

Choice Literature.

JACK.

(Continued.)

It was now night of a February day. It had not been a very cold day; a light, clean snow had fallen, which was thawing gently. Jack, looking dimly on through his craze, saw the light of his half of the gray cottage shining ahead; he perceived that the frost was melted from the windows. The warm colour came quietly down to meet him across the fresh snow; it had to him in his delirium the look of a woman's eyes when they are true, and lean out of her love to greet a man. He did not put this to himself in these words, but only said:

"Them lamps look like she used to,—curse her!" and so went hurtling on.

He dashed up against the house, as a bowsprit dashes on the rocks, took one mad look through the unfrosted window, below the half-drawn curtain, and flung himself against the door, and in.

His wife sat there in the great rocking-chair, leaning back; she had a pillow behind her, and her feet on the salt-fish box which he had covered once to make a cricket for her, when they were first married. She looked pale and pretty,—very pretty. She was talking to a visitor who sat upon the lounge beside her. It was a man. Now, Jack knew this man well; it was an old mess-mate; he had sworn off, a year ago, and they had gone different ways; he used to be a rough fellow: but people said now you wouldn't know him.

"I ain't so drunk but I see who you be, Jim," began the husband darkly. "I'll settle with you another day. I've got that to say to my wife I'd say better if we missed your company. Leave us by ourselves!"

"Look here, Jack," Jim flushed good-humouredly, "you're drunk, you know. She'll tell you what I come for. You ask her. Seeing she wasn't right smart,—and there's them as she says she lacked for vittuals,—my wife sent me over here with a bowl of cranberry sass, so help me Heaven."

"I'll kill you some other evenin'. Leave us be!" cried Jack.

"We was scatin' and talkin' about the Reform Club when you came in," objected Jim, with the patience of an old friend. "We was wonderin' if we couldn't get you to sign, Jack. Ask her if we wasn't. Come now! I wouldn't make a fool of myself if I was you, Jack. See there. You've set her to cryin' already. And she ain't right smart!"

"Clear out of my house!" thundered Jack. "Leave us by ourselves!"

"I don't know's I ought to," hesitated Jim.

"Leave us be! or I won't leave you be a minute longer! Ain't it my house? Get out of it!"

"It is, that's a fact," admitted the visitor, looking perplexed; "but I declare to Jupiter I don't know's I'd oughter leave it, the way things look. Have your senses, Jack, my boy! Haze your senses! She ain't right smart!"

But with this Jack sprang upon him, and the wife cried out between them, for the love of mercy, that murder would be done.

"Leave us be!" she pleaded, sobbing. "Nothing else won't pacify him. Go Jim, go, and shut the door, and thank her, for the cranberry sars was very kind of her, and for my husband's sake don't tell nobody he wasn't kind to me. There. That's right. There."

She sank back into the rocking chair, for she was feeble still; and looked gently up into her husband's face. All the tones of her agitated voice had changed.

She spoke very low, and calmly; as if she gathered her breath for the first stage of a struggle whose nature she solemnly understood. She had grown exceedingly pale.

"Jack, dear," softly.

"I'll give ye time," he answered with an ominous quiet.

"Tell yer story first. Out with it!"

"I haven't got nothin' to tell, Jack. He brought the cranberry sars, for his wife took care of me, and she was very kind. And he sat a little and we was talkin' about the club, just as he says he was. It's Mother Mary's club, Jack. She's made Jim secretary, and she wanted you to join, for I told her you'd reformed. Oh, Jack, I told her you'd reformed!—Jack, Jack! Oh, Jack! What are you goin' to do to me? What makes you look like that?—Jack, Jack, Jack!"

"Stand up here!" he raved. He was past reason, and she saw it; he tore off his coat and pushed up his sleeves from his tattooed arms.

"You've played me false, I say; I trusted ye, and you've tricked me. I'll teach ye to be the talk upon the wharves another time when I get in from Georges'!"

She stood up as he bade her, tottered and sank back; crawled up again, holding by the wooden arm of the rocking-chair, and stretched one hand out to him, feebly. She did not dare to touch him, if she had clung to him, he would have throttled her. When she saw him rolling up his sleeves, her heart stood still. But Teen thought:

"I will not show him I'm afraid of him. It's the only chance I've got."

The poor girl looked up once into his face, and thought she smiled.

"Jack. Dear Jack!"

"I'll teach ye! I'll teach ye!"

"Oh, wait a moment, Jack, for the love of Heaven,—stop a minute. I've been that I said I'd be to you since we was married. I've been an honest wife to you, my boy, and there's none on earth nor heaven as can look me in the eye and darst say I haven't. I swore to ye upon the Rock of Ages, Mother Mary witnessin',—why, Jack!" her voice sank to infinite sweetness, "have you forgotten? You ain't yourself, poor boy, you'll be sorry. I ain't very strong, yet,—you'll feel bad if you should hit me,—again. I'd hate to have you feel so bad. Jack, dear, don't. Go look in the other room, before you strike again. Ye ain't seen it yet. Jack, for the love of mercy!—Jack, Jack!"

"Say you've played me false, and I'll stop. Own up, and I'll quit. Own up to me, I say!"

"I can't own up to you, for I swore you by the Rock of Ages; I swore ye I would be an honest wife. You may pummel me to death, but I'll not lie away them words I swore to ye . . . by that, . . . Jack, for the love of Heaven, don't ye, Jack! For the way you used to feel to me, dear dear, Jack! For the sake of the babies we had, . . . and you walked beside me to bury 'em! Oh, for God's sake. . . . Jack! . . . Oh, you said you'd be kind to me. . . . Oh, ye'll be so sorry! For the love of . . . I for the love of God! Not the pistol! Oh, for the Rock of—"

But there he struck her down. The butt end of the pistol was heavy enough to do the deed. He struck, and then flung it away.

Upon his bared arm, as it came crashing, the crucifix was shattered red.

He stood up stupidly, and looked about the room. The covers were off the kitchen stove, and the heart of the coals blazed out. Her yellow hair had loosened as she fell, and shone upon the floor.

He remembered that she spoke about the other room, and said of something yonder, that he hadn't seen it yet. Confusedly he wondered what it was. He stumbled in and stared 'bout the bedroom. It was not very light there, and it was some moments before he observed the cradle, standing straight across his way. The child waked as he hit the cradle, and began to cry, stretching out its hands.

He had forgotten all about the baby, there had been so many.

"You'd better get up, Teen," he said as he went out; "it's crying after you."

He shut the door, and staggered down the steps. He hesitated once, and thought he would go back and say to her:

"What's the use of layin' there?"

But he thought better, or worse, of it, and went his way. He went out and reshipped at once, lingering only long enough to drink madly on the way, at a place he knew where he was sure to be let alone. The men were afraid of Jack, when he was so far gone under as this. Nobody spoke to him. He went down to Salt Brothers' wharf, opposite Salt & Co.'s, and found the *Daredevil*, just about to weigh. She was short by one hand, and took him as he was.

He was surprised to find himself aboard when the next sun went down; he had turned on his bunk, and was overheard to call for Teen, ordering her to do some service for him, testily enough.

"Oh," he muttered, "she ain't here, is she? Well, then, if I ain't on the *Daredevil*."

He was good for nothing, for a matter of days, and silent or sullen for the trip. It had been a very heavy spree. He told to, when he came to himself, and fished desperately: his luck turned, and he made money; he made \$75. They were gone three weeks. They had a bitter voyage, for it was March. They struck a gale at Georges', and another coming home. It snowed a gre deal, and the rigging froze. The crew were uncommonly cold. They kept the steward cooking briskly, and four or five hot meals a day were not enough to keep one's courage up. They were particular about their cooking, as fishermen are, and the steward of the *Daredevil* was famous in his calling. But it was conceded to be unusually cold, even for March, at Georges'. One must keep the blood racing, somehow, for life's sake.

Whiskey flowed fast between meals. Jack was observed not to limit himself. "It was for luck," he said. Take it through, it was a hard trip. The sober men—there were some—looked grim and pinched; the drinkers ugly.

"It's a houn's life," said a dory mate of Jack's one day. His name was Rowe—Rowe Salt; he was a half brother of Jim's. But Jim was at home. And Teen, of course, was at home. Jack had not spoken of her, he had thought of her,—he had thought of nothing else. God knows what those thoughts had been. When Rowe spoke to him in this fashion, Jack looked hard at him.

"I've been thinkin' ef it disobligated a feller," he said.

"Hey?" asked Rowe.

"If you was treated like folks, but you ain't. You're froze. You're soaked. You're wrecked. Your nets is stole. You're drove off in the fog. You're drowned, and you lose your trawls. If you swear off, you miss your luck. It's dirty aboard. Folks don't like the looks of you. There's alwars a hanker in the pit o' your stomick. When you get upon a tear you don't know what you—do to—folks."

Jack stopped abruptly, and leaned upon his oar; they were trawling, and the weather grew thick.

"Rowe," he said, staring off into the fog, "did yer ever think we was like fishes, us Fairharbor folks?"

"I don't know's I hev," said the dory-mate, staring too.

"Well, we be, I think. We live in it, and we're drowned in it, and we can't get on out on't,—we can't get out. We look like 'em too. I've thought about that. Some of us look like haddock. You've got the halibut look yourself. Skipper, he's got the jib of a monk-fish,—you ken see it for yourself. There's a man I messed with, once, reminded me of a sculpin. I guess I'd pass for a lobster myself,—for colour, anyhow. We take it out some-ways, each on us. Don't ye know the look of the women folks have when they get old and have gone hungry? You can tell by the build of a boy what he'll turn out,—halibut way or hake, or mebbe mackerel if he's sleek and little. It's a kind of a birth-mark, I shouldn't wonder. There's no gettin' out on't, no more'n it out of you. Sometimes I used to think—"

"Bless my life!" cried Jack. He laid down his oar again, and the dory wheeled to starboard sharply.

"Rowe Salt, you look there! you tell me if you see a woman yonder on the water!"

"You've got the jim jams, Jack. Women folks don't walk at Georges'. I can't see nothing nowhere, but it's as thick as—"

"It's thick as night," interrupted Jack, "and there's a woman walkin' on the water,—There! don't you see her? her hair is yellor hair, and it's streamin' over her,—don't you see her? She's walking on this horrible fog toward the dory,—Teen! Teen! There! Lord save me, Rowe, if I didn't see my wife come walkin' toward us, us sittin' in this dory—Hi-igh! I'll swear off when I get home. I'll tell her so. I hate to see such things."

"You'll see, Rowe," Jack added presently,—for he had not spoken after that, but had fallen grimly to work. It was ten below, and the wind was taking the backward spring for a bitter blow; both men, tugging at their trawls through the high and icy sea, were suffering too much to talk,—"ye see we had some words before I come aboard, and she warn't right smart. The baby can't be very old. I don't know how old it is. I was uncommon drunk; I don't remember what I did to her. I'm afraid I hit her,—for I had some words with her. I wished I was at home. She won't tell nobody. She never does. But I'm set to be at home, and tell her I've sworn off. I've got money for her this trip too; I'm afraid she's in a hurry for it."

After this outburst of confidence, Jack seemed to cling to his dory-mate; he followed him about deck, and looked wistfully at him. Jack had begun to take on the haggard look of the abstainer once again. The crew thought he did not seem like himself. He had stopped drinking, abruptly, after that day in the fog, and suffered heavily from the weather and from exposure.

"I say, Rowe," he asked one day, "if anything was to happen, would you just step in and tell my wife I didn't believe that yarn about her? She'll know."

(To be concluded.)

READING THE BIBLE.

In his address to the students of Rotherham College, Professor Wilkins, of Manchester College, said:

I have been speaking hitherto of that part of the student's course which often appears the most trying to him at the time, as it is that which has the least apparent bearing on the work to which his life is devoted. Of the theological studies proper I have but little right or wish to speak, but there is just one thing on which I may venture to say a word. We have heard much of late, some of it wise talk, some of it rather the reverse, about the hundred best books of the world. Now, have you appreciated the full significance of the fact that there was probably not one of those lists drawn up by men of the most different tastes and positions in which a foremost place was not given to the Bible? We read a great deal about the Bible—do we read enough of the Bible itself? I am not speaking of the devotional use of the sacred volume. That, I trust, is not neglected by any of you. But here we have, what is admitted by all who have a right to speak, to stand first in the rank of literature. If you are wisely counselled to read only or mainly what is best, believe me, you cannot be wrong in reading much of your Bible. It is well to read some selected portions of it carefully and critically in the classes of your professors, as giving you an example of the results which may be gained by detailed and accurate study. It is even better to turn again and again to the favourite passages, endeared by many a sacred memory, which you have found to be most helpful for the nurture of the spiritual life. But between these two there is the reading, which has for its object to grasp the spirit of a book as a whole, the reading which takes one week, we will say, an *epistle of St. Paul*, another week a book like *Job* or *Ecclesiastes* or one of the minor prophets, and studies it, not with minutely critical scholarship, but rather with the desire to learn the lessons, which lie, if I may say so, on the surface, and comprehend the place which the book has in the chronicle of the training of the world in the mind and the purposes of God. A friend of mine was recently expressing the opinion that no student ought to leave our colleges without having read through the whole of the New Testament in the original, and the Old Testament at least in the Revised Version. I am afraid that this was what the Catholics call a counsel of perfection, and that it cannot be expected of all. But I do not see why it cannot be at least an aim at which you may aim; and I am sure that the more nearly you approach it, the better you will feel that you have used your time.

A LOST PAGE OF THE BIBLE.

A question having arisen here of vital importance in Bible history, I have pleasure in briefly tracing its rise and progress. Several years ago Mr. W. N. Groff, an Egyptian scholar, discovered in the lists of Thotmes III. at Karnak, which contains the names of the principalities and tribes inhabiting Palestine, the names of Jakob-el and Joseph-el. A discovery of such importance induced him to prepare an article for the *Revue Egyptologique* in 1885, which was presented by M. Oppert to the French Academy, from whose report I make the following translation. "In the lists of the peoples made prisoners at the fortress of Megiddo by Thotmes III., the king quotes two names, Jakob-el and Joseph-el. The great importance of the new reading consists in this, that in this event we have an episode in the history of the children of Israel between their arrival in Egypt and the Exodus. The very fact that the tribes of Jacob and the two tribes that descended from Joseph had joined together to combat the Egyptians would explain the unfriendliness of the Pharaoh that knew not Joseph, be having arrived during the reign of the shepherd kings." An immense amount of discussion has been raised on the question in France and Germany, for it is evident that no Exodus could have taken place without the existence of our fathers in Egypt, and hence the value of the coincidence that the very name of Jacob and Joseph are recognized as having lived there. Protestantism is too weak in France to deal courageously with such a class of questions except in some cases, alas! to yield to the negative side, while Roman Catholic fathers keep abreast of the times, for I noticed in the *Univers* an able defence of the conclusion