

Sunday Reading.

Just as I am.

BY THE REV. A. PARKE BURGESS.

"Just as I am!" I dare not wait,
I dare not longer risk my soul
Outside the Heavenly Shepherd's gate,
Lest I should miss the blessed goal,
Or, turning, seek the fold too late.

"Just as I am!" I cannot feel,
As faint I would, my nature's woe,
Nor melt beneath thy kind appeal,
Nor grieve to see my Saviour bleed
And know he suffered for my weal.

"Just as I am!" Thou knowest best
My depth of guilt, my dreadful sin;
I only know I am oppressed
By fear and pain and strife within:
I know my need; thou knowest the rest.

"Just as I am!" Though so unmeet
To be received and made thine own,
I fall before thy Mercy-seat,
O Christ—I hasten to thy throne;
My guilt itself seeks this retreat.

"Just as I am!" My heart, so dumb,
I fear would never warmer be,
Nor be more inclined to come;
It is thy love constraineth me,
It is thy voice that calls me home.

"Just as I am!" Thy latest call
I hear and heed with bitter tears:
So late to come, and bring thee all
My leaves and tares and wasted years—
So late at Mercy's shrine to fall.

"Just as I am!" And I rejoice
That Mercy's gate stood open long
For one so slow to hear thy voice.
My heart has learned the great new song;
At last thy love has fixed my choice.

"Just as I am!" And if for me
One little hour remaineth still,
Thy truest servant I would be,
And prove the love that owns thy will;
But this, my Lord, I leave to thee.

—New York Evangelist.

In his own way.

BY MRS. HARRIET A. CHEEVER.

There was a hushed chamber in Mr. Clauson's house—such a chamber as most of us have entered at some time in our lives; a room in which the husband and wife can hardly look each other in the face; where the footsteps fall lightly, and the few words spoken are whispered ones.

It seemed enough of sorrow that the little darling of the household, four-year-old Willie, should lay there before the eyes of the parents so cold and still. Yet that was not the only trouble oppressing them, although at present it far outweighed all others.

Mr. Clauson's affairs had been steadily growing worse and worse for many months, until he found it impossible to pay any longer the bills of interest arising from the mortgage on his pleasant homestead, which had been his father's before him, and was "bound by a thousand ties to his heart." And now this bitter affliction had come, as if to test to the utmost the strength and faith of these children of God. But Robert Clauson's faith never wavered for a moment.

The evening before the funeral, as Mr. Clauson and his wife were sadly recounting the recent events, Mrs. Clauson remarked in a broken voice:

"Hard, isn't it, Robert, that so soon upon becoming childless we must also become homeless? A note came from Mr. Liscomb yesterday, saying that the mortgage had been foreclosed, and a sale would take place early next week."

The husband's reply came readily enough:

"Never mind; I've done my very best, Jennie, and—"

"It may not be my way;
It may not be thy way;
And yet in His own way,
The Lord will provide."

I must leave all in His hands.

O, blessed trust of the children of God! Aye, and he will provide.

Later in the evening Mr. Clauson took his hat, then paused before his wife, as if what he would say was of so painful a nature as to be hard of utterance; at length he said in a tremulous tone:

"It is getting late, Jennie, and I'm going around to Darkling's. I told him I would do what I could to make expenses light as possible. You know it is one of our painful necessities, Jennie, wife!"

And she knew he was going himself, poor man, alas and alas! for a little casket.

Lawyer Liscomb was on the high road to great prosperity. His wife was

a devoted Christian, and Mr. Liscomb was a professor of religion, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches had, indeed, choked the Word, until his life had become unfruitful, and even barren of anything like godliness. His loving little wife had remonstrated on more than one occasion at what seemed to her unwarrantable measures on his part, where a question of worldly greed and a kindly showing of humanity were concerned; but although a kind husband and doting father, there was at such times a certain pursing of the lips, as he would reply with firmness that he was, perhaps, the best judge of how business matters should be conducted, which had finally silenced good little Mrs. Liscomb effectually; that is, had silenced her in the presence of her husband, but she only went the oftener to her closet, and begged the Father in heaven to show him the errors which were fast mastering him, overcoming his better nature, and crushing the piety out of his life. And this afternoon, happening into her husband's office for a moment, she had seen a written advertisement lying on the table ready to be sent to the daily paper; stating that early the next week the fine estate of Robert Clauson would be sold at auction.

"Oh, how can he?" she said to herself, "and his only little son lying dead, to be buried to-morrow!"

What could she do? Jennie Clauson and she had been schoolmates. Mr. Liscomb was not at the office, so she walked home alone, wishing she could say something to induce him to reconsider the matter, but that evening the lawyer was particularly silent and hurried; sat writing until rather late in the evening, then said he must go out awhile, he had an errand to attend to.

Soon after he had gone, his wife went up stairs, and with a troubled heart besought God in his way to provide for her dear husband a way of escape from his own increasing selfishness and utter want of feeling for others. What had seemed her way of trying to open his eyes had only resulted in disappointment and failure.

It was a dark, damp night, and a heavy fog made objects at but a short distance from the street lamps hardly discernible. Lawyer Liscomb was passing rapidly through a by-street on his way home from the office of the daily paper, when suddenly on turning a corner he collided violently with another man, a man who with bent head and downward gaze was carrying a something dark and long. It would be impossible to tell how it happened; no one can ever tell how such things happen, but in the eager effort which the other made to save himself from dropping his burden, and the effort which the other man made to save himself from falling on the slippery pavement, the object which the former was carrying suddenly became transferred to the outstretched arms of Lawyer Liscomb, and looking down he saw at once by the light of the lamp on the corner that he was holding—a casket—and he noticed, too, on the instant, that it was one just about large enough for his Willie!

A cold, weird feeling of superstition, almost of horror, ran over him, as he said sharply:

"Here man, take back this uncanny thing, and be more careful another time." The next instant he added in another tone:

"Ah, Clauson, is it you? Sorry for you, poor fellow; upon my word I am! There, don't say a word; it was all my fault. I beg your pardon."

As soon as Lawyer Liscomb re-entered his library that night his wife wondered what had come over him, and at bed-time she wondered still more, for he hung about Willie's little crib, kissing the child again and again, until the little fellow, as if instinctively, kissed him back; then he broke out in an impulsive tone, startling his wife with its fierce accent:

"Lord, what should I do if that little boy couldn't kiss me back!"

Well into the night Mrs. Liscomb knew her husband was not sleeping, but she wisely refrained from asking any questions. After a while he said softly:

"Yes? What is it?"

"I shan't foreclose on Clauson at present; he's in trouble, you know."

"Oh, I'm so thankful!" was the response. And an hour later:

"Wife?"

"Yes."

"I'm going to help Clauson up hill again, if I can. He's a royal good fellow; got a good wife, too."

"Yes, and members of the same church we are," was the significant reply.

And still a little later:

"I'm going to be a church member in earnest, wife, God helping me."

Early next morning, before breakfast, Lawyer Liscomb slipped out on an errand to the office of the daily paper, and that night after the funeral a note was handed to Robert Clauson, informing him that the foreclosure on the property was indefinitely postponed.

No one else knew how it was that Lawyer Liscomb all at once resumed his old place at the church, and in the prayer-meeting; nor why it was he showed at the same time such a friendly interest in the affairs of Robert Clauson, who was soon really well on his way up hill again. His happy little wife only knew that somehow in his own way the Lord had touched her husband; but he knew well what a searching, wholesome lesson had been borne in upon his innermost soul by being obliged voluntarily to hold for a moment in his father-arms that little casket.

And so with his limitless range of resource, the good Father, who makes his sun to shine alike on the just and the unjust, had by one master-stroke of divine power spoken in his own way to both his children, blessing and confirming the faith of the one, and calling back to allegiance the wandering feet of the other.—Golden Rule.

John Bunyan's Wicket Gate.

You must have heard Mr. John Bunyan's description of how the pilgrims came to the wicket gate. They were pointed, you remember, by Evangelist to a light and a gate, and they went that way according to his bidding. A young man in Edinburgh was very anxious to speak to others about their souls; so he addressed himself one morning to an old Musselburgh fishwife, and he began by saying to her, "Here you are with your burden." "Ay," she said. He asked her, "Did you ever feel a spiritual burden?" "Yes," she said, resting a bit, "I felt the spiritual burden years ago, before you were born, and I got rid of it, too; but I did not go the same way to work that Bunyan's pilgrim did." Our young friend was greatly surprised to hear her say that, and thought she must be under grievous error, and therefore begged her to explain. "No," said she, "when I was under concern of soul, I heard a true gospel minister, who bade me look to the cross of Christ, and there I lost my load of sin. I did not hear one of those milk-and-water preachers like Bunyan's Evangelist." "How," said our young friend, "do you make that out?" "Why, that Evangelist, when he met the man with the burden on his back, said to him, 'Do you see that wicket gate? No,' said he, 'I don't.' 'Do you see that light?' 'I think I do.' Why man," said she, "he should not have spoken about wicket gates or lights, but he should have said, 'Do you see Jesus Christ hanging on the cross?' Look to him, and your burden will fall off your shoulder." He sent that man round the wrong way when he sent him to the wicket gate, and much good he got by it, for he was likely to have been choked in the Slough of Despond before long. I tell you, I looked at once to the cross, and away went my burden." "What," said the young man, "did you never go through the Slough of Despond?" "Ah," said she, "many a time, more than I care to tell. But at the first I heard the preacher say, 'Look to Christ,' and I looked to him. I have been through the Slough of Despond since that. But let me tell you, sir, it is much easier to go through that slough with your burdens off than it is with your burdens on."

And so it is. Blessed are they whose eyes are only and altogether on the Crucified. The older I grow, the more sure I am of this, that we must have done with self in all forms and see Jesus only if we would be at peace. Was John Bunyan wrong? Certainly not; he was describing things as they generally are. Was the old woman wrong? No; she was describing things as they ought to be, and as I wish they always were. Still, experience is not always as it ought to be, and much of the experience of Christians is not Christian experience. It is a fact which I lament, but, nevertheless, must admit, that a large number of persons, ere they come to the cross and lose their burden, go round about no end of a way, trying this plan and that plan, with but very slender success after all, instead of coming straightway to Christ, just as they are, looking to him and finding light and life at once. How is it, then, that some are so long in getting to Christ?—C. H. Spurgeon.

Mr. Spurgeon and the dying Orphan.

The following touching incident is told by Mr. Gough, as witnessed by him on the occasion of his visit to Mr. Spurgeon's Stockwell Orphanage, when Mr. Spurgeon took him to see one of the boys in the infirmary who was ill with consumption. Holding the boy's hand the great preacher said: "You have some precious promises in sight all round the room. Now, my dear boy, you are going to die, and you are very tired of lying here, but soon you will be free from all pain, and will enjoy rest. Nurse, did he rest last night?" "No," he coughed very much. "Ah, my dear boy, it seems very hard for you to lie here all day in pain, and cough all night, but remember Jesus loves you. He bought you with his precious blood, and he knows what is best for you. It seems hard for you to lie here and listen to the shouts of the healthy boys outside at play; but soon Jesus will take you home, and then he will tell you the reason, and you will be so glad." "Then," continues Mr. Gough, laying his hand on the boy, he said: "O Jesus, Master, this dear child is reaching out his thin hand to find Thine. Touch him, dear Saviour, with thy loving, warm clasp. Lift him as he passes the cold river, that his feet be not chilled by the water of death; take him home in Thine own good time. Comfort and cherish him till that good time comes; show him Thyself as he lies here, and let him see Thee and know Thee more and more as his loving Saviour."

What follows shows in a beautiful way what a fount of tenderness and love lies deep down in the pastor's heart. After a moment's pause, Mr. Spurgeon added, "Now, dear boy, is there anything you would like? If you would like a little canary in a cage to hear him sing in the morning, you shall have one. Good-bye, my dear boy; you will see the Saviour perhaps before I shall." In relating this Mr. Gough adds: "I had seen Mr. Spurgeon holding by his power 5,000 persons in a breathless interest; I knew him as a great man universally esteemed and beloved; but as he sat by the bedside of this dying child, whom his beneficence had rescued, he was to me a greater and grander man than when swaying the multitude at his will."

The London May Meetings.

In looking over the report of the Baptist Union meetings in London, last month, we find that the Rev. John Brown was present, and in speaking on the matter of statistics of public worship and efforts to reach the masses who do not attend places of worship, he said it is not for us so much to seek to get the masses to us as to get ourselves to the masses. The Salvation Army are teaching us this lesson; they do things that we would not do, and we do things that they would not do. But they do this, not by any efforts of oratory, not by attempting to draw the people to their places of worship, but they go to the people, and then the people go to them. The Saviour said, "I will make you fishers of men." Fishermen do not whistle to the fish; they go where the fish are, and we must as fishers of men try to show the fish that we want to catch them, not for our sake, but for theirs. I know of some who think that we want to catch them for our own sakes. Many of you may remember a sermon preached by Mr. Spurgeon about the year 1869 to this Union. "We must go down," he said, "from our high places; we must be one with the people." You may re-

member also that he spoke, too, of a fisherman who went down to the river side with a remarkably good rig-out, a magnificent rod and beautiful tackle. He fished on, but he did not catch a solitary fish. Towards the evening a little boy came down with a crooked pin and stick and some twine and a worm, and he waded out of the shallow and dipped his line, pin and worm down into a little deep spot, when he pulled them up thick and fast; and you will remember the application, why it was that we do not catch so many—because we do not go down amongst them.

At the same meeting Rev. G. W. McCree said one of the most useful means of getting people to attend the house of God that we have had in operation is that of assembling a number of friends together for prayer at six o'clock, and then sending them out into the streets to invite the people to come in, and in that way I have known as many as forty persons brought in to a single service. I believe if we employed similar modes throughout the country we would add considerably to the Sunday evening service. I have also found cottage meetings right amongst the people to be exceedingly useful. I have known one cottage meeting filled up, another established along the street, and a third beyond that, so that at one time on the same evening three cottage meetings were convened. I cannot say that increasing knowledge of theatre services makes me feel much confidence in them. For one theatre I think about £500 a season has been paid, and I am inclined to think on the whole that the money might have been spent in a better way. Nor has my experience in the south of London of the result of Messrs. Moody and Sankey's missions, at all induced me to sign the memorial for them to come again. I believe if you were to canvass the masses in the south of London, you would find it difficult to lay your hands upon any tangible spiritual results of that mission. This view of the results of the labors of Messrs. Moody and Sankey was confirmed by other speakers.

THE ENGLISH BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The recent Annual Meeting of the English Baptist Missionary Society in London, was presided over by Lord Shaftesbury. In opening the proceedings he said: "I wish, in the first place, to express the great pleasure I have in renewing my relations with the Baptist Missionary Society. This is not the first time I have had the honour of presiding over your meetings; and I have ever cherished for your society and the men it has produced the greatest reverence and respect; and I pray God from the bottom of my soul that what you are about to do will exceed a hundredfold what you have already by His grace accomplished."

What an amount of work you have produced in the literary department. Men like Carey, Marshman, and many others that might be named, are an honour to your society, and afford another proof that the study and pursuit of religion is one of the finest intellectual trainings that a man can have. To show the effect that may be produced by missionaries, let me tell you a simple story that I had from my son. He went out with Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of the Cape, who entrusted him with a great mission—to go over the whole of Kaffirland, to go amongst the natives, examine their condition, and report upon the best means for their improvement and civilisation. My son told me that after he had started there broke out an unhappy feud between many of the Kaffirs and some farmers and Boers. On turning the corner of the slope of a hill, he came upon a farmer's house, which he saw had been sacked and looted, and was full of armed Kaffirs. "I gave myself up," he said, "for lost, because I was worth plundering. I had several horses, three or four oxen, and several waggons, besides having some jewellery about me. I thought the best thing I could do was to take a bold step, and walk into the house. On entering the hall, I saw a man with a red blanket over him. He rushed towards me, and said, 'Oh, I have seen you before, haven't I?' 'I dare say you have,' I said. 'Did not I see you in the house of Missionary So-and-So?' 'Yes, you did.' 'Are you a friend of the missionaries?' 'I am.' 'That is enough.' (Ap-

plause.) That was a lawless fellow who had been plundering the farmer's house; but such was the effect that had been produced upon him by the missionary, that he said, "You may go, you are perfectly safe." And safe he was, for he went through the whole of the country, and arrived at Cape Town without having received any injury. I repeat that these societies are the glory, the strength, and the conservative principle of the nineteenth century.

At the same meeting Dr. Laudels of London spoke on what he had seen of missionary work in Italy three weeks previously:

In passing through Geneva, where our mission was commenced by my eldest son two and a-half years ago, I attended the ordinary week-night service, just three weeks since. After much labour and prayer, our friends managed to obtain, what they cannot always obtain in Italian cities, a good room in a central situation; and from the time it was opened it has been crowded with attentive hearers. At the ordinary week-night service I saw every seat in the room occupied, a number of persons were in a side room, and at the back part of the hall people were standing three or four deep through the service. Now, in a crowded place, and in an Italian climate, that means a good deal. Since the station was opened there have been gathered into the church thirty-six or thirty-eight members, and after two and a-half years' labour I think you can hardly call that an unsatisfactory result. I also had an opportunity of attending our service in Naples. They had been meeting there in a very disreputable stable, where you could hardly say that good accommodation was provided either for man or beast. They had papered it, and fitted it up in the best way they could; but it was in a back street and in a courtyard, and could only be found out with the greatest difficulty. The Neapolitans are a very different people from the Genoese, and you can scarcely get a congregation to listen to the preaching of the Gospel; so that you may imagine the difficulty of getting out into such a stable as I have described. Still, at the morning service we had forty persons gathered together—members of the church—assembled to unite in breaking bread, prayer, praise, and reading God's Word. Young men, too, from the University, who have been brought to a knowledge of the truth, have gone out to pursue their callings in their own districts, and are bringing the influence of their character to bear in favour of the Gospel; so that, on the whole, I think a good work has been done in Naples. I am glad to say that we have secured splendid premises on very low terms. There is a beautiful sala in which to preach, and a large room at the side for the Young Men's Christian Association meetings, which will also be used as a reading room. There are stables and a coach-house, which can be used for school-rooms, and for a printing establishment, if any of you will be good enough to present them with a small printing-press. We have also a residence for the missionary—almost too good, many would say, but we cannot help its being so good; and as we have a good place for the price of a bad one, I think you will not object. We have also a room for an evangelist on the same floor, and other rooms which will be serviceable to the church. The premises are in a splendid condition. In addition to the rooms I have named, we have in the garden a beautiful blue grotto, and at the end—what do you think?—a baptistery. (Laughter and applause.) It was not quite ready for use, for the marble bath in it was a little too small; but that has been removed, the recess has been covered with Roman cement, and there is as beautiful a baptistery as any of you could wish to see. It was a singular providence that such a building should have been offered to us for sale; it was perhaps the only house in Naples that was all that we required. It was in the hands of an English gentleman, who dealt with us as English gentlemen will, stating his terms, and abiding by them, even though he could have bettered himself. I trust that our friends will now enjoy such a measure of prosperity as they have not hitherto experienced.