

A Family Reunion.

BY REV. A. C. CHURCH.

Seated here in the shade of these friendly trees this summer day, my mind turns backward in time as I look to yonder gate. I see once more, as I used to do a good while ago, the coming of a large covered carriage with its three occupants. But today it is seen only in memory, for those three faces are now among the faces "lost awhile." Would you care to hear about that father and mother and child?

The father was one of the most genial of men. Whenever he was he made that part of the world a little brighter by the shining of his countenance. Through the trouble that came, as come it did, he always discerned the light ahead and still smiled as he moved among his friends. No wonder, therefore, that his children were glad to catch sight of that comfortable old vehicle turning into our lane. Possibly the husband was all the more uniformly bright because the wife was somewhat inclined to tarry long over the sombre aspects of the situation. Early in their married life they were thrust into the furnace of affliction. A little girl arrived only to be shortly snatched away; and soon there was another birth and another death. Then a third daughter came to stay until she herself became a wife and mother; and she it was who occupied part of the rear seat in that roomy carriage as I recall it.

In this beautiful region where I rest this morning was the birthplace of the mother. Here she quietly spent the days of her young womanhood, and here she became the bride of the manly man into whose kindly face we have been looking. Both could well have been congratulated upon that wedding day, for scarcely could either have done better. What pleasure it was to the wife and to each of the family of three to drive from the town twenty-five miles away and visit, at narrow intervals, through the changes of the years, her kindred and friends. That sweet-faced, gentle, lovable girl, whom many can never forget, had few joys that exceeded the one of coming in this direction. No wonder we were so pleased to open the red gates and let in these guests. Those who come in love are lovingly received.

But we now see those dear ones no more. Go where we will we still miss their faces. We used to say, when speaking of the inseparable three, that very painful to the survivors would be the removal of any one of their number. The first to be called higher was the daughter, who went about thirteen years since. Those who knew the mother, and who read these lines, know well how deep and sustained was her sorrow. A changed world was this to her when wearing disease had done its work—changed not for a little only, but ever after. It was hoped that the little grandchild might remain, for then the grandmother would feel as though a part of the loved and lost were still with her, and that she yet had something worth living for. But this accorded not with the plan of God. Looking upon other families where the children were spared and where all seemed happy, this sorrowing heart wondered why it was going so hard with her. We sometimes thought her to be doing very wrong in grieving after that manner and refusing to be comforted. Was not God in his heaven, and were not her children safe? But the truth broke slowly with its light upon her troubled soul. The piano, which was Carrie's, had been closed with the coming of the death-angel, and no hands must pass over its keys. There was frequent turning to the tomb to weep. In the drawing-room was placed a life-sized portrait of the beloved child, and I know not that there was ever a time when I visited the home thereafter that she did not take me in there to sit before that speaking face, and talk of the happy days that were. For long her gaze was little else than a backward one, but forward it shot at length, and God be praised if I did ought to have it so. Always had she been faithful in the church of Christ, but henceforth she surpassed herself. To the memory of her last born she supported a preacher among distant pagans, while at the same time she was increasingly loyal to interests nearer home. How delightful it was at last to see more of brightness in her face. Today she knows how much sooner it might have been there and how much more abundantly.

Well, the darkest night soon passes after all for the child of God, doesn't it? Why should we be overburdened? Why should we ever worry so? It was thus I thought when word reached me, about two and a half years ago, that our good aunt had been translated. And I thought it again after the good uncle was borne to the heavenly home. It is only a few weeks since the making of the last grave declared that the whole family had been re-united in the land of fadeless flowers and full felicity. Not again will we see the beloved three in yonder lane nor offer them our hospitality. Nor do we want to see them here, but there. I trust that they will welcome us at the gate of the shining city as we were wont to welcome them below. "So shall we ever be with the Lord."

And will not you, afflicted and lonely reader, will not you now turn with brave and trustful heart to your assigned tasks? Will not you cease from undue concern,

my supposedly prosperous friend, about gathering what ministers only to temporal delight? As the seraphic Rutherford has it: "Build not your nest in any tree down here, since God has sold the entire forest unto death." I would like to get some gain myself, gain that may rightly be called gain, from these summer-day reflections, and I would much like to have you share some profit with me. Let us together, then, submit to God's blessed purpose of grace, and together give ourselves with fresh zeal and faith to the line of duty. Years ago, while that long unused piano was still touched by Carrie's fingers, we oftentimes sang (and let us make the song our present prayer with more of meaning in the words than was possible for boys and girls to see):

"Oh for the place that floweth as a river,
Making life's desert places bloom and smile;
Oh for the faith to grasp heaven's bright forever,
Amid the shadows of earth's little while.

"A little while for patient vi il keepin',
To face the storm and wrestle with the strong;
A little while to sow the seed with weeping,
Then bind the sheaves and sing the harvest song."
Upper Stewiacke, August 2, 1899.

The Lord Christ a Man of Business.

The Lord Christ—Creator, Redeemer, Captain of our salvation, on His Throne in glory superintending the preaching of the gospel throughout the world, is a Man of Business. So twenty four years ago the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces accepted from Him in India the care of 2,000,000 Telugus. What account can we render to Him after 24 years, less than 500 conversions. Meanwhile 1,000,000 have died hopeless. Only six mission families on the field, having each an average of over 300,000 souls, a population equal to more than three fourths of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia scattered, in over 300 villages and towns to preach to. Query: Does that look like the conduct of sane, intelligent men, to have provided so inadequate a force, for so great a work? When our business men undertake to build a house, or to provide a million of lumber for a foreign market they put on a force of workmen sufficient, and the work is done on time. Does not the Lord Christ as a Man of Business expect as intelligent action from us in our work of saving the 2,000,000 Telugus committed to our care, as our business men give to their enterprises? Will the blood of those ones, a portion of the one million that have died hopeless since we had care of them, be upon us? To what extent will the Lord Christ as a Man of Business hold us responsible for this terrific state of things? According to His infinitely just mode of government, has He given, and will He give lessened temporal prosperity, since we as a people refuse to dedicate one-tenth to the saving of men, which tenth would have supplied funds for 30 missionaries on the Telugu field instead of six families; or has He in the past and will He still withhold the showers of spiritual blessing on our home churches in token of His displeasure at our lethargy? Both of these penalties are in accordance with His Word. But says one of the Lord's rich stewards who would fain find a reason why he should not be called upon to support two or more missionaries himself, "I do not see that we are responsible to put on such a force as you speak of—one mission family for every 50,000 Telugus instead of one family for every 300,000." Well, suppose we grant your contention that there is no legal document to that end. In Christ's Kingdom it is loving service not legal. Did not the Lord Christ intend as a Man of Business that we should be filled with His Spirit that we should be like himself moved with pity and compassion to self-sacrifice to use the means to save the two million Telugus committed to us. If the Lord's stewards had not been so immersed in their own business cares and their own home church cares as to make them largely oblivious to the crying needs of the Telugus so far away, long ere this our force on the Telugu field would have been quadrupled. As one rich steward said to me, "I'll give what I can, let the F. M. Board see that a suitable force of missionaries is sent, I have no time to study such problems." If the same dear brother could only take time to study the problem of saving the Telugus he would be likely to write to the Foreign Mission Board next week: "Put me down for the support of two mission families to the Telugus this year and if the Lord prospers me I may do better next year."

The Telugus are perishing not so much because the Lord's stewards in this land lack a knowledge of their state as that they are not filled with the spirit of Christ by whom alone that knowledge will become real to them. They know now but sleep on and take no suitable action. Only make way for the incoming of the spirit of Christ into our lives and our business, and he won't come in unless we have vowed to obey him, and then what a mighty inheave! Layman and ministers are transformed into veritable Samsons. Then scores will come to the Convention at Fredericton each saying: "Put me down for the support of one mission family to the Telugus." What a power is the spirit of Christ to move us to action. I pity the poor brothers and sisters who have given the spirit of Christ a right of way in only a part of their lives. He is welcomed to help them in home and family

duties, in prayer meeting and Sunday School duties but perchance never allowed a share or partnership in the money making or business part of life. Oh, brothers, sisters, won't you welcome the spirit of Christ into your business? Then to make money in order with it to save men will be the all-controlling motive in your business. With Christ in our business we become like Him self-sacrificing, delighting to forward His plans. Then how joyously the money flows out for the Telugus and for all other claims. In closing let me again repeat, where is the proof of our loving loyalty to Christ unless we carry on the work of saving the Telugus with as much intelligent energy as we as individuals conduct our own business.

FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Statute Labor for the Lord.

No department of civil service is more indispensable to the general welfare of our country than that which provides for the extension and necessary repairs of our highways. These great industrial thoroughfares aid materially in the improvement and development of our national resources. A nation's prosperity may be fairly estimated by the condition of its public roads. The primitive sheep-path, as a social highway, betokens barbarism; but the substantial turnpike and elegant avenue mark the existence of a cultivated and prosperous community.

Regulations for the repairs and extension of these public ways have wisely been made by all enlightened governments; and, as a rule, the people promptly and cheerfully respond to the proclamation calling them out to this service.

A greater Sovereign than Queen Victoria has, at infinite cost, opened out a glorious highway for the moral and spiritual benefit of a lost race. Isaiah made reference to it when he said, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Christ and his apostles describe it in the most explicit terms; and the grand purpose of the gospel is to make plain to men this precious way of life.

The royal edict lays upon us all the duty of keeping the way of salvation in good repair, and of extending it to the utmost bounds of earth. In silver tones the inspired summons came from the lips of the prophet of old, and on Jordan's banks the forerunner re-echoed the strain, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Here is the divine call to statute labor. Let us give earnest heed to the important summons.

And our first duty seems clearly to be the prompt and immediate calling out of all our working forces. Young and old, rich and poor, saint and sinner are under obligation to come, and none should refuse or hesitate to respond. The number of real workers on the Lord's highway is discouragingly small. Many are idle, and some are asleep, if not dead. Others, like people we have sometimes seen on the Queen's highway, are trifling by the wayside, with their shovels and pick-axes stuck in the mud. Where are many of our church members during the observance of the Lord's Supper? Do not many practically forsake the assembling of themselves together in connection with the regular services of the sanctuary, the meetings for prayer and the sessions of our Sunday Schools? There is surely need of a renewed blast of the gospel trumpet calling upon such persons to come to our aid in preparing the way of the Lord.

With respect to the specific character of this statute labor we are not left in uncertainty. We must begin by removing obstructions. "Gather out the stones" is the command. Along Zion's highway are numberless stumbling-blocks. Backsliders, who have neglected and almost forgotten their simplest duties, lie like boulders of granite across the royal pathway. These must get themselves out of the way. The inconsistencies of professing Christians form fearful hindrances in the way of those who really try to pursue the narrow path. With great diligence should we seek to remove these discouraging obstacles.

We should, moreover, endeavor to make the King's way as level and smooth as we can. The gospel chariot oftentimes becomes sadly bemoired in the swamp-holes of old family dissensions or party strifes; and it not infrequently becomes completely wrecked in the deep ruts of worldly greed and unholy living. The thorns of discord and roots of bitterness should be carefully removed from our pathway, lest they unhappily prove fatal to our own salvation.

Let us gather up the sunbeams
Lying all along our path;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff.
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessing of today;
With a patient hand removing,
All the briars from the way.

And not only should the way of life be made level but it should certainly be made beautiful and attractive. The public roads of England and Scotland are smooth and firm, but they are also exceedingly beautiful, with their trim hedges and neat side-