

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

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

OF ALL DEGREES.

CHAPTER XXVI.—HONORIA'S DECISION.



HONORIA PROPOSES TO RETURN HOME.

AS so often happens, circumstances on which he had not counted at all came to the doctor's aid, and made his task less difficult than he had expected.

There had been a long-standing acquaintance

between the families of Vivian and Ellis. The elder Ellis, indeed, as a successful physician had had the health of the banker and his family under his care until his death, and though his son had foolishly declined to step into that

excellent, ready-made, fashionable practice which his father left at his disposal, and had preferred to cast in his lot with humble folk and work his own way in life, he had not cut himself entirely adrift from early ties; and occasionally journeyed westwards and entered the stately Vivian mansion there at an hour when the banker was to be found at home.

He was generally pretty well received, though Mr. Vivian never failed to comment on the folly of his conduct, and bewail the throwing away of that substantial family practice which had devolved upon an assistant.

"I couldn't think of employing Carter," he said to young Ellis, "except for the servants. Sir Henry Hornblower attended my poor wife. It was a monstrous piece of folly to throw your chances away in that fashion; your father always expected you to succeed him. He certainly spared nothing on your education, sending you to Paris and Vienna—and all for what?"

Ellis laughed.

"So you think my talents are wasted?"

"I certainly think you should have given them a chance."

"Well, it's certain I should only have made a mess of things if I had worn my good father's mantle. I'm not sleek enough for genteel complaints."

He smiled over the hint that he might have had the Vivian patronage which was now bestowed on the great Sir Henry Hornblower; but the truth was, as he frankly owned, he found the maladies of humble people more interesting, and prized science and the chance of learning far above money rewards.

After his talk with Janey he went to Grosvenor Square, though with no very defined idea of what he should say or do when he got there. It was late in the afternoon of a day in spring; an hour when the social tide is busy. Between his own quarter of the world and this there could scarce have been a sharper contrast; for, true to his conviction, the young doctor avoided the respectable comfort of Bloomsbury, and found his clients in those narrower and meaner streets that intersect the great thoroughfares. Here, in this western quarter, a stately grandeur made itself subtly felt; the windows blossomed with flowers; carriages with servants in gorgeous liveries, and drawn by magnificent horses, carried well-dressed folk from door to door. The young man thought, with a smile, that his own shabby coat and indifferently-polished boots were an insult to this shining prosperity.

The banker's home was as stately as its neighbours; but the flowers of spring did not deck its front, and none of the fine carriages pulled up at its door. It struck the visitor that the mansion for all its imposing air looked lonely, and this sense of silence and of what might be called a splendid forlornness, was deepened as he passed within. The fine hall, the great staircase, the corridors above were all dark and voiceless; the footman's step was hushed as it fell on the soft carpet. Noiselessly,—almost as if it were a house of death—he opened the library door and shut it behind the guest.

It was a finely-proportioned room into which he ushered the young man, and full of books that had sometimes been Ellis's envy; but his only feeling on this day was a lightly-stirred pity for the possessor of it all, who sat unfriended among his treasures.

Mr. Vivian, who had been nodding behind his newspaper, looked up with a start; but when he recognised his guest he welcomed him with some show of cordiality.

"It's a long time since you have been here," he said; "pretty near a year, I should say."

"Yes, I suppose it is; one grinds along and forgets how the days go," said Ellis, realising for the first time as he looked at the other how long the interval had been. There was more than a year's difference in Mr. Vivian since he had seen him last. He looked older, less confident, as if some satisfaction had gone out of his very successful life; it was difficult exactly to define the change, but it was there.

"Time does not bring much variety here either."

"I thought you would be out driving—like all the world—or riding. It's a day to make a man wish himself astride a horse, especially when he doesn't own one."

"I don't drive or ride much now-a-days," said Mr. Vivian, thinking of the years when he had sat by his wife's side and joined the daily procession round the park, finding the exercise pleasant enough; "one gets sick of the old round."

"But there's no need to stick to it," said Ellis good-humouredly. "There's no place in the world where you have a greater choice of good riding roads than London. I wish you could persuade Miss Vivian to go with you. It would be the best thing in the world for her; she needs it."

The banker turned his eyes upon the visitor inquiringly.

"Is my daughter ill?" he asked.

"No, she is not ill," he answered truthfully; "but she may become so if she does not relax a little and take things more easily."

Mr. Vivian made no reply, looking neutrally into the fire as if the matter did not concern him greatly, though he gave it a polite attention, and Ellis bit his lip with an access of temper.

"It's clear I'm going to get no help from him," he said to himself. "His confounded pride, I suppose, stands in the way. Was there ever anything so utterly idiotic? It's as plain as daylight that he's miserable for want of her, and yet he wouldn't stoop to ask her to return."

He turned the talk into another channel, and, after a short visit, rose to go.

Mr. Vivian made no effort to detain him; but he said as he was shaking hands—

"My daughter comes frequently to see me. To-morrow is her day for calling, I believe. I will mention your suggestion to her."

"Oh! about the riding?" said Ellis with assumed indifference. "Yes, it would be a capital thing—shake her out of herself, give her a change of ideas; and it's a pity her splendid horsemanship should go for nothing."

"She rides very well," Mr. Vivian acquiesced calmly.

"Now, I wonder," said the young man to himself as he walked rapidly away, "what I've done that it should be my malign fate to meddle with other people's affairs? If they choose to make a mess of their lives, why should I bother myself to set them straight again? Old Vivian is a good deal shaken; he wants rousing. If Miss Vivian won't go back to him, she ought to get him to marry. But she will go back," he ended with conviction, conscious of being armed with a new power.

But even a young man who goes in for the study of human nature is not always infallible. Ellis was only half right in his conclusions. It was true that the banker—though his pride would never have allowed him to own it—felt lonely; but it was the dead wife more than the living daughter whom he missed. He had been very proud of his wife, he loved her well after his fashion, and life seemed to have been swept bare for him when she died. Perhaps in time his daughter might have taken her place and filled the blank successfully; but she had left him, and the experiment had never been made. He had yielded to her wish to go, shaken and agitated by the arguments she used, and moved, perhaps, by a superstitious dread of consequences if he should refuse. She had made it her plea that she was called on in her degree to make reparation for a life of folly and sin. To his bewildered, grief-stricken mind, taking its standard from the world around him, it did not seem to him that his wife—who had always been affectionate and obedient—had been so great a sinner that she could not claim heaven's mercy; but that eager, despairing cry of hers, as Honoria related it, had burnt itself in upon his memory scorchingly. He could not forget it; and what if—by refusing Honoria's longing for a life of work and renunciation—he were further to imperil her peace in the life to which she was called? It was this shape that his thoughts took, dimly and gropingly, in the confusion of his first hour of sorrow—that hour when neither creeds nor doctrines come to the support of the mourner; but when time went on, and custom had somewhat blunted the keenness of his feelings, his pride re-asserted itself, and he knew that Honoria had wounded it irreparably. That vision of reparation she held herself called on to make receded into the background, and fronting him, and ever present to him, was the thought that she had forsaken him and stepped from her place in life to stoop to those who had no claim on her services. But he had consented, and—here pride prevailed once more—he would not recall her.

Ellis went straight home to his rooms and wrote Honoria a little note—he had composed it carefully as he walked—which he sent by the hand of a small boy whom he employed to run his errands. He did not go to see her partly because he could not spare the time, and in part also perhaps because he was a little ashamed to have used the only argument he knew would prevail with her. She might think him cruel, but, to

draw a simile from his profession, has not the surgeon often to wound in order to heal?

Honoria did not receive the note till late at night, when she came home faint and weary from a long day among her sick poor. The doctor would have absolved himself if he could have seen how pale and wan she looked as she sat down without removing her outer dress and broke the seal of the letter.

She flushed as she read it, and letting it fall mused for a time in silence. The doctor must have put his case with scientific clearness, for in a mere line or two he conveyed the exact impression he wished to make to her brain.

Her father was not ill, there was no need for her to hurry out into the night as she would have done on the first hint of his need of her, he was not ill, nor had any trouble or disaster befallen him—he had not even asked that she should go to him. What was it then that helped her to see, clear as if she indeed saw it with bodily vision, the proud man sitting lonely and unfriended in the stately and beautiful home—with no one to care for him and give him that love for which for aught she knew he might be perishing?

Miss Lemming came into the room while she sat thus gazing before her, her hands folded over the letter in her lap.

"My, how tired you look, you're just regular wore out," cried the faithful creature, "and all for them good-for-nothings as will never thank you."

"Don't say that!" cried Honoria with a new sensation of pain stabbing her, "yes, I am very tired and I think I will rest best in bed."

"Just the most sensible thing you can do, you lie down, my dear, and I'll fetch you something as will help you to sleep."

"But those girls"—Honoria began with a faint scruple—"If they should come—"

"You leave them to me, if they do. But it's the fire they come for and the tea, and the night is that mild, as like as not, there won't be one here."

So Honoria yielded to all the kind cares that were heaped upon her and lay down, but not to sleep. Thought was too active—that quickened moral sense that was a part of her new nature was stirring within her. It was inevitable that she should question herself, should go back on all the history of the past two years with an unsparing scrutiny.

Her mind rushed back to that deciding day when she had willed to renounce her old life for this new one. It had seemed to her then to be the only worthy life, and her enthusiasm, faith, and belief in it had never failed her, but might she not after all have been interpreting her own desires into the voice of God calling her, and was there some other path on which He would have chosen her to walk?

The answer did not come with any clearness, no Divine directing voice rose upon the silence and the darkness for her guidance, and in her instinctive shrinking and recoil from pronouncing her own sentence she found courage to rebel.

"He gave me his consent freely and without

conditions, he is strong and well, he has many interests which I was never asked to share—he has everything, and these, my poor people, who have nothing, must I leave them?"

But she was too honest with herself to find a secure refuge in such excuses, conscience was ready with her argument on the other side.

"These do not absolve you if duty lies that way for you," it said, "those relationships which are not of your choosing—those human bonds, have you fulfilled all their obligations, or have you while you thought yourself embracing the higher life, while you thought the path so clear—have you been blind all this while, walking with your back to the God-appointed way, forsaking the duties and mercies, the home pieties from which nothing can set us free?"

Poor Honoria, as in a lightning flash she saw her life illuminated by these new conditions, and she could not pass on as if she had not known their arrest, but neither as yet could she yield. She tossed and found no rest, no relief from this sudden insurrection of feeling. Towards morning she fell into a troubled sleep to wake weary and unrefreshed, shrinking with intensified repulsion from the necessity of making a choice.

Yet she allowed herself no holiday from her self-imposed duties, rather she faced them more eagerly with the dread lying like a cold hand at her heart that the time of their fulfilment might be short. In the afternoon, when she was certain that her father would have returned from the business which still occupied some of his morning hours she set out for Grosvenor Square.

It was natural, perhaps, that with the new direction given to her thoughts her mind should dwell much on the past. In the two years when she had visited her father once or twice a week, never allowing her weariness to interfere with this duty, she had come to consider herself as belonging no more to these regions; she never altered the penitential plainness of her dress, and as she walked her mind was always intent on some phase or incident of her work—some new need or claim of her people. Her entire absorption and abstraction prevented her from recognising old acquaintances if she met them, and they too, possibly would have failed to discover the proud and beautiful Miss Vivian in this erect, grave woman, so severely clad. No doubt if they noticed her they took her for one of those sisters with whose mission and costume the world has grown familiar: it had never happened to her at least to renew any of the ties she had voluntarily snapped.

But to-day it seemed as if her senses were preternaturally acute, and as if every nerve in her thrilled and quivered in response to the manifestations of life about her. She saw things that had hitherto no existence for her—the gaily decked windows, the wealth and luxury that rolled about in carriages, all the bustle and hurry and business of fashion as it wakes to the breezes of May.

She saw her own girlhood walking these ways—the old proud self, conscious of her gifts and beauty and ambitious only of more power, and

once more the chill touched her as with an icy breath.

"Must I go back?" she asked herself. To go back wholly would never be possible, but if the final choice determined her return she knew that she must so far conform to the rules prescribed by this world she had so eagerly renounced. She must live as her father's daughter in ease and plenty, yes, and in luxury. "And those others who have nothing?" This was always her anguished cry. "'Except ye bring your brethren with you ye shall not see my face' How can I forsake them?"

When she reached her father's door her heart was beating with a painful intensity. Somehow she had expected to be guided by some sign from him, some look or word that should show her how to disentangle the confusion of her thoughts, and it was almost with a shock that she found herself met with the same calm, unenthusiastic greeting as usual.

"How are you, Honoria?" he said submitting to her kiss, "you are a little earlier than usual this evening, I think, but fortunately I did not linger at my club."

"I should have been sorry if you were not at home, papa," she said trying to still the trembling of her voice, "because—I particularly wished to speak to you."

"I shall be very glad to listen to anything you have to say," he said politely, "but would you not prefer to have some tea first? you look tired. Or wine? but I think you do not take wine?"

"No, I have not felt the need of it of late," she said, "but I am a great lover of tea." She unclasped her heavy cloak. "Let me make it for you, papa," she said, when the man had brought it in response to Mr. Vivian's ring.

"No, my dear, no," he said more kindly. "Sit still and rest; I am used to helping myself, you know."

She was touched by his solicitude for her, but she felt a deeper pang at these words, "I am used to helping myself."

"Are you busy to night?" she asked, a little timidly. "Should you like me to stay and dine with you, or—would it be a trouble?"

"It certainly would not be a trouble," he said looking rather surprised, "if you can spare so much of your time."

"Yes," she said flushing, "I should like to stay." "Then by all means do so. But I hope you are prepared for a very indifferent dinner. I dine so habitually at my club now, that Mrs. Allen may not have the necessary supplies."

"Oh, that doesn't matter, at least for me," she said hastily, too glad of the permission to feel as acutely as she might have done how completely he regarded her as a stranger and a guest.

"And Mrs. Allen is always equal to any emergency, I will go and tell her I have invited myself and propitiate her a little."

She was glad of any excuse to leave the room, to recover if possible control of her calm. For seeing her father in this new light of awakened knowledge she read so many little signs that she had missed before in her absorption. He looked older, and surely he had not had those

grey streaks in his hair before? He was stately, impassive, urbane as ever, but there was a joyless look such as one sometimes reads even on a proud face, and oh, how dreary the great house seemed, how empty of sound and life. Living as she did in a crowded corner of the great city where day and night the hum and cry of human voices was in her ears, the silence struck her painfully.

She went upstairs to a little room that had been her mother's favourite morning retreat, here she had given her orders, written her notes, conducted all the business of her social life; and here, as Honoria remembered, her father had come each morning to see her before he set out for the city. It was a practice begun in their early married life and never forgotten or dropped by him. She recalled it with a pang, there was no one now to look up and smile on his entrance. When she had appeased Mrs. Allen's ruffled dignity and borne with her thrust—

"It is not so often that you take a meal here, Miss Vivian, that I need grudge your stopping for once—"

Honoria said, "My father tells me he dines mostly at his club, I suppose he isn't much at home?"

"Well, you see, Miss Honoria," said the housekeeper, who remembered her when she was little and still sometimes called her by the old name—"you can't wonder, poor gentleman, for there's nothing, so to speak, to come home to. When the captain is here he dines at home, and now and then there's a dinner-party, but a French cook is as good as wasted for the little there is to do. It's your mamma he misses, he's never been the same since she died."

Honoria made no answer, and Mrs. Allen having no further excuse to remain left the room.

"You will find your own room ready, Miss Honoria," she said lingering at the door. "I don't think you have been there since you left it, but you will find it just the same. Mr. Vivian gave orders that it wasn't to be touched."

So he had hoped she would come back after all? Her tears fell as she sat alone. Presently she rose and opened the door of her mother's room; that too was unchanged, though Mr. Vivian slept in another part of the house. Honoria went to the white bed where she had seen her mother die. The thought of that tortured hour rent her with a great anguish in which all her late found peace seemed swallowed up. She knelt and buried her face, her frame shaken with tearless sobs.

"Guide me. Show me Thy will," she whispered, "bend mine to it."

But the battle was not won at once. Such struggles are never easy, the soul may come out of them saved but it is as by fire, and the mark of the scar remains.

But when Honoria rose from her knees she was calm once more. The second renunciation was lightened by no ardour or enthusiasm such as had helped her in the first, but the peace of submission was in her heart.

When she went back to her father his first remark helped her to say the difficult words she had resolved upon.

"By the way, Honoria," he said, "Ellis was here yesterday and he expressed a wish—as your medical man, I presume—that you should recommence your riding. He suggested, indeed, that we should ride together, and I undertook to mention his wishes to you."

"What are your wishes? should you like it, papa? you have not been riding lately, I think."

"No, not for some time, but I have always found it a beneficial exercise. Your mare Sheila is still at Barford."

Then she could refrain no longer.

She went and knelt by his chair, the beautiful face tremulous and pleading lifted up to his own. He looked down on her a little constrained and surprised, but he suffered the hand she laid on his.

"Dear papa," she said controlling her voice, "should you like me to come back and live with you again—for always—to make the house a little more cheerful—and—and we could do many things as well as ride together, and it would be some one for you to come home to—" She paused brokenly.

"Have you found your present life a mistake?" he said slowly.

"No," she said strongly, "but I have been thinking perhaps I ought not to have left you, even for work such as this."

"I have always thought that your place was here, Honoria. There is an old commandment about honouring one's father—perhaps you and I interpret it differently, but there are times when I have wondered why I have a daughter."

She bowed her head under his words.

"You—would like me to return?" she whispered presently.

"I gave you your choice, I give it you still: it is a question solely for your own decision."

"I will come," she said simply, raising her head and looking at him with a struggling smile, "and perhaps—there are some hours of the day when you can spare me, papa—the times when you are in the city, so that I need not wholly forsake my other friends?"

"I see no reasonable objection to that arrangement. But this dress—you will not think it needful to wear it in my house?"

"I will do just as you wish, papa."



RECENT DISCOVERIES AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

VII.

I HAVE reserved for our final remarks the two most notable manuscript discoveries which have come to our knowledge during the last ten years. They have been the subject of learned treatises and academic discussions, but if asked to name off-hand a good popular account of them, suited for readers who do not require minute criticism, I should be placed in a difficulty. I shall take them in the order in which English-speaking Christians first heard of them.

In the forefront I therefore place the Diatessaron of Tatian, with which we became acquainted in the year 1881. I shall hang the observations I have to offer concerning this work on the following three pegs:—(1) Who was Tatian? (2) What is the Diatessaron? and (3) What has its discovery to do with the Christian faith?

And, first, as to Tatian himself, we must say that he is one of the most interesting characters of the second century, and one of the best witnesses to the vast extent of the Christian faith by the middle of that century.

He was born in its earliest years in the far distant East across the river Tigris, "in the land of the Assyrians," as he tells us himself. He was educated in Greek philosophy and in Greek religion, and initiated into the pagan mysteries, which, in the second century, and indeed down to the fall of paganism, had a great charm for religious minds. He became a professor of rhetoric, earning a living by teaching, and in the course of his academic wanderings found his way to the world's capital—Rome. He came to Rome a pagan, but there he came in contact with a great Christian teacher, Justin Martyr. Tatian's mind was prepared for the reception of the truth. He was disgusted with the bloody, impure, immoral worship practised by Greeks and Romans alike when Providence threw the Scriptures of the Old Testament in his way. These writings Tatian read and studied. He admired their simplicity, their purity, and their antiquity. They probably were given him by some Christian, perhaps by Justin himself, because we find that they led him not to Judaism but to Christianity. Justin Martyr was just the man to suit Tatian's tone and temper.

Justin was a native of the East, like Tatian himself, Justin coming from Samaria in Palestine as Tatian from Assyria. The Syriac language was then spoken all over the East, and this would form a common bond between them. Justin had been a philosopher like Tatian himself, and even still retained as a Christian his philosopher's cloak, as distinctive a mark of their common profession, as the academic cap and gown are of a member of our Universities. Tatian imbibed Christian truth from Justin's lips about the year 150, and then became an enthusiastic champion of the cross of Christ. He addressed an oration, or apology, to the Greeks, in which he discussed the absurdities of paganism,

contrasting with them the beauties and truths of Christianity. From this Apology we learn all, or nearly all, that we know of the details of Tatian's life. It is at the same time an interesting record of primitive Christian controversy. We see in it a picture of life, worship, philosophy, and morals in pagan Rome at the time when unregenerate human nature bore full sway. We behold displayed in this work the immoral and depraved character of paganism, elaborated though it was amid all the influences of the highest human thought, and its utter incapacity to satisfy a soul longing for true spiritual light and direction. The oration of Tatian is an everlasting testimony, a witness most necessary for these times of the spiritual and moral impotence of man apart from Jesus Christ. A month's visit to the streets, theatres, temples, and homes of Rome in the days of Marcus Aurelius as portrayed in this oration would prove to the most sceptical the absolute need for a supernatural religion and a supernatural power to reform a society so utterly cruel and corrupt.

Tatian wrote not merely this philosophical Apology for Christianity; he produced other works of a similar type, which are, however, lost, or at least lost for the present. At some future time we may recover them, and with them much other precious evidence for revealed truth. He was a biblical critic too. Eusebius, in his ecclesiastical history, written a century and a half after Tatian's day, tells us a great deal about the literary activity of the Christian writers of the second century. Eusebius had access to large libraries, which must have been filled with works of that time. The principal churches, like Jerusalem and Cæsarea, had libraries attached to them where the leading Christian writers were to be found. Three hundred years later than Eusebius, the great Irish missionary, Columbanus, established a library in northern Italy, which contained and even still contains—for it exists to this day at Milan—many works written in the second and third centuries.

It was very easy, therefore, for Eusebius to extract into his history numerous passages from second century writers, many of whom would be unknown to us save for the exertions of Eusebius. Among the writers to whom he refers was this Tatian, of whom he writes: "Tatian composed a sort of connection and compilation, I know not how, of the Gospels and called it the Diatessaron. This work is current in some quarters even to the present day." A good many questions of theological interest might here be raised concerning the reasons which induced Tatian to make this compilation; but, as I have a special object in view, and that is to exhibit the bearings of this work of Tatian on the Christian Faith, I pass them by, and proceed to notice the second peg on which my argument hangs. What is this Diatessaron of which Eusebius speaks?

The word Diatessaron means simply, by four, and Tatian's Diatessaron described by Eusebius was a Harmony of the Four Gospels, or, perhaps we should rather call it, a paraphrase or connected Gospel story made up by selecting passages from the four canonical Gospels. A few words will explain the nature of it. This patchwork gospel began with the first chapter of St. John, using the famous preface, "In the beginning was the Word," and going down to the fifth verse, "And the light shined in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not," a passage whose authenticity it was the habit of some deniers of our Lord's divinity to controvert as spurious. This new discovery has, however, completely vindicated it and shown that it formed a part of the original Gospel.

Tatian, in the next place, inserted almost the whole of the first chapter of St. Luke; the story of Zacharias and Elisabeth; the annunciation of our Lord's birth, together with the circumstances of the birth of John the Baptist. Then there followed the narrative of our Lord's birth, taken from St. Matthew i. 18-25; the story of the shepherds from St. Luke, the visit of the wise men from St. Matthew, and so on, till a connected narrative of the whole life of our Lord was made out, ending with the final commission to the apostles, and the story of the ascension, gathered from St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke.

This book was composed by Tatian, and published by him in his own native country, the province of Syria, whither he returned about the year 160 or 170. It obtained a large circulation there, and very naturally; it was a handy book, it superseded the necessity for four different documents, no small matter in days when there were no printing presses to reproduce copies by thousands in a few days; and lastly, it presented a continuous story, and our own experience has shown what a wonderful charm continuous and connected lives of Christ have had for the present age. This Syrian compilation out of the four gospels or Diatessaron, as it was called, became most popular in the church of the distant East, where still a down-trodden remnant of the ancient church survives, notwithstanding the thousand years of Mahometan rule.

Tatian's became the household Bible of the people of Syria and Mesopotamia: it was expounded by celebrated doctors: commentaries were written upon it, translations of it were made into other languages, and three hundred years after its compilation it was still so widely diffused, that a learned bishop of that country named Theodoret, whose see was near the Euphrates, and therefore in the very neighbourhood of Tatian's native place, writing in the year 453, tells us that when he was appointed bishop he found this gospel of Tatian's used in no less than two hundred churches subject to his jurisdiction. He soon made a change, for he gathered copies together and put them away, substituting the four canonical Gospels for them.¹ But even

Theodoret's activity and zeal for the canonical writings were not able to depose Tatian's gospel from its place. The Syrian Christians loved it. It was associated with their earliest memories, and they brought it with them wherever they went. It came thus back into Italy, where, perhaps, it had been originally composed when Tatian lived in Rome.

There was a very active intercourse between Syria and the West, Italy, France, and even Ireland in the fifth and sixth centuries. One of the most touching stories in the romantic history of Columbanus, the great Celtic missionary of the seventh century to Burgundy and Switzerland, is connected with a Syrian woman. St. Columbanus was arrested by order of a wicked queen for his faithfulness in reproving her impious deeds. The soldiers to whom he was committed were ordered to send him back to Ireland whence he had come. The soldiers executed their commission very faithfully but very roughly; they allowed scarcely any one to speak to him, and the only sympathy he met was, as he tells himself, from a Syrian woman at Orleans who gave him food when well-nigh starving, saying, "I am a stranger like yourself and come from the distant sun of the east, and my husband is of the same race of the Syrians."

These Syrian immigrants brought many eastern ideas into Western Europe, and with them too they brought Tatian's Diatessaron which fell into the hands of Victor, Bishop of Capua, about the year 540. He translated it into Latin, whence, three centuries or so later, it was rendered into German, becoming thus the basis of many popular ideas and traditions concerning Christian truths current in central Europe during the middle ages. The history of this primitive Gospel harmony is already sufficiently varied; composed in Rome or Mesopotamia in the second century, brought back to the West four hundred years later, and then, after the lapse of several other centuries, translated into the language of the great Teutonic tribes. Yet all this we have learned only within the last ten years. The discovery came about in the following manner. The loss of this second century Harmony of the Four Gospels has always been a source of lamentation with Christian scholars and champions. Thus, to take a notable instance, the present Bishop of Durham, Dr. Lightfoot, wrote a series of articles in defence of Christian truth, between the years 1874 and 1877, which he published in the *Contemporary Review*. These articles have now been collected together and have been published within the last few weeks in a volume which that learned writer calls *Essays on Supernatural Religion*.

One of these articles dealt with the subject of Tatian, and in this the Bishop says, "Tatian was a voluminous writer, but of several writings mentioned by the ancients, only one has come down to us—his Apology or Address to the Greeks." Dr. Lightfoot then proceeded to prove from the materials open to him at the time that the lost Diatessaron of Tatian was a Harmony of the Four Gospels. The reason of this is evident, if a learned Christian philosopher about the year 160 thought it worth his while to compose a Harmony

¹ A thorough search among the monastic libraries of the Syrian Christians might yet reveal many copies of the Diatessaron in Syria.

of our Four Gospels, then the Four Gospels must have existed at that time, and, farther still, must thus early have attained the same position as they now occupy, in the estimation of the church at Rome and the church in the far distant East alike. There must have been universal assent throughout the Christian world to the canonical authority of the Four Gospels in the generation next after the Apostle St. John.

And, farther still, a gospel harmony of this character made in the middle of the second century guarantees to us that no change has been made in the narrative since that period. The efforts of the antagonists of the truth were fifteen years ago all directed therefore to establish the opposite view. They held that the Four Gospels did not exist when Tatian lived and wrote, and that the Diatessaron was in reality the source whence our Four Gospels were, in plain language, forged. One brief sentence may here be quoted from the work to which Dr. Lightfoot was replying; it is sufficient to show the sceptical contention as set forth in a book which purported to overthrow "the reality of Divine Revelation" so lately as the year 1874. "It is obvious that there is no evidence whatever connecting Tatian's Gospel with those in our canon."¹

To the arguments of the writer, summed up in these few words, Dr. Lightfoot most satisfactorily replied, but what would he not have given for a copy of Tatian's Diatessaron at the time; yet the long-lost book was at that very moment lying at Venice—yea, was even at that moment in the Bishop's own study, as we shall show—waiting to render its witness to the canonical authority of the Four Gospels, and to expose the narrowness and unfairness of sceptical controversialists. The discovery of it came about thus.

I have already said that learned divines of the early church wrote commentaries on Tatian's life of Christ in the language of Scripture, as we might call it. Ephraem, Deacon of Edessa, for instance, did so about the middle of the fourth century.

Ephraem was one of the most copious Christian writers of that age, and his works have a special value as showing what were the doctrines taught at that period in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates and Tigris. Ephraem wrote among other works a Commentary upon Tatian's Diatessaron, embodying the text of it paragraph by paragraph. Early in the next century, that is the fifth, the Armenian church sent a large number of its most promising students to study at Edessa, and translate useful books into the Armenian tongue. They specially selected the productions of Ephraem's pen, and among the rest translated his Commentary on the Diatessaron.

The labours of these primitive Armenian students have come to light of late years in great abundance. They confined themselves to no one topic. Classical writers, historians, poets, philosophers were translated as well as theologians, and as the result, within the last thirty years, large numbers of ancient Greek works have been recovered by classical scholars which have been thus preserved

in their Armenian dress. From the same source we have gained the Diatessaron. The Mechitarist monks at Venice are Armenians. They represent the section of that ancient church which has submitted to the pope. They have a convent at the island of St. Lazarus at Venice, which is noted for its literary labours, and where vast quantities of ancient Armenian manuscripts have been stored. Among them was a copy of the Armenian translation of Ephraem's Syriac Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron made about the year 400 by the Armenian students at Edessa; this commentary was published at Venice in Armenian so long ago as the year 1836, but then Armenian is practically an unknown tongue to our western critical scholars. It is easy to see how this works; a man may be a first-rate Armenian scholar: he can read any document which comes before him, but he is not a critical and theological scholar: he knows not therefore the value of the document which lies before him; or else he may be a first-rate critical scholar, yet he is not skilled in Armenian, and so he may be looking at a document he would prize above rubies, and yet be in complete ignorance of its transcendent value.

This was the case with Dr. Lightfoot as he tells us in his lately published volume. In the course of his omnivorous studies he had purchased many years prior to 1877, the Armenian volumes published by these Venetian monks in 1836; but he had not skill enough in the Armenian tongue to read them, and so the long-lost Diatessaron lay hidden for forty years after their publication till a Roman Catholic divine, Dr. G. Moesinger, professor at Salzburg, discovered that this hidden treasure was at Venice, went there, found a Latin translation of the Diatessaron in manuscript made so long ago as 1841 by a certain Father Aucher, and then published that translation at Venice in 1876,—so that when Dr. Lightfoot was regretting the loss of the Diatessaron in 1877, at that very time it was lying unknown and unnoticed on the shelves of the Venetian publishers.

The discovery of Tatian's Diatessaron has stopped the mouths of the adversary, and for the present we hear no more of the late origin of St. John's or of the three Synoptic gospels. But surely this discovery ought to have a wider influence and a more extensive teaching. It ought to teach patience and confidence to the Christian. Discovery after discovery has come to light capped by this most precious discovery of which we have now told the story. Not one of them has in the most minute degree collided with the New Testament narrative. Nay, rather, as they have successively appeared, they have helped to clear it of difficulties which we in our ignorance had seen there. Surely then we may repose in sure confidence that as it has been in the past, so will it be in the future. Novelists, male and female, may draw fancy pictures of what Christianity has been or will be, but we can repose on the solid foundations of fact and calmly assert and conclusively prove that the only persons whom modern discoveries have put to shame have been those who have challenged the historic facts of the Christian Faith.

¹ "Supernatural Religion," vol. ii. p. 161, Lond. 1874.



“These Three.”

FAR down beneath life's ebb and flow
The steadfast roots of Faith abide,
Unharm'd by all the storms that blow,
And from hid treasures satisfied;

While Hope her venturous stem uprears
Through the chill wastes that lie between,
Till borne upon the flood appears
A living argosy of green.

And Love unfolds the perfect flower,
That dares the waters deep and cold,
And blooms unchanged through sun and shower,
Knowing her anchorage will hold.

For Faith shall not be overthrown,
Hope shall for ever upward move,
And neither death nor life can drown
The peerless lily flower of Love!

SOME INCIDENTS OF EVANGELISATION IN RUSSIA.

II.

THIS conference subsequently held at St. Petersburg, did not escape the attention of the police. It might have been compared to the great assembly mentioned in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, for there were representatives from almost all the evangelical parties in Russia—Stundists, Molokans from the centre and the south; Moravians, Baptists from the west; Reformers and Lutherans from Finland and from the Baltic provinces, each speaking his own language or particular dialect. There were also present brethren from Bulgaria, Germany, and from England; but they all understood the language of heaven. If the Holy Spirit did not reveal Himself, as formerly, in tongues of fire, His power was felt in directing, strengthening and setting free those who had assembled under His auspices.

Fervent prayers and thanksgivings went up to the throne of God in different languages.

German pastors, Finnish colporteurs, and Russian peasants, each in turn spoke.

All was translated for the benefit of the great mass of Russian believers. During this season of speeches, Colonel Paschkoff and his friends lodged at their own homes a large number of invited guests. Aged brethren, those whom devotion and Christian labours had marked out among others, without distinction of social rank, were seated at his table. The dining-rooms of the Viborskaia, a charitable institution of which we shall speak later, had been set apart for their friends. The conference continued ten days; the interest was sustained, and the faithful returned to their homes full of joy, refreshed in their souls, and fortified for their coming struggles. These were in some cases severe, for many suffered for their visit to St. Petersburg the persecution of the police and even imprisonment.

Fifteen men had been lodged in a hotel where there was a band of Nihilists at the same time. The presence of so large a number of provincials who seemed united by close ties of friendship aroused suspicions. The police attempted a seizure. The Nihilists took fright and fled, leaving in the room occupied by our friends a secret press and pamphlets of a dangerous character. The issue of these discoveries may be imagined. The innocent suffered for the guilty. They were soon locked up. After inquiry into the full circumstances, the police found out their mistake, but this drew attention to the Conference. The different religious bodies were censured, and finally sent home with a command not to propagate their errors.

At the end of the year 1881, some persons who desired to provide in a more systematic way for the material and spiritual wants of the poor of

the capital, resolved to form a society upon the model of that which was established in London by Mrs. Ranyard ("L.N.R.") under the name of the *Missing Link*. The efforts of the society were directed to those places where some work had already commenced.

First of all, in the quarter of the Viborskaia, to the west of the town, M. and Mme. Paschkoff got possession of a house with the special object of using it for the preaching of the gospel.

There was in the same building a home for young female students, who found cheap lodging there, a workroom where poor women had work supplied them, and also a kitchen where they could dine for five copecks.

In the Galernaia, a suburb situated at the mouth of the Neva, another lady had founded a free school and a home for young girls as well as a workshop.

The two districts of the Kolomna had also workrooms, and the poor were visited there regularly. In one of these quarters Colonel Paschkoff had opened a second kitchen.

Our Circle was the name the society took at its birth. The first meeting of the committee took place 25th November, 1881. Although this society had a man at its head, the principal work was done by ladies. The ladies of the committee had chosen persons devoted to the Lord to visit the poor, and they often went themselves into the different quarters of the town to read the Word of God and to make known the good news of salvation. This was the primary object of the association.

Galernaia is a low quarter, which is inundated almost every year in the autumn storms. The waters of the river flow back towards their source, and spread over the town which is inhabited by poor people who live by fishing. The Home here became the centre of an interesting work. The directress, a Christian woman of great devotion, offered to visit the poor of the locality, although she was already very much occupied. She attached to this work the elder of those young girls who took a lively interest in it. Each one of these had one or two families placed under her care. Once a week the Home was opened for a meeting of the mothers, followed by a sale of clothes at a low price. Madame — generally presided herself. When the business was over, she opened the Bible, and read to them of the Saviour.

During this time some other person held a Bible-class in the adjoining room for the children of poor mothers who had come to the meeting.

Madame — was received with joy by young and old. She was the mother and the good queen of this little kingdom. Thirty-five children

attended the free school, and the Home contained an average of thirty young girls.

A soup kitchen for the benefit of the poorest of the quarters was also opened there. A hundred families received aid during the year. Nine to ten women converted at the Home meetings were formed into a prayer union, and it was from among them that Madame —— selected her Bible-women later.

These went from house to house reading the Holy Scriptures and selling Gospels.

In the house of one of these humble Christians a little orphanage was opened and a kind of *crèche* (day nursery), where children were kept when their parents were at their work; then a work-room where the women who knew how to handle their needle found employment, and where others learned to use the sewing-machine. But, some months later, the meetings were forbidden, and the poor who came for soup were paid by the secret police to act as spies over those very persons whose aid they sought. The poor creatures said in astonishment: "When we were conducting ourselves badly, and were reeling about in the public-house, they left us alone, but now that we are willing to live honestly and read the Word of God they do nothing but persecute us."

The young Countess Korff, *née* Shoulepnikoff, had the management of the other division of the same quarter. She commenced with much hesitation, but the Lord gave her more than one sign to encourage her. Here the principal work was the sale of the Scriptures and tracts, which were less known than in other parts of the town already visited.

Peterburgskaia is the oldest quarter of the town of Peter the Great; an old wooden church is seen here still which he built with his own hands, and there also rises the ancient fortress of Peter and Paul, whose gilded spire overlooks the city.

But besides these historical edifices there is little to be seen there, and the quarter is inhabited by very poor people. Work-rooms for mothers have been opened here also, and children received in a free school. A young person who had a diploma for instruction devoted two days a week to teach them to read, write, and cipher.

The establishment of the Viborskaia, founded and managed by Madame and Mademoiselle Paschkoff, was even yet more complete, if possible, than that of Galernaia.

To the other institutions already described was joined a Home for young girls without a home at St. Petersburg. These were not servants without a place, or work girls without a family, but young female students from Bestoujief School, a sort of Girton or Newnham opened some years ago when the edict was put forth prohibiting women from entering the Russian universities.

But if these young girls might no longer sit on the same benches as the male students, they did not study any the less with them, assembling together to compare notes and work together.

Many of them had left the paternal roof in a fit of independence, without experience of the capital and often without money. The majority

of them were Nihilists. Without any fixed principles of religion, they were too often ready to fall under the first temptation. It is easy to imagine what this hospitable asylum became to them. In exchange for a small payment they found shelter and protection, and soon proved what affection and sympathy could do.

Mademoiselle K——, who was at the head of this institution, became a real friend for these poor sheep without fold or pastor.

One by one she guided, comforted, and received the confidence of a number of young girls. God alone knows how many have been saved by her influence.

Contiguous to the house there was a large garden, where, in summer, the young students found shade and cool airs. In the winter they assembled in the warm hall, where everything was provided that could draw them off from evil influences—wholesome lectures, innocent games, musical instruments, writing materials. And in the evening, when they had put aside their books of study, Mademoiselle K—— gathered them round her, and read to them the Word of God—that book which they regarded at first with contempt, but which by degrees they learned to know and to love.

This branch of the work has, however, been stopped by the authorities, under misapprehension as to the real aims of its promoters.

One day Colonel Paschkoff was told that a young person wished to speak to him. She was admitted, but was not known to him. A few sentences were sufficient to reveal that she was a Nihilist. Had she heard from some student of Colonel Paschkoff's kind heart? I know not; but she came to him with a request on which the happiness of her life depended. She was in love with a young Nihilist—alas! a political Nihilist under sentence. These two had determined on a life consecrated to the one cause; but one day the police laid their iron hand on the unfortunate young man. He had now before him only banishment for life to Siberia. The same blow had crushed two lives, and plunged into despair the poor girl who loved him. But she did not despair. If for her there was an end of happiness, she could at least share his misfortunes.

The Russian Government allows the female relatives of prisoners to go with them into exile, if they submit to the same fate. So she begged to be allowed to marry the condemned man and to follow him to Siberia. This was the plea she came to urge upon M. Paschkoff.

Colonel Paschkoff listened to her story with much sympathy, and promised to intercede for her. The prayer was granted. Full of gratitude, she came to thank him. He then took occasion to present her with a Gospel, and before she left, he gave her a New Testament and some tracts. She took them with her to Siberia.

Five years had passed away. The Countess Schouvaloff was one day visiting a hospital for women in Moscow. She went from room to room, drew near to every bed, and distributed to the patients tracts and portions of the Holy Scriptures. These were received with eagerness,

and her sympathetic words opened all hearts to her.

She stopped at the bedside of a poor woman whose piteous groanings were sad to hear. Her disease was a real martyrdom. But when the countess showed her the Holy Book where she could find peace for the soul, and even a balm for her sufferings, the patient seemed to forget her pains. A beam of joy lighted up her pale countenance.

"Ah, those books, I know them!" cried she, drawing out from under her pillow little books yellow with age, and a small Testament quite worn, and with corners turned down.

These books she had kept during the five years she had passed in Siberia. Although a Nihilist, she had read them in remembrance of him who had secured her permission to follow her husband. She had understood but little, but the divine words had consoled her heart amid the sufferings and privations of her exile.

Unfortunate illnesses, far from any medical aid, had brought about her complaint. Whether willing or not, she was compelled to leave her husband in order to get to Moscow to seek a cure; but alas! she knew it, death alone was before her. If only before dying she could see Colonel Paschkoff again!

The latter, informed of her wish, went to the hospital. One may imagine the joy of the poor woman, but he recognised with difficulty the fresh young girl of five years before. A short time after, she was carried to the Evangelical Hospital. There she was visited by Christian friends.

Her heart had been prepared already in Siberia. The truth soon came to her soul, and she gave herself to the Saviour. Full of peace and happiness, she had now only one thought,—to glorify her Saviour, to witness of His love. This displeased the authorities of the establishment, and under some pretext, she was excluded from the hospital.

The Princess X. had her taken to her own splendid hospital at Ioula. Here the patient had all the care which her body and soul needed, for all the *employés* of the house were true Christians filled with the love of God. Some months later, the dying woman was again at St. Petersburg at the hospital Marie. She had asked to be nearer Colonel Paschkoff to whom she vowed eternal gratitude. There she died blessing her Saviour, and beseeching Him to reveal Himself to her husband.

This took place in 1883, whilst Alexander II. was still living. When his son ascended the throne, much was expected of him; but whatever were his private views, the chief of the Synod had no difficulty in gaining his adhesion to an act of intolerance. This man grounded his reasons on the Conference of Christians held at St. Petersburg in 1884. Colonel Paschkoff was ordered to quit Russia as well as Count Korff.

Other men were threatened in like manner. But the women, viewed with more indulgence, remained at their post, and, in spite of many obstacles, continued to work quietly. We cannot finish this account without mentioning one other,

although her work belongs to a more recent period.

Mademoiselle — was the mistress of a town school. A lady who had observed her intelligence and abilities offered her the post of manager in her free school. This offer was accepted. Being anxious that her *protégée* might not only teach the children to read and write, but also to know and love the Saviour, this lady took her to Colonel Paschkoff's meetings. The young woman took an interest in them, and it was not long before her eyes were opened, and she gave her heart to the Lord.

Colonel Paschkoff left for the interior—before his exile, and knew not in whose hands to leave the work which was so dear to him. Mademoiselle — offered him her services. Meetings among the cabmen, visits among the poor, to the hospitals and prisons, she undertook everything. Some listened to her with joy, others mocked her. Insults served only to increase her zeal. In a court, where she visited, some men leagued together to kill her. They arranged their plan, which was to throw her out of a window from the third story. In these out-of-the-way lanes which even the police seem to avoid, is she not at their mercy? Who will trouble themselves about a poor woman who breaks her skull on the pavement? But there is One who is watching over her. She prepares to go on her round, her bag of books in her hand; she is about to direct her steps towards the place where her destruction is plotted, but some hindrance arises; she is detained all the day at home, and thus escapes!

It is the police especially who persecute her. She is harassed on all sides. Her presence of mind and confidence in God alone bring her unhurt out of the most dangerous positions.

One day she is arrested. A member of the secret police brings her to the office of the third section.

Mademoiselle — is not alarmed; she speaks to the attendants with great amiability. Her calm and sweet smile win for her the hearts of her rough keepers. Seated in the middle of them in the waiting-room, she opens her Bible. They question her; she offers to read out of it some portions; and there she is holding a religious meeting in the very centre of this formidable and dreaded courtyard. These men are touched. "She is a very angel of the good God," they mutter, quite low. "She has done nothing to be in prison." And the heavy door opens before her, and she is free.

Mademoiselle — has finished her work at St. Petersburg. After two years' struggles and labours, she met a Baptist pastor, who was about to start for Bulgaria on missionary work.

Struck with the gifts and graces of this young woman, he expressed his wish to have her as a companion in his labours. He obtained her consent, and she left her native land to follow the path thus opened before her.

Here ends our story. We have given our readers some idea of woman's work in Russia. May these simple relations touch the hearts of their Western sisters, and move them to pray for this difficult but blessed work!

"SINGING JOE."

CHAPTER II.

AT this moment, a fretful voice from the closet door called—

"Joe, Joe! who have ye got there?"

"It's a gentleman, mother," answered Joe, shooting his voice over his shoulder into the open door. "It's a gentleman as came in."

A grunt followed, then a cough, and Joe dropped his last, and went in; some more grunts, and his soothing voice speaking low. Then he came out and asked me to go in and see his mother.

It was a mere closet with just room for a small bed and a box which served for both table and chair; the only light was from the door, for the square pane of glass which looked into the passage had a curtain over it to keep out the public eyes.

I was prepared to find the mother like the son, something out of the common—a specimen of holy joy and gladness in spite of circumstances. Far from it; as soon as my eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, I saw an old woman in the bed; her face was bleached and wrinkled with an expression in it to match the voice I had heard.

"Good day, sir," she said fretfully, "it's not many as comes in to say a word to me, and me lyin' here a year come Michaelmas, with a leg as won't do a ha'porth for me but ache all night, and when I drops asleep in the day it's sure to be just when some un comes in that would help to cheer me up a bit," and she grunted and coughed dismally.

I was quite disappointed. Joe's opinion of his mother was much too favourable, thought I, so far; but I must not be too hasty in deciding, I would try a pleasant subject.

"You have a good son," I began. Joe had gone back to his work, in fact the closet would not have held us both. "A good son, I am sure, I am glad to have made his acquaintance."

The wrinkled old face softened and smoothed out, and she answered pleasantly—

"That he be, sir, that he be! and if it warn't for him where would I be, a-lyin' here, and I that was always a stirring woman, and doing everything for him and me, and now"—she was fast relapsing into the dolours, so I put in a word again—

"He sings beautifully!"

"Don't he, sir?" she began, quite brightening up; "his hymns is just the life of me. I forgets my leg and all, and just gets right up to heaven!"

"Ah!" thought I, "Joe said so."

"And when his pain is bad, and he can't sing, try as he may, then thinks I to myself, it's just a shame to fret and complain while Joe is able to be about, and to sing over his work."

"His pain?" I repeated, "has he pain now?"

"Dear bless ye, sir," said the old woman, raising herself up on her elbow to look at me, "to be sure he has pain—and that bad too sometimes I thinks it be to finish him yet."

"And he never spoke of it?" I said.

"Bless ye, no sir, that's not Joe's way. He just sings on like a bird, but for all that he drops from his perch at times. He gets by times what they calls an 'income' in the hip joint, and then, no work and no singin' for my poor boy."

She wiped her eyes with a corner of the sheet. "But he's patient still, and the minute it's over, he's up and at the hymns again. They calls him 'singin' Joe' in the court here."

"His singing may do much good," I remarked.

"Bless ye, sir, it does that!" she replied eagerly. "There's no tellin' how many listens to it through that broken winder too! A man offered to put in a pane for nothing, but says Joe, 'Let it be till the cold weather comes, when mother might feel the blast. There's a heap of poor creatures comes and listens when I sings about the dear Lord, and He only knows if it mayn't send them to Him for help.' And then he sings out that strong it almost started me—

'I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!'

and the rest of it. I'm a dour old body," she went on, after a pause in which we could hear the clicking of Joe's needle, and his low hum going over some tune to himself, "I'm often cross and fretful enough, but the Lord will forgive me, for I'm not happy-tempered by natur' as Joe is, and I have something to try me too. And He knows I try to be patient.

"But at times I've lain and just wondered how He that has all power in Heaven and earth could see Joe suffer as he does, and not relieve him—me here helpless, and he in the corner out there, and not a soul to come nigh us. I said it out one day, and Joe he spoke up that pained like, I never forgot it.

"'Mother,' says he, 'when ye say that, it hurts me more than my hip does. The dear Lord, He knows best, that's enough for me.' And I must just sing right up to Him to show Him I can trust Him through everything.' And with that he sang like I never heard him afore or since. I don't mind all the words, but it came in pretty often,

'If ever I loved Thee, Lord Jesus, 'tis now.'

"He swooned right away afore he had done, and I've never said a word of the kind since. And I've got to trust Him better myself, though as I said, I'm of a peevish temper. Only the Lord is very good and bears with us wonderful."

Joe was not so far wrong about his mother, I thought. I sat and talked with her for a while, and after praying with her and her son, I came away.

Was it any wonder if I thought of the caged bird singing its heart out in praise, as I walked home after my first visit to "singin' Joe?"

Through the kindness of a friend, I got Joe

and his mother into a better lodging, where the old woman had a bed in the corner of the room in which her son worked, and he had a little inside room for himself. She improved in health, and though never able to get about, she could sit up in the bed and knit, or mend their garments; and what she seemed to value even more, she could see her son always while he sat singing over his work, his bright, happy face often turned to her.

I often visited them, and felt that I learnt far more than I taught in my visits. Joe was always ready for a chat, but somehow his talk always ended in his wonder at all his mercies.

The hymn through which I had first made his acquaintance was still a "prime favourite" with him. The words "mercies countless as the sands," seemed to express his experiences so well.

"Why, sir," he said one day when I found him singing it over, "it's just what they be! There's Mrs. Butts overhead, she brought in a ha'porth of sand she had bought at the door, and I ran my fingers through it while she stood a talkin' to mother.

"And, thinks I, who could count all these grains? No one but Him that made 'em! And that's like my mercies. And yet it was only a ha'porth! I never seen the sand by the seashore, but I reckon, sir, as it's a deal more than all the carts in the town could carry, and there's my mercies still. The good Lord above and the kind folk down here just serve me as they might the Queen—and the Lord Mayor of Lunnon!"—this last, evidently in his mind, her associate in royalty.

The smile called up by his simplicity, was checked by the tender reverence with which he always named the Name so evidently to him above every name.

CHAPTER III.

In about a year after my first meeting with Joe and his mother, I left that parish and moved to one at a considerable distance. I parted with regret from many friends, and I can truly say, among them, Joe stood almost first. He was sorry, too, but I knew he would soon cheer up; he had such a well-spring of happiness within, and his old mother had really become much more cheerful and bright herself.

Above all, I felt that "the good Lord" held Joe especially dear, and would be more to him than earthly friend could ever be.

So I went my way, specially commending him to my successor in the parish, and hoping some day to look in upon him, and find him singing over his work as of old.

Time slipped by, however, and I could not fulfil this intention for about six months. Then I happened to be on a visit not far from the town where Joe lived, and I took an opportunity of riding in to see him. I soon found the street and came to the house.

I stood still for a moment before opening the outer door, expecting to hear the voice I knew so well, especially as the window was a little open—but there was silence.

Can he be laid up? I thought, and pushing

open the door, I went in. When I got to the door of their room I found the key turned in it outside. Can they have left the house? I again asked myself. But I unlocked the door and went in, and in a moment I knew all.

Joe lay on the bed that had been his mother's; he was covered with a spotless sheet, and a muslin handkerchief was spread over his face.

I stood by him for a moment, then lifted the face-covering—the same face, only the eyes dancing with childlike happiness were closed. But over all a wonderful smile shone—a solemn, holy light as if his "dear Lord" had poured some of His glory over the empty casket when He took the jewel into His own keeping.

I still stood looking, when a step came downstairs and into the room. It was an elderly woman. She looked a little startled at finding any one there, but soon saw I was a friend.

Presently we sat down, and she told me all. "His mother had died about a month since, a peaceful blessed end it was," the good woman said, "and Joe nursed her night and day. She liked him to sing to her to the last, and I believe she departed while he was singing one of what he called her prime favourites." How it reminded me of Joe when she said this! She went on, "But when she was gone he seemed to dwine away. He was patient and cheerful still, but I could see his strength was going every day. I did what I could for him," she went on, her eyes filling, "but there was no one he liked to have with him so much as the poor little Irish boy called Pat, who used to run errands for him. He slept in the little room inside, and was up and down to get him what he wanted, and Joe would sing to him when he was able.

"And even the poor ragged mother must come in, and he would sing about the woman who touched the hem of His garment. Dear, dear!" the good woman sobbed, "but it would have moved a heart of stone to hear him! But yesterday morning when I came in with his breakfast, I see a great change in him. He couldn't swallow a bit, and his voice was almost gone. Just then Pat came in with his mother, Joe had sent him for her—and he roused up like at the sight of her. His poor white lips moved and a few notes of the old hymn came, 'O touch the hem of His...' then they died away. I saw him looking up bright and sweet, and such a smile on his pale face—and before I knew it he was away."

I soon left, promising to come to the funeral next day.

When I reached the house they were waiting for me. I silently shook hands with my old rector and his curate, and with a few others I had known, and the little procession formed.

The coffin was carried by four young men who had known Joe, and had begged for the privilege. Close to them came poor little Pat, chief mourner indeed he was. He walked with his head bent down, and every now and then I saw him draw his ragged sleeve roughly across his face.

There were only a few others—the good woman who had looked after Joe, in her decent black, and beside her, with no fear of a repulse in spite

of her rags, shuffled Molly the poor Irish woman, her head and face covered up in an old black shawl, and a suppressed sob escaping her now and again.

As we went through the long street which led out to the country, several joined in, till, as we wound up the hill and turned into the graveyard, there was quite a little crowd following.

Then the holy words of faith and thanksgiving broke the silence, and we gathered round the open grave. We laid Joe down to his quiet rest in sure and certain hope indeed. Then "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," and that most thrilling of sounds, the rattle of the clay on the coffin lid.

At that moment a lark shot up from its nest among the graves, and as it rose into the clear air, it burst into a song so joyous, so triumphant, it came to me like the voice of the angel at the sepulchre: "He is not here, He is risen."

I no longer thought of Joe lying in his narrow bed at our feet, his life gone out, his wonderful voice hushed for ever. I thought of the emancipated spirit, freed from its cage, joining in the burst of song with the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. No bars now to shut him in. No sunless life now. No agonies of body to lay him down and hush even his voice to silence—only fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

I mused on till the people had all dropped off, then I turned to come away.

Just behind me poor Molly sat, so still that I had not known she was there. She was crouching down with her face on her knees. Pat lay with his face hidden in the grass. When I moved they both looked up.

"Och! an' och!" sobbed Molly, "what 'ill I do! what 'ill I do! I've niver a wan to help me now Joe's gone!" And she hid her face again, and rocked herself violently to and fro.

"How did Joe help you?" I asked.

She sat up suddenly, and pushed the shawl

from her face, wet and swollen with tears. There was something indescribably pathetic in her look and voice as she answered me—

"How did he help me? Och, an' didn't he bring me to the feet of the good Lord, and bid me touch the him of His garment! An' he tould me He'd make a good woman of me—me, thunderin' Molly they used to call me in our coort. He said He'd niver so much as minton the ould sins, and He'd take the thunder out of me, an' make me a raal good woman, an' Joe he niver tould me a lie, niver! An' I did as he bid me, an' I comed, an' I'm houldin' on by the him of His garment, but och, He hasn't said 'Go in pace' yet. An' now Joe's tuk away, an' I don't know what iver to do!" And her sobs broke out afresh.

I was going to sit down beside her, and try to tell her that though Joe was gone, Joe's "Good Lord" was as near as ever to help and save; but before I could speak, Pat broke in eagerly—

"Ah, an' shure, mother dear, don't ye mind what Joe tould ye about that? He said ye war to trust to the dear Lord and not to go on misdoubting because ye couldn't hear Him say it. He's giv His promise, an' that's enough, shure. An' ye weren't to fret neither because he couldn't sing for ye, for here's the book;" and Pat pulled out from some hidden recess in his rags the same hymn-book I had seen so often on Joe's little bench with the iron spoon lying across it, and held it out. "Here it is. He gave it to me hisself when he war a-dyin', an' plaze God I'll larn to read that same, an' thin ye'll be all right, won't yer?"

Pat's face was worth looking at while he spoke. His eyes were red and swelled with crying, and his cheeks smeared by the frequent application of his coat sleeves; but now his eyes sparkled, and his whole face lighted up while he tried to comfort his mother with the comfort he had evidently himself been comforted with.

A sudden thought struck me.

LET THE CHILDREN LEND A HAND.



It has long been the usage in Christian churches and households, to interest children in foreign mission work. Juvenile contributions from collecting cards and missionary boxes figure in the reports of various societies, and considerable amounts are thus obtained. But there is no good reason for confining these juvenile efforts to the collecting of money, which is obtained less frequently by self-denial than by begging donations from older people. It has been thought by some kind and sensible people that it would be a good thing to engage the interest and action of children in personal work for benevolent and religious objects, and for the benefit of their own neighbourhood, as well as of distant places.

In America this idea has been carried out in a systematic way, under the name of "Lend-a-hand Clubs." These clubs consist of groups of boys, or of girls, associated for

charitable and Christian effort. The founder of such institutions was Dr. W. Everitt Hale, of Boston. They flourish in many towns and villages, not always connected with churches, but wherever there are zealous and judicious people to organize and superintend them.

In England, the same kindly and useful system has for some years been in operation largely through the influence and exertions of the Earl and Countess of Meath, better known to many under their former title of Lord and Lady Brabazon. Beginning in a very humble way, and in a few localities, these juvenile working parties are now established in a great number of towns all over the kingdom, and they are associated under the name of "The Ministering Children's League." Each society or working party is under its own local management, and the work is carried on for charities of different kinds, but it is found that the interest is increased, and charitable influence spread by union. An Annual Report brings before all the local

branches information as to the various works upon which the children are employed, and thus useful hints are given.

Two or three examples from the last year's reports will serve to show the objects and operations of the local branches of the league.

At Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, the branch founded in 1885, has now two hundred and twenty juvenile members, and ninety-one associates, the associates superintending the working parties, and contributing materials or small donations in money. The work done amounted to 1171 articles sent to the poor in Spitalfields and Haggerston parishes, and to the Children's Hospital, Paddington Green. At this branch there are quarterly gatherings of all the working parties, and an annual festival service in summer. At the last festival an offertory of nearly twenty pounds was collected, after a sermon by the vicar. This was given to the "Ministering Children's League Home," at Chertsey.

At St. Jude's, South Kensington, there are four hundred and sixty members, and one hundred and fifty associates who have sent a large quantity of needlework and useful articles for poor children in the east of London. The Rev. Prebendary Forrest is a good patron of the branch, and one of his daughters is the honorary secretary.

At Dr. Clifford's Baptist Church, Westbourne Park, warm clothing is prepared for poor children, and the Children's Hospital gets a supply of bibs and handkerchiefs, scrap-books and toys, and old linen for surgical cases.

In looking through the report it is amusing to note the ingenuity with which every conceivable way is found of ministering to the wants of the poor and afflicted. In some branches where there is a large proportion of the children of the better classes, money is collected as well as work done, and hundreds of poor little ones are treated to free dinners in winter, or to gifts from Christmas trees, or trips to the country in summer. We have taken London branches as examples, but the same good work is reported from country towns, and from Ireland and the colonies as well as England. In some of the branches the children are all of humble station in life, but they have the same happy delight in working for their brothers and sisters in poverty or sickness. Bishop Billing, who is a warm friend of the league, said that no one could imagine the pleasure and gratitude of the children in Whitechapel and other poverty-stricken districts on receiving the gifts sent by young friends in more favoured circumstances.

Sometimes there is even international good-will fostered, as when the boys of a "Lend-a-hand Club" in Brooklyn sent across the Atlantic a little present of books, and a charming letter to Lady Meath for the League Home at Chertsey. This is an institution for poor waifs and strays, which forms a common centre of interest in the league, and is supported by gifts, and by collections at meetings.

We have forgotten to say that there are already branches in India, Australia, and various parts of the British Empire, and we have no doubt that the movement will spread rapidly. Besides the direct good done by the charitable gifts, there is the encouragement of habits of useful industry and kindly sympathy among the young workers. A branch of the M.C.L. in Australia lately sent 5*l.* for the home at Chertsey. The office of the league is at 83 Lancaster Gate, London, S.W., where advice or help can be obtained for organizing new branches.

JAMES MACAULAY, M.D.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS.—p. 640.

1. (a) John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 26; 2 Peter ii. 19.
- (b) Gal. iii. 10; iv. 3, 9; Acts xv. 10.
- (c) Rom. viii. 15.

2. John viii. 36; Isa. lxi. 1, with Luke iv. 18, 21.
3. (a) Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 26; 1 Peter i. 18, 19; Rom. vi. 6, 7, 11, 18.
- (b) Rom. vii. 6; viii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. ii. 19; iii. 13.
- (c) Rom. viii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 7; 1 John iv. 18.
4. Ex. i. 13, 14; vi. 6, 7, 8.
5. Gal. iv. 22-31.
6. The parable of the talents. Luke xix. 15-23.
7. Ps. cxix. 45; Matt. xi. 30; Rom. xii. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 17; 1 John v. 8.
8. 1 Cor. vii. 23.
9. Gal. v. 1. See iv. 9, 10; vi. 12, 13.
10. Gal. v. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 9. See the Apostle Paul's own conduct, 1 Cor. ix. 19-23.
11. Heb. ii. 14. "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death. . . ."
12. Rom. viii. 19-21.

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. XVI.—p. 592.—TOPAZ AND AGATE.—Job xxviii. 19; Isa. liv. 12.

T abith A	Acts ix. 39-41.
O G	Deut. iii. 1-3.
P afar A	Acts xxi. 1-3.
A rara T	Gen. viii. 4, 16-19.
Z ebete E	John xiii. 23; Matt. iv. 21.

NO. XVII.—p. 622.—ENDURE WITH PATIENCE.

E-lisha	1 Kings xix. 16.
N-icolas	Acts vi. 5.
D-inah	Gen. xxx. 21.
U-ri	Ex. xxxi. 2.
R-echab	2 Kings x. 15.
E-lead	1 Chron. vii. 21.
W-eighed	Job xxxi. 6.
I-shmael	Gen. xvi. 15.
T-imothy	Acts xvi. 1.
H-eth	Gen. x. 15.

P-entecost	Acts ii. 1.
A-braham	Gen. xvii. 5.
T-iberias	John vi. 1.
I-saac	Gen. xvii. 19.
E-liud	Matt. i. 14.
N-ain	Luke vii. 11.
C-orinth	Acts xviii. 1.
E-mmaus	Luke xxiv. 13.

NO. XVIII.—p. 640.—MIZPAH.—Gen. xxxi. 49.

M-oses	Num. xvi. 46.
I-saac	Gen. xxvii. 37; xxii. 9.
Z-acharias	Luke i. 78.
P-haraoh	Gen. xlvii. 8.
A-andrew	John i. 40, 41.
H-iram	1 Kings v. 8.

ANSWERS TO CITIES OF SCRIPTURE.

NO. V.—p. 608.—JERICHO.

- (1) Joshua vi. 1, 20; (2) Luke xix. 11-27; (3) 2 Kings ii. 4; (4) Luke xix. 1, 2; (5) 1 Kings xvi. 33, 34; (6) 2 Kings xxiv. 2-5; (7 and 8) 2 Chron. xxviii. 15; (9) Luke xix. 1; (10) Heb. xi. 30.

NO. VI.—p. 640.—GATH.

- (1) 1 Sam. xxvii. 3-5; (2) 1 Sam. xxvii. 8-12; xxix. 9; (3) Amos vi. 2; Micah i. 10; (4) 1 Sam. v. 8; (5) 1 Sam. xxi. 10; (6) 1 Kings ii. 40-46; (7) Jos. xi. 22; (8) 1 Chron. xvii. 1; (9) 2 Chron. xi. 5-11; (10) 2 Kings xii. 17; (11) 2 Chron. xxvi. 3-6, 19.