



CROSSING THE ROPE BRIDGE OVER THE GILGIT RIVER.

A CURIOUS BRIDGE.

Away up in the province of Kashmir is the scene of one of the latest British frontier wars. Gilgit, the scene of the war, is one of the least known of British dependencies. It is in the furthest northern corner of Kashmir and is hemmed in by difficult mountain ranges and cut up by numerous rivers and streams which render communication extremely difficult. It is across these streams that these curious bridges are flung. They are made by the natives simply of birch twigs plaited together, and will bear a considerable strain. A dozen men can cross them at a time. The one shown in the picture spans the Yarsan river near Gilgit. This town of Gilgit stands 4,800 feet above the level of the sea, and possesses a fort which is the chief stronghold of the Maharajah of Kashmir in this remote portion of his dominion.

"FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED."

BY GRACE LIVINGSTONE.

Three young men sat together one Sunday afternoon in the reception room of a private boarding-house. The day was rainy and disagreeable, and at least two of the young men looked bored by the state of circumstances. They had read the morning paper through, yawned many times, and made all the remarks about the weather that they could think of. The third young man was a comparative stranger to the others. He was a young fellow with quiet manners and a frank, open face, which commanded respect and invited friendship. Both Edward Burton and Charlie Stone felt a desire to know him better as they watched him set himself by the window with his open book. That pleasant, firm mouth and those wisely merry eyes were interesting. They felt impelled to enter into conversation with him, and each searched his mind for a topic with which to begin. Edward Burton found it first, and began, "Did you go out to see Bernhardt last evening, Murray?"

"No, I did not."

There seemed to be a quiet putting aside of the subject in the tone of this answer, and Edward was quick enough to see that he had started out on a wrong line; but Charlie was full of enthusiasm the minute the subject was mentioned.

"Oh, didn't you go? That's too bad. You missed it. But perhaps you were there the night before? It's the finest thing of the season."

The mild, quiet eyes were raised again, and the young man replied, "I never attend the theatre."

There was none of the "I-am-better-than-thou" tone in this reply; and therefore the young men did not feel as if a bombshell had exploded in their midst, making it desirable to close up the conversation as soon as possible and get out of the room, but rather experienced a feeling of

wonder and perhaps of a sort of envy at this young acquaintance who could so composedly say that he never took part in what was to them so intense a pleasure, and almost a constant temptation.

"Don't you ever go?" asked Edward. "I know many people do not approve of Bernhardt. I don't much myself. I just thought I'd go once. But there are good theatres, good, helpful plays, instructive, you know, and all that. Don't you go to any theatres?"

"No," was the pleasant answer. "I don't go to any."

"Well, I'm sure I wish you'd tell me why," said Charlie. "Of course, there are bad theatres, but I don't see what that has to do with the good ones. You might as well say you won't read any books at all because there are some bad ones written. That would cut you off from the Bible, don't you see? What's the difference? I've been to some theatres that did me a great deal of good. I have been to theatres all my life and never got any harm from them that I could see. What's your theory, anyway?"

"My theory is this," answered the young man thus appealed to, "the theatre, as an institution, is a bad thing. Its principal actors and actresses are people of known immoral character; the large majority of the plays enacted have at least objectionable portions, which is putting it very mildly; if you don't believe that, study up the question and you'll find it so; I have a little book upstairs that you can read if you like. It is called 'Plain Talks About the Theatre.' It is by Dr. Herrick Johnson, a man who knows what he is talking about; and it contains some of the most tremendous facts I have ever found. It makes this a solemn question."

"Well, but," said Charlie, who had evidently been waiting impatiently for a chance to speak, "what's that got to do with the good ones? I suppose there are bad ones, but I can't see why that should affect the good ones. I think they're all right. I can't see any harm in going to a theatre when it's a good play."

"For one thing," answered young Murray, quietly, "the same management that on one, or two, or three nights in the week places upon its stage what is commonly called a good play, the other nights in the week places there something which you could not in decency listen to, or observe—"

"Stay away then," interrupted Charlie, eagerly; "don't you see, you'd only be patronizing the good ones, and showing the management that you could only uphold the good ones?" He finished with a triumphant flourish, as if he thought there was nothing left to be said.

"But," said the other, smiling, "your money goes to help along a management that is doing a business of death. What do you suppose it matters to them what you pay them your money for? They are willing you should choose Monday night

instead of Tuesday. On Monday night they will take your money, and on Tuesday they will take the money of some poor soul who hasn't your moral sense, who has perhaps seen you enter the same building the evening before, and knowing you to be a Christian, thinks your example one to be followed; and it may be on Tuesday night there is something for him to see that will plant the seeds of eternal death in his soul."

"Oh, well," said Charlie, carelessly, "I can't be looking out for every one else. If I take care of myself and see that I do what is right, I think I'll be doing pretty well. If other people have a mind to go wrong, why, I can't help it."

"Can't you? Oughtn't you to help it?" said the other young man, lifting those quiet gray eyes to look searchingly at him. "What will you do when God asks you as he asked Cain, 'Where is thy brother?' The Bible says that 'none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself,' and it tells us that 'we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves,' and 'Let no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.'"

"My! You have them right at your tongue's end, haven't you?" exclaimed Charley, admiringly.

But Edward's face was more serious.

"I never realized that there were so many verses of that sort in the Bible. Do you really think it ought to be taken so literally? Haven't the times changed a great deal and people's views grown broader? If you reason in the way that you have done, that would set up a pretty high standard. Why, we couldn't do a thing without stopping to think whether it was going to hurt some one," he said.

"Yes," said the young man, "I suppose times have changed. We have theatres, and dancing, and card-playing, and Sabbath observance, and a good many other things of that sort to think about now instead of the question of eating meat that was offered to idols; but I do not see how that changes the principle any. I suppose people's views are growing broader, but I do not see why that gives us any right to broaden the Bible rules. God himself said that the road that led to death was broad, and that many travelled in it, and that the way of life was narrow and that there were few who found it. Keeping in mind that word of his, it seemed to me a dangerous thing when we can look ahead of us and see the path growing broad. You and I are supposed to be in the 'straight and narrow way,' I believe," and as he said this the look on his face was one of tender brotherly friendship, that made his two companions feel that they were honored by his acquaintance, and that it was their privilege to live on higher ground than that on which they had been living.

"As to the verses I quoted," he went on, after pausing a moment, "there are scores of them. Listen;" and he drew from his

inner pocket a small pocket Bible, and turned over the leaves rapidly. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.' But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. . . And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Charlie gave a prolonged, sober whistle. "That's putting it pretty strong, I must admit," he said. "You seem to know all about that book. Wish I knew as much. You ought to be a minister."

"I have been preaching quite a sermon, haven't I?" he said. "Well, you should not have started me off."

"Oh, don't stop," said Edward. "I'm interested. I've been troubled about the thing sometimes myself. My father didn't approve of it; but he never told me his reasons, and I couldn't see that it ever did me any harm; so I went. But now I can see that for the sake of the influence of the thing perhaps a Christian ought not to go. If that is so,—and I'm afraid it is,—why, I should be willing to give it up. I want to think a little more about it."

Charlie surveyed his friend with a quick, astonished expression, and perhaps there was mingled with the look a new touch of respect. It was something, in his estimation, to be able to give up pleasure for a principle. He did not quite understand the motive that prompted it, but he could appreciate the act.

"H'm!" said he at last. "Well, I can't say I'm ready for just that. It would be pretty tough for me to give up going to the theatre for the sake of some old fellow down on Scrogg's Lane, if that's where you located the 'weak brother.' I'd have to think a long time before I made up my mind to that, I'm afraid."

"You are both talking on the theory that it does no harm to you personally to go, aren't you? Now, I don't admit that quite," said young Murray. "I can't see why you are not harming yourself every time you pay out your money to an institution that is such a power in degrading the world and pulling down all moral standards. Why, is it not an inevitable harm to yourself to allow yourself to become so fascinated with such a thing that you hesitate about giving it up for the sake of some other one? It seems to me that it cannot fail to lead one farther from Christ. It certainly will not help on in the Christian life. Then, too, the majority of even what you call 'good plays' are poor trash as regards literature, and their code of honor is that of the world, and not of Christ's followers. Their standards are worldly standards, and they hold up for approval deeds that belong to the world, the world from which we are told to come out and be separate."

The tea-bell broke the silence that followed these words. The afternoon was over. Young Murray felt half sorry that he had said as much as he had done. But he did not know how he could conscientiously have said less.

Charlie Stone was the first to walk out at the door; and as the other two followed him, Edward placed his hand detainingly upon Frank Murray's arm, and said in a low tone: "I thank you for what you have said this afternoon. I have never thought of these things in just that way. I think it will make some difference in my life."—*Golden Rule.*

THE CAUSE OF THE BOOM.

The Washington Post, commenting upon the effect of the prohibition of the liquor traffic within one mile of the Soldiers' Home, says "Real estate has taken a boom everywhere within the prohibition zone." It adds that "the abolition of the liquor traffic throughout all that section of the city made real estate investors eager to get hold of property there," and that "there is no other part of the city or district where an absolute absence of the liquor business is assured."