

PLEASANT HOURS

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The Clouds of God.

BY ROBERT CLARKSON TONGUE.

The city is full of labour,
And struggle and strife and care.
The fever-pulse of the city
Is throbbing in all the air;
But calm through the sunlit spaces,
And calm through the starlit sky,
Forever over the city
The clouds of God go by.

The city is full of passion,
And shame and anger and sin,
Of hearts that are dark with evil,
Of souls that are black within;
But white as the robes of angels,
And pure through the wind-swept sky,
Forever over the city
The clouds of God go by.

The city is full of sorrow,
And tears that are shed in vain;
By day and by night there rises
The voice of its grief and pain.
But soft as a benediction,
They bend from the vault on high,
And over the sorrowful city
The clouds of God go by.

O eyes that are old with vigil!
O hearts that are dim with tears!
Look up from the path of sorrow,
That measures itself in years,
And read in the blue above you,
The peace that is ever nigh,
While over the troubled city
The clouds of God go by.

—Youth's Companion.

LANDMARKS OF HISTORY.

Memories of the Mayflower.

BY THE EDITOR.

"That man is little to be envied" said Dr. Johnson as he moralized amid the mouldering monuments of the early Cul-dee faith, "whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona." So also, we think, his must be a very sluggish nature whose pulses are not quickened as he stands on Plymouth Rock and recalls the thrilling memories of the Mayflower. Those old colonial towns upon the New England coast—Portsmouth, Newburyport, Salem, Plymouth, Newport, Providence, with their historic associations of the Pilgrim Fathers, have all a strong attraction to the British subject no less than to the citizen of the Republic. Indeed, the heroic memories of the Puritans are the common heritage of all mankind.

Nowhere in the world can the founding of an empire be so minutely studied as at the town of Plymouth. In the stone vaults of the Registry Office may still be seen the earliest records of Plymouth Colony, in the handwriting of the men who are now held in reverence the world over, for their courage in braving the perils of an unknown sea and an equally unknown shore, to face the dangers of savage men and savage beasts, in their constancy to what they believed to be their duty, and for planting on this spot the principles of a theocratic government by the people.

Here is their writing, some of it quaint and crabbed, some fair and legible. Here, on these very pages, rested the hands, fresh from handling the sword and the musket, or the peaceful implements of husbandry, of Bradford, and Brewster, and Standish, and others of that heroic band. Here is the original laying out of the first street, Leyden Street. Here is the plan of the plots of ground, first assigned for yearly use, which they called in the tinge of the Dutch tongue they had acquired in their long residence in Holland, "meersteds." Here are the simple, and yet wise, rules,—laws they can hardly yet be called,—laid down for the government of the infant colony.

The seed of the three kingdoms, says the old chronicler, was sifted for the wheat of that planting. Winnowed by the fan of persecution, of exile, of poverty, of affliction, the false and fickle fell off, the tried and true only remained. Even after leaving the weeping group upon the shore of Delft-Haven, and parting with



THE MAYFLOWER.

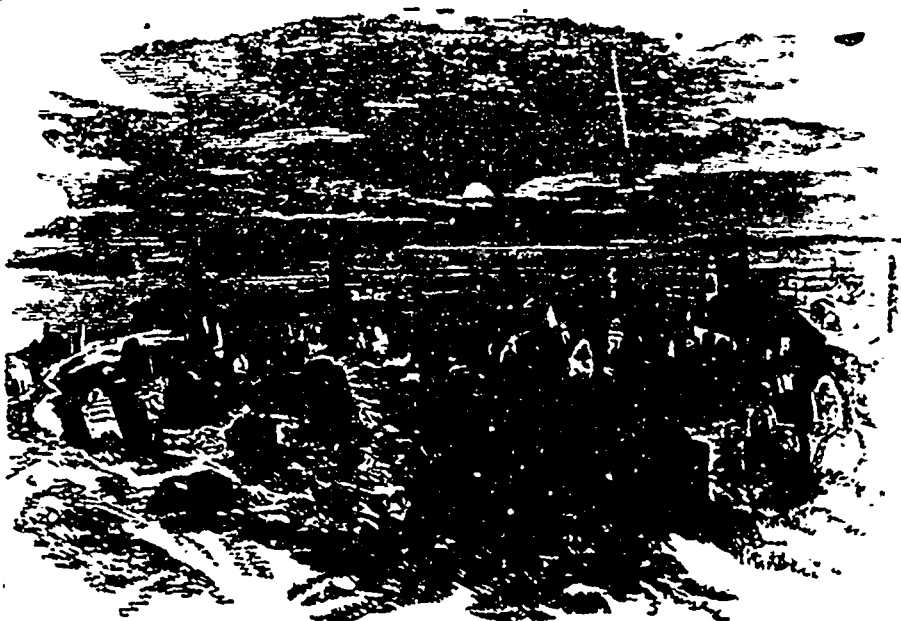
their English friends at Southampton, the little company of exiles for conscience' sake was destined to a still further sitting. Twice was the tiny flotilla driven back to port by storms. One of the two small vessels of which it was composed, and a number of the feebler-hearted adventurers, were left behind, and only a hundred souls remained to essay the mighty enterprise of founding a nation.

In the little cabin of the Mayflower were assembled some of the noblest and purest spirits on earth, whose names are an inspiration and a moral power forever—the venerable Brewster, Governor Carver, and Bradford, his successor; Allerton, Winslow, the burly and impetuous Standish; Alden, the first to leap ashore and the last to survive; and the heroic and true-hearted mothers of the New England commonwealth. Before they reached the land they set their seal to a solemn compact, forming themselves into a body politic for the glory of God, the advancement of the Christian faith, the honour of king and country, and their common welfare. "Thus," says Bancroft, "in the cabin of the Mayflower humanity recovered its rights and instituted government on the basis of 'equal laws' for the general good."

On the wild New England shore, at the

beginning of an inclement winter, worn and wasted by a stormy voyage, and with a scant supply of the necessaries of life—behind them the bolsterous ocean, before them the sombre forests, haunted by savage beasts, and still more savage men, even stouter hearts than those of the frail women of that little company might have failed for fear. But we read no record of despondency or murmuring; each heart seemed inspired with lofty hope and unflinching faith. The first landing was effected on the barren sand dunes of Cape Cod, an arm stretched out into the sea, as if to succour the weary voyagers. In debarking, they were forced to wade through the freezing water to the land, and sowed the seeds of suffering in their weakened frames. "The bitterness of mortal disease was their welcome to the inhospitable shore."

But they must seek a more favourable site for settlement. By the good Providence of God, they reached safely the quiet harbour—since known, in grateful remembrance of the port from which they sailed, as Plymouth Bay. The next day, despite the urgent need of despatch, they sacredly kept the Christian Sabbath in devout exercises on a small island. On Monday they crossed to the mainland, and a grateful posterity has fenced and



BURIAL HILL, PLYMOUTH.

guarded the rock on which they stepped. Thither, as to a sacred shrine of liberty, many men of many lands have made a reverent pilgrimage. "Plymouth Rock," in the brilliant rhetoric of one of these, the accomplished De Toqueville, "is the corner-stone of a nation." The principles of which it is the symbol are certainly the foundations, broad and deep, on which national greatness is built.

The Mayflower soon anchored in the quiet bay, and on Christmas Day its passengers debarked and began the building of the town of Plymouth. By the second Sunday the "Common House," some twenty feet square, was ready for worship; but the roof caught fire, and they were forced to worship beneath the wintry sky. At length, little by little, in frost and foul weather, between showers of sleet and snow, shelter for nineteen families were erected. But disease, hunger, and death made sad havoc in the little company. "There died," says Bradford, "sometimes two or three in a day." At one time only six or seven were able to attend on the sick or bury the dead. When spring opened, of one hundred persons, scarce half remained alive. Carver, the Governor, his gentle wife, and sweet Rose Standish,—

"Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed by the wayside,
She was the first to die of all who came in the Mayflower;"

with many another of unremembered name were laid to rest in the "God's acre," overlooking the sea, still known as "Burial Hill." In the spring, wheat was sown over their graves "lest the Indian scouts should count them and see how many already had perished."

At length the time arrived for the departure of the Mayflower, and as the signal-gun of departure awoke the echoes of hill and forest—

"Ah! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of the people.

Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read from the Bible.

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in earnest entreaty.

Then from their homes in haste came forth the Pilgrims of Plymouth

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the Mayflower:

Homeward bound o'er the seas and leaving them there in the desert.

"Meanwhile the master,
Taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,

Sprung into his boat and in haste shoved off to his vessel.

Glad to be gone from a land of sand, of sickness and sorrow,

Short allowance of victual and plenty of nothing but Gospel

Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the Pilgrims.

O strong hearts and true! not one went back with the Mayflower!

No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this ploughing.

"Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the vessel.

Much endeared to them all as something living and human.

Then, as if filled with the Spirit, and wrapped in vision prophetic,

Baring his hoary head, the excellent elder of Plymouth

Said, 'Let us pray,' and they prayed, and thanked the Lord and took courage

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and above them

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the field of death, and their kindred

Seemed to wake in their graves, and to join in the prayer that they uttered.

Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean,

Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a graveyard,

Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of returning."

* Down by the sea shore, now protected by a graceful canopy, is the huge boulder on which sprang John Alden, the first of the Pilgrims to land, the last of them to die.

(Continued on next page.)