

Pastor and People.

HE LEADETH ME.

In pastures green? Not always; sometimes He
Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
In many ways, where heavy shadows be.
Out of the sunshine warm and soft and bright—
Out of the sunshine into darkest night,
I oft would faint with sorrow and affright,
Only for this—I know He holds my hand;
So whether in the green or desert land
I trust, although I may not understand.

And by still waters? No, not always so,
Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.
But when the storms beat loudest and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by
And whispers to my soul, "Lo, it is I."
Above the tempest wild I hear Him say,
"Beyond this darkness lies the perfect day,
In every path of thine I lead the way."

So whether on the hill-tops high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
The shadows lie—what matters? He is there.
And more than this, where'er the pathway lead,
He giveth me no helpless, broken reed,
But His own hand, sufficient for my need.
So where He leads me, I can safely go,
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
Why in His wisdom, He hath led me so.

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THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

THE YOUNG ROAD-MAKERS.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."—Isaiah xl. 3, 4.

One of the greatest mountain ranges in the world is that called the Altai, which rises like a barrier wall between Siberia and the Chinese Empire. It is 2,500 miles long, and one of its peaks is more than two miles in height. In this range many rivers take their rise and flow northward into the Arctic Ocean. One of these rivers, somewhat to the west of Central Siberia, is the Yenisei. Near its source it flows through a wooded country, similar in its appearance and productions to many parts of Canada; but, as it goes northward, it runs through desolate plains and comes at last to a region of almost endless snow and ice. All about the southern part of the river's course, and many long miles to the east and west of it, there are strange remains of an ancient people similar to those that appear in the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi on this continent. There are mounds of earth and stone of all shapes and sizes, many of which were burial places of great people; for those who have dug into them have found not only traces of human bodies but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, together with other treasures that had been left with their dead owners. The wandering natives of this mound country of the Yenisei call the mounds "the tombs of the Katei," and this is all they know about them. But the history of China tells us that the true name of the people who made them was the Khitan; that they were a very famous race; and that they conquered China itself and ruled over it for more than two hundred years. You have read in the poets about a place called Cathay. That is an old name of China, which was given to it when the Katei or Khitan were its rulers. It must be more than a thousand years ago since the Khitan left their Siberian home on the banks of the Yenisei and marched eastward and southward towards China.

The Khitan did not all leave the land of their fathers and the graves of their ancestors. Some of them are living there to-day. The Russians, who own all Siberia, call them Yeniseians, but they call themselves Kotten, and each man of their race calls himself a Khitt. They are a very poor and weak people, no better off than our wild Indians, and know no more about the mounds than the American tribes know of those in their country. It is worth while remembering this, for you will find many wise men who pretend that all the civilized peoples in the world have gradually raised themselves out of a savage state, and who do not tell us of the very many savage peoples whose ancestors once were civilized. Many races that were once famous in history have disappeared from the seats of their former empire. They have not perished, but have become barbarians. If we would find them we must search the mountain ranges and northern wilds of Europe, the African desert borders, the plains of Asia, the islands of the South Seas and the prairies and forests of this newer world. So in the miserable Yeniseians of to-day we discover a remnant of the conquering Khitan.

If you remember your map of Asia you know that under the Altai mountains, south-east of the Yenisei country, the Mongols live; and, east of them again, the Mantchoos dwell. These two peoples came into power after the Khitan had been driven out of China. First, the Mantchoos, who had helped to expel the Khitan, took their place as the rulers of the Chinese. And after a while the Mongols drove them out and became the lords of the greater part of Asia, although China was the seat of their government and centre of their authority. About the time when Edward I. began to reign in England, the greatest of the Mongol emperors, named Kublai

Khan, left Karakorum, in Mongolia, which had been the capital city of his empire, and made Khanbalig his home. Khanbalig was the Mongol name of Pekin, in Northern China. Now, as my story is about the Khitan people of the Yenisei, about Kublai Khan and his capitals, it was necessary that I should let you know something of their history. This fact also I may add, that at the time with which the story deals, the near neighbours of the Yeniseians were the Tartars on the west and the Tungus on the east. The Tungus belonged to the same family as the Mantchoos, and called themselves Donki.

There is a pass in the Altai mountains through which one of the sources of the Yenisei that rises in Chinese Tartary flows into Siberia, and at the head of this pass, on the Siberian side, stood in the old days the little village of Koleda. It was a very poor little village, for the few Khitan families that dwelt there depended almost altogether for their support upon the small patches of ground they tilled, the fish they caught in the river and what wild beasts they could kill with their bows and arrows. Sometimes, indeed, they dressed deer skins and made ornamental hunting-shirts of them, which they sold to the barbarous Tartars and Donki. But, more often, these savage peoples, and especially the Donki, took these and many things beside from the feeble villagers of Koleda without any return. The Donki were robbers and worse than robbers, for not satisfied with stealing from the living, they also plundered the dead. Many a mound, which they thought contained the ashes of a great chief, they opened for the purpose of taking away the valuable things that had been buried with the dead, and these they sold to other tribes, who carried them to Karakorum or to China. There was no law in the land, nobody strong enough or willing enough to help the feeble villagers. They might have left their homes and have sought quiet lives elsewhere, but they loved the land of their fathers; and, besides, they did not know where to go, for all over the world at that time the strong oppressed the weak. So they remained where they were and suffered, content if the plunderers left them enough to keep body and soul together.

An old grandmother named Dachaim lived in one of the wooden huts of Koleda, and with her lived her two grandchildren. The eldest of these was a boy of twelve called Alik; the other a girl two years younger named Pretsha. The grandmother had had her own share of trouble in life. Many times her house had been plundered and her little store taken away. But her greatest grief was when, with her own eyes, she saw her brave son killed by the Donki while striving to protect his father's grave from insult, and her daughter-in-law stretched beside him by the same cruel hands, when she ran to her husband's help. So she was left alone with little Alik and Pretsha, the baby children of these brave parents. They had thriven well under her care, and at the time when our story begins there was no manlier boy than Alik, no prettier girl than Pretsha in all the Yenisei country. They were old enough to be of use, and spent a great part of their time in helping the old grandmother, Pretsha in the house, and Alik in the field. But sometimes they had half a day to themselves, a genuine holiday. Then they would wander over the plains and among the mounds, gathering yellow strawberries and startling the blue foxes; or they would stroll along the wooded river banks catching little fishes, watching the beavers at work, and looking with wonderment at the strange writing on the rocky cliffs that rose far overhead. Often Alik would lie down at full length upon the grass among the mounds or in front of the written rocks, thinking of the old days when many people, and very clever people, too, lived in the Yenisei country to make these wonderful things. When he told Pretsha what he was thinking of she always answered that if she were a man she would not rest till she had seen more wonderful things than these.

One summer day the two children had finished their tasks by noon and were ready for a ramble. Good old grandmother Dachaim warned them to be careful where they went, for the neighbours had told her that the Donki were not far off, with their chief, Talingu, at their head. Talingu means "lightning" in the Donki language, but the chief was not at all like his name, either when he swayed about on his reindeer's back in winter or waddled along on his heavy feet in the summer time. Yet as the lightning scorches and destroys all it touches, so wasting and destruction marked the path of the Donki chief. Alik and Pretsha, you may be sure, had no wish to meet this robber, so for warning and protection they look with them their big dog Tship. Tship was a splendid dog for hunting or for watching. His legs were long and strong as well, his muzzle sharp but his neck thick, and his upstanding ears and tail told that there was not a lazy bone in his body. He was glad to get a holiday like the children, and bounded along beside them as full of life as they. About a mile from the house they came to a plain full of mounds, and began looking about for wild fruit and flowers. A pretty blossom on the side of a large mound caught Pretsha's eye. She ran to the place and plucked the flower. Then, with a cry of joy, she called to Alik, who came at once to join her. She had something in her hand besides the flower; what was it? Brushing off the earth that clung to it she held it up, crying "a babee, a babee," for that was their name for a little child or a doll. It was indeed a pretty doll, although more like the image of a chief dressed in a tunic that reached to his knees and wearing a collar round his neck and a pointed cap on his head. It was made of very fine clay well baked, or of stone, for it was hard to tell which, but its eyes and teeth and the collar round its neck were of precious stones. The coloured

eyes and teeth gave rather a fierce look to the babee in spite of the prettiness of the figure, but Pretsha loved it all the same, for where is the little girl that is not pleased with a doll?

While she was examining her new found plaything, Alik got down on his hands and knees peering among the grass out of which Pretsha had taken her toy. Brushing the long tufts aside with his hand, he saw a deep hole that had been made by some burrowing animal, very likely the fat, little, short-legged marmot, which spends all the winter underground, after it has stopped up the mouth of its hiding-place with a wisp of dry grass. Seeing the children's attention taken up with the mound, and not liking to be neglected, Tship came up to the place. True to his hunting instinct, he put his sharp nose into the hole, took a long sniff, and then went to work with his forepaws to widen the opening. Out flew the earth right and left from Tship's strong paws, and with the earth many small stones that made Alik and Pretsha stand aside. At last something bigger was thrown out of the hole. What was it? A long, flat, narrow stone, perhaps, or a stick! No, it was neither; it was a dagger, very rusty indeed, but still strong, and with a beautifully ornamented handle. Now was the time for Alik to cry out: "See, Pretsha, see what I am going to fight the Donki with when they come to rob us." In his delight he danced about the mound, flourishing his little weapon and stabbing many imaginary enemies. Then Tship gave a growl, his strong jaws snapped, and up he came to meet his young master with something in his mouth that was not a hairy marmot. Alik took it from him and saw that it was a large cup made of silver, and there, a little below the rim, were the deep marks of Tship's sharp teeth. "This will be for the grandmother," he cried; "let us go home, Pretsha, and show her what we have found." They did not think, poor children, that they had been plundering a grave, that cup and dagger had belonged to a great chief whose body had been buried there, nor that Pretsha's doll was an idol which the dead chief used to worship.

Gleefully they journeyed homewards, and leaving the plain came to the woody banks of a little stream. There Tship began to show his teeth, then to growl, and at last to bark furiously. They did not know what to do. It would not help them at all to go back, and this was the only short way home. So they went on, Tship advancing slowly and barking, Alik holding the dagger in his right hand, ready to fight, and the cup in his left, while Pretsha, close beside him, hugged her babee to her breast. Soon they saw the enemy. He came out from behind a tree and stood in front of them, a short, stout man with a broad face, little peering eyes and a mouth that, by means of the paint at its corners, seemed to grin from ear to ear with mischievous glee. He had on a long coat of skin that had once belonged to a wild sheep, and a kind of waistcoat of deerskin embroidered with thread of different colours. His trousers, also, were of skin, and his boots were of reindeer's legs, with the hair still on. In his hand he held a long bow; at his back hung a quiver full of arrows, and fastened to his belt was a long knife like a sword. "Quiet, Tship!" cried Alik, as the dog was going to spring upon Talingu, for this ugly Donki was the chief they had been warned against. So Tship came back and stood growling beside the children. "That is right," said Talingu in the Yenisei language; "keep your dog quiet or I shall have to kill him." While he was saying this he pulled an arrow out of his quiver and set it on the bowstring. "Now," he said, "would you like to lose your dog, your Tship, as you call him?" Both the children cried out "No, we will never part with our dog." "Then," he continued, "you must lay down these pretty things you have found, or I will shoot your dog and take them from you." "Don't do it Alik," cried Pretsha; "you with your dagger and Tship with his sharp teeth can beat that man, and I will help you with stones." "Very well, Alik," said the Donki chief with a voice that trembled between rage and fear, for he was a cunning coward, though they did not know it; "Very well, I will shoot your sister first and fight the dog with my knife if I have not time to shoot him, too." Alik was brave, though but a young boy. He would have dashed at Talingu without a thought for himself, and if he and Tship had done so at once the coward would have run or cried for mercy. But fear, first for his dog and then for his sister, held him back. So he said: "It is of no use, Pretsha; you and Tship are dearer to me than the dagger and the cup." So he threw them both on the ground. "Come, girl," said the Donki, "be wise like your brother and lay down your pretty thing." Pretsha was very angry. She threw the babee down but not roughly, for though she had to give it up she loved it all the same, and would not willingly break it. But she stamped with her foot upon the ground and cried: "You wicked man, you mean thief who rob children of their toys, I will have you punished for your wickedness if there is a judge in the world." Then the Donki laughed as he came forward to pick up the treasures, and he said: "There is only one judge, the lord of all the earth, who lives at Khanbalig, many, many long miles away; when he makes a road to Koleda and comes here with his hosts you may get him to punish Talingu." Saying this he laughed loudly again, as if he had made a very funny speech; and the two children, followed by their disappointed dog, left him with their treasures and went sadly home. On the way they met many of Talingu's men, so that while they grieved over their loss, they were glad that they had not fought with the cowardly chief and brought ruin upon Koleda.

(To be continued.)