

Our Story.

JANET MACFARLANE'S PRAYER.

BY MRS. AMELIA E. BARR IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I—(Continued)

In his own class Malachi soon became a great favourite. He possessed, indeed, an almost irresistible personal magnetism. When he entered the hall, many an eye watched the noble pose of his head, the swing of his broad shoulders, and his ruddy, handsome face. His eyes were specially attractive. There was in them a gleam as of the morning star, and they laughed out upon all with boundless good humour and sweetness. He had other advantages rather exceptional in a student of his social position. Though in some sense a peasant's son, he was not poor. John and Janet had not put their savings into a bag with holes in it. Year by year the increase, if modest, had been sure, and John had remembered his son's needs in no scrupling spirit. Malachi was well clothed; he had a comfortable room, and all reasonable money for college expenses. Besides which, if he ranked as a peasant's son, he felt himself to be by birth a Highland gentleman. He was a MacFarlane, and the same blood flowed in his veins as in those of "The MacFarlane" himself. The poor kinsman of the chief of his family, he inherited, as truly as the chief, all its traditions of civil and military glory; and this feeling, being in-born and natural, was worn with that ease and grace that the vulgar in soul, be they ever so rich, can never successfully assume. His life in Edinburgh was very pleasant to him, and he took care that his parents shared in its pleasure. Each week he wrote them a letter which filled all the next seven days with delightful interest; and every Saturday afternoon John walked to the post-office, seven miles distant, for this pleasant token. Not even Jura rain torrents, nor snow, nor wind, could prevent him, and he was never disappointed. The thick white letter was sure to be waiting. He always put it in his pocket unopened. It was the charmed hour of the whole week when Janet and he sat down together upon their hearthstone, with the tea table between them, and Malachi's letter in John's hand. Yes, indeed, the few sheets of paper had a power beyond that of Ethiopian sorcery or Chaldean magic; they transformed the little house in the Jura mountains to college and kirk, and to the busy streets of a great city. Famous preachers and professors spoke through them. They brought the air and the enchantment of a life new and wonderful within the narrow walls, and made John and Janet breathe an ampler life than they had ever dreamed of. For two years there was very little change in Malachi's nature. Though he increased rapidly in knowledge, he kept all the dew and freshness of his youth. He had still that spirit which has ever a look upward, and is open to the whole noon of sunny influences. The fact was, that the companionship in which he was thrown during this time had no power over him. The home memories were far stronger. For the empty laughter and practical joking, the boyishness and slang which was its tone, he had only a good natured toleration. In his father's company he had learned, even in early boyhood, a dignity beyond such things. The youth whose amusements had been to stalk the wing footed red deer, and bring down the eagle, and spear the leaping salmon, could hardly find any pleasure in silly student tricks. But when he reached the higher classes, and was thrown into the society of men of wider experience, the case was different. It was a time of great mental and spiritual excitement. The Free Kirk Movement was at its height. Temperance was beginning to be a great moral power. Sunday schools, ragged schools, and many hitherto unheard-of charities were exercising the Church; while, on the other hand, German philosophies and doubtful speculations of every kind were rife in the reviews, appealing to the minds of the young and the inquisitive with that peculiar force which novel ideas have for intellects in a state of formation. Young men of twenty-two years set themselves to solve the mysteries of existence and the problems of the Eternal. There was something fatally attractive in this temptation. It was a trap set by the devil for souls which could not be lured by sensual baits. Milton represents the fallen angels discussing such topics; and holy angels in heaven must have gazed with pitiful eyes upon the assemblies of fine young fellows meddling with things as fatally beyond their capacities. In such a club Malachi was at first a silent listener. But it was, perhaps, this very quality which made him so popular that he was unanimously voted its chairman. Even in that capacity he had little to say; but the words he heard, brought him many hours of great unrest. He often found himself walking rapidly about his room in order to cool the fever of spiritual contention; and once he trembled with a new terror when he stopped before the old black Bible with its silver clasps, which he had brought from home with him, and was aware of a question, subtle and cruel, that crept into his soul about it. He repelled it by lifting the book recently and clasping it to his breast.

But, oh! if that question should come back and back, and each time with fresh power and new doubts, how could he bear it? Would his faith stand the trial, or should he run away from it? But running away, even from a spiritual foe, was not in the MacFarlane nature. "I will write to my father," he said, after a long argument with himself. "I will tell him just what these men say about The Book, and I will do what he counsels." But while the letter was pending, the question was settled for Malachi in a manner that he had not even dreamed of. It was the night of the club, and he had determined to excuse his attendance until he received his father's advice, but a young man called Traquair urged him to go and support his argument upon a subject which he heartily commended itself to Malachi's conscience and reason. There was a stranger present that night, a grave, swarthy man with gleaming eyes, who sat at Malachi's right hand. He seemed very much interested in the debates, and, though he said little, he contrived by adroit questions to lead the discussion frequently from its proper channel. Mainly through his suggestions, dropped now and then in few words and with singular modesty, the argument had drifted in the course of an hour, from a geological problem to the more tremendous issue of the soul's immortality. Then, to his horror, Malachi discovered that there were Sadducees in modern Edinburgh, as well as in ancient Jerusalem. As they spoke, his heart began to burn within him, his eyes to flash, he grew restless, and finally angry. "On what does the evidence of our immortality rest?" inquired the stranger. "The evidence is in the Holy Scriptures," answered Traquair. "You'll not find a word in the Auld Testament to support the doctrine. It's a maist materialistic book 'a' the gither," answered a member. At that moment, swift and penetrating as lightning, Malachi heard these words spoken in his soul, "Arise and shine, for thy light has come!" A trumpet blast in his ear, the noise of multitudes shouting, could not have stirred him like that heavenly whisper. He rose to his feet, his face shone with the light behind it; a majesty and a magnetism far beyond the power of words to express, seemed to pervade and to surround the wonderful and beautiful body and soul, which the speaker was dooming to annihilation. "Will you be silent?" he cried. "How many more of you will blaspheme the Word of the Living God! Stand up, every one, who can daur to say in His Presence, that they have ever read the Auld Testament carefully through, missing not a word in the book." No one moved, and no one spoke. "Not one of you then! If it was a question of an acre of land, or of a bit two roomed cottage, you would have read the title-deed frae end to end. Yet you'll fling awa' your soul's heritage without an fair reading of its rights. If you were familiar wi' the Auld Testament, you would know weel that it is in a' things the charter which the New Testament affirms and confirms." "Iteration is na' any proof, MacFarlane, and we are na' the men to be taken in wi' it," said the doubter. "Just gie us chapter and verse whar the immortality of the soul is taught in it." "I tell you the doctrine is in the whole book as the salt is in the sea water. You canna avoid it. When Jacob is dying, he gives Joseph blessings not only for this world but unto the bounds of the everlasting hills; and he welcomes his sin death wi' these words: 'I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord.' Do you think he would ca' the corruption of the grave and the annihilation of his soul 'the salvation of the Lord'?" "Na! na! na!" answered Traquair. "When Moses had taen the people o'er the Red Sea, he anticipates the passage across the grave, with the same strong arm to help, and says wi' a confidence, 'Thou shalt plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.'" "Thy would mean Jerusalem, MacFarlane." "It would mean nothing of the kind. God doensna promise to hae His tabernacle wi' men until He makes the new earth wi' which there will be nae sin and nae tears. Auld Jerusalem, as you weel ken, was one of the sinfulest of cities, and one of the maist unfortunate. And Hannah, rejoicing at Shiloh, whispered in the temple—'The Lord killen and naketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave and He bringeth up.' Balaam, constrained against his will, asks to 'die the death of the righteous man,' but if there was naething after death, the death of the sinfu' man would have been the same in its results to him. Job knew that 'his Redeemer lived,' and said, 'Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' You'll find the doctrine a' through the Psalms. David was weel acquainted wi' it, and sang in his triumph, 'God shall redeem my life from the power of the grave.' Wi' the Psalms, martyrs hae walked to a fiery death, mothers hae given up their sons, and husbands their wives and wives their husbands. I danna think a book that works miracles is a materialistic book."

"The Ecclesiastes! MacFarlane, what o' that, then? Is na it a bit o' despairing materialism?" "You'll find the key of the book at the end o' it. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;—Vera weel, and what then?' 'But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' But what for need I go further wi' men who are wiser i' their ain conceit than patriarchs and prophets, and wha ken mair than the saints on earth, or the angels in heaven? You'll be to get yourself a new chairman forthwith, for if I wouldna sit and hear my father speak ill of in his ain house, or 'The MacFarlane' on his ain hills, it's no vera likely I'll listen to you while you deny the Word of my God, and mak' little o' His promises." He had spoken rapidly, and with a growing indignation. At the last words he pushed back his chair and left the room. An authority of which he was quite unconscious had fallen like a mantle upon him. Even after the door had closed behind him, there was a moment or two of intense silence. Then the stranger who had prompted the question quietly followed Malachi. He looked this way and that way, as if desirous of overtaking him; but Malachi, impelled by a rush of feelings which he scarcely understood, had walked with marvellous swiftness, and was very soon safely locked in the seclusion of his own room. A wonderful happiness had been given him. The call he had longed and waited for, and almost resigned, had come! He had heard it! And he had answered it! Oh, how glad he felt that he had not hesitated for a moment! How doubly precious was the Book which he had defended! He lifted it from the table and clasped it firmly in his hands. At that moment he felt that neither life nor death could part him from it, and that for nothing would he relinquish one jot or tittle of its promise, or prove disloyal to the Divine Lord and Saviour revealed in the Scriptures. (To be continued.)

THE BANNER OF LOVE. A MAN once left England, came to America, and was naturalized, and thus became an American citizen. He went to Cuba during the time when the civil war raged there. In 1867 this man was arrested and condemned to be shot by the Spanish Government. He was brought out sitting on his coffin in a cart. A grave was dug. The black cap was drawn over his eyes. The Spanish soldiers awaited the order to fire. The English and American consuls came on the ground—one spreading over him the British flag, the other the American flag. Then turning to the Spanish officers they said: "Fire upon those flags, if you dare." They did not fire upon these flags because the armies of two great nations stood behind them to avenge any insult. What those banners were to the poor, trembling man, Christ is to those who flee to Him for refuge. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."

Sabbath School Work.

- LESSON HELPS. FOURTH QUARTER. LESSON V, November 4. DEFEAT AT AI. Josh. vii. 1-12. MEMORIZE VERSES 10-12. GOLDEN TEXT.—Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.—Ps. cii. 36. CENTRAL TRUTH. Sin the source of failure and trouble. DAILY READINGS. M. Josh. vii. 1-15. Tu. Josh. vii. 16-26. W. Josh. vii. 1-29. Th. 1 Tim. vi. 6-21. F. Jas. i. 1-15. Sa. 1 Kings xviii. 1-20. Su. Matt. vi. 19-34. TIME.—A.C., 1451, Spring. Soon after the last lesson. PLACE. Ai, a city of 12,000 inhabitants (825) fifteen or twenty miles west of Jericho, and a short distance east of Bethel. It is 3,000 feet higher than Jericho, being situated in the high lands. CIRCUMSTANCES.—When Jericho was captured, the whole city was 'devoted' to destruction, and the metals to the Lord's treasury. Any one who took anything for his private use was to be accused—devoted to destruction. It was supposed that all had obeyed. HEIRS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. In the accused thing, that which was devoted to destruction, if it could be burned, or if metal, to the Lord's treasury. 2. Accusation of the Lord: not unreasoning passion, but indignation, the deep sense of justice that would punish all wrong. 3. Belshazzar, host of vanity, or of idols: twelve miles north of Jerusalem. View: spy out. 5. Unto Saraiim: the quarries, or ravines. In the going down: into the ravines or quarries. 6. Rent his clothes: as a sign of anguish, as was putting dust upon their heads. 7. Amorites, mountaineers: to whom probably Ai belonged. 9. Unto: in regard to. 10. Wherefore list

ber of the Association. The card of membership contains a list of the readings for the year, and you will receive every month a little leaflet, with hints on the daily readings, and a circular letter in January and July. The Subscription is ONE PENNY (two cents) for the year if connected with a Branch. If there is a Branch of the Association in your Sunday School you should apply to the Secretary of it, and send TWO PENCE HALF PENNY (five cents) in stamps for subscription and postage, to the Honorary Secretary, International Bible Reading Association, 46 Old Bailey, London, E.C. or to Canadian Secretary, Jas. McNab, Bridge Street Toronto, who will forward card of membership, and the circular letters, etc., as issued. When you have joined, do all you can to get your friends to do the same? Education. Subjects for Further Study and Special Reports.—AI.—The defeat before Ai.—Joshua's prayer.—The evils that might come from this defeat.—The cause of the defeat.—Why there could be no prosperity with sin in the nation.—Achan's sin.—His temptation.—His punishment.—Why so severe. QUESTIONS. INTRODUCTORY.—What was the first city captured by the Israelites in Canaan? What was to be done with the spoil? (vi. 18, 19, 21.) SUBJECT: FAILURE AND TROUBLE THROUGH SIN. I. THE FAILURE (vs. 1-5).—What city did the Israelites attack next after Jericho? Where was Ai? How large a city was it? (Josh. vii. 25.) Who lived in it? (vs. 7.) What was the report of those sent to investigate? Were the people too self-confident? How many soldiers marched against the city? What was the result of the attack? What was the effect of the defeat on the people? II. SEEKING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE (vs. 6-9).—What did Joshua do in view of the defeat? (v. 6.) Why should we always take our troubles to the Lord? In what place did Joshua pray? Why there? What three outward marks of his earnestness and sorrow do you find in v. 6. What was Joshua's plea? What bad effects would naturally follow from this defeat? III. SIN THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE (vs. 10-12).—What did God say was the cause of the defeat? How could it be said that Israel had sinned, when it was only Achan with his family who did the deed? Are we responsible for the sins and crimes committed in our nation? Who was Achan? (v. 1.) What had he done? What does he say of his temptation? (v. 21.) How many sins did he commit in this transaction? Which of the ten commandments did he break? On what condition only could the Israelites have success? (v. 12.) What is meant by the accused thing? Is sin usually the cause of our failures? Will a life of sin always prove a failure? IV. THE PUNISHMENT.—In what way was the guilty man discovered? (vs. 16-22.) Why was his sin called "folly"? Did Achan confess? Was this true repentance? Did it save him from punishment? What was done to Achan? Who suffered with him? Does this show that they partook of the crime? Why was the punishment so severe? Is sin sure to find us out? (Num. xxxii. 3.) How only can we escape? Did Joshua succeed after this? By what means? PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. I. The sin of one man is a trouble to all with whom he is connected, in family, church, or community. II. The whole community are in a degree responsible for the crimes of its members. III. Note the way to crime: (1) he saw; (2) he coveted; (3) he took; (4) he concealed; (5) he deceived; (6) he was discovered; (7) remorse; (8) punishment. IV. Take every trouble to God in prayer. V. There is a time when confession and remorse are too late. VI. Those who partake in the sin partake also in the punishment? VII. God cannot prosper us so long as we harbour sin in heart, or church, or nation.—Psalms.

Special Notices. CHINIQUEY'S "FIFTY YEARS IN THE CHURCH OF ROME" New Illustrated Edition. Both for \$2.50. Books and Publications. PRESBYTERIAN NEWS CO. MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES. THE SHORTER CATECHISM. PRESBYTERIAN TRACTS AND LEAFLETS. Ladies' College. Boarding and Day School. Music, Art, Modern Languages, Classics, Mathematics, Science, Literature, - ELOCUTION. Good Book-keeping. DAY'S BUSINESS COLLEGE. British American BUSINESS + COLLEGE. WILL Re-open Sept. 3, 1888. BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL. LLOYD N. WATKINS, Banjo, Guitar, Mandolin & Zither. Hamilton Business College. TORONTO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC. 50 TEACHERS.