

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE VOICE OF THE SEA.

Close by the margin of a tiny lake—
A hollow carved by many tempest-shock,
A little marvel of the ocean's make—
I lie here on a jutting point of rocks
With half-shut eyes, and hear the steady roar
With which the great Atlantic rollers break
For miles and miles along the curving shore.

I hear the waves come washing up the beach
And thinning slowly out upon the sand ;
I hear them slow receding, bearing each
A load of rattling pebbles down the strand.
Till, listening to their changless voice, I cease
All restlessness, and gradually reach
A quiet, dreamy state of rest and peace.

But still the sense of that grand undertone
Throbs through my thoughts and fills them more and more
Until I seem to hear the thunder-tone
Of waves that dash on ice-bound Labrador,
And catch, low-borne upon the gentle breeze,
Where coral-keys of Florida lie lone,
The murmur of the sun-kissed Southern seas.

I think how down through ages all these coasts
From where the Arctic icebergs grimly keep
Unending watch upon their lonely posts
Through the long winter-night to where there sweep
In endless line long, languid summer days,
And all the land perpetual summer boasts,
Have ever heard that same great Hymn of Praise.

For such it ever ever seems. My day-dreams leap
Backward to that far time in sacred tale,
When o'er a motionless and silent deep
The darkness spread a never-lifted veil ;
Nature lay waiting for the mighty "Be,"
And in the dusk and gloom of Nature's sleep
God's Spirit brooded o'er the formless sea.

I always liked the fancy that the sea
Had lain a dull, dead, formless mass, no more ;
But dimly felt the Spirit's mystery,
And thrilled through all its depths with holy awe,
Had leaped to life and sound as all the night
Shuddered, and upward shook, and broke before
The golden lances of the new-made light.

And so I hear in that unchanging tone
The grandest sound from earth that upward swells
Through infinite space to the eternal throne ;
A wonderful Hymn of Praise that ever tells
Of that dim time when first the Spirit trod
The water's face. A voice that nothing quells,
"The voice of many waters" praising God.
Cambridge, May, 1887. —Watchman.

JOHN PLOUGHMAN'S TALK ON PATIENCE.

Patience is better than wisdom ; an ounce of patience is worth a pound of brains. All men praise patience, but few enough can practice it ; it is a medicine which is good for all diseases, and therefore every old woman recommends it ; but it is not every garden that grows the herbs to make it with. When one's flesh and bones are full of aches and pains it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose ; but nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth ? If a soldier fights no better than a plough-boy, off with his red coat. We expect more fruit from an apple-tree than from a thorn, and we have a right to do so. The disciples of a patient Saviour should be patient themselves. Grin and bear it is the old-fashioned advice, but sing and bear it is a great deal better. After all, we get very few cuts of the whip, considering what bad cattle we are ; and, when we do smart a little, it is soon over. Pain past is pleasure, and experience comes by it. We ought not to be afraid of going down into Egypt, when we know we shall come out of it with jewels of silver and gold.

Impatient people water their comforts ; sorrows are visitors that come without invitation, but complaining minds send a waggon to bring their troubles home in. Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed ; they chew the bitter pill which they would not even know to be bitter if they had the sense to swallow it whole in a cup of patience and water. They think every other man's burden to be light, and their own feathers to be heavy as lead ; they are hardly done by in their own opinion ; no one's toes are so often trodden on by the black ox as theirs ; the snow falls thickest round their door, and the hail rattles hardest on their windows ; and yet, if the truth were known, it is their fancy rather than their fate which makes things go so hard with them.

Many would be well off if they could but think so. A little sprig of the herb called content, put into the poorest soup, will make it taste as rich as the Lord Mayor's turtle. John Ploughman grows the plant in his garden, but the late hard winter nipped it terribly, so that he cannot afford to give his neighbours a sip of it ; they had better follow Matthew xxv. 9, and go to those who sell and buy for themselves. Grace is a good soil to grow it in, but it wants watering from the fountain of mercy.

Friends, let us take to patience and water-gruel, as the old folks used to tell us, rather than catch the miserables, and give others the disease by wickedly finding fault with God. The best remedy for affliction is submitting to providence. What can't be cured must be endured. If we cannot get bread let us bless God that there are still some cabbages in the garden. Must is a hard nut to crack, but it has a sweet kernel. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Whatever falls from the skies is, sooner or later good for the land : whatever comes to us from God is worth having, even though it be a rod. We cannot by nature like trouble any more than a mouse can fall in love with a cat, and yet Paul by grace came to glory in tribulation also. Losses and crosses are heavy to bear, but when our hearts are right with God it is wonderful how easy the yoke becomes. We must needs go to glory by the way of Weeding Cross ; and as we were never promised that we should ride to heaven in a feather bed, we must not be disappointed when we see the road to be rough, as our fathers found it before us. All's well that ends well ; and, therefore, let us plough the heaviest soil with our eye on the sheaves of harvest, and learn to sing at our labour while others murmur.—C. H. Spurgeon.

A MEDITATION.

As I came out of the Chapel of the Sepulchre, it seemed as if I were coming out of a tomb. When I left the church the shades of evening had fallen, and the gathering darkness reminded me of another night that was fast coming on, wherein no man can work. I had just passed a milestone on my life's journey, and was a year's march nearer to the grave. But I had found strength for the inevitable hour. I had been to the place where the Lord lay and had seen the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, and seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. I hastened through the streets as in a dream—as if I had been one of the army of the dead laid to sleep in Jerusalem centuries ago, that had crept out of the tomb, and was now fleeing like an affrighted ghost. And that night as I sat once more on the balcony which was my place of meditation, and looked up at the ancient Tower of David, around which Jew and Roman, Turk and Crusader, had fought, and under whose shadow all lie buried together, how little a thing seemed human life beside the monuments which man himself had builded ! Men come and go, but these stand fast like the everlasting hills. . . . Never had I so felt how comprehensive was that creed—so brief, so simple, and yet so sublime—which has been repeated for generations :

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth ;

"And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; born of the Virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. . . .

"I believe . . . in the life everlasting."

It is enough : in the strength of that great hope will I take up my pilgrim's staff for the rest of my journey. The future is dark before me, but not with unknown terrors. Welcome the twilight ! Welcome the shadows ! Since beyond shines the light of Eternal Day.
—Dr. H. M. Fields.

TRUE SYMPATHY THE RESULT OF SUFFERING.

He who has passed through trial can feel most tenderly for those who are similarly afflicted. This is so true that the inspired writer has said even of Jesus : "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted ;" and, indeed, in one aspect of it, the very necessity for the incarnation is found in the principle which I have just enunciated. To have a sympathizing God we

must have a suffering Saviour, and there is no true fellow-feeling with another save in the heart of him who has been afflicted like him. Nay, more, the having suffered like another impels us to go and sympathize with him. Those of us who have lost little children feel a prompting within us to speak a word of comfort to every parent who is passing through a similar experience.

Indeed, it was in connection with an affliction of that sort that my attention was first drawn some twelve years ago, to the text of this discourse. I had just a few weeks before buried a beloved daughter, the light of the household, and the darling of all in it, and had gone to attend a meeting of Synod where an honoured minister, who had been through the same trial oftener than once before, came up to me and took me by the hand and said to me, with a reference to my sorrow, "By these things men live." That was all, but each successive year since then has given a new verification of his words, for oh ! how often in the interval have I been enabled to comfort others with the comfort with which I have been comforted of God, and the efficacy of the consolation lay largely in the fact that it was offered by one who had proved its value for himself.

We cannot do good to others save at a cost to ourselves, and our own afflictions are the price we pay for our ability to sympathize. He who would be a helper must first be a sufferer. He who would be a Saviour must somewhere and somehow have been upon a cross : and we cannot have the highest happiness of life in succouring others without tasting the cup which Jesus drank and submitting to the baptism wherewith he was baptized. Every real Barnabas must pass to his vocation through seasons of personal sorrow—and so, again, we see that it is true that "by these things men live." The most comforting of David's Psalms were pressed out of him by suffering ; and if Paul had not had his thorn in the flesh we had missed much of that tenderness which quivers in so many of his letters.—Wm. M. Taylor, D.D.

SUNDAY DRIVING.

A quiet drive on Sunday with one's wife and children seems to some a very innocent form of recreation, and not opposed in letter or spirit to real Sabbath-keeping. "I find the children growing fretful and restless," said a lady to the writer, "and instead of enforcing silence, or compelling them to sit still with books in their hands, I just crowd the little things into the phaeton, and take them for a few miles into the country. That gives their father a chance to take his Sunday afternoon nap in peace.

Good people, with Christian consciences, reason in this way, and satisfy themselves that they have rendered the Sabbath all the respect to which it has a just claim, if they go to church in the morning and to Sunday school in the afternoon. There is a letting down of the standard in this matter, which is to be deplored.

We have no doubt that the same men and women who go with easy minds on their little drives past quiet woods robed in vernal beauty, and over breezy hills, and through trim villages, are themselves indignant at the wholesale Sabbath breaking of the travelling public. They resent the scream of the locomotive, and the rushing thunder of the train. They are scandalized at the crowds who seek the beech and throng the parks on Sunday. As for the Sunday concert, which allures its patrons with unblushing attractiveness, they hold it in horror.

And yet it is difficult to draw the line between right and wrong anywhere except plumb with a certain old-fashioned command, laid down in an old-fashioned book : "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuaries." In kind, the quiet Sunday drive is as open to criticism as the crowded Sunday train, or the gay Sunday excursion boat.

A strictly kept Sabbath need not be oppressively formal, nor obtrusively Pharisaical. The Lord's day, the day of His resurrection, should be full of a subdued gladness, sweet with a spiritual fragrance. The youngest child in a Christian household may learn to greet it with delight, and still it may be kept wholly separate from the work and play lawful on other days. The secular days will be more profitable if the Sabbath be guarded from labour and from amusement, and spent, as Sabbaths should be, entirely in divine service, or in divinely permitted rest.—Christian Intelligencer.