

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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



EVENTIDE.

[By *Rudolf Blind.*

“PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.”

BY THE REV. JOHN MONRO GIBSON, D.D.

“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”—*Heb. ii. 10.*

NEVER has the mystery of pain been felt as it is in these days of ours. The progress of modern science, while it has brought relief to some forms of suffering, has set the vast mass of it in such a strong light that the thought of it is more burdensome than it has ever been. This it is, more than anything else, which makes it difficult for thoughtful people to exercise a steady and unwavering faith in a God of Love. “Nature red in tooth and claw with ravine,” sometimes seems to “shriek against the creed.” It is this which has doomed the old deism, and rendered it in our day an almost impossible belief. In a less enlightened age it seemed possible, by a mere effort of the intellect, to rise “from nature up to nature’s God;” but now it is seen that without more light than nature alone can give, this is impossible. More clearly than ever it is manifest that the world has only one Sun, even “the Sun of righteousness,” whose claim to be “the Light of the world,” is more and more abundantly justified as the centuries roll on.

The inspired author of this epistle has been perplexed with the mysteries of human life, especially with the thought of man’s greatness as lord of nature, side by side with his utter helplessness in the face of its forces—all things put under his feet; and yet by a strange irony of fate, the powers of nature tyrannise over him, so that he who was born to be nature’s lord has become nature’s sport, a grain of sand, or a little insect in his eye enough to torture him, a whiff of poisoned air enough to end him. Revolving such things in his mind, he asks, “What is man?” And he finds no satisfaction till he beholds the Man, till he sees Jesus, who had passed through that stage of subjection and humiliation, who had been thwarted and tortured and buffeted—the Lord of all made a servant of servants, the Lord of Glory become the jest of the lowest of the people, the Lord of Life brought down to the dust of death—now “crowned with glory and honour,” glory and honour which would have been unattainable, except through that dark and bitter experience. The mystery of pain was at its very darkest there; for where was ever such shame and suffering without one pang of it deserved? Well might that scene on Calvary be spoken of as “the hour and power of darkness.” He was “the Man of Sorrows,” and all the sorrow of His life is concentrated in the agony of its awful close. There is nothing to compare with it anywhere. “Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.” There is nothing to compare with it in the east of London; nothing to compare with it in any of our hospitals; nothing to compare to it in all the long and dreadful story of human woe. Absolute sinlessness on the one hand;

unparalleled pain on the other—what could be more impenetrably dark? Now see how this holy man of old, who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, thinks of it: “It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” It is well, it is well. These sufferings need no apology. They are no contradiction of the love of God; but its illustration; it became Him, for the sake of the high and holy and blessed end He had in view, the bringing of many sons to glory, it became Him to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

There is too much in this great text to attempt to overtake at once. Let us then concentrate our attention on the concluding words, that we may see what light is shed by them on this great mystery of pain—the three words “perfect through sufferings.”

There is first the simple and familiar thought suggested by the preposition *through*, that suffering is a stage through which man passes to his perfection. This is, as we have said, a simple and familiar thought; but simple and familiar as it is, we cannot have it if we have not Christ. Without faith in Him and the hope which comes of it, there is no way out of the gloom. As a sorrowful illustration of this we may refer to some of the latest words of a chief spokesman of the unbelieving science of the day. Giving his personal experience as a seeker after truth, without any help from Christ, he says: “Like Dante,

‘In the midway of this our mortal life
I found me in a gloomy wood;’

but unlike Dante I cannot add, ‘because the straight way had been lost,’ on the contrary, I had and have the firmest conviction that I never left the true way—the straight road; and that this wood led nowhere else but into the dark depths of a wild and tangled forest.”

We have all lately been reading with great interest of a journey, which is and will be famous, through a wild and tangled forest in the centre of Africa. We have read not only with interest but with admiration of the indomitable courage, the unyielding determination, the inexhaustible patience and endurance shown by the great explorer in that long and weary and terrible journey. But suppose now that Stanley had had no reason to believe that there was any end to that forest. Suppose that neither he nor his men had had the least idea that there was any prospect of even getting through it, do you think they would have shown that courage and patience? They could not have stood it a week. The expedition would have been a total failure; or rather it would never

have been undertaken at all. It was the expectation of getting through it, confident expectation on the part of the captain, and confidence in the captain on the part of the men, that supported them through all these toils and sufferings, and at last crowned the enterprise with complete success. How touching was that racing and rejoicing and rapturous shouting when the forest was at last cleared, and the sun shone above them, and the country spread out fair and promising before them. There was no complaining of the leader then, no murmuring over the toils and hungers and pains of the way. And when at last they reached the shining shore, saw the Albert Nyanza sparkling in the sunlight, and after some further trials and delays, met him whom they expected to be waiting for them there, all the past seemed fully justified.

A most imperfect picture this must be, of course, of the Christian pilgrimage through this mortal life. The wood is too dark and gloomy; and the lake is not nearly bright enough; but, fresh and vivid as it is in our minds, it may serve at least to mark the contrast with the Agnostic view of life which finds itself in a gloomy wood, and after a life spent in patient threading of its mazes, has nothing better to tell than that this wood leads nowhere else but into the dark depths of a wild and tangled forest, with leopards and lions in it, and the hungry wolf that “with privy paw devours apace and nothing said.” It is indeed, an evil thing and a bitter, when men forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Only by looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, can we keep in sight the goal of this our pilgrimage, and so have the heart to run with patience the race that is set before us. If we turn away from Him, we turn away from light and hope, and plunge into the depths of a gloomy wood, which, though it may not seem as yet so bad as the depths of a central African forest, must prove in course of time far worse, to those who pursue their own dreary way, heedless of Him who “as the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

But we have dwelt long enough on the proposition. Let us try the adjective now, “*perfect* through sufferings.” We must first see that we clearly understand the word. We are in the habit of using it in a moral sense; but that is not the meaning of it in this passage, or almost anywhere in the Scriptures. It needed no suffering to make the Captain of our salvation perfect in that sense. He was without sin from the beginning to the end of His pure and spotless life. The perfection referred to is the full development of the man Christ Jesus as the leader of the many sons to glory. Just as the child Jesus had to grow in wisdom and in stature, in order that His physical and intellectual development might be complete, so He had to suffer in order that the supremely noble and manly qualities of His human nature—fortitude, patience, endurance, unconquerable love—might be tested and developed. The sufferings were of course necessary in another

sense, a sense suggested by the title “Captain of our salvation;” for without these sufferings there could have been no atonement for sin, so that in order to the completion of His work as our Redeemer, it was necessary that He should suffer many things of the chief priests and scribes, and be put to death; but, over and above this familiar and fundamental view of the sufferings of Christ, there is obviously in the mind of the inspired writer, a personal sense in which the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings. He must be “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” in order to be a perfect representative of our common humanity. This will become very clear and vivid to us, if we allow ourselves for a moment to imagine Him as passing through life without any suffering. What would be the effect? Would not that great life be shorn of all its glory? Would not that matchless character lose all its strength? The time may come when men may traverse in a Pullman car that very road which the African explorer has just penetrated; but who will then think the exploit worth chronicling? There are those in our day, claiming to be intelligent too, who would set lightly aside all the story of the gospels, making little or nothing of what Jesus did and suffered, counting it enough to pay some heed to what He taught. Give us, they say, the Sermon on the Mount, and the parables of the Prodigal Son and the good Samaritan; and all the rest may go. Aye, and with it all our hope would go, and all the light that shines upon the darkest places of our life, from the burdened heart and scarred face of our Emmanuel. The Sermon on the Mount pealed forth in silver tones from heaven would have been better than nothing, certainly; but what would the sermon be without the Preacher? And what the Preacher without His holy life? And what would His holiness have amounted to without temptation? and where would the temptation have been, if He had not been exposed to suffering? Turn it round and round in your mind; and the more you think of it, the more you will see how necessary it was, not only as an atonement for our sins, but as a personal qualification to be the leader of the many sons to glory, that He should be made perfect through sufferings.

Well, now, if the one pure and holy Man that ever lived needed to be made perfect through sufferings, how much more such as we? If for the joy that was set before Him, He was willing to endure the cross, despising the shame, should we, in view of the glory that is before us, repine at any sufferings through which we too must pass? Oh, if we would only see—I was about to say believe, but it is not a matter of faith only, it can be plainly seen—how good it is for us to have to suffer, how necessary in order to the making of us! We grumble at the things that go against us, and think of ourselves as miserably unfortunate, and think how much to be envied are those who seem to get everything their own way—whereas it would be the undoing of us to have everything our own way. Suppose, now, my friend of forty or fifty years old, you had your life to live over

again, and could have it just as you liked, could have a guarantee that you would never meet a single difficulty, never have to bear a single cross, never be disappointed, never lose anything, never fail in anything, never have an hour's discomfort or five minutes' pain, not the smallest thing to complain of or worry about all your life long—would you choose it? And if you did choose it, what sort of a specimen of humanity would you be at forty? A big baby. There would be no manliness, no womanliness in you. Would anybody dream of asking your assistance if there was anything to be done that needed some nerve for the doing of it? Who would ever be mad enough to ask you to go out on an exploring expedition, or on any expedition? You would be good for nothing but sitting in an easy-chair, and eating and sleeping, if the want of exercise had not so spoiled your digestion that you could not even do that.

A great deal more than half the trouble men have with the mystery of pain, arises from the shallow notion that the chief end of man is happiness. It is nothing of the sort. On that basis human life here is certainly a failure. It is a failure even when we let any number of individuals go, and try to content ourselves with "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," the minority of wretches being supposed to find their satisfaction in the fact that they are a minority after all, and that humanity on the whole is happy because the majority are. On any such supposition the sufferings of the present time are an impenetrable mystery. But instead of the vulgar idea of happiness, take the Scripture idea of perfection through sufferings, and what a difference! Look at the text again: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory"—what kind of glory? Let me quote another passage to make this plain. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Revealed *in us*, remember. Let us not vulgarise that grand word glory too. Let us not imagine that it means splendour, magnificence, grand spectacular display. No, no, it is a glory to be revealed in us, to be wrought into our characters, glory like that of Christ, the glory which comes of the surmounting of difficulties, the triumph over adverse circumstances, the gaining of victory in no toy game, but in a real contest of opposing forces. "To him that overcometh" is the promise of the heavenly crown. And when the victory is gained, when the conquest is complete, when our manhood shall have been fully developed, when through sufferings we shall have been made perfect, then it shall be plainly seen that it was worth it all, worth it all,—that even in the worst cases "the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in" those who, following the Captain of their salvation, have like Him been made perfect through sufferings.

Let us in a few closing words direct our thoughts more definitely to the great central light on human sorrow, the cross of Christ. What strange extremes meet in that wondrous cross. It is the nadir of darkness and the zenith of light. Truly the light shineth in darkness. Recall to memory how constantly the Lord Jesus associates glory with the cross. When James and John asked to sit on His right hand and His left in His glory, His answer was the question, "Can you drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" When, by the coming of the Greeks, He was reminded of His approaching death upon the cross, He exclaims, "Now is my Father glorified, and I am glorified in Him." When He leaves the upper room to take the road to Gethsemane and Calvary, He does it with these words on His lips, "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Was He wrong? Was shame the overshadowing thing in the cross? Was it? Is not the shame overshadowed by the glory? "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth His glory." But did that beginning of miracles, or all the miracles together, manifest His glory quite as much as that endurance of the cross and despising of the shame, on account of which the name of Jesus has been set above every name in heaven and on earth? The world has never had an illustration of glory to compare with that which was given on the day when Jesus of Nazareth bowed His head and gave up the ghost.

There is no true glory apart from suffering. Before we sound the praises of the man who has accomplished some great thing, we want to know what it cost him, what forthputting of strenuous endeavour, what exertion of manly courage and intrepidity, what endurance of pain, or shame or wrong; and if it cost him little or nothing, we may congratulate ourselves and him on what is accomplished, but we speak not of glory. "No cross, no crown," is not a mere statement of an arbitrary law; it lies in the nature of things. O men and women, if you wish to see what glory is, behold the Man with the crown of thorns and the purple robe; and if you wish to know what glory is, take up your cross and follow Him; far from murmuring or complaining, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." "Behold, we count them happy that endure." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."



OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER XIV. — AWAKENING.



The sickness that lurks to devour, sparing neither rich nor poor, high nor low, had stalked quite as suddenly and unexpectedly into the household in Grosvenor Square, as it did to the humble lodgings where the young governess found two kind Samaritans to take her in and nurse her back to health.

There was not more kindness or care or tenderness in the large house than in the small one, but the weapons with which the warfare with death was carried on were of finer make and better sharpened than those the two humble women could command. For in this contest, as in every other, money sometimes helps the victory.

The roadway before the door of the Grosvenor Square mansion was laid with bark to still the sounds of traffic; the physicians paid their visits twice a day, and they were the most eminent that London could produce—whereas, Mary had to be content with the services of a young surgeon as poor and little known to fame as she was her-

self, with nothing but an indomitable will and energy and love of his work to help him on his way. Everything that money could buy or procure was at the service of the sick lady: a nurse came from a great hospital and took possession of her by day, while another relieved guard at night; every sound was hushed, and the servants went about as if they were shod with silence.

All the gaities, the dinners, dances, festivities of one kind and another, that marked the season, were brought to a premature and abrupt end. Mr. Vivian refused all invitations on his own account, and came home nightly, dining in silence opposite his daughter, who was silent too, pondering many things. Lord Reigate called or sent daily to make enquiries, but he was not admitted to the house of sorrow, and perhaps he had no wish to be invited in. Those grim reminders of death which come in the form of sudden illness, of drawn blinds and a funeral car pacing slowly from some stately door, are never welcome in Vanity Fair, where no one likes to think that his summons may come next. For while this life is

all, and the darkness beyond has no hope to illumine it, can we wonder that men cling to it with passionate desire, and turn aside from the lessons and warnings of death?

Jim came up to town as often as he could, and sometimes sat for a time in the shaded silent room by his mother's sick bed. The poor lady, though she was very ill, seemed to be conscious of his presence, and to be soothed by it. Honoria stole in sometimes too, but she had not won the place in her mother's heart that Jim held securely, and there appeared to be nothing that she could do. All the services that the invalid needed other hands were able to render; the task was fulfilled far better and more successfully (or so she thought) than she could have accomplished it.

After all, the sick room in the Euston Road, which all the noises of the noisy street invaded, and where no special appliances were available, had some privileges which the banker's wealth could not purchase, for the service there was without reward.

A hundred very gentle pieties and charities hovered round the bed where Mary lay. But yesterday she was a stranger, friendless and forsaken, and already love had given her a place

that many far richer in worldly store might envy. The poor professor had scant enough stock of worldly gear, but even he returned from those mysterious walks he was always taking with an offering for the sufferer, if it were only a tinted leaf or two or a spray of autumn berries rescued—who knows with what infinite pains and toil—from some green remoteness beyond the wilderness of brick?

He made Janey the medium of these little gifts, and the moments of their intercourse came to have for her a curious, half-pathetic, half-comic significance, as if it were a play these two were playing—a scene out of the yellow pages of Molière.

It was to Janey too, that Mr. Augustus brought his gifts of fruit and game for the sick girl. It was less difficult to accentuate the comic element in one's traffic with Mr. Augustus, who presented the grapes and pears as if he had purloined them from his own table at dessert, and delivered over the pheasant or partridge with the air of being owner of a moor.

Unfortunately the highest moral worth does not save a man from contracting tiresome little habits and mannerisms, and few have insight enough to pierce the outer garment of affectation, and reach the real underlying good. It is so easy to take hold of some one outstanding characteristic of a man and to judge him by that, thinking we know the whole, forgetting that the lives of most of us are overlaid with a fungoid coat of "crusted matter," which custom or accident, inheritance or wayward habit, has accumulated there. Well for us if beneath this alien growth the sap runs sweet and unvitiated.

Miss Lemming flew in and out of the house in those days of distress, her bodice bristling with pins, but her heart beneath full of kindly impulses. Scraps and tags of Mary Anne's last yearnings in the way of finery clung to her spare skirts, but there was no one to betray the secret of the midnight hours when she sat stitching, half blind and weary, that she might spare a daylight hour to cheer the watchers. Surely if we could choose, we should ask that our hours of pain might be soothed by kindnesses such as these.

Charlie came too—for the boy had a good heart—and the sound of his rapid foot on the stairs was like music in the ears of the anxious nurses. He went to the stately house in the square too, and brought reports with him of how matters stood there.

One day he told Allie and Janey that he had seen Miss Vivian.

"She looks awfully ill," he said; "but she was very gracious, and she thanked me for coming. Mrs. Vivian isn't out of danger yet. I shouldn't have thought she cared so much."

"Do you think it so strange she should love her mother?" demanded Janey. She could not remember her own mother, but the tie between parent and child had always seemed to her peculiarly close and sacred.

"Yes," said Charlie, with a queer smile. "Fashionable mothers and daughters haven't very much time to cultivate the affections—their duties

to society demand too much. Jim is fond of his mother, though; he's awfully cut up."

"Lieutenant Vivian is your hero."

"Yes," assented Charlie; "that he is, and a better hero than your pig-headed doctor."

"Our doctor has more brains in his little finger than your soldier has in all his head," retorted Janey.

The two were always falling out and quarrelling like foolish children over this subject. Charlie and the young surgeon had met once, when the former came to see his friends and the latter was on duty, and had taken an instinctive dislike to each other, having indeed very little in common to draw them together.

"Stuck-up young fool," was the doctor's verdict; "can't forget that he has had to come down, and is always dragging in his fine acquaintances. I wonder a sensible woman like Miss Lindsell can stand his airs."

"Conceited, dogmatic prig," was Charlie's inward retort; "thinks he's born to set the world right, and is as proud as a peacock because he has pulled this sick girl round, as if it weren't Allie's nursing that has done it. I wonder Allie doesn't see through his pretensions."

It was the young doctor's skill and care that had conquered Janey's reluctant regard. She still found it wholesome to administer snubs personally, but she defended him in his absence.

"He has cured Mary," she said to Charlie; "and what have all your consulting physicians done for poor Mrs. Vivian? You told us yourself she can't recover."

This was of course most unreasonable and illogical, since the conditions differed in each case; and even the bumptious young man of medicine would have been the first to own that his skill would have availed nothing where the highest talent and experience had failed, but women, as we all know, are guided less by reason than by impulse.

So the two quarrelled and made it up, after the manner of children who are too dependent on each other to indulge in a long fit of the sulks; and Mary Grainger got better and came back to the world, made brighter for her by so much unexpected kindness, and Mrs. Vivian gave up the battle and sank day by day, till the last of all came, and the record of her years on earth was closed.

Then the undertaker, who is feared and dreaded as a spectre in the gay world where this poor lady had lived, took possession of the house with his underlings, and there was the sad bustle of a funeral where a little while ago there had been marriage preparations.

Charlie, as an old family friend, went to the grave with the mourners—surely as sad a procession as the world could show, a parting with no hope of a future meeting to lighten its bitterness, dust committed to dust.

"The sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection"—with what a chill of sad despair the words fell on one mourner's ear. Honoria stood there, outwardly calm and stately as a marble statue, but within what fires were raging, what longings, what cries that found no articulate voice.

Her mother's illness had made that forced pause in Honoria's life which was perhaps necessary to show her the path of dishonour she was treading. In the whirl of gaiety she had found it possible, by the exercise of a determined will, to shut her ears to the appeals of conscience, to close her eyes to the vision of coming degradation, but death with its awful rebuke had swept from her mind all its carefully guarded sophistries. That final surrender made in despair, without hope, had shaken her soul to its foundations. A great horror of darkness was on her; and in her searching anguish from which she found no relief, no way of escape, but one thing was clear. Her marriage was no longer possible. Perhaps, unknown to herself, the regenerative process had begun in her after all, since she never wavered for a moment from this decision.

In those first dreary days when all the house was disorganised, unused as yet to the new blank in it, she sought her father in the library where he sat in solitude, and told him of her intention to ask Lord Reigate to release her from her promise.

"Your marriage?" he said, looking up heavily, and speaking as if of some forgotten topic newly recalled to his mind—"of course Reigate wouldn't think of pressing for it immediately—it would be—indecent."

"I do not mean the putting off, papa. I mean that I can never marry him."

The banker looked at her in a kind of dull amaze. Bereavement coming after a long life of prosperity had crushed him. He had married for love, and though in the course of years he had drifted inevitably away from the wife of his youth, he was truly attached to her still and missed and mourned her, and felt uncomfortable without her. He was too depressed to be angry, and anger in the mourning house would have been unseemly to his mind, but he said coldly—

"That would be dishonourable, Honoria. You are virtually pledged. I can understand your feeling—your poor mother scarce a week in her grave. It is very natural and proper, but in a little while, when—when you have had time to get over this"—even in the beginnings of his grief he recognised that there is an hour for sorrow to cease—"when you have got over it, my dear, and—are like yourself again—"

"Ah, papa, it is not that," said Honoria, with sad self-repression. "It is not mamma's death, though, perhaps, but for it I might not have listened. I might have turned a deaf ear and gone my own way. But, papa, long ago, almost from the first, I knew it was wrong."

"Wrong?" repeated her father vaguely, then he frowned. "You don't know what you are saying, Honoria."

"Be a little patient with me, papa," she besought him, "and I will try to tell you. I know it is my fault—all my fault." Her voice was sad and beseeching, her pride dethroned. Was this the haughty Honoria who had worn the diamonds, and suffered her friends' congratulations in cold and silent disdain?

"I meant to consent to marry Lord Reigate because I thought I should get pleasure to myself

out of the position—influence, and grandeur, and power; I wanted these—I loved them above all things, no matter with what hindering conditions they came. I never cared for him, how could I?" she cried, with a little natural outburst; "even you could never expect me to care for a man like that—a man who has not lived a good life."

"That is not a womanly way to speak, Honoria."

"Ah, but I must speak, I never cared for him, and I knew that I might come to hate him—the thought underlay everything, that I should come to hate him and despise myself, and yet I meant to marry him."

"You are morally bound; you have accepted his presents," began the banker, feeling that the moment for remonstrance had arrived. But she went on with more agitated haste, though with broken pauses between—

"I know, I know, but to go on would be a worse sin, oh, a thousandfold worse. I have had time to think of it all—oh, the weeks have been so dreary and so long—I had nothing to do, nothing in the world to do; mamma didn't need me; nothing to do but to fight and to go over and over the old arguments. At first it was all rebellion. I wanted to take my way. I would not listen to the inward voice. I told myself that, come what would in the way of misery later, I should have my hour of triumph. Even the thought of coming sorrow did not move me at first. I was very wicked. I could not feel, my heart was like a stone. And then"—her voice sank to a whisper—"there came the night when mamma died. It came sooner than we thought, you know, the end of all; and I was alone with her for a little while—the nurse had gone to rest because mamma was sleeping, and we two were alone, quite alone. Then suddenly mamma sat up and looked at me. Till I die I shall never forget her awful look of misery and despair and dread."

"'God is calling me,' she said, 'calling me to judgment, and I am afraid to die. Is there no way of escape? Nora, if you were to say a prayer, He might hear you.'

"And I couldn't; I was dumb. I had been hardening my heart, and God gave me no words to say. I was dumb. I couldn't help her; and then—and then—without a word of hope or cheer or comfort, she went away, always with that look on her face."

She sank down on her knees beside him, and bent her head, and the banker put out a trembling hand and laid it unsteadily on her shoulder. He was carried away by her agitation, and in that moment he could think of nothing but of the tragic sorrow her words called up.

Presently she lifted her head. Her beautiful eyes were tearless and very sad.

"It never leaves me," she said, "night or day. I cannot get any rest or peace for it, the thought that if I had known and loved God and obeyed His will, I might have been a comfort to her at the last. And when I think of my life all these years, and how I have only lived for what I could gain of pleasure or satisfaction, struggling away

from conscience—oh, the time seems very short for atonement.”

She was thinking only of herself, scourging herself with her new remorse and anguish, yet he shrank at her words. For had not he too bowed down to mammon, and made as though there were no other God?

“If there were something I could do,” she went on hesitatingly, “something to make up—if there were work for others, oh, I should not mind how hard, some way to pay the debt!” She groped for words that should fit the depths of her new

need. “It is all dark now, but by-and-by there might come light, and rest and peace.”

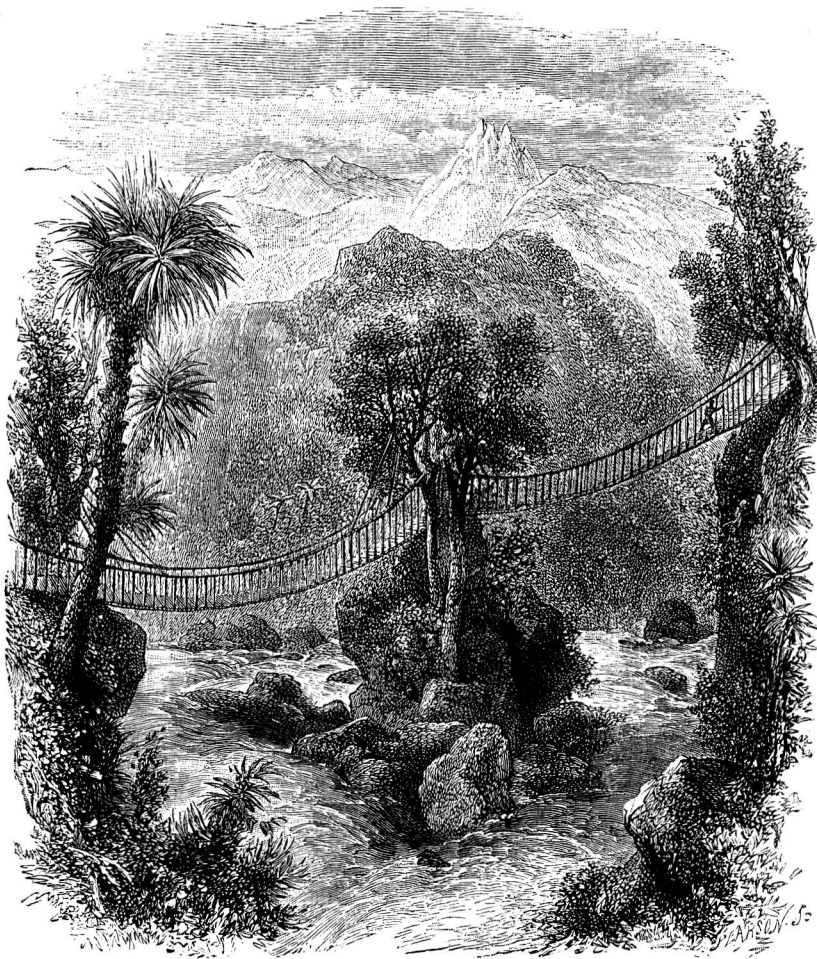
He did not answer her, but he still kept his hand upon her shoulder.

Neither of them remembered the object for which she had sought her father. If either of them had done so, it would have been impossible to reopen the question then, the depths of feeling had been too solemnly stirred. And it was never reopened, for that same night Honoria herself wrote to Lord Reigate—a letter from which there was no appeal, and returned his gifts.

THE BATAHS OF SUMATRA.

A NEW CHAPTER IN MISSIONARY ANNALS.

II.



IN BATAH-LAND.

LET us enter one of the villages. Unhappily we cannot approach them without perceiving that conflict of village with village is the normal state of things. Tread carefully, or you may (unless heavily shod: the natives are bare-

footed) tear your feet with hidden but sharply-pointed bamboo spikes. Safely past these we reach the one entrance to the village. Sometimes this is underground, and thus easily blocked up. First comes a deep ditch, then a thorny hedge,

and then a strong palisade. These surround the houses, and thus each village is clearly defined, forming a *kampong* (hence the Anglicised word so common throughout the East "compound"), and can be easily so protected as to become a formidable fort. The houses may so stand as to form two or three streets. As soon as you enter one you see the confusion and squalor usual in Malayan streets. Children and pigs, goats and dogs, ponies and fowls, run about as members of the same family, and possessed of equal rights. But look at the houses. These are of two kinds, one occupying one side of the street, and the other the opposite, and each include the house in front of it as its adjunct. The houses are all on piles, but those on one side are boarded and windowless, while the opposite buildings are open or nearly entirely so on all sides. The boarded house is the sleeping house of the father and mother and daughters and younger sons of the family. Sometimes it is of considerable dimensions, and occupied by four or five families, whose rooms are at night divided from each other by mats suspended from the ceiling. The open house (called *sofo*) consists of two storeys: the upper being a storeroom for grain and other produce that will "keep," and the lower is used during the day for consultations or handicraft, such as weaving, and at night as the sleeping place for unmarried men. Each village has also its *balli*, or town-hall, where the village business is transacted and festivals held and strangers received. These villages vary in size from a population of thirty to three hundred souls. There is remarkable uniformity in the customs of each village. As a rule, there are two substantial meals in the day, the first between nine and ten in the morning, and the other about six in the evening. They are fond of palm wine, but are a sober people, and of course inveterate betel-chewers. As to honesty and truthfulness there is very conflicting testimony, but probably as it respects each community in its own limits, they are superior in these respects to the Malays who surround them. Marsden says, "Theft is almost unknown among them; being strictly honest in their dealings with each other." No doubt the communities differ from each other, and hence some who profess to know them declare them to be "sly and mendacious," and the writer of a "Short Account of the Batahs," in Moor's "Notices of the Eastern Archipelago," actually declares: "I am sorry to say I cannot allow them a single virtue!" No doubt, like Malays, gambling is an ungovernable passion with them. I saw much of this among Malays, and I am ashamed to say in connection especially with cock-fighting, and I can readily believe that Batahs can be worked up in games of hazard to such frenzy as to stake on the chances of success all their property, their children, their wives, and even their personal liberty. A man will go on gambling till nothing is left but that he should be sold as a slave. Marsden, however, adds that sometimes "a generous winner" will let off the unfortunate loser, on "condition of his killing a horse and making a public entertainment." Slavery through debt is common, as it is throughout the

Indian Archipelago; but cruelty to slaves is well-nigh unknown, and every slave may buy his freedom.

Nothing perhaps more clearly indicates the state of civilisation in any people as its treatment of woman. It is in this particular that Mohammedanism so signally fails; there are no laws among the Batahs to enforce monogamy, but, as a rule, the men have but one wife each. There is a proverb current among them to this effect: "A war between villages comes at last to an end, but a war between women who have the same husband never ends." Of course the customs belonging to marriage, as amongst uncivilised tribes generally, include as their essence the purchase of a wife.¹

This at once degrades woman to the position of goods chattel, i.e. movable property, like cattle, of which word it is really simply another form, something to be disposed of again when the purchaser chooses; not that he can sell her into slavery, as amongst Malays, except for adultery, but he can return her to her family if she is without an adolescent son. In some districts actually the marriage tie is indissoluble except for adultery. A woman on her marriage seems to lay aside all her ornaments. Marsden is therefore probably right when he states that men alone are deemed responsible beings, and women are without proper individuality, and hence, while in cases of adultery the man is punishable with death, the woman is only shaved and sold into slavery, and even from this she may be redeemed. The purchase-money for a wife varies considerably, from about a sum or property equal to five pounds, up to fifty pounds or more, a man often borrowing the money required, and yielding as security for its return his services as a slave. Considering these facts, we shall not be a little surprised to find that on the whole woman is well treated.

A singular usage prevails which requires a man to marry if possible his maternal cousin, and perhaps in this intermarriage within blood relationship is found the explanation that the women look so prematurely old. Certainly it is not because they work hard while their husbands amuse themselves. Comparing Battah women with Malay we shall find both are overworked, that day by day they labour beyond their strength, and hence both become rapidly old, really and in appearance; but all who know both races declare that the Battah women are better off in every way than the Malay, and their husbands decidedly work harder than their wives. Both husbands and wives fondle their children and spoil them.

There is an impression which would be immediately produced by an observation of the people. It is the absence of a central and governing authority. As we move about among them, we hear nothing of a king or general council. There have been pretensions to a principal chieftainship, based on hereditary office, but there has never been any real power; no central authority giving law and coherence to the entire tribe. I am told by Dr. Schreiber of a particular chief

¹ As to the special peculiarities found in Sumatra, see Sir John Lubbock's "Origin of Civilisation," &c., 1882.

who lived near the lake who managed by his ancestral relationships to acquire some authority over the surrounding country, but he has lost his assumed position entirely, and is now practically an outcast. The unit with the race is not so much the individual as the family, or the families, which, in combination, form a village community.

The people consist, in fact, of a collection of separate and often contending republics. Each village has its chief, and this chief has his village council; chief differing from chief in importance by his hereditary position, the dimensions of the villages, and the extent of the lands belonging to it, and also by his personal accomplishments. Throughout those communities certain race customs prevail, but each contains within itself the power and the functions of government, though, of course, in the most primitive fashion.

Between village and village there are prevailing jealousies, and standing questions of contention, and incidental quarrels, which bring them into the habit of petty but persistent conflict. Often, as in the village communities of India, the antagonism is caused by some dispute about a bit of land. One of the Rhenish Missionaries writes in the report of 1837, "Since I have been here I have built a beautiful new house close to the Tobah lake on an open space fifty feet above its level; the new station lies between two inimical parties. Both declare that the land belongs to them, but both have made over their rights to me."

These chronic animosities are in many cases perpetuated from generation to generation, though the original occasion may have been very trivial and long since disposed of. Sometimes, when the actual fight takes place, it is ended by the killing of the first man, when the side to which he belonged is adjudged defeated, and the warriors on both sides retire from the field. But the fight may soon be resumed from some new offence, to end again in like fashion. Sometimes, especially where we are now supposing ourselves to be looking around us, the conflicts are on a larger scale and seem never to cease. Not that many lives are ever lost in actual conflict, but the miseries of war are constantly present, owing to the ordinary industries of the people being abandoned.

Sometimes famine follows the neglect of cultivating or wasting the crops. To prevent this, as has been intimated, it is sometimes agreed to suspend the activities of war during the intervals required for attention to the fields under culture. As soon as the reaper's work is done the fighting begins again.

This state of habitual conflict (and yet the Enc. Brit. vol. iii. 442, declares, "The people show a very peaceful disposition, but are valorous when occasion demands") no doubt explains the remarkable fact that the Dutch government has so far extended its paternal rule, not through conquest, but because these communities have voluntarily sought it so as to secure a principal and indisputable authority which shall settle their disputes and compel peace. The government, however, moves but slowly. The country comprising Silindung and Tobah came under its dominion in 1878, but apparently, it was not

till 1885 that its sagacious system of electing and appointing a native chief for each defined district came into operation.

I have ventured in the foregoing sketch to act as a guide to my readers, but I cannot undertake to be their interpreter. True there are Malay words (which I can understand) in the Battah language, and other words resembling Malay words (the numerals, for instance (1) M. Satu, B. Sada, (2) M. Dua, B. Dua, (3) M. Tiga, B. Tolu, (4) M. ampat, B. opat); but the languages are essentially different, while the characters used in writing are with the Battah original, and with the Malays Arabic. Sanscrit words are to be found in both. Some have hence inferred that the Batahs have Hindoo blood in them. But the particulars cited are of very doubtful value for this inference. The indications of the once dominating presence of Hinduism, such as the occurrence of Sanscrit words, resemblances in features, the remains of temples, the veneration for the peal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and current traditions, belong to the whole island of Sumatra, abound in Java, and are found in islands beyond, and, in fact, throughout the Indian Archipelago; but it certainly is very remarkable that a people so isolated as the Batahs, and with certain habits and customs of so savage a type, should possess a language of their own, with a vocabulary much more copious than that, for instance, of the bulk of the English people, and have this language in a written form, and possess an ancient though meagre literature, and number amongst themselves so many who can read, that Marsden actually declares that according to the reports received by him "the proportion of the people who know how to read is much greater than of those who do not." Burton, the first missionary who went amongst them, got possession of several books, and writes of the language as having "many words in common with Malay. I have begun to read it and find there is nothing to fear as to its acquisition; the character is remarkably simple, and every sound has its representative mark. The language may be pronounced correctly by any person who has acquired the character, though he may not understand what he reads." There appear to be three dialects, pointing therefore to three divisional tribes—Mandailing in the south, Tobah in the centre, and Dairi in the north. I find from "The Gospel in Many Tongues," issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society, that there have been translations of the Scriptures into the first two dialects only, and infer that they only are of importance in our consideration of the people.

The following is a copy in the Battah version of St. John iii. 16:—

Handwritten text in Battah script, consisting of several lines of characters.

TOMMY ATKINS AT HOME.

III.

THESE weekly Temperance Meetings are pleasantly diversified. On the first Thursday in the month a large tea-party is held, where truly you may see "Tommy Atkins at Home" in all his glory. It really is a fine sight.

The big hall is cleared of its chairs, and filled from side to side with the white-covered tables, which generally, if circumstances are favourable, are adorned with flowers, and are duly supplied with the proper quota of cups and saucers, and huge plates of bread and butter, bread and jam, and cake. Admission is by sixpenny tickets. The numbers vary to a degree which would be most perplexing to those who are only acquainted with work among civilians; and even to those who are pretty well hardened to the vicissitudes of military life it is sometimes, in spite of all their fortitude, a little embarrassing. In civil life, a man can calculate his movements for the next two or three days with some degree of certainty; amongst soldiers, the risks are so many that very often men will not run the chance of losing the use of a ticket, and so will only buy one as they come in at the door. Sometimes when appearances have been very encouraging, and every preparation has been made for a large number, news will come the last thing the night before, "The Duke is coming to-morrow." Loyalty and zeal for the service are undoubtedly very supporting principles, but still, when you look at the piles of cakes and mountains of bread, and further reflect upon the sensitive feelings of the great gun who has at length been induced to come and address the men, it is difficult not to feel a little downcast. All the theory of probabilities has to be freshly discussed; the quantity of loaves and cakes that it will be safe to cut up must be carefully calculated; the number of urns to be brought down, and of tables to be put up, and of gallons of tea to be made must be readjusted, and certain quarts of milk must be countermanded. And then it is quite possible that the field-day may be over much sooner than was expected, His Royal Highness and staff may vanish into space, the regiments march in quite early in the afternoon; the men put on an extra spurt over their cleaning, and just come pouring in as though nothing had happened, whilst the distracted waiters rush to and fro with the empty plates which the struggling cutters-up vainly essay to fill fast enough. Flying messengers are dispatched for extra cake, the once-rejected milk can now hardly be got for love or money, and the agonized ticket-taker at the door

Whispers with white lips,
The foe, they come, they come!

Such are some of the occasional pleasures of a soldiers' tea! However, all's well that ends well. If such a *contretemps* should arise, the scrimmage seems to be very much enjoyed, and everyone looks

perfectly happy. Anything is better than empty seats. The brightly polished urns are carried in, filled and refilled; the clatter of tongues waxes louder and louder as the evening goes on, and even the latest comer has a seat found for him, and the supply of his wants. Then follows the address, grave or gay, lively or severe, as the mood and temperament of the speaker may dictate; and next comes the really important part of the whole thing—the taking of the pledges of total abstinence. On one occasion, at Aldershot, no fewer than thirty-seven men thus signified their sense of the force of the appeals made to them by an old officer; whilst on the same evening one of the daughter homes, that at Colchester, completely beat her old mother by a roll call of sixty-two names.

Another Thursday evening during the month is given up to "Readings and Recitations," an "At Home," which is very popular with "Tommy Atkins," the class room being generally full, sometimes overflowing, on these occasions. They are conducted in very friendly and home-like fashion, and are generally the product of strictly local talent. The president of the Total Abstinence Society, a young officer, "puts them through" the programme in very lively style. One of Sankey's "Songs and Solos" is heartily sung by all, the blessing of God is asked in a few very simple words, and then follows something of this kind: "Sergeant A. will give a reading."

Sergeant A. steps forward and reads an instructive article from one of the Temperance papers upon the financial aspect of the question, which is listened to with much interest.

Private B. is then announced to give a song. He takes up his concertina and accompanies himself very ably, whilst he sings a beautiful translation of a German hymn to a pretty and plaintive tune. This is greatly appreciated; the concertina is evidently a well-known friend.

A very young soldier, Private C., then reads a lively little skit, "Apply to the Landlord," giving a series of misfortunes, crimes, and evils for whose accomplishment you have only to "Apply to the Landlord."

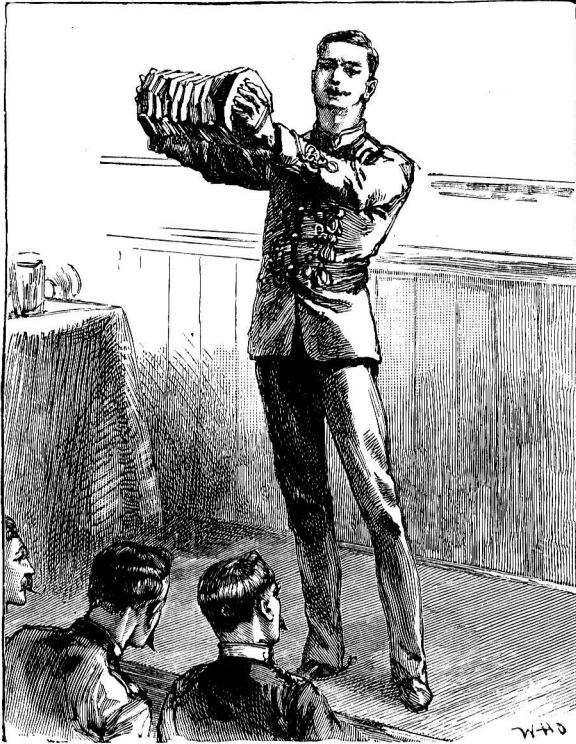
Then follows a recitation by an active and popular civilian member.

Private D. is now called upon in vain for his song, which stands next on the list. Private D. cannot be found. Something has hindered his putting in an appearance, so Sergeant-Major E. gallantly steps into the breach with a capital little story, "A Man of My Word," which is thoroughly well read, and rewarded by great applause.

Another civilian member next produces his roll of music, and accompanied by the harmonium sings one of the popular little songs about "Thirty Years Ago," and "The Days of Youth." And so the hour passes, till at half-past eight the

president calls on all the abstainers present to stand up and repeat the pledge which they have signed, an invitation which is always accepted with the utmost promptitude, and which possibly may have a stimulating effect upon such as find themselves in the still seated minority.

Then whilst one piece after another is given out from "Songs and Solos," and sung with great spirit, those who wish to sign come up to the table,



PRIVATE B. ACCOMPANIES VERY ABLY.

round which there soon gathers a deeply interested group. After the first hymn is fairly started, you will see a man here and there slip out of his place to a comrade's side, and under cover of the singing, ply him so earnestly and affectionately with arguments, that presently the man gets off his chair and marches up to the platform, followed by his delighted "god-father," who assists at the ceremony with intense satisfaction, and often presents the neophyte with his pledge-card.

A third temperance evening in the month is devoted to a lecture, or dissolving views, and a fourth to "Personal Experiences by Members of the Society." So all who find "the fire burning in them" can have an opportunity every other week or so of saying or singing or reading something on behalf of a cause which is very dear to them.

On one or other of these occasions, it may happen that a medal has to be presented for a year's faithful abstinence. This is always a matter of interest, hardly less so to the onlookers than to the recipient. Sometimes several have to be presented together. At other times it happens that a man who has signed the pledge in one of

Miss Daniell's Homes finishes his year in another, and there receives his medal, which is of course exactly similar for all her Homes. It is a fine design, very superior to the knots, and hands, and doves, and wreaths, with which we have all been slightly nauseated. On one side is the Hall itself; on the reverse, a sketch of the celebrated picture of St. Michael the Archangel, treading down the prince of darkness. It is mounted on red or blue ribbon to suit the different arms of the service. There is also a bar, to be added after the second year has been fulfilled.

Thus the influence of temperance work is spreading through the service, for it is an interesting fact that every regiment in the army has now taken its turn of service at Aldershot, and many twice or even thrice.

From various returns, of course unofficial, which have been issued from time to time, it would appear that the spread of total abstinence must be very considerable. A year or two ago an officer, not himself an abstainer, mentioned with much interest that in going round the rooms in a garrison where one of Miss Daniell's Homes is situated, he had found one in which were twelve cots, over eleven of which was nailed a pledge-card. He added that the men "did credit to it," and that he had advised the twelfth to follow their example. The men probably will not forget their adjutant's commendation for many a long day.

It is an hour or so later on the Thursday evening, and the gun has fired. The drawing-room at the further end of the long house now gives another aspect of the work in Miss Daniell's Homes. The room is well filled, mostly with the more earnest and devout amongst the Christian men. Probably two or three officers, and sundry of her helpers, are also there, whilst Miss Daniell herself speaks to them week by week of those subjects which are specially the heritage of the children of God. We all of us know how much training and teaching a young Christian needs. It is not all over when he is new-born into the "blameless family of God." Then comes the struggle, the conflict, the good fight of faith; maybe the fall and the restoration. As all who are acquainted with spiritual work know well, much of this training can best be done when the world at large is shut out, and the family gathers itself together in some quiet hour. Such is secured by this late meeting, which is free to any man "who professes and calls himself a Christian," and who is entitled to a pass to enable him to stay out after roll-call. The responsibility is left to themselves, but they all know the profession which is implied by coming to this meeting. Many of them value it beyond every other, finding their greatest help in the definite teaching by which their ignorance and inexperience are guided or removed, and the sympathy and instruction which a varied matured experience can gather from the Word of God.

All is over by about half-past ten, the good-nights given, the lights turned out, and the house still, unless some few are yet lingering awhile downstairs till eleven o'clock, when the Home is closed.

And now I think I may have given a tolerable idea of "Tommy Atkins at Home" in a Soldier's Home. Imagination must fill in the details of what goes on in the game and coffee-rooms and refreshment-bar. Here they are of course completely abandoned to the freedom of their own devices, and, judging from all appearances, it seems a very cozy happy society which gathers there. Sometimes till very late the sounds of the piano are heard, or really charming part-singing, mostly of Sankey's popular hymns. Generally before the evening ends, long after gun-fire, the low quiet murmur of voices comes up, telling of a fellowship not only with earth, but with heaven, whose enjoyment is the last drop of peace in the cup of quiet happiness which some faithful souls are drinking.

We can in some degree enter into the delightful freedom which a soldier feels in the Home, where he has space and opportunity to read, write, sing, play games, smoke, eat, play the piano, lounge about, do nothing, talk, listen, go to a meeting, get advice, get comfort, or pray alone or with others, exactly as he pleases. The necessary routine of his military life must add zest to the freedom of his "Home" life. But about a couple of years ago, a stranger wrote to Miss Daniell, asking, "If she still thought Soldiers' Institutes are useful, and used by the men." I can imagine that she must have smiled as she read the letter. However, thinking that the men's own opinion would be much more valuable than her own, she asked some of them to give it, which was done by several in writing. Some of the letters are before me, and I only wish there were space to transfer them as they are to these pages.

Of course the men were very much surprised that such a question could be raised. They all with one accord tell the same story of gratitude for "these blessed Homes." Some go into elaborate descriptions of a place which provides "everything a soldier can want;" whilst most have to speak of a fresh life begun there, when "old things passed away, and all things became new."

No wonder, if this be his feeling, that Tommy Atkins loves such a Home, and is proud of it too!

Now I must close with something about the day which is "the best of all the seven," for the Home is, of course, open on Sundays as well as week days. By the rules of the service, every soldier is bound to profess some form of religion, and is marched to its appropriate place of worship on the Sunday morning. The utmost indulgence is now shown to the "conscience question," so much so that report tells, and tells truly, of a man whose scruples would allow of his worshipping nowhere but at one particular chapel at Ash, and

who consequently had a corporal told off all to himself of a Sunday morning to parade him, and conduct him to and from his place of worship! I am informed that a man may not "change his religion" above three times in one year, but hitherto I believe these limits have proved sufficiently elastic. Thus all ecclesiastical and denominational distinctions are amply provided for by the rules and regulations of the service, and duly honoured on each Sunday morning, whilst Miss Daniell, standing on neutral ground outside, works for the Army as a whole without touching on any point of difference. No man is ever asked what he is; it is enough that he is a soldier, and that he needs all that wise and loving Christian sympathy can do for him. The really earnest Christian men in any regiment are but a little band, and union is their strength.

On Sunday afternoon, the average British soldier, having passed through the fatigues of church parade, divine service, and a heavy dinner, usually "makes down his bed," and takes a good sleep till tea-time. I was much amused once by hearing a gentleman describe his first visit to a barrack-room on a Sunday afternoon. He opened the door and looked in; the first sight which met his eye was a man stretched at full length upon his cot.

"I am sorry to see you so poorly," said the visitor, in tones of unfeigned sympathy, upon which the patient rose hurriedly and began to laugh. So did the minister, who, as he passed on to other rooms, found that the greater portion of the little detachment was similarly afflicted.

This almost universal practice makes the number of soldiers at the afternoon meeting but small. Afterwards any who like come up to the drawing-room for an hour's hymn-singing—a peaceful happy quiet time. At five o'clock, though the bar is not open on Sundays, a sit-down tea is provided for such as do not wish to break into their day by going back to barracks.



AN HOUR IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

Between this and the evening meeting the time soon slips away; some go for a walk, others read quietly or steal away alone into one of the rooms to pray. Others, like true soldiers, enjoy the sweetness of a pipe. A little later you hear them running up the back-stairs to the class-room, where Miss Daniell meets them, and one after another pours out simple earnest hearty prayers for a blessing on the evening's work.

Then caps and belts are put on, sticks found, tracts sorted, and out goes a little company, two and two, to "pick up stragglers." If you should happen to be in the entry during the next half hour or so, you would see one and another come proudly in with a stranger in his wake, lead him into the hall where singing is already going on, find him a seat and a hymn book, and then go out again for more. In this way numbers of men who have never been into any place of worship for years, excepting when marched there, are brought in, how often, oh, how often to "find rest unto their souls"—not seldom on that very first time of entering the place. Blessed happy work, who would not wish it God-speed?

The bright hall, the lively singing, the deep evident earnestness, the clear simple business-like preaching, straight to men's hearts, the absence of formality and conventionality, above all the living Presence of Him who is the Lord and Giver of life, have made these simple evening services the gate of heaven to scores of souls. Ah, well, it will not do to enter upon that topic. Eternity will tell all that time can never reveal.

Sunday and week-day alike, as occasion offers, the happy work goes on.

The weary find eternal rest,
And many a son of want is blessed.

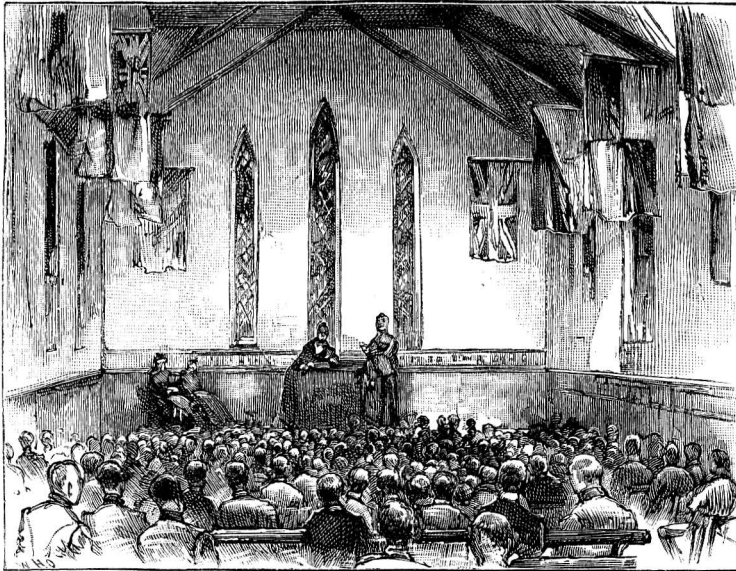
I believe it is really because he knows that the deepest wants of his soul can here be met, that Tommy Atkins so dearly loves his Home. It is so delightful to be able to give him "all that a soldier wants," as they say, and then above it all God's best brightest, eternal gift. When men's "trade is to die," they want something beyond secular amusement and religious forms, however good; they want a Friend to live with, and a Friend to die with.

After the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, an officer, going round with the doctors, found a poor fellow, a gunner, so fearfully wounded that it was impossible to move him even into the field hospital. The doctors did what they could to make him easy, and moved on to other cases; but the officer felt as though he could not go without a word of sympathy. Hardly knowing whether he would be heard or understood, he bent over the man and said, "Well, my poor fellow, I'm afraid your best friend can do no more for you."

The dying eyes opened with a smile, and he said feebly, "I think He can."

Yes, even though the dying bed be the sand of a desert battle-field, and a soldier's knapsack be the only pillow.

It is soldiers such as these whom, by the grace of God, it is the highest aim of "Tommy Atkins' Home" to make and keep.



THE MISSION HALL.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER XIII.



THE HUT WAS VACANT.

BOTTA could see Gaspard from where he stood, and his eyes kindled and grew luminous as he watched the athletic figure bending under its load of "forage." The young carpenter had proved himself good metal, and Arnaud—one of whose many gifts it was to judge men's qualities swiftly and justly—had advanced him from the ranks to a place of trust about his own person. There was not a man in his whole troop that he trusted more fully than Botta's son, Gaspard.

"This was your mother's home," said the house-master, later that evening, when he and Gaspard had withdrawn themselves a little from the rest, and climbed the steep bank which swept up from the hill-torrent to the bastion of rock that kept watch and ward above. "Your mother's home. Here I saw her first, binding rye in those fields—the grey and silver rye. I never see it now but I think of that day in autumn, two and thirty years ago. Two and thirty years—a long time, Gaspard, to you, for it is more than your whole life; but to me it seems but a handful of days, few and evil like those of Jacob. Two and thirty years!"

"There are other measurements than hours and weeks," returned the young man slowly; "I have learned that. How long is it since we crossed the mountains into Switzerland? They count our exile as a score or two of months, to me it is a very lifetime."

"His day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years in His sight but as a day," returned Henri Botta, whose slower mind had not grasped the inner meaning of his son's words.

"And," Gaspard went on, "there are the small things we give our lives to grasp, and the great things we have not eyes to see. Will God judge us for our foolishness and punish us for our blindness in the day of the account?"

"He bids us ask for wisdom, Gaspard, and He has promised us the light."

Still he did not follow the workings of his son's mind, but he added,

"God understandeth our frame, and remembereth that we

are but dust. If His heaven is high and far above us, His Son came here that in all things *He* might understand."

The young man did not answer. He was thinking of that day on the Angrona hill when first he caught an inkling of the truth that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment—that day when it was first given him to see that God's stroke, falling as sharp pain, is yet His Hand of Love.

It was but little that they seemed able to effect, this handful of men marching across the confines of their native land; their bivouac fires were few and feeble on that summer night in the Prali fields; and Henri Botta's white hairs, and Gaspard's ill-armed hands showed as poor samples of the stuff of which Arnaud's army was made. Yet judged by wider measurements they were not ignoble, nor was their effort mean.

These men of the Vaudois were holding forth to the world the spectacle of reverent faith in the promises of their God. They trusted in Him, and they believed that that fervent trust should never be confounded.

As the notes of Madeleine's evening psalm died down on the hill-side, a figure raised itself from behind a jutting crag and crept stealthily off in the darkness.

The two women, well used to the desolate mountains, slept serene and safe in the hut. *Rénée's* head rested on her foster mother's arm, and over the sweet flower-like face there was spread the reflection of the peace that passeth understanding. The evil mood that had tried her faith was gone, and in its place had come the nameless Light that shines from the Spirit of Comfort. She was dreaming, not of Gaspard, nor of happy days past or come, but of her mother—Madeleine and her "song of Confidence."

Yet all about that ruined hut were cruel and violent men, the hired soldiery of the Duke. Men little better than brigands, who had been sent expressly upon work of rapine and slaughter, that a "strong hand" might crush the Vaudois now and for ever.

The singing had roused the attention of the outpost of the troops that had been thrown forward to keep the Guliano Pass. A soldier had crept forward to reconnoitre news of the advance of Arnaud, and his men had made the Savoyards cautious, and the sound of a Huguenot hymn might mean serious mischief.

But the alarm died away in a brutal scoff when the scout brought news that it was no meeting of heretics, no vanguard of the Vaudois army, but an aged woman and a young girl singing themselves to sleep under the shattered roof of a herdsman's hut.

"Leave them in peace," ordered the captain, an old soldier who was weary from his forced march and who wished for undisturbed repose. "If those two hundred hounds of mine start such a quarry there will be no quiet for hours. So hold thy tongue an' thou canst, Antoine, and go back to thy post. Dost hear? It is well."

But when the sun had climbed the morning sky and the scented tassels of the pines were swaying to the breeze stealing from the snow-fields, when the soldiers had shaken off their slumbers and were clamouring for their morning meal, they might do what they pleased with such trifles as a couple of defenceless women for all their captain cared.

There were, as he said, but two hundred of them, but half that number might hold the Guliano Pass; the Vaudois were marching southwards by Roderet and Prali, as the

Duke's troops were all aware. What mattered it? Arnaud and his hoard of fanatics might beat themselves to pieces against the swords of the soldiers without risk or loss to that two hundred, so wonderfully did the rocks stand round the forge, an entrenchment and barrier stronger than mortal hands could build, a fastness which neither Arnaud nor his mountaineers could force.

The captain laughed as he glanced up at the cliffs towering towards the snows. Ah, yes! it would be strange indeed if his two hundred could not hold the Gulian Pass against greater odds than Arnaud was likely to bring.

When at peep of day rude hands flung open the hut door, and ruder voices called across the empty space, there fell a brief silence of surprise upon the group of men. The hut was vacant; the quarry had fled.

Whither?

Who could tell? As well hunt for the proverbial needle amongst a bundle of hay, as seek two women of the valleys amongst their native wilds. They might carry news to Arnaud—true, but Arnaud might have the news and welcome! He was not likely to profit much by it.

So the soldiers hung their camp-kettles over their fires and pushed chestnuts into the edges of the ashes and made ready their morning meal, blythe as the birds in the copse of birches below them. And yonder where the mighty mountains sloped northward and eastward towards Prali, Madeleine and her foster-child sped through the forest paths with pale looks and quickened breathings. They had lived through so much, escaped so much, but perhaps the fiercest danger was this last—the Savoy guard on the Gulian Pass.

Madeleine's quick ears had caught the sound of voices, and a very little investigation had shown her the nest of hornets amidst which she and Renée had laid down to rest. They were well used to see danger staring them in the face, but even Madeleine's heart grew sick with fear as they threaded the stony ways in that gleaming midsummer dawn. A false step might betray them, and how have cool caution sufficient to plant each step silently down those difficult paths?

At Ebentide.

THE faithful round of daily toil
A far-off recompense may own;
The patient tillage of the soil
Is not for bread alone.

In labour deemed of low degree
A royal dignity may dwell—
The spade may as a sceptre be
To hands that use it well.

The lowly task, the homely deed,
The common duties truly done,
Will make a record good to read
When health and strength are gone.

For busy youth makes peaceful age,
And when the day of life is past,
And softly o'er its evening stage
The twilight falls at last—

The heart that hath in meekness filled
A humble place at God's behest,
The hands that wrought but as He willed
Shall surely know His rest.

On hoary head and wrinkled brow,
Ere they have passed from mortal sight,
The peace of love's own afterglow
Shall rest, a crown of light!

MARY ROWLES JARVIS.

HIDDEN TEXT.

NO. II.

1. Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips.—*Proverbs* xix. 1.
2. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—*Psa.* xc. 12.
3. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.—*Matt.* xi. 15.
4. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.—*Proverbs* ii. 6.
5. He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.—*Proverbs* xiii. 24.
6. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.—*Psa.* xxxvii. 31.
7. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord.—*Psa.* xix. 14.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. XII.

1. A city celebrated for its worship of a goddess; here Paul fought with wild beasts; and to it one of the letters to the seven churches was addressed.
2. Our treasures should be stored where this cannot come.
3. An animal ridden by a king's son when an accident deprived him of life.
4. A venomous reptile to whose poison the speech of the wicked is compared.
5. A large and wicked city to which a prophet was sent with a special message. Its repentance is referred to by our Lord in one of His discourses.
6. A description applied by Jacob to his eldest son.
7. A town which was the dwelling-place of a woman with a familiar spirit.
8. One who carried the slender provision from which a multitude of five thousand were fed.

The initials and finals form two of the titles of Christ; one by which Isaiah prophesies of Him (a prophecy which is quoted in Matthew); and the other, a familiar figure in the East, by which our Lord speaks of Himself repeatedly in a chapter of John's Gospel.

A. E. R.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE VERSE.

NO. VI.—P. 352.

Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.—*1 Chron.* xxi. 18.

(1) To "set up an altar," sent by the angel and Gad to David; (2) Gad, the angel, David and Ornan; (3) See 1st and 2nd Sam.; 1st Kings and 1st Chron.; (4) 1 Chron. xxi. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 20; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; (5) 1 Chron. xxi. 15; (6) 23; (7) Threshing-floor and altar; (8) 1 Chron. xxi. 25, 26; (9) David, 16, 21; (10) 1; (11) 18.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER.

NO. V.—P. 432.

1. S-aul 1 Sam. xv. 3, 9; xix. 10; xxxi. 4.
2. O-rnan 1 Chr. xxi. 15, 23.
3. L-emuel Prov. xxxi. 1.
4. O-bed Ruth iv. 21, 22.
5. M-ichal { 1 Sam. xix. 11-17.
2 Sam. vi. 16, 20, 23.
6. O-mri { 1 Kings xvi. 16-26, 30.
2 Kings viii. 26.
7. N-abal 1 Sam. xxv. 3, 25, 33, 38.