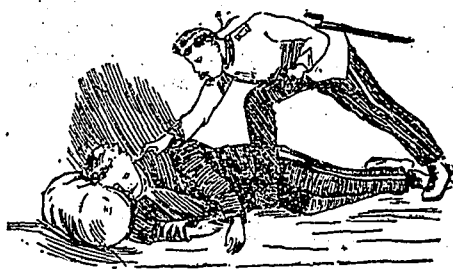


war over, and though it has emptied some places that can never be filled on this side of Paradise, still there is joy in English homes and hearts over the peace that has brooded down once more. The troops who had been ordered hastily to the rescue have returned again. On a certain day they are gathered together amid welcoming crowds, while their Queen herself decorates the best and bravest of them with the famous Victoria Cross. One after another they stand before Her Majesty to receive it. Lastly, there strides up a tall, stalwart young officer, his blue eyes looking out, clear and steadfast, from his bronzed face. He is a conspicuous soldier, and is well known by name to the great concourse of people around for a heroic act of bravery. But royal eyes look pitifully at the empty coat-sleeve hanging by his left side; pitifully, for our Queen, they say, feels her soldiers' wounds in her own heart. It is Skip himself, and standing near is a proud and happy group, through each of whom runs a thrill, hot and then cold, as he bends low that his sovereign's hands may reach his breast. The Dene Hurst boys and girls have grown to man and womanhood, and in their midst stands the gentle, soft-eyed mother who strove her best to bring them up in the 'fear and admonition of the Lord.' There is Sir Oliver, the chief of the clan, a fine, tall man, whose body has managed to grow up to match his big head. No longer the stupid Noll of old, the young baronet is a member of Parliament no less. Pressing close upon him are two eager twin faces belonging to Castor and Poll, now Oxford men. The other boys likewise have shot up, and in the dainty young lady between them we recognize Bunchy herself. It was only last week that Miss Wentworth went to Court to make her curtsy at the Queen's drawing-room, in feathers, and satin-train. Now her shy eyes reverently watch the sovereign decorating the brave brother whose name Bunchy is so proud to bear. But, perhaps, proudest and gladdest of all is the bent, wrinkled woman peering from behind her ladyship, the old nurse whom the Wentworths still call 'Nurse Tweedy.'

'My dears,' she quavers, when the great ceremony is over, 'our Master Reggie earned his Victoria Cross over and over again, when he was but a little boy; thank God I've been spared to see him wear it!'—M. B. Manwell.



Good Humored People.

Those who are always good-humored are very useful persons in this world, by diffusing a generous cheerfulness among all who approach them. Habitual vivacity has the recommendation of not only its own pleasurable feelings, but it has a sanitary benefit, for it keeps the blood in proper circulation, quickens the understanding, and even helps digestion. Indeed, it conduces to long life, while, on the other hand, the habit of yielding to and fostering sadness of heart embitters and shortens the days of the young. It is well said by Solomon that 'a merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.'

The Story of the Purple Codex.

(By Professor A. L. Long, D.D., Vice-President of Robert College, Constantinople, in 'Sunday-School Times'.)

(Continued from last week.)

Tradition has occupied itself only with the history of the ancient relic, and so fails to gratify our curiosity concerning the fate of the poor widow and her goat after their mysterious supply of food was thus suddenly cut off. It is to be hoped that for the remainder of her days she was tenderly cared for as one of the 'widows indeed' of the church thus enriched by her misfortune.

Years rolled by. Generation after generation came and passed on to 'the land of no return,' and the old volume still remained in the sacred coffer of the humble village church. No prying archaeologist had cast his covetous eye upon it, or reported its existence and whereabouts to the scientific world. At length the bishop of the diocese happens to visit the village, and learns incidentally of the existence of the venerable relic. He spends some time in examining it privately, and becomes evidently interested in it. He soon makes another visit, and spends the night in the house of one of the chief men of the village. In the evening he calls the priest, and orders him to bring to him the old Gospel, in order that he may use it in his private devotions. The book is brought and delivered into his hands. His reverence receives during the night some urgent message, rendering it necessary for him to start upon his journey very early in the morning. In the hurry of packing, the old volume is accidentally put into the pannier, and loaded upon the mule and carried off. The priest discovers, to his horror, that the 'talisman' of his church is gone. He hastily summons a half-dozen stalwart young fellows, armed with stout cudgels, and sends them in swift pursuit. They are lucky enough to intercept the episcopal caravan in a mountain pass, and, without great difficulty, they succeed in 'persuading' the bishop to surrender the coveted prize.

This incident, together with the evidences of many leaves having been previously abstracted from the volume, aroused the leading men of the village to the necessity of greater caution in guarding their treasure. It was consequently kept with much greater strictness than before. At length two of the 'epitropes,' or trustees, who had travelled as far as Stamboul, and seen something of the world, were incited with the desire of seeing something done for the education of the youth of the village, and the idea struck them that perhaps this old volume might be put to a practical use. In short, they ventured to think of selling it. They had to proceed, however, very cautiously, lest their ignorant townsmen should be aroused against their project, and might possibly use with them the same wooden arguments which they had used so effectively with the bishop. They secretly took out a sample leaf from the book, and, folding it twice, put it into an envelope, and sent it to one of their townsmen then in the capital on business.

It was in the summer of 1892 when this young man appeared before me and mysteriously handed me the envelope containing the vellum leaf. I saw a leaf of the thinnest kind of vellum almost like 'gold-beaters' skin,' of a dark reddish-purple color, the letters square, upright uncials, and in silver while the sacred names of God, Christ, etc., abbreviated as usual, were in gold. I glanced hastily over both sides of the leaf; my hand trembled with excitement. I folded up the precious document, replaced it in the envelope, and gravely put it in my pocket, saying to the young man, 'You see that

I am busy just now. Come to me at my house the day after to-morrow at noon, and we will then talk about this.' The young man, whom I had never seen before, looked somewhat hesitant. I quietly said, 'You know, of course, who I am and you are not unwilling to trust me.' 'All right' said he, and politely took his leave. For two hours I was busied with pressing duties, so that I could not even glance at the precious leaf. Only the expert can understand how that envelope seemed to burn in my pocket. The thought of having actually in my pocket a sample leaf of a six-century manuscript of the Gospels was constantly uppermost in my mind.

At length my duties were ended, and I hurried home and seated myself at my table for the critical examination of the fragment. The size of the folio was thirty-two by twenty-six centimeters, text twenty-two by ten centimeters; two columns of sixteen lines each, space between the lines equal to height of the letters, or six millimeters. The added letters at the end of the line were small uncials of the same type as the other letters. There were no capital letters, but the initials were simply set out one space to the left.

I copied first with pen and afterwards photographed the two pages. The photograph, owing to the color and to the crumpled state of the original, was not quite satisfactory, but it sufficed to show the general character of the letters. The text contained in the two pages was Luke xviii., 14. I made a note of the itacisms and the variants upon these two pages, and noted carefully the paleographic characteristics of the writing. I then consulted what authorities were at hand, and the conviction was forced upon my mind that the volume represented by this sample leaf could be no other than the original volume out of which have been stolen, and that many years ago, those four leaves in the British Museum, those two leaves in the Vienna Library, and those six in the Vatican, which with thirty-three more found in Patmos and reported by Sakellion, in all forty-five leaves, were catalogued as one volume by Tischendorf under the designation Codex N Purpureus, and dating from the latter part of the sixth century. This opinion I expressed in a confidential note written that same evening to my friend Professor Gregory of Leipzig.

The appointed time arrived, and the young man made his appearance. He told me that he was not authorized to sell, but that he had been sent to me for my opinion of the book, and my estimate of its value; in short, to ask how much I was willing to give for it. I realized at once the difficulty of the situation, and the necessity of secrecy in negotiation. My great desire being to secure for America this volume, I did not dare to announce the discovery. I thought it quite possible also that others were in possession of the same secret. I saw that the expectations of the holders of the treasure were very high, and, if a purchase were effected, it would only be with a good round sum. To raise the sum required without publicity was a difficult problem. In the meantime, I labored with the hope of getting the parties to name a definite price for the volume, and thus give me the refusal for its purchase. They were too wary to be caught.

The story of the bargaining is too long to be here given. One after another of my offers had been rejected, and I had paused to consider the question of ways and means. I unexpectedly received from Bishop Whitaker, who had been earnestly requested by my friend, Professor Hilprecht, to obtain the precious codex for the library of the Episcopal Seminary of Philadelphia, a check for six hundred pounds sterling, and a request that I secure the manuscript at once. Thus