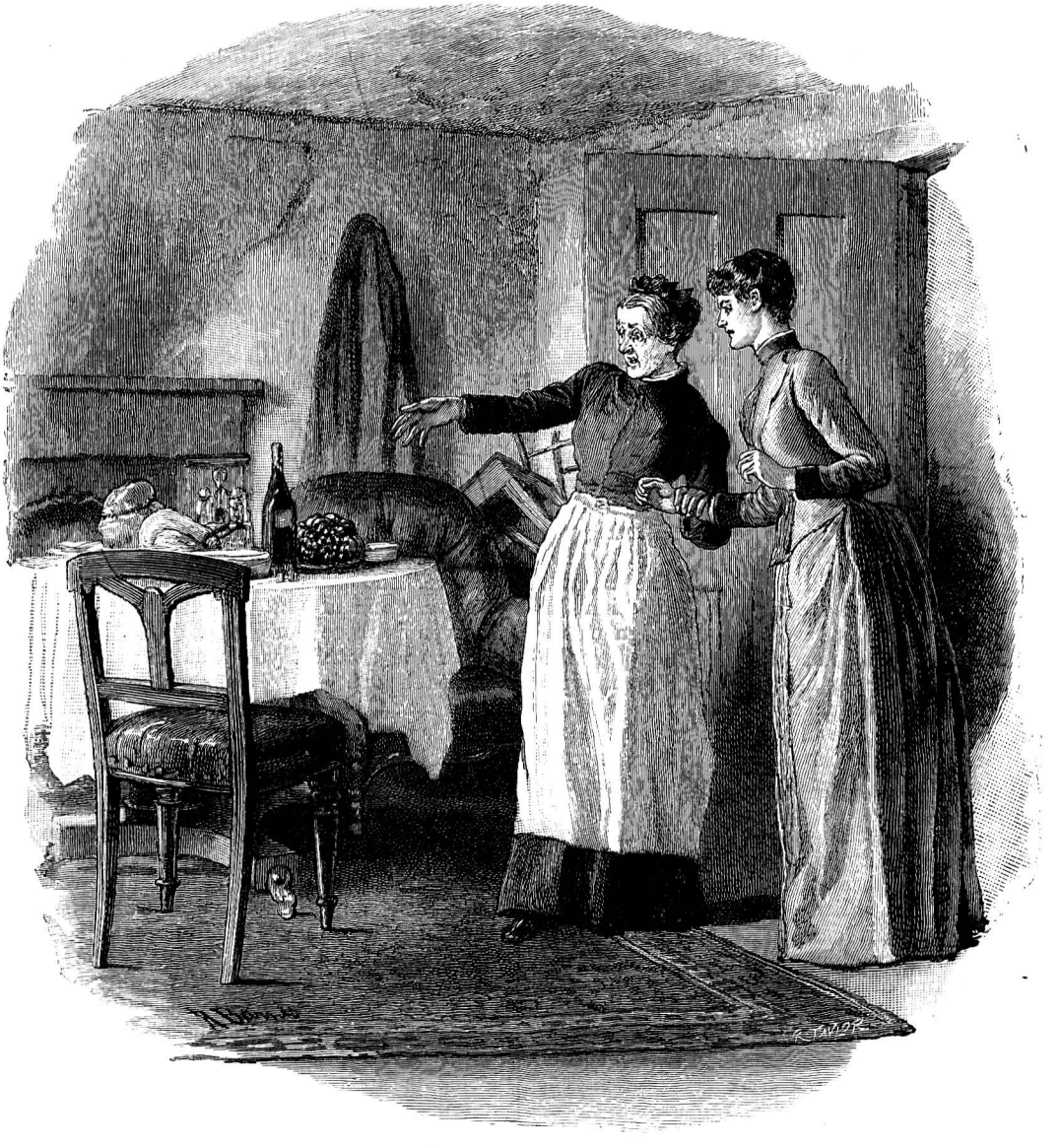
THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

OF ALL DEGREES.

BY LESLIE KEITH, AUTHOR OF "THE CHILCOTES," ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.—FORTUNE'S FAVOURS.



A SURPRISING SIGHT.

MORALISTS have always found a congenial theme in the freaks of Fortune: her capricious humours, the rubs she deals out to one, the favour she heaps on another, her shrugs and her smiles, her nods and her frowns. Perhaps the kindest of her doles is the pleasure she sends unexpectedly. The joys we securely count on, how soon and how surely they disappoint us! But those chance delights which imagination never claimed, which no hope ever

pictured to us—what a rare zest and charm they give to life!

Fortune was frowning very severely at this time on the two women who occupied Mrs. Jones's front parlour. It was all shadow there: hearts wrung, purses empty, want creeping very near; and yet the same fickle dame was about to smile her best and bravest on another occupant of the same house, a poor old fellow who seemed scarcely worthy her regard.

It had always been a mystery to Mrs. Jones—and like others of her class she loved a mystery—how the poor professor lived. While the title carried but a vague and scarcely honourable image to her mind, he remained always the professor to her, though no college was his sponsor, since she had been unable from the first to surmount the difficulties presented by his name, and Von Gianschaieng may indeed be allowed to afford obstacles even to a readier tongue than nature and art had given to Mrs. Jones. But his patronymic mattered little: "What's in a name?" she might have cried with Shakespeare. The great question was, how did he live and where did he scrape and gather together the pence that paid the weekly hire of his room?

"For he pays regular, or he wouldn't have been here this ten year," she explained superfluously, since nobody was likely to suspect her of a too great softness of heart—"and where it comes from beats me."

It came from all sorts of quarters, as the pence of poor people who have not the privilege of drawing cheques often do. Sometimes it was extracted from a French or German lesson, given to a smart clerk who wished to advance himself, or to a milliner who had an idea of flitting for improvement to Paris and who held the innocent conviction that she could acquire all the niceties of the language in twelve lessons. Sometimes it was earned by the translation of foreign correspondence for those firms who do not employ the pushing Teuton or by the making of transcripts at the British Museum, sometimes in ways more precarious and obscure than these. Of one thing we may feel sure, it was earned hardly, at a cost of much endurance, of many slights, of continued disappointments.

As to the question of bodily sustenance, it is even more easily answered. A good many experiments have been made from time to time to prove upon how little nutriment the human frame can subsist, it has even been asserted that a man may continue for weeks not to die upon a diet of nothing else than water. The professor might have thrown some light on the subject, for many similar experiments had been made by him, and the fact that they were made of necessity and not voluntarily would not have rendered him a less trustworthy witness.

To those who have given any thought to the matter, it must be a startling revelation to discover how the poor whom we distinguish as the educated and gently-born poor, live. When a man can speak ever so many languages and is an accomplished musician one feels that there ought to be roast beef on his table every day. How comes it that so many talents and accomplishments can command nothing better than a crust of bread and a draught of water, and at times scarcely these? The truth is, if the professor had had a trade at the ends of those skilled fingers of his, he might have fared less hardly; but first and foremost in the long ranks of the unemployed and unwanted march those who have only brains to barter for daily bread.

He did not complain, perhaps because he had had a long apprenticeship to hunger, and had got a little used to its pangs. Now and then, but very seldom indeed, Alice and Janey had persuaded him to take a meal with them. They had to go about the matter delicately, with infinite diplomacy, because there is one thing that usually fattens and swells on a man's poverty, and that is his pride.

It took a curious, half-laughable phase in the ragged professor, and by a trick of imagination, a curbing of the will, he tried not only to persuade himself but others also that while he had nothing he had everything; that the wealth and comfort and ease of which there were no evidences, yet in which he seemed to move and breathe, were real, and the poverty and pinch of want of which there were so many, a mere trick of your deluded fancy.

A crust came thus to be rich entertainment and his ragged old cloak the garment of a prince. Sad yet brave makeshifts of indigence, have they not their pathetic as well as their humorous side?

These courtier airs, this royal behaviour towards unhandsome fortune found no favour in Mrs. Jones's eyes, however. She was very much scandalized and shocked by the foreigner's seeming want of truthfulness.

"He tells that many lies you wouldn't believe," she confided to Janey; "how the man can walk and not be afraid of the judgment of Heaven is more nor I can think. He couldn't speak the truth if you was to pay him golden guineas for it."

So that there was ready-sown unbelief in Mrs. Jones's heart when those fantastic conceits and self-delusions seemed to be turning into solid realities and fortune's favours ceased to be the dream of a disordered fancy.

The change first indicated itself in the arrival of a visitor who was closeted with the professor for hours—a sufficiently surprising circumstance this, since for years no one from the outside world had ever made a single enquiry concerning him. Then letters came with some frequence, and these, combined with the professor's lengthened disappearances and erratic returns, led Mrs. Jones to the serious step of giving him notice. When the postman's visits grew urgent, when a lodger took to late hours and unexpected absences, this astute woman smelt difficulties. But the professor's reception of her hint was one more surprise in store for her.

"Madame," he said, "I shall leave your roof without doubt, probably without delay; but the time and manner of my going I shall settle for myself."

"As if he was going in a coach and six to a palace," cried the derisive landlady.

The particulars of this little disagreement might have had zest for Janey at another time, but she had neither ear nor heart for them now. So when Mrs. Jones burst in on her one day while she sat alone, she gave, at first, but a listless attention to her tale.

"For pity's sake, Miss Warner," cried the excited Mrs. Jones, "come here this instant. It's my belief that the old professor has gone clean out of his mind!"

"I can't come," said Janey indifferently.

"You ain't doing nothing, Miss Warner, setting idle with your hands in your lap as if you was a lady, and you won't stir a step to help a poor woman as is distracted, what with the landlord as won't take a halfpenny off the rent, and me paid him reg'lar these twenty year, and Jones no helpfuller than that there wooden stool, and a lodger as is fit for Bedlam and no place else, which you will see with your own eyes if you will condescend to step across the passage!"

There was a threat of tears underlying the indignation of this speech, and Janey got up to avoid further importunity.

"What is it?" she asked, "what do you want me to do? If you have quarrelled with the professor I shall take his side, Mrs. Jones."

For all answer the landlady, with that touch of the dramatic which most women love to practise, took her by the hand and led her across the landing to the back room which had been the old man's home for so many years.

And there indeed the open door disclosed a surprising sight enough. A fire—not a mere handful of cinders, but a splendid blaze, glowing and sparkling—burned in the old grate, which scarcely served to contain it. The broken furniture was piled in a corner, a carpet was spread on the floor, and there were deep, comfortable chairs scattered about, while a table in the centre was furnished with abundant good things to eat and drink.

The effect was oddly incongruous, for the paper was broken and dingy, the ceiling black with smoke, the windows uncleaned; the professor's old cloak, which seemed to shrink and hang limp in the midst of this new splendour, depended from its nail on the wall. Surely he had exercised his magician's gift and conjured spells to deceive them!

"And all done unbeknown to me, when I was out, in the innocence of my 'art, buying Jones's dinner," wailed Jones's helpmeet, "and what to do—Jones out and no more sense in him if he was here than the babe unborn, letting alone having to deal with a raving maniac——"

"Come, Mrs. Jones," said Janey with a faint smile, "you have no right to say that. Where is the professor?"

"I know no more than you, Miss Warner, and if I was dying that would be my last word. But if you was to ast me, I would say he is lying drownded in the river, or 'as put 'is head under the train. That's the way they mostly does it 'ere, being handy, so to speak."

"Nonsense," said Janey with authority, "it is very wrong and foolish to talk like that, and I hope you won't think of hinting at any such thing to Miss Lindsell when she comes in. The professor has probably had money left him, he will tell us himself if he wishes to do so. In any case we have no right to be prying here in his absence."

Mrs. Jones scouted the idea of a fortune, and bewailed her ill luck with tears; but Janey would hear no more and returned to her room, shutting out all those fears and surmises. Still, take it as one might, the professor's conduct was certainly surprising—and it occupied her for a moment or two. "I do hope it means that prosperity has come to him," she said to herself. She was able to wish it with an honest, ungrudging heart, though prosperity had not shone on her.

She had been out all morning, tramping here and there in the vain search for work, and she had come home to find Alice absent, too—gone to the shop where she was employed, for it was on the proceeds of her needlework that they now mainly lived.

Six weeks had now gone by since Janey lost her situation—six dreadful weeks in which each day had begun with a lessened stock of hope and ended with a deeper disappointment. Oh, the sickness of this desperate search, how shall we measure its bitterness—we who have nothing but our halting sympathy, our limited vision of sorrows not our own to help us?

Why, it will be readily asked, why did these two starve when there were so many whose purses would have flown open at the first intimation of their need? Why but for that same pride—that delicate, easily affronted susceptibility, good and commendable in its way—which makes all the difference between the refined and the vulgar when the same misfortune befalls them both. The poverty which finds no voice and wears a smiling face has often such pitiful resignations, such heroic sacrifices hidden behind it.

Neither Alice nor Janey could have easily asked help, and it so happened that the loving eyes that might have penetrated their secret, for all the brave front it wore, were for the moment averted.

Honoria, battling with a sudden outburst of sickness in her district, was occupied every moment of the night and day; and after her first visit, in which she assured Alice of Charlie's safety and her father's desire to give him some chance of recovery, she had only been able to send little messages of love and good-will from time to time. The last of these told that Captain Vivian was on his way from Finland to join Charlie. Miss Lemming found her hands full with the same task that occupied Honoria's, and Mr. Augustus was still absent on his honourable mission. Even the doctor had paid fewer visits than usual of late to the Euston Road, such evening hours as he could spare being given to aiding and advising Honoria. Thus in a quite natural and unavoidable way, Alice and Janey were forsaken at the most critical juncture of their fortunes.

Janey had not been many moments alone after her interview with Mrs. Jones when a second knock at the door aroused her.

"Come in," she said impatiently, anticipating

a fresh lamentation and determined to check it firmly, but it was the professor himself who came in. Himself, and yet not himself—the professor with his hair cut, and his beard trimmed, and a new suit of clothes on, and with a something different in his manner, too, as if a little of the old exaggeration and pomp had slipped off with the ragged garments, and a finer calm and courtesy had been put on with the new.

"Miss Janey, you will allow me to enter and talk a little with you?"

"Please do come in," answered Janey, a little frightened, she knew not why. It was like making a new acquaintance. "I am all alone, and I have nothing to do."

"So I guessed. You have been out all morning, Miss Janey?"

"Yes."

"You have been looking for work—for young ladies to instruct?"

"Yes."

"And you have found no one to employ you?"

"No."

The catechism seemed a little cruel, and she could only answer it in monosyllables. He might have spared her.

Yet he did not spare her.

"You have walked about—you, a young lady used to delicate ways—you have walked upon the cruel streets of London till your shoes are worn out and your feet swelled with weariness, and your dress disordered and faded; you have got wet many times because there was no money in your purse to pay for a cab or even for an omnibus—you have gone hungry and come home faint and spent, yet cheerful, always cheerful, Miss Janey, making believe that you have had a full meal when you know it was at the best but a cup of tea——"

She hung her head, she was not cheerful now. These fluent words spoken with a faint foreign accent seemed to be the voice of her own despair.

"You have many and many times set out in hope. Some one was to do great things for you—here was the very place for a young lady of your accomplishments, and behold, when you were about to seize it, it was wrested from your grasp. Some one quicker than you secured the prize. Or, let us say that it is your hand into which it falls; you come home rejoicing. 'I am allowed to work, I am permitted to earn my bread,' you say and you thank Heaven for the boon. Then there comes a letter, a message—'I am sorry, but there is some one else who suits me better, who will do the work a little cheaper—who is a little older—a little wiser'—what matters the reason? You have been deposed, that is enough. As for your disappointment, you must bear it as a philosopher: a great many others have troubles, that ought to console you; many have died of starvation and have perished, because there is no room and no work and no bread for everybody. You ought to find comfort in the thought that you have a band of brothers and sisters in misfortune."

"Why do you say that to me!" cried Janey, pale and agitated, speaking with tremulous lips. "Do I not know how low I have fallen? Why should you remind me of it?"

He shook his head.

"There is a lower deep still," he said, "you have not touched the lowest deep yet, but every day is bringing you a little nearer it. When first I knew you a year ago you were bright and gay; there was a cloud perhaps at the first, but that soon passed; you had smiles and a song on your lips, and you ran upstairs lightly. You do not smile or sing now, and your step is slow, and your face is pale and thin. And this room which you had made so charming, where are all its prettinesses now? The furniture I see is the furniture of Madame Jones; you had a bird, and books and a picture, an easy chair in which I myself have been permitted to sit—where are they now? They fetched money for a meal or two, but the money is spent and at an end. You tasted no breakfast this morning, and when your friend comes home weary and faint there will be no dinner for her to eat."

Janey had listened with a bowed head, but at this hint of Allie's sufferings her tortured heart cried out.

"Why do you come here to insult and stab me?" she said. She got up and fronted him, though she was faint and had to cling to the back of her chair for support.

"Have I ever complained—have I ever come to you and said that I was hungry, have I asked any favour at your hands? If fortune has come to you, go and enjoy it. Go and eat and drink, and be warm and live idly—what is that to us? We ask nothing of you but that you would leave us alone."

"Miss Janey," he said with an earnest courtesy, "I beg you to hear me one little moment still. I have been speaking of you, let me speak of someone else. There was a young man once of another country than this who was born—or so he thought—to wealth. All the days of his boyhood were spent in a beautiful home, the gates of learning were open to him if he chose to enter there. He had friends such as rich men have, though he had neither father nor mother, and money, so that he could live softly and do as he pleased. He meant to be a great man—that is the dream of many youths—and to make his name shine; but when he was twenty-four everything was changed. No matter how it came about—it is a tale of injustice and wickedness and fraud he could tell, and why should I trouble you to listen to so old a story? It is sufficient that the young man was shut out from his early home, a wanderer in search of his fortune, poor as the poorest, with a burning sense of wrong in his heart. He came to England, the land of hope for all exiles, with a firm purpose that he would work and earn money and return to fight his enemy and claim back his own. It seemed an easy thing to do: everything is easy and possible when one is young. And he had friends still, some few who were sorry for him and believed in his cause.

"'Go to England,' they said, 'it is best that you leave this land, and we shall write letters to our friends there, you will be well received. Believe

us, they will take up your cause, they will give you work and you will become rich again——'

"So he went, carrying letters to this one and that, waiting in the ante-rooms of great men. Ah, that is a curious experience! There are others waiting there, all day, and every day: some of them—the new ones, these—very confident and bold; some of them—the older ones—patient and subdued, and very humble and shabby. The shabbiness and the humility come together. And what is the great man to do for all these? What can he do? He reads your letter; he gives you a finger to shake, perhaps: he remembers your father. He is very sorry, but at present he knows of no opening; he will not forget your claims if anything offers, and meanwhile, perhaps, a trifling assistance? You do not accept the assistance, which he calls a loan; that is left for the time when you shall become humble and shabby. You go away, your pride on fire, and begin again and fail again. Then you try upon a lower step of the ladder and fail there too. There is no foothold for you where so many are clinging and struggling.

"Miss Janey, I tire you, and why should I paint for you the young man's descent? It is a very common and often told story. It was a great depth he got down to, and when at last he reached the bottom, he was no longer young. He was old, and he had forgotten that boy and his wrongs, and his desire for revenge, because he had no longer any hope or any wish or anything to live for. His life was at its darkest when a new influence came into it. Two women, strangers to him both, came to him and said—'Let us be friends; we know also what it is to be poor, let us help each other.' Their faces were kind and their voices were soft and gentle, and their manners were the manners of those he had known in his youth. For years and years nobody had spoken a kind word to him or had smiled on him or had taken him by the hand, or passed a little jest with him—a shabby, grim old man, what was there in him to call out these things? Other women and children avoided him, drew away afraid of his harsh looks, but not these two. They would not leave him in his moroseness; they bore with his pride—for he had it still—and his coldness; they melted his heart with a thousand little acts of kindness; when he was ill, one of them nursed him and the other read to him and sang to him. They gave him of their bounty when his need was greatest, but more than food or warmth was their simple goodness and loving kindness, for it woke his faith in others which had been dead. Miss Janey, do you know of what I speak? Do you recognise the picture?"

She shook her head faintly, she had buried it in her hands.

"We did nothing for you," she murmured, "but—forgive me if I misjudged you now. If your wrongs have been righted, I am glad."

"Yes," he said sadly, "the wrongs have been righted, the money has come back to me now when I am old and no longer desire it—when all my ambitions are dead, even the old desire to be revenged."

Janey looked up. She was struggling to put her own cares away and to listen with sympathy.

"You will be glad by-and-by," she said gently, "when you are used to it, when you go back again to your own land and people."

"There is no going back," he said with a grave smile, "the money will not restore me the years of exile and despair and want, it will not give me back my youth. But I am glad of it for one thing, for now Miss Janey will let me pay back a little part of my debt."

"There is no debt," she said, starting back, "and—we can't take money from you."

"You gave me of your store, and you will not share my abundance?"

"It is different," she panted, "we had so little to offer—nothing at all, and—you were our friend."

"And shall I be your friend no longer because I have food and fire and enough to eat? Is that to be the punishment of my wealth?"

"Oh, you know I don't mean that, we shall always be glad to have your friendship, but—to take money——"

"You prefer to starve? But it shall be as you will, Miss Janey: your goodness has given you a right to wound me. But your friend, the gentle lady who is an angel of goodness to everyone around her, must she suffer because you refuse me this boon?"

"Ah," cried Janey, feeling that he had touched the weak place in her armour, "I had not thought of Allie. Allie has suffered and—and—it is my fault because I was so confident, so sure we should prosper, and I persuaded her to come here."

She looked at him with a faint smile struggling with her tears,

"I saw the feast, Herr Professor; Mrs. Jones made me go and look. You wish us to come and eat a dinner, in commemoration of your restored fortune?"

"You will do me this great honour?" he said, a little of his old manner creeping back in his relief at her surrender—"you will sit at my poor table?"

"It is a very grand table," she said, bravely trying to be cheerful, "you have been very extravagant. Yes, we will come and be glad—we are very hungry, both of us, for it is true that there was no breakfast."

"And you will not deny me the other boon?"

Then Janey fairly broke down.

"Oh," she said, "I have been proud and my heart was hard. It seemed as if God had forsaken us, forsaken Allie, who loves and trusts Him—but—perhaps He has sent you. And Allie is ill, how can I see her fade away? we cannot do without her. For Allie's sake—for Allie, who is good to everybody, yes, if you will help us over these dreadful days——"

"I thank you," he said quite simply, taking her hand in his own reverently; "now you are good to me again, Miss Janey."

Elsa.

[ONLY a little child of eight, with all the winsomeness of childhood, and yet with the deep, tender, and thoughtful love of womanhood. She was gathering the wild woodland flowers one sunny Wednesday in May, and on Friday at daybreak, as the sweet singing of the birds came through the open windows, the Master of Life transplanted the fair lily to bloom in His paradise. She was laid to rest beside her infant brother, and the flowers which she had gathered, still fresh and blooming, were laid upon her coffin. One who loved her well, dedicated the following In Memoriam to her parents.]

MERCY it is that giveth. Is it mercy that taketh away
The warble of childhood's laughter, the gleams of a rising day?
That marreth the rosebud's promise, and maketh the lone heart bleed
To the scar of the thorn that tore it, and murmur, "Was there a need?"

A thousand are falling around us; we know not or heed not the grief;
We say, "'Tis the grass on the moorland, the tempest tossing the leaf;
'Tis nature teaching her lessons, though harsh betimes is her tone,"
Till the core of the heart is smitten, the flower that has drooped is our own!

The saplings wave in the forest; not all that we knew are there;
Men gaze at the thicket's fulness, *we* look where the sward is bare;
Around and above spring rafters of bronze and arches of green,
We can only stare at the vista: but the sky seems clearer between!

Blithe in the bluebell glade, she wandered one sunny day
And laughed to the nodding flowers that danced in the breath of May,
And she fared with their gathered sweetness, as over the rippling foam
Some skiff, with a scented burden, leaps on to the haven of home.

Her bells of azure still smile in the cups which she bade them adorn;
But she, ere twice o'er their beauty had broken the tearful morn,
From the sheen of her youthful blooming more swiftly drooping than they,
Lay held in the grasp of sickness, and faded softly away.

In the wake of the fleeting night-tide the throstle piped on the oak,
And shrill through the open casement the lays of the dawning broke;
But she passed through the mirthful singing, on the golden bars of the morn,
And left but the fleshly garments her spirit a while had worn.

God, through the valleys of earth, so lightly and trippingly trod,
The spark that flashed from Thy Being has travelled again unto God,
And the void in the heart and the home, whence the gleaming child-life has fled,
Is a shrine for Thy fulness to dwell in and hallow the name of the dead!

Have we loved her too much? We know not, our sorrow seeks not to know,
Or is it Thy love unto us, that has come to us shrouded in woe?
As it came to the world with the pitiful Christ, in garments of blood,
Laden with suffering and shame, and smitten—because Thou art good!

Pain, in the beast and the bird that come, and struggle, and die,
Pain, through forest and field and e'en in the dome of the sky,
Pain, in the hearts that scorn Thee and hate Thee, and cannot break free,
Pain in Thy children who know Thee and nestle still closer to Thee!

How shall we bear the travail that cometh alike to all?
Sullen, as brutes that yield and know not wherefore they fall?
Hardened, with wills that battle, and break to a Force unknown?
Or, laying the load in the Hand that is lifting us nearer the Throne!

Dear to our love is the veil that the soul in our keeping wore,
We lay it to rest near the infant form that we lost before;
"Only the form," they tell us, "the mould that brightens the sod."
"Only the form," we answer,—"the form of the Son of God!"

"Cry to the winds," they say, "for the dead that are dust on the plain;
Sever your own from the silt of the flood and the sand of the main;
Seek through a thousand lives, the lives ye have lost to-day!——"
We sow not that which shall be, but we know that *they* will be *they*.

For there dwells in the heart of man, a love that is stronger than death;
And valiant to conquer the world is the God-like prowess of faith;
And we ask not again from the grave the broken hopes of the past;
For the earthly image was first, but the heavenly image is last.

She in her winsome sweetness, so early lifted above,
With her seven summers of gladness, her growing yearnings of love—
Would we bind her again in the earth-form, and fashion her round with clay,
Or leave her to soar, in the freedom of life, on her God-ward way?

We held her with breaking heart-cords; we are but human, and weep,
But the Hand that has wiped our tears is the Hand that laid her on sleep;
And we rise from a mighty sorrow to the height of mighty trust;
"Forasmuch as God of His mercy. . . ." The Loving is also the Just!

F. H. WOOD.

THOUGHTS AND BYTHOUGHTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE," ETC.

GLEANING.

REAPERS and Gleaners. These are, indeed, distinct and separate. Call to mind the wide untouched acres of the wheat's tall brown-gold; of the silken shimmering barley-waves; of the pale gold rain of the restless oats; all this before a sickle has begun to lay aside the graceful bowing corn into silent swathes, and to make square gaps in the steadfast serried ranks. Stand, in thought, sickle in hand, ready to begin the reaping. Not yet has the bearded grain been touched, nor "the flowers that grow between." There lies the virgin harvest before you. Pause and consider ere the first sickle sweep is given.

For look farther on. The last swathe has fallen. The last load has been carried. The last "hurrah" has died away into silence. The "harvest home" rejoicing is now a thing past. The homely stacks or the "sweet smelling granaries" imprison the golden corn that used to wanton in every breeze, to gladden in the sunshine, or pass into rippling dusks of shadow, when a light wind carried a grey cloud across the sun. The poetry of the life of the corn has passed into dull utilitarian prose. The Ophir fields are "grey now and forlorn." Over them, a lonely gleaner here and there, here and there a group of gleaners, traverse the field backward and forward, stooping, when the prize appears of one solitary ear of wheat, seen lying between the lines of short stubble. Where are the great armfuls of wheat that the reapers gathered to them, and then, leaving them in the swathe, passed on to the great abundance that yet invited the sickle sweep in the wide unreaped field? For these, behold, here and there a scarce ear, a prize to the gleaner, left out of the abundance of the reaper's portion.

Yet call these things to mind. For the very commonplaces of Nature are instinct with the plaintive pathos of this life of ours. This life, in which Hope is the reaper, and Disappointment the gleaner in, perhaps, the most of cases.

What a harvest was spread out before the first generation of mankind! All the inventions to be discovered; all the music to be composed; all the poems to be written; no tale twice told, as yet; no commonplaces; no plagiarisms possible —even all the rhymes unused. All the history to be made—every man's diary, indeed, a history of the world. All the coals to burn; all the peat to cut; all the ore to dig; all the gems to find;—all the graves to dig.

Well, as for this last, Death is no *gleaner*. The harvest ever grows and multiplies before his sickle sweep. And a vast harvest will remain standing, and quick, when the Master of the harvest, appearing on "the field, which is the world," commands to cease the reaping. Meanwhile, this Reaper sharpens his sickle on our hopes, our dreams, our eager anticipations, on our better intentions, our noble resolves, our efforts and our strivings; and then, a sweep of the arm, and how still lies the tall grain that just now swayed and rustled, and tossed and grew excited in the airs and the winds and the tempests of all that is done and purposed under the sun. That which still basked in the sun-warmth, and that which the rain-hurrying storm had laid,—they lie quiet in the swathe; the heavy ear, and

the light, and "the flowers that grew between." Aye, a harvest that God will garner; and the angels will be not only reapers, but also gleaners, so far as to see that "not the least grain" shall be left on the field.

But we revert to the harvest that was outspread, untouched, before the first generations of mankind. Jubal and Tubal-Cain, and the builders of the great Tower: all harmony to arrange, every style of architecture to invent, all cunning devices of the smith to be worked out, every style original, no simile or metaphor hackneyed. Of every thought and device of man, that sayable which, in King Solomon's time, could not be said of anything, even "See, this is *new!*"

Or, to take our later days, viz. "Great Eliza's golden time;" and the new languages—languages without literature—rising out of the débris of the old. Think of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, and other reapers; and later yet, even 'Robinson Crusoe' as being new ground; and, for painters, the 'Vicar of Wakefield' untouched! For music, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, with the unreaped fields of divine sound before them. Contemplate Walter Scott entering upon the scarcely-begun acres of the harvest of Romance. For this yet later age, the untried realms—vast virgin prairie land—of steam, electricity, what not. Were not all these the reapers in the splendid fields of new thought, new expression, new invention? Aye, for they entered upon the first-grown harvest in a virgin soil.

And even in Sir Walter Scott's time, he claimed to be only a gleaner, over fields "where happier bards of old have richer harvest found." His experience, however, may well give heart to the gleaners after harvest. Nor, in truth, is there need for gleaners after the reapers to lose heart, seeing that, even after Scott, and Byron, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Keats: in "great Victoria's golden time," Tennyson and Browning have found such stores of golden grain, and such "flowers to grow between."

It must have seemed a wonderful position, that of the twelve Apostles of the Lord. Twelve men, and the fields white for harvest; and the world the field of their labour. What a first-sickle sweep was that which gathered into one swathe "about three thousand souls"! But for us, in our day, toil as we may, we seem to gather only a grain here, and another at a long interval. Had but the first love and zeal lasted, how different the world might be! But now the harvest, long neglected, seems too vast for any reapers we can bring, and those that should be of the reapers are, alas! more often of those who mar and trample the grain. How much has perished ungathered, perished under the onward rush of commerce, under the iron heel of war!

The Spaniards, and America. The British, and India. Those millions of souls in the dark, and the Government of India would not for long so much as allow a messenger of the Gospel to set foot on the land! Then the sad neglect, till some seventy years ago, at home. So the harvest, God's harvest, was left to God's foes—and it is hard to win lost ground now; and we must, in our awakened earnestness, rank ourselves rather as gleaners than as harvesters for God.

Gleaners after the harvest. Aye, this train of thought can hardly miss leading those of us, who are no longer young, to musings, more or less sad, upon the days of the years that are past, of our life.

How they extended before us at the outset, all life's wondrous delights! Was it not as though a great harvest, and no sickle had yet intruded upon the untold wealth? A harvest, rather, of fields of lilies, than of fields of grain; acres of milky lilies, banded with strips of the golden flowers; tracts of thornless roses; hyacinthine meadows, and sheets of scented lavender. The harvest of the lavender—aye, this is no dream, this we may see, if we will, in the Surrey fields, where

> The rye, about the squares of lavender,
> Isles all the amethyst with pale dead gold.

Yes, this, and the harvest of the blue flax, is the only flower-harvest we in England have in real life. But the opening of the child's life is not real life, and the harvest before the tiny hand that holds the tiny sickle, is one of endless, many-hued and diverse-scented flowers.

In later life we are, indeed, in this thing, but gleaners. We follow those old merry reapers, even our own child-selves, and are glad, if we light upon one, here and there, sometimes, of the flowers, withered now, that they threw away, or left unregarded, and "needed not," amid the abundance. A joy here, perhaps a murdered joy, but a joy "not yet quite dead;" a hope faded, but still fair; a dream, from which we waked long ago, and lo, it was a dream, yet we glean if but the ghost of it, from the delicious past; an ecstasy from which we returned to sober life again; a rapture from whose carrying away we were soon brought back. These, in the eagerness and absorption of harvest carrying, were left on the field to die. But we value the withered flowers, now that only a dwindled blossom,—poppy shrunk, heart's-ease dwindled—is scattered sparsely upon the empty field.

Well, well, we love the more the old words of looking forward—

> *There*, everlasting Spring abides,
> And never-withering flowers,—

as we go on to thought of eager youth, of opening manhood, thinking now not only of flowers, but looking, sickle in strong hand, on the great fields of golden opportunities, splendid purposes to be garnered as mighty deeds, occasions to be grasped, fame, power, wealth, to be made our own. Or, higher work to be done, worthy of heirs of God: so to live as, when the time for our own reaping shall have come, to bend, a stalk weighted an hundredfold for the garner of the Master of the harvest.

For writers, all the thoughts unused, all the subjects untouched; for preachers, all the texts to choose from, all the sermons unwritten. For

EVENING GLEANERS.

soldiers, all the possibilities upwards to a Field-marshal's bâton. For a lawyer, the Woolsack; for an M.P., to be Prime Minister. And so on, in every pursuit in life.

This for the Reapers. But, later in life, the harvest is, doubtless, reaped. Often, however, it was reaped by the son of the stranger. The Newdegate prize, another won it. The first-class, others carried it off. He is well-nigh briefless who thought to have been Lord Chancellor, and the intending Prime Minister is unknown by name in the world of statesmanship. And the man who meant to rival Millais or Leslie, is fain to make a living by "pot-boilers," and the would-be poet is glad of a poor salary in a solicitor's office. Yes, and he who purposed to do great things for God—sometimes the Elijah despair overcasts his soul, the more in that he cannot claim to have led the Elijah-life of burning zeal for the Master.

And so we go on, doing not what we would, but what we can yet do. Seeing the goodly stacks that others have garnered, and ourselves going about the field, gleaners after the harvesters. Picking up, of means whereby to live, a few scanty ears, for the dreamed-of harvest of wealth, of fame, of world-delight; pulling down the great barns of fancy to build smaller; yea, mostly living from hand to mouth, with no need for any place of store. Great harvests for others. Ears of scattered grain for ourselves. And doubtless better so.

Better so, in the world's matters. Aye, but we cannot think "better so" in our "great expectations" of success-crowned labour for God. So much purposed, such ripening—breadths of grain spreading out before the virgin-sickle. And now, later life has come, and whose has the harvest been? Oh, the granaries of the world and the flesh and the devil seem full. But the toiler for God seems but to glean in the well-reaped field. In this soul and that he may rejoice, with this mind and that he may enjoy spiritual free-masonry. But the many! And are these few ears which he painfully gathers indeed all that he can show for a lifetime of more or less earnest labour? So it often seems; yet he must (if it must be so) *glean* on and not lose heart. It may be that more of the harvest has been secured than it appeared, for the Master. At any rate, the bundle of the gleaner grows.

Painful gleaning, it may appear to be, with but small results, but even gleaners sometimes bring big bundles home. And it is good for God's gleaners to do even as wheat-gleaners do—to place the growing bundle behind their back. Let them keep adding, it may seem ears but rarely found and few and far between, but let them keep adding. And let the day's end show the size of the bundle. Aye, let the gleaner stoop, painfully stoop, intent on his work, careless of backache and of hot sun beating down. It is good for us, the Master knows, not to see the result of our toil for God. It is good for the gleaner to work with bent head, and in the sweat of the brow, and to find no time, in the intentness of work, to scrutinise what has been done. Downcast of brow and downcast in heart, let him toil on. It may be that some handfuls will be let fall of purpose in his way. At any rate, let him scrutinise the field for every ear of wheat. Unseen to him, the bundle is growing all the while.

THE BATTAHS OF SUMATRA.

A NEW CHAPTER IN MISSIONARY ANNALS.

IV.—SIGNAL PROGRESS.

TO return once more to "my cannibal friend," it is a very remarkable fact that he passed from the superstitious horrors of his beliefs as a Battah, through Mohammedanism, to Christianity. Looking at him as he entered my father's service, and our happy Christian home, it might well be anticipated that he would soon and eagerly become a Christian. He was at once taught our faith, and taught in the midst of the kindliest influences and the most attractive examples. Christians had rescued him from cruel slavery. He was fed and clothed, sheltered and befriended by Christians. He was naturally so submissive and lovable, that I do not believe he was ever severely punished, or harshly rebuked. He became familiar with our Bible, and prayers, and hymns, and above all with the life and sayings and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet the astute and zealous votaries of Islam were able to win him over to the faith they taught, and the rewards which it promised. My friend submitted to the initiatory rite of Islam, and became a worshipper at the Mosque. But the time came, when, finding his heart still void, and his spirit without rest, he publicly renounced the faith he had tested, and accepted salvation in Christ and Him crucified. This was in the martyr spirit, for Islam declares all apostates worthy of death. But for the British flag under which we lived he would probably have been murdered.

I have recorded these particulars for a general and a special purpose. Questions have recently been pushed to the front concerning the comparative results of Moslem and Christian missions, and many seem to be perplexed by the success of the first and the failures of the second among tribes with rude and fragmentary forms of worship. Those who really know what Moham-

medanism is can have no such difficulty. The individual case I have given shows what power there is in its creed and law (a cardinal distinction made by itself—*iman* and *din*), even when it has at its side the rival revelations and claims of Christianity—how enormous must its power be when alone it appears and speaks to men and women who are helpless victims to such a reign of undefined but enthralling horrors as are the Battahs!

For what is the chief element of its *iman* or creed? It is the sublime declaration of the unity of God. How startling, and afterwards how reassuring and all-satisfying, must this revelation be to men and women under the awful spell of the horrifying belief that the earth, the air, the heavens are peopled with malignant spirits unceasingly harrying the human race, and only to be combated or controlled by enchantments and sacrifices, often failing egregiously and leaving those who resort to them more helpless and hopeless than before. Here is its emphatic and authoritative annunciation of the absolute and universal supremacy of God:—

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

"Say, He is God, one [God];

"God the Eternal.

"He begetteth not, nor is begotten.

"And there is none equal unto Him." (Lane).[1]

And again ["The Throne Verse"].

"In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful!

"God! There is no God but He, the ever-living, the ever-subsisting. Slumber seizeth Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens, and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that shall intercede with Him unless by His permission? He knoweth what [hath been] before them and what [shall be] after them, and they shall not compass aught of His knowledge save what He willeth. His throne comprehendeth the heavens and the earth, and the care of them burdeneth Him not. And He is the High, the Great" (Lane).

It is not sufficiently realised that the unity of God involves the idea of perfection. This is a completely new idea, not only to the fetish worshipper and the trembling victim of demon rule, but wherever there is a systematised plurality of gods. Just as these men see among their fellow-men deficiencies and contradictions even among the best, so, wherever there is a pantheon, the various energies and characteristics of human life are divided among separate and conflicting divinities such as Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva (or his more popular wife Kali), the Destroyer. Wherever Islam speaks, it speaks in the most emphatic and continually reiterated language: "There is but one God, and in Him are vested all the energies and characteristics you have hitherto assigned to different existences. He is at once omnipotent and eternal, infinitely wise and infinitely good, inexorably righteous and unceasingly merciful, claiming for Himself alone the adoration and the obedience of every other form of intelligent being in the universe; the hosts of angels and the nations of the earth; the Almighty Creator and the Supreme Governor of all—the absolutely and eternally Perfect One." It is quite true that Islam presents for the most part to the human mind God in His majesty and power, and this is the aspect, say what we will, in which He becomes specially impressive to the races in which Islam prevails; but it should be known that every[1] *surah* or chapter of the Kuran begins with the exclamation, "In the name of God, the Compassionating, the Compassionate," and Lane adds, "Mohammed was never weary of telling the people how God was 'The Very Forgiving,' that His love for man was more tender than that of the mother bird for her young."

And, on the other hand, I ask what is the chief element of its *din* or law? I must not speak of ablution and temperance (including fasting) and almsgiving, and the pilgrimage to Mecca, all of which have their practical value as requiring self-restraint and self-sacrifice, but limit myself to the duty of prayer—declared by Mohammed to be "the pillar of religion" and "the key to Paradise." Five times a day is every Moslem summoned to turn his face towards Mecca, and prostrate himself before his God, and what is the prayer he offers? It is the Fatuah (El-Fátihah) or "Preface" to the Kuran, and has well been designated "the Lord's prayer" of the Moslem world.

"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

"Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds,

"The Compassionate, the Merciful.

"The king of the day of judgment.

"Thee do we worship, and of Thee seek we help.

"Guide us in the right way,

"The way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious,

"Not of these with whom Thou art wroth, nor of the erring" (Lane).

And, mark it, every man is to offer this prayer—offer it wherever he may be and in whatever state. There is no priesthood in Islam. Every spirit is to approach God and receive blessing from Him in its own individuality. Can we wonder, in view of these facts, that wherever Islam prevails it arrays human nature in a dignity before unknown?

Some reference must be made to the revelation it makes of immortality. Not only does it distinctly declare the personal immortality of man, but in the most solemn and persistent manner announces a day of final judgment. The penalties for the wicked are depicted in terms of realistic

[1] Lane's "Selections from the Kuran," new edition, by S. Lane Poole. Sir Richard Burton (can there be a higher authority?) renders (Hitchman's "Auto. of Burton," i., 207) the initiatory exclamation of the *Surahs*: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate!" Even the reader who knows nothing of Arabic can, I think, see that this version of the line appears to be more in accordance with the original: *Bismillah, er Rahman er Rahmeen!* Is it not obvious that in rendering *Rahman* and *Rahmeen* the same word should be used with different terminations—one, according to Burton, representing action, and the other character?

[1] Except one, where it was evidently omitted by accident.

horror, and the rewards for the righteous in descriptions of equal sensuousness. And no doubt both have enormous power in their influence on the minds to which they appeal. As a matter of simple justice, however, it should be known that intelligent Moslems may be found who regard these representations as only symbolical. Ancient commentators on the Kuran declare, in particular, that there are pleasures, for those who are prepared and entitled, far higher in their nature than a literal interpretation of the passages relating to them would imply. Al Ghazâli (professor of theology at Bagdad, who died A.D. 1111), one of the most eminent of these commentators, is quoted by Sale ("Preliminary Discourse," Ed. 1795, vol. i. p. 132), as declaring that the "highest honour" in Paradise will be to "behold the face of God morning and evening," and that this "will give such exquisite delight that in respect thereof all the other pleasures of Paradise will be forgotten and lightly esteemed;" and not without reason, since, as the same author says, "every other enjoyment is equally tasted with the very brute beast who is turned loose into luxuriant pasture." And Sale (whose authority on Moslem questions has not been diminished by any subsequent author) adds in a passage which ought not to be ignored: "The reader will observe, by the way, that this is a full confutation of those who pretend the Mohammedans admit of no spiritual pleasures in the next life, but make the happiness of the blessed to consist wholly in corporeal enjoyments." Notwithstanding, I am compelled by what I know on the subject, to believe that the pictures continually occurring in the Kuran of the voluptuous pleasures of Paradise have largely to do with the success of the proselytising zeal of its votaries. So much for the object in its general aspect.

And now for the special aspect of this great question. Islam preceded Christianity as a missionary agency in the Eastern tropics. It appears to have been introduced to the Malayan peninsula at the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century, and probably by means of traders from Arabia. Marsden quotes Marco Polo as stating that he found it prevailing on the coast of Sumatra. This was in 1268. The Malays seem everywhere to have embraced it eagerly, and with it the Arabic character, which has now, I believe, superseded all the original forms of writing which may have existed among them. No converts to Islam have been characterised by intenser devotedness to the imported faith. At the proper seasons shiploads of pilgrims (including women) leave the ports of these seas for Arabia, and many perform the pilgrimage two or three times during their life. The Malays occupying the districts surrounding the Battahs on their heights became Mohammedans centuries ago. No marvel that at last the aggressive efforts of the enthusiastic leaders in faith of these neighbouring tribes proved successful. Among the Battahs of the south, Islam has become the established creed and cult. And it is now making its way among the Battahs of their central home. Who can wonder? If among Pagans generally the revelation of a perfect, supreme, and only God is full of power, how much more must it be this to a race cowed down into abject and unremitting fear by the realisation of nothing spiritual but cruel and malicious demons! And, again, it is a significant fact that as the rule of strong government (though foreign) advances, so does the faith of Islam (also foreign), showing how the feeling of disorder and conflict amongst themselves urges the people to seek and welcome the domination over them of a definite and principal authority, religious as well as civil. The missionaries complain of the multiplied difficulties of their work when they have to face Mohammedans in their fight with the heathenism of Battahland. But their own records show that the history of my departed Battah friend is being repeated, and to very many of the race Islam is proving the "pioneer" to Christianity. And this it ought to be. With all its perversions and inventions, the Kuran accepts the Christian Scriptures as inspired, and Christ Himself as a Prophet only inferior to its own Author.

Examining the reports of the Rhenish Missionary Society, the following statements have been noticed. As to the presence and strength of Islamism we read of one station: "The great difficulties encountered here are the long distances, bad roads, the ever-moving population, and already far-spread Islamism." Another missionary reports that "he has only Mohammedans in his whole district, of whom six families have adopted the Christian faith." Of a third station it is said, "It is very important that Christians should take a firm footing and hinder the spread of Islamism," and it is added that the missionary "has again baptized eighty Mohammedans." Such success, remarkable as it would be anywhere among Moslems, is the more signal when it is achieved among those who have all the ardour of a "first love."

But let us trace the present prosperous work of Christian missions to its beginnings. To the enterprising Baptist brethren of Serampore, and to the Baptist Missionary Society, is due the honour of first appearing upon the scene. Would that they had never retired from it! The heroes of Serampore led the way. In the "Periodical Accounts" of the Baptist Missionary Society it is recorded that in 1819, "Mr. Nathaniel Ward (nephew of Mr. Ward of Serampore) has proceeded to Sumatra with a printing-press, and some other missionaries are expected shortly to follow." Accordingly, in the same year there started from England Messrs. Burton and Evans, and they joined Mr. Ward in June 1820. The "instructions" to the two missionaries are given at length, and amongst them occurs a passage which is full of significance in view of recent controversy, in which violent attack has been rebuked as if a common course with missionaries: "Use no harsh language either with reference to the person, character, or writings of Mohammed, or the notions and practices of heathen superstition, but attempt gradually to awaken a concern after superior instruction, and then communicate that information as they are able to bear it." Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles was at this time

governor of the British territory in Sumatra, and, acting on his advice, Mr. Evans remained with Mr. Ward at Bencoolen, while Mr. Burton proceeded to the northern part of the island for the purpose of commencing a mission among the Battahs, "of whose moral condition," it was announced, "some faint idea may be formed, when it is stated, on the authority of the governor, that it is not only their practice to eat prisoners taken in war, but that the capital punishment of the country—a punishment as common as hanging in England [*i.e.* in 1820]—is eating the criminal alive. The population of this Sumatran tribe is estimated at about a million; they have no caste among them; nor is it known that they practise any religious observances whatever; but it is remarkable that, a little before the arrival of the missionaries, they had sent a deputation to the British governor, requesting to know of what religion they should be!"

The response to the question is found in the counsel given by the sagacious and kindly Sir Stamford Raffles. Mr. Burton sailed, as stated, from Bencoolen to the Battah country, and made his way in it as far as the furthermost trade station of the East India Company, whose official Sir Stamford was. He finally selected as his residence Siboga, in the magnificent bay of Tapanuli (See first chapter). He appears to have settled there in 1821 and was soon able to make himself understood by the Battahs. He then composed and distributed tracts in the language, and translated, in successive portions, the Gospel of St. John. He appears also to have commenced the compiling of a dictionary of English, Malay, and Battah. In the year 1824, accompanied by Mr. Ward, he accomplished a very important excursion into the Battah country, journeying in it so far as to be able to obtain a distant view of the superb Tobah lake. A report of this journey is published in the twelfth number of the "Friend of India" and is well worth reading. It appears from it, that at that date any men "caught" in the act of robbery with violence and housebreaking were eaten. "No money can save them." At one village they saw the skull of a man who had just been eaten, and at another the travellers were told that "twelve months ago twenty men were completely eaten in one day." And yet, speaking generally, they describe the people as quiet, industrious, and kindly, the women inquisitive but modest, the fields cultivated, and everywhere signs of plenty. They went where no white man had ever been seen, and, though the inhabitants collected in thousands at different places, they never felt themselves in peril. Mr. Burton's knowledge of the language, no doubt, prevented misunderstanding and suspicion.

Unhappily, the mission begun by such heroic men, and with so much promise, came to an end in the very next year (1825), with the transfer to the Dutch Government of all territory in Sumatra which had been under the authority of Great Britain. It is difficult at this distance of time from this occurrence to feel assured that the circumstances fully justified this disastrous abandonment of the field; but we ought to be satisfied that the great and good men, who were served by such able and brave agents, would never have proceeded to such an extreme step had they not clearly seen it to be an inevitable necessity. There was, no doubt, fear as to the safety of the agents in the change of governments, and, moreover, expectation of hindrance in the work through the jealousies then rampant between the two governments of Britain and Holland. In July, 1825, Mr. Burton and his family, and the Battah girls in the Orphan Institution in Mrs. Burton's charge sailed for Calcutta. They were followed by Mr. Evans, and, though Mr. Ward seems to have continued for several years after his educational work at Padang, he appears to have done nothing for the Battahs, and, indeed, to have been only nominally connected with missionary service.

JOHN T. BEIGHTON.

Things New and Old.

THE "CHALCEDONY" OF REVELATIONS XXI.—Amongst the precious stones in the foundations of the new Jerusalem described in this chapter, one is called in our version the "chalcedony." It is, however, well known that the stone intended is not that which is now called by that name, and is popularly denominated the "white carnelian." But what stone is really indicated by the word used in the original has been much disputed. The Vulgate or ordinary Latin version has "chalcedonius," and from this the "chalcedony" of our English version is derived. But the "chalcedonius" described by Pliny in his 'Natural History' (which was in fact an inferior kind of smaragdus or emerald) is certainly not the stone intended by the sacred writer, who mentions the emerald as in the next foundation.

In a very interesting little work on *The Precious Stones of the Bible*, published (through Messrs. Nisbet) a few years ago by a London physician, we believe that the correct explanation of this difficulty is given. A very slight alteration in the letters of the Greek word used in this place by St. John makes the stone a species of carbuncle called by Pliny the "carchedonius," from the Greek for Carthage. Indeed, the ancient manuscripts vary in their spelling of the word, and one of them has that indicating this carbuncle. The precious stone in question is a very beautiful one; its name, "carbuncle," signifies "burning coal," because it has a fiery appearance as though burning with a bright flame. It was one of the stones in the first row of those set in the breast-plate of the high priest as described in Exodus xxviii. The Hebrew word means literally "the flashing," and is derived from "barak" (lightning), the name, it will be remembered, of the victorious leader who came down with lightning speed from Mount Tabor and discomfited the hosts of Sisera by the waters of Megiddo. —*W. T. Lynn, B.A., F.R.A.S.*

"BE YE ALSO PATIENT."—"Is this constant preaching of any use?" sadly questioned a missionary, who for long years had earnestly proclaimed the Gospel message in a crowded Chinese city. Not indeed without effect. Since the beginning of his ministry, some hundreds had been gathered in; but hundreds of thousands around him still lived in heathenism, and even among those who heard his preaching, for a long time few had shown more than passing interest in Christian truth. And now the hour of the daily afternoon service at our Mission Church

had come; but the rain was pouring, leaving little hope of any congregation that day. And in fact, no one in the thronged thoroughfare fronting the church, where he usually sought, by first speaking on the steps outside, to collect the passers-by, and then inviting them in, seemed inclined to stop. Within the building he found a middle-aged Chinaman who evidently wished for some conversation with him, and, encouraged by his kindness, told him the following story:—"For seventeen years I have been a devoted Buddhist, and have gone from house to house repeating prayers in honour of the idols. I knew I was a sinful man, and most earnestly I sought in this way to make atonement for the past, and acquire sufficient merit to attain to Nirvana, escaping the condition of re-birth. Some time ago I came into this chapel, and though at first I received no clear idea of the doctrine you were teaching, I was struck with the mode of worship: especially the offering of prayer to an unseen God, attracted me. I came many times, and listening to your preaching, gradually saw the utter vanity of my own religious views and life, and the blessedness of the way of salvation in Christ. Many arguments have been used to bring me back to Buddhism; but I am fully determined to enter the Christian Church, and now I ask you to receive me." After further conversations and prayer with him, and careful inquiry concerning him, consent was gladly given, and the following Sunday, at the Converts' Service, in the presence of some sixty brethren and sisters, the ex-Buddhist stood up and made clear confession of faith in Christ, and then kneeling, and baring the strangely-shaven head, was baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And so was answered the preacher's sorrowful question "Is it worth while?" Day by day, all unknown to that faithful but often disheartened servant of Christ, one weary heart was listening and learning.—*Alice Jane Muirhead, Shanghai.*

SCHOLARSHIP.—"As to the *wisdom*" so often "deprecated in the New Testament, it seems to me that Greek philosophies and Rabbinical follies are aimed at. But *scholarship*, in our sense of the word, did not exist when the New Testament was written. Scholarship is a laborious, and, to a great extent, mechanical way of getting at the original text. Scholarship assumes no doctrine, and denies none. It is colourless. Scholarship can hardly be called wisdom, any more than I can be called wise because I know English. The words chiefly used in the New Testament to denote wisdom, viz., *σοφια* and *γνῶσις*, mean something else, namely, Rabbinical lore and tradition and Greek (Alexandrian) philosophy, which afterwards made a compromise with Christianity, and produced 'Gnosticism.' The more of a 'scholar' one becomes, the more one fathoms the depths of one's ignorance, and estimates the measure of one's dependence on God's Spirit."—*Keith Falconer.*

RAYNHAM FARM.

BY MARY ROWLES JARVIS.

CHAPTER I.

THERE were shouts of fun and peals of merry laughter in and under the old walnut trees at Raynham Farm on the bright autumn morning when our story begins.

Far up in the topmost boughs a curly head and two mischievous dark eyes could be seen at intervals, and two busy hands were picking and scattering the dark-hulled nuts, aiming them with great skill at the girls below, while Bruce, the beautiful collie dog, greeted his share of the missiles with a deep bark, and Tim, the terrier, darted here, there, and everywhere, adding his sharp little notes to the general din.

It was still early, and the white autumn mists were hanging low over valley and river, out on house and garden, and on the hillside behind, the sun was shining brightly, lighting up the many-tinted woods, and glistening on the faded leaves as, loosened by the frosts, they pattered heavily down. But not so heavily as the walnuts!

"Oh, Tom, that's too bad!" cried Norah, the elder of the girls, as, forgetting her caution, she looked up for a moment and promptly received a reminder on the tip of her nose.

"It will make it a better shape, my dear," was the mocking reply.

Then, as a diversion from Norah's natural indignation, he shouted—

"Look out! Here's old Grantie coming, and I must give him a royal salute," and, quick as thought, the heedless lad clutched a handful of ammunition.

"Maister Tom, Maister Tom, you be wanted in the house directly, and the young ladies be to go in too," said Grantie, as, with bent figure and much-knotted stick, he came hobbling along the mossy terrace.

"All right, Grantie, we're coming," said Norah, looking ruefully at her well-dyed hands.

"What will Miss Smith say, if we haven't time to pumice them first?" said Jessie, answering her look with another of dismay at her own.

"Never knowed such a sight o' walnuts afore," said Grantie meditatively, coming close to the tree, "and I've been here, man and boy, these sixty years. Uncommon big uns too."

"Have a few to crack going home," cried Tom persuasively, giving the tree a tremendous shake, and raining down a special handful on the clean smock frock below. Then, sliding down the tree, with more discretion than valour, on the opposite side, he darted after his sisters, who were already half way to the house, leaving Grantie to follow with the basket of spoils, and to forget the insult as best he might.

In the cheerful sitting-room, where breakfast waited on the table, good Farmer Raynham was seated in his easy chair, with an open letter in his hand, and a look of new perplexity and trouble on his good-natured face. Lately, many lines of care had made their home there, for harvests had been bad, and disease had taken his stock; and year after year the money in the bank made in more prosperous times had been lessening, until now it seemed only a question of time until the final crash must come, and the old home have to be given up.

To-day the cloud was not lightened, even when Elsie, the pet of the family, ran to him and climbed his knee, putting up her rosebud mouth for a morning kiss.

Tom entered noisily, having beaten Norah and Jessie in the race; but all three were subdued by the sight of father in trouble, and mother with fresh tears on her face.

"Come here, children; we have something to tell you," said Mr. Raynham gravely.

"You have often heard of your uncle Hugh who left home and went away to America many years ago? Poor fellow, he couldn't be contented on the old place, and thought he should do great things out there; but we never heard of much success, and now he is dead! It seems he wasn't ill long; and with his last strength he wrote this letter, asking me to give a home to Hugh and Caryl, his two children. And of course I shall, for they have no other friend in the world now to take them in, and we must do all we can to make them happy here."

"But will they stay here always?" cried Elsie excitedly.

"And oh, father, how old is Hugh?" broke in Tom, believing that his often expressed wish for a boy companion was to be fulfilled at last.

"Just twelve; but his health has always been very delicate, and he is lame, and needs a good deal of care. The girl is just about Norah's age, I fancy. As to their staying here always, we may not be able to do that ourselves if things go on as they have lately. And we want you all to work as hard as possible at your studies and learn all you can, for you may all have to turn out and make headway for yourselves in the future."

"But won't their coming make it harder for you now, papa?" asked Jessie thoughtfully.

"Yes, and harder for you," said Mrs. Raynham tearfully.

She was often fretful and worried, and prone to look on the dark side of life; and this new and unexpected addition to her cares seemed to have crushed her completely.

"We shall have to economise in every way. No new winter frocks for you, girls! Tom must do without the watch he has wanted so long, and we must send Jane away and divide her work amongst ourselves. I must say it is a trial their coming now in these bad times, and my health so poor too! I don't know what we shall do!"

"We'll help all we can, mother dear," said Jessie, who was the sunbeam of the family; "and if Caryl has had to be the house-mother, she will know lots about work. You will see how much we will get through between lessons."

"That's my good little daughter," said her father, patting her head affectionately, as he took his place at his long-delayed breakfast.

"Perhaps, when matters out there are put straight, there may be something left for them, after all; and meanwhile, as long as we have a home, my poor brother's children shall not want."

Tom rode off to school on his shaggy pony that morning thinking much more of the new-comers than of his lessons, which, as usual, were not very perfectly learned; and Miss Smith, who came every day to the farm to teach Norah and Jessie, found it quite impossible to keep their thoughts at home, so much had the news excited them.

During the next few days many preparations were made for the strangers, and the girls worked well. A small bed was put up in Norah's room for Caryl, and a room opening out of the same side of the corridor made ready for Hugh; and Jessie, persuading herself that he was a confirmed invalid, made it as cosy as possible, bringing unused cushions to light, and bringing down a comfortable old lounging chair from the lumber room for his benefit.

It was a large rambling old house, with rooms almost big enough for hospital wards, and a staircase of dark oak up which a small coach might have been driven. The broad landing at the top went through the house, its dark floor slippery from much beeswax and elbow polish, and the walls hung with stags' horns and various old engravings. At the far end a door opened on the hillside, for the house was built on the slope; and at the back sunflowers and dahlias peeped through the bedroom windows.

But to the Raynham children the chief glory of the house was the secret room, as they proudly called it, though the secret was an open one, and known to every one on the place.

Built by a Raynham who had known troublous times, the house was immensely strong; and its stout bolts and bars and oaken shutters would have baffled the most experienced London burglar.

In the best parlour heavy beams crossed the low ceiling, and dark oak panelling went half way up the walls. In spite of the wide window, with its many little panes, it was a dark and dreary room, only brightened on Sundays by the great fire lighted on the hearth, and the sound of childish voices singing to the old piano, and childish laughter echoing in the shadowy corners.

The farmer openly expressed his preference for the cheerful sitting-room on the other side of the hall, and Tom rarely entered it during the week, except for one purpose.

In a recess to the left of the fireplace one section of the panelling had a small keyhole hidden under the twisted moulding; and, with a little coaxing, the panel itself slid back and showed a low doorway with a flight of narrow stairs behind, leading up and up to the very top of the house. There another door, but larger, and only peculiar for its many strong bolts and bars without and within, led into a good-sized room under the eaves. There was only one small window, placed far up in the gable, and guarded with strong iron bars, and no second door or means of communication with any other part of the house.

No one knew the history of the place, or why it was contrived; but many romantic stories were told about it, and among these was a tradition that a certain Hugh Raynham, known through all the country side as "Miser Raynham," had hidden his riches there.

After his death, which happened forty years before our story, little hoards had been found in different parts of the house, for he could not trust any bank, and lived always in fear of robbers.

Many a search had since been made in the gable room, or secret chamber; but though he was known to have spent much time there, no treasure store was discovered.

Occasionally Tom would beg for the key and go up to rummage among its musty furniture, the girls helping him, and disturbing many an ancient spider as they moved dusty old chairs and boxes, or laughed at the quaint pictures in the store of mildewed and dismal-looking books that filled the chest in the corner, and being disturbed in turn by the sound of mice busy behind the wainscot.

But it was a dreary place; and somehow they never stayed there long, though their pride in its mystery was very great; and as a show-place to their few visitors it outrivalled all other attractions of garden and farm.

In these and all their expeditions Tom, of course, was

leader, for the spoiling he had received from mother and sisters as the only boy had developed in him a great deal of selfishness, and his will was law.

Jessie rebelled sometimes; but might was generally triumphant, and Tom reckoned securely on his mother's aid in all their differences, and Jessie had to give way.

With Norah it was different. She had a temper quick and passionate as Tom's; and though she was his favourite sister, and sided with him always when he was in trouble, the two were continually quarrelling. And neither of the children dreamed of putting into every-day practice the golden rules for family life: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another;" "Whatsoever things ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" "Forbearing one another in love."

The Bible at Raynham Farm was strictly a Sunday book, and little read even then; and neither father nor mother, in the days of care and anxiety through which they had been passing, turned for comfort to the Refuge which cannot be moved, or knew the sweet peace which comes to God's believing children in times of greatest need and sorrow.

But better things were in store for both; and to Mrs. Raynham especially. From the fretful, complaining mood which had lately become habitual to her, the change was to be deep and lasting.

SCRIPTURE CHARACTER.

NO. VIII.

1. The son of a priest. A swift messenger, and used as such on two occasions. On the first, he and a companion were cleverly hidden till danger was passed. On the second, he carried tidings of an important battle, outrunning the accredited messenger.

2. A herdman, and an Edomite who gave information which caused the king's anger to fall upon a body of innocent people. He savagely carried out the king's orders in slaying them and laying waste their city.

3. A prophet whose name appears only once. He came before the victorious army of Israel, as they returned, bringing with them captives out of Judah to be their bond servants. He delivered to them the message from the Lord, and, in obedience to it, they carried the captives back to their own land.

4. A prophet who faithfully delivered the messages he received of God. On one occasion he conveyed to the king God's promises for himself and his house; and on another he unsparingly condemned his sin. He afterwards brought tidings to the king of the revolt of his son; and we are told that he wrote a book containing the acts of the reign in which he lived.

5. A foreigner who refused to think of personal advantage or safety, and faithfully followed the king in the time of his misfortune. He was put in charge of the third part of the king's forces.

6. A king's son, generous and tender in his affections, but brave in battle, and once, by his faith in God, accomplishing a great victory with slender means. He helped to save the life of the friend whom be loved better than himself, and between whom and himself a covenant was made and kept.

7. One of three brothers who were attached to the service of the king their uncle. He was bold and venturesome, and was reckoned chief among three for a feat which he accomplished; but he was impatient, and, had he not been restrained, would have taken into his own hands the punishment of his master's enemy.

8. A skilful workman sent by a king of the same name. He made much of the metal work required for the Temple.

A. E. R.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA

NO. XV.

Thou sayest (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for the war.

Thou our God has punished us less than our iniquities deserve.

Oh Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee.

It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.

Blessed is she that believed.

All this availeth me nothing.

Tell me what thou hast in the house.

Let us not kill him.

Seek out these words and tell
Each speaker's name;
One, high and mighty, fell
To deepest shame;
One said a famished host
Should be fed;
One, with a daring boast,
An army led;
To one, when left alone,
Was wondrous vision shown,
He heard, in tender tone,
A heavenly voice;
One heard her cousin cry
"My soul doth magnify
The Lord, and now will I
In Him rejoice;"
Another cried, in woe,
"I, whither shall I go?
The child is not!"
His brothers killed a kid,
And thus their guilt they hid
By cruel plot;
One sought the safest way
Beside a river,
God heard His servant pray
And did deliver;
The sons of one are killed
While Israel's armies fly,
Thus is God's word fulfilled
"Both in one day shall die."

These eight initial letters now proclaim
An everlasting, ever-sacred name,
And yet, though so familiar is its sound,
In the New Testament it is not found.

L. T.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER.

NO. VI.—P. 544.—BALAAM.

(1) Mesopotamia; Deut. xxiii. 4; Acts vii. 2; (2) Numbers xxii. 21; Jeremiah xlviii. 38; (3) Numbers xxii. 8, 19; (4) 4, 5; (5) 27-30; (6) 32, 33; (7) xxiii. 1, 14, 30; (8) 10; xxxi. 8; (9) xxii. 17; xxiv. 11; (10) Micah vi. 5; 2 Peter ii. 15; Rev. ii. 14; Jude 2; (11) Joshua xiii. 22.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. XIV.—P. 558.—HAGAR AND SARAH, Gen. xvi. 1; xvii. 15.

H erodia S . . . . . Mark vi. 22-25.
A s A . . . . . 2 Chron. xv. 16.
G ome R . . . . . Gen. x. 2.
ArimatheA . . . . . Luke xxiii. 50-53.
R ama H . . . . . 1 Sam. xii. 20-23; vii. 17.