

The Inglenook.

The Light of Other Days.

BY AGNES MARCHBANK.

The sun shone sweetly down on the crowded ridge that, from Holyrood to the Castle, is covered with high crowded buildings where dwell so many of the Edinburgh working-men and their families. Close that branch off this ridge descending to the valley on either side of Canongate, High Street, and Lawnmarket were shut out from the May sunshine; but a wind that came from the Forth slipped quietly up, chasing before it many pieces of paper. It was a Sunday morning wind, untainted with the smoke from the Leith workshops, and it was a very early wind at that, for the sun had not long risen, and the dwellers in Little Jack's Close took a slice of Sunday at both ends. It was their way of making it a day of rest.

Half way down Little Jack's Close was a crowded tenement house filled with one room tenants. They were a sort of hand-to-mouth lot who worked hard at their several trades, except at intervals when they left the tenement for another where they were entertained at His Majesty's expense.

On this particular morning Donald Bain sat up in bed and looked round. His father had not come home. Even at ten Donald had learned his lesson. He rose from his couch in a corner of his home and limped over to the window. This window was the best in the tenement for it got a little sunshine in the morning. The boy looked out and up at the blue sky above the slates and chimney pots. His thin, white, pinched face had the hard indifference that is pitiful when seen in the young. He was not sentimental. Life to him was made up of bare facts. He was wondering what sentence would be meted out to his father. And if it were possible for the bare garret to be held in possession till the old man came back. He had a supreme contempt for the "Shiller," and as he watched the sunbeams chase the sparrows over the roof he laid plans how to evade telling the truth regarding the old man. There was nothing he could sell to pay the fortnight's rent. Perhaps he would be turned out if he told the truth.

He stood there forgetting all his hunger in his miserable dread of losing that cold, dirty, little room he called his home.

Suddenly on the silence of the morning the quiet was broken by the tramp of feet on the stones of Little Jack's Close. Donald listened. That sound sometimes came early on Sunday mornings when the majority of the inhabitants were sleeping off their Saturday night's potations.

"Wha are they wantin' now?" he heard some one say in the next room, which was only divided from Donald's home by a thin partition of lathe and plaster.

Donald heard several doors open softly. He heard the women come to the landing to listen. Saturday night had ended with more noise and fury than usual in Little Jack's Close. Several of the inhabitants whose terms had expired had celebrated the event with a carouse. The steps came into the house and up the stairs; doors closed softly, women stole away, Donald stood ter-

rified. He had once seen the black flag rise on the Calton jail. People said the man that died that morning had "been on the drink." He was a Little Jack's Close man, perfectly harmless when sober. Donald had known him and the wife he murdered.

The steps came up the stairs till they reached the room where Donald stood waiting, the door opened and two men entered. One was Captain Scott of the Salvation Army, and the other was—Donald's father.

"Oh!" was all Donald said. He looked up, his father was sober, and there was something in his face Donald could not understand. Just then Captain Scott dropped on his knees and so did Donald's father. Donald stood open mouthed, he could not understand what it meant. Was his father acting a part?

After a few minutes Captain Scott rose, shook hands with the man, and said, pointing to the little bit of sunshine that fell on the dim window—

"A new morning has arisen." "Thank God!" said Donald's father.

"What does it mean, feyther?" asked the crippled boy a minute later when they were alone. He spoke crossly. "What is that man wantin' wi' ye?"

"He wants my soul's salvation."

"And where have ye been a' nicht?"

"On the penitent form. I have signed the pledge, Donald lad. I mean to keep it—the light of other days will come to you and me. The bright, free, blessed sunshine of God's blessing on a new and better life."

"Will you keep it, feyther?" The eager eyes searched the man's face. It was a face of purpose and of power. A face that the humpy lad had as yet never learned to know.

Yes, old Norman Bain kept the pledge. Up in Wick, his native town, he is a power for good among the herring-fishers. The light of other days that had made his youth so full of promise, arose at mid day in newer power. Donald is his right hand. He sings while he mends the nets. But he has not forgotten the darkness that once clouded his life.—Christian Leader.

Baby Stars: A Child's Song

The souls of little girls who die
God sets up shining in the sky,
But what becomes of little boys?
I ask of nurse, and she replies
That little boys are born without—
Just born to scuffle and to shout,
To play rough games, hit hard, and die.
I'm glad I'm not a little boy.
I think I'd like to be a star.
If God would set me not too far
Away from Daddy—so that I
Might send him kisses from the sky.
And shine upon his bed at night
With such a lovely little light;
And if he felt too lonely there,
I'd unwind all my golden hair,
And make a little shining stair,
For him to climb and sit by me—
Oh Dads, how lovely that would be!
And perhaps, if I asked God for you,
He'd change you to a star, dear, too.

Richard Le Gallienne, in Harper's Magazine for October.

The Lower Lights.

"I don't believe I'll go to church today," said Ruth one Sunday morning, at the breakfast table. "Somehow I don't feel like it, and nobody will ever know the difference whether I'm there or not."

"My dear," said Aunt Margaret, "I've often heard you singing, 'Let the lower lights be burning.' I wonder if you know the story that suggested it?"

"No," answered Ruth, "I never so much as heard that there was one."

"Some years ago a steamer in a terrific gale was trying to make the harbor at Cleveland, Ohio. There are two lights at the entrance of the harbor, one the upper light on the bluffs of the shore, the other the lower light on a bar at the other side of the entrance. The pilot peered out anxiously to catch a glimpse of the friendly lights, and presently caught sight of the upper one. But that alone was not sufficient, he must also see the other to know just where to go. But for some reason it was not lighted on time. Beaten by wind and wave, the steamer staggered on as best she could, while the hearts of all on board trembled with fear. If she missed the entrance, there was little hope of her escaping the rocks. Suddenly the lower light appeared, but, alas! it was too late—the steamer had missed the entrance, and in the attempt to turn about, went down with all on board."

"I suppose," said Ruth, with a laugh, "you mean that even if I am the most insignificant member of our church, and sit in the very back seat, it is my duty to be there in my place?"

"You remember George Eliot's poem of the violin-maker, who said if he did not make the very best violin possible for him to make, God would miss the music? If we are not each one of us faithfully doing our duty, be it small or great, there is silence or discord where there might have been music. More than that, our lives are bound together—we must needs lift up those about us or drag them down. We are bidden to sow our seed at all times, for we know not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether both shall be alike good. The cobbler, as I once heard a minister say, could not paint a picture, but he could tell Appelles that the shoe-tie was not right, and so might help towards making the beautiful picture perfect."

"O Auntie," exclaimed Ruth, "why did I say anything? I might have known you would not let me stay at home in peace. Still, I will try to keep my wee little lower light burning as brightly as possible hereafter."—Zion's Herald.

A gentleman from Aberdeenshire went to South Africa lately. On the sea he was very sick for a number of days, a sickness which everybody who has experienced it declares to be the most trying of all experiences. This gentleman wrote home to a friend in this strain, "I was sea sick for five days during the voyage. I have been tobacco sick, I have been whiskey sick, and I have been love sick, but to be sea sick is worse than any form of sickness I have ever felt."

"That white cow," said the waggish farmer, is the one that gives milk." "Ah!" exclaimed the city girl, "and those brown ones, I suppose, give beef tea."

Some people's religion is like a wooden leg. There is neither warmth or life in it; and although it helps them to hobble along it never becomes a part of them, but has to be strapped on every morning.