

palaces of the great but in the homes of the less. To this the caliph, who had been greatly impressed by the bearing of the stranger, would only consent on obtaining his promise to at least call upon him after he had rested from the fatigue of his long journey. Upon this promise being given, they parted company, each pursuing his own way; the one pondering, guessing, contriving; the other stately, impassive, buried in his own thoughts.

—"Sire, I was born in great Damascus, a prince's son, and already have I seen the noon of life, and passed on down, far down towards its evening," began the stranger guest unto the caliph Sadi, when the two had partaken lightly of food on that same day. "Nushirowan the Just, was my father, but whether or not he still lives I know not. Abd-ul-Kazan they called me, but ere scarce over I was known on the streets of Damascus, lo! I had left them forever. I saw, while yet young, the follies and the fripperies of idle-minded men, and little able as I was to judge, took mind upon it that I at least should not stay amidst such surroundings. No more than a lad, I departed. By my father I was sent to an old time friend of his, one who had learned much of wisdom and who had gone apart from the world, feeding his own flame where there were none to be warmed by its light. There I stayed only until the reverence I at once formed for his high qualities of mind gave place to a loathing for the selfish and idle uses to which his talents were put, and one day I left him, too, forever. I next went to strange cities, smaller than Damascus, and learned their manners and customs. Yet was I not satisfied, and at length, angry at the follies I could nowhere escape so long as I remained in man's company, I set my face away from all human habitations and went my ways alone.

Three days I went thus, and the memories of what had been abode with me. But on the fourth day, looking up I noticed the blue dome of heaven and the resplendent jewel glittering from out the centre. From thence I marked not time.

I looked about me and the fields were bare. Save for here and there a palm tree, nothing arose to relieve the eye. There was barrenness, scorched and silent everywhere. Nevertheless I pursued my way. Next day I rested at the noon hour in a shade of spreading branches. When I awoke there was a gentle murmur in my ears, and looking I beheld a tiny streamlet, whose waters pure and warm coming from I know not where, went by me drawing the long grasses down into the bosom of the stream, where they swayed unceasingly in gentlest, smoothest motion and sang so softly sweet no other sounds might share the harmony of silence. I arose and looked upon the stream and then along its course. Far ahead I could see, now clear, now faint a line, a mark, where, I knew what way it ran. Beyond there was naught to show whither it would lead. But what cared I for certainties. My mind but yesterday was blank to nature as the wastes that ran before my vision to where they met the blue sky. Now I had heard the whisper song of the waters and the greeting of the sedge grass, and I was prepared to wait what else might come. All day long I wandered on, counting the white pebbles and the black that lay upon the bed of the river, until wider apart the edges sundered, and deeper and more inscrutable grew the moving stream.

Thereafter, without noting the time, I followed the river, observing as closely as I could the ever increasing volumes nature opened for my study. I marked the distinguishing shades in the grass, that as I advanced grew wider and like to velvet, stretching out in a rich carpet wherever the way led. The colors and forms of leaves, of trees, of fruits, of the birds of the air, and of the fishes that darted through a ray of light in the stream, all there I watched and noted. Solitude, in all its dazzling panoply lay spread out before me. I lost no ray of sunlight, either at morning or evening, by whose aid I could pursue the investigation.

At length, after I know not how long, I one day found myself in a larger valley. Here, all the perfections I had before noticed were intensified, and I found my long pursuit of the study I had engaged in was as yet only sufficient to assist in the examination of this land of enchantment. The river that had before moved on in one deep body now broke up into a multitude of little streams, which intersected each other frequently, but which, amongst them, carried moisture to the furthest boundaries of the valley. All things grew in profusion. There were trees whose shady foliage broke the glare at noonday, and others, giants of an olden time that rose high above their neighbors, swaying even to the lightest zephyr's breath. But, me t of all, it was the flowers that mystified me. When the dawn peeped over the mountain and the joy of its coming glistened in the dew drops, the fields were covered with blossoms of a single hue, oftenest blue. An hour later, most of these had faded, and the mead bloomed again in flowers all of one kind, and that different from the first. Hour after hour, and day after day, these strange changes went on. Sometimes one flower would bloom at the same hour each day for several days; oftener the few remaining were blended almost beyond discovery in a mass of new ones.

Bright birds hovered in the air around, whose hues were numberless, and bright like flashes of colored light they crossed my vision. I chanced to observe once that a flock of them descended to the earth, when lo! not one particle of the radiant splendor remained, and they became so as to be almost imperceptible against the dark leaves and wood of the trees.

Sometimes I fancied I heard voices about me, and once or twice shadows as of human figures flitted among the trees. Still I went on undisturbed, and the going down of the sun or its rising were my only positive marks in the day's course.

One morning, after a day of considerable fatigue, I overslept the dawn and was awakened by the rays of the sun beating down through an angle formed by two hills. I started up at once, when to my exceeding surprise I saw a few feet away a tall girl-like woman, seated upon the grass and looking upon me with unfeigned wonder. I was angry that I should be obliged to meet any human being before my wandering was over, but as she had appeared I determined at once to acquire her aid in exploring the valley. Wonderingly, she consented. Never before had any come there, she told me, and for herself she had never been elsewhere.

Thus down the valley each day we wandered together. Its beauties grew more beautiful under her touch, its peace more hallowed. As we went on the various streamlets again came together and flowed on again in one large stream. As I observed this I knew that sooner or later there would be an important change, that the stream was rushing on to pass between the hills and I began to feel that the end of the enchanted valley was at hand. Still this was the only sign, yet I was in daily dread of it. One day I asked my guide about it, who quite surprised me by saying she did not think there was any end. Then I quoted to her some verses that the sage, my father's friend, once spoke to me at sunrise, when, after prayer, I had remarked the glories of the sky and the fragrant coolness of the decoy earth. They were these:

Like the dews of the morning
Poor perishing gems
That glint in the dawning
On myriad stems,
But vanish ere noon time
Has come with the sun:
So life's brightest pleasures
When once felt, are done.

Like the sun in its noon
Is the glory of man;
But the cool breezes fan
Him that must rest and soon
From the glamour of day
In the night of the tomb.

She laughed and shook her head and we went again our way.

One day I heard a roaring sound. The river heard it too and leaped away. I caught the madness and rushed along the banks. Soon I stopped, for the river, coming to an embankment, rushed through a crevice and into the earth with a yell that found a startling echo in my mind. I looked about me. I was out of the valley. My girl guide was gone. I thought to return but found I had closed the narrow passage, by brushing against a huge rock that had hung balanced beside the river's edge. I looked again. The sky was darkened by clouds, the birds were gone, there were no flowers upon the earth. Only I could see some gnarled and desolate trees, whose limbs whistled in the coming wind. Once, only once, I saw a thorn brake growing on a desolate hillside. There I rested.

Sire, I was young when I entered the valley, but I am now old. I feel that I shall see Damascus again, but not for long. Nushirowan the just must have gone to rest among his fathers. Soon I shall return to him."

This was the tale of Abd-ul-Kazan, told by him to the caliph Sadi in his palace in the city.

CYRIL.

For the CATHOLIC REVIEW.

Catholic Canadian Celebrities.

HON. AND REV. ALEX. McDONALD.

It is but meet and proper that the first name we treat of should be one that has alike reflected honor and credit upon the Church of his birth, and the land of his adoption—Bishop McDonald.

This soldier-prelate was born at Glen Urquart, Scotland, in the year 1762, of the clan of Glengarry that afterwards formed such a powerful factor of the Canadian people.

His boyhood was passed among his native hills, and the same strong bracing air that blew across their purple summits built up a Highlander's sturdy physique, and a Highlander's unswerving loyalty to his God and his king.

The education of the young McDonald was begun in the Scotch College in Paris, and completed in the Scotch College at Valladolid, Spain, where he was ordained priest in 1787.

We do not learn much of his simple life until the year 1792, a time of great destitution and distress in the Highlands, the outcome of a movement made on the part of the landlords, to consolidate all small farms into a number of large ones. The tenants of these small holdings were thrown on the roadsides, somewhat after the style of Irish evictions, as if the hand of persecution, in every land, must always rest the heaviest upon the Catholic.