

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

By ALBERT PIKE.

The spring has less of brightness Every year. And the summer flowers whiteness Every year. For do summer flowers whiteness Every year. For do summer flowers whiteness Every year. For do summer flowers whiteness Every year.

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS—BLESSSED RALPH SHERWIN, PRIEST.

London Tablet.

An illustrious convert once said that I would be glorified with Christ, whose fellow labourers are, we must also suffer with Him, and what St. Paul learnt by his own painful experience many other converts from his days to ours have in greater or lesser measure experienced also.

Scottish Customs.

It was formerly the custom in many parts of Scotland for the bride, immediately after the wedding, to walk round the church unattended by the bridegroom. Matrimony was avoided in the months of January and May. After a baptism the first food that the company tasted was a mixture of meal and water, or meal and ale.

A Stitch in Time.

When first attacked with a cold in the head, drooping from the usual package into the nostrils, pain in the head, or any of the symptoms of influenza or catarrh, a 30 cent package of Neim Salin will cure you.

Dr. Sullivan, Malcom, Ontario, writes:

"I have been using Dr. Thomas' Eucalyptic Oil for some years, and have no hesitation in saying that it has given better satisfaction than any other medicine I have ever used. Consider it the only patent medicine that cures more than is recommended to cure."

It Can Do No Harm to try Freeman's Worm Powders when your child is ailing, feverish or fretful.

NATIONAL PILLS will not grip or sicken, yet are a thorough cathartic.

heard the leper's call, and saw them go away. First there was one man; then there were ten; and they were all made whole."

The elder listener was silent again. The skeleton hand shook. We may believe she was struggling to give the story the sanction of faith, which is always an obstinist in demand, and that it was with her as with the men of the day, eye-witnesses of what was done by the Christ, as well as the myriads who have succeeded them. She did not question the performance, for her own son was the witness testifying through the servant; but she strove to comprehend the power by which work so astonishing could be done by a man. Well enough to make inquiry as to the fact; to comprehend the power, on the other hand, it is first necessary to comprehend God; and he who waits for that will die waiting. With her, however, the hesitation was brief. To Tirzah she said:

"This must be the Messiah!" She spoke not coldly, like one reasoning a doubt away, but as a woman of Israel familiar with the promises of God to her race—a woman of understanding, ready to be glad over the least sign of the realization of the promises.

"There was a time when Jerusalem and all Judea were filled with a story that He was born. I remember it. By this time he should be a man. It must be—it is He. Yes," she said to Amrah, "we will go with you. Bring the water which you will find in the tomb in a jar, and set the food for us. We will eat and be gone."

The breakfast, partaken under excitement, was soon despatched, and the three women set out on their extraordinary journey. As Tirzah had caught the confident spirit of the others, there was but one fear that troubled the party. Bethany, Amrah said, was the town the man was coming from; now from that to Jerusalem there were three roads, or rather paths—one over the first summit of Olivet, a second at its base, a third between the second summit and the Mount of Offence.

The three were not far apart; far enough, however, to make it possible for the unfortunes to miss the Nazarene if they failed the one He chose to come by.

A little questioning satisfied the mother that Amrah knew nothing of the country beyond the Cedron, and even less of the intentions of the man they were going to see, if they could. She discerned, also, that both Amrah and Tirzah—the one from confirmed habits of servitude, the other from natural dependency—looked to her for guidance; and she accepted the charge.

"We will go first to Bethphage," she said to them. "There, if the Lord favor us, we may learn what else to do."

They descended the hill to Tophet and the King's Garden, and passed in the deep trail furrowed through them by centuries of wayfarers.

"I am afraid of the road," the matron said. "But that we keep to the country among the rocks and trees. This is leafy day, and on the hillside yonder I see signs of a great multitude in attendance. By going across the Mount of Offence here we may avoid them with great difficulty; upon hearing this her heart began to fail her."

"The mount is steep, mother; I cannot climb it."

"Remember, we are going to find health and life. See, my child, how the day brightens! Now, when you see yonder women coming this way to the well, they will stone us if we stay here. Come, be strong this once."

Thus the mother, not less tortured herself, sought to inspire the daughter; and Amrah came to her aid. To this time the latter had not touched the person of the mother. Now, when she saw the women coming this way to the well, they will stone us if we stay here. Come, be strong this once."

"You should have been merciful to yourself, and by doing so been more merciful to me. Now, where can we fly? There is no one to help us. O false servant! The wrath of the Lord was already too heavy upon us."

Here Tirzah, awakened by the noise, appeared at the door of the tomb. The pen shrinks from the picture she presented. In the hall-dress apparatus, a leper, with a lividly seamed, nearly blind, his limbs and extremities swollen to grotesque largeness, familiar eyes however sharpened by love could not have recognized the creature of childish grace and purity we first beheld her.

"Is it Amrah, mother?" "Stay, Amrah!" the widow cried imperiously. "I forbid you touching her. Rise, and get you gone before any at the well see you here. Nay, I forgot—it is too late! You must remain now and share our doom. Rise, I say!"

Amrah rose to her knees, and said, brokenly, with clasped hands, "O good mistress! I am not false—I am not wicked. I bring you good tidings."

"Of Judah?" and as she spoke, the widow half withdrew the cloth from her head.

"There is a wonderful man," Amrah continued, "who has power to cure you. He speaks words, and the sick are made well, and even the dead come to life. I have come to take you to him."

"Poor Amrah!" said Tirzah compassionately.

"No," cried Amrah, detecting the doubt underlying the expression—"no, as the Lord lives, even the Lord of Israel, my God, as well as yours, I speak the truth. Go with me, I pray, and lose no time. This morning He will pass by on His way to the city. See! the day is at hand. Take the food here—eat, and let us go."

The mother listened eagerly. Not unlike she had heard of the wonderful man, for by this time His fame had penetrated every nook in the land.

"Who is He?" she asked. "A Nazarene," she said. "Who told you about Him?" "Judah."

"Judah told you? Is he at home?" "He came to night."

The widow, trying still the beating of her heart, was silent awhile.

"Did Judah send you to tell us this?" she next asked.

"No. He believes you dead."

"There was a prophet once who cured a leper," the mother said thoughtfully to Tirzah; but he had his power from God. The widow, hearing Amrah, she asked, "How does my son know this man so possessed?"

"He was travelling with Him, and

primarily Hur had been able to maintain her insensate soul through such a period of years.

When the sun would glid the crest of Olivet and the Mount of Offence with light sharper and more brilliant in that old land than in the West, she knew Amrah would come, first to the well, then to a stone midway the well and the foot of the hill on which she had her abode, and that the good servant would there deposit the food she carried in the basket, and fill the water-jar afresh for the day. Of her former plenitude of happiness, that brief visit was all that remained to her; the unfortunate, she could then ask about her son, and he told of his welfare, with such bits of news concerning him as the messenger could glean. Usually the information was meagre enough, yet comforting; at times she heard he was at home; then she would issue from her dreary cell at break of day, and sit till noon, and from noon to set of sun, a motionless figure draped in white, looking statue like, invariably to one point—over the Temple to the spot under the rounded arch where the old house stood, dear in memory, and dearer because he was there. Nothing else was left her. Tirzah counted the days; and as for herself, she simply waited the end, knowing every hour of life was an hour of dying—happily, of painless dying.

The things of nature about the hill to keep her sensitive to the world's attractions were wretchedly scant; beasts and birds avoided the place as if they knew its history and present mood; every green thing perished in its first season; the winds warred upon the shrubs and venturous grasses, leaving to drought such as they could not uproot. Look where she would, the view was made depressingly suggestive by tombs—tombs above her, tombs below, tombs opposite her own tomb—all now freshly whitened in warning to visiting pilgrims. In the sky there were three roads, or rather paths—one over the first summit of Olivet, a second at its base, a third between the second summit and the Mount of Offence. The three were not far apart; far enough, however, to make it possible for the unfortunes to miss the Nazarene if they failed the one He chose to come by.

A little questioning satisfied the mother that Amrah knew nothing of the country beyond the Cedron, and even less of the intentions of the man they were going to see, if they could. She discerned, also, that both Amrah and Tirzah—the one from confirmed habits of servitude, the other from natural dependency—looked to her for guidance; and she accepted the charge.

"We will go first to Bethphage," she said to them. "There, if the Lord favor us, we may learn what else to do."

They descended the hill to Tophet and the King's Garden, and passed in the deep trail furrowed through them by centuries of wayfarers.

"I am afraid of the road," the matron said. "But that we keep to the country among the rocks and trees. This is leafy day, and on the hillside yonder I see signs of a great multitude in attendance. By going across the Mount of Offence here we may avoid them with great difficulty; upon hearing this her heart began to fail her."

"The mount is steep, mother; I cannot climb it."

"Remember, we are going to find health and life. See, my child, how the day brightens! Now, when you see yonder women coming this way to the well, they will stone us if we stay here. Come, be strong this once."

Thus the mother, not less tortured herself, sought to inspire the daughter; and Amrah came to her aid. To this time the latter had not touched the person of the mother. Now, when she saw the women coming this way to the well, they will stone us if we stay here. Come, be strong this once."

"You should have been merciful to yourself, and by doing so been more merciful to me. Now, where can we fly? There is no one to help us. O false servant! The wrath of the Lord was already too heavy upon us."

Here Tirzah, awakened by the noise, appeared at the door of the tomb. The pen shrinks from the picture she presented. In the hall-dress apparatus, a leper, with a lividly seamed, nearly blind, his limbs and extremities swollen to grotesque largeness, familiar eyes however sharpened by love could not have recognized the creature of childish grace and purity we first beheld her.

"Is it Amrah, mother?" "Stay, Amrah!" the widow cried imperiously. "I forbid you touching her. Rise, and get you gone before any at the well see you here. Nay, I forgot—it is too late! You must remain now and share our doom. Rise, I say!"

Amrah rose to her knees, and said, brokenly, with clasped hands, "O good mistress! I am not false—I am not wicked. I bring you good tidings."

"Of Judah?" and as she spoke, the widow half withdrew the cloth from her head.

"There is a wonderful man," Amrah continued, "who has power to cure you. He speaks words, and the sick are made well, and even the dead come to life. I have come to take you to him."

"Poor Amrah!" said Tirzah compassionately.

"No," cried Amrah, detecting the doubt underlying the expression—"no, as the Lord lives, even the Lord of Israel, my God, as well as yours, I speak the truth. Go with me, I pray, and lose no time. This morning He will pass by on His way to the city. See! the day is at hand. Take the food here—eat, and let us go."

The mother listened eagerly. Not unlike she had heard of the wonderful man, for by this time His fame had penetrated every nook in the land.

"Who is He?" she asked. "A Nazarene," she said. "Who told you about Him?" "Judah."

"Judah told you? Is he at home?" "He came to night."

The widow, trying still the beating of her heart, was silent awhile.

"Did Judah send you to tell us this?" she next asked.

"No. He believes you dead."

"There was a prophet once who cured a leper," the mother said thoughtfully to Tirzah; but he had his power from God. The widow, hearing Amrah, she asked, "How does my son know this man so possessed?"

"He was travelling with Him, and

initially, "The Lord lives, and so do the words of the prophets. Time is in the green yet; let to morrow answer."

"Be it so," said Balthasar, smiling. And Ben Hur said, "Be it so." Then he went on: "But I have not yet done. From these things, not too great to be above suspicion by too good to see them in performance as I did, let me carry you now to others infinitely greater, acknowledged since the world began to be past the power of man. Tell me, has any one to your knowledge ever reached out and taken from Death what Death has made his own? Who ever gave again the breath of a life lost. Who but?"

"God!" said Balthasar reverently. Ben Hur bowed.

"O wise Egyptian! I may not refuse the name you lend me. What would you—of you, Simonides—what would you either or both have said, had you seen, as I did, a man, with few words and no ceremony, without effort more than a mother's when she speaks to wake her child asleep, under the work of Death? It was down at Nain. We were about going into the gate, when a company came out bearing a dead man. The Nazarene stopped to let the train pass. There were weeping women, and weeping men. He spoke to her, then went and touched the bier, and said to him who lay upon it dressed for burial, 'Young man, I say unto thee, arise!' And instantly the dead sat up and talked."

"God only is so great," said Balthasar to Simonides. "Mark you," Ben Hur proceeded, "I do but tell you things of which I was a witness, together with a cloud of other men. On the way thither I saw another act still more mighty. In Bethany there was a man named Lazarus, who died and was buried; and after he had lain four days in a tomb, shut in by a great stone, the Nazarene was shown to the place. Upon rolling the stone away, we beheld the man lying inside bound and rotting. There were many people standing by, and we all heard what the Nazarene said, for He spoke in a loud voice: 'Lazarus, come forth!' I cannot tell you my feelings when in answer, as it were, the man arose and came out to us with all his cements about him. 'Loose him,' said the Nazarene next, 'loose him, and let him go.' And when the napkin was taken from the face of the resurrected, lo, my friends! the blood ran anew through the wasted body, and he was exactly as he had been in life before the sickness that took him off. He lives yet, and is hourly seen and spoken to. You may go see him to morrow. And now, as nothing more is needed for the purpose, I ask you that which I came to ask, it being but a repetition of what you asked me, O Simonides, what more than a man is this Nazarene?"

The question was put solemnly, and long after midnight the company sat and debated it; Simonides being yet unwilling to give up his understanding of the sayings of the prophets, and Ben Hur contending that the elder disputants were being right—till the morning the Nazarene was claimed by Balthasar, and also the destined King the merchant would have.

"To morrow we will see. Peace to you all."

So saying Ben Hur took his leave, intending to return to Bethany.

CHAPTER III. GLAD TIDINGS.

The first person to go out of the city upon the opening of the Sheep's Gate next morning was Amrah, basket on arm. No questions were asked her by the people, since the morning she had not been more regular in coming than she; they knew her somebody's faithful servant, and that was enough for them.

Down the eastern valley she took her way. The side of Olivet, darkly green, was spotted with white tents recently up, and people attending the feast; the hour, however, was too early for the strangers to be abroad; still, had it not been so, no one would have troubled her. Past Gethsemane; past the tombs at the meeting of the Bethany roads; past the sepulchral village of Siloam she went. Occasionally the decrepit little body staggered; once she had to get her breath; rising shortly, she struggled on with renewed haste. The great rocks on either hand, if they had had eyes, might have heard her mutter to herself, could they have seen, it would have been to observe how frequently she looked up over the mount, reproving the dawn for its promptness; if it had been possible for them to gossip, not improbably they would have said to each other, "Our friend is in a hurry this morning; the mouths she goes to feed must be very hungry."

When at last she reached the King's Garden she slackened her gait; for then the grim city of the lepers was in view, extending far round the pitted south hill of Hinnom.

As the reader must by this time have surmised, she was going to her mistress, whose tomb, it will be remembered, overlooked the well En-rogel.

Early as it was, the unhappy woman was up and sitting outside, leaving Tirzah asleep within. The course of the maledy had been terribly swift in the three years. Conscious of her appearance, she kept her whole person habitually covered. Seldom as possible she permitted even Tirzah to see her.

This morning she was taking the air with bared head, knowing there was no one to be shocked by the exposure. The light was not full, but enough to show the ravages to which she had been subjected. Her hair was snow-white and unmanageably coarse, falling over her back and shoulders like so much silver wire. The eyelids, the lips, the nostrils, the flesh of the cheeks, were all gone, or reduced to faded rawness. The neck was a mass of ash-colored scales. One hand lay outside the folds of her habit rigid as that of a skeleton; the nails had not been eaten away; the joints of the fingers, if not bare to the bone, were swollen knots crusted with red scoria. Head, neck, and hand indicated all too plainly the condition of the whole body. Seeing her thus, it was easy to understand how the once fair widow of the

Hur, bowing to the old man, began again: "I fear to answer the question you asked me about the Nazarene without first telling you some of the things I have seen Him do; and to that I am the more inclined, my friends, because to-morrow He will come to the city, and go up into the Temple, which He calls His Father's house, where, it is further said, He will proclaim Himself. So whether you are right, O Balthasar, or you, Simonides, we and Israel shall know to-morrow."

Balthasar rubbed his hands tremulously together, and asked, "Where shall I go to see Him?" "The pressure of the crowd will be very great. Better, I think, that you all go upon the roof above the cloisters—say upon the Porch of Solomon."

"Can you be with us?" "No," said Ben-Hur, "my friends will require me, perhaps, in the procession."

"Possession!" exclaimed Simonides. "Does He travel in state?"

Ben Hur saw the argument in mind. "He brings twelve men with him, fishermen, tillers of the soil, one a publican, all of the humbler class; and He and they make their journeys on foot, careless of wind, cold, rain, or sun, passing them up by the wayside at nightfall to break bread or lie down to sleep. I have been reminded of a party of shepherds going back to their flocks from market, not of nobles and kings. Only when He lifts the corners of His handkerchief to look at some one or shake the dust from His head, I am made to know He is their teacher as well as their companion—their superior not less than their friend."

"You are shrewd men," Ben-Hur resumed after a pause.

"You know what creatures of certain master motives we are, and that it has become little less than a law of our nature to spend life in eager pursuit of certain objects; now, appealing to that law as something by which we may know ourselves, what would you say of a man who could be rich by making gold of the stones under his feet, yet is poor of choice?"

"The Greeks would call him a philosopher," said Amrah.

"Nay, daughter," said Balthasar, "the philosophers had never the power to do such things."

"How know you this man has?" Ben-Hur answered quickly, "I saw Him turn water into wine."

"Very strange, very strange," said Simonides; "but it is not so strange to me as that He should prefer to live poor when He could be so rich. Is he so poor?"

"He was nothing, and envies nobody his owning. He pitied the rich. But passing that, what would you say to see a man multiply seven loaves and two fishes all his store, into enough to feed five thousand people, and have full baskets over?"

"That is it," said Simonides.

"You saw it?" exclaimed Simonides.

"Ay, and ate of the bread and fish."

"More marvellous still," Ben-Hur continued, "what would you say of a man in whom there is such healing virtue that the sick have but to touch the hem of His being, and at least almost out of recollection. It is at best so easy to forget our youth; in his case it was but natural that his own sufferings and the mystery darkening the fate of his family should move him less and less, as in hope at least, he approached nearer and nearer the goals which occupied all his visions. Only let us not judge her too harshly. He paused in surprise at seeing Esther a woman now, and so beautiful; and as he stood looking at her, a still voice reminded him of broken vows and duties undone: almost his old self returned."

For an instant he was startled; but recovering, he went to Esther, and said, "Peace to thee, sweet Esther—peace, and thou, Simonides"—he looked to the merchant as he spoke—"the blessing of the Lord be thine, if only because thou has been a good father to the fatherless."

Esther heard him with downcast face; Simonides answered, "I repeat the welcome of the good Balthasar, son of Hur—welcome to thy father's house; and sit, and tell us of thy travels, and of thy work, and of the wonderful Nazarene—who He is, and what. If thou art not at ease here, who shall be? Sit I pray—there, between us, that we may all hear."

Esther stepped out quickly and brought a covered stool, and set it for him.

"Thanks," he said to her gratefully. When seated, after some other conversation he addressed himself to the men.

"I have come to tell you of the Nazarene."

"The two became instantly attentive."

"For many days now I have followed Him with such watchfulness as one may give another upon whom he is waiting so anxiously. I have seen Him under all circumstances said to be trials and tests of men; and while I am certain He is a man as I am, not less certain am I that He is something more."

"What more?" asked Simonides.

"I will tell you."

"Some one coming into the room interrupted him; he turned, and arose with extended hands."

"Amrah! Dear old Amrah!" he cried. She came forward; and they, seeing the joy in her face, thought my once how wrinkled and tawny it was. She knelt at his feet, clasped his knees, and kissed his hands over and over; and when he could, he put the lack grey hair from her cheeks, and kissed them, saying, "Good Amrah, have you nothing, nothing of them—not a word—not one little sign?"

Then she broke into sobbing which made him answer plainer even than the spoken word.

"God's will has been done," he next said solemnly, in a tone to make each listener know he had no hope more of finding his people. In his eyes there were tears which he would not have them see, because he was a man.

When he could again, he took seat, and said, "Come, sit by me, Amrah—here. Not then at my feet; for I have much to say to these good friends of a wonderful man come into the world."

But she went off, and stooping with her back to the wall, joined her hands before her knees, content, they thought, with seeing him. Then Ben-

BEN HUR; OR, THE DAYS OF THE MESSIAH.

BOOK EIGHTH.

CHAPTER II. BEN HUR'S RELATION.

An hour or thereabouts after the scene upon the roof, Balthasar and Simonides, the latter attended by Esther, met in the great chamber of the palace; and while they were talking, Ben-Hur and Ira came in together.

The young Jew, advancing in front of his companion, walked first to Balthasar, and saluted him, and received his reply; then he turned to Simonides, but paused at sight of Esther.

It is not often we have hearts roomy enough for more than one of the absorbing passions at the same time; in his case the other may continue to live, but only as lesser lights. So with Ben-Hur, much study of possibilities, indulgence of hopes and dreams, influences of the condition of his country, influences more direct—that of Ira, for example—had made him in the broadest worldly sense ambitious; and as he had given the passion place, allowing it to become a ruler, and finally an imperious governor, the resolves and impulses of former days faded imperceptibly out of being, and at least almost out of recollection. It is at best so easy to forget our youth; in his case it was but natural that his own sufferings and the mystery darkening the fate of his family should move him less and less, as in hope at least, he approached nearer and nearer the goals which occupied all his visions. Only let us not judge her too harshly. He paused in surprise at seeing Esther a woman now, and so beautiful; and as he stood looking at her, a still voice reminded him of broken vows and duties undone: almost his old self returned."

For an instant he was startled; but recovering, he went to Esther, and said, "Peace to thee, sweet Esther—peace, and thou, Simonides"—he looked to the merchant as he spoke—"the blessing of the Lord be thine, if only because thou has been a good father to the fatherless."

Esther heard him with downcast face; Simonides answered, "I repeat the welcome of the good Balthasar, son of Hur—welcome to thy father's house; and sit, and tell us of thy travels, and of thy work, and of the wonderful Nazarene—who He is, and what. If thou art not at ease here, who shall be? Sit I pray—there, between us, that we may all hear."

Esther stepped out quickly and brought a covered stool, and set it for him.

"Thanks," he said to her gratefully. When seated, after some other conversation he addressed himself to the men.

"I have come to tell you of the Nazarene."

"The two became instantly attentive."

"For many days now I have followed Him with such watchfulness as one may give another upon whom he is waiting so anxiously. I have seen Him under all circumstances said to be trials and tests of men; and while I am certain He is a man as I am, not less certain am I that He is something more."

"What more?" asked Simonides.

"I will tell you."

"Some one coming into the room interrupted him; he turned, and arose with extended hands."

"Amrah! Dear old Amrah!" he cried. She came forward; and they, seeing the joy in her face, thought my once how wrinkled and tawny it was. She knelt at his feet, clasped his knees, and kissed his hands over and over; and when he could, he put the lack grey hair from her cheeks, and kissed them, saying, "Good Amrah, have you nothing, nothing of them—not a word—not one little sign?"

Then she broke into sobbing which made him answer plainer even than the spoken word.

"God's will has been done," he next said solemnly, in a tone to make each listener know he had no hope more of finding his people. In his eyes there were tears which he would not have them see, because he was a man.

When he could again, he took seat, and said, "Come, sit by me, Amrah—here. Not then at my feet; for I have much to say to these good friends of a wonderful man come into the world."

But she went off, and stooping with her back to the wall, joined her hands before her knees, content, they thought, with seeing him. Then Ben-