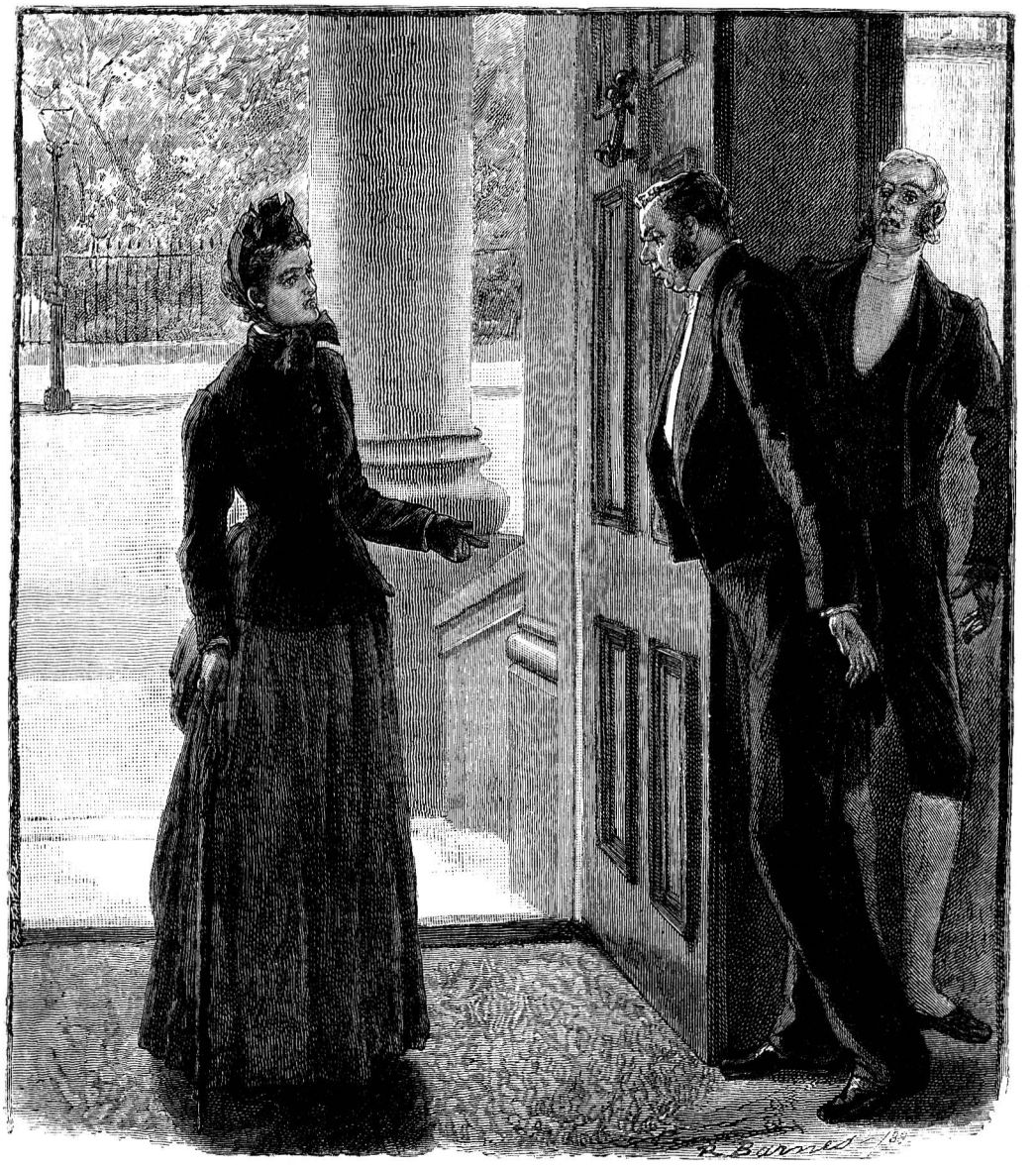
THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER XV.—A FRIEND IN NEED.



THE BUTLER HAD NEVER OPENED THE DOOR TO A SHABBIER VISITOR.

THERE are people who are created specially, it might seem, to console and soothe in times of our adversity. We all of us surely are happy enough to number such among our friends, those who steal in when the house is darkened and bring comfort—whose words do not grate on our wounded susceptibilities, for they are not mere phrases of the lip, conventional expressions of a regret that is but easily borne—whose very presence insensibly stills quivering nerves and brings a measure of peace to anguished hearts. Blessed feet that travel on such errands of mercy,

following in the steps of Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.

It would not have occurred to anybody—least of all to Allie herself, that she might be wanted or welcomed in the great house in Grosvenor Square when the marriage bells were being rung there and the feast got ready. She had visited but little at Oakdene when the family migrated there from town, being wholly taken up for many years with nursing and caring for her father, and ministering to her humble friends in the village. And the intercourse between the great house and the small one had chiefly been maintained by Charlie, who dined there and shot over the banker's coverts, and rode his hunters with his bosom friend and crony the younger Vivian. The banker and the colonel had no tastes and sympathies in common to draw them together, the one hated business, and the other loved it, and despised any man who could not manage his own affairs, and so by a tacit agreement they mutually avoided each other. As for Allie, if Mr. Vivian thought of her at all, it was to shrug his shoulders over her as another of the incapable sex, who allow themselves to be robbed and defrauded with a meekness that is truly exasperating to any man of sense.

In those days of her insolent youth, Miss Vivian was as careless of her quiet neighbour and as indifferent to her personality as she was to the quaint mediæval figure in the stained window of the little church, under which Allie's gentle face might be seen on any Sunday morning. Allie and the saint in the coloured pane were pretty much on a level in this proud beauty's thought—both of them had lived their day and had reached a stage when neither of them could have any interest for man or woman or any part in the bustle and joy of life. This was how the eyes of twenty-three looked upon the woman of thirty-eight, for to that mature age Allie had come when those calamities which bereft her of a home fell upon her.

Girls, when time's stealthy foot brings you too, as it surely will, if God spares you, to the end of your maidenhood, will your hopes have ceased then, and your aspirations, and your dreams of achieving? Will life be told for you, think you, and your reign over, and will you be humbly ready in your turn to abdicate and make way for a new generation? Some of you may have gained all that on which your hearts were set, and may have found it but vanity after all; others may have been wounded and defeated in the race; but some of you, many of you, let us pray, will be better women and worthier of all honest and upright people's regard at forty than you are in your teens,—yes, and younger too, for, paradoxical as it may sound, the best of women are never so young as when they have left their youth behind them. For of what avail is it to sit in the school of life if it is not that we may learn lessons of charity, of forbearance, of justice and mercy, and so may grow with the passing of time wider in our sympathies and more patient towards our brothers' failings, since we are more humbly conscious of our own?

Even Janey, however, hot as was her championship, was ready to admit that Allie would have been but an incongruous figure among the dukes and duchesses and all the titled and great people who would have been summoned to the marriage of Lord Reigate and Miss Vivian.

The slim, gentle spinster who never knew how to put on her clothes properly, and whose fashions were always long behind the age, who had no key to the "little language" of fine society, would have been as sadly out of place as a sparrow in an aviary of macaws and humming-birds. Therefore it would not have occurred to any one to inscribe her name on the list of those who were to be invited to the breakfast, or of those who were held to be sufficiently honoured by the presentation of an admission card to witness the ceremony in church—not even of that larger class whose social merits were meetly recognised by the gift of a morsel of cake in an oblong box, tied up in white satin ribbon.

But when the fiat went forth and death became a tenant of the great house in the square, Allie's hour had come. Her heart beat with great tenderness for all those in need, sorrow, sickness or any other form of adversity, and her own recent companionship with loss gave this meek, timid woman courage to offer herself as a consoler.

Perhaps the butler who flung it wide had never opened the door to a shabbier visitor. Allie did not mourn her father by any outward show of crape or parade of woe, and in truth Miss Vivian's maid would have turned in scorn from the offered reversion of the visitor's costume. The butler who went with the family to the country remembered her however, and condescended to let his mistress know of her presence.

Allie was shown into a little boudoir, furnished in beautiful taste and full of the ruddy warmth of firelight, and there in a very few moments Honoria came to her. She looked pale and worn and ill, in her clinging black dress, and the forlorn look went straight to Allie's tender heart.

In the old days she would not have ventured to do more than touch the tips of Miss Vivian's fingers, but now, scarcely knowing what she did, she had her arms about the poor thing's neck, and was soothing and comforting her with murmured words of love.

And Honoria clung to that fragile support as if she drew new draughts of life from it, and was weeping as she had not wept in all those tearless dreadful weeks of misery. By the blessed secret of sympathy—surely the most Christ-like of graces—Allie won the key to this proud heart and administered her gentle medicine to its wounds.

"Tell me all, dear," she said, "it will do you good to talk of it. Oh, my poor child, you have had no one to talk to; you have been bearing it all in silence. But if you will trust me, I think I can understand—you know I have had to part too, with a dear parent whom I loved."

Thus encouraged, Honoria poured forth all her story in broken, vehement words. Alice came to her as a rescuing angel to save her from

despair. The passionate, strong, ill-regulated nature was hot in its repentance as it had been wayward in its rebellion; not for her the beautiful dawn that had broken for Allie when she woke to the great inheritance of love—for her the storms and upheavings, the fightings without and within, the kingdom of heaven won hardly and as if by violence.

It was not the story Allie had expected to hear, not the outpouring of loneliness and longing, not that sense of aching solitude which makes the worst pain of our bereavement, not even the natural and inescapable remorse that is our Nemesis for all our lapses and transgressions towards our beloved dead. The tie between this mother and daughter had never been very close, there had been no time, alas, in their busy lives for the cultivation of mutual love, and Honoria was too honest to have at any time made a parade of a grief that she knew time would heal.

But now the one great anguish included all lesser pain.

"I could have borne to let her go," she said, "I think I could have comforted myself with praying that in another world I might be allowed to be good to her—as I was not always good to her here; but to see her die, uncomforted, unblessed, and to know that I had wilfully sinned away my right to pray for her—what was I that I should pray? It would have been mocking God to ask anything of Him: I who had scorned His messages, and turned away from His entreaties. Ah, will He ever forgive me?"

"Yes," said Allie, "He has forgiven you already, my child. At the very first cry of our need He turns to us. He is our Father, always remember that—a Father full of the most tender pitifulness. He has led you to Himself by a terrible way, and He will not forsake you."

"Ah, but I cannot forgive myself," she cried in despair. There is always that last pain left. To be forgiven is a great deal, but to forgive oneself?

"It is my punishment," she said, "I have deserved it all. To hear her cries and entreaties, she going down to darkness in horror and despair —may you never know what that is!"

What could Allie say or do in the face of a grief like this? There is no healing of such a wound, we can but leave it—the mystery and the dreadfulness of it to the infinite compassion, whose depths and heights we cannot fathom. We but grope about the shore and touch on the edge, as it were, of that great sea of love that encompasses us, and is it for us with our poor little earthly measurements to plumb its bottomless deeps?

She whispered such words of soothing and hope as she knew, and by-and-by Honoria grew calmer. Then it was that she unfolded her scheme.

"I must have work," she said, "hard work, or —I think I shall die. You have always been good, but I have only wasted years behind me."

"Yes," said Allie encouragingly, "there is no such medicine as work, and in helping others you will best help yourself."

"I have been thinking of that," said Honoria with a gleam of hope on her pale face; "if I could go down among the very poor and help them—the people who have sick bodies, and are in need and want—and perhaps some day God would heal my sick soul."

She was groping dimly after atonement, after restitution, but Allie would not check the regenerative process by any chill of doubt. Works may have very beneficent uses for many of us though our faith can never soar on them.

"Yes," she said once more, "there is such a large field, and so many of us are wanted, you with your wealth, how much you can do."

"But I don't mean the giving of money; after all, money can do little. Do not forbid me," cried the girl, as if Allie were her confessor. "I have been used to magnificent charities all my life, and what have they done for me? only fed my pride. I never got nearer to a single sorrow or need, or cared for any one's disappointments but my own. Ah, you must let me go among them, learn their ways, live their lives, help them if I may. I do not mean to talk—how could I preach to others—but there are many kinds of distresses, so many ways of suffering, there are troubles of body and estate, as well as of mind, and if one could alleviate these?"

"It is a great work; if God calls you to it, He will make you useful in it."

"And I am going to be very practical," said Honoria with the first gleam of cheerfulness her face had worn. "Papa has given his consent to my entering one of the large London hospitals, and being trained there. I know so little—there is no one so ignorant as I, and all these years wasted when I might have been learning."

This vain regret went with Alice, like a sad echo chiming to all her thoughts as she was whirled home in the omnibus. Who can look back on his past record and wish it unchanged?

Yet perhaps in Honoria's remorse lay her chief hope of regeneration. Vigorous diseases must be met by vigorous remedies. Honoria's passionate, strenuous nature—large in all its impulses, emphatic in all its decisions, needed this goad to keep her contrition glowing. If she had been able by compulsion of her will to forget the sad scene at her mother's deathbed, if she could have put its lessons from her, there is the danger that she would have crystallised into impenitent, irremediable hardness and reckless unbelief, but now there was hope for her, hope that through this baptism of fire, she should grow into one of those good and helpful women who make this world a better place for all who follow them because they have lived in it.

Allie descended from the omnibus at her own door to be captured by Janey, who was on the outlook for her, with a face full of mystery and importance.

"Something has happened," she said, by way of preparation. "Come up and hear all about it. But oh, Allie, you look very tired; you must have some tea at once. I'm afraid it was a very trying visit?"

"No," said Alice quickly, "it has made me very happy; I am glad I went."

Janey looked at her with a quick perplexed frown.

"You liked it? then Miss Lindsell didn't snub you? But, Allie, I hope you haven't spent all your powers of consolation on her, for Mary needs them."

"Mary?"

"Yes, she is crying."

"Is she ill?" Alice asked, startled into closer attention. She had come home in a strangely exalted mood, excited, wrought upon by the agitated emotions of the meeting with Honoria, and yet sustained by glowing hopes and thankful prayers, but to enter little Janey's company, was to descend precipitately to the earth. A kindly earth, it is true, peopled by very good-natured impulses and benevolences, but yet, the heavens no longer.

"Not ill," Janey answered, "Mary wouldn't cry for that. Her tears are falling because she is going to leave us."

"Janey, if you would only tell me," begun Alice with a plaintive quiver in her voice—who does not know the irritation of having intelligence doled out by drops? "I—I am a little tired." She made a movement to rise, and go up to the little room Mary occupied.

"Oh, I'm a brute, I'm a brute," cried the self-accusing Janey, "if you will only sit still, there is nothing to take you upstairs I will tell you everything. I won't meander any more, I indeed won't!"

Alice sat down again smiling.

"Mrs. Parker called when you were out (Mrs. Parker was the lady whose girls Mary had taught) she is going to Algiers for the sake of Nettie, the second girl, whose chest is delicate, and she came to offer to take Mary with her. Mary is to teach again, when she is quite strong."

Janey had determined to confine herself to a bald statement of fact, and firmly resisted the temptation to be dramatic, but she could not forbear breaking in with an anxious query here.

"I think," said Alice, in answer to it, "Mrs. Parker is a very sensible woman, and Mary must certainly go."

"That is Doctor Ellis's opinion too—he also called—but he put the matter a little more forcibly. He said she would be a fool not to go, and I was a fool to wish to keep her. That young man," said Janey grimly, "requires to have his language pruned."

It did not take long for Allie to summon her ready sympathy and to enter into all these new hopes and schemes. The smaller need claimed her no less than the greater. She ran upstairs and kissed and comforted Mary, who was sitting up in bed, to which exile Janey had condemned her, crying dolefully over her own good fortune.

"As if I could be glad to be going from you!" she said reproachfully. When Allie had cheered her into a better mood, she came down again to be waited on, and served by Janey, who, while she flitted here and there, poured out all the gathered up resolves of an hour. Janey was a practical little person and already she had overhauled Mary's trunks, passed their contents in review, and settled the deeply interesting question of her wardrobe.

"She must have my new merino, Allie; she is so thin it will fit her beautifully. That may be counted as one of the sweet uses of adversity! Perhaps Mary will look on it as a kind compensation, for she always did admire that brown merino, and I saw a hat the other day—quite a cheap hat—that will just match it. And, oh, Allie we must have another tea party before Mary goes. Charlie said he would come to the next, you know, and actually, Allie, think of it! I have stormed the citadel and conquered the professor!"

Janey found no time in the rush of this new excitement to question Alice about the visit on which she had set out with many misgivings, and Alice kept silence. The deep sadness she had left behind her, had no place in this light weaving of girlish plans and schemes, but Janey found nothing lacking or awanting in the listener's interest.

For to those who have truly learned the beautiful lesson of sympathy nothing is too trivial or small to claim its ministry, and Allie whose depths of compassion and pity had been stirred to painful intensity by the spectacle of a soul in anguish, could laugh wholesomely with Janey too, over the victory she so triumphantly announced.

"Here is your tea at last. Take it comfortably, Allie, and I will tell you the full, true, and particular history of my conquest."

RECENT DISCOVERIES AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

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

III.

IN my last article, I described the progress of research and discovery in Egypt during the the last century, so far, at least, as manuscripts are concerned. Much has been discovered in that wonderful land during the same period in the departments of architecture, sculpture, painting, and the remains of the dead. But these discoveries deal chiefly with the Old Testament period, and we must now limit our investigations to the Christian period, for the discoveries bearing on it will much more than exhaust the space at our disposal.

The vast collections of manuscripts which Egypt has supplied during the last century are now dispersed over the principal libraries of Europe, and are found specially in the British Museum, at Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Rome. Some of the documents which have come to light,

are intensely interesting. Some of them illustrate the New Testament, others strikingly confirm and support it. Let us first take one of the former class.

The exclusive character of Christ's religion is a special feature of His teaching.

Any one who has read an old-fashioned book, far too much neglected, Paley's Evidences, will remember that it singles out the teaching of the Christian religion on this point as the feature which the Pagans of apostolic times could neither understand nor tolerate. The New Testament made no halting compromises. Its standard was either Christ or nothing. A man cannot serve Christ and Jupiter, or Christ and Osiris, he must be entirely Christ's, or else without part or lot in Him. This holy exclusiveness, this sacred intolerance of any half-hearted allegiance, was proclaimed by Christ, Who warned His disciples that it would evermore be the cause of bitterest strife and division in families. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?" was His own query; "Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." And this prediction of social and family division which Christianity introduced into life, has been amply fulfilled from the earliest age, as these Egyptian manuscripts prove.

We have recovered, for instance, a document containing the curses pronounced by a Pagan mother upon a son who had abandoned idolatry and embraced Christianity. It is a most pathetic production, and proves that, in some respects, Egyptian Paganism had a firmer hold upon the belief and affections of its votaries than that of Rome or Greece possessed. The whole document will be found printed in French, in the "Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology" for 1883, under the learned direction of M. Eugène Revillout. We can now merely offer a summary of it. The Egyptian mother was evidently deeply grieved by the spiritual defection of her son, whom she looked upon as lost to herself and to her dead husband for all eternity. Greeks and Romans often bewailed the conversion of their relatives, not because of the spiritual danger or loss thus incurred, for they regarded all religions as much the same, but on account of the persecutions, tortures, and disgrace the converts would bring on their family and on themselves. This Egyptian mother honestly believed in her creed, and in its necessity for salvation, and she laments her son as lost for ever. The woman speaks in the name of her deceased husband whose manes she invokes against her apostate son. The creed of these ancient Egyptians comes out incidentally. It was a subtle pantheism. Her husband had been elevated by death to the position of Osiris, and had obtained divine rank. The wife appeals to him, therefore, with the more confidence. We see the rites and customs, the enthusiastic and headstrong zeal of the Christians of the third century portrayed. The convert had adopted a new name at his baptism. His name was originally Petosor, signifying gift of Osiris, the god of the Nile. He changed it to the apostolic name of Peter, which as we learn from an Egyptian writer of the third century, Dionysius, of Alexandria, was in that century a most popular one in Egypt.

What an interesting side light is thus thrown on the New Testament. St. Mark founded the Church of Alexandria, and St. Mark wrote his Gospel at the dictation, and under the guidance of St. Peter, and here, in Egypt, the Church of St. Mark's own tending, the name of Peter is the favourite one. The pious Pagan refuses to call her son by the sacred name Petosor which she had given him at his birth. She will not apply to him the new name which he has taken. Hence she calls him Petu, or Tu, meaning, simply, "the gift." The convert adopted the name of Peter, and with his name, he adopts somewhat of the apostle's rash zeal. He had not only flung off his old religion, but had uttered threats against the temples, promising to destroy them. It seems, indeed, strange that a Christian should have attempted such an outrage upon the established religion of the country while Paganism was still dominant, for our document may date back as early as the second century. But the acts of the martyrs which remain, undoubtedly show that the headlong and unwise zeal of the converts, not only in Egypt, but all the Roman world over, often led them to acts of violence contrary to the meek spirit of their religion. In venerating and honouring the outer form of their religion, they often violated its inner spirit, and, like Peter, when he smote off the ear of Malchus, stained rather than upheld the honour of their Master. A few brief sentences extracted from this ancient document will enable my readers to realise the difficulties and sufferings through which early Christianity had to make its way. The mother's name was Naïchrat. Her husband's name was Nesmete. He was dead, and the widowed mother addresses her husband's spirit thus: "I stand at the gate of Osiris and of Isis Hathor. I bow before her (Isis) whom we love, before him (Osiris) whom we adore. As for me, Oh Nesmete, son of Isis, I have spoken concerning the wretch!" Then the venerated spirit of the father intervenes and addresses the apostate: "I will not call thee by thy name which thy mother gave thee. They now call thee Peter. Let it be thy name. I have cast away thy true name, and will not call thee by it. I have given thee bread, and thou hast spoiled thy mother. Thou sayest, Cast the temples down, destroy the sacred images. Before they will be able to do so, Osiris will come and destroy thee. Before they do so, thou shalt die, oh most wicked of wretches." After these opening sentences, the document proceeds to set forth at length the wickedness of the convert from the mother's point of view, in rejecting the customary rites of the ancient religion, in eating and drinking with his new friends—a reference, doubtless, to the love feasts, and the Eucharist, and then depicts the terrors that await him in the life beyond the grave.

There is one point in these Egyptian maledictions which is most interesting and instructive. Their doctrine of a future life forms a striking

contrast to that of the New Testament. This Pagan mother believed in a future life where rewards and punishments were duly meted out. She believed too in a resurrection of the body, and strove to perpetuate the actual body in the shape of a mummy. Hence, the vast quantities of mummies which have been found in Egypt. But when men would fain insinuate that the Christian doctrines concerning a future life and the resurrection of the dead have been developed out of mere human ideas, that they are the outcome of unassisted human reason, and at best are mere spiritual improvements on the ideas of the ancient Egyptians, we can, without hesitation or fear, appeal to the teachings of Egyptian Paganism in the first and second centuries of our era, as we study them in the celebrated Book of the Dead, or in the statements of this inconsolable mother.

If human reason had ever fair play to develop a consistent and noble theory of a future state, that fair play was found in Egypt. For thousands of years the human mind had been working on the subject, yet it only succeeded in producing a theory which combines absurdity with obscenity. This may seem very strong language. The space at my command would fail me if I wished to prove it, but any persons who wish to see what the profoundest and most spiritual of natural religions existing in the apostolic age could produce, have only to turn to the "Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology" for March 4th, 1884, and there they will find this assertion amply confirmed. The Egyptians believed, as I have said, in the resurrection and renewed life of the body. One of the means they took to ensure the continuance of the body was this: they inserted under the head of each mummy a talisman, or disk, formed of linen and plaster to maintain the vital warmth of the body, whereon were depicted scenes indicative of the renewed birth after death. In this disk the soul of the deceased is represented in the form of a hawk with a human head, adoring a cow, which wears a disk and two feathers, combined with some other figures of a very obscene type indeed. Surely if this is the best and highest that unassisted human reason could teach concerning the future state, the noble dignified spiritual theory of the unseen world taught in the New Testament could never have sprung into life complete and perfect in all its details, involving no absurd, degrading or obscene ideas and yet so wondrously reserved concerning the things unseen, unless it had been taught by revelation. The theory of unlearned Galilean peasants surpasses at a bound all the fine-spun ideas of philosophers and thinkers developed throughout the long roll of Egyptian history.

I do not think that half enough has been made of the contrast between Pagan cults, like the Egyptian or the Mithraic, and Christianity. The Egyptian religion had certainly attained to some anticipations or dark guesses of what Christianity has fully revealed. But this does not trouble us one whit. The great teachers who fought and conquered Egyptian Paganism on its own soil, like Origen and Clement of Alexandria, did not hesitate to admit that there was a divine element of truth and vague guesses after a fuller light involved and mingled up in the religions of the old world. But what a contrast between Christianity and the best of them! Read the Egyptian Ritual and Book of the Dead, then turn to the study of the New Testament; and it is like passing from a charnel house, full of darkness and bones and impure odours into the open air of heaven where life and light and health abound. Human religions guessed at the light, and then buried these guesses under mountains of grotesque absurdities. Christianity recognised the little light which had been gained, revealed a fuller light, and then set the whole forth in a practical and refined shape which brings refreshment and comfort to the mourning and the stricken soul.

The manuscripts discovered by the Archduke Rainer, of Austria, have also thrown a vivid light on the epistles of St. Paul and upon some incidents in his career. The Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and to Titus have been the subject of fruitful debate. Their date has often been challenged, and specially on this ground that they reveal a state of development as to Christian doctrine and practice which was only true of the second century. Objectors have pointed to the ministry of women, for instance, as an institution which could not have existed in the days of the apostles in the state depicted in Timothy. The Epistles to Timothy speak of the widows as an organised body, into which no one was allowed to enter under sixty years of age, and this regulation some critics have considered unapostolic. But subjective criticism of this kind is utterly untrustworthy. No man's imagination is so copious and authoritative as to enable him to determine what could and what could not have existed at other periods of the world's history. The only wise plan for any critic to follow is simply this: patiently to sit down and discover what actually did exist, utterly setting aside his own imaginations.

Take, for example, the instance to which we have referred, the ministry of women. St. Paul, in the first Epistle to Timothy, ch. v., lays down: "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old." This rule has seemed to some to indicate a degree and amount of organisation which could not have existed earlier than the second century, and yet when we turn to a heathen authority, we find in the Letters of Pliny, clear evidence that some forty years later, the ministry of women as deaconesses was universal in the Primitive Church. Pliny tells us in the interesting sketch he gives of early Christianity as it existed in Bithynia, when St. John and St. Ignatius died, that he put to the torture two female slaves who were ministers among the Christians and yet could extract nothing worthy of punishment. And so again about Gnosticism, and the references to that system in the Pastoral Epistles. St. Paul in the first Epistle to Timothy, ch. i., exhorts, his disciples not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying." And in the closing chapter of

the same epistle exhorts him to avoid "oppositions of science falsely so called." These passages are clear references to some form of what has been called Gnostic error, a system which flourished in the second century. But men have quietly assumed that it did not flourish in the apostle's time, and have therefore concluded the Pastoral Epistles to be forgeries of the second century.

The faithful Christian will, however, do well in this age to remember the exhortation of the prophet, "He that believeth will not make haste;" and, assuredly, he will not make haste to throw away his confidence in truth that has sustained him in past trials because of objections like these. The numerous discoveries in Egypt have shown that Gnostic thought existed in Egypt and all through the East in the age of the apostles, and long before. Gnosticism was simply a combination of Oriental and Buddhist thought with Judaism at first, and afterwards with Christianity. There was a Jewish Gnosticism in Palestine and Egypt before the birth of our Lord. The Essenes round the Dead Sea and the Therapeutæ or Ascetics of Egypt taught the very views about genealogies or endless emanations of spiritual beings intermediate between God and man to which St. Paul refers, just as in the second century the same Gnosticism, combined with Christianity and in the wild weird speculations of men like Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion, proved that Christianity could be connected from the very beginning with the most extravagant teaching.[1]

The New Testament connects two ideas with these Gnostic systems—magic, and a rejection of the reality of the Incarnation, based on the theory of the evil nature of matter. Both these points receive abundant confirmation from the Egyptian discoveries. Magical manuscripts abound, as we might imagine, remembering that as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses fifteen hundred years earlier, so Egypt ever continued to be the chosen home of magical delusions. At Colossæ and at Ephesus in St. Paul's time Gnostic thought abounded, magic was practised, and the professors of the magical art were Jews. "Certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus," and were so strikingly punished that "many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." At Rome, as we know from classical sources, the Jews were the great magicians in the Apostolic age; while again, when we turn to Egypt, we learn, from a letter full of interesting gossip concerning the inhabitants of Alexandria written by the Emperor Hadrian about the year 120, that magic so flourished in that city that Jews, Christians, and Pagans all alike practised it. Manuscripts of a magical character like those "books" mentioned by St. Luke—Ephesian letters, as they are technically called—have been abundantly found, wherein special use is made of the word Iao or Jehovah, plainly indicating their connection with those Jewish speculations and magical practices in which the chief of the Jewish priests and his seven sons indulged themselves.

The other question whereon Gnostic thought led men astray was the doctrine of the Incarnation. Students of Scripture have often found such passages very puzzling, as that where St. John says in his second Epistle: "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Or, that again in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle, where the Apostle of Divine love speaks equally strong words: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." It is evident too that the persons who taught these views thus reprobated were also evil-doers. The apostle will not allow even social intercourse with them. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (that is the true orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

It is clear that St. John in these passages is not referring to unbelievers outside the church—for social intercourse was never forbidden as regards these—but to some special form of thought, to some profane and immoral sects inside the church which denied the reality of the Incarnation, and then with their theoretical teaching on that fundamental question united immoral and wicked dogmas on points of practice, bringing disgrace on the Christian name and profession. Eusebius, the learned church historian, tells a well-known story about St. John, illustrating the strong language used in his Epistles—that, having on one occasion gone to the public baths to refresh himself, and learning that Cerinthus, the chief of one of these immoral sects, was inside, St. John fled from the door, exhorting all to follow his example, "lest peradventure the bath fall upon us while Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." The discoveries among the ancient Coptic manuscripts enable us to realise and understand the reason of the apostle's language, and the nature of this heretical teaching, which, by the way, extorted from St. Paul, writing to the Colossians, just as stern and severe condemnation.

More than one hundred years ago a Coptic manuscript was brought home from Egypt by a Mr. Askew. It lay unnoticed on the shelves of the British Museum for more than half a century, till, just forty years ago, a German scholar translated it into Latin, and published it at Berlin. Its title is "Pistis Sophia," and it is a strange reflection upon our English reputation for attention to the Bible and Biblical studies, that no one gave an account of this curious book

[1] The devout student of the New Testament should consult on this point the Introduction and Dissertations in Bishop Lightfoot's "Commentary on Colossians."

in our own language till Dr. Lipsius contributed an article upon it to the fourth volume of Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Biography." It is a valuable document, for it explains the doctrine which St. Paul and St. John so strongly denounced. This "Pistis Sophia" opens up the whole Gnostic system. It sets forth the endless genealogies of spiritual beings intermediate between God and man, it makes much use of angelic beings, it teaches the essentially wicked nature of matter, and therefore rejects the doctrine that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. It does not deny that there was such a being as Jesus Christ. It accepts the history of His life and actions, and thus enables its followers to profess themselves Christians, but it teaches that Christ's body came down from heaven; that His humanity was not real, but only in appearance, and therefore that His body had nothing to say or do with our bodies, which are made up of matter irreclaimably and eternally bad. The conclusions that follow from this teaching are very evident. If Christ's body was not a real human body, there was no real incarnation, no real atonement—Christ's human life on earth was no example for us, and His glorified humanity in heaven has no vital connection with our race. It is no wonder that St. John, therefore, described such teaching, striking at the very foundations of Christianity, as the spirit of antichrist. And then, too, evil-doing followed evil teaching. Our human bodies, "Pistis Sophia" teaches, are necessarily and hopelessly bad. The deeds of the body must then be bad, and the soul cannot be held responsible for what the body does. Hence arose the grossest Antinomianism, all moral responsibility being swept away. It is no wonder that St. John in his Epistles speaks so sharply, and in the Apocalypse denounces the Nicolaitans, who taught thus, as those whom God hateth. A study of Dr. Lipsius' article will show that angelic worship, magic, and astrology, "the curious arts" of the Acts, were a necessary part of this Gnostic system, and will prove the best commentary on St. John's Epistles, and on those words of St. Paul wherein he writes to the Colossians, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,—not holding the Head."

I may close this paper by saying that studies like these have a present practical interest for us. Buddhism is dying in the East. Yet some foolish spirits have of late striven to revive it in the West, and have even established a society which aims at propagating its teaching. Esoteric Buddhism has caused a considerable sensation in some circles in India and in England. Its teaching is in all respects almost a literal reproduction of the ancient Gnostic system. It denies the Incarnation, and has been allied with theosophy, with magic, and with vain attempts to penetrate the future, as in the ancient system reprobated by Holy Scripture. Verily the man is to be pitied who can thus leave the river of life which has revived a dying humanity, and poured into its exhausted veins the current of a vigorous morality, to seek such a broken fountain as Buddhism, which has ever proved the bitter source of death spiritual and death temporal to those who have trusted in it.

WONDERFUL WALKER.

IN a quiet churchyard in one of the most secluded valleys in England is a plain slab of grey stone. The great hills circle it round, and the mountain streams sing their perpetual requiem beside it. Sometimes travellers turn aside to decipher its half-obliterated inscription, and then, Wordsworth in hand, wander up the valley, following the windings of the river till it is lost amongst the higher hills. Both the gravestone and the valley are in their way famous, and have a little literature of their own. The tomb covers the bones of "Wonderful Walker," and the valley is that of the Duddon. In the Acta Sanctorum of the English Church, if it ever come to be written, the name of Robert Walker will hold an honoured and unique position. In the Seventh Book of Wordsworth's Excursion he is referred to in the beautiful passage beginning:

> A priest abides before whose life such doubts
> Fall to the ground;

and in the notes to the seventh and eighteenth of the Duddon Sonnets, the poet gives an excellent memoir of the well-remembered parson.

One hundred years ago the North of England nurtured in her hardy bosom a very distinct and remarkable type of piety. If it lacked the graces of a Herbert it held in delightful balance the grace of holiness and the sanctity of labour. The nearest approach to this north country type is the Swiss pastor, as drawn in the pages of Gothelf, but he lacks the dignity of the old north-country parson.

The "Wonderful Walker" type of parson is now well-nigh extinct. Only eighty-seven years have run by since he died, and yet St. Francis himself seems scarcely more removed from the modern idea of a clergyman than does "Wonderful Walker."

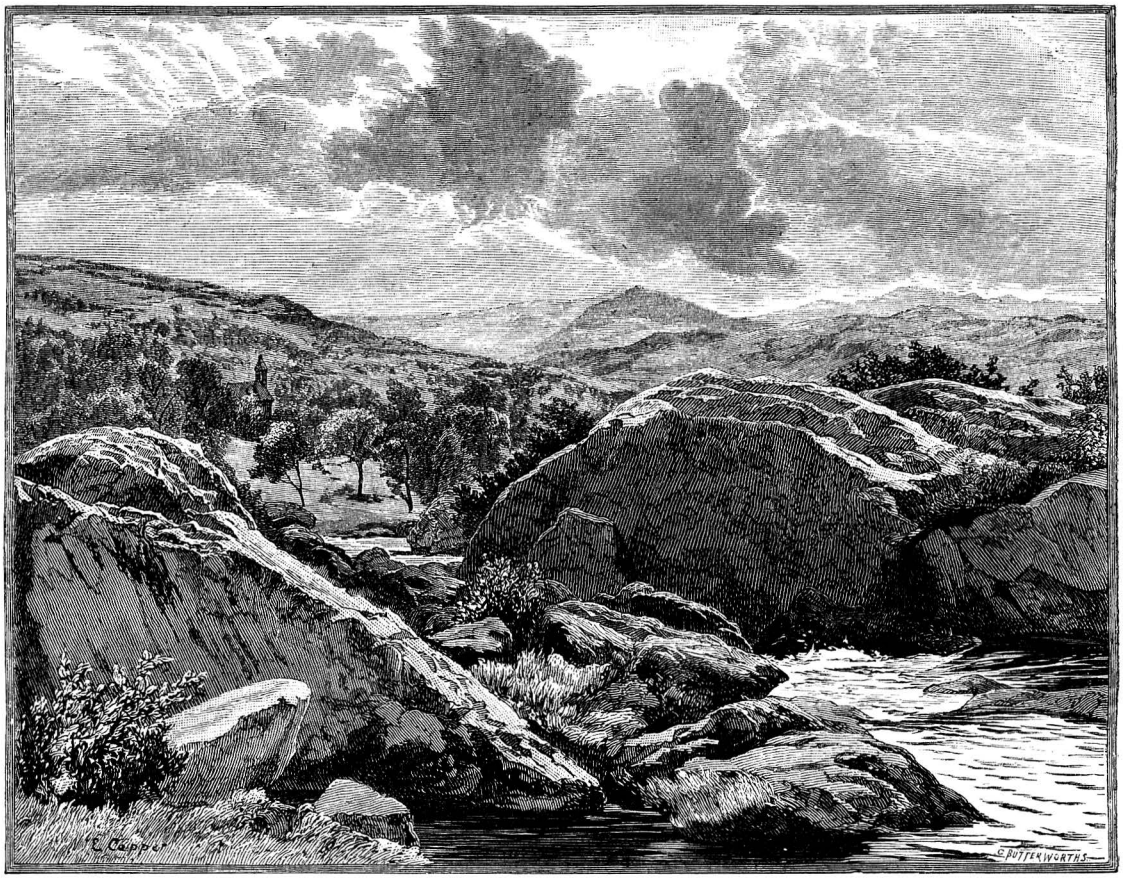
In the matter of dress he was a law unto himself; he wore a "coarse blue frock, a checked shirt, a leather strap about his neck for a collar, a coarse apron and wooden shoes." He claimed similar latitude as to trades, and followed various occupations with exemplary success, such as

sheep-farming, spinning and weaving and selling cloth and linen, and agriculture generally. The nineteenth century clergyman must of necessity discourage the drink traffic, but Walker, in days when total abstinence questions were rarely discussed, was not only brewer, but publican also. Finally, in still further contradistinction to the existing order of things, although his living was always at or under the annual value of 20*l.*, this model parson never got into debt, never asked charity, but always dispensed it freely; brought up and launched in the world eight children, and triumphantly left 2000*l.* of accumulated savings at his death.

to the land with a strange tenacity; the occupants of one farm in the district claim that their family have occupied it for nine hundred years, and from various local records it seems to be no empty boast. The dialect too remains the same, many old Norse and Danish words being in constant use.

> The lovely poet words grown obsolete
> That will not leave off singing.

The people themselves are reserved, resolute and honest. It is traditional among them that the old pack horses used to travel from Kendal to Whitehaven led by a sagacious old black roadster,



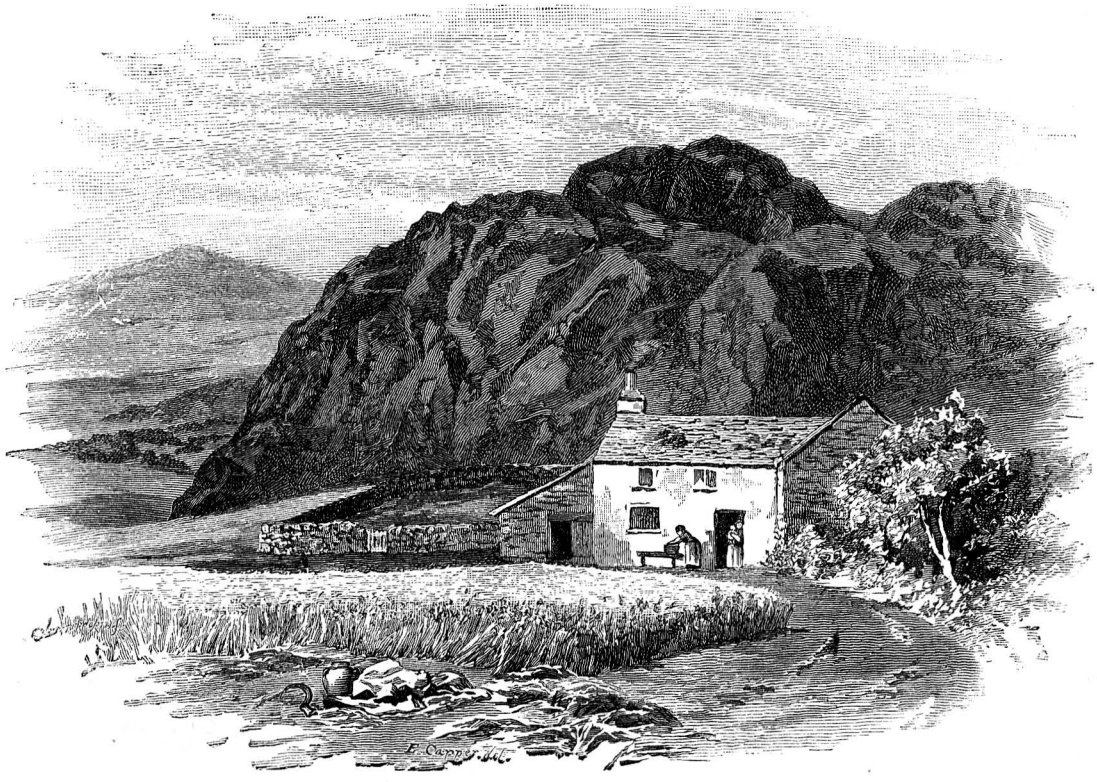
THE DUDDON VALLEY.

Robert Walker was born in 1709 and died in 1802. He ruled his one parish of Seathwaite for sixty-seven years. What that parish was and what the people, may be easily guessed, for neither one nor the other is much changed. The lovely valley of the Duddon is shut in on all sides by the hills, except on the south-west, where it widens out towards the sea. Here and there on the hillsides, are scattered farms and homesteads, substantially built of the rock of the district, they generally (as if in obedience to Horace's injunction) have a little plantation close by and a stream of running water. On the lintel of the door is usually carved the initials of the owner and the date. The same families cling

and though they were known to travel miles unattended and often laden with valuable goods, yet no robbery was every known to occur. The thirty-four sonnets that the all-too-generous Wordsworth dedicated to the Duddon valley slightly exaggerate its undeniable beauties. Though far less lovely than the Derwent as it flows through the gates of Borrowdale, less placidly sweet than the Brathay as it glides through its emerald valley to meet its sister Rothay, still those few miles of water have a special charm of their own—enormous rocks have rolled from the crags above and broken the stream into a hundred cascades.

The whole valley is characterised by a wise moderation; it is solitary without being desolate,

and prosperous without being prim. The fells are gloomy in parts where they crest themselves against the sky, but as they sink down towards the stream they level into lawns of vividest green, full in spring time of anemones and daffodils. Wordsworth's "Faery Chasm" deserves the name, if only for the marvellous colour of the water, sky blue in parts as the poet describes it, softening down into the pale clear green of the beryl. It is a land of crystal waters



UNDER CRAG, THE BIRTHPLACE OF WONDERFUL WALKER.

gathering upon a hundred hill sides, and rushing in mid-channel over huge rocks and through deep sunless pools till they broaden out into the sands of Duddon. A little way below the stream there is a mill for weaving yarn. Wordsworth considered it a "mean and disagreeable object," but it has acquired some picturesque features since his days.

And now about the man whose history and traditions are still honoured through all the country side. He was born in the cottage shown in our illustration—it shelters itself beneath a mass of rock and is appropriately called Under Crag. Nearly one hundred and eighty years have passed over this quiet homestead but it remains practically unaltered. It is the usual type of north country farm cottages, built of the rough stone of the district, purposely kept low in pitch to avoid the wild westerly gales, the simple farm building flanking the living rooms on either side. If you step within you would find yourself in a kind of small partition known in Cumberland by the beautiful name of "the God-speed"—here the host stands to bid farewell to his guests; the living room is called the "house-place" or "the house;" a square open chimney covers the flat hearth on which the peat fire smoulders. The furniture will assuredly date back many generations; and some few years ago before the rage for old oak had sprung up, would certainly include cabinets of old black oak, with settles and linen and oatmeal chests to match, all fairly well carved and bearing amidst the interlaced scroll work the initials of the owner and the date. In such a home as this Robert Walker was born and lived all the long years of his life. He was the youngest of twelve children, and being in his childhood somewhat delicate and frail in health, was judged unfit for bodily labour. In those days, as in still earlier ones, the church and the school claimed the less robust sons, and he was set aside to be a scholar. The sickly lad picked up learning of a practical kind and became schoolmaster at Seathwaite.

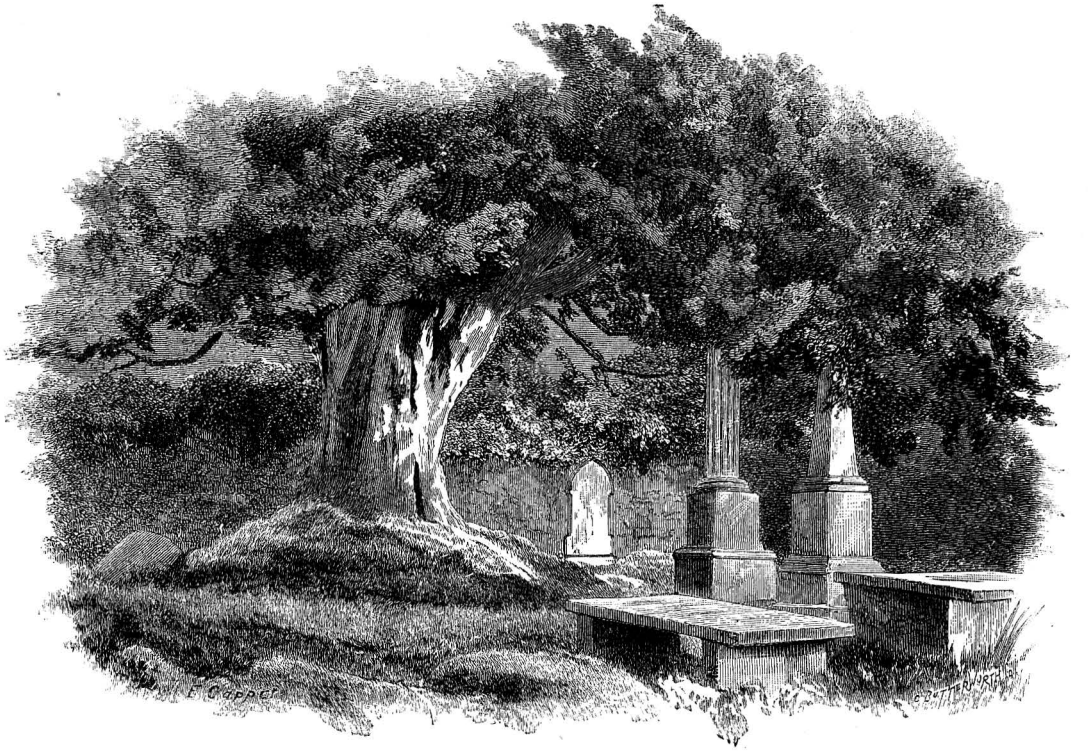
Looking back from our own exalted days with their accompanying paraphernalia of Educational Departments and School Boards, one may yet perceive that "Wonderful Walker" was a born teacher, having the supreme gift of moulding and forming character, grinding with wise persistence into the very fibre of his pupils certain distinct moral forces and healthy influences, so strong and vital that they survived and asserted themselves to the third and fourth generations. Having acquired some little knowledge of Latin, he took Holy Orders and became Curate of Seath-

waite, the value of this piece of ecclesiastical preferment being then 5*l.* per annum. On the strength of this he married, acquiring 40*l.* as his wife's portion, but she brought him also the better dowry of a sweet serviceableness and a life long devotion to him and his work. As the years rolled on he was offered preferment, but he could not be tempted to leave his well-loved valley. Frequent offers of much better benefices were made to him, but Seathwaite gave him scope enough for his ambition. His living was twice augmented, and reached at last the grand total of 20*l.* per annum, just half the value of the living of Goldsmith's memorable parson, and three pounds less than that of Fielding's exemplary divine.

Rising every morning about four o'clock he was the first in the fields, tending his sheep and planting and tilling his land. Eight hours of the day were given to teaching, for he was schoolmaster as well as parish priest. He sat at his spinning-wheel surrounded by his scholars, teaching them and spinning at the same time. Although a High Churchman of the old school, and a man of great reverence, he sat to teach within the altar rails, his wheel by his side and the altar itself serving as desk. His glebe consisted of less than an acre of land, but by-and-by he was able to rent two or three additional acres, farming them himself in an entirely practical and successful manner.

According to a general custom, he brewed his own beer; and, in order that his people might share it with him, he took out a license in his daughter's name, and sold his honest home-brewed ale to all who wanted it. What a model beershop was that and what a Boniface; realising Mr. Ruskin's later dream of a holy church at one end of the village and a no less holy tavern at the other. Stories still linger in the vale about the management of that ideal beershop: how wisely he drew the line between enough and too much, and how his wife, who seems to have acted as tapster, said once to a thirsty traveller who asked for a third glass of the ale, "My friend, go thy way; I know, if thou dost not, when thou hast had enough."

Every Sunday he kept open house for those parishioners who had come to church for long miles over the fells. Truly then did the humble vicarage become a Bethlehem, the House of Bread. He himself presided at the long table, his guests and his children all forming one large family. A portion of broth was set before each guest, and the "Wonderful" garnished it with wise and cheerful talk. His manner of taking tithes was simple and picturesque. When his people were gathering in their harvest, he would take a sheet into the field and they filled it with as much of the crop as he could carry, which the Wonderful would then contentedly place upon his back and walk home with.



THE GRAVE OF WONDERFUL WALKER.

Eight children came to bless that frugal couple, each one sharing in his labours and working steadfastly at home and in the field. Although he made his own shoes, and spun and wove his own clothes, yet he found time to devote to study; he was a sincere student of nature, he

watched and recorded the growth of plants and the laws of weather. He observed the stars and acquired some knowledge of mineralogy. He was familiar with the ways of birds and insects and amused his children in the long winter evenings with stories of their lives and habits.

In the little kingdom over which Walker reigned, Christian virtues and noble conduct were taught inflexibly, and enforced with a completeness and a discipline still rare. From the little church beside the stream was preached a gospel which was nothing less than the Sermon on the Mount brought into fruitful contact with every-day life. Alike from vicarage and village beer-shop were enforced with entirely healthy autocratic rule the divine laws of order, obedience, and peace. At once bishop of souls and earthly magistrate, Wonderful Walker ruled his parish with undisputed sway, winning the love and reverence of his people for sixty-seven years; they were to him but a large family and he to them a father indeed.

Traditions yet linger in the valley crediting the Wonderful (as they still call him) with a beautiful dignity of manner. Often he would turn from his lowly work in the fields, or from the rough labour of peat cutting, to give his solemn benediction to some member of his flock who might be departing on a journey; and surely never was blessing of patriarch or pontiff, pronounced and received with more solemnity and awe.

For ninety-three years he lived in Seathwaite, retaining his faculties until his wife died. Then the strong man faltered; when he preached, his voice trembled, and the tears gathered in his eyes as he looked at her empty seat. The night before he died he went to the open door, and gazed at the stars, meditating silently in the open air as was his wont. That night his Captain, Christ, called him away, and he, laying down his arms, became the guest of God. It was in the year 1802. Nearly three generations have passed away, and yet beside the mountain streams, and under the shadow of his well-loved hills his memory is kept green and honoured. It has passed beyond the circle of the quiet valley, out into the busy world beyond, and his descendants have preserved and handed on the lessons taught a hundred years ago by the man who takes his rest under the grey slate slab in Seathwaite churchyard.

ALBERT FLEMING.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN.

CHAPTER XIV.

"GASPARD!" SHE CALLED, "GASPARD!"

ONCE clear of the defile with its perils the two women hurried onwards, each turn of the hills revealing some well-remembered scene to Madeleine. There, below, was Prali, where she had lived when a girl; those tall poplars by the waters seemed to be unchanged since the days when she had driven her cows into their shadow; and there away to the right was the gleam of water where the thirteen lakes lay in the snowy mountain spurs like dew-drops in the bosom of a rose; and surely no rose could be lovelier than was the snow at that moment as the sun broke through the level mists that veiled his dawning.

"It was my father's home, Rénée," the woman murmured wistfully, "my home, where I played with my brothers, where I sat spinning at my mother's side, where Henri Botta came and taught me how to love him. Long ago—ah, yes, so long ago! There is the church, look, Rénée; there was a bell in the wooden tower that used to ring for prayer. The papists say often that we Vaudois do not pray; had they lived in Prali they had learned better things of us. Rénée, child, tell me canst thou see the tower? thine eyes are clearer than mine, canst thou see it, the little red tower with its painted bell-cage? It was Henri, my brave Henri, that reared it, it was that building-task that brought him to Prali. Ah, how long ago!"

"And I shall never see him on earth again," she went on more to herself than to Rénée.

"I shall never hear his voice as when evening brought him home to me at Prali and at Rora; but he is in higher

hands than ours, ah, yes. And I know that in the land of light I shall see him and hear him when these turmoils and troubles are past. Only a little while more, a very short while, and our Master will call me too."

"It must not be that I am left behind," said Rénée with a girl's swift thought of self. "Thou art all I have, mother, and we must die together."

The woman turned slowly from regarding the distance, and let her eyes rest upon the sweet sad face so near her own. "That is as the Master wills," she answered softly, "He loves thee better than I do."

"Yes," answered Rénée, a smile breaking over the sorrow of her mouth. "Yes, I know it now."

It was true; in the thick darkness the Day-star had arisen for her, the faint and far-off glimmer of God's great light of truth. Earthly trial and torture bites sharply, and such griefs as had beaten on Rénée Janavel and on her people may well demand human courage and break human hearts; but the truth was true for them as it is true for all time that God's love is stronger than pain, that in the midst of sorrow His comfort can be sweet, and that even "men's fierceness shall turn to His praise."

They were far from the crest of the Guliano pass by this time, and they could hear no sign of pursuit. They turned aside to rest awhile on a grassy slope which broke the hill-side with its long terrace, a lovely stretch of sward where flowers gleamed amongst the grass, and the bees were flying heavily above the patches of wild-thyme. The shadow of a birch-tree crossed it, making a trembling play of light and shade in the strong sunshine; and below this clear space of grass and flowers there came a tossed and tangled brake, full of creeping plants and broken stones, and tussocks of moss, and the stately spires of some alpine larkspur crowded thick with bloom.

Here they sat, silent for the most part, for their hearts were too full for much speech, but between them lay a sacred sympathy that scarcely needed words.

Madeleine's yearning eyes were still seeking out familiar landmarks, her memory was busy with the past; but her fingers were closed tightly over her foster-child's hand, and the sense of Rénée's presence lay in the background of her thoughts as the blue sky lay behind those birchen boughs. And the girl's head drooped and her eyes were downcast, but her soul was steady and stilled. God's ways might be mysterious, and His lessons hard, but the ways and the lessons were those of her Father, and she could trust His love.

Then, suddenly, over the peace and the stillness there fell a horror of alarm.

Down below them, coming by the poplar rows and the river-bank, were armed men. They could see the regular ranks, and catch the gleam of steel. *Soldiers!* And to these hunted women of the valleys that word meant terror and the danger of death.

Should they hide themselves amongst the stones and trees? Should they fly to the right or left?

"Ah," Rénée's hand clutched her mother's convulsively as the cry left her lips, "they are all about us; see!"

Dark forms were climbing the hill-side on either hand. Below them was that marching troop. Behind them was the guard of the Guliano Pass. Was there then any hope in flight?

They shrank back into the shadow of the birch, a flickering and slight shadow at best, but any movement might betray them if they crossed the bare slope; sunlight so strong as that which bathed the grass would reveal them only too sharply. Madeleine hid her face in her hands, and lifted her heart in prayer. Rénée watched the approaching figures with wide open defiant eyes; her beautiful head held back like a stag at bay; she threw her black cloak over the white coif and kerchief to her foster-mother, and flung her own scarlet capucin into the shadow; it came naturally to her to protect her mother—Madeleine, but even as she covered and sheltered her the thought came flashing through her brain that it was now for the last time. Surely the end had come.

There could be no escape. The troops were advancing rapidly, led by those who apparently knew every feature of the ground. The scouts were close upon them now, the sound of their feet crashing through the underwood could be distinctly heard, even the hoarse tones of their voices, and the clank of their accoutrements. Madeleine cowered yet lower, and a whispered word of prayer came like a groan from her lips.

And then, starting forwards with a jerk as of a bow released from its tension, Rénée snatched her hands from her mother's hold, and held them out with a ringing cry.

"Gaspard!" she called, "Gaspard!"

The hill above her echoed it, the dear, long-unuttered word; and Madeleine, bewildered, repeated it in her turn, as if speaking in a dream. "Gaspard! Gaspard!"

And there were hurrying steps bounding over the brake, and a voice loud and strong calling across the distance. And then. . . .

But neither Rénée nor Madeleine could remember very clearly what happened then. They knew that instead of danger, help had come, instead of death a newer and dearer life, instead of the faces of their foes the sight of their best beloved.

And there on the hill-slopes where he had first beheld her, Henri Botta met his wife again. Safe after perils unspeakable; together after bitterest separation. Was it strange that for the moment they forgot that there was still trouble and trial in God's fair world, and that while the golden sunshine lay bright upon the grass they should, for those brief minutes at least, forget that the Vaudois had yet to win the valleys?

"Rénée," whispered Gaspard holding the girl's hands in both his own, and looking down into her frank eyes as he spoke, "Rénée, I trusted thee to the care of our Father above, and He has preserved thee alive."

"But I," and her answering voice sank and broke, "but I have been faithless—unworthy. I have doubted. I have despaired."

The tramp of the main body of Arnaud's army was close upon them. Gaspard remembered his place which was on the advance guard.

"I must go," he said hurriedly. "At our noonday halt I shall find thee. My father and mother and thee—keep together, keep with the troops. Farewell for a short while, dear one; and may God grant us each a braver faith, and then a larger heart of thankfulness."

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. XIII.

Consider how great things he hath done for you.
Search diligently for the young child.
I am at the point to die.
Stand up; I myself also am a man.
I have cut off, like a weaver, my life.
Is it a time to receive money?
Thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid.
Behold, thou hast mocked me and told me lies.

Who spake these words? Now tell them one by one,
Then with initials spell, when all are done,
One of the beautiful symbolic names
Which, as His title, Christ our Saviour claims.

L. T.

Monthly Religious Record.

FOR some years past, according to a statement in the new "Missionary Year-Book," the missionary offerings of the churches, at least in Great Britain, have been nearly stationary. We extract the figures for 1887, as prepared by the Rev. Canon Scott Robertson, premising that the sums mentioned do not include any proceeds of funded property, or interest, or balances in hand from previous years, or amounts raised and expended abroad.

	£
Church of England Societies.	461,236
Joint Societies of Churchmen and Nonconformists.	187,048
English and Welsh Nonconformist Societies . .	367,115
Scotch and Irish Presbyterian Societies . . .	202,940
Roman Catholic Societies.	10,420
Total .	£1,228,759

Comparing this sum with that raised in the three previous decades, we find the averages as follows:

	£
From 1873 to 1877 inclusive . . .	1,047,809
From 1878 to 1882 „ . . .	1,110,463
From 1883 to 1887 „ . . .	1,218,163

Here is undoubtedly an increase, but a very gradual one, and not at all in proportion to the advance of the country in wealth during the fifteen years. The total contributed by the churches of the United States for Foreign Missions in 1887–8 was nearly 800,000*l.* "If the sums appear large, they may be contrasted with the amounts raised for other purposes. Thus, the expenditure of the London School Board for the year 1887–8, amounted to 1,972,472*l.* That is to say, the payment for the education of childreu, in the middle and lower classes of London alone, has cost the community about 750,000*l.* more than all the churches of Great Britain together have found themselves able to raise for the evangelisation of the world!"[1]

A REVIVAL of missionary interest has been the most marked feature of the recent anniversary meetings. The discussion of facts and methods has had an awakening influence. The actual peril threatening some of the societies has aroused the sympathy of their friends. The spirit of devotion which has prompted many private individuals to surrender all to the cause has shamed the sloth and selfishness of others. Never was the cry of the heathen world more distinctly heard; and never was the response of Christians at home more widely echoed. The *Church Missionary Society* has emerged unharmed from the ordeal of criticism. Its General Fund has received 211,378*l.*, which is 16,821*l.* more than the preceding year, 3,602*l.* more than the highest amount yet recorded, and 12,000*l.* more than the average of the last seven years; while the various special funds raise the total entrusted to its administration to 252,016*l.*, an amount never before approached. That this is more than an expression of confidence, that it is a manifestation of sympathy with its work, is apparent not only from the enthusiastic meetings which assembled, but from the numerous offers of personal service which it has received—as many as 132, of which twelve came from clergymen, and six from qualified medical men—it might be said seven, for the wife of one doctor is a doctor herself. Of the Universities, Cambridge sent nine, Oxford two, Dublin two, Durham three, London one, Edinburgh two. Twenty-six were ladies. The special distinction of the year has been the number of persons accepted who were already well qualified to go out without further preparation, fourteen only of the fifty-nine having been accepted with a view to training. *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* has, perhaps, been less exposed to direct assault; but its income this year is 138,366*l.*, as against 109,765*l.*, the advance being chiefly due to one special gift of 25,000*l.*, five-sixths of a property which came to a clergyman who had always generously supported the society.

THE *Baptist Missionary Society* also, notwithstanding the strictures on its Indian work, received an income of 80,000*l.*, which is larger than any recorded before; and in relation to India itself, is able to report a growing number of unpaid agents, and of self-supporting native churches. The *London Missionary Society*, which was so seriously threatened, reports a total income of 125,250*l.*, and an expenditure of 122,596*l.* The missionaries themselves have contributed about 1,000*l.* towards meeting the emergency that had arisen, and some instances of great self-denial have come to light. The *Wesleyan Missionary Society* has reduced its debt of 16,869*l.* to 9,382*l.*, the total income last year amounting to 105,000*l.*; and the *Moravians*, whose efforts within comparatively narrow limits have had so great an influence on the history of missions, have also increased their income. Several other societies rejoice also in proportionate advances. These signs of fresh awakening encourage the hope of such continuous efforts as shall maintain the work of the several societies on a healthy level.

REFERENCE has more than once been made to the aggregate of small contributions which might be reached in all the churches by more systematic giving, in which all classes could take share. Thus, at the meeting of the London Missionary Society, the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers pointed out that, if every Congregationalist in the country contributed a penny a week, they would have at once an income of 200,000*l.*

THE usual routine of meetings has this year in several instances been advantageously modified. The interest has not been equally maintained, but the general average has been good. As regards the speeches, they have been more controversial than for some years past: we should be disposed to rank the men of practical experience before the men of eloquence and thought; but many good things have been said, as well as many good deeds described. We have had, too, beside the bolder generalisations, many life-stories of great interest—such as the narratives of Mr. Hargreaves and Mr. MacGowan, from China, and of Mr. E. R. Young, from the Cree and Saltoux Indians—attesting the power of the Gospel to lift up the fallen everywhere, and the fulness of the redemption and grace which it declares. So many and so various are the meetings of the season that no complete summary of them is possible within our space. We can but select a few facts as samples of many.

INDIA naturally occupied a prominent place. One significant fact deserves more notice than it has received; namely, that, whereas a few years ago the Bible was declined as a gift, hundreds of thousands of copies are now bought by the people. Sir Charles E. Bernard, K.C.S.I., speaking for the Church Missionary Society, said he had seen a good deal of missionary work during the thirty years he had been in India, and he was able to state that the missionaries lived self-denying lives, not in any way lives of luxury.

THE Rev. H. E. FOX, who took part in the Special Winter Mission, bore personal testimony to the work. He saw no signs of failure. But the paucity of labourers was pitiable. "One lovely summer morning in January we rode out to one of the innumerable villages in the great Kistna

[1] The "Missionary Year-Book for 1889," containing historical and statistical accounts of the principal Protestant Missionary Societies in Great Britain, the Continent of Europe and America. We commend this new edition to the attention of all readers interested in the progress of Christianity among the nations. The various sections have been carefully revised, and it is now as complete a statement as can anywhere be found of the origin and work of the different missionary organisations. It is published by the Religious Tract Society, price 2*s.* 6*d.*

delta, not only to bring the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but to be the bearers of the heavy tidings that we must take away their teacher, their only catechist, from whose lips they had heard the Word of Life. There was another village, where there seemed to be a more earnest need, and we must take him from this village. If you could have seen these people running beside us as we rode away, and with that plaintive pleading of the natives, which is irresistible to Europeans—at least for the first six months of their residence in India—saying, 'Master, master, what are we to do? You are taking away our teacher. Master (turning to me), tell the people of England to send us more teachers when you get home.' There was a poor woman carrying her child, and I said to the men, 'Some day that woman will put that child down; it will grow up to be a man, strong enough to carry its mother. So it should be with you. We have been carrying you, and now we want to put you down. You must walk. We want you to support a teacher yourselves. And the time may come when you will be able to carry us, and send out teachers in India.' The reply was unanswerable: 'Master, we are so lame; we cannot walk; you must carry us.' And what can you say to men who are only earning twopence a day in the rice-fields of the Kistna?"

It was shown incidentally in the speech of the Rev. H. D. Williamson, who described his work among the Gonds of Central India, that some methods recently discussed as new have long been part of the machinery of missions. These people of the jungles are devil-worshippers, "people satisfied to worship evil spirits, people so dense and dark that when," he said, "we began to speak to them about Jesus Christ and God, their minds were a complete blank. It was evidently utterly impossible for them to realize what we were speaking to them about. Therefore my first endeavour was naturally to make friends of them, and the way I did so was to go and live among them, and as much as possible like the Gonds. I found that the ordinary mode of pitching tents was not the best means of reaching them, and one day I said to my catechist, 'Look here, pundit'—for he was a pundit, a converted Brahmin of Benares,—'don't you think we could go and put up in these people's houses, and do away with the tents, by which they evidently confound us with the Government officers?' So we started off and took our ponies and goods for two or three weeks' operations in the jungle. When we started from a village my catechist went to the right and I to the left, and we sent off our ponies and our breakfasts to a village nine or ten miles away. My catechist went through his three or four villages, and I went through my three or four, and when we had gathered our congregation—which was not easy, for their first impulse was to run away—we talked to them about their own evil spirits, about Jesus Christ, and God and man. Then we would go on to another village, and in the middle of the day we met in our little Gond hut—made as clean as possible, but perhaps not as clean as we should like—and sat down to our breakfast. The people, anxious to see the interesting proceeding of a European missionary taking his breakfast, would sit down in front and watch us. We are glad to see them, for it shows us that their suspiciousness of us and our work is going away. At night they watch us, and in the morning they watch us, and they are up before we are. We sleep outside, in the village street, or in any open place. God saw fit to let us labour for six years before showing us the first-fruits of our Gond Mission. Then He brought out the man He had been preparing to be the first-fruits of our mission. He was a man owning a couple of villages, and was looked on as a holy man. He had sat beside the River Nerbudda doing penance for two years, seeing if he could find peace. He sat there on the advice of Hindu pundits. Not having found peace, he came back to his native village, and there the Lord caused me to meet him. He had been taught to read by the Hindus—a thing not one Gond in a thousand can do; so that on the third day I handed over a New Testament to him, and the end of it was that, with the help of God's Spirit, he was brought to the light and was baptized as the first-fruits of our Gond Mission. And now I am thankful to say that we have nearly forty Christians among these Gonds. It is a very difficult work. Here are a people spreading over a district 150 miles across, in which for six years I was the only missionary labouring. We have now converts all over the district, with catechumens and inquirers more numerous than the Christians."

Among the more important general papers of the month was one by the Rev. R. Glover, of Bristol, on "The Present Aspects and Needs of the Mission Field," read at a missionary conference arranged by the Baptist Society. In dealing with present needs, Mr. Glover said he could not approve of the proposal to employ young men without training and without wives, who should live upon a mere subsistence allowance. The Catholic priests, it was true, lived like the natives, but seven-eighths of them were natives. As to the Salvation Army, facts seemed to indicate that their methods involved sacrifice of health during the first two years in India far in excess of anything which any other Indian society has to face. It was penny wise and pound foolish to save money and squander health. The celibate missionaries sent out by Oxford to Calcutta, and by Cambridge to Delhi, cost 200*l.* a year, but for 260*l.* a man and his wife could be supported, and the Christian wife and mother was, as had been said, the object lesson India wants. After insisting upon the importance of sending the most thoroughly-trained men, who should combine the simplicity of culture with the understanding of educated sympathy, Mr. Glover, in closing, said that grander souls were the want of the mission field, as they were the want of the Church at home to-day.

The growth of commercial interests is affecting missionary work at many points in Africa. Thus the Congo railway, to be laid from the Lower Congo to Stanley Pool, will not only greatly facilitate the movements of evangelisation, but bring a current of new influences, which will need to be carefully watched. At the meeting of the Baptist Society, the Rev. Philip Davis, B.A., gave a very suggestive account of the Congo people, as he had found them, without any religion but a senseless belief in fetishes, and restrained from evil only by fear, yet with such power of memory that, if a Congo man chooses to listen, he can repeat afterwards any fairly coherent kind of speech. As to the Roman Catholic missions in that region, he said it was more than four hundred years ago since they baptized one of the kings of the Congo, and then for two hundred years or thereabouts they had the full machinery of the Roman Catholic Church, bishops, and monks and priests, and when the fathers' arguments were supposed to be somewhat weakened by the effect of the climate, and not sufficient to convince and convert, there were soldiers to back up their work. And yet what do we find? "With the exception that most of the Congo men have a Portuguese name in addition to their native name, which they call their saint's name, there is nothing at all in the people or the country to show that the Roman Catholics had ever been sent there. The only effect of having the full machinery of their church in operation had been to introduce amongst the people a certain amount of idolatry. Now, idolatry is not native to the Congo, and, whenever anything in the nature of idolatry has been met with, it is to be distinctly traced to the influence of Roman Catholic missionaries, and, in fact, is about the only evidence that there is in the country to show that they ever were there. It is worth noting this when we are sometimes bidden to observe the methods of Roman Catholic missions. Their mission seems to have completely collapsed as soon as the European missionaries were removed."

Amongst the speakers at several meetings, notably at that of the Church Missionary Society, was the Rev. W. Salter Price, who some five-and-twenty years ago founded the settlement of Frere Town. He made reference to the establishment of the Imperial British East Africa Company, which, by judicious management, has been peacefully and successfully established at Mombasa, and is pushing inland within the sphere of British influence, on the line of Bishop Hannington's last journey. But there was for a time some danger of disturbance, owing to the fact that many hundreds of fugitive slaves had, during past years, attached themselves to the Church Missionary station at Rabai and the neighbouring Methodist station. Mr. Price described how these slaves were claimed by their old masters. He consulted with the manager of the Imperial East Africa Company, and it was decided that the best thing to be done was to ransom the whilom slaves. This was done, and they were declared "Free!" The church at Rabai was calculated to hold six hundred; but after the declaration of freedom a thanksgiving was held, and the church was crowded from end to end with nine hundred people.

COLONEL EVAN SMITH, C.S.I., Consul-General at Zanzibar, spoke also at the anniversary of the Church Missionary Society. He said that if Africa, in the wisdom of God, is in the future to take her place amongst the nations of the world, her regeneration must be brought about by the sons of Africa—it must be brought about by the natives themselves. "It is too vast, it is too gigantic, a work to be undertaken by any foreign agency. But the channel of education is in the hands of the missionaries. The land is beginning to quicken. Little by little the pioneers of civilisation—whether as geographers, whether as explorers—have been supported. Our missionaries themselves are beginning to make their influence felt even in the uttermost parts of the continent. We have all heard much about slavery and the slave trade. The slave trade is a matter entirely different from slavery. The status of slavery must be abolished eventually by Africans themselves. It is too gigantic a task for any Government to undertake, and to bring about its abolition you must make the natives understand its curse and degradation." He pleaded earnestly, therefore, on general grounds for strengthening the hands of the missionaries.

ONE of the resolutions passed at the meeting of the Church Missionary Society gave express approval to different forms of evangelisation. These have been abundantly illustrated in connection with the various societies. The place of education in mission work was the subject of frequent allusion, and the balance of opinion strongly in favour of upholding it. The place of literature was also adverted to. This aspect of the subject came naturally under closer review at the meeting of the Christian Vernacular Education Society for India. The report was most satisfactory. The popular system of the Christian supervision and inspection of some of the native schools in Bengal has been working well. A most striking instance of the conversion of a Mohammedan boy, who first learned the truths of Christianity from the Christian inspector, is related. He was baptized in front of the schoolhouse, and, though his conversion brought on him sharp persecution, he remained true and steadfast to Christ. Three of the native masters in one of the circles are reading the Bible prayerfully and are not ashamed to confess Christ. The principal feature in the work of the year in the publication department is the production of various pamphlets and books for educated Hindus. New life has been thrown into Hindu Tract Societies. Among the speakers was Dr. Murdoch, who gave many interesting facts relating to the work of the society.

THE Church of England Zenana Missionary Society has this year reached an income of 24,866*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.*, the largest yet received. There had been an increase of sixteen European missionaries, and the staff now numbers 715 workers, of whom 557 are native agents. New stations have been opened during the year, and further developments are contemplated. Other Zenana workers attached to other bodies speak with equal hopefulness of the future, with equal pathos of present needs.

THE China Inland Mission has experienced a year of unusual contrasts. It has had its season of trial and bereavement, but has also its record of progress and blessing. Fifty-four new missionaries have left for China from this country and America. The present staff numbers 328, including the wives of missionaries, most of whom were themselves missionaries before marriage. There are fifteen accepted candidates now preparing for the work. Much pioneering work has been done, which shows little in the way of ascertained result, but which is nevertheless of great value as affecting the future of missions in China. The great calamities which have devastated several districts, and brought famine on multitudes, have brought a heavy strain on the missionaries, who have done their utmost to administer relief. Mr. Hudson Taylor stated at the annual meeting that thirteen new stations in different provinces had been opened. In speaking of progress in the province of Kiangsi, he said it was almost wholly due to the efforts of "the sisters;" nothing had more deeply impressed him of late than the way in which God had honoured the labours of the lady missionaries.

THIS increase in missionary zeal has not injuriously affected home institutions; it is in part evidence of the warmer glow of life by which all alike profit. As one feature of the time, we may note the tendency to localisation and subdivision in both religious and philanthropic work. Thus the missions which deal with special classes increase in number and influence. Beside the numerous philanthropies which Lord Shaftesbury did so much to promote, and, beside, the agencies which address themselves to soldiers and sailors, we have now the well-known Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, which with its usual success has once more made its appeal from Exeter Hall: the Navvy Mission, to which we recently called attention; a Mission to the Police, quietly extending its wholesome influence, and a Mission to Railway Men, both of which have had large and successful central meetings. The Theatrical Mission illustrates the same tendency in another direction. A whole host of local societies adapt themselves with equal resource to special requirements, while the multiplication of guilds, and the frequent modifications in much of the machinery of the churches, testify to the general wish to cope with the actual necessities of the time.

THE Sunday School Union has now 6,241 schools associated with it; teachers, 147,595; scholars, 1,450,647. There has been an increase of nearly 10,000 scholars in affiliated schools during the year. These numbers, however, suggest rather the range of its influence than the character of its work, which every year seems to take more practical form. Many of its schemes are directed to the training and elevation of its teachers, whose intellectual and religious needs are wisely considered. The proportion of teachers who are "church members" is ninety per cent. in London, and eighty-three in the provinces.

THE recollection of Whitfield's preaching in Moorfields is revived by the evangelistic expedition to Epsom Downs made during the Derby week by Mr. Hugh Price Hughes and other members of the Wesleyan West Central Mission. The tent, the furniture vans, the Bibles, the blue ribbon, and all the money needed, were provided spontaneously by friends known and unknown. A site, immediately opposite the Grand Stand, was secured for the tent. A lady of title placed a house in the neighbourhood at the service of the missioners, who were about one hundred strong. The first evening seven services were held. There were hundreds of people in the tent. Many pledges were taken, and there were some conversions.

FROM Virginia we have accounts of a revival movement among the negroes of Richmond, which is described as "unprecedented." On one day nearly three hundred were baptized in the James River, in the presence of great multitudes. The converts marched in procession through the streets, many of the women wearing white robes. The three ministers stood in the river, three lines of the converts moving to them at a time. The groans and shouts surpassed all previous experiences. Many more baptisms were expected. The excitement was intense; in some respects ludicrous, as well as full of spiritual danger.

THE Rev. B. La Trobe, one of a family honourably connected with the Moravian brotherhood for several generations, paid a visit last summer to the Society's mission stations in Labrador. A most interesting account of his voyage and travels has been published at the mission agency, 32 Fetter Lane. Mr. La Trobe sailed in the Society's vessel, Harmony, leaving London Docks on June 23rd, Stromness on July 3rd, arriving at Hopedale, the most southerly of the mission stations, August 3rd; staying in Labrador fifty-three days, and returning to London October 26th, after a homeward voyage of thirty-one days. The whole trip occupied one hundred and twenty-five days, or nearly eighteen weeks. The present barque, Harmony, Captain Henry Linklater, is the fourth ship bearing the same auspicious name, and has made the voyage since 1861, being launched on the 24th April that year. The first voyage was made in 1771, since which time a ship has been despatched every year from England to the mission stations at Labrador. There have been in all eleven vessels, ranging from a little sloop of seventy tons to the barque of two hundred and fifty-one tons in which Mr. La Trobe sailed. The stations are on the north-east coast of Labrador, distant from Hopedale to Ramal about three hundred miles. The winter temperature is occasionally seventy below zero. The communication is by sledges, and boats in summer. There is only one bit of road, at Hebron, fitted for a wheeled carriage. For missionary results we commend the perusal of Mr. La Trobe's Journal.