

## Sunday Reading.

## Pines.

BY M. S. MACRITCHIE.

A quiet meeting-place with God,—  
Late wild flowers down the forest way,  
Sweet arms of moss that clasp the sod,  
From the near footprints of decay;  
A weariness o'er land and sea,  
And sunlight passing lingeringly.

A music as of autumn rills,  
That wander under brown and red;  
A low, rich psalm across the hills,  
Where branches whisper overhead;  
All calm and mighty, lone and dim,  
This clustering choir that chants of Him.

Have the last leaves a message heard,  
From angels through the evening air,  
Or do the dews some sacred word,  
From the still arch of heaven bear?  
Oh, pines mysterious! vast your power,  
To rest me at this sunset hour.

All things are changing; memories press  
Of buds of hope most bright of yore,  
But nearer to my consciousness  
The clasp of God than e'er before;  
All tender tints on forest-side  
Woke surely as the roses died.

Death everywhere, yet life in death!  
For comfort with His Presence stays;  
I speak His Name in peace and faith,  
I hear Him down these autumn ways,  
In beauty moves no quivering bow,  
But breatheth—Christ is caring now.

## The Biography of a Hymn.

BY MRS. G. HALL.

"Who trusts in God's unchanging love  
Builds on the rock that none can move."

Every hymn has its history, and there are some that well might claim a biography; for like a peal of bells heard a thousand times, they bring out through all the ages a story, each line of which has connected itself with some human heart in its burden of sorrow, bringing to it light and consolation, or promise of eternal peace.

One of the sweetest of these "lullabies sung to the weary," and one thus curiously interwoven with human struggles, is perhaps the most beautiful of all the German hymns, *albeit* Germany is preeminently the land of hymns. The merest accident gave it birth, and yet what a story of infinite love it reveals; as if from the very Father himself, preaching as true a sermon as ever came from the lips of minister or layman. To the lovers of the hymn in question—and there are many—this little sketch may be of interest.

In one of the narrowest lanes of the city of Hamburg, and in one of the most obscure houses there, during the year 1592, a young man took up his temporary abode. No one knew anything about him, except that he was very, very poor, and that he brought with him a small violin upon which he played continually, and with so much expression that the humblest people gathered about his window to listen to the music. How he lived no one knew—not even the good natured woman with whom he was stopping. For days going without eating, refusing every overture from Mistress Johannsen, parting with one article after another until a bag of straw and the old cloak which he constantly wore on his midnight rambles (for it was only then that he appeared in the street), were all that the room contained—excepting the old violin which stood in one corner, and which had been silent now for more than three days.

The kind landlady had noticed this, and that he had not been out in all that time. Though poor herself, she had a very kind heart, and she determined to go to his room and inquire the cause. She found the poor young man with his head buried in his hands upon the open window-sill, and upon enquiry learned that he was very sick—a form of sickness which is hardest to bear than that from starvation!

"You are hungry, I am sure," said good Mistress Johannsen, "and though we have not much for ourselves, you shall not starve."

The young man colored deeply as she said this, but without a word more she left the room, and in a few minutes returned with food.

After he had eaten what she had brought him—which was not much—she ventured to question him in regard to his destitute condition.

"Do you not know any one in Hamburg? Who are you? You seem so

mysterious! Are you a musician? What are you doing here?"

The young man smiled at her volley of questions, but she had been so kind that he at once made answer: "I am indeed a stranger, good woman. My name is George Neumark, and I was born in Muhlhausen, where my parents died many years ago. They were poor, but honest people. I have eaten my bread in tears many a day since then. Yet I should sin against the Lord, my God, did I complain. I know he will not let me suffer more than he thinks best. I could tell you many things, my good woman, of the wonderful goodness of God, even in all my misery."

"But how do you live, young man? Are you a musician?"

"Well, I am, and I am not. I have but one friend in all the world, and that is my old violin! And as for what I have lived on, ever since I have known of God I have lived on His promises. You have heard me play, and I can write some. I have tried place after place where I hoped to earn my daily bread, and at last I came here, where I am again doomed to disappointment. And now, having parted with everything else, I have nothing left in all the world but my constant companion—and here he broke down with emotion."

Now in one of the crooked lanes of the city lived Nathan Hirsch, a Jew and a pawnbroker. He was always on the watch for the steps that brought him pelf. To-night it was no new step when he heard young Neumark in his shabby cloak enter the musty shop. He had been there many a time before.

"Good evening," said the Jew, "why so late? Couldn't you wait till morning?"

"No, Nathan; if I had waited I should never have come at all. I am about to part with all I hold dear. Come, tell me quickly, what will you give me for this violin?"

"Pray, what could I do with such a thing in my establishment, and it is not worth a farthing to me."

"Poor Neumark's countenance fell. 'Nathan,' he said, 'for five long years I starved to pay the five pounds to buy it. Lend me two on it, I beg you. It is all of earthly comfort that I own, and yet I must part with it for a season at any rate. I might almost as well pawn my soul.'

"What would I do with your soul? The violin might be mine."

"Hush, Nathan, say not so. Thy people crucified my Saviour, but he has redeemed my soul. I am his, and he will never suffer me to want."

The Jew suddenly gave him the pounds as he ceased speaking, and as Neumark turned to go, late as it was and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, he snatched up his violin, and seating himself upon a bow in the farther end of the shop, he sang a hymn so exquisitely soft that the Jew listened in spite of himself. As he laid it carefully down he said to himself, "This is very hard, may God have mercy on me; for ten long years we have been together, and when I was dulled it sang back all my courage. I would rather give my heart's blood than this comforter. I pray that I may submit as he would have me."

Neumark left the shop a sadder man than he had crossed that threshold for many a day, repeating to himself, to keep his courage up, "As God wills, I am still."

Just at the door, for it was very dark he almost stumbled over a man, who had been listening as he played.

"Pray tell me if it was you who was playing so beautifully a few minutes ago. I am a very poor man, but that hymn you sang has gone through my very soul. Will you give me a copy of it? I will pay you for it."

Neumark was about to brush past him but the earnestness of the man arrested his attention.

"I am poor myself," he answered, "but you shall have it without pay. But who are you, that are so much interested in my music?"

"I am John Gutig, servant in the house of the Swedish Ambassador, Baron Von Rosencranz."

"Well then," said Neumark, "come to me at Mistress Johannsen's to-morrow morning, and you shall have it."

A few days after Gutig appeared, and the copy was handed him; but the servant had another object in view. He told him that his master had a

secretary who had written all his letters, but he had left very suddenly, and he had told Baron of him; how he had seen him at the pawnbroker's, where he had heard him say he was parting with his 'best friend' because he was so poor; and adding: 'the Ambassador sent me to bring you right away.'

Neumark was almost stunned at this announcement.

"Yes," he said to himself, "God's ways are truly wonderful. Surely, they that trust in him shall not want any good thing," and turning to the servant, prepared to follow him.

As he entered the room where the Ambassador was seated, the latter received him kindly, and said: "I understand you are a poet; I have read your verses, and like them much. Do you write nothing, but hymns?"

"I never knew anyone, sir, who was rich to write hymns. It is the cross that presses such music out of us," Neumark replied.

The Ambassador was astounded at the reply, though not at all angry—and looking up at the honest face of young Neumark said to him: "I hear you are very poor. Have you ever cursed your life?"

"Very near it, many times; but thank God, I never really have. He has always kept the true peace in my heart. Besides, the Lord called the poor blessed, and was himself poor for our sakes; and the very poor, the Apostle says, may make many rich. And after all, it is not so hard to be reconciled to poverty."

"You have spoken like a man of faith," said the Baron. "I hear you know something of the law. Do you know anything of jurisprudence, so that you could sift papers?"

"I will try, if your highness will bear with me."

The Baron handed him the papers, requesting him to take his own time, and when ready come to him again.

Never was a more radiant face than Neumark's as he left the Ambassador's house that night, talking all the way to himself, "Oh, have I not known it! Leave God to order all thy ways!"

For he had won the victory, and received the appointment. As fast as he could go, he went to Jew Nathan's.

"Give me my dear old friend; here are the five-and-twenty shillings, and a half a crown which I present you. You took advantage of me in my greatest need, but I thank you for the loan. If you had not given them to me I should have left Hamburg a beggar. As it is God made you an instrument in his hands to keep me here. You cannot know the joy one Christian has in saving another, and now I pay you in the way you like best, *hard money*, but do not forget—

"Who trusts in God's unchanging love,  
Builds on the rock that nought can move."

Seizing his treasure with an iron grip and hurrying home, never stopping until he had reached his miserable room, he sat down and played with such surpassing sweetness that Mistress Johannsen hurried in with a storm of questions which were unnoticed, Neumark playing and singing all the while until the landlady could not have told whether she were really on earth at all!

After a while he turned to Mistress Johannsen, and requested that she should call in as many persons as the house would hold. "Bring them all in for I am the happiest man in all Hamburg, and I want to sing them a hymn they have never heard before. Go, good Mistress Johannsen, bring me in a congregation, and my dear violin shall preach the sermon."

The house was very old, and not very large, but the fame of Neumark's playing had gone abroad, and very soon it was filled with quiet and attentive listeners. Neumark seized the bow played a few bars, and then sang with a voice brimful of joy:

Leave God to order all thy ways,  
And trust in Him, whatever betide,  
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days  
Thine all sufficient strength and guide—  
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,  
Builds on the rock that nought can move.

What can these anxious cares avail,  
These never ceasing moans and sighs;  
What can it help us to bewail  
Each painful moment as it flies?  
Our cross and trials do but press  
The heavier for our bitterness.

Only your restless heart keep still,  
And wait in cheerful hope, content  
To take whatever his gracious will,  
His all-discerning love hath sent;  
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known  
To him who chose us for his own.

He knows when joyful hours are best,  
He sends them as he sees it meet;  
When thou hast borne his fiery test,  
And now art freed from all deceit,  
He comes to thee all unaware,  
And makes thee own his loving care.

The singer ceased, for his voice trembled with emotion, while the tears ran down his cheeks. The little audience sat in silent awe, both at the music and the words. Mistress Johannsen was the first to speak, drying her eyes with her apron.

"Dear, dear Mr. Neumark; this seems like being in church and forgetting all my care, only remembering Christ and heaven. What does it all mean? This morning you were so dull and now your heart is leaping for joy. God must have been helping you."

"Yes, that he has, my gracious Lord and Saviour. All my need is over. With a hundred crowns a year I am to be secretary to the Swedish Ambassador, and to relieve my present distress he has given me outright five-and-twenty crowns, and with this money I have redeemed my old and trusty friend. Good people, I stand before you a living monument to God's mercy, so do not forget in your sorest distress 'Who trusts in God's unchanging love, Builds on the rock that nought can move!'"

Mistress Johannsen still questioned him: "Mr. Neumark, where did you find this hymn? I thought I knew all the hymn-book by heart, but I am sure I have never seen that one. I half believe you made it your-elf?"

"I? Well, I was perhaps the instrument in God's hands, but he himself swept the strings. All I knew was this, 'Who trusts in God's unchanging love.' Over and over again I have said them, and they lay upon my heart, and to-day they have shaped themselves into these words, I cannot tell how. He only knows—and just in proportion as my heart blessed the Lord for all his mercies, word followed word, like water from a fountain. Now hear the rest:

Not in the heat of pain or strife,  
Think God has cast thee off unheard;  
Nor that the man whose prosperous life  
Thou enviest is of him preferred,  
Time passes, and much change doth bring,  
And sets a bound to everything.

All are alike before his face;  
'Tis easy for our God most high  
To make the rich man poor and base,  
To give the poor man wealth and joy.  
True wonders still of him are wrought,  
Who setteth up, and brings to nought.

Sing, pray, and avenge not from his ways  
But do thine own part faithfully.  
Trust his rich promises of grace,  
So shall it be fulfilled in thee;  
God never yet forsook in need  
The soul that trusted him indeed.

As Neumark finished he placed his instrument silently in the corner, completely overcome, and the audience quietly dispersed. He wrote many verses in after years, but the one quaint legacy he left the church was the hymn composed for that little group of people when God gave him back his dearly loved violin.

## The Formation of Christian Character.

It is with the building up of Christian character as with the formation of crystals. In order that a crystal may be properly and perfectly formed, at least three things are needful; there must be ample time in which all unnecessary fluid can be dissipated, and the component parts of the crystal come gradually together; there must be sufficient room for all the angles and planes of the crystal to attain their requisite size; and there must be the absence of agitation, so that all the points and proportions of the crystal shall be evenly and symmetrically formed. Christian character, when it is what it ought to be, is more beautiful than any crystal that nature's laboratory ever produced; and, in order that it may reach its perfection, time is necessary. It is a thing of quiet growth; it has to rise gradually and by many stages, into form and beauty; to hurry through religious processes will be to mar and spoil the result; we must 'let patience have her perfect work.' And space is as needful as time. If we shut ourselves up in a narrow place, if we go away from the broad, open world and confine ourselves to a monk's seclusion, to a hermit's solitude, we shall be cramped and restricted; and while some parts of our character may become finely and delicately developed, others will be stunted and dwarfed, and the character, as a whole, will be anything but perfect. The absence of agitation, too, is important. Whatever may be going on upon the surface of our life to interrupt

its tranquility, deep down in the depths of the spirit in which character has its beginnings, and from which it grows, there must be the untroubled calm which trust in the Father's will and purposes never fails to inspire; otherwise character will be built up by fits and starts, and so will lack the fullness of harmony, symmetry, majesty, which it ought to possess.—*Baptist Weekly*.

## How to Draw.

Mr. Spurgeon in a late number of the *Sword and Trowel* deals in the following fashion with the question, "How to attract a congregation. A contemporary has been asked: 'Can a man belong to a brass band and be a Christian?' It replies, 'We see no impediment in the way; but if he is a member of a brass band, and is given to practising on his cornet or trombone at home, it is an impossibility for the man next door to be a Christian.' This verdict is one in which I heartily coincide, only, I extend it a little further, and include the equal difficulty of displaying a Christian temper when Salvation Bands go banging through the streets day after day." Mr. Spurgeon next deals with the advertising method of attracting a congregation. "It consists," he remarks "in little puffs instead of big blasts. Odd ways of making yourself known are supposed to be effectual. One advertises on small tissue bills, 'Do you like sugar? Then hear Rev. T. Offey!' Another thus emblazons himself, 'Have you heard Richard Tones?' repeated ten times in separate lines, and followed next week by the advice, 'Go early if you wish to hear Richard Tones.' This can be supported by, 'Over the garden wall! There is no need to attempt this feat in order to hear Richard Tones, if you are at the chapel by six o'clock.' This style of proceeding has its admirers, but it does not add much to the influence exercised by Mr. Tones over judicious minds. He will probably be left in the limbo of quacks by those who give so much as a passing thought to him." Ritualistic methods, Mr. Spurgeon admits, show far greater taste, but he does not believe in the permanence of the attractions offered. For Nonconformist imitations he has only supreme contempt. "Our Dissenting Gothic," he writes, "is an utter abomination to all architectural taste, our organs are usually of the baser sort, and if a fine service is attempted, it is a ridiculous travesty. Why will men pine to do that which they can never do well? And the more especially when, if they succeeded to perfection, the thing would not be worth a bad halfpenny. With the noblest architecture, the best music and the most gorgeous scenic apparatus, the people are not to be drawn to the worship of God: the question is—if they were drawn, would the performance be the worship of God after all? Would it not be as well for them to see millinery, and hear music, and smell incense in the usual depots for such luxuries?"

The best, surest, and most permanent way to fill a place of worship is, Mr. Spurgeon believes, to *preach the Gospel and to preach it in a natural, simple, interesting, earnest way*. "Why should a truthful Gospel," he asks, "be so frequently preached in a false and artificial manner? I know a brother who undoubtedly preaches the Gospel; but one would suppose that he was originally ordained to wear a black cap and pronounce sentences on the condemned: do you wonder that he is not followed? Another bawls at the beginning of his sermon, and raves towards the close, and the friends complain that he gives them the headache: can you not see that he is himself to blame for his thin congregation? A third has a pronounced nasal twang, and somehow people do not enjoy the good news when it savours too much of the nose. Another friend is earnest and good, but he is supernaturally monotonous. I suppose that spiritual men take no notice of monotony, but I am sure that carnal men do; and they carefully get out of the way of Mr. Dronish." Simplicity in preaching the Gospel must also be aimed at. "Crumble down the bread," says Mr. Spurgeon, in his characteristic way, "when you serve it out to the children. Break the loaves and fishes for the multitude. The common people like to hear that which their minds can grasp, but they shun the jargon of the schools."—*Ch. World*.

## The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson V.—NOVEMBER 4, 1883.

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

1 Sam. xii. 13-25.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 23-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth, with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."—1 Sam. xii. 24.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. Saul's First Victory, 1 Sam. ch. xi.

T. Samuel and Saul, 1 Sam. xii. 1-12.

T. The Lesson, 1 Sam. xii. 13-25.

W. Blessing or Cursing, Josh. viii. 30-35.

F. Joshua's Exhortation, Josh. ch. xxiii.

S. Intercession of Christ, Heb. ch. vi.

S. Admonition from Christ, Matt. vii. 13-29.

ISRAEL AND ITS KING ADMONISHED.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Warning, Vs. 13-15. II. A Sign from Heaven, Vs. 16-19. III. Encouragement, Vs. 20-25.

QUESTIONS.—How did Saul gain popular favor? For what did Samuel gather Israel? Where?

Vs. 13-15, (also Vs. 1-12).—What had been the character of Samuel's administration? What did he rehearse? What recent sin? What exhortation to king and people? Why peculiarly timely? What threatening?

Vs. 16-19.—What sign did Samuel ask and receive? Why was it so great a wonder? What did it confirm? What did Samuel wish the people to feel? What was the effect?

Vs. 20-25.—How did Samuel encourage them? What was the great hope? v. 22. What further exhortations? What should they heed? v. 24. What would Samuel do for them? What final warning? What is the condition of the Jews to-day? Will it last forever?

Scripture Searchings.—How were two ways set before Israel soon after they entered the Promised Land? What did Jesus say to the Jews concerning a sign from heaven?

After the public choice of him as king, Saul went to his home in Gibeah, awaiting the call of the Lord to action. The king of the Ammonites besieged Jabesh-gilead (on the east side of the Jordan), and threatened its inhabitants with great cruelties. They sent to Saul for succor. He raised a large army, and came to their rescue, and defeated and dispersed the Ammonites. Thus, his reign was begun with a bold, skillful, and successful measure of deliverance, which created great enthusiasm, and united all hearts to him. Moreover, he signalized his victory by an act of clemency and magnanimity, in refusing to punish the "children of Belial," who had refused to recognize him as king. Samuel took advantage of this time of enthusiasm to assemble the people at Gilgal, to inaugurate the new king over Israel. It is there that he made his farewell address as Judge of Israel, a portion of which is our Lesson to-day. He lived, however, some years after this.

Notes.—Vs. 13.—Now therefore. A turning point in his address. In the first part of it he dwelt specially upon two points. 1. A vindication of himself in the use of his great office. His hands are clean. He has defrauded none, he has oppressed none. 2. A rehearsal of God's gracious dealings with them; a record of his faithfulness in his office as their king. And yet the people have rejected both, and demanded a king. Now, therefore, he is before you: *Behold the king whom ye have chosen, whom ye have desired. The desire having been as a long slumbering fire which has blazed up in the choice. Behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.* That is, he has fulfilled your desire; he has yielded the point, after warning you of the consequences.

Vs. 14, 15.—If ye will fear the Lord (Jehovah). Although the desire for a king was not of God's mind, he takes you now upon this basis; and if now ye will fear Jehovah, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, and both ye, and also your king that reigneth over you, shall continue following Jehovah your God, then it shall be well with you. But. A solemn and significant turn. If ye will not obey, etc. No change in the form of government would offset disobedience to God. It was not a new political constitution that they needed, but new and obedient hearts. Samuel saw that they were likely to fall back into their old sins, and suffer their old penalties. *As it was against your fathers.* God would be as swift to punish them in their kingdom, as under the theocracy. And he would punish their king, as well.