

Pastor and People.

WEAVING.

Yes, I'm a weaver, and each day,
The threads of life I spin,
And be the colours what they may,
I still must weave them in.

With morning light there comes the thought,
As I my task begin—
My Lord to me new threads has brought,
And bids me "weave them in."

Sometimes He gives me threads of gold,
To brighten up the day;
Then sombre tints, so bleak and cold,
That change the gold to gray.

His love, alas! I oft forget
When these dark threads I spin,
That cause me grief and pain, but yet
He bids me "weave them in."

And so my shuttle swiftly flies,
With threads both gold and gray;
And on I toil till daylight dies,
And fades in night away.

Oh, when my day of toil is o'er,
And I shall cease to spin,
He'll open wide my father's door,
And bid me rest within.

Then, safe at home in heavenly light,
How clearly I shall see
That every thread, the dark, the bright,
Each one had need to be! S. L. CUTBERT.

THE GOSPEL AFLOAT.

A Mediterranean twilight—how short it is! How quickly the night is upon us! The sun is sinking toward the western horizon; the western sky deepens in colour; the water—so beautifully blue, so exquisite in effect when a wave breaks, and spreads its lace-work of snowy foam over the under ground of blue,—changes its aspect with a surprising rapidity. The blue takes on a warmth of tone which is passing beautiful. The sun sinks; the sea assumes a depth of regal purple colour, and the horizon is streaked with the "intolerable radiance" of crimson and gold, which to reproduce on canvas would be voted unnatural. A weird uncertain light for a few moments, and then it is night. The copious dews begin to fall, and the air assumes a chilliness in terrible contrast to the heat of the day. Voyagers in general consult safety and comfort by retreat into state-room or saloon.

The night had always set in before our service ceased. It was my custom to walk up and down the deck with quiet, unmolested thought for companion for some time before I joined the passenger circle in the saloon. Thus it was that yet another phase of work presented itself. Wrapt in my own thoughts, promenading the dark and lonely deck, after our service in "the church in the fo'c'stle," I was gently detained by some one concealed from me by the darkness. It was the bo's'n, a square-built, stolid Dutchman. He had been at all the services, but had evidenced nothing beyond the interest of his attendance. Indeed, a less likely subject for impression I had seldom met.

"I want to speak to you, sir." I expressed my willingness to talk with him.

"I am very miserable, sir, and I thought as perhaps you wouldn't mind me telling you something about myself, sir."

I encouraged his confidence. He told me he had a religious wife. She was a Methodist. He knew she was praying for him. Often had the thought of her prayers annoyed him in his wickedness, but now he felt so miserable that he did not know what to do. He sketched for me his life in dark, sad colours. He did not spare himself. "I want now to be a Christian, sir, like my wife, that when I go home, I shall make her happy as she has never been before." Shrouded by the darkness, we conversed together of the things that belonged to eternal life. I pointed him to the Saviour, who would cast none out who came to Him. I found, in conversation, that my friend Tandy, his mate, was also in deep concern about his soul. I arranged to meet them both in the bo's'n's state-room after next evening's service.

On entering the state-room as arranged, there were not only the bo's'n and his mate, but a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age, each with a Bible before

him. It was explained apologetically to me, by the Dutchman, that he and this boy had been rather "chummy" for some time, and that they had been trying to have prayer together for some nights past; and that he would like the lad to get good as well as himself. I willingly and joyfully assented to his presence. Then I had to hear Tandy's story. In a word it was this: He had only been married three weeks when he started on this trip. He described himself as fearing neither God, man, nor the devil. My prayers for the dear ones left behind had drawn out his sympathy, and now, like the bo's'n, he would like to go home a Christian. We had a happy conference together for over an hour. I read with them, prayed with and for them, and left the fo'c'stle with a grateful heart, that God was using a feeble instrumentality to draw hearts to Himself.

The constituency of inquirers slowly increased, until I was acquainted with the outlines of the personal history of half the crew.

The work was not confined to the crew. Standing on the bridge at night, a conversation would be begun by the officer on the watch, revealing that interest in "The Gospel Afloat" had extended to the superior officers of the ship. Many a confidence was imparted to me in these dark nights, and many a resolve expressed to lead a different life. How near God was I! The dark yet star-lit sky, the solemn sea, the impressive silence, combined to make these scenes sacred. The fellowship on the bridge and the meetings for prayer in the officers' quarters can never be forgotten. One officer I must here specialize. He was the third officer—a gentlemanly young fellow, of good family and education. He was a great favourite with the passengers and crew. The "old, old story" touched his heart, and drew him into close fellowship with me. At his request I frequently visited his state-room; and kneeling at the same camp-stool, with hand clasping hand, we often enjoyed sweet fellowship at the throne. After we parted at Liverpool, I never heard from him again. He had to make a voyage in a sailing ship to qualify for a master's certificate. Whispers have reached me of the wreck of his ship—true or not I cannot tell. The possibility but adds truth to our short fellowship in the Gospel.

May the seed cast under such impressive conditions yet appear in harvest form to the glory of God!

A difficulty presented itself in the scarcity of Bibles in the fo'c'stle. Out of a crew of fifty-one, there were only four Bibles and one prayer book. This difficulty presented itself to me as we were nearing Malta. I laid the matter before the captain, and suggested that he and I should join in purchasing Bibles for the crew. I was pleased with the readiness with which he responded. We were not, however, allowed to enjoy a monopoly. Several of the passengers insisted on helping in the good work. Sufficient money was easily raised before we anchored in Valetta Harbour. It was Saturday afternoon when we went ashore to see the city, and make our important purchase. After getting rid of that Maltese plague—self-invited guides—we strolled down the principal street, the Strada Reale, in search of the Bible Society's depot. Failing to find it, we inquired. With a significant shrug, our informant answered: "The priests have done for that." How the priests had managed that piece of work, which we knew would be congenial work, we did not learn; but, sure enough, the depot had ceased to exist. On the following day, after returning from service in the Scotch Church, we found a way out of our difficulty. An agent of the Seamen's Mission was on board distributing tracts to the men. To him I stated the case. Very kindly he offered to sell me all he had, and taking his mission boat, with its snow-white awning, he was soon back with a large parcel of Bibles. The "blue peter" was flying at the fore. As I should have no other opportunity till we reached Smyrna, I therefore effected the purchase of fifty-one Bibles on the Sunday afternoon, without the slightest consciousness of having broken the fourth commandment. There were no suggestions of Sabbath around. The market on the quay was in full operation, and Maltese "pack men" were busily trying to seduce our lady passengers into purchases of lace and jewellery.

From the missionary to the seamen I gathered much information. He drew a sad picture of the religious condition of Malta. It was overrun with priests, who had the people completely in their power. Pointing to his little punt, made fast to our gangway

with the words "Mission Boat" prominently painted on her bows, he said he had infinite trouble to secure a boy to row him from ship to ship in the prosecution of his work. The boy he had then was, of course, a Romanist, and he remained with him because he had quietly resigned himself to the perdition his priest had prophesied for being in the service of a heretic.

My missionary friend had given his boy a Bible, requesting him to read it. Soon the Bible disappeared. The following conversation occurs:—

"Where is your Bible, Guiseppe?"

No answer.

"Where is your Bible?"

"In the fire, sir."

"You haven't burnt it?"

"Yes, I have, sir."

"Why were you so wicked?"

"The priest came to the house and made me. He said it was a bad book."

"Do you think it was a bad book?"

"Yes."

"Well," said the missionary, "you see me every day reading that book to others, and teaching what teaches it; what do you think will become of me?"

"You'll go to hell, sir," was the ready answer.

"But what will become of you? You row me about that I may read and teach."

"I'll go to hell too, sir."

I needed no further proof that the people in this British Dependency were priest ridden than the sounds and scenes of revelry on the eastern shore of Valetta Harbour on that Sabbath afternoon. Racing in sacks, climbing greased poles, grotesque mummeries, were part of the observance of a Maltese Sabbath. And all this arranged and patronized by the priests themselves!—and under the British flag!—*Rev. W. Scott, in the Canadian Independent.*

A GOOD EXPERIENCE.

God knows me better than I know myself. He knows my gifts and my powers, my failings and my weaknesses; what I can do, and cannot do. So I desire to be led; to follow Him, and I am quite sure that He will thus enable me to do a great deal more in ways which seem to me almost a waste in life, in advancing His cause, than I could in any other way. I am sure of that. Intellectually, I am weak; in scholarship, nothing; in a thousand things, a baby. He knows this, and so He has led me and greatly blessed me, who am nobody, to be of some use to my Church and fellow-men. How kind, how good, how compassionate art Thou, O God! O my Father, keep me humble! Help me to have respect toward my fellow-men, to recognize these several gifts as from Thee. Deliver me from the diabolical sins of malice, envy, or jealousy, and give me hearty joy in my brother's good, in his work, in his gifts and talents, and may I be truly glad in his superiority to myself, if God be glorified. Root out weak vanity, all devilish pride, all that is abhorrent to the mind of Christ. God, hear my prayer. Grant me the wondrous joy of humility, which is seeing Thee as all in all.—*Norman Macleod's Diary.*

HOW WHISKEY STARTED THE REBELLION.

General Thomas W. Conway, at a temperance lecture in Norwich, repeated an interesting story, told him years ago by Admiral Semmes, of the rebel cruiser *Alabama*, of the way in which whiskey started the Rebellion. According to Semmes, just after the election of President Lincoln, a conference of Southern leaders was held at the St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans, to decide upon which course they should follow. At the opening of the discussions of that conference the prevailing sentiment and a decided majority were against a declaration of war. The majority of cooler heads, when sober, were against it. The discussion continued until a late hour. At length whiskey and ice were brought up. The members of the conference, some of them sparingly at first, imbibed. Bottle after bottle was produced. As a result those at first opposed to war, under the influence of drink, were influenced by the others; and when the conference broke up, near daylight, nearly the entire body of Southern representatives were in favour of making war upon the flag and the government.—*Albany Journal.*