

the wilderness. Some recollect us out us very keenly, and even make us furious with resentful anger. It was surely not so with Ishmael. He was not hardened by hardship. He was a giant and a true king, and his eye took in wide sweeps of things, and thus helped his soul toward large and noble judgments.

Abraham is our father, too, if we believe, for he is "the father of the faithful." If we blame him for ought of shortcoming or misdeed, we blame ourselves, for we are more to be reproached than he. Abraham lived in the twilight, we live in the full noon; Abraham stood alone, we are members of the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, with throngs of friends around us, and blessed memories and inspirations. Let us cultivate the pilgrim spirit. Let us "declare plainly that we seek a country." Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Bind the sandals, grasp the staff, tarry briefly everywhere, and though faint, be evermore pursuing, content with nothing less than heaven.—*The Complete Preacher*.

## RUSSIAN SOLDIERS AND THE BIBLE.

A member of the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society writes:—More than 60,000 Bibles and portions of the Scriptures have been bought lately by the soldiers of the Russian armies since they crossed the Pruth. Large editions have been required, and the books were sent from Vienna, Odessa, St. Petersburg, and London, necessarily for very high rates for carriage, and involving an expense of £8,000. The agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who has conducted the arrangements, reports from Bucharest several interesting particulars, as follows:—

"As to the Russians, we are one and all of opinion that their readiness to buy is unparalleled in our experience of the Society's Continental works. It is a strange thing, and yet not less true than strange, when fierce-looking Cossacks, armed to the teeth, thank you ten times over for having brought them the New Testament, and when they can scarce be restrained in the gladness of their hearts from taking you in their bony arms to give you a well-meant, albeit none the less dreaded, hug of gratitude. And not only do the men buy, but they read; for they can read, and that to an extent that

has utterly surprised me. All the reports received by me agree in this particular, that there are comparatively few unable to read, and the explanation given by the common men, as well as by some of high rank, of the glad but strange fact is that, since the introduction of general compulsory military service a few years ago, it has been made obligatory on all the subalterns and on the younger commissioned officers to see to it, as soon as the recruits enter the army, that they acquire the wholesome art of reading. Dr. Obermuller, the Grand Duke's physician, told me that the arrangement gave such satisfaction at the time that men whose term of service had run out, had asked permission before quitting to attend the new reading-class. In the long Russian winters, with snow all around many feet deep, drilling impossible, and all out-of-door exercises impracticable, spelling and reading were welcomed as pleasant and profitable pastimes. Not only do the Russians buy, not only can they read but they do read; and through the camp, and along the roadside, they may be seen in their spare hours, book in hand, alone or in small companies. It is a sight to do a man's heart good. It is but repeating what has been told me time after time by different parties in various parts of the country, that, speaking generally, the Russian soldier has yet to be discovered who would speak an irreverent word of the Holy Gospel, or who would knowingly venture to treat a Bible colporteur with harshness or contempt. Generally the title-page of their New Testament has been to our men a more valuable credential, a more powerful recommendation, than either their passport or their license, and while common hawkers are strictly forbidden, our colporteurs are joyfully welcomed. It has frequently been the case that the commanding officer has been the first to buy a number of copies, which he himself would distribute as a gift to the common soldiers around him.—*Observer*.