

## Pastor and People.

### THY BURDEN.

To every one on earth  
God gives a burden to be carried down  
The road that lies between the cross and crown,  
No lot is wholly free;  
He giveth one to thee.

Some carry it aloft,  
Open and visible to any eyes;  
And all may see its form and weight and size;  
Some hide it in their breast,  
And deem it thus unguessed.

Thy burden is God's gift,  
And it will make the bearer calm and strong;  
Yet lest it press too heavily and long,  
He says, "Cast it on Me,  
And it shall easy be."

And those who heed His voice,  
And seek to give it back in trustful prayer,  
Have quiet hearts that never can despair,  
And hope lights up the way  
Upon the darkest day.

Take thou thy burden thus  
Into thy hands and lay it at His feet,  
And whether it be sorrow or defeat,  
Or pain, or sin, or care,  
Upon the darkest day.

It is the lonely road  
That crushes out the life and light of heaven,  
But borne with Him, the soul restorer, forgiven,  
Sings out through all the days  
Her joys and God's high praise.

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### THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

#### THE GARDENS OF ARIM.

After a few days thus spent Arim and his company quitted the earthly paradise and returned to the Adite kingdom, leaving only enough servants and soldiers behind to do the work of the palace and gardens, and to defend them against wandering tribes. Many such tribes did indeed pass by. They heard the soft splash of waters, the songs of birds, the voices of men; even the odour of a thousand flowers was wafted over the rocky barriers towards them; but they did not know what lay smiling in evergreen beauty within the mighty cliffs, and hastened away as from a dangerous, enchanted land. The king became worse and worse, vainer, more self-indulgent, more cruel. He no longer allowed the people to worship what gods they chose: they must worship him. Those who refused were tortured or put to death. He would have killed his own queen for this had he not feared the vengeance of the Egyptian king, her father. He no longer took her to the hidden gardens, and she was glad not to be compelled to go there, for, while she admired their loveliness, she hated the conduct that defiled it. Instead, she took her boy Haril into the Nile country and had him taught by grave and learned men. Some of these venerable teachers were not very cheerful, and their lessons chimed in all too well with what Haril, boy as he was, had seen of the dark side of life. So he learned to say and to feel with his teachers:—

Empty and vain are the kingdoms of earth;  
Sin follows pleasure and bitterness, mirth;  
Better death's morn than the evening of birth.

Justice is bribery, honours are lies;  
Fools make a mock of the good and the wise;  
The kingdom worth having is up in the skies.

Thy maker, thy keeper, thy friend ne'er deny;  
Shut not thine ear to the suppliant's cry;  
So live thy life as to fear not to die.

To find what is Truth make thy constant endeavour;  
Thy soul's trust from earthly things valiantly sever;  
So shall thine be heaven's glories for ever and ever.

Haril determined to be satisfied with no earthly kingdom, which has so often been the destruction of its king, but to seek that which has a true foundation and can never be moved.

One day Arim went out of the Adite land with a small company of boon companions and his idolatrous mother, to visit his earthly paradise. He never returned. Many messengers were sent to get news of him, but they could not find the gardens. Trumpets were blown from every rocky peak for miles and miles around, but no answering blast greeted the herald's ear. Haril, grown to be a young man, accompanied by his mother and a great retinue, passed through the whole peninsula of Stony Arabia, climbed mountains, explored valleys and passes, dug through ramparts of stone, made the air ring with shouts and trumpet peals and beat of drum, but no gardens were found, no response came. No songs of birds greeted them, no scent of many fragrant blossoms, nothing but the grim, forbidding wilderness met their gaze, just as it had been before the gardens were made. "Our Lord has taken His gardens up to heaven," said some of the most idolatrous, when, at that very moment, Haril and all the company beheld a mirage far away in the south towards the sea. Yes, there could be no mistaking it, it was the gardens of Arim, with Arim's dyke, his canal and lakes, his trees and flowers turned upside down between earth and heaven. And there, falling down into the depths that are

bottomless, were Arim and his mother and their little company, with all their glory gone, haggard, wan, dishevelled, the pictures of misery and despair. Then the wind came rushing from the Egyptian desert, over the Red Sea, and up the narrow ravines, as of yore it fed the blast of the copper furnaces, howling in its height and wailing in its fall, while the people cried: "Alas, alas, for the gardens of Arim!" So Arim and his gardens came never back again, and among the Arabs to this day any vain quest is called looking for the gardens of Arim.

Haril sought no more for the earthly paradise. Sometimes travellers, hoping for reward, came and told him that they had found it, but they told falsehoods. The courtiers came to worship him as they had worshipped his vain father. "Are you dogs," he asked, "to worship a man?" The Adites did not like to be called dogs. "Your father commanded it," they pleaded. "And you," he answered, "know my father's fate. So must all perish who magnify themselves against God." So he taught them to worship God, and for penance, made them build the sepulchres of the prophets and just men whom they had slain by his father's orders. The slaves were all set free and royal lands granted to them. The soldiers were disbanded and ordered to take up some useful calling or leave the country, with the exception of a small body of chosen men which kept guard over the criminals whom he sent to work the copper mines in the desert. In spite of their watchfulness, the convicts would often escape and explore the valleys seeking for Arim's lost gardens, where they hoped to lead an easy and luxurious life. But they never found them.

There was no longer violence in the Adite land. No vice and debauchery publicly revelled to the nation's shame. No man-stealers went forth with arms and came home with troops of slaves. No armies marched to conquest, no sad burdens of slain and wounded entered the city gates. There was peace and plenty in the land, and king Haril rejoiced in that plenty, not because it made him rich, but because his people were happy, and he had enough to relieve the wants of all that were poor. He and the queen mother knew all their subjects and served them. One of his courtiers said to him one day, "How is it that in other kingdoms, the people serve the king, but here the king serves the people?" And Haril answered, "Do you know Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords?" He replied, "Yes, it is the great God." "Do we serve Him?" asked Haril, and the courtier replied, "No, how can we?" "Then does He not serve us?" "Yes, truly, His power keeps from day to day, His bounty feeds us, His grace keeps us from sin; He suffers with our evil ways continually." "So," said Haril, "if He who is highest is a servant, why may not the high ones of earth follow His blessed example?" The courtier said nothing, but went his way, and seeing one of his own servants staggering under a heavy burden, put his own shoulder to it to the man's great surprise, and helped him forward with his load.

Grief came to Haril's house; he lost his good mother. But now that he knew this grief, he knew how to sympathize with those in sorrow, and many a mourner blessed the name of the king. His name went abroad into all countries round about, and all that were in any kind of trouble came to him. The king said, "It is a new thing under the sun, for any man, woman or child to seek help in the Adites' land." But they sought help, and they got it. So long as Haril had enough to eat and drink, to clothe himself with, to put a roof over his head and covering on his couch, he was satisfied, and the rest he gave away. Many physicians from Egypt, of the race of Paeon, he brought into his kingdom and maintained at his own expense, to care for the sick and the diseased. In every town he built public baths that the people might practise cleanliness, which, the proverb says, is next to godliness. And holy men assembled there together to worship God and think of all his marvellous works. Thus the Adites once more became a people of renown, but now it was the renown of righteousness under a God-fearing king. Haril had sought neither power, wealth nor fame, but they all came to him, and he used them as means for doing good.

A traveller through his kingdom wrote a book giving an account of what he had seen, and this book was copied in different ways. Some scribes wrote it on a kind of paper made from the papyrus reed, others painted it on rolls of thin leather, and others stamped it on clay tablets which they afterwards baked hard in ovens. A copy of this book fell into Haril's hands. He read it, and found that the writer was much pleased with all that he had seen in the Adites' land, with one exception. That exception was the copper mines of Stony Arabia where the convicts worked under guard. The book told how sad was the lot of the miners, herded together like cattle, flogged by their guards, compelled to work for months under ground, with no family companionship and no hope. It is true they had been wicked men, thieves, rebels, man-stealers, murderers, blasphemers of God, but still the writer said that so good a man as king Haril ought to know that God forgives sinners when they repent and turn to him. This touched the king's heart. "I will go to the mines," he said. So he wrote a letter to the Governor and commander of the soldiers, telling him to receive a convict called Sheddad, and to set him at hard labour among the worst criminals in the mines. Then he told his prime minister, Mareb, to conduct the Government for him while he was absent for a time in a distant country.

The next morning a captain with a guard of soldiers came to the prison for the convict Sheddad, and the king, clothed in

rags and with his face artificially discoloured, was delivered over to him by the jailer. The captain and soldiers were kind to the supposed Sheddad, whose crime they did not know. The king's letter was given to the Governor of the mines, very faithful officer and one who meant well, but who hate wrong doing and who thought that sinners should be punished and punished always. He looked at Sheddad very severely and said, "You must be a very wicked man or our good king would not have commanded me to set you at hard labour among the worst of the convicts." Sheddad bowed, but said nothing. He was taken down into the bowels of the earth where the only light was from oil lamps and pine torches. There grimy, half-clad figures toiled with pick and crowbar, painfully tearing the hard rock asunder, and covering the floor with masses of ore that other men carried in baskets and on stretchers of wood to the mouth of the mine. A crowbar was given him and he was told to join the gang and break up the rock layers. So the king took the office of the very lowest of his subjects. Like theirs his fare was very meagre, black bread, lentil soup, cold water and mouldy figs or dates. When he paused a moment to think, the lash came down on his shoulders. When he went forward to help one of his companions he was told to mind his own business. When he rebuked his fellows for their blasphemy and foul language, they struck him. He bore it all with meekness and answered never a word. But when his work was done, he knelt down and prayed to God for the poor fellow convict and for himself, that God would give him grace and strength to bear the burden.

The miners could not understand him, nor the guards. He never struck, or even answered back. He never swore, or even grumbled. He helped others with their burdens, he bound up their wounded hands and feet, he spoke to them words of comfort and cheer. When work was over and his prayers made, he spoke to the convicts of wife and child and home. Then the tears ran down their grimy cheeks while they cried "That is all past; there is no hope for us." So he went round them all, and from all heard the same sad story. They were tired of sin, and would fain get away into King Haril's blessed kingdom, but there was no hope. All said so but one, and that was Hassim, a great murderer and criminal of many kinds, a perfect Adite, tall and straight as a palm-tree, strong as a cedar, handsome as the morning sun. He would have nothing to do with the canting convict Sheddad. He called him a hypocrite, was sure that no vile man breathed, and hated him and the guards, and the Governor, and King Haril, with all the strong hate of his proud, angry heart. Haril wrote a letter by the light of a pine torch to his prime minister Mareb:

"Haril to his well beloved Mareb sendeth greeting. Forasmuch as it is our pleasure that all the convicts at the mines who are willing to lead a good life be set free and be allowed to return to their families, we enjoin you to direct the Governor to bring such back to our kingdom of Ad, and to furnish them with all means for leading a better life in all time to come."

This he sealed with his signet and delivered in an enclosure to a soldier to give to the Governor. The Governor wondered, but, as a just man, he sent it by post to Mareb in the Adite land.

In a week the answer came. The Governor first set free the common criminals; then he came down into the mine to interview the worst cases. All gladly accepted the amnesty except Hassim and Sheddad. With joy they left their picks and crowbars and went aloft, some of them staying awhile to pray that good miner to join them who had spoken to them words of comfort and hope. Hassim said "I'll lead no good life; were I free, I would kill the Governor and Mareb and Haril too. I'll be no hypocrite even for the sake of the sunlight and wife and child and home." "Then," said Sheddad, "where Hassim stays, I stay too." And no entreaties could alter his purpose. So the convicts went forth, a joyous band full of hope, back to their native land, pouring blessings on the head of Haril, the most merciful king the world had ever seen. Hassim glowered at the supposed Sheddad. "Why did not you go too?" he asked; "are you staying here to be a spy upon me?" He replied "Hassim, I stay because I like you and cannot bear to leave you here alone." "You are a strange fellow," said Hassim, but he never cursed him after this, nor called him a hypocrite.

There were only two convicts in the mines, who could do little work. It was plainly King Haril's desire to have an end put to convict labour, and, so far, no free workmen had come to take the place of the criminals. So the Governor gave no new orders and the guards were very lax. One night Sheddad heard a slight noise and awoke. It was Hassim, who had risen from his couch and was stealing along toward the mouth of the mine. Sheddad followed. They passed the careless sentry, singing a song of home, and soon were out under the open sky, Hassim in front and Sheddad not far behind. Soon Hassim tripped. There was a ball and chain on his right leg, and he had held them up while passing the guard, but, becoming tired, and no longer in fear of arrest, he had let them drop, and they had got entangled about a shrub and had thrown him to the ground. Sheddad came up and helped his companion to his feet. "Let me free you from these," he said. So with a file he severed the chain and set Hassim free. "You are a good comrade, brother Sheddad," said the grateful malefactor; "I should like to do as much for you." But Sheddad's leg was bound by no chain. "Where are you going, friend Hassim?" asked Sheddad, and he replied, "To find the gardens of Arim, and live in joy." "Then we will travel together," said his companion, and so they went southward to seek their fairy land.

(To be continued.)