

Forth to Meet Him.

Do not stay away from Him!
Days are dark and nights are dim,
And the roar of wind and ocean
Keep after the Bridegroom's voice:
Yet His steps are drawing near;
Go and meet Him without fear.
Winter changes into summer
When He bids the soul rejoice.

It is good to sit and wait
For love's hand upon the gate,
But 'tis better to go forward
Through the wind and through the rain,
So the sooner thou to stand
Face to face and hand in hand;
For to hearts that throb with longing
Every moment is pure gain.

You may find Him in the street,
Where the needy people meet,
Or where the poor are dying
In some little darkened room;
Where the sad lips part in prayer,
Or the earth-worn hearts despair,
He will come to lighten sorrow,
And to send away the gloom.

You may find Him in the light
Of the lonely mountain-height,
Or in the secret chamber
At the dawn or close of day,
When the spirit seeks its Lord,
There is heard the Master's Word,
For from those who go to meet Him
He is never far away.

Therefore do not idly wait
Though the Bridegroom tarry late,
But go ye forth to meet Him
With your lamps well-trimmed and bright;
For their joy shall never cease,
And their hearts are full of peace,
Whose quest of love has ended
In the gladness of His light.

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM

The Virtue of Straightness.

BY IAN MACLAREN.

Nothing has brought such scandal on religion in public life as the dishonesty of a certain kind of religious people who will call themselves by the name of Christ, and take part in religious meetings, and set themselves up as censors of morals, but who betray the trust of poor investors, and bring banks to ruin, and start bogus companies, and make discreditable bankruptcies, and obtain possession of the means of relatives and trustful people, and who turn out bad work, so that every decent man condemns them, and, when they are not cunning enough, the law fortunately lands them in prison. With their mixture of Phariseism and duplicity, with their cant and their lying, such people are a reproach and a byword, and are ever being flung in our faces. While they are praying and preaching, young men are declaring everywhere that it is because of them they are not Christians. If the Old Testament gospel of morality had been more stringently preached, the Church would not have been cursed with the presence of men who have dared to speak for her, but whom neither God in His Holy Hill, nor the world in her market place, can tolerate, because they do not walk uprightly nor work righteousness.

Nor has the Church as an historic body established so high a claim as one would like for straightforwardness. Why is it that priests have earned so bad a name, and been so keenly hated by the people? Why has one order been expelled from nearly every country in Europe and has often brought cruel persecution upon its fellow Christians? It were a slander to say that all priests are bad, since many have been men of singular devotion and of vast sacrifices; but it is a fact that, as a class, priests have been less than straight. They have used words in a double sense; they have practiced the doctrine of reserve; they have invented astounding excuses for falsehood; they have brought casuistry to the height of a science. One of their chief characteristics has been that rat-like cunning which Browning illustrates in the priest of the "Ring and the Book." Whether called priests or not, all ecclesiastics are tempted to be crafty and diplomatic. They make up catching motions; they devise subtle schemes of policy; they are afraid of exciting prejudices; they are fond of ambiguous words. Certainly no one has ever said that they were simple and guileless. There are fair grounds for saying that while the Church has taken the intellectual failing of heresy and made it into a sin, she has condoned the moral failing of trickery and almost raised it to a virtue.

Has it ever happened to us to have a dispute, say, about a statement we have made, or about a matter of business, or about family affairs, or even about a game with a man of the world, and he told us plainly that we had acted dishonorably? Not illegally—which is a different matter, and has to be tried by a different standard—but dishonorably, as between man and man, when tried by the working code of straightness. If he was wrong, it was a bitter moment that he should have thought so badly of us; but if he was right, was it not ghastly! What did we do in that moment when the

light was suddenly turned on in the cellar of our souls, and we was the loathsome creatures of darkness making for their holes? Did we acknowledge our sin to man and God, or did we try to justify ourselves, and afterwards—which is the cheapest thing that we could do—pretend that we were martyrs for religion's sake? When Pharaoh told Abraham to his face that he was a liar, it was one of the lamentable paradoxes in the history of religion, for in that hour Pharaoh stood higher than Abraham before the conscience of men and in the sight of God.

If anyone be conscious that he has a taint of crookedness in his blood, and that he is inclined to play tricks; if he has already been exposed and put to shame because he did not speak the truth, and his hands were not clean, let him face the situation and bestir himself. There is nothing but contempt and humiliation in store for the dishonorable man at the hands of the world, nothing but self-reproach and self-loathing within his own soul. His own wife, try as she may, will not be able to respect him, and his children, as one thing after another becomes plain to them, will be ashamed of him. And whatever he believes, and however he prays, there can be no welcome for him with God, who is the fountain of truth and righteousness. The thoughts of men are often foolish, and their judgment vain; but, after all, they honour straightness. The ways of God are often dark and past finding out, but of one thing we may be sure, the blessing of God rests upon righteousness, both in this world and in that which is to come.—British Weekly.

The Widow's Mite.

BY JARED L. FULLER.

The careless and oft-times flippant use of Scriptural expressions becomes a habit with some people. Sometimes the habit is wholly thoughtless; but the hypocrite ever seeks to hide his hypocrisy under the garb of piety, and men whose only god is gold, and whose business it is to rob the widow and the fatherless, frequently have the Bible at their tongue's end.

In a certain town the Christian people were endeavoring to build a new church edifice to replace one which age had long since made truly unfit for worship. It was not an especially wealthy community, and the hard-working pastor who led the movement, knew that first subscription on the paper would very likely govern those which followed in point of amount, at least. He thought long and prayed over whom he should approach for that first subscription.

There was one very wealthy man in the place, but he had never been known to do a really generous act in his life. At least such was the report. He loved money better than most men love themselves. The pastor well knew that, did he feel so disposed, Old Squire Buckridge could head the subscription list for the new church with a generous sum. It seemed to the good man, too, as though it was right for him to approach the old gentleman first, though, truth to tell, his faith was not what it should have been. We are very apt to let our fore-knowledge of people and circumstances get in the way of our faith in this world.

Of course the minister was primed to answer the usual objections of "the old church having been good enough to worship the Lord in for fifty years," and such like moth-eaten excuses for continuing to ask God to meet his people in a structure in which the people themselves would have been ashamed to house their cattle. It is really odd how humble folks are and how little they feel given to display when the need of a new church edifice is mentioned.

But the pastor patiently got over that stage of the discussion and finally managed to make the squire see how really beneficial to the town in general, and to his property interests in particular, a new church would be.

"Wal, elder," said the old gentleman, "I expect if you really air goin' to build a new meetin' house, I shall have to do somethin' for you. Money's very tight now, an' sometimes I don't know which way to turn for ready money, there's so many calls for it—I don't, for a fact. But every little helps, I s'pose; th' Lord commended the widdier's mite, ye know, an' I'll certainly do as well as the widdier did; ye can count on my mite, elder," and he chuckled softly.

The poor pastor felt, while the old man was speaking, as though all his work had gone for naught. Suddenly he raised his head and stared sharply into the squire's face.

"Do you mean what you say, brother?" he asked, gravely.

"Eh?"

"Do you mean that you will subscribe for this worthy object as gener-

ously as the widow gave to the Lord's treasury?"

The squire looked at him in surprise.

"Why, elder, I'll do better'n that by ye!" he exclaimed, with another chuckle.

The minister leaned forward and laid his hand heavily on the squire's arm, still with his eyes fixed upon the other's face. "We do not ask nor expect such generosity, Brother Buckridge," he said, sternly. "Not for our church, at least, though I would be glad to know that you considered your riches held only in trust for the Lord."

"Wha—what d' yeou mean, elder?" gasped the old gentleman, weakly.

"The widow, squire, gave all the living that she had, and was commended for it. The rich men who threw in gold of their abundance, only thought they were being generous."

The pastor rose and went away without further comment. But the very next day the squire was round and set down his name on the subscription list for far more than the good man had dared hope. Nor was it the last generous thing the old man did. The minister's pointed words had opened the squire's eyes to his own condition.—Pres. Witness.

Where Heroes are Made.

BY LAURA M. GEMMILL.

Living, as I do, at the entrance of a great park in a great Western city, and watching on a Sunday the host of the idle and the godless thronging to the beer gardens which are brazenly located hard by, I feel tempted to say with Elijah, "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant: thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword [of indifference]; and I, even I only, am left."

But this summer a voice in my soul said to me, "Go forth, and stand upon the hills of Pennsylvania before the Lord." And, behold, the Lord passed by. And I found, as my soul hungered to find, "left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal."

Rising at half-past five o'clock, and feeding at six, breakfasting at seven, driving five miles to the church on the hill, I found a people who were all at Sunday-school at half-past nine o'clock, with a lesson prepared six days in the week for the seventh.

I found a bright young superintendent far the busiest man in the community, father of a little family, proprietor of a large creamery, country storekeeper and postmaster all combined, but not too busy to invite his teachers once a week to his cosy home for a prayerful study of the lesson,—not to busy, after six days of partial preparation of the lesson, to rise early on the seventh, and with Bible go out alone, far into the orchard, to get his school where he should face it. How his face shone while he talked to his boys and girls last Sunday on the Golden Text. "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see!"

The pastor was away on a two week's vacation. A brother minister from a neighboring rural church filled his pulpit, driving ten miles to reach Sunday-school in time to teach a Bible class of twenty.

I say it sincerely, and without reservation, that I heard that day in that country church, the most powerful and heart-stirring sermon I have heard in a year, not excepting a red-letter sermon in a city pulpit last April.

How he prayed for poor China! A gray-haired father who had bowed his head in bitterness for he had a brave missionary son in peril there—lifted it with the bitterness all melted away.

I heard him that night, at the family altar, pleading with the Father to bring these darkened ones into the light, sparing, if he could do so and accomplish his purpose, the boy in whom fond hopes are centered. A graduate of Princeton, and of four sons the only one to take a collegiate education, father and mother dreamed dreams and saw visions of an honorable career in a home pulpit. But at Northfield, one summer seven years ago, the boy saw visions of China's needs, and "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Writing to his anxious mother from Tien-tsin during the bombardment, he spoke of the shells whizzing over his home every two minutes, and striking wide of the mark. "God has been very gracious. He has spared my life. Surely he has a work for me to do yet in China."

And this brave fellow is not the only representative in the foreign field from this little church. Another boy out of this wide-awake Sunday-school gave his heart to Christ, and his life, three years ago, to obeying Christ's command, "Go ye, . . . teach all nations." He is at the front, at the capital of Persia.

Do you wonder that a preacher

standing in such a pulpit could plead as with a tongue of fire with the God of the nations for the missionaries, and the poor, blind heathen too? Is it any wonder that children sitting under such prayers, living under such examples from pastor, superintendent, and teachers in the Sunday-school, grow into men and women who either go into the battle's front with the banner of the cross, or stay by the stuff, living such faith-filled lives that those who pass by recall instinctively the words of Jesus: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Communion With God a Cure for Loneliness.

A short time ago the daily papers stated that an elderly gentleman had died of natural causes in a cemetery in New Orleans, where he was visiting the grave of his only son, who had recently died. There were tear marks upon the face of the old man when the body was discovered, and a note in his pocket stated that he was the last of his family. There was no suspicion of suicide; the poor man had died of exhaustion produced by loneliness and sorrow.

There is no loneliness like that which accompanies human sorrow. The gentle, persuasive sympathy of friends cannot dissipate it; communion with nature cannot shake off its pall; recourse to intellectual activity cannot diminish its heaviness; and the allurements of the world or of the secular life tend rather to emphasize it. But the loneliness is more bitter and poignant when the sorrow that causes it results from the obliteration of a man's family, and he has turned away from the grave saying:

"Plundered, plundered, all is plundered; The last tie to earth is sundered!"

Men may speak cynically if they choose about family pride, the heritage of a great name, and the desire to preserve it and perchance render it illustrious, but they do violence to a profound human instinct, for the blotting out of a family is one of the most pathetic incidents in human history. Nevertheless, one should have a view broad enough and a faith deep and firm enough to lay hold of the Christian doctrine which connects both worlds in one family under the declaration, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Holding such a faith, less importance will be attached to racial continuance on this side of the narrow stream of death, and more to the adoption of every member of the earthly family into that eternal family of which God is the Father. Besides, such a faith yields the comforts and consolations of gracious resignation and submission to the higher will and to the unerring wisdom of the Father of all mercies and God of all comfort. Faith supplants misgiving, smiles scatter and dry up the tears, contentment reigns in the heart, the hope of reunion fills the soul with an unspeakable and satisfying joy, and thus in the midst of the darkness and the loneliness the stricken one can say:

"Who murmurs that in these dark days
His lot is cast?
God's hand within the shadow lays
The stones whereon his gates of praise
Shall rise at last."

The supreme cure for heart loneliness is communion with God; and it seems sometimes as if only by means of the loneliness which sorrow brings do we come to appreciate the value, satisfaction, and real meaning of intercourse with the divine Father. At such times we may have a clearer knowledge of His purpose, a more definite comprehension of the divine economy, a higher conception of our own relation to that purpose and economy, and out of it all may come a more settled determination to devote ourselves to the cause of God and the service of mankind. It requires loneliness sometimes to convince us that we are not alone, and the darkness to show us the light. It was Righter who said: "When we walked under the forest aisles in summer the foliage hid from us God's sweet skies. But it was only when the desolating winds of winter had made the branches bare that through these very black, and naked boughs we could all the better discern God's eternal guiding star."

To one who is in complete harmony with God, and who enjoys the blessings of communion with Him, the things that seem mysterious in His dealings with His children have all a beneficent meaning; the things that seem contradictory and inconsistent with a kind and considerate nature are all acknowledged to be right and reasonable, even though their immediate necessity may not be apparent; and the things that have brought sorrow, or loneliness, or distress, or disappointment, or pain are all revealed as the objects of a sublime and

holy purpose, and are accepted as having their place among the "all things" which work together for good to them that love God.—Chris. Advocate.

Being Wcrt; Knowing.

A girl who was eager, ambitious and restless for many things once heard two sentences that changed much of her life. They were these: "Would you be known? Then be worth knowing."

In a flash she saw how cheap an ambition hers had been and how selfish. Who was she to long for the friendship of high souls? What had she to give them in return for the treasure of their lives? Would she, as she was, even understand their language?

In humility and sorrow she prayed again—no longer that she might be known, but that, in God's good time, her own life might grow strong and beautiful, that she might prove worthy of all the blessings that were given her. Then, since God in His wisdom teaches us to answer many of our prayers, she began to study, to read, to think, and to try to love greatly. So years passed.

Did she become known? Never as in her girlish dreams; but she found something far, far better. For she learned that to be known is nothing and to try to be worth knowing that one may be known is less than nothing; but to lift one's soul to highest living, because one will not be satisfied with lesser things, is a task whose joy deepens with every passing year and reaches on into God's eternity.—Selected.

No religious profession amounts to anything if it does not include a readiness to put one's property at the service of the Lord. It has been well said that "a personal consecration" should be spelled "a purse-and-all consecration." And the full restitution for all that has been taken wrongfully must be made by a Christian disciple, even to the stripping of himself of all his earthly goods.—Trumbull.

You are as much the object of God's solicitude as if none lived but yourself.—Robertson.

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