

THE PALM BRANCH.

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A LETTER FROM REV. MR. LAWSON

My dear Band Workers:—It is long since I was asked to write you by my very dear friend, "Cousin Joy." "Well, why didn't you?" Because my loving companion in arms, Rev. W. J. Kirby was talking to you so well for so long, and I am stealing his space. Now I am a firm believer in all true "saints" of any church and age, but not so much in canonized saints—hunt up that word and you will never forget it—set up in special spots for worship by man as in "All saints." In all places, for every day in the year, saints in shoes, in all the ways of life. As you are missionaries I will tell you of a sailor missionary, of whom we used to read, called "St. Brandan." We peep at him on the pages of Scottish Church history—a history full of thrill! The bright lights which flash upon that somewhat dark page shine the more brilliantly by contrast with the gloom. The ideal of Christian life was in those days, even of the most sincere and earnest souls, that of the convent, monastery or cloister as Kingsley's "Hermits" shows. Well was it that such places in those far-away days were holy places; not like vermin holes of the middle ages. All who wished to live above the world tried to go out of it, instead of living in it by the power of God. But they had three grand purposes—the study of the Holy Scriptures, which they really revered; cultivation of the missionary spirit, and a self-denying life.

What lives of devotion can we find even now surpassing those of the "Sailor Monks," among whom we find our hero? Columba and his comrades in Iona; Columbanus, or Columba, "The younger," who shone as bright stars in that dark night, and as brighter suns in that dark day? The world knows far too little of such lives and workmen, who wrought so well to make Europe Christian.

St. Brandan seems like "Saul, the son of Kish," head and shoulders above his brethren and his sailor companions were of no mean moral stature. St. Cormac, a great navigator, in a voyage of 14 days was carried northward by a south wind without changing his course and it was thought he reached Iceland.

We read in the "Life of Columba" that "in this voyage a multitude of loathsome creatures covered the sea in swarms and struck Cormac's poor boat so violently that it was like to be destroyed." They may only have been a shoal of jelly fish crowding the handles of their broad oars, but their sting was very painful. At any rate there was often need for concern for these brave souls in frail vessels, consisting "simply of hides fastened over a frame of wood."

(To be Continued.)

LETTER FROM REV. MR. KIRBY.

Dear children of the Palm Branch:—I have been thinking and thinking, and thinking about you, and wondering whether you have been thinking about me.

If you have I would not wonder if you have been saying to yourselves, "Well, he must have forgotten us."

No, indeed, I have not forgotten you. I would feel mean enough to hit myself if I forgot you. What an awful thing it would be if all our friends were to forget us! Forget to write to us if they were away; forget to pray for us when they pray! Oh! how I love to think of those words, "He careth for you." If you were so unfortunate as to be compelled to say, "Nobody cares for me," the Bible would say, "Yes, One cares for you, Jesus." We sometimes sing,

"He ever lives above
For me to intercede,"

and it is a precious thought, that Jesus prays for me.

Tell me who it was to whom Jesus said, "But I have prayed for thee," and with what result. Then I am glad others pray," and sometimes, when I hear the members of the church praying in the prayer meeting for God to bless our dear pastor," I feel very thankful that I am not left out of the prayers of the church. Last night I heard a prayer, and it made me write to you to-day.

"Oh Lord, we would not forget the Mission Band, bless them when they meet on Thursday, and when they go out on Saturday to enjoy themselves in their picnic, bless them and give them a good time." Who do you think offered that prayer?

"The minister," I hear someone say. No.

"One of the women of the W. M. S.," I think I hear another say.

No. We have none in that prayer meeting.

"Oh, I know," someone says, "one of the officers of the Mission Band." No, again.

I must tell you, it was the superintendent of our Sunday School, a brother who prays quite often for the Mission Band. Does the superintendent of your Sunday School pray for you? Does he pray for you when you go on your picnic?

Oh, dear me, I have known some superintendents who always forgot to announce the meeting of the Band, unless you reminded them so often that you feared annoying them. But we must not be hard on them, for there may be many who pray for us in the home circle, or in the church, and we never hear of them.

I am glad to tell you of the one who remembers us in prayer.

Dear me! I've wandered off and forgot what I was going to write about.

Never mind! I will wait till next time. I think I will close with the prayer of the little quaker girl—she had been so long in the quiet meeting of the Society of Friends one day she would not keep quiet any longer, so she just prayed herself and said, "O Lord make us gooder and gooder till there is no bad left in us," and I just say Amen, amen.

Your friend,
W. J. KIRBY.

The cousins will all be glad that Mr. Kirby has not forgotten them. We welcome him back very cordially. Glad to hear from our good friend, Mr. Lawson, too.