

with its ministry or officers; its revealed Word, its Faith, Ordinances, Sacraments, and worship. Had it not been a positive institution of Christ, organized for the end of embodying, handing on, extending, making universally effectual, the revealed Truth, the plan of Salvation, clearly, it could not have survived in its purity the first century. It would soon have degenerated into a human scheme, lost its distinctive and Divine character, and thus perished from the world.

It is exceedingly important that Christian people should realise the fact that God has a Church; that this Church is not a thing of expediency, a human arrangement, a voluntary society, a sect or denomination, or any number of such; but a visible living, organic Body; the institution of Christ; the keeper and witness of Holy Writ; the pillar and ground of the Truth; the home of all Christians; the school for their training; the instrument of their sanctification; the means of the world's regeneration.—*Bishop Spalding.*

REPENTANT.

Every one on board the steamer *Mercy*, of the New York and Savannah Line, knew that the two young-looking men, standing on deck talking to the captain that August evening, were doctors bound for a fever-stricken little town on the coast.

It was a matter openly spoken of, and the doctors were looked upon as doomed men, bound to die by pestilence. A passenger, noted hitherto for his silence, asked their names, and was told Dr. Lance and Dr. Redding.

After a while, when the captain went astern to give some orders, he walked directly up to the pair and addressed a question to them.

They seemed surprised. Dr. Lance started. Dr. Redding drew back.

Then the one put out a hand and laid it on the passenger's shoulder, the other looking almost suspiciously on.

Finally both shook hands with their new acquaintance, and half an hour later, when a boat came alongside to take the doctors to their destination, the little town of Carroll, the silent passenger got into it with them, and a new sensation pervaded the watchers on the deck; the silent passenger—Hope, John Hope, he called himself—had volunteered to go with the physicians as nurse to the stricken district.

"I—I have a great desire to try what I can do for these poor creatures," he had said. And the doctors asked no further. Nurses were badly wanted in Carroll, they knew, for the sick were dying off like flies in autumn. It would not do to wait for references when a strong, quiet young fellow offered his life and strength in the service.

Dr. Lance did wonder for a moment who or what one could be to throw himself thus headlong into personal danger. Black-eyed, with closely cut black hair, dressed in cheap new clothes, it was difficult to put him down to any class or occupation. He might be a gentleman; he might not. Anyway he was evidently a man who meant work.

As they landed on the flat, low, scorching shore, the doctor made some kindly observation to the man.

"I want work," he answered; "real work. Yes, I can nurse."

Then the doctors went off to the rooms of the Relief Committee, and Hope, after learning where he could find them next day, sought a lodging—a cheap attic looking out on the streets of the doomed town. There his first action, after closing the door, was to put his hands together and sink on his knees. "Lord, give me work," he said, "and in Thy mercy let me save a life."

After that he threw himself on the bed and slept, rising with the sun to pray the same brief prayer, and then to sally forth in search of employment.

It soon came to him. "A very bad case," said Dr. Lance. "No one will take it. Will you go?"

Hope raised his eyes, there was a thankful look in them. "Willingly," he said.

"Scip will show you the way."

Scip was the Negro boatman who had rowed the party to land that first day—a poor, weak, solitary old fellow, just making enough to keep body and soul together by doing odd jobs for any one who would employ him.

Those were bad days in Carroll. The fever literally revelled in the town, and black men and white, poor and rich, clean and unclean, dropped and died almost before their friends realized that they were ill. The doctors had a busy time of it; so had the nurses.

Hope stuck to his work bravely; that silent, determined fellow was stopped by nothing. The vilest, the lowest, he would nurse like a brother, with a quiet tenderness that won all hearts. Only once he was seen to smile, and that was when he laid down a sweet boy-baby, whom he had hardly put out of his arms in a forty-eight hours' struggle for life. "God has not given me this life. He knows best. An innocent soul has gone back to Him," he said. And Dr. Redding, whose case it was, hardly knew what to make of the speech. Hope was an odd fellow.

The fever waxed worse and worse, and all the world turned its back on Carroll. Only the steamer, *Mercy*, now and again lay at anchor beyond the harbor, bringing food and necessities for the stricken from pitiful but terrified neighbors. Scip put off in his boat to fetch the supplies.

Once the mate questioned him: "Have you got that dark young chap up at Carroll now—calls himself Hope?"

"Yes," answered the negro.

"What's he after?"

"He nurse sick, all day, all night."

"Hah!"

There was a laugh exchanged among the crew. They had heard something in New York. Presently Scip gathered what that something was. He rowed slowly back to shore full of wonderment. "He seem so good," he said.

Meantime Hope had had a busy day, and was going to bed thoroughly worn out. Still, he knelt, at the window like Daniel and prayed, but this time he had only one sentence to say over and over: "Lord I thank Thee."

For he had saved another life. His last patient had been given up by the doctor, and he had pulled him through by sheer nursing; a young man, the father of five little children. The mother had died at the beginning of the outbreak.

"Lord, I thank Thee," said Hope, and his face was radiant as he laid himself on the truckle-bed.

We never know what a day may bring forth, and the next day brought a change to the silent nurse. He hardly noticed it at first, but men shunned him. Not his patients—they clung to him as they had always done, but the doctors, the Relief Committee, the few acquaintances he had made, they hung back, the frank manner completely gone—something had been told them!

Hope's face turned ashy pale as he realised it. "Lord, is this Thy hand? must I be punished yet more?" he cried in his soul.

Then Dr. Lance, the cheerful young fellow whom Hope had begun to delight in, spoke to him. "Is it true what they say?" he asked of his nurse.

The man's eyes fell. "Tell me what they do say," he asked.

"That you are a—discharged—convict; ugly words, but soon contradicted," said the young man uncomfortably.

"I can't contradict them," returned Hope. "Can I go back to my work?" he asked, almost humbly, as the doctor stood electrified and silent. "I don't want to cheat, but the sick did like me, and I wanted so to save life. Yes, I took one," he went on, "God knows I did. In the heat. He spoke evil of the woman I loved, and I struck him. He died. Yes, I took his life. I repent of that. All the time I was in prison I prayed the Lord to let me live to save life. Well, He's done it, and I thank Him. I did wish, though, that it hadn't got out till the fever was over."

That night a dirty little bit of twisted paper reached John Hope's lodging. It was from Scip.

"I've got it. Nobody won't nurse me, and I s'pose you won't, 'cos I brought the news."

Hope smiled once more over this. God was good to Him. To let him return good for evil so soon! He hurried down to the wretched cabin where Scip lived, where Scip's wife and four children had died in that visitation.

The negro was very ill, dying as soon as stricken. He stretched out his hands to Hope. "I never meant to harm ye."

"You've not harmed me, my boy; it's all right," said the nurse almost cheerfully.

"You'll stop by me, begged the poor black. I can't die alone; it's hard enough to live alone."

There was a special service that night in the city, to pray for the sick and dying. The bells sounded across the waste and reached the poor hut. "They sound like calling us," said Scip, after a paroxysm of chills and cramps. "Hold my hand, master."

Hope took the poor dark hand and held it till the bells stopped. And then the watcher found that Scip had been called, for the hand was cold and nerveless.

Hope was grieved; he would fain have had this life, too. He was greedy for lives, he told himself, half smiling.

The stars were shining outside like lamps. He would go to the city and ask for help to bury this poor fellow. Or no, he was too weary for that; he would do as he had had to do more than once before—dig the grave and bury the poor negro himself.

It was hard work, but the sand was loose and poor Scip light to carry, so he managed it.

Afterwards he lay down in the hut, quite worn out, and slept a little. When he woke he felt giddy and strange. Utterly powerless, too. The truth dawned upon him. "Lord, I've got it now," he gasped.

Yes, it was the fever. And Hope had no one to nurse him, and no one came near the solitary hut. He was not afraid, not impatient, however. In his weakness he simply thought, "I have been a wicked man; they will not come near me."

And then he turned to his God. "Lord, don't You leave me, though—don't You forget me!"

And then he slept and prayed again; prayed and slept all his time.

Two days passed, three, and still Hope was alone; alive still, still praying in a low, weak tone.

"Lord," he said, "they loved me, my sick, and I saved some lives. I'm glad I lived long enough to save life. I'm much obliged to You for that. I wish there was something else I could do for them. What can I do lying here, though? Ah, I know. Pray for a change of weather, for a cold spell. Lord, Lord, grant it for these poor sick!"

Then the poor brain wandered and addressed imaginary people round him. Presently his voice grew stronger, and took a tone of pleased surprise.

"Lord, it is You! It's very good of You to come when all the rest have forgotten me. But there! I remember! They deserted You. They let You die by Yourself. Will You hold my hand, dear Lord? You know I'm sorry. You know I've repented and tried to save life."

After a little while he said in a tone of supreme contentment, "Dear Lord!"

In the morning the hut door was opened, and Dr. Lance and a member of the Relief Committee came in. The hut told its own tale; the lifeless corpse in the corner was silent forever.

The men took off their hats.

"Dead at his post," said Dr. Lance, grasping the whole state of the case. "Good Lord, what a smile he wears!" he added suddenly.

Ah, Yes! The penitent may smile when he dies with his sins confessed, his hand in that of his Lord!

After all, those bells had called Hope too, as Scip declared.

LENTEN OFFERINGS.

Dr. Langford, in sending out an appeal to the Sunday Schools, tells this story, and makes the application:—

A man who was very sad once heard two boys laughing. He asked them:—

"What makes you so happy?"

"Happy?" Said the elder, "why, I makes Jim glad, and gets glad myself!"

This is the true secret of a happy life: to live so that by our example, our kind words and deeds, we may help some one else. It makes life happier here, and heaven will be happier for the company of those we have, by God's help, brought there.

Children

HOW KATIE

The Hudso through break little nurse girl and rosy, and chair by mamr bib securely, fi milk, and brot the dish of oat well. She lin what Mr. Hud Mr. Shandley, her mother. I eer on the nig awoke her with when Mr. Hud man she felt p with Teddy an

"He saved presence of heard Mr. Hud ed at the door

"I wonder w thought Katie grand to have.

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"Sto-o-pl!" ling to escape, "Not until

over again. I followed, Gec subject in whi been interest found no oppo explanation.

question and I the boys for a frolic, and the cloak under ti the delicate la face for mamr carried her lit carriage at the the time of tl mind, and of l

"I know v said, as she t ghan that Gra so beautiful fringe, "I k just as Hal sa house on fire

out of your li in a blanket, the fire and sr house, they'd presence of r don't you kno 'little pet'?"

"Coo, coo well as she co her mouth.

Katie had street and wa sedately alor the cheerful anddimples to

"No, no, p ma's blanket she said, stop it in more caused her to moment her l