

It is always considered to be a fitting companion volume to the Holy Scriptures.

May every reader of these lines follow Bunyan's Pilgrim through the 'trial-way of life to the same kingdom of God above.—Friendly Greetings.'

### Macmorton's Secret.

(Mrs. Harvey-Jellie, in the 'Christian.')

The sleepy little church in the quiet town of Ablefleet experienced a mild shock on Sunday morning, when the minister announced a special meeting for Christmas Eve, adding 'a gentleman known to some of you has a secret to divulge.'

'Most absurd idea,' said an important deacon, 'no one will attend a meeting on Christmas Eve; I know I shan't.'

'What do you think of that?' asked Mrs. Sharpe of an astonished lady. 'A meeting on Christmas Eve! and Christmas dinner to think of! a secret! what ever is our church coming to!'

These and other similar remarks fell from the perturbed members on their homeward way, and unsparing were the remarks about that deluded minister on the five following days.

Still, after all opinions and disapprovals had been well ventilated, it came to pass on Christmas Eve that never had so large a number assembled in that church on a week evening.

An air of expectancy gave just the hopeful tone to the meeting; for, strange to say, everybody was in good time, and evidently eager as the minister rose to explain the reason for calling the ministry.

'I feared to ask you to come here,' he said, 'on Christmas Eve; but our friend Macmorton feels it laid upon his conscience to tell us the secret that lies behind his helpful conduct in this church. Therefore, with your patient permission, I ask him now to tell us his story.'

A faint expression of disappointment might be seen on some of the faces, yet the wish to hear gave silent attention to the man, whose cheery manner at once arrested the audience as he spoke.

'I thank you sir, it is on your behalf and in the name of my Lord and Master, as well as the interest of this church. I came here two years ago, a stranger. I soon fell into the customs of this church. You must pardon me for confessing my own weakness, but I honestly declare, while I enjoyed the services and the sermons, I allowed all good effects to be discounted by the indifference I saw and the non-appreciative remarks I heard.'

'I easily fell into the habit of half-day attendance, and only occasionally showed myself on week evenings.'

'If ever the matter troubled me, I argued, "Tis the minister's business to go; 'tis mine to do as I like." Noble argument you will think.'

'But last Christmas Day I was suddenly called to account by a question forcing itself on me as I sat with my wife by our snug fire-side. It was this, "What good have you done in this church since last Christmas?" I could not cast it off; it worried me, and would not be denied. My wife assured me I was as good as most of the people; but I tell you I felt uncomfortable, and still more so when she said, "The minister called to see you yesterday, and I sent word you were out. He can't have much to do. He can call again." Now this pricked me, and I answered, "I am an unsympathetic coward, and from this time for one month I will try what he has to do, for as far as I can I'll put myself in his place, and into whatever he takes part in I go, if possible."

'I made a vow there and then. How amazed our minister must have been, for at every service I was present, and he was trying I knew to cheer and help me, I took good care I would return it by an encouraging look and a good word to others. I found his time was given either to study for us, or visiting, or meetings, and I abhorred myself for all my selfishness, and almost thinking I could not keep it up for a whole month, I persevered. I meant patient, self-forgetting work, I can tell you, and even then, there were many duties and much anxious toil I could not go into. It made me feel queer when he would

shake hands and say he was glad to see me at the small meetings, for I had said, "for one month" I would do this; but by the time the month was up, I found myself in such close sympathy with our pastor that I was seeking every opportunity to render him help or cheer; in fact, his comfort was mine, his success was mine, his hopes or disappointments mine, and if through the months of the year I have been what he calls his "right hand," this is the secret, I had put myself in his place and had done for him what I would have been glad of had I been the minister instead.

'I ask your forgiveness, but I dared not keep this longer to myself, for we are told to "provoke one another to love good works," and I pray that on this coming Christmas Day every one of you will try my secret, and let us shoulder the burden of good work together and with our leader go on to a good and glorious future.'

For a minute there was silence, then from the back of the building a naval man spoke out, addressing the minister of the church:—

'If that gentleman is helper number one, I'll be helper number two; you may depend on me, captain!'

A strangely solemn feeling seemed to be in the meeting. No resistance, but a quiet air of devotion as several earnest prayers were offered and the meeting closed.

A week later New Year dawned over Ablefleet, and at the appointed time the minister entered his pulpit. How often had he sighed over disappointed hopes; he had tried to steel himself against the outward conditions, till he had sometimes felt all the warm heart glow become chilled within him.

On that particular Sunday a surprise met him, for instead of a few worshippers here and there, and many coming in late, he beheld a full church, and all in time.

Macmorton experienced the joy of answered prayer, and felt that God had accepted his conduct toward His ministering servant as deeds of loving kindness done unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the first time the preacher broke down—cold, when continued, only freezes, but warmth and sunshine sets the waters free.

Putting his sermon aside he said: "Tis the pew creates the sermon, the people make the preacher. My text shall be the words of God to Moses—"This shall be unto you the beginning of months"—forgiven, I have the sympathy and loyalty of those who profess to be Christ-like; my message shall be the outcome of your prayers, and carried on the wings of your faith and zeal, shall win souls for the nearing eternity of bliss,' and out of a full heart he spoke as he could not have done before.

The sequel will make a volume too large for any library, but happy are they whose names figure on its pages

### Just the Man.

Successful missionary work in heathen countries is done only by missionaries who possess a rare combination of personal traits. In too many cases the examination of the candidate fails to reveal the presence or the absence of this combination. But the following story shows how an unusual examination made known that a certain young man was just the sort of missionary needed.

It was winter. The examiner sent the candidate word to be at his home at three o'clock in the morning. When the appointed man arrived at the appointed time, he was shown into the study, where he waited for five hours. At length the examiner appeared, and asked the candidate how early he had come.

'Three o'clock, sharp.'

'All right; it's breakfast time now; come in and have some breakfast.'

After breakfast they went back to the study.

'Well, sir,' said the examiner, 'I was appointed to examine you as to your fitness for the mission field. Can you spell, sir?'

The young man thought he could.

'Spell "baker," then.'

'B-a ba, k-e-r ker—baker.'

'All right; that will do! Now, do you know anything about figures?'

'Yes, sir, something.'

'How much is twice two?'

'Four.'

'All right; that's splendid. You'll do first-rate. I'll see the board.'

When the board met the examiner reported. 'Well, brethren,' he said, 'I have examined the candidate, and I recommend him for the appointment. He'll make a tip-top missionary—first class. First, I examined the candidate on his self-denial. I told him to be at my place at three o'clock in the morning. He was there. That meant getting up at two o'clock, or earlier, in the dark and cold. He got up, and never asked me why. Second, I examined him on promptness. I told him to be at my place at three o'clock, sharp. He was there, not one minute behind time. Third, I examined him on patience. I let him wait five hours for me when he might just as well have been in his bed, and he waited and showed no signs of impatience. Fourth, I examined him on his temper. He didn't get excited; met me perfectly pleasant; didn't ask me why I had kept him waiting on a cold winter morning from three till eight o'clock. Fifth, I examined him on humility. I asked him to spell words a five-year-old child could do, and he didn't show any indignation; didn't ask me why I treated him like a child or a fool. Brethren, the candidate is self-denying, prompt, patient, obedient, good-tempered, humble. He's just the man for a missionary, and I recommend him for your acceptance.'—Michigan 'Christian Guardian.'

### Worthless Clay a Hindrance.

A child put its hand into a rare and valuable vase, and could not withdraw it. The father said, 'You must open your hand and straighten out the fingers; then you will be free.' But the child said, 'Oh, papa, I couldn't straighten out my fingers, for then I should drop my marble.' It is only when we insist upon holding on to the things of clay that we find trouble in doing as Jesus would like to have us do.—'Ram's Horn.'

### 'Pictorial' News.

The 'Canadian Pictorial' bears out the promise of its first number to give its patrons only the highest class of work. The object of the new monthly is to present pictorially the news of the day edited from a Canadian point of view for those interested in Canada and the British Empire. Canada and the British Empire are a large order, and the pictures consequently cover a big field. In this impatient age, when many people prefer to draw their own conclusions from a good picture rather than wade through a dull article, the new journal ought to do well. Certainly it offers the maximum of pictures and the minimum of prose.—From 'Toronto Star.'

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