This very original compact is occasionally entered into, almost invariably with the same results.

R—— was an officer's servant, very smart and intelligent, and anxious to improve himself. He came on steadily to school, worked away most diligently at arithmetic, which was his weak point, made very good progress, and was always extremely active in clearing away books and slates, and fetching the Bibles when the reading came. He generally took a place of his own—quite a reserved seat, in fact—next to the lady at the end of the table, and listened and read with marked intelligence and interest. As soon as school was over and the room rearranged, downstairs he went, and never returned to any meeting whatever, simply disporting himself about the house. This went on for many weeks.

One evening he listened with very marked gravity and evident feeling to the few words which were said upon the need of deciding for Christ, a subject which arose out of the verses read; then, as usual, he started up to help carry the books and slates back to the dining-room, where they were kept. He lingered there behind the other men.

"R——, you have been listening a great many weeks. When are you going to decide?"

He could hardly speak, but the day of power had come; before he left that room he had taken the one great step of life. That must be seven or eight years ago, but from that hour, at home or abroad, he has never, so far as we know, turned back from the choice which he was enabled to make, but has continued Christ's faithful soldier and servant. I need hardly add that there was no more running away from meetings, or unwillingness for conversation upon the one subject which now filled his heart.

And now about this nightly meeting. When Mrs. Daniell built the Hall in 1863, she planned to carry on the work which she had been doing for some months previously in a hired house, by services on Sunday afternoon and evening, and one meeting during the week; but this would not at all suit the men. They wanted the Bible every evening, and never left her alone till the meeting became a recognised nightly institution. A small sitting-room was given up for the purpose, and soon became so overflowing that the men stood all along the passage, This was rather a disconnected kind of meeting. So they removed into the drawing-room, where from sixty to seventy could be crammed in; and finally, after Mrs. Daniell had suffered from a serious illness brought on by the cold of the large hall, whither they were obliged to migrate, the class-room had to be built.

It appears to me that it is this poor little meeting, which I need scarcely say has never been discontinued, which has been what the men call "the instigation" of much of the criticism and advice with which Mrs. Daniell and her daughter have been favoured during the space of about six and twenty years. It certainly does strike an onlooker as a little remarkable, if the work is so materially disfigured and injured by what some people call "too much religion" that there should yet have been found such multitudes to copy it. This does not certainly, on the face of it, seem to carry an impression of any very marked want of success.

I was very much amused by a conversation upon this subject which I lately overheard. The chief speaker was a young officer.

"Did you ever hear how I first came here?"

"Never."

"Then I'll tell you. It's rather a funny story, for I came to convert Miss Daniell. When I first got to camp, you know, I had always been extremely interested about the men, and Soldiers' Homes and all that sort of thing, so one day when I was riding with X—— I asked him about such things here. He told me.

"'Yes,' I said, 'but isn't there one belonging to Miss Daniell?'

"'Oh, yes,' he said, 'but that's not at all a good place.'

"'Why not?' I asked.

"'Oh,' he said, 'too much religion; there's a man stands each side of the door as you go in. One asks you to sign the pledge, and the other asks you if you are saved.'

"'Dear me,' I said, 'but that's very wrong. That's not the way to work.'

"Well, after a bit I thought it wasn't fair to say things behind any one's back that I wouldn't say to their face, and that I would go and tell Miss Daniell what I thought. So I came.

"I think there was a drawing-room meeting going on that afternoon, and afterwards I was introduced to her, and I began talking to her."

"What did she say?"

"Oh, she listened. I told her what I had heard, and of course she laughed and explained that that was nonsense; so then I went on to tell her how *I* thought a Soldiers' Home should be carried on. I had never had such a good listener. So I talked and talked, and she listened, and smiled every now and then. At last I stopped, and she said very quietly, 'Yes, Mr. Z——, that is all very good for this world, but how about the world to come?'

"Well, as I went back to camp, being a very plain-spoken young man, I said to myself,

"'Y—— Z——, you're a fool. Here is a lady who has been working for soldiers probably before you were born. Now don't you suppose that she knows better than you? And do you think it's likely she would keep on with her way if she didn't find it answer?'

"So the next time I saw X—— I said to him:

"'Well, I've been to see Miss Daniell, and that's the place where I mean to go.'

"So that's how I came here; it is rather a funny story, isn't it?"

Of course in one sense no worker can ever be satisfied; when they look at the thousands around, their hearts and hands might well sink down. Would to God that all that has been done were increased a hundred fold! Would that where tens are touched thousands might be reached;

but it does not seem as though that would be by going in, as some suggest, for regular worldly amusements and attractions. The men are not little babies, but intelligent human beings, many of them grieved and wearied with the burden of their sins, many of them buoyant with youth and health and strength which they are ready to pour out with lavish enthusiasm in the service of Him who merits all their love, did they but know Him. So naturally it does not occur to Miss Daniell and her helpers that the methods which her honoured mother planned, and which have stood the vicissitudes of a quarter of a century need to be exchanged for others. Like the parson in Miss Ingelow's "Brothers and a Sermon," they may well say:—

> Still I search my soul
> To find if there be aught that can persuade
> To good, or aught forsooth that can beguile
> From evil, that I—miserable man
> If that be so!—have left unsaid, undone.

But it is not theatricals which will avail where the preaching of the Cross fails. And, besides, they have proved hundreds of times that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God. It has never given them any cause to be ashamed of it; and indeed they might well challenge the whole world to show them anything which can be so attractive, so enjoyable, so lasting as the knowledge of Him Whom to know is life eternal. If Jesus Christ lifted up will not attract the souls of men, what will? Imagine laying that down for mere weapons of earthly warfare! Of course you can make the Gospel as dull as anything else if it be preached without life and love and spiritual power; but I believe that the fact that those who carry on this work have themselves very clear apprehensions about sin and salvation, and the need of a new birth and a new life, is the secret of its success and permanence. A man knows where to go when he is spiritually awakened, and, thank God, he generally gets what he needs, whilst the healthy happy tone of the home-life keeps the men, one trusts, simple and natural, and obviates the danger of their becoming spiritual prigs.

"Tommy Atkins" is fond enough of standing treat for coffee and jam-tart and plum-duff; he is proud enough of bringing a new member out of his own room, or marching a comrade up to "join the pledge;" he will introduce a shy recruit to the Night school or the savings' bank, or ask that the musical-box may be lifted out of its case in the entry and set going for his amusement. But after all there seems nothing which most of them like better than the class-room. "Tommy Atkins at home" may truly be seen there.

Just one hour the nightly meeting lasts, and it need hardly be said that, despite the pleasing fictions with which Mr. Z—— was entertained, attendance is purely voluntary. I believe there are men who use the the Home every evening for months together, writing their letters, reading the papers, using the library books, playing on the piano, taking such meals as a soldier needs in the refreshment bar, who yet never even set foot upstairs, nor enter the large hall on Sundays. They can do exactly as they choose, though naturally they cannot but know how much pleasure it gives to see them upstairs. But the fact seems to be that a large proportion of them like that quiet evening hour better than all else that is provided for them in their Home.

The first bell rings at a quarter past seven, and those who are inclined go upstairs, where they sing one hymn after another till the second bell is heard and the tramp of feet upon the long staircase. Up they come, fine, tall, strong young men—not ashamed, many of them, as they take their places, to go on their knees for their own few words of silent prayer. The missionary, or some "old hand" among the men, is generally hovering round the door, finding places or hymn-books for new-comers, and giving a hearty grasp of the hand to most. The three "sweeps" are there, and plenty more of their cloth. The sad grave young face is not missing. Here comes a horse artilleryman swinging up the room, his spurs jingling as he treads, and there a cavalry sergeant, a little late, slips quietly into a back seat. Perhaps between thirty and forty soldiers made up the ordinary nightly meeting, and there are some civilians and women. Certainly this is not like the old days, when sixty or seventy would be the average nightly attendance. But then we must remember that times have changed. Short service and linked battalions, and perpetual drafts, and volunteerings, have altered matters; and at Aldershot there are always courses and classes of one kind or another going on—for the gymnasium, for cooking, for signalling, or as some of the men call it "signalising." Everybody seems very busy now-a-days at something or other. The old idle soldier is surely a phantom of the past. The very early age too at which mere boys now become non-commissioned officers tells heavily upon some of them, for it seems to be believed amongst the men that a lance-corporal, the lowest step of promotion, is the hardest-worked being in the British army. I well remember the tragic air with which a young lance-corporal in a Highland regiment, burst forth in the following recital of his woes, all in the broadest Scotch:

"The korrnul chases the officers, and the officers chase the sergeants, and the sergeants chase the corporals, and they all chase the lance-corporals!"

It must be remembered too, that Aldershot Camp is the quarters of the First Army Corps, which is supposed to be in perpetual and instant readiness to take the field, and therefore is to be wrought up to and kept at the highest state of perfection. Consequently the field-days and parades and manœuvres and sham fights now seem to be innumerable; and when these are over for the year that other enemy of steady work, the furlough season, advances with swift and steady feet.

Besides all this, other institutions, more or less similar, have now sprung up, and inevitably lessen the actual numbers in attendance at any one meeting, the British soldier being no more able than the Irish M.P. of happy memory, to "be in two places at once, not being a bird."

But even with all these changes and impediments, it is a wonderful sight to see every night in the week, these men gathered together with no other attraction than simple hymns and the quiet familiar speaking of words which go to their hearts.

These nightly meetings are mostly taken by officers, a good number of kind and ready helpers often being in camp. Sometimes Miss Daniell will speak herself, or a friend staying with her, or some clergyman or layman from a distance.

When I said just now that this meeting was held every night, I should have made one exception. Thursday is always given up to the Temperance Meeting, a subject which is very near a soldier's heart, and justly so, for he knows well, as multitudes of officers have also testified, that almost all the crime in the service arises directly or indirectly from the use of strong drink.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER XII.

ARNAUD POINTING TO THEIR NATIVE HILLS.

THE Vaudois had lived from generation to generation a life described by a modern writer as one of absolute seclusion, "without thought or forethought of foreign help or parsimonious store;" drinking draughts from their own grape-clusters, and saving of last year's harvest only seed enough for the next. They had the serenity given them by God and by Nature, with thanks for the good and submission for the evil; they persisted through better or worse in their fathers' ways, in the use of their fathers' tools, and in holding to their fathers' fields as faithfully as the trees to their roots, or the lichens to their rocks.

It was this simplicity, this serenity, and persistency, that carried them forward now. A regular army would have been hampered by a hundred needs and cares and strategies. Arnaud and his men went from Nyon to Salenches, from Mont Blanc to Mont Cenis, from the Arve to the Doire, stepping forward with the confidence of children, and the "foolishness" of the saints.

Some opposition they had already overcome.

They avoided the French garrison of Exilles, but they could not avoid the Marquess de Larrey, who with two thousand five hundred soldiers kept the passage of the Doire at Salabertrand.

They had hurried past Exilles, hoping to win this bridge as they had won the bridge over the Arve, but the night was falling as they came within sight of the place, and they were forced to halt at a village to snatch rest and a meal.

They asked if they could buy bread. The answer, significantly spoken, sounded threatening.

"Come on to the river, you will get there all you want; they are preparing excellent suppers for you."

It was Gaspard Botta to whom those words were said, and he reported them at once to Arnaud.

The chief shared his fears as to what they might mean, but there was no room for hesitation in Arnaud's heart He gathered his men for the usual evening prayer; perhaps his words were more intensely fervent, higher in their note of faith than they had been before, and the "Amen" that rose from the tightened bearded lips was fit echo to such petitions.

The darkness was lying on the world unbroken by moon or star; only the snow-gleam and the pale line below the western clouds gave light enough to see the strongly-rushing river, white here and there with broken water, and the dark span of the wooden arches stemming the torrent.

The tramp of their feet provoked the sharp challenge—

"Who goes there?"

"Friends," cried Arnaud; "all we ask is ——"

But the answer came in a tempest of bullets, and wild cries of "Kill! kill!" The mountaineers flung themselves on their faces, and the deadly hail flew almost harmless above their heads. Then when the French muskets were empty, Arnaud dashed on.

"Courage," he called. "Forward, Vaudois! the bridge is won!"

And it was even so! The fierce onslaught of the desperate men confused and shattered the enemy's lines. Ten or twelve wounded, fourteen or fifteen killed, was the Vaudois loss—and their gain was the passage of the Doire, the open door to their valleys!

The French had fled. The town was at the mercy of its captors. They seized what military stores they needed, and blew up what ammunition they could not carry away. They did sup well that night; the threat had turned to a prophecy.

The next day they reached the summit of the mountain of Sci.

It is a high crest overlooking the valley of Clusone, fearful enough when howling with the gales of winter, and dark with the shadow of snow-clouds; but to-day the sun bathed it in warm light, and the sky shone over it, fair as a shield of silver. Arnaud halted his army there on the brow, and silently pointed to the scene before them.

There were the well-known landmarks; there the sharp horizon-line of their own mountains, the hills of their native land.

Before their eyes it lay, bright in the sunshine, the country of the Vaudois—the home for which they had hungered—the land for which they had longed. The very wind as it blew from off it seemed charged as with breath of blessing.

They knelt reverently, with one accord, lifting moist eyes to the blue sky-depths, while Arnaud, their captain and their minister, poured out thanksgiving and praise for the Help that had brought them thus far. "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, that they that sow in tears may reap in joy. Though we walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive us. Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of our enemies, and Thy right hand shall save us."

Those Hebrew psalms came to their lips in the day of toil and suffering, and they come still to all Christian souls, fitting all needs, singing as they do of human sins and failures, of Divine forgiveness, and God's triumphant glory; they stir the innermost hearts of men as they echo down through the ages, as true and real now as when first sung by the sweet singers of Israel.

Each day increased the difficulties gathering about the devoted band. The news of their approach had reached Piedmont, and troops were on the alert to intercept their march.

The valleys were not to be gained without a deadly struggle; and Arnaud knew it.

Eleven days after leaving Geneva they set foot in the first Vaudois village, Balsille, in the vale of St. Martino. It was empty; the new inhabitants had fled down the river-bank towards Le Perrier, where a strong force of Piedmontese soldiers were forming across the valley.

But the Vaudois avoided the force they could scarcely hope to defeat. Arnaud turned to the south-westward, up the gorge of Prali, intending to reach the valley of Lucerna by the Giuliano pass, leaving Le Perrier and its garrison on his left.

There was utter peace up this mountain valley, the peace of the great hills in the warmth and hush of the summer. The church—the "Temple of Prals," as they had used to call it—was still standing; it had been transformed into a place for Romish worship, but the white walls raised by Vaudois hands were there, and the roof-tree that had echoed to the people's prayers for generations.

Henri Botta bared his head as he entered it. He gave small heed to the movements and exclamations of his comrades, who were sternly removing all superstitious ornaments and popish adornments; his heart had gone back to the old days when he had come here from Rora to woo Madeleine, who had lived in yonder farm-stead all her girlish years—one could see it yet, the broken gable rising sharp above the tufted chestnut grove; and there in that humble cottage by the foot-bridge, the heroic pastor Leydat had lived—Leydat, who had been martyred in 1686, seized while singing psalms with his hunted flock in a cave below the mighty crest of Mont Cournan. Henri Botta almost thought he could yet hear his well-known voice as he read from the great Bible chained on the desk by the further arch; a voice easily to be held in memory, with its deep cadences and rolling utterance.

THE CHAINED BIBLE.

Leydat was dead—blessedly dead among God's saints in God's keeping; the farm-stead was wrecked; the great Bible and its clasps torn away—and Madeleine—who could say what had befallen her since they parted at the entrenchments across the Rora valley? How long ago it seemed!

And the house-master held his own withered hand before his eyes, gazing at it curiously, evidence as it was of his age and infirmity. Such a shaking, knotted, feeble old hand! A marvel, is it not, that one so aged and broken as he should have managed to live through the days of their daring march hence from Switzerland?

"God has been my helper," he murmured. "He, and His gift to me, my boy Gaspard."

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. XI.—P. 414.—COURAGE, Num. xiii. 17–20.

Caleb	Josh. xv. 16, 17.
Obed-edom	2 Sam. vi. 7–10.
Ulai	Dan. viii. 2; vi. 7, 10.
Ramoth-gilead	1 Kings xxii. 3, 4, 30.
Abed-nego	Dan. iii. 5, 6, 12.
Goliath	1 Sam. xvii. 4, 10, 49.
Elijah	1 Kings xix. 1–3.