

MISSION HYMN.

BY L. H. SIGOURNEY.

Onward! onward men of heaven,
Rear the gospel's banner high;
Rest not, till its light is given,
Star of every pagan sky.
Bear it where the pilgrim stranger
Faints 'neath Asia's vertic ray;
Bid the red-browed forest ranger
Hail it, ere he fades away.
Where the Arctic ocean thunders,
Where the tropics fiercely glow,
Broadly spread its page of wonders,
Brightly bid its radiance flow.
India marks its luster, stealing,
Shivering Greenland loves its rays,
Africa, 'mid her deserts kneeling,
Lifts the untainted strain of praise.
Tide in speech, or grim in feature,
Dark in spirit though they be,
Show that light to every creature,
Prince or vassal, bond or free.
Lo! they haste to every nation;
Host on host the ranks supply;
Onward! Christ is your salvation;
And your victory is high.

Selected Serial.

ALYPIUS OF TAGASTE.

A Tale of the Early Church.

BY MRS. WEBB,
Author of "Pomponia; or, the Gospel in
Caesar's Household," etc.

CHAPTER I.

The sun rose upon a busy scene in the streets of Alexandria one glorious summer morning in the latter part of the fourth century. The great main street, which ran from the eastern extremity of the city to the Neropolis at the western end, a distance of thirty stadia, was thronged already with eager citizens, mostly arrayed in holiday costume, and with an expression of expectation on their animated countenances. Still more crowded was the wide intersecting street which crossed the longer one at right angles, nearly from north to south, and afforded, as it was intended to do, a free passage to the cool northern breezes, for the ventilation of the populous city. Down this street one continuous stream of chariots, and horses, and foot passengers flowed nosily towards the port on the Mareotic Lake, but not for any aquatic purposes. No gaily-decked galleys waited to bear these pleasure-seekers over the smooth and glittering waters of the lake. The stream of human beings did not flow down the marble steps which led to the water's edge, but took a southward direction across the plain, and formed an almost unbroken line along the road which led to the Circus, situated about a mile below the city.

The Roman Prefect had proclaimed a holiday for his subjects of all nations and all creeds; for truly Alexandria numbered a vast variety of both among her permanent inhabitants, as well as among the visitors who came from distant provinces on such joyful occasions as that of which we now speak.

And what was that occasion? And why was Alexander's city now like a hive of bees when the countless swarm pours forth into the sunshine as an escort to their queen? Let some individuals of the human swarm reply to the query.

"It will be a brave show to-day, Julius," said a young man to his friend and fellow-student at the school of rhetoric and philosophy at Alexandria, as they turned together out of a by-street into the crowded thoroughfare. "My heart beats high at the thought of the deeds that we are about to witness, and I am impatient to reach the Circus, and secure a seat on the front benches. I would see it all; and yet I tremble a little when I picture to myself the ghastly wounds, and the flowing blood, and the dying struggles of man and beast. I hardly know, in this case, which will be the nobler animal of the two."

Julius laughed somewhat derisively, and replied: "The quadruped, surely; for the bipeds will only be the hired ruffians, and a herd of Lybian captives, whose doom of death will be executed in this approved manner for the amusement of the good people of Alexandria. Perhaps, by way of a crowning pleasure, we may have two or three of these catiff Christians brought on

the stage, and given up to the sport of the tigers or the gladiators. I know that our good and loyal Prefect has several of the hated sect in his strongholds; and as he has intimated that this is to be a superlatively grand entertainment, I make no doubt it will close with a display of martyrdom, as they call it."

His friend, Alypius, slightly started, and drew his arm hastily from that of Julius. Then, having made a pretence of arranging the folds of his upper robe, he again placed his hand on his companion's arm, and said, though with some hesitation—"I will not stay in the Circus to see my fellow-creatures torn to pieces for no crime but that of worshipping a different God from those whom I have been taught to serve. The Lybian prisoners must abide the chances of war. They knew what to expect when they took up arms against the imperial government. But these Christians are not criminals. On the contrary, Rome has no better subjects, no truer adherents, than the members of this maligned and persecuted sect. Their noble courage, and unexampled patience, would almost lead one to believe that they are sustained by Divine strength, and are trusting in a Divine Master."

It was now Julius's turn to start. He almost stopped; but the increasing throng of passengers on the raised footway carried him on unconsciously. He turned, however, and looked keenly in Alypius' face. The open and ingenuous expression which he there met seemed to reassure him; for he smiled, and pressed the arm of his friend as he exclaimed, "Well, when you talked so, I began to fear that either your brain was wandering, or your faith was wavering. But no; I see in those clear, honest eyes that all is right with you; and it is only that over-tender heart of yours that leads you to pity the brutes, both human and feline, and even to sympathize with the Nazarenes, who are more pernicious than either. Why, Alypius, my friend, you should have been born a woman. Your gentleness might put many of our dames and maidens to shame; but then your courage and your talents are an example to all our youths, and chiefly to myself, most noble Alypius."

Cheerfully and sportively Julius spoke; but there was truth in what he said; and he had correctly sketched the character of his friend. Alypius was indeed endowed with warm and affectionate feelings, and a degree of sympathy for suffering, which more commonly belongs to the gentler sex. But his whole character was manly, and his abilities far above the common level. He was, in every respect, the superior of Julius; and yet their tastes and pursuits were similar, and while they studied together in the schools, a mutual friendship had sprung up between them. Julius was a native of Alexandria, where his parents had long resided, and where he hoped by-and-by to establish himself as a teacher of philosophy. Alypius was only a stranger and sojourner in the city, and had come thither from Tagaste, a small town near Carthage, for the purpose of completing his education in the capital of Lower Egypt.

Tagaste was, at the time of which we now speak, a town of little note; but ere long it became distinguished as the birth-place of the great Augustine, afterwards Bishop of Hippo. This celebrated man was born at Tagaste, in November 353, about five years before Alypius saw the light. Their respective mothers were neighbours and friends; and the boys, notwithstanding the difference in their ages, were companions and playfellows. As they grew up they became separated; for Augustine was sent by his father, Patricius, first to Madensa, and then, in his sixteenth year, to Carthage, to study in the schools which flourished in each place; while Alypius remained at home until he was of an age to enter on a course of philosophy under the distinguished teachers at Alexandria.

Calanthe, the mother of Alypius, was not a Christian when he left his native town; and, during his residence in Alexandria, which had now

been for two years, he had seen very little of her. But he knew that she was deeply attached to Monica, the mother of Augustine, who was not only a devoted follower of Christ herself, but who, by her prayers, her teaching, and her example, had brought her husband to embrace the same holy faith, and practise the same holy life, some time previous to his death.

Alypius had seen the beauty of Monica's character, and had been drawn towards her by the kindness of her manner, and the charm of her intelligent conversation. Into the tenets of her religion he had never inquired, for all religions had seemed to him of equal value, so long as the professors of each and all lived honourable and upright lives. But he could not hate the disciples of Christ when he knew that Monica was one of the number; he could not hear unmoved of the cruelty and persecution that was so continually exercised against the lowly followers of the crucified Nazarene, when he knew that his mother's dearest friend worshipped that Man of Sorrows as her Lord and her God, and modelled her pure and useful life on the doctrines and the precepts which he had taught. His own mind was deeply imbued with the errors of a vain philosophy, and with the heathen notions of the innate dignity, and possible purity and perfection of human nature; and he looked on the Christians as a misguided and superstitious sect.

Fabius, the Prefect who then governed in Alexandria, had made an outward profession of Christianity; but he was still a heathen at heart. He looked down with philosophical contempt and scorn upon every form of religion. To him all faith was superstition, all zeal fanaticism, all earnest belief folly. Some sort of religion, he thought, was needful for the lower orders, and the gods of his forefathers would have answered the purpose very well. He was sorry that any change had been made. The Christians were very troublesome people for him to deal with, and he never missed an opportunity of venting his dislike to them. This state of affairs in Alexandria enabled him to do. The Arians had now the upper hand. The orthodox believers, who knew Christ as their Saviour and their Lord, were in a minority; and the heretical sect joining with the Jews, the heathens, and the philosophers, gave the Prefect the opportunity he so much desired, of once more seeing Christians cast to the lions, and slain in the amphitheatre.

Nothing could have been more acceptable to the degraded inhabitants of Alexandria than this. The Prefect had long been unpopular amongst them, but the announcement of his intentions had turned the tide of popular feeling in his favour. Therefore Fabius had seized several of the obnoxious persons of both sexes, and of various ages, and had kept them for some months in prison, waiting for a favourable opportunity of offering them up to gratify his own hatred and the malignity of their accusers. We shall see how he carried out his intentions.

Meanwhile, Julius and Alypius were pressing onwards towards the Circus, anxious to obtain seats so near the stage as to enable them to see even the features of the combatants, and to watch the expression of their countenances all through the deadly struggle. It was the first time that Alypius had brought himself to be a spectator of these cruel scenes; but Julius had witnessed them both at Alexandria and at other places; and he had painted in such glowing colours to his friend the exquisite excitement which thrilled through the breasts of the spectators, that he had induced him to accompany him to the Circus, and even to feel a strong desire for the animating spectacle, though not unmingled with a shrinking from the sight of human blood and human agony. This shrinking had been greatly increased by the prospect which Julius held out of the games being concluded by the torturing and the death of the Christian prisoners. But Alypius was ashamed to draw back now, and to confess that he could not face a spectacle which

high-born and delicately-nurtured ladies sat to witness with delight. So he went on, but with slackening speed, and with what he felt to be a firm resolve to leave the Circus the moment there were any signs that the Christian victims were to be brought on the stage.

To be continued.

The Origin of the Post-Office.

The Post-Office is an example of the mode in which things change while names remain. It was originally the office which arranged the posts or places at which, on the great roads, relays of horses and men could be obtained for the rapid forwarding of Government despatches. There was a Chief Post-master of England many years before any system of conveyance of private letters by the Crown was established. Such letters were conveyed either by carriers, who used the same horses throughout their whole journey, or by relays of horses maintained by private individuals, that is, by private post. The scheme of carrying the correspondence of the public by means of Crown messengers originated in connection with foreign trade. A Post-Office for letters to foreign parts was established "for the benefit of the English merchants" in the reign of James I., but the extension of the system to inland letters was left to the succeeding reign. Charles I., by a Proclamation issued in 1635, may be said to have founded the present Post-Office. By this Proclamation he commanded "his Postmaster of England for foreign parts to settle a running post or two, to run night and day between Edinburgh and London, to go thither and come back again in six days, and to take with them all such letters as shall be directed to any posttown in or near that road." Neighbouring towns, such as Lincoln and Hull were to be linked on to this main route, and posts on similar principles were directed to be established on other great high-roads, such as those to Chester and Holyhead, to Exeter and Plymouth. So far no monopoly was claimed, but two years afterwards a second Proclamation forbade the carriage of letters by any messengers except those of the king's Postmaster-General, and thus the present system was inaugurated. The monopoly thus claimed, though no doubt devised by the King to enhance the Royal power and to bring money into the Exchequer, was adopted by Cromwell and his Parliament, one main advantage in their eyes being that the carriage of correspondence by the Government would afford "the best means to discover and prevent any dangerous and wicked designs against the Commonwealth." The opportunity of an extensive violation of letters, especially if they proceeded from suspected Royalists, was no doubt an attractive bait; and it is rather amusing to notice how the tables were thus turned on the monarchical party by means of one of the Sovereign's own acts of aggression. However, from one motive or another Royalists and Parliamentarians agreed in the establishment of a State Post, and the institution has come down without a break from the days of Charles I. to our own.—*English Illustrated Magazine.*

FACTIE.

A Burlington mother has miraculously cured her youngest hopeful of smoking by the laying on of hands. At a town meeting in Ireland it was recently voted that "all persons in the town owning dogs shall be muzzled."

"When in society, never talk of yourself," is the injunction of an authority on etiquette. People in society never do they run down other people.

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