

The BEREAN.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS XVII. 11.

No. 13.]

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[VOL. I.]

Poetry.

THE STILL, SMALL VOICE.

He cometh, He cometh, the Lord passeth by;
The mountains are rending, the tempest is high;
The wind is tumultuous, the rocks are o'ercrest;
But the Lord of the Prophet is not in the blast.

He cometh, He cometh, the Lord, he is near,
The earth is reeling, all nature's in fear;
The earthquake's approaching, with terrible form;
But the Lord of Sabaot is not in the storm.

He cometh, He cometh, the Lord is in ire;
The smoke is ascending, the mount is on fire;
O say, is Jehovah revealing His name?
He is near, but Jehovah is not in the flame.

He cometh, He cometh, the tempest is o'er;
He is come, neither tempest nor storm shall be more,
All nature reposes, earth, ocean and sky,
Are still as the voice that descends from on high.

How sweet to the soul are the breathings of peace,
When the still voice of pardon bids sorrow to cease,
When the welcome of mercy falls soft on the ear,
"Come hither ye laden—ye weary, draw near."

There is rest for the soul that on Jesus relies,
There's a home for the homeless, prepared in the skies,

There's a joy in believing, a hope and a stay,
That the world cannot give nor the world take away!

(Communicated.)

THE REV. SAMUEL CROWTHER'S NARRATIVE

OF HIS CAPTURE, LIBERATION, AND CONVERSION.

[The writer of the following is a native of the interior of Africa, who, as his narrative will show, received his education wholly in the schools of the Church Missionary Society in Sierra Leone, with the exception of a few months, seventeen years ago, during which he attended the Islington Parochial school, having come to England as attendant upon a missionary in impaired health. He has been found fit to be presented to the Bishop of London as a candidate for holy orders; and the satisfaction which His Lordship felt in ordaining him, has been expressed in his recent Sermon before the Society, with strong encouragement to the efforts which are making towards raising a native ministry at the Society's stations. Our readers will conclude that the Bishop, in admitting candidates for fields of labour like that which Mr. Crowther is intended to occupy, has his eye mainly upon their qualifications by piety, judgment, scriptural knowledge, and general intelligence, giving to classical attainments but a very subordinate rank for consideration.—EDITOR.]

I suppose some time about the commencement of the year 1821, I was in my native country, enjoying the comforts of father and mother, and the affectionate love of brothers and sisters. From this period I must date the unhappy, but which I am now taught, in other respects, to call blessed day, which I shall never forget in my life. I call it "unhappy day," because it was the day in which I was violently turned out of my father's house, and separated from my relations, and in which I was made to experience what is called "to be in slavery." With regard to its being called "blessed," it being the day which Providence had marked out for me to set out on my journey from the land of heathenism, superstition, and vice, to a place where His Gospel is preached.

For some years, war had been carried on in my country, (Eyo) which was always attended with much devastation and bloodshed: the women, such men as had surrendered or were caught, with the children, were taken captives. The enemies who carried on these wars were principally the Eyo Mahomedans, with whom my country abounds; who with the Foulahs, and such foreign slaves as had escaped from their owners, joined together, made a formidable force of about 20,000; which annoyed the whole country. They had no other employment but selling slaves to the Spaniards and Portuguese on the coast.

The morning on which my town, Ocho-gu, shared the same fate which many others had experienced, was fair and delightful; and most of the inhabitants were engaged in their respective occupations. We were preparing breakfast; without any apprehension; when, about nine A. M., a rumour was spread in the town, that the enemies had approached, with intentions of hostility. It was not long after, when they had almost surrounded the town, to prevent any escape of the inhabitants. The town was rudely fortified by a wooden fence, about four miles in circumference, containing about 12,000 inhabitants, and producing 3,000 fighting men.

The inhabitants not being duly prepared; some not being at home; and those who were, having about six gates to defend, as well as many weak places about the fence to guard against—and, to say in a few words, the men being surprised, and therefore confounded—the enemies entered the town after about three or four hours' resistance. Here, the most sorrowful scene imaginable was to be witnessed;—women, some with three, four, or six children clinging to their arms, with the infants on their backs, and such baggage as they could carry on their heads, running as fast as they could, through the prickly shrubs, which, hooking their blies* and loads, threw them

* Blies—a kind of basket used by the natives.

down from the heads of the bearers. When they found it impossible to go with their loads, they only endeavoured to save themselves and their children. Even this was impracticable, with those who had many children to care for: as while they were endeavouring to disentangle themselves from the ropy shrubs, they were overtaken, and caught by the enemies by a rope-noose thrown over the neck of every individual, to be led in the manner of goats tied together, and under the drove of one man. In many cases, a family was violently divided between three or four enemies; who each led his way, to see each other no more. I was thus caught, with my mother, two sisters, one an infant about ten months old, and a cousin, while endeavouring to escape in the manner above described. My load consisted of nothing else than my bow, and five arrows in the quiver: the bow I lost in the shrubs, while I was extricating myself before I could think of making any use of it against my enemies. The last time I saw my father, was when he came from the fight to give us the signal to flee: he entered into our house, which was burnt some time back for some offence given by my father's adopted son: hence I never saw him more. Here I must take thy leave, unhappy, comfortless father!—I learned, some time afterward, that he was killed in another battle.

Our conquerors were Eyo Mahomedans, who led us away through the town. On our way, we met a man sadly wounded in the head, struggling between life and death. Before we got half way through the town, some Foulahs, among the enemies themselves, hostilely separated my cousin from our number. Here also I must take thy leave, my fellow-captive cousin! His mother was living in another village. The houses, in the town on fire, were built with mud, some about twelve feet from the ground, with high roofs, in square forms of different dimensions and spacious areas. Several of these belonged to one man, adjoining to, with passages communicating with, each other. The flame was very high: we were led by my grand-father's house, already desolate; and in a few minutes after, we left the town to the mercy of the flame, never to enter or see it any more. Farewell the place of my birth, the playground of my childhood, and the place which I thought would be the repository of my mortal body in its old age!

We were now out of Ocho-gu; going into a town called Iseh-i, the rendezvous of the enemies, about twenty miles from our town. On the way, we saw our grandmother at a distance, with about three or four of my other cousins taken with her, for a few minutes: she was missed through the crowd, to see her no more. Several other captives were held in the same manner as we were: grandmothers, mothers, children and cousins, were all taken captives. O sorrowful prospect! The aged women were greatly to be pitied, not being able to walk so fast as their children and grandchildren: they were often threatened with being put to death upon the spot, to get rid of them, if they would not go as fast as others; and they were often as wicked in their practice as in their words. O pitiful sight! Whose heart would not bleed to have seen this? Yes, such is the state of barbarity in the heathen land! Evening came on; and coming to a spring of water, we drank a great quantity which served us for breakfast, with a little parched corn and dried meat previously prepared by our victors for themselves. During our march to Iseh-i, we passed several towns and villages which had been reduced to ashes. It was almost midnight before we reached the town where we passed our doleful first night in bondage. It was not, perhaps, a mile from the wall of Iseh-i where an old woman of about sixty was threatened in the manner above described. What became of her I could not learn.

Sale of the Slaves, to many Masters.

The next morning, our cords being taken off our necks, we were brought to the Chief of our captors—for there were many other Chiefs,—as trophies at his feet. In a little while, a separation took place; when my sister and I fell to the share of the Chief, and my mother and the infant to the victors. We dared not vent our grief in loud cries, but by very heavy sobs. My mother, with the infant, was led away, comforted with the promise that she should see us again, when we should leave Iseh-i for Dahlah, the town of the Chief. In a few hours after, it was soon agreed upon that I should be bartered for a horse in Iseh-i, that very day. Thus was I separated from my mother and sister for the first time in my life; and the latter not to be seen more in this world. Thus, in the space of twenty-four hours, being deprived of liberty and all other comforts, I was made the property of three different persons. About the space of two months, when the Chief was to leave Iseh-i, for his own town, the horse, which was then only taken on trial, not being approved of, I was restored to the Chief, who took me to Dahlah; where I had the happiness to meet my mother and infant sister again, with joy which could be described by nothing else but tears of love and affection; and on the part of my infant sister, with leaps of joy. Here I lived for about three months, going for grass for the horses, with my fellow-captives. I now and then visited my mother and sister in our captor's house, without any fears or thoughts of being separated any more. My mother told me that she had heard of my sister, but I never saw her more. At last, an unhappy evening arrived, when I was seized with a man to get some money at a neighbouring house. I went, but with some fears for which I could not account; and to my great astonishment, in a few minutes I was added to the number of many other captives, fettered, to be led to the market-town early the next morning. My sleep went from me;

I spent almost the whole night in thinking of my doleful situation, with tears and sobs; especially as my mother was in the same town, whom I had not visited for about a day or two back. There was another boy in the same situation with me: his mother was in Dahlah. Being sleepless, I heard the first cock crow; and scarcely was the signal given, when the traders arose, loaded the men-slaves with baggage; and with one hand chained to the neck, we left the town. My little companion in affliction cried, and begged much to be permitted to see his mother; but was soon silenced by punishment. Seeing this, I dared not speak; although I thought we passed by the very house my mother was in. Thus was I separated from my mother and sister, my then only comforts, to meet no more in this world of misery. After a few days' travel, we came to the market-town, Ijah-i. Here I saw many who had escaped from our town to this place, or who were in search of their relations, to set at liberty as many as they had the means of redeeming. Here we were under very close inspection, as there were many persons in search of their relations; and through that, many had escaped from their owners. In a few days, I was sold to a Mahomedan woman; with whom I travelled through many towns, in our way to the Pophoh country, on the coast, much resorted to by the Portuguese to buy slaves. When we left Ijah-i, after many halts, we came to a town called Toko. From Ijah-i to Toko all spoke Ebweh dialect; but my mistress Eyo, my own dialect. Here I was a perfect stranger; having left the country far behind.

Temptations to Despair and Suicide.

I lived in Toko about three months; walked about, with my owner's son, with some degree of freedom, it being a place where my feet had never trod; and could I possibly make my way out through many a ruinous town and village we had passed, I should have soon become a prey to some others, who would gladly have taken the advantage of me. Besides, I could not think of going a mile out of the town alone at night, as there were many enormous devil-houses along the high way; and a woman having been lately publicly executed—fired at—being accused of bewitching her husband, who had died of a long, tedious sickness. Five or six heads of persons, who had been executed for some crime or other, were never wanting, to be nailed on the large trees in the market-places, to terrify others. Now and then my mistress would speak with me and her son, that we should by-and-by go to the Pophoh country; where we should buy tobacco and other fine things, to sell at our return. Now, thought I, this was the signal of my being sold to the Portuguese; who, they often told me during our journey, were to be seen in that country. Being very thoughtful of this, my appetite forsook me; and in a few weeks I got the dysentery; which preyed on me. I determined with myself, that I would not go to the Pophoh country, but would make an end of myself one way or another. Several nights I attempted to strangle myself with my band; but had not courage enough to close the noose tight, so as to effect my purpose. May the Lord forgive me this sin! I next determined that I would leap out of the canoe into the river, when we should cross it, on our way to that country. This was I thinking, when my owner, perceiving the great alteration which had taken place in me, sold me to some persons. Thus the Lord, while I knew Him not, led me not into temptation, and delivered me from evil. After my price had been counted before my own eyes, I was delivered up to my new owners, with great grief and dejection of spirit, not knowing where I was now to be led.

Continued Journeying toward the Coast—First Knowledge of Ardent Spirits.

About the first cock-crowing, which was the usual time to set out with the slaves, to prevent their being much acquainted with the way, for fear an escape should be made—we set out for Jabbo, the third dialect from mine. After having arrived at Ik-ke-ku Ye-re, another town, we halted. In this place I renewed my attempt of strangling, several times at night; but could not effect my purpose. It was very singular, that no thought of making use of a knife ever entered my mind. However, it was not long before I was bartered, for tobacco, rum, and other articles. I remained here, in fetters, alone, for some time, before my owner could get as many slaves as he wanted. He feigned to treat us more civilly, by allowing us to sip a few drops of white man's liquor—rum; which was so estimable an article, that none but Chiefs could pay for a jar or glass-vessel of four or five gallons. So remarkable it was, that no one should take breath before he swallowed every sip, for fear of having the sting of his throat cut by the spirit of the liquor: this made it so much more valuable. I had to remain alone again in another town in Jabbo, the name of which I do not now remember, for about two months. From hence I was brought, after a few days' walk, to a slave-market, called I-ko-sy, on the coast on the bank of a large river; which very probably was the Lagos on which we were afterward captured. The sight of the river terrified me exceedingly; for I had never seen any thing like it in my life. The people on the opposite bank are called E-ko. Before sun-set, being bartered again for tobacco, I became another owner's. Nothing now terrified me more than the river and the thought of going into another world. Cry was nothing now, to vent my sorrow. My whole body became stiff. I was now made to enter the river, to ford it to the canoe. Being fearful at my entering this extensive water, and being so cautious in every step I took, as if the next would bring me to the

bottom, my motion was very awkward indeed. Night coming on, and the men having very little time to spare, soon carried me into the canoe, and placed me among the corn-bags, supplying me with an Abalah* for my dinner. Almost in the same position I was placed, I remained with my Abalah in my hand, quite confused in my thoughts, waiting only every moment our arrival at the new world; which we did not reach till about four in the morning. Here I got once more into another dialect, the fourth from mine; if I may not call it altogether another language, on account of now and then, in some words, there being a faint shadow of my own.—Here I must remark, that during the whole night's voyage in the canoe, not a single thought of leaping into the river had entered my mind, but, on the contrary, the fear of the river occupied my thoughts. Having now entered E-ko, I was permitted to go any way I pleased; there being no way of escape, on account of the river. In this place I met my two nephews, belonging to different masters. One part of the town was occupied by the Portuguese and Spaniards, who had come to buy slaves. Although I was in E-ko more than three months, I never once saw a white man; until one evening, when they took a walk, in company of about six, and came to the street of the house in which I was living. Even then I had not the boldness to appear distinctly to look at them, being always suspicious that they had come for me; and my suspicion was not a fanciful one; for in a few days after, I was made the eighth in number of the slaves of the Portuguese. Being a veteran in slavery—if I may be allowed the expression—and having no more hope of ever going to my country again, I patiently took whatever came; although it was not without a great fear and trembling that I received, for the first time, the touch of a white man, who examined me—whether I was sound or not. Men and boys were at first chained together, with a chain of about six fathoms in length, thrust through an iron fetter on the neck of every individual, and fastened at both ends with padlocks. In this situation, the boys suffered the most: the men sometimes, getting angry, would draw the chain most violently, so they seldom went without bruises on their poor little necks; especially the time to sleep, when they drew the chain so close, to ease themselves of its weight, in order to be able to lie more conveniently, that we were almost suffocated, or bruised to death, in a room with one door, which was fastened as soon as we entered; with no other passage for communicating the air than the openings under the eaves-drop. And very often at night, when two or three individuals quarrelled or fought, the whole drove suffered punishment, without any distinction. At last, we boys had the happiness to be separated from the men, when their number was increased, and no more chain to spare; we were corded together, by ourselves. Thus were we going in and out, bathing together, and so on. The females fared not much better. Thus we were for nearly four months.

Arrival at the Coast—Liberation by British Men-of-War—First Alarms succeeded by Joy.

About this time, intelligence was given that the English were cruising on the coast. This was another subject of sorrow with us—that there must be wars on the sea as well as on land—a thing never heard of before, nor imagined practicable. This delayed our embarkation. In the mean while, the other troop, which was collected in Pophoh, and was intended to be conveyed into the vessel the nearest way from that place, was brought into E-ko among us. Among this number was Joseph Bartholomew, my brother in the service of the Church Missionary Society. After a few weeks' delay, we were embarked, at night, in canoes, from E-ko to the beach; and on the following morning we embarked in the vessel, which immediately sailed away.

(To be continued.)

AGAINST PREVAILING ERRORS.

THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM, (E. MALTRY, D. D.)

I must express my deep concern that, instead of employing the resources of their piety and learning to heal the dissensions which were already too prevalent, some members of our church have embarked in the perilous enterprise of introducing among us a fresh element of discord. It is scarcely necessary for me to state that I am alluding to some recent publications, which contain opinions bordering at least upon those against which our Reformers strenuously contended, and at length successfully prevailed. I mean, more particularly, such as relate to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and to the authority of the Fathers asserted in the inordinate deference claimed for tradition.

I suppose I need hardly vindicate myself from the suspicion of being actuated by any intolerant feelings in regard to the conscientious adherents of the Church of Rome. With many members of that church, I have, both in my former diocese and this, had the pleasure of much social intercourse; and I gladly seize the opportunity of acknowledging thus publicly the many marks of courteous and respectful attention which I have received from them. With as little justice should I be charged with an unfriendly feeling towards those learned persons of our own church, who have taken the lead in propounding their opinions with what I must be allowed to call, a misplaced zeal.

It has not been my fortune to have any intercourse whatsoever with those able writers; excepting, indeed, one distinguished individual.

* Abalah—a kind of cake, of which the natives are fond, made of Indian corn.—Ed.

dual, of whom, as a former pupil, I have no recollections but such as are most agreeable. Personal feelings, however, can have no place in a question like this. Grievously should I fail in my duty, if, in a matter affecting the purity of doctrine, and the maintenance of good order in the Church, I were capable of allowing any private, or personal considerations to prevent the avowal of an honest and deliberate opinion.

Strongly, then, must I acknowledge my regret, that, with nothing like an appearance of stringent necessity, or the prospect of adequate advantage, the writers of these Tracts should have come forward to disturb the peace of the Church. For men of any prudence cannot but have seen that they were about to provoke discussion upon questions, on which very serious differences of opinion were to be anticipated. Something has been said about an alleged departure from the rubric, in order to justify the interference of the authors of these Tracts. I am not aware of any point in which the directions of the rubric had been transgressed in a way inconvenient or offensive; but, if such had been the case, the evil could surely have been remedied by an appeal to the proper authorities, the heads of the Church. Neither do I recollect to have heard, at the time, of any alarm respecting the state of doctrine in the Church, although apprehensions were no doubt entertained as to its outward condition and prosperity. But if these writers did feel themselves called upon to examine the existing state of doctrine, in the hope of improving it, the result of their efforts has assuredly been very unfortunate. So far from adding to the purity of our faith, as contrasted with those errors from which we believed that the Reformation had set us free, the tendency appears to have been in an opposite direction. The effect of principles, either expressly laid down by these writers, or collected as a natural inference by their followers, has been not merely to recommend a variety of antiquated forms and ceremonies, but to uphold them with such earnestness as to threaten a revival of the follies of by-gone superstition. The necessity of fasting is inculcated, and its merits enhanced, too eagerly; the placing of candlesticks is now treated as matter of importance, and a suspicious predilection has been manifested for the emblem of the cross; while contempt is somewhat ostentatiously thrown upon the name of Protestant, and the proceedings of our venerable Reformers; an elaborate attempt has been made to explain away the real meaning of our Articles, and infuse into them a more kindly spirit of accommodation to the opinions and practices of the Church of Rome.

Under these circumstances, however painful may be the task of animadverting upon opinions espoused by persons otherwise so respectable, I consider it incumbent upon me thus publicly to make known my deliberate judgment. And I feel no little satisfaction and support, when I can appeal to the high authority of our venerated primate, who thus expressed himself in an address delivered last year to his assembled clergy: "In the celebration of divine service, the introduction of novelties is much to be deprecated; and even the revival of usages, which, having grown obsolete, have the appearance of novelties to the ignorant, may occasion dissatisfaction, dissension, and controversy. In cases of this nature, it may be better to forego even advantageous changes, and wait for the decision of authority, than to open fresh sources of misapprehension or strife by singularity."

They who have shown such anxiety to improve the state of religious feeling in this our Church, would have done well to recollect, when they began to defer with such implicit reverence to the authority of the Fathers, and endeavoured to trace the true meaning of revelation through the medium of tradition, that, before the Fathers wrote, or any matter of opinion or of fact could be conveyed through those who succeeded them, there existed the infallible Word of God, dictated by His Holy Spirit, and preserved for our study and edification by the special care of His good Providence. To this one only mean of truth and source of faith, they should have directed their unremitting attention. In the interpretation of dark passages, and the explanation of essential doctrines, their learning, diligence, and acuteness would have found ample scope, and might have done good service to the cause of sacred truth. In such labours, their researches into antiquity, and their acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers, might have been useful; although I am of opinion that the aid which may be derived from such sources towards the elucidation of Holy Writ, has been rated too highly. A thorough knowledge of the original languages (of one of which—that in which the Old Testament is written—the Fathers, be it remembered, were almost all ignorant), a study of the works of the best critical expositors, with a careful weighing of different opinions and arguments, will, by God's help, implore in fervent but humble supplication, lead the mind to a clearer perception of the truth as it is in Jesus, than all the writings of the Fathers, and will also put in a striking point of view the little dependence that can be placed on the fallacies or sophistries of tradition. "Let us reverently hear and read Holy Scripture, which is the food of the soul;" is the exhortation of the first of our Homilies; and justly does it call for our compliance as it proceeds, though in the quaint language of the times: "Let us diligently search for the Well of Life in the books of the New and Old Testament, and not run to the stinking puddle of men's traditions (devised by men's imagination) for our justification and salvation; for in Holy Scripture is fully contained what we ought to do and what to eschew, what to believe, what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length. Well am I aware, my reverend brethren,