

talent for which those who possess it will have to render an account ; still remember

'We may carry music in our heart

'Through dusky lane and wrangling mart :'

and "only we do our duty faithfully in that state of life to which it hath pleased God to call us, His presence will create a Paradise anywhere,—with the fishermen mending his nets on the lone sea-shore, or with the publican collecting his tithes amid the busy haunts of men."

"Who were the publicans ? I know St. Matthew was one, but then publicans and sinners always seem to be joined together in the Bible, and surely he was not a wicked man?"

"What his character was before his call, we are not told. We can only judge of it from his conduct afterwards ; but to answer your question about the publicans. At the time we are speaking of, Judea was a Roman province, and the term publican was given to those officers who were appointed to collect the taxes or tribute money exacted by the Emperor from his subjects. Two things made the officers greatly despised and hated by the Jews : first, the very having to pay tribute at all was a continual reminder to them that they had lost their freedom ; and secondly, these officers were, generally speaking, dishonest, covetous themselves upon the profits thus unlawfully obtained. The office of Levi or Matthew was to receive the toll or tax exacted from all who crossed the sea of Galilee, and it was while thus employed, sitting at the receipt of custom, that our Lord called him, as was read to us in the gospel for the day."

"How very little we hear of St. Matthew in the Bible ; at first I thought he was the only Evangelist who mentioned himself, till I discovered by the references that Matthew and Levi were the same."

"Yes, this is one of the instances among many of a Jew possessing two names ; here it is supposed that Levi was the original one, and that Matthew was given after the call to the Apostleship. To the Church of Christ he would be known by the latter name, and therefore while the tenderness and consideration of the other Evangelists is shown by their speaking of him, as a publican, under the title of Levi ; so is his own humility most striking, in that he does not shrink to declare that Levi was himself Matthew ; and in the enumeration of the Apostles where St. Mark and St. Luke simply name him before St. Thomas, he places himself after as 'Matthew the publican.' Again, it is not St. Matthew, but St. Luke, who tells us of the great feast which Levi made our Lord and His disciples ; a feast to which the proud Pharisee and the rich man came, but to which he also especially invited his own profession, in the pious, loving hope, no doubt, that having been found of Christ himself, these too might hear His words, believe and be saved. From this feast we gather that St. Matthew possessed wealth. At the same time St. Luke tells us, that he left all to follow Christ ; he himself says simply that 'he arose' as if he felt all he left as nothing compared to what he trusted to gain. 'The god of this world had no longer power to blind his mind, but the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shone upon him, and thus having received mercy, he renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and henceforth preached Christ Jesus the Lord, and Him only.'" *

"I had no idea you would be able to find out so much about St. Matthew, from the little that is said of him. I had noticed the difference in the accounts ;

* See the Epistle for the day.