

sky and earth seemed to grow insignificant in comparison with any one of the listening, deathless spirits gathered there.

Before Mr. Wesley had uttered many sentences I ceased to look at the audience. My eyes also were riveted on his benevolent face.

And before I had thus looked and listened long I forgot Mr. Wesley himself altogether in the overwhelming love and grace of the pardon he proclaimed.

It was the old, inexhaustible good news, that all men being lost and wandering sheep (and probably not one present needed to have this proved to them), the Good Shepherd had come to seek and to save that which was lost: that all men being under sentence of death, he that might have claimed the forfeit had paid the ransom; that the way to eternal joy, once closed by sin and the flaming sword of justice, was now and forever open to all; this sword having been buried in the heart of him who willingly offered up himself, for us, the flames quenched in his precious blood. The way was open to all; and most earnestly Mr. Wesley invited all to return back to God by this "new and living way," then said there.

Soon the sound of subdued weeping directed my attention once more to the multitude around me. The most part were "listening with a close, silent attention, with gravity and quietness, discovered by fixed looks, weeping eyes, or sorrowful or joyful countenances;" others began to lift up their voices aloud—some softly some in piercing cries; at one time the whole multitude seemed to break into a flood of tears, when the preacher's voice could scarce be heard for the weeping around him. Many hid their faces and sobbed; others lifted up their voices in an ecstasy, and praised God. At moments a deep spontaneous "Amen" arose from all those thousands as from one voice. One or two, not women only, but strong men, sank down as if smitten to the earth by lightning; and these were borne away—sometimes insensible, sometimes convulsed as if with inward agony.

There was a hymn after the sermon. I shall never forget its power. It seemed as if the sluice gates had suddenly been opened, and the whole pent-up emotion throughout that great, silent, listening assembly burst forth at once in a flood of fervent singing.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair,
Speak to my heart, O blessings speak,
He conquered by my instant prayer.
Speak, O thou never heard shall move,
And tell me if thy name is love.

'Tis love! 'tis love! thou diedst for me,
I hear thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
Pure, universal love thou art;
To me, to all, thy bowels move,
Thy nature and thy name is love.

To hear that hymn so sung by thousands, who, but for Mr. Wesley, might never have known a joy higher than those of brutes that perish, was a joy such as I would have walked barefoot a hundred miles to share. And then afterwards to see those whose feelings overcame their natural reserve, going up to Parson Wesley for one shake of his hand, one word of encouragement or welcome, to which they could only respond by a sobbing, "The Lord bless you," or by tears, without any words at all—and others "fingering" to pour

out the grief of consciences awakened to see their sins, but not yet seeing the remedy; and to observe Mr. Wesley's kindly, patient, discriminating words for each! As father said, when in the gathering dusk we were riding away among the slowly dispersing multitudes (who seemed scarcely able to tear themselves away).—

"Men who do not know him may talk lightly of those multitudes, as a bragging boy at home may talk lightly of a battle. But, right or wrong, it is no light matter. There is power in these words, as there is in a battery or a thunder storm; and Kitty," he continued softly to me, as I sat on my pillion behind him, "I believe in my soul it is power from Heaven. So help me God, I will never say a word against those men again."

The next evening, when we sat around the fire, mother said gently, in answer to our description of the scene,—

"I'm only afraid that all this excitement will pass away, and leave the poor people colder and harder than it found them."

Father replied,—
"Mother, you are as good a woman as there is in the world, and a very gentle touch would set you in the way to Heaven; but, I tell you, some people want a wrench enough to part soul from body to drag them out of the way to hell. Why, but for such preaching as this nine-tenths of those people would never have prayed except for a 'godsend' in the shape of a wreck, and would scarcely have thought of a church except as a place to be married in or buried near."

"Well, my dear," replied mother, "we shall see. By their fruits ye shall know them."

"My dear," exclaimed father, becoming rather irritated, "I have seen. I do call it good fruit for ten thousand people to be weeping for their sins, as people commonly weep for their sorrows, and to feel, if it were only for that one hour, that sin is the worst sorrow, and the pardon of God and his love the greatest joy."

"And if only ten of the ten thousand believe that truth and live by it forever, Aunt Trevelyan," said Evelyn, "is not that fruit?"

"Yes," said mother, gently, but not very hopefully. "I am very old-fashioned. But I confess I am afraid of conventicles."

But afterwards when she was expressing the same dread of religious excitement, and these good feelings passing away, to Betty, Betty replied,—

"Bless you, Missis, of course it'll pass away, ninety-nine hundredths of it. And so does the rain from Heaven, goes back to the sea, and down into the rocks, and no one knows where. But the few drops that don't pass away make the fields green, and bring the harvest."

Every other Sunday evening through the winter a few of our poor neighbours have long been used to gather round the fire in the hall, while mother reads parts of the evening service, especially the psalms and lessons, with such bits as she thinks they can understand out of the homilies, or some of our few Sunday books.

Last Sunday was the first day this winter our little congregation had assembled. Father had generally found it necessary at such times to be busy

about the farm, but this evening he kept hovering in an unsettled way about the room, while mother, also in an unsettled and nervous way, turned over the leaves of the prayer-book. At last she called him to her, they spoke for a moment or two softly together, and when the poor old men and women came straggling in I saw a look of surprise on many faces as they whispered to each other,—

"The Captain's going to be parson to-night!"

There was a little tremor in his clear, deep, manly voice as he began,—

"Dearly beloved brethren," but when he knelt down with us and said,—

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep," the tremulousness had passed, and deep and firm came out the words of confession and prayer.

When the evening hymn was sung (and I never enjoy the evening hymn as on those Sundays when those poor old quavering voices join us in it), and the neighbours had gone, no one made any remark on the change. Mother sat very quiet all the evening. But now and then her eyes were glistening, and when as she went to bed, Cousin Evelyn said, mischievously,—

"Dear Aunt Trevelyan, I like your little conventicle very much."

Mother did not defend herself; she only said,—

"I am not too old to learn, Evelyn, and, certainly, not too old to have much to learn. But God forbid I should be setting my feeble hand against any good work of his."

And from mother such words as these mean much.

Much as Cousin Evelyn admires our wild coast scenery, her favourite excursions are to the cottages of the fishermen and miners in the hamlets around us.

To-day we went to see old Widow Treffry, Toby's mother. We found her in a very rare attitude for her, thrifty, stirring old creature that she is. She was crouching close to the fire, with her elbows on her knees, while from the chamber within came, every now and then, the sound of a low moan.

"Is it the rheumatism again, granny?" I said.

"Worse than that, worse than that, Mrs. Kitty," she moaned, scarce moving or noticing either of us. "Toby's gone mazed, clean mazed, all through the Methodists. He came home from one of their preachings last week like one out of his mind, and so he's been ever since; bellowing like a bull one hour, and moaning like a sick baby the next." He says it's all along of his sins. And what they be worse than other folks, I can't see at all! The Lord is merciful, and if he sends us a 'godsend' now and then, he surely means us to be the better of it. It was not us who raised the storm. And Toby never set a false light upon the rocks, nor gave any man a push back into the sea, like some other folks. And if, as he keeps crying out, he didn't take the pains he might always be bringing the drowned to life, it can't be expected we should do the same for Indians and popish foreigners as for our own flesh and blood. Would they do more for us? And if he has picked up a stray bit of good luck now and then, we've to save things for the

dead, or for the folks from London who come prowling about where they've no business, with their pens and paper, to rob them who've got the natural right to what the Almighty sends on the shore? Yesterday I got Master Hugh to him, and he prayed like an angel, and did him a sight of good for the time, but to-day he's worse than ever, he's gone clean mazed, and swears he'll go and give up everything he ever got from a wreck to the justices. And that," continued the old woman, breaking into a wail, "that's what I call throwing the Almighty's gifts back in his face."

At this moment Toby's face appeared at the door of the inner chamber, pale and haggard, and wild. But his voice was quite calm and steady as he said,—

"Mrs. Kitty, I told Mas'er Hugh, and he said it was the right thing to do, and Parson Wesley said the same, when I heard him on the moors. He said the Bible speaks of 'the fire,' and of 'their worm,' and that that means that every sinner who is lost in hell will have his own torment made out of his own sins. And he said that worm begins to gnaw at our souls now when we are wakened up to feel our sins. And the words had scarcely left his mouth, Mrs. Kitty, when there was the knowing begun at my heart! And it has never stopped since. And if it has made me faint away like a sick woman with the anguish, and has most driven me mazed in a week, what would it be forever? For Parson Wesley said there's no fainting away, and no going mazed in hell. We shall always be wide awake to feel the torment. But, Mrs. Kitty, he said there is a way of escape now for all, and for me. He said there is a way to have our sins forgiven. He said the Almighty gives his pardon as free as air, and the blood of the Lord can wash all the sins of the world whiter than snow. But he and Master Hugh both say, the Lord sees us through and through, and there's no way of making him believe we are sorry for our sins but by giving them up, and making up for them as far as we can. They say sin and hell go together, and can't be parted, nohow. So I've nought to do but to go to the justices."

Evelyn was deeply moved, and when we reached home and told mother, she wept many tears, and said at length as she wiped her eyes,—

"Kitty, my dear, I cannot make out about the rubrics and the canons. They were made by very holy men; and Mr. Wesley does not seem to mind them as one would wish, and I cannot think it wise to set ignorant men up to preach and teach. But his words are those of the prayer-book and Bible. And his works are those of an angel sent from God. And what can we do but give God thanks."

"I used to be afraid," she continued, after a pause, "that Mr. Wesley's was blind, fanatical zeal, 'till meant but misguided; but the zeal cannot surely be fanatical which spends itself in labours of love; nor blind since it leads so many into the light."

"Mr. Wesley says," responded Evelyn, "that true zeal is but the flame of love, and that all zeal is false which is full of bitterness, or has not love for its inspiration."

And mother said, thoughtfully,—
"His zeal will certainly stand that test. God forbid that ours should not."

(To be continued.)