

THE FORTUNE TELLER AND HIS FEE

AND OTHER GOSPEL NARRATIVES



By WILLIAM LUFF

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The Fortune Teller

AND HIS FEE

AND OTHER STRIKING GOSPEL
NARRATIVES

BY
WILLIAM. LUFF



PICKERING & INGLIS

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"Look," said the fortune teller, "let these two top marks on this card represent your two eyes: the middle mark, your mouth: and the two bottom marks, your two knees."

PREFACE.

THE Bible is full of "Royal Records." What is Genesis, but a record of the doings of the King in Creation? And what is Revelation, but a record of the King's future doings? The Gospels are Royal Records of the King's doings upon earth, finishing with His great victory over the world, Satan, sin and death. One book, in two parts, is specially a book of "Royal Records," giving us in detail the acts of the kings of Judah and Israel: indeed six books are of this character. From tablets and cylinders dug up in Assyria and Babylonia, we find it was the usual practice to keep "Royal Records," and in our own day the *Court Circular* tells us daily the doings of our own earthly king.

And shall we not keep records of the doings of King Jesus in this "little while" of grace? What acts of new creation! What deliverances from bondage and leadings through deserts! What victories! What buildings of spiritual temples! What miracles of healing are done by the Royal Christ to-day! John finished his gospel by writing, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 25).

Among the "many other things which Jesus did," are the "Royal Records" of this little book, records of the King's workings through the Spirit upon the hearts of sinners. We pray they may have a threefold result.

Encourage Endeavour. — The King works through His subjects, directing,

helping, blessing. Worker, as thou seest how effort is crowned with success, pluck up heart: thy labour is not in vain.

Stimulate Sinners.—The King has pardoned others, favoured others, honoured and enriched others: as ye read of their coming, submitting, and acceptance, come ye also, and your life story shall be added to the “Royal Records” of the King.

Glorify God.—Oh the grace, the wisdom, the mercy, the patience and the power, put forth in every conversion! As this is seen in the various “Royal Records” here given, may the Mighty Worker receive the honour due to His holy name.

WILLIAM LUFF.

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ROYAL RECORDS OF DIVINE CONQUESTS.

I.

THE FORTUNE TELLER AND HIS FEE.

HAVE you ever heard the striking story of "The Five Card Sharpers and the Fortune Teller"? I first heard it from the fortune-teller himself, and since then have told it many times.

"Let us hear you tell it over once again," did you say? So I will, just as I once told it on the very spot where it happened.

Travelling one day on the G.W.R. a company of young soldiers invaded my carriage. The capture hardly pleased me; but as I looked at the youthful red-coats, I felt I must attempt to capture them also for the service of my King.

They prepared to smoke, to remind them of the smell of powder perhaps;

and this was most decidedly against my taste ; but I did not wish to offend, so kept quiet. Alas, for the tobacco luxury !—they had not any matches. I was no smoker. I like to spend my cash on something more substantial than smoke ; but I had the coveted matches, and my offer constituted me a friend at once.

Waiting my opportunity I told my story.

A friend of mine was once travelling over this same bit of line, only in the reverse way, from Oxford to London. His companions were five men, who, as soon as the train had started, spread a newspaper over their knees and began card-playing. Soon they tried to interest their lonely fellow-traveller ; but he was a bit too old, though they declared by the look of his face that he would be sure to win. It seemed useless ; but after the most simple looking player of the group had pocketed five shillings, they again tried their powers of persuasion.

“ Well, gentlemen, if I must take part, I assure you that I have quite forgotten how to play : but ”——and he hesitated.

“ Come on,” they said hopefully, “ but, what ? ”

"I can tell fortunes with cards."

"Capital! will you tell ours?"

"I will do my best, if you give me the five of spades."

The card was found and given.

"Now to conduct the business properly," said the fortune-teller, "we ought to have a Holy Bible. Have you one?" No, they had forsaken their mothers' Bible long ago: but my friend had his.

"Look," said he, "let these two top marks on this card represent your two eyes: the middle mark, your mouth: and the two bottom marks, your two knees. The future of your eyes, according to my fortune-book is this, 'Behold, He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him' (Rev. i. 7). Your eyes shall see Jesus. The future of your mouth and knees is also told. Here it is, God has said, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth and *things* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' (Phil. ii. 10, 11). Why not behold Him now, bow to Him now, confess Him now and be saved?"

They had heard enough of such fortune-telling; but the train was express over the very spot we are now travelling, and would not stop till it reached Reading: so they had to put up with a further bit of fortune-telling, for my friend went on:—

“A second reading of this card is that it represents five spades in an iron-monger’s shop, which before long, will dig your graves, where your bodies will lie till the resurrection morning.”

(My soldier friends were so interested they almost forgot their pipes. So I continued.)

By this time, with sundry applications as to what they were going to do in this solemn matter, the train had reached Reading, and the moment it stopped, the men decamped, without paying the fortune-teller his fee. But he had told them he feared they had no money to spare, if all their debts were paid. He should be satisfied, he said, if the only reward he had was the salvation of their precious souls.

Then I told my soldier friends the sequel as I heard it from the fortune-teller’s own lips:—Years passed away and he had almost forgotten the incident,

when after taking part in an open-air meeting in London, he was walking home; but was stopped by a man who touched him on the shoulder. He was



"BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS."

one of the card-sharpers, and said, he had never forgotten the five of spades and the texts. The words, "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him," had been a godly mother's

last message : and he had seemed to see her and hear her voice as the words were uttered in the train. God's Spirit strove with him, and made him so restless, he went to sea. But his convictions were not to be thus drowned. A Christian mate got hold of him, and together they found and read over the texts about eyes seeing, knees bowing, and tongue confessing. At San Francisco this Bible-loving companion got the card-sharper to a meeting, where the Holy Spirit led him to believe on Jesus, who died "the just for the unjust." Three of the five had, he feared, died as they lived—the spades had made their graves. The remaining one he had seen a few days previous, and as he seemed anxious, he had repeated to him the sermon of the card. Thus my friend had his fee for telling the five card-sharpers their fortunes.

I and my interested soldiers soon separated. Shall I ever meet any of them, as my friend met his card-sharper ? God grant it.

II.

THE PRODIGAL'S MOTHER.

ONE night a Dutch Christian was standing at the door of a Sailor's Rest on the watch for any fellow in distress. As he stood there, two seafaring men hove in sight: they were evidently "three sheets in the wind," one of them very much so.

"Come in here," said my friend to the more sober of the two, trying to pilot him into this haven.

He was inclined to yield, but his more drunken friend sought to pull him away. Nothing daunted, the mission worker sought to pull the other way. He was the smaller man; but looking to the Lord for strength, he got the poor sailor through the door, and eventually down into the meeting held in what was called the "Fo'castle."

This was literally obeying the injunction, "Compel them to come in" (Luke xiv. 23).

Once in, he heard how the Son of God, the Saviour of men, came down from heaven to live for, and die for, such sinners as he. He heard how—"He was numbered with the transgressors." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah liii. 6). "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). "Christ . . . suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

As he heard, the Spirit of God laid hold of him, sobered him, and enabled him to obey the one saving command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

He then told the story of his life. Sixteen years before he had left a christian home, with all its holy influences and prayers. He had heard wonderful stories of the sea, and was fascinated with the offer of adventure which he thought it promised. His mother was against his going; but, without her permission, he ran away. Letters at first told of his travels; but they came

at longer intervals, and at last ceased altogether. The son forgot his mother ! Was not that the greatest sin next to forgetting his heavenly Father ?

Away from the beloved mother's side he had gone from bad to worse,—not without warnings and strivings ; for often the Spirit had awakened old memories, but he had only sought to drown them in the cursed drink. Head-ache, heart-ache, and pocket-ache had been the only comfort the devil administered.

“ Do you know where your mother lives ? ” asked his new-found christian friends.

He had left her so long ago, he feared she might be gone to the eternal home ; but from memory he gave the last known address in Amsterdam.

“ Shall I write for you ? ” said his now doubly interested Dutch brother. The letter was written and posted.

“ How long before we can get an answer ? ” said the anxious young convert.

“ Let us see, to-day is Thursday : not to-morrow ; we may get one on Saturday.”

Poor fellow ! he longed to hear and

to have help, for one reason—he was hard up, “on a lee shore,” as sailors say.

No letter arrived at the expected time, however; but while at breakfast a cab drove up, and presently one of the helpers came to my friend, and said:

“There is a stout lady and a gentleman with her, but I cannot understand what they say.”

The Dutch brother went forward, and behold it was the mother and another son! She had not trusted a letter: she had come herself. Long had seemed the few hours before she could start, longer the weary journey: now her cry was—

“Where is he? I want to see my boy.”

“My boy” still! Backslider from God, what a lesson for you: you are still God’s child.

“Not far away,” they said, “we will send for him.” In the meantime the visitors were led into an inner room, known as “the cabin.” As I sat there, and heard the story, I could picture the whole beautiful scene.

John was sent for, but just then he came in to inquire if the answer had come.

"Let me see the letter," said he.

"Wait a bit : it's so large."

"Is it a parcel?"

"Yes, and a pretty big one too."

"Where is it?" he said excitedly.

They were about to take him to the other room ; but the quick ears of the mother had heard the voice unheard for sixteen years, and she could not wait a minute longer, so running forward, she embraced her wandering boy. Long she lavished her love upon him, as if she would never part from him again.

It was a fit subject for a picture ! At last the party went back into the inner room, and there knelt in a praise-meeting over the lost one that was found.

"What will you do with him?" was asked.

The mother had her little plan as of old, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him" (Luke xv. 22).

The brother was to go out with him and buy a new outfit, for he was in a sorry plight. But the mother had not looked at his ragged appearance. She was so full of joy, she saw only her boy.

Poor sinner ! God so loves thee that if thou comest to Him as thou art, He

will not see thy rags. Thou seest them ; but His love sees only " this my son."

Anxiously she waited and watched for their return : peeping through the window for the first glimpse of her renovated boy. Does not Jesus, our good Brother, thus take us and clothe us with His own robes of purity and grace ? Even so.

On their return, the happy party, with thanks to friends, and greater thanks to God, departed for home. Home was the only safe place for the wanderer. Lord, bring us HOME !

III.

AN OUTCAST WHO WAS NOT CAST OUT.

THE person of whom I write first appeared at an open-air meeting held by friends from Miss Macpherson's "Home of Industry." The story of her conversion is a proof of the good resulting from such services. It was an open-air service at which God preached the first Gospel sermon mentioned in Scripture (Gen. iii. 15-19). It was in the open-air that the holy law was given, and upon a mountain-side that Jesus Himself preached His great sermon about righteous living. God bless all open-air work! For were not the three thousand who believed at Pentecost won beneath the blue sky?

The woman came into the circle at the service in a state of intoxication, intending by her violence to upset the meeting. If the preaching had been in a building, probably, she would have been shown the door; but as there was

24 *An Outcast who was not Cast Out.*

no door in the open-air the speaker had to put up with the interruption, which of course helped to swell the gathering ; for the wisdom of a crowd is so great that men will stand enraptured to hear the nonsense of a poor drunkard, while the good news of pardon and peace is not thought worthy of a hearing. Do not despise a drunkard. Jesus says of them practically, as of children, "Suffer them to come, and forbid them not." Black coals have more latent fire in them than white chalk, and black sinners make hotter converts than many chalky moralists. "They need not depart : give ye them to eat," even if the devil has given them drink in excess.

A woman, a drunken woman, a violent drunken woman, flourishing in a Gospel meeting what a fearful sight ! But one arrow reached her :—

"HIM THAT COMETH TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT" (John vi. 37).

Did it mean "*her* that cometh" ? Yes, there was no sort of persons excluded. God's servants had not cast her out, nor would their Master.

So she came, drunkenness, rags, violence, and all, just as she was, and she was not cast out. Christ took her

in, into His church, into His family, into His heart.

Have you ever tried that verse—John vi. 37—as a card of invitation to the Saviour of sinners? If not, try it now.

Soon a change was visible, and the woman presented herself in a good warm shawl.

“Once I was a bundle of rags,” said she, “now I have got good clothes.”

A moral spring is very like the natural one. The winter of sin strips: the spring—the sun-time of conversion—clothes the apparently dead with life and beauty. What bare old things the mountains seem in mist and shadow; but when the sun shines upon them how his beams alter their appearance! The sun was shining upon this poor sinner, and soon husband and children felt the change.

Like a spring violet, telling of a coming summer, a piece of blue was put upon the new shawl—a large piece, so that all might see it. That token seemed a bit of heaven come down to earth—a bit of God’s own blue. She had put up her “Blue Peter,” as the ships do when going to sail. Her port was heaven. Happy are they who can

26 *An Outcast who was not Cast Out.*

show the red, white, and blue—the red of atonement, the white of purity, and the blue of heavenly mindedness.

Ashamed! No, not she! When I heard of her two years after her conversion, she was going to the public-houses, and standing outside delivering her message in her own fashion.

“I used to be inside: but now, thank the good Lord, I’m outside,” she says; and she points to her bit of blue. “Why do you starve when ’taters is 6 lbs. for 2*d.*, and bread as cheap? Come to Jesus. He won’t cast you out.” Such is her quaint style of giving her message.

Are we ever ashamed? Listen: “Who-soever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. x. 32, 33). The case of too many is told in the little poem:—

“I should like to be a soldier; but the flag I cannot bear:

I should like to win the battle; but the coat I cannot wear:

I should like to follow Jesus; but I think it would be best,

I should like to wear my own black broad-cloth, and my own plain, private vest.

An Outcast who was not Cast Out. 27

“I should like to see the Bridegroom: but I cannot
take His name,
Lest my family refuse me, and I have to suffer
shame.
Well, the marriage tie would please me; but I
should not like it known;
I should like to be His loved one; but the name
must be my own.

“I have claimed Him for my Saviour in the Church
where I attend,
And I hope that He has saved me, and become
my precious Friend:
And I sing ‘Ashamed of Jesus!’ when I’m stand-
ing in the crowd!
But when all alone I hardly like to say it quite
so loud.

“O my brother, wear the colours! be a soldier
brave and true;
Let the armour of salvation be thy shining
armour too.
O my sister, take the Bridegroom, and the Bride-
groom’s honoured name,
And be known as His beloved, bring it praise or
bring it shame.”

The woman’s first text was ever after
her favourite: she never forgot it,
though unable to read it; consequently
she usually added the word “you” thus,
—“Him that cometh, you poor things,
He will not cast *you* out. He didn’t
cast me out, but He took me in.”

Like the woman of Samaria, she loved
to go to her old haunts and tell of Him

28 *An Outcast who was not Cast Out.*

who had saved her, and who shall say how many believed on Him through her words, or at her invitation came and heard Him for themselves?

I like her text. I like to use it as a telescope looking into the future: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." He has not cast us out, and He will not.

"Once in Christ in Christ for ever,
Nothing from His love can sever."

No man can pluck us out, and Jesus will not cast us out. Are you one that cometh? Then the promise is for you.

IV.

A BUDDHIST CONVERT.

“**R**OYAL RECORDS ” are found abroad as well as at home. The details of the following were told at a meeting of the China Inland Mission.

A Buddhist became anxious about his soul, and in his fashion tried to accumulate merit by going a tedious journey to a sacred mountain. How true is that word, If he “ had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it ? how much rather then, when he said to thee, Wash, and be clean ? ” (2 Kings v. 13). His religion told him that if he performed this pilgrimage three times he would be free from sin. The journeys took him eleven years ; but when all was done, he felt sin was not gone, the load remained. He knew not that no journeys were needful. But the Book of God came into his neighbourhood, the book which says,

“ For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they

being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down *from above* :) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith which we preach ; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation " (Rom. x. 2-10).

No ascending to any mountain was required: the mountain where Jesus had died for sin was the only mountain the new religion told him of. He asked to know more, and was told Christ took our place under the law of DO : HE DID all that wanted DOING : now all was DONE. More than this, He took our place under the curse deserved for what we had NOT DONE, and bore it all.

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it

is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 10 and 13).

His religion said, "Do : " Jesus added two important letters, and said, "Done ; " but instead of being glad, the proud heart rebelled, and the Buddhist said,—

"I would do anything to save myself ; but I cannot receive this new doctrine."

He brought his books, and argued with the missionary ; but he had to own the Book of books had the best of the argument. Did it not say,—

"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20) ?

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. iii. 5) ?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; *it is* the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9) ?

The new book went even farther, and told of some who, having done all kinds of good works, were yet denied. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23). Their good works were only works of iniquity. It told him salvation could be had, not as wages for work, but as a gift of grace without works.

Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no,
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

At last the Holy Spirit of God opened his eyes to see he could do nothing, and that nothing was to be done, but obey the command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). The only work was faith. "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 29)

“To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5).

He believed, and he was saved, and immediately brought others to the mission : for this he lost trade, and was so persecuted that he had to start in a new line, and preached Christ in his spare time.

In the village where he and his son lived, there were several fires, and the priests said the fire gods were angry, and must be appeased by processions and gifts. With this the young convert would have nothing to do. The processions were, however, conducted, and for several nights they marched through the place chanting. Unfortunately for the priests, a fresh fire broke out in the middle of the ceremony, and so powerless were the priests that the flames spread with terrible rapidity; and, as if to prove that the Christian was the cause of the calamity, the fire came straight in the direction of his home which was only a thatched wooden building. The officials advised him to bring out his goods ; but, knowing they would be stolen he refused, saying,—

"We will pray, and trust our God."

He did so; but on spread the fire, devouring all before it.

"We trust Thee, O Lord: do Thou let this people see that Thou art the true God." So he prayed.

The next house caught, and was burning.

"Now will you bring out your goods?" they asked.

"No! our God will deliver us."

How like the courage and faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, when they were in danger of the fire!

"If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. iii. 17, 18).

At the last moment the wind changed, and the direction of the flames was altered. The people were amazed, as the fire burned around three sides of his little house, leaving it safe in the midst of destruction. What a comment upon Ps. xci. 9, 10: "Because thou hast made the Lord, *which* is my refuge,

even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." That night 176 families were burnt out, and in the morning, as they gathered among the ruins, the Lord's dear child preached to them.

"Now you see your gods can do nothing for you ; but our God has saved us from the fire."

V.

“OLD MERCY.”

THERE goes “Old Mercy” to church. Any child was glad to help him along, for his grand-daughter was teacher at the school. Many times had he trod the church path, and he not only knew the way to church, he knew the way to God, through Him who said, “I am the Way, . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John xiv. 6).

He was seventy-four years old when first I knew him, and he had never been to school. What little education he possessed he had “picked up.”

He had been unable to work for many years; but when I asked if he was not lonely, he replied,—

“Alone, yet not alone, for I always have One to converse with.” And then he read much.

“I like to read the Psalms,” he said, “and the Gospels; they are so simple.

And the promises in Isaiah, how beautiful they are ! "

Then we had a specimen of the " Fear nots " in this part of Scripture.

" Say to them that are of a fearful heart, . . . Fear not " (xxxv. 4).

" Fear not ; for I am with thee " (xliii. 5).

" Fear not ; I will help thee " (xli. 13).

" Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee " (xliii. 1).

" Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed " (liv. 4).

" And what do you think of the Epistles ? " I asked.

" I can't understand all," said " Old Mercy," but he knew and understood such blessed words as,—

" This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners " (1 Timothy i. 15).

And that other,—

" The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin " (1 John i. 7).

" ' All sin,' " he repeated ; " no number is stated, or I should despair. It says, ' All sin.' "

I read to him in Hebrews, " Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. . . .

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (xii. 61—1).

He remarked, "I am like the barren fig tree, yet the Lord lets me stand. I wish I had brought forth fruit earlier."

"What a lesson to us!" I said to his young grand-daughter, who was standing by.

"I'm very near changing worlds," he continued; "a worse for a better, I love to think."

He was full of texts, and with "There remaineth . . . a rest to the people of God," I left him.

"Old Mercy" is no fanciful name; it was his own proper inheritance. He had obtained mercy, lived on mercy, was crowned with mercy, and believed mercy would follow him all the days of his life.

When next I saw him he began:—

"I've been thinking what blessing there is in eternal life!"

"And you have it, and know you have it?"



"PRAISE BE TO JESUS !"

"I've nothing to disturb me, sir. It is wonderful men can live without it!"

"But you are not always on the mount?"

"In the valley He is with me," he replied, David-like.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm xxiii. 4). Then he told of a valley he recently passed through.

"I dreamed t'other night, and it was all dark around me; then a voice said, 'Examine yourself.' There was a table and a book. I had to take the book, and as I did so a trembling came over me, and I said, 'Lost at last.' Then I heard a sweet voice calling, 'Come to Me, poor sinner; I will save you.'"

"And you have come to Him, haven't you?"

"Yes; and I'll just cling to Jesus. I'm a poor, weak, empty sinner; but He draws me to Himself."

"He gives us some blessed 'Comes,' doesn't He?" I asked.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white

as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool " (Isaiah i. 18). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). And, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). He added,—

"That is best of all."

Leaving him with the assurance that God would help him right through to the end, he remarked, "I often think what a vision it will be when I leave this poor old body."

When next I called I found his cottage shut up. He had removed to the mansions, and the old suffering body was sleeping in the churchyard, through which he had so often passed.

"Mercy." Do we not all need mercy ? "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lam. iii. 22). Do you pray, "Have mercy upon me?" (Psalm iv. 1). He is "the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah liv. 10). "Save me for Thy mercies' sake" (Psalm vi. 4). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy

Ghost ; which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus iii. 5). Saved by mercy, you may go on, "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21); led by His mercy to present your bodies "a living sacrifice" (Rom. xii. 1).

"Praise be to Jesus ! His mercy is free—mercy is free !

Sinner, that mercy is flowing for thee—mercy is boundless and free !

If thou art willing on Him to believe—mercy is free !
Life everlasting thou mayest receive—mercy is boundless and free !"

VI.
FROM IRON BARS TO GOLDEN
GATES.

“ I HAVE been twenty-two years at sea,” said a strong-looking navy man, “and in that time I have seen many ups and downs ; but the worst downs have always been through drink. I had a good home, but I left it. Hearing of the Egyptian campaign, I volunteered, thinking I would then be killed, and so end my life. The drink crave was so strong, I would do anything to get it.”

This brought him to Winchester Jail. He had put on another man’s clothes, in which to go ashore. The fraud was detected, he was arrested, and sent to prison. “In a few weeks I should have had a pension of two shillings a day for life,” he continued, “but it is lost.”

Within the iron bars, he began to read his long-neglected Bible. One day,

while using a needle, he pricked his finger, and the sight of his own blood led him to think—was he ready to die? He read more, and the impression was deepened by the Holy Spirit. As the time drew near for his release, the ladies at the Soldiers' Home heard of him through the kindness of the Honourable Miss E. Waldegrave, and arranged to have him met and brought to the hall. To his astonishment there was a good breakfast ready for him.

Miss Perks was delighted at his surprise. He had a few shillings, and after they were spent he did not know what he should do. "We have quite upset your plans," they said cheerfully, "hav'n't we?"

It was arranged that he should lodge with one of the workers, who had himself been down through drink, but had been brought up by the grace of God and the instrumentality of the "Home."

"I shall test him," said this friend, "and find out if he is worth helping." "What shall you do?" asked the ladies.

"There is a lot of wood in our yard that wants chopping. I shall lay the hatchet handy, say nothing, and see how he acts. If he sets to work he's

worth our trouble ; if he does not I don't think much of him."

To the delight of all, the wood was chopped before the others were up, and in true sailor fashion, the place was also cleaned and the fire lighted.

Just before this the sailors from Miss Child's "Welcome Home," Canning Town, London, had been holding meetings at the "Soldiers' Home," Winchester, and when the question arose as to what could be done for this rescued one, the answer was "Ask Miss Child to find him a berth with a Christian captain." This was done, and thus the man was helped by these united efforts. Strange to say, the name of the ship in which he sailed was *The Golden Gate*, typical of the gate of hope opening before him once more and of the brighter heavenly gates beyond.

Just before he left, in giving a public testimony for Christ, he touchingly alluded to his mother. "For three years she lay in bed with cancer. The last time I was with her was Christmas. I carried her upstairs, and she did not come down again till carried down in her coffin. She died while I was in Egypt ; but when I came home, they

told me just before her death she straightened herself and called my name three times. I thought, if I could only have seen her ; but God has forgiven me, and so has she."

His first letter to Miss Perks from Freemantle, Western Australia, tells of a broken leg, but whole heart. He writes :—" God has spared me to reach my journey's end in safety ; Jesus was with us all the way. I thank God that I still believe in Jesus as our Saviour, that made the lame to walk and the blind to see. With a Christian captain, Jesus for our Pilot, and the good old Bible for the chart, we are all right."

The Mohammedan graves are numerous around the " Golden Gate " of Jerusalem, for at his return they think the prophet is to enter by that gate and those buried there are to be first raised. Happy are they, who have buried their old self, like our friend at the true Golden Gate of John iii. 16. God is no respecter of persons ; what He did for this sailor He can do, my friend, for you.

I have called John iii. 16. " The true Golden Gate : " my friend, Mr. Charles Edwards, author of " A Box of Nails for Christian Workers," says, the verse has

SEVEN GOLDEN GATES
OF
LOVE AND LIFE.

- 1—The Flood Gate of Love.
God so loved
- 2—The Wide Gate of Hope.
The World
- 3—The Open Gate of Grace.
That He gave His only begotten Son.
- 4—The Welcome Gate of Promise.
That whosoever
- 5—The Narrow Gate of Salvation.
Believeth
- 6—The Refuge Gate of Safety.
Shall not perish
- 7—The Blessed Gate of Life.
But have everlasting life,

VII.

DADDY THE GANGER.

THERE can be no two opinions as to the importance of Christian work among railway men, when we learn that of 400,000 employes, there has been one in every 695 killed, and one in every 121 injured, during a year's service. Through its branches the Railway Mission, London, seeks to reach this class.

"Daddy," as he was usually called, was a well-known form along his "length." He was "ganger" of plate-layers, and was scarcely ever seen without a short pipe. Of course, if the inspector came around, this beloved piece of clay went up his sleeve or into his palm out of sight. It was his idol, and, as is sadly too often the case, he worshipped it by pouring out libations of grog. Pipe and pot went together!

Church was not in Daddy's line. A vulture was as likely to turn vegetarian, as this old sinner to relish Divine things.

Daddy was not only careless about his soul, he was also careless about his body. Recklessly he would step aside, only just in time to allow the trains to pass. How often it is so ! Those who are the least prepared for danger think the least of it ; yet sudden death would have been sudden damnation.

Somehow Daddy's wife came to the Mission, and by the grace of God found salvation. This was the thin edge of the Gospel wedge, and terribly annoyed the enemy of souls.

Daddy's eldest son also came, and before long learned that he was a sinner. At the same time he heard the good news of God which has been thus put—

“**G**OD so loved the world that He gave His
ONLY begotten
SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not
PERISH, but have
EVERLASTING
LIFE.”

But comfort came not all at once. One day in the signal-box he saw it all. There had been a smash on the moral line, it was blocked, the signals were against him ; for “the face of the Lord is against them that do evil ” (1 Pet. iii. 12). He

had stopped, further he must not go: then he saw how Christ had cleared the line, removing all the ruin and rubbish. Now he had boldness to go forward on a new and living way, which the Lord had opened by His great and glorious work (Heb. x. 20). The signals were in his favour, and he went on saved and safe.

Wife and son converted made the father begin to think. He saw the change in their lives. "Piety at home" (1 Tim. v. 4) was reaching one who cared not for piety in any other form. And as they were now regular attendants at the Mission, Daddy came also, and it was not long before he began to see he was altogether wrong. The Spirit of God convinced him of sin, and he became very unhappy. Night after night he came, but could get no comfort. There was no peace for him when awake, and sleep fled far away. When God puts thorns into the pillow no man can slumber. The thundering train of Divine wrath was overdue, and he seemed chained to the metals along which it must run. How could he rest? He could almost see the fiery engine of swift judgment, even the Lord Himself

coming, "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. i. 8, 9).

One evening the railway missionary visited him, and sought by God's help to open up John v. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." "He that heareth My word"—work for the *ears*. "And believeth"—work for the *heart*. "Hath everlasting life"—hath a life that will last for ever. He "*shall not* come into condemnation"—future. "*Is* passed from death unto life"—present.

Another text was also tried—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7.) "Sin"—Daddy had sin. Sin needed cleansing. It could only be cleansed by punishment, a punishment of blood-shedding. Jesus Christ, God's Son, had bled, bled for sin, for Daddy's sin, for all Daddy's sin. So now Daddy could be

cleansed, perfectly and for ever cleansed, whiter than snow.

Praying, preaching, and pleading the hours went by ; but just at midnight Daddy saw it : for Jesus' sake he was cleansed, he had everlasting life, and would not come into condemnation.

He now saw that a cleansed man ought to have a clean mouth, so he talked to his wife about the tippling and the tobacco.

"I'll give up my pipe, if you'll give up your little drop," said he.

They agreed : so the dear little clay image was flung to the moles and the bats, and Daddy & Co. were henceforward known as pledged abstainers.

What mischief many a woman has done by continuing the drink when the husband has had a better mind ! Let such follow Mrs. D.'s excellent example.

The marvellous change in Daddy's life after three years' wear is known to every driver, fireman, and guard along his line ; they all see that he is a converted man. One who knows him says—

"There is not a brighter light on the railway, nor yet a happier man with a brighter face sits in the hall, than dear old Daddy. Truly does Christ say, 'By

their fruits ye shall know them ' ' "
(Matt. vii. 20).

When Daddy was first pointed out to me, I could not help noticing how heartily he sang the hymn I had given out.

“ Once I was dead *in* sin,
And hope within me died,
But now I'm dead *to* sin,
With Jesus crucified.
And can it be that ‘ He loved me,
And gave Himself for me ? ’

“ O height I cannot reach !
O depth I cannot sound !
O love, O boundless love,
In my Redeemer found ! ”

What a different song to those he used to sing ! In the old times he made the tap room ring with his loud and foolish singing, amid the crackling laughter of his drinking mates, but all that is over now. He has had a new song put into his mouth.

“ I live—and yet not I,
But Christ *now* lives in me ;
Who from the law of sin
And death hath made me free.”

But perhaps he threw even greater energy into another burst of praise—

“ Redemption ! oh, wonderful story,
Glad message for you and for me ;
That Jesus has purchased our pardon,
And paid all the debt on the tree.”

The last time I heard of Daddy he had been visiting some of his sick friends, and so was passing on the "glad message" which had done so much for his own heart and home. He was still ganger, and beloved by all who know him.

VIII.

JOE, THE INDIAN.

JOE was an Indian, and an Indian with a very bad character, so bad that in his own country a price was set upon his head for the murders and outrages he had committed.

War had been his delight, but the neighbourhood having become too hot for him, he determined to go to a far-distant tribe. A company of missionaries happened to be passing the place where he was, and Joe obtained the post of driver of one of their waggons, as they went to the country of the Cree and Salteaux Indians.

However, being in the company of Christians did not make Joe a saint. He hated religion, and if he saw a hymn-book he would scowl at it as if it were a serpent. Of the Bible he had even a greater horror, and whenever one was opened he always went away. On the Lord's Day, not being required to drive, he would go off with his gun and spend the hours in shooting what game he

could find, so that he might be well out of hearing of the worship of God.

As the party pursued their way, in the middle of July there came a Sunday so hot that even Joe did not care to take his usual ramble, and he laid himself down in the shadow of one of the waggon, artfully selecting that of the missionary who was not expected to conduct the service.

But he had made a mistake, for the preacher whose turn it was to preach was so overcome by the heat that he had to beg to be excused, and the owner of the waggon under whose shadow Joe was sheltering offered to take his place. Hence the little company gathered about the waggon, and the meeting began. Joe was lying in the long grass half asleep, and was not a little annoyed at being thus disturbed; but to lie still while hymns were sung, and to see the hated Bible opened, was too much for him; he would move. So, rising to his feet, he stretched his fine limbs; but the heat was great, and he was too lazy for locomotion. Again he threw himself upon the grass; and there he lay, right in front of the preacher, his angry eyes flashing defiance at him.

"Lord, help me to preach to Joe," prayed the man of God inwardly, as he saw the opportunity before him. Forgetting everybody else, in simple speech he set forth the love of God to all His creatures. He told his hearers that though God gave them rain and sunshine, flesh and fowl, corn and fruit, yet they did not love Him in return, and that instead of loving Him they hated Him, and His servants, and His Book. But did He send the lightning to strike them down for their enmity? No; He had given His Son to die, so as to put away their sins. He had shown His love to them, to the worst of them, even to the murderers, and if they would only believe in His Son, He would forgive them and make them His dear children.

Joe's eyes were fixed earnestly on the speaker, who, as he went on, watched the anger fading out of them, and hoped the Holy Ghost was casting out the evil spirit from the Indian. Shortly afterwards the party broke up.

Joe did not forget that sermon. One day, walking beside another missionary, he said :—

"Didn't the preacher tell awful lies that hot Sunday?"

"Lies, Joe? I did not hear any."

"He said the Great Spirit loved poor, wicked Indians. Wasn't that a lie?"

"Not at all, Joe; it is in the Book. 'God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins' " (Eph. ii. 4, 5).

"But was not that an awful lie that the Great Father gave His Son?"

"No, Joe; it is in the Book. 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' " (1 John iv. 9, 10).

Then Joe said, "But it must be a lie, that He was preparing the beautiful country for them."

"No," he answered; "that too is blessedly true. It is in the Book. Jesus, the Son of God, said to sinful men whom He loved and had saved, 'I go to prepare a place for you' " (John xiv. 2).

The end of the conversation was this,

Joe said : " If all this is true, missionary, I'll stay with you, and never again go on the warpath."

When they reached the station Joe did not want to go farther, but stayed to chop wood and work. Time showed the change that had come over him. His consistent life proved that he was a truly-converted man.

The following year the smallpox broke out among the Indians in the station where Joe was, and caused the death of many of them. Three daughters of one of the missionaries died also, and there was no one but their bereaved father to saw the boards for their coffins and to bury them.

The missionary with whom Joe had had the conversation came over to see the sorrowing parent and to speak words of comfort, and while doing so a message came that a poor Indian was dying under the fence, and wanted to speak with him. He at once went to the spot, and found there a living mass of corruption in the last stage of the terrible plague of smallpox. Both eyes were gone, and the face was so disfigured that it was almost impossible to recognise the sufferer.

"Who are you?" said the missionary.

"Are you Joe?"

"Yes, I'm Joe."

"Is there anything you want to say to me, my poor friend?"

"I'm nearly gone, but it is all right. Only I would like you to take a message."

"What is it, Joe?"

"I can't see you, but I can see Jesus. You know that young man who preached that hot Sunday afternoon, and you know that my life has been a changed one since then. If ever you meet him, tell him that sermon made me a Christian. I'll soon be with Jesus, and if the good Spirit will let me, I'll come down to the gates of heaven to meet him."

So died Joe, the once-wicked Indian, believing that God loved him, and had given His Son to die in his stead, so that through faith in Jesus he was forgiven, and made fit for the mansion the Lord had prepared for him.

So will any sinner who believes the Gospel, that God loved him and that Christ died for him, be saved and satisfied in life, sure of heaven should he come to die, and be with Christ in glory for ever and ever. Oh, believe the "glad and glorious" message now.

IX.

THE WORK OF THE POTTER.

A FRIEND of mine recently jotted down the outline of an address by the Rev. F. B. Meyer on Jer. xviii. 4. His words so well introduce the present incident that I take the liberty of giving them :—

"He made it again." "Jeremiah," the speaker said, "was living in dark and difficult times, and in order to discover to him His gracious purpose of one day restoring Israel, God bade him go down to the potter's house. So he went. And there, in the course of his accustomed work, he saw the potter take a lump of clay, and, placing it on the revolving wheel, gradually fashion it with his skilled hand into a beautiful vase. But just as it was nearing completion, the whole fabric on which he was working fell into a shapeless mass—probably fell to the ground. The prophet doubtless expected—at least, I

should have expected—that, taking another piece, and leaving the other to lie on the ground and be trampled beneath his feet, the potter would direct his efforts to fashion the intended vase from the fresh piece of clay. Instead of this, the good potter stooped and picked up the marred and fallen portion, and with infinite patience wrought upon it until at last, under the deft touches of his fingers, it was complete and finished, a thing of beauty. *So he made it again.* And as soon as he had done so, the Holy Ghost said to Jeremiah, ‘So will I do unto you, O house of Israel.’ From which we learn that God is so infinitely tender, that after man had marred His fair ideal, God, in His pitiful and infinite patience, stoops to re-fashion him and to *make him again.*”

The vessel of which I write was fair and beautiful; but it was marred very early. Perhaps her father began the marring by spoiling the child; for her mother was never allowed to correct her. At the age of eighteen her indulgent parent died: and it became necessary for her to help to support her widowed mother.

A bright, bonnie, Borderland lassie,

she went into a family where, to use her own words, she was spoilt in every way, and allowed to do, go, and say just as she liked, because she was "good to the baby." She was naturally fond of children, and in the ordinary sense of the word was a good girl: she was even supposed to be a Christian, and became engaged to a young man who was also supposed to be a Christian.

"I was not converted at that time," she says, "only touched."

With false promises of marriage, she was tempted, yielded, and fell. The vessel was marred.

On reminding him of his word, and of the trouble which was likely to follow their sin, in a hard cold way, he said,—

"I will have nothing more to do with you."

Unlike Jeremiah's potter, he whose hands had dashed the precious clay to the ground, disdained to stoop and attempt to make it again.

She shall here tell her own story at two-and-twenty —

"What was I to do? I went upstairs, but not to bed. I paced up and down the room the night through. About four o'clock the next morning I slipped



THE POTTER AT WORK.

out unobserved. I wandered many miles from home. I was afraid and ashamed to return. When night came on, I thought, whatever shall I do? I had only two-and-sixpence in my pocket, so I just turned back again and went home, so broken-hearted and ashamed to face my dear old mother."

Oh, the bitterness of sin! Young men, young women, avoid it: flee from it: for, though the blossom be fair, the fruit is deadly.

Then came the sad story to the sorrowing mother, whose love bore the terrible strain. Shame on the parents, be they father or mother, who spurn the sinning one from their doors. Call them not children of the loving, pitiful Father, who *makes us again*.

In her trouble she was got to a rescue home, conducted by deaconesses of the Mildmay Mission, potters with gentle hands, whose life-work is to pick up fallen ones, and by God's grace seek to *make them again*. Of this now beloved spot, she says,—

"When I came here I was so hardened: I positively hated everybody. I thought everybody hated me, and had just made up my mind to go and put an end to

myself, when I went to one of the deaconesses, with my face set as hard as a rock and told her I wished to go. I so well remember her saying 'Why, dear, God loves you, and God wants you, and we love you.'

"She kissed me! and oh, that kiss seemed just to come and melt this heart of stone, and after that I took courage, and then gradually the love of God came in."

Was not this the father's own way with the prodigal? "He fell on his neck, and kissed him much" (Luke xv. 20, R.V. marg.). A kiss has often been a betrayal; but a kiss of true Christian love is often God's means of winning back the erring.

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore:
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more."

She learned friends cared for her, God loved her, Jesus died for her; and though, like Peter, she had fallen, like Peter, she might be made again.

Her little one was born, and Jesus in mercy took it to Himself, saying, "Suffer the little child to come unto Me." No father owned it upon earth;

so the Father of the fatherless took it to His own beautiful home.

So completely has this marred vessel been *made again*, that she is now an earnest worker in the very home where she first found help in time of trouble.

The Divine Potter, who made the vessel again, is keeping it and adorning it to His own praise. The young heart's gratitude may be seen from the following little note, placed upon the desk of one of the deaconesses :—

"It is just four years this month since I came to you, such a weary, laden, and, God knows, sin-sick and broken-hearted creature, just feeling despised and forsaken by every one. How I do now thank God for the Home and its workers ! for had it not been for the Home and the helping hand just stretched out so lovingly and willingly to help when all seemed against me, where should I have been now ? In the very depths of sin ; for I did not care a bit what became of me : and as I look back and think of just four years this very night, the position I was in then and now, I can truly say, ' Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits ; ' for truly He has followed me all my life long."

X.

A STRANGER STRANGELY SAVED.

IS open-air work any good? Those who know such services best will say, "A thousand times yes." Here is an incident to prove the point.

We had been asked to take an indoor service at a little mission hall. It was a very small place, and the prospect held out was anything but bright. In a letter reminding us of the service we read:—

"We will try and get the people in. I do not know why, but they do not seem to come like they do to other missions. We are always working the district, and try all we can to get the people there, yet the week - evening services are very badly attended. If they will not come and hear, we will go to them, now the open-air work is beginning."

Encouraged by our promise to take a Wednesday evening, these earnest friends planned a week of special services, and when we came we found them at the street corner doing their utmost.

The night before, a stranger had stood in the crowd, and we were told the Spirit of God had arrested him, and he would be at the indoor meeting.

He was a journalist, and had come from the opposite side of the world to report upon a prize fight, which was exciting great expectations in the sporting circles.

The lady sitting at the harmonium had first caught his attention, reminding him of his own wife, whom he had first seen engaged in a similar work. Now he was a sceptic and the great trouble of the woman, whom he had taken from God's work.

"I know she is praying for me, night and day, in Australia," said he, and God was answering.

One of the workers got hold of this man, and spoke personally to him ; but to give up his life as a sporting journalist meant giving up all. He was receiving many pounds weekly ; had come to this country to attend the forthcoming fight,

and to retire far from home and friends looked like ruin.

He was present on the evening when we took the service, and as the numbers were few, we made the meeting homely, asking :—

“What shall we sing, friends ? ”

A man replied,—

“Master, the tempest is raging.”

This was sung, and in an informal way we read the incident (Mark iv. 35-41). They were passing “over unto the other side”—let us go from the devil’s side to God’s side. The multitude were gone—let us be alone with Jesus. “They took Him, even as He was.” Let us take Jesus, just as He is, for He takes us just as we are. A storm followed—taking Christ often results in a storm ; but He was present to hush it, and say, “Peace, be still.”

After the meeting I spoke to the anxious one, but he said he would rather not converse. So he was left to the Holy Spirit, who had begun the work, and, after repenting with tears, he took Christ into his ship, storms or no storms, and in the open air boldly declared that

in future he would use his powers for the Lord.

His great sorrow was about a lad taken from the streets to work in his editorial office. Proving clever and talented, he had helped the boy until he looked up to his patron as to a father. One day he asked,—

“Is there any such thing as salvation?”

His friend replied, “No; it is all rubbish.”

“Then,” said the lad, “why do so many preach in the parks and other places?”

“What do you drive the pen for?” asked his friend.

“To earn bread and butter.”

“That is what they preach for.”

That boy became a thorough infidel under such teaching, and, falling sick, asked for his teacher, who stood by his side when he died in the dark. No prayer, no word of hope, had he to offer. This was a heavy load upon the convert's heart. He could do nothing for the boy, now, but he promised to seek out the mother, and do all he could for her.

Before he returned to Australia the Sabbath evening service was made

special to pray for his guidance and keeping. His gratitude to the workers for the love and help they had shown him was only second to his gratitude to God, his Saviour.

He took away with him a dozen Sankey hymn-books and a Bible to begin work for the Lord during his voyage, and friends have since heard from him as following on in the way to which he was first drawn by an open-air meeting.

Are you working for Jesus in the open-air ?

Are you saved by Jesus ?

"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John iii. 17). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

XI.

HEAVEN, VIA SOUTH AFRICA.

IN a belt of trees near Bulford Camp stood the canvas branch of the Soldiers' Home, Winchester; for Miss Perks and her sister believe in following the troops to their manœuvres on Salisbury Plain.

Here the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Royal Berks, the Dorsets and others met night by night and sang, as only soldiers can sing,

“ Sound the bugle for the muster !
Summon every faithful soul !
Mighty is the coming conflict,
Ere it opens, call the roll ! ”

The conflict soon opened in actual warfare, and the men who sang with us under those peaceful firs were soon under deadly fire in South Africa.

We have before us a letter from one who was in our meetings again and again; but he would not yield to the

Gospel. In song and speech from comrades and visitors he heard the message, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 20, 21). But he surrendered not. Almost every night we sang together,

"Who are in God's mighty army
Call the roll!
Sound the Signal! form in column!
Call the roll!"

Many answered, but not this one.

Visiting the troopship on which his regiment was embarking, Miss Perks had a last word with him, and followed it with a letter, to which came the following reply:—

"Praise the Lord! I gave my heart afresh to Him on the boat, and two more with me came out on the Lord's side, and I do praise Him for it, for there is no joy in the world like what He gives."

From this it appeared that the young soldier was a backslider. How many such might well pray David's prayer,

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Ps. li. 12).

"Dear friend," he continues, "I can honestly say that when I wandered



JUST A SOLDIER LAD.

away from the fold, I was not happy till I came back; but, thanks to Him, He is always willing to forgive and take us in again. We had some happy times

with our Lord and Saviour, and we do praise Him for it. He is a never-failing Friend, and He will always keep His children from harm, if we put our trust in Him. I do thank Him for His peace and joy. I have no desire to go back in the world again. Oh, it is glorious to trust Him for all ! ”

Then this happy one gives a word about others : “ We have a happy band in our regiment, and also in other regiments up here at the front, and we are having such happy times with our Lord. . . . Jesus is with us. He will never leave us, nor forsake us, bless His holy name ! ”

Before closing he asked, “ Will you be so kind as to send me a small pocket Bible, as I have not got one, and am anxious to get one that I can read God’s Word daily. We can’t get them here ; if I could I wouldn’t ask you, and please send the price and I will forward on, and if it is His will that I should come back again I will come and see you. He knows whether we are or not ; my all is in His hand, bless His Holy Name ! ”

He closed with rather a remarkable text, coming from the seat of war, Heb. xii. 14, “ Follow peace with all men,

and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The date of this letter was Dec. 15th, 1899. In March, 1900, Miss Perks was travelling, when a lady in the train passed her the paper. The list of casualties at once attracted her soldier-loving heart, and the first number and name that caught her eye was that of the writer of the above letter—"Died of enteric fever, Wynberg, March 14." Just above was the name of one of the comrades referred to as coming out for the Lord on board ship—"Died of enteric fever, Kimberley, March 15."

"On the march some souls have fallen,
And have crossed beyond the goal:
Some were faithless and deserted—
Who are left? Now call the roll."

XII.

THE MISSING MESSENGER.

THE 27th of February, 1872, will long be remembered as a day of thanksgiving by many, when national praise ascended to our Father for answering prayer by the restoration to health of the Prince of Wales, now Edward VII. That day, memorable to many, was particularly so to a dear child of God, who had special cause to praise Him for answering a four-years' petition. The morning of the 27th brought the postman to her door with a packet of Gospel truths, which called forth more than usual gratitude and joy, inasmuch as it contained a leaflet she had been seeking and praying for during those four years.

This Christian woman had lost her Bible, in which was a paper entitled, "The love of Jesus to a sick one." The Bible had belonged to the lady who wrote the hymn. She prayed that the Lord would send her back her Bible, if it were

His will, or, otherwise, that He would use it for His own glory. Four days after the Bible was brought back by a young man, all the contents being there save the leaflet referred to. She tried to get it in London, as well as in the large town where she lived ; but, failing in this, waited upon God about it from time to time all those years.

He who has said that men should pray and not faint, in His own time answered her petitions. Nothing is too little to be interesting to our loving Lord ; and this true account is sent forth for the encouragement of His people, that they fail not in persevering prayer.

Such is the first story. Now we will show how the present writer became acquainted with the leaflet named.

Visiting a young woman, who for many years has been a great sufferer, he proposed to read a little out of her own Bible.

"There is a tract there," she said ; "a very old thing, but so precious !"

So I hunted until I found, between the leaves, a soiled, worn-out piece of paper, once white, but now brown, and falling asunder at the folds, so frequently had it been folded and re-folded.

"He's a poor little fellow, isn't he?" she said, playfully, "but he has been such a blessing to me!"

"And how long have you had him?"

She thought for a moment, and then guessed it was about ten years since the tract first came into her possession. It was soon after the Lord had laid her aside, and when His dealings seemed a little hard; but that message had come as from the Master Himself:—

"Thy way is all marked out by Me,
From purposes of love to thee:
A way of suffering, it is true,
But nothing else would do for you."

The words had brought comfort not once, nor twice, nor thrice, but hundreds of times, until it seemed she heard her Saviour's own voice saying,

"Now lean thy head upon My breast,
Thou weary one; I'll give thee rest."

As I read the sweet words, and felt how suitable they were to my dear suffering friend, I did not wonder at the loving way in which she spoke of that scrap of paper, nor did I marvel to hear her say:

"Many a time I have shed tears over him, and been refreshed."

I have tried to get a new copy of the old lines, but in vain; so the original

has had to be gummed together and patched, and there he still lies in my invalid's Bible, like an apple of gold in a basket of silver ; but his portrait has been taken, and is going forth to visit and cheer other sufferers. Here it is:—

The Love of Jesus to a Sick One.

“ How full of pain that aching brow ;
But I, the Lord, am near thee now :
No other hand can give release,
No other love can whisper peace,
No other heart thy grief can bear,
Then let Me, lov'd one, take thy care.
Thy way is all marked out by Me,
From purposes of love to thee :
A way of suffering, it is true,
But nothing else would do for you.
I knew if you would love Me much,
My plan of training must be such.
The deeper sorrows which I send
Bring sweeter blessings in the end.
The child of My peculiar love
May weep on earth—shall sing above,
Now lean thy head upon My breast,
Thou weary one ; I'll give thee rest.
I feel thy sighs, I see thy fears,
I know thy wish, I note thy tears ;
Nothing can ever thee befall
Without My knowing, ordering all ;
Only this love I seek in thee—
This wish—
' THY WILL BE DONE IN ME.' ”

XIII.

HOW "HAPPY" BECAME TRULY HAPPY.

ONE of my first recollections of Christian work was in a Ragged School : a lively lot they were, and being a novice, they gave me the benefit of one of their best entertainments. The proverbial parched peas in a frying pan were nothing compared to their motions. They terminated the performance by pouring the platform glass of water over an unlucky teacher's head. It was cool, and cooling.

What tricks such juveniles are up to ! We have heard of them bringing live mice into school, cutting off the tail of a new teacher's coat, and even sitting upon the superintendent, singing—

"Yankee-doodle came to town upon a little pony."

After all, these worst boys are often the best, if grace and the Holy Spirit

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master them. Here is a story told me by the chief actor, which proves this assertion.

Things had been rather loose in the school, and the rebel element had not failed to take advantage of its hour; but a new superintendent had come into power, and he believed in ruling with firmness and with love. There was evidently a rebellion planned, and during prayer the first shot was fired, or rather the first "shell," for it proved to be a winkle-shell. It struck a teacher on the cheek. With a quick eye he detected whence it came, and told the super, who at once ordered the boy out.

This was the signal for a further declaration of war. A boy named "Happy," who had neither father nor mother, rose to his feet, put on a prepared paper hat, and shouted—

"Rough heads, follow me!"

At this war-whoop two dozen sprang to their feet and marched out, causing as much disturbance as possible.

It was annoying, and some suggested "Happy" should be excluded from the school. But if Christian friends shut him out, who would take him in? No, considering his circumstances, there were

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many excuses to be made for him ; and by love and God's blessing he might yet be "Happy in the Lord."

"We will not forbid his coming," said the new superintendent, "but if he come, leave him to me."

He came, and as usual began his tricks. The leader went to him and ordered him to a side room. He moved not, so his friend touched his arm.

"Who are you shoving of?" said he, preparing to show fight.

"If you are rough, I shall be," said the super firmly, and insisted upon being obeyed. When they got to the room, he locked the door, shutting himself in with the prisoner.

"Happy" was very unhappy just then, and kicked at the door like a madman.

"Stop that," said his kindly companion, and he made him sit down. Then the young Turk started whistling.

"Keep quiet, please," was the cool command.

"Ain't I to do nothing?" said the cowed boy.

"No, you will stop till school is over, and I will stop with you."

At this he became sullen, now and then making a rush for the door.

Presently the school began to sing the closing hymn.

"Suppose I can go now?" said "Happy."

"No; not till the others are gone."



THOSE NAUGHTY BOYS.

Then came a quiet talk. Why did you behave so? Was it not unkind to the teachers who came at great inconvenience to do the children good? Was it not unfair to the boys who wanted to learn? Worst of all, how ungrateful it

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was to the Saviour who had loved and died for you?

"Happy" felt more unhappy than ever, began to cry, and parted quite good friends with his master, who shook hands with him saying—

"We shall be glad to see you next Sunday, if you can behave; if not, we will spend another evening together."

Next Sunday "Happy" was the first at the school. He was no more trouble; but if a noise occurred in any part of the room, he would go over, and raising his powerful arm, say—

"Shut up, will yer, or I'll——"

No one ever wished to know what he would do.

A place was got for him with a friend.

"I'm half afraid to take him," was at first the excuse.

"You need not be; he will behave well."

And so he did. Poor chap! he could neither read nor write; so three times a week he visited the school to learn these useful arts.

Some time after, the teacher who received that first winkle-shell was passing along Westminster Road, when a stranger said—

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"Good-morning, sir."

"Somebody seems to know you," said the wife. A wife who had often objected to his going to the Ragged School, on account of the children, and had insisted upon his having a special suit in which to go among such low boys and girls, as she called them.

He halted, and found himself face to face with a respectably dressed young man.

"You do not know me. Don't you remember 'Happy'?"

It was the same, and yet not the same. He was now warehouseman in a city house, earning good wages.

"And are you converted?" asked the old teacher.

Yes, "Happy" was truly happy, for he could sing—

"O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

"Happy day! happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away:
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.
Happy day! happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away."

XIV.

OUT OF A COAL PIT.

AS we gather around our winter fires, it may not be amiss to think of whence and at what cost and labour our comforts are obtained. The same may be applied to the fires of heavenly comfort, around which many of us sit. Let us not forget the Great Miner, and the pit into which He descended.

Knowing the foreman of a coal mine, a friend of mine had the opportunity of visiting one of these underground cities. It seemed to him an awful place, and the sense of being buried alive was most oppressive, especially as he penetrated into a cutting no higher than a table, in which men were lying on their sides picking out the black diamonds.

Feeling he would like to read a portion of God's Word in that dark region, he got permission for the men to cease work, and by the aid of the little lamp he attempted to decipher a chapter of

his Bible to the seven colliers who were near.

It was a strange place, and the reading was altogether under strange circumstances ; but the reader knew that God had often saved men in the midst of strange surroundings. He who saved a jailor in a dark prison, might save a prisoner of sin in this dark spot.

The congregation was small—"only seven." Fancy troubling to have a meeting and only seven present ! The passage of Scripture selected to be read was Isaiah liii.

"He is despised and re-jected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were *our* faces from Him : He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him ; and with His stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned ev-er-y one to his own

way ; and the Lord hath laid on Him the in-iqui-ty of us all.

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth : He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He o-pen-eth not His mouth.”

With various stoppages, owing to the bad light, the stranger read on until he reached the words,—

“FOR THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE WAS HE STRICKEN.”

At this sentence he fairly lost his place, and had to repeat the words,—

“For the transgression of My people was He stricken.”

But the place was hopelessly missed, and a third time he delivered that all-important message,—

“For the transgression of My people was He stricken.”

Wonderful words ! one sentence of four in the chapter, which seemed linked :—

“He was numbered with the transgressors.”

“He made intercession for the transgressors.”

“He was wounded for our transgressions.”

“For the transgression of My people was He stricken.”

Now it happened that hidden in the darkness was a man who refused to join in the little meeting. Sam did not want to hear Scripture—not he; but he heard that bit and was puzzled. Suppose he was not one of God’s people; suppose Christ was not stricken for his transgressions. Suppose he had to be stricken for his own transgressions.

These were unpleasant suppositions, for God had said He would “visit transgression with the rod” (Ps. lxxxix. 32). His transgression. Like him, the people spoken of had transgression; but somebody was stricken for their transgression.

Rough as he was, he had a sweetheart, and she took him to the Wesleyan Anniversary. He was quite willing to go, for he wanted to hear more about the One who was stricken for transgressors. The reader’s mistake was no mistake after all. God was using it. Oh, bless Him, how He overrules our blunders!

To the astonishment of Sam, the preacher had for his text the identical words, “For the transgression of My people was He stricken.”

This so deepened the impression that

he came to hear the strange preacher of the pit, who was holding services in the neighbourhood. His mates were astonished.

"What ails, thee, Sam? Hast thee brought thee dog with thee?" alluding to the canine companion which usually accompanied him. No, that night Sam was the dog, come to pick up crumbs at the Gospel table.

Without knowing what he was doing, my friend took for his text the very same words at which he had hesitated in the darkness:—

"FOR THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY
PEOPLE WAS HE STRICKEN."

In simple language the preacher showed how God must strike at sin. But He had given up striking at the sinner. "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt yet more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint" (Isa. i. 5). It had been prophesied, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" (Mic. v. 1). "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (Isa. l. 6; Lam. iii. 30). This had been

fulfilled upon Jesus. "And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands" Mark xiv. 65). Men smote Him and God smote Him. "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man *that is* My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zec. xiii. 7). Thus the wonderful text was proved true, "For the transgression of My people was He stricken." And collier Sam was one of them, and through the atoning blood of the great Sin Bearer he passed from darkness to marvellous light, and became a child of God.

XV.

AT THE GAS-WORKS.

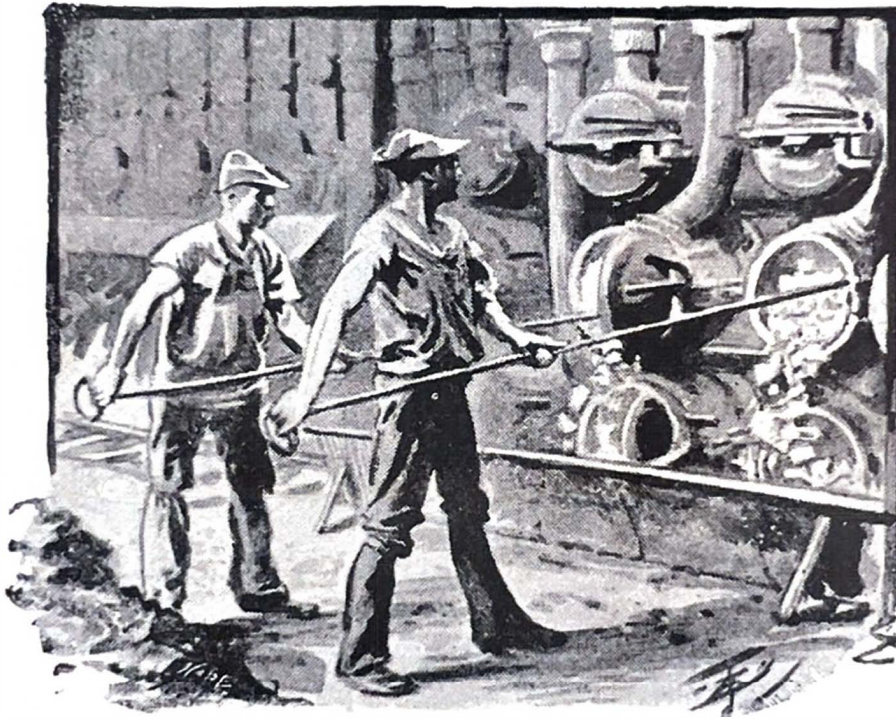
THE following incident was given by a London city missionary. We recite it as nearly as possible in his own graphic words.

It was his part of God's great work to visit one of our large London gas-works, and there speak of Christ, who "receiveth sinful men." Sometimes he had opportunity of speaking to twenty and thirty in the lobby, sometimes his witness had to be to ones and twos. Whichever it was, he had only one message,—“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” “He that believeth on Him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not, is condemned already ; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God ” (John iii. 17, 18).

Then came the great strike, and all the men refused to work ; other men

were secured and marched in under protection. Our friend was there when they arrived, gave them tracts and books, and told them he should visit them on the same errand again ere long.

Sunday came and he fulfilled his



WORKING AT THE RETORTS.

word. The directors had seen the good of his former visits, and had built a small hall upon the premises for his meetings; but on this particular Sunday, the hall had been turned into a dwelling-place for the new-comers who had to be lodged within the gates. Noth-

ing daunted, the missionary, with his wife, sons, and daughters, went to a shed, where the men were holding anything but a religious meeting. Coke fires were sending forth their poisonous vapours: as if this were not enough, pipes were adding to the impure atmosphere: while cards and dice were helping to pass away weary hours.

"Will you ask them to cease?" said his wife, as he took his stand in the centre.

"That will come right directly," was the trustful reply. He then told the congregation that he had come to have a little singing with them, and his son proceeded to sing:

"Where is my wandering boy to-night—
The boy of my tend'rest care;
The boy that was once my joy and light,
The child of my love and prayer?
Oh, where is my boy to-night?
Oh, where is my boy to-night?
My heart o'erflows, for I love him he knows:
Oh, where is my boy to-night?"

Gradually the rattle of the dice began to cease, as the sweet singer sang on,

"Once he was pure as morning dew,
As he knelt at his mother's knee;
No face was so bright, no heart more true,
And none was so sweet as he."

By the time the last verse was reached, the voices were hushed, and every one was listening :—

“Go for my wandering boy to-night ;
Go search for him where you will ;
But bring him to me with all his blight,
And tell him I love him still.”

As the last note of the chorus died away,

“Where is my boy to-night ? ”

the Christian said, placing his hand upon his son's shoulder :—

“There is no need for me to ask that question, for he is here with me safe and happy.”

Before the speaker could proceed further, a rough fellow spoke out :—

“Come, lads, let's give up and hear.”

And they did. After another hymn, the old Book of God was opened, and they read of the wandering boy and the forgiving father. See Luke xv. 11-24.

After half-an-hour of hymn-singing, which the men themselves selected, the informal meeting ended ; with the result that next morning some forty of the congregation met the Christian in the lobby and thanked him for his service.

“I thought you knew I was there,” said one coming boldly forward, “I am

that wandering boy. Years ago I ran away from home and went for a soldier. I served through the Egyptian war, and since then have wandered anywhere sleeping in casual wards or where I could. That story, I tell you, went straight home to my heart."

Four Sundays he attended the meetings, and, as far as could be seen, he came to his Father and was forgiven freely for Jesus Christ's sake.

"Mother wants me to come home," said he shortly after; "I have not seen her since I left the old place."

Having come home to his Heavenly Father, he soon found his way to his earthly mother; and when last heard of was living a happy Christian life.

XVI.

A TRACT THAT SAVED.

A YOUNG Christian went round to a few houses with tracts. A capital work for young believers. At one door he knocked and received no answer : so he knocked again, and yet again, for he believed in the perseverance of the saints.

Presently he heard someone coming, and the door was opened ; but only a very little way. He at once presented his tract, and it was at once grabbed, drawn in and the door closed. He just saw the opener was a man, and that was all.

Not a very encouraging opening ; but the distributor believed, (did I not say he was a young *believer* ?) and believing, he called again the following Sunday. He did not have to knock twice, for the door flew open as by magic.

"Come in," said the man, the same,

yet not the same: and, shutting the door behind his guest, he led the way upstairs. There appeared to be no third party in the house.

"Are you afraid?" said the mysterious man.

"No," replied the young believer. And he needed to be a pretty firm believer just then, for his guide was evidently bent on getting as far from the ground as possible, Up, up, up, to a sky-garret.

Opening a door, he led his visitor into a scene that might have made the stoutest quail. From a beam hung a rope, in the rope was a noose, and beneath the noose stood a box.

"Are you afraid?"

"No," said the child of God, feeling that he was in the presence of his Father even then.

"Then let me tell you that, when you knocked last Sunday night, my feet were upon that box, and my head in that nooze. I made up my mind not to answer you; but when you kept on knocking, I thought I would see who it was before I hung myself. I came down, took your tract, returned here, and read it. It was so blessed to me, that I am here alive."

The receiver of that tract did not put his head again into the rope. He was saved! Saved upon the verge of death, upon the brink of hell.

I was told this incident not very far from where it happened, by one who, I believe, had it from the young believer himself. Go on, tract distributors, scatter these crumbs of the Bread of Life, for even under the table, out of sight, are some who may call themselves dogs, to whom the words will be blessed.

"Fear not, neither be discouraged," is a word from God to every tract-distributor (Deut. i. 21.) and He never gives us a precept without good reason for practice. To help us not to be discouraged, I write this further incident.

A Doctor known to a friend of mine, always took tracts with him, on his walks, in his carriage, and even in the railway train. For many years he was a sower, and did not know that even one grain of his good seed had rooted and grown. The seed basket seemed to be for him, and not the reaping-hook. He became discouraged, and was tempted to give up his apparently useless work. But he felt he must not, until he got his discharge from the Master. He

would just pray specially for some sign of approval, in the spirit of the psalmist, "Shew me a token for good." (Psalm lxxxvi. 17.) If the distributing of tracts was God's work for him, his desire was, "Let Thy work *appear* unto Thy servants." (Psalm xc. 16.)

Shortly after this, he came to London and was there stopped by a woman.

"You don't know me, sir?"

"No, I certainly do not."

"But I know you: some years ago you gave me a tract: I was then a drunkard, and my house was a pigsty; but you come and see it now."

He followed her to a good, comfortable house: found she was a total abstainer from the awful drink, and a Christian. The tract given to her, she had passed on to her husband: they had both gone and heard the gospel of eternal life through believing in Jesus Christ, and were both real live Christians.

The Doctor felt this to be such an answer to prayer, and was so encouraged that he never gave up tract distributing. When he became too old to take his walks abroad, he adopted the plan of laying tracts upon his window-sill for any passer by to pick up.

My friend who related to me the circumstance, said he had himself seen this gentleman's little messages waiting quietly for the right person to come along and take them.

"Neither be discouraged," brother. You may not see, nor know, but you may believe.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter." (John xiii. 7.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.)

XVII.

A PRISONER OF THE LORD.

FOR fifteen years she had been an invalid, and for eleven years, had been a prisoner between the sheets.

"Eleven years in bed," I said with a tone of pity.

"No," she replied, "eleven years in His arms," reminding me of the restful text, "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27).

Often she had to be alone for many hours, with no companion but her Bible: which of late she could only read by laying her cheek upon the page.

One day her husband went out to his work, and forgot to leave the precious book near enough to be within easy reach. How could she live a whole day without a word from her best friend! Impossible! She must get it: so reaching out her weak arm, she found she could just touch the covers. Unable to

move, the difficulty of drawing it toward her was very great; but by continued efforts, she drew it nearer and nearer until it was close to her. Now a new trouble arose: the exertion had so exhausted her, that she was unable to use it.

Then came a little temptation to think it hard that she could not have this one pleasure of reading her Father's word. Again she tried to open the volume; but it grew larger and larger, and as she endeavoured to raise the covers, they seemed to turn to two iron gates, leading into a beautiful garden, where were grassy lawns, dripping fountains, roses, lilies, and flowers she had never seen before.

"If I could but set my feet upon that cool grass: if I might but feel that water in my hot hands, and bathe my brow with its fresh drops: if only I were permitted to gather large bunches of those fair flowers."

But she could not open the heavy gates.

Then the Lord stood by her and with her, on the outside of the enclosure, and as He touched her, He said,

"It is all right, My child, that is My garden; but in thy weakness, thou

could'st not bear the splash of those fountains: yet thou shalt have the dew. Thou could'st not walk in those grassy ways: so lean upon My bosom. Thou could'st not gather large bunches from those bushes and beds: be content to take the flowers I give thee, one by one."

A few snowdrops were upon her small table, and the vision seemed to change, as the Saviour stood beside her bed, and passed them to her flower by flower. At the same moment, sweet promises came into her mind, flowers from the book she could not open.

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5).

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9).

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters" (Ps. xxiii. 2).

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

Then followed verses from Psalm cxxi.

"He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

"The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand."

“The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil : He shall preserve thy soul.”

How wonderfully the Master can make up for any weakness in His servants ! She could not walk in the garden and gather promises for herself ; but she had, what was even better : she received them from the loving hand of Jesus.

This passing of love-words went on for an hour, the last one being, “Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings ” (Mal. iv. 2).

The invalid remembered repeating the word “Healing ” and went to sleep repeating it.

Not yet the golden dawning
Of the Sun with healing wings :
Not yet the happy morning—
Sleep, child, till Love outflings
The banners of the glory :
Sleep through the lingering night :
True healing is before thee
In Heav'ns on-coming light.

XVIII.

A VERITABLE VILLAGE VILLAIN.

SIR J. HERSCHEL has calculated that if a solid icicle, 45 miles in diameter, and 200,000 miles long, were plunged into the sun, it would be melted in a single second. Cannot the Sun of Righteousness melt a sinner as cold, as hard, and as gigantic in wickedness?

Let us hear Paul's experimental answer. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 15, 16). But other great sinners have been melted since the days of the apostle.

There was one living in a village in China, a veritable villain, and as a punishment for his evil doings, his eyes had been put out. But blinding a man does not make him see the error of his ways. Law cannot cure a man morally or spiritually: it is too cold a process to melt.

“ Law and terrors do but harden,
All the while they work alone ;
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,
This will melt a heart of stone.”

The sightless Chinaman became a blind beggar, blackmailing his neighbours, and doing all sorts of violent deeds. Once he entered an oil-shop, demanding money, and as it was not forthcoming, he struck out right and left with his thick stick, breaking the earthenware pots of oil, and letting the oil out in all directions. Getting hold of some of the broken pieces of crockery, he cut himself, and then went to the magistrate to complain of ill-treatment: the shopman being fined 100 dollars for the supposed assault.

In addition to this, the blind man was a great opium smoker, and knew the power of the evil habit.

Can you hush the thunder : stay the rising tide : reverse the downflow of Niagara ? Then may a sinner by his own power cease to sin. Or in Scripture language, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil " (Jeremiah xiii. 23).

An old lady got this sinner to the Medical Mission Hospital, where he found Christ died for sinners as bad as he, and that God was able to save to the uttermost all who came to Him through Jesus. He came, and was at once made a new creature.

It is a terrible sin to limit the Holy One of Israel (Psalm lxxviii. 41), in this day of grace, "for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us ; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit " (Romans viii. 3, 4).

After the change it was the man's great delight to sit in the waiting-room of the hospital and point to himself. All knew what he had been : they now saw

what he was. Having been so bad, he was a good example of what God could do—the sun had melted the icicle. None are too bad to be saved : though we fear many are too good. Three things make it possible for the worst to be saved :

The infinite value of Christ's blood.

The almighty power of Christ's arm.

The unbounded love of Christ's heart.

Let us not imagine all Chinamen are bad, because some have risen against the missionaries and others.

Could we find anywhere among English converts a clearer confession of faith than the following, from a man in the Ping Nang district, who was baptized after two years' probation.

When asked why he concluded that he was saved, he answered :

" Jesus has redeemed and saved me, and I am quite different from what I used to be. I used to swear, and do other evil things, and lie ; now I do not, I hate them." This was good experience.

REDEEMED, SAVED, DIFFERENT.

Redeemed by the blood of Christ—saved by faith in Christ—different because his heart has been changed by the Spirit of Christ. But he continued :

"The Bible tells me that if a man believes in Jesus, he is saved. I believe; and, therefore, know I am saved."

How many who would despise a sallow complexion and a pig-tail, fall far short of this in their faith: and professing to believe their Bible, say:

"I believe, but I am not saved."

This Chinaman's faith led to works, for he loved to tell others of His precious Saviour, even though they laughed at him.

"You worship chairs and tables," they said, because they saw him kneeling at the forms, etc., but he heeded not. He even started a prayer meeting in his own home with members of his own family and had the joy of leading his own brother into the assurance of faith in Christ Jesus.

Shall Chinamen and other heathen believe and be saved, and the sons and daughters of Christians, church-goers and chapel-goers, who boast of their Bibles and the Christian faith, be left behind unsaved? It was so in the days of Jesus, who said: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the king-

dom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last" (Luke xiii. 28-30).