

The Pillar of Cloud.

YOU know well enough how clouds look. But you have never seen a cloud standing up straight over a house, have you? The one in the picture does. Though the houses are not at all like ours. They are all tents. One big tent in the middle, and then, as far as you can see, great numbers of little tents. For forty years in the wilderness the Children of Israel lived in tents. God was very good and kind to them, and took care of them.

But what was this wonderful cloud, and what did it mean? When the Children of Israel left Egypt, God led them and showed them the way by this cloud. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night."

When the Egyptians were rushing after the Israelites by the Red Sea, we read that the pillar of the cloud went from in front, and stood behind them: and it became a cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, but it gave light by night to the Israelites.

After Moses had talked with God on Mount Sinai, he built the tabernacle, exactly as God told him to do. We are told that when Moses finished the tabernacle, the cloud abode upon it. When it was taken up, they journeyed; when it was not taken up, they rested. And this happened through all the forty years. And when the people sinned and God was grieved, and the tabernacle was taken out of the camp, the pillar of cloud came down and "stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door."

Thus you see the cloud told the Children of Israel that God was with them. He led them in all their wanderings. He helped them against their enemies. He came down to punish them when they were wicked. He never left them. And this loving, leading, protecting God is our Father in heaven. He will guide His little children who love and serve Him safely until He brings them at last to the bright home above, where they will dwell with Him for ever.

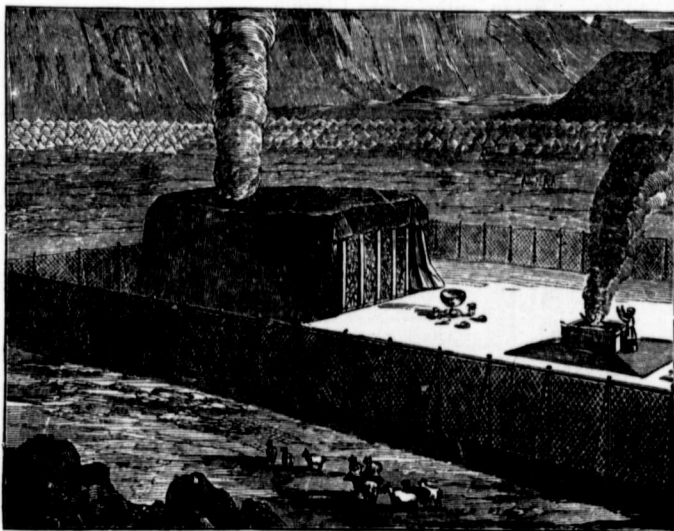
"To Which do you Belong?"

MANY years ago a king of Prussia was passing through a pretty country village and as was often the case, was met by a number of school children, who sang a simple song of welcome. This much pleased the king; and through their head master the children bade his majesty welcome to their village.

When the king had thanked them, he began to question several of the children. Plucking an apple from a tree hard by, he said:

"Let me see if you can tell me to what kingdom this belongs?" "To the vegetable kingdom, sire," answered a blue-eyed German child. "And this?" questioned the king, taking his watch from his pocket,

and holding it up before all. "To the mineral," answered several little voices. "Right," said the king. "And now, little maiden," turning to the first child, "to what kingdom do I belong?" The blue eyes fell, and the child's cheeks coloured deeply. She was afraid to say "the animal kingdom," for she thought his majesty might be offended at being called an animal! Just then it flashed across her mind that "God



made man in His own image," and looking up full of joy she said, "You belong to God's kingdom, sire!"

The king was deeply moved. A tear stood in his eye. The child was frightened at the effect of her words; but the king kindly placed his hand on her head, and said earnestly:

"God grant that I may truly belong to His kingdom!"

Two bright thoughts come out of that story for you, children:—

First, a child's words can reach even kings' hearts, if God guide them. Every word we speak does harm or good. How careful, then, we ought to be in what we say!

The next thought, or rather question, is: "To which kingdom do *you* belong?" "You would like to belong to the kingdom of heaven," you say? How are you to belong to it? Jesus tells you how when He says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."