

hardly grasped the reason, but he spoke out plainly before both Mr. Furniss and Mrs. Proctor a few minutes later.

'This is my wife,' he said simply, to their great surprise. 'A good wife,' he added, and the words were poor Hope's solace in after-days. 'Will you be kind to her when I am gone?'

Then the two went downstairs marvelling at the strange confession, and Harold said, 'Pray again, Hope, pray always, and, oh, hold me tight—tight!'

But before the sun was yet high in the heavens, Hope knew that she grasped the hand of the dead.

(To be continued.)

## Heroes of the Christian Faith.

S. AUGUSTINE, BISHOP OF HIPPO.

**N**OW little is commonly known of the history of the Church in Africa! Perhaps less than anywhere else. The Africans are so far removed from us, in race, in habits, in instincts. We are not seriously interested in them. We can sympathise with the struggles of Christianity in France or America, or in our own colonies—for the people there have much in common with us. They share our civilisation, our ideas, and our ambitions. But the 'dark continent' seems to most of us to deserve its name. It is wrapped in darkness, and so is largely hidden from our view, and banished from our thoughts.

And yet of late years English people have watched with considerable sympathy a Church in South Africa struggling into existence, and bravely fighting for its life amid many and great difficulties. We believe they have been doing more. They have been praying for it, too. They have been praying that God will put an end to the troubles that have distracted both Church and State in those far distant parts, and that to each He will give His blessing of peace.

But we may well look upon the Church of South Africa with courageous hope. For she is a Church, not of the past, but of the future. Her troubles are the troubles of childhood. Her work lies before her. Her best days are to come. It is true she

needs our prayers and sympathy now. The time may come when we shall need hers. For it is with individual Churches as it is with nations and empires. There are the days of infancy, prime, and old age. They rise into youthful vigour; they leave, may be, their mark upon history, and they sink alas! too often into a slow decline. Few are so faithful as to escape the threat of the Book of the Revelation. Prosperity intoxicates. Not once or twice only has the candlestick been removed, that it may shed elsewhere a brighter light. The Churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, and Laodicea; the famous Churches of S. Paul immortalised in his Epistles, where are they? Grown careless in the possession of great privileges, like Israel of old they forfeited them. Is there laid up in the future some such fate for England? God forbid!

There was once a Church of North Africa. The northern sea-board, washed by the waters of the Mediterranean, was the land of Christian people. Those that now sit in the darkness of Mahommedanism have seen a great light. But the candlestick has long since been removed, and the Church of North Africa is no more. Her opportunities have gone; her work is done; her roll of saints is completed.

And yet the Church of North Africa was once as full of life and vigour as our own. Her history may have been comparatively short, but it was brilliant. And if she has