

THE FRUITLESS TREE MADE FRUITFUL.

A few days after the lieutenant entered the Hospital, a lady called and solicited permission to see him; but, for the first week, no one but his wife was allowed to do so. At the expiration of that time the lady called again, and was admitted. As she approached his bed-side, the lieutenant said to himself, "Who can this strange lady be? What brings her here?" He was not long kept in suspense; for, after only a few words of introduction, she spoke to him very kindly of the love of Jesus—of His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, and His intercession at God's right hand; and, before leaving, prayed for his conversion. The second time she came, she conversed on the parable of the barren fig-tree. "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; why cumbereth it the ground?"

The lieutenant thought, "I am this fruitless tree."

The continued, "And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

She said, "Here is a representation of Jesus interceding for a poor sinner."

The lieutenant thought, "I am under this sentence of being cut down. But she says, Jesus is interceding for me." He then felt himself to be a lost sinner, and that this was God's call to him, perhaps for the last time. When alone that night, for the first time—"he prayed."

This dear lady now became almost a daily visitor; and when not able to call herself, sent a friend.

In the evening another visitor came—an old man, who had been an actor, but at that time a minister of the Gospel. Sometimes he was present when the surgeons were dressing the wounds, and would look on in silent admiration that no groan passed the lieutenant's lips. One one occasion, when they had left his bed-side, the old man remarked, "By the merciful blessing of Divine Providence, you are spared, my dear sir, for some special work for the Almighty's glory. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." And then the old man poured out his soul in earnest prayer, that God would "cause his face to shine upon the afflicted one," and make him "the honoured instrument in His hands for the conversion of many souls."

The lieutenant looked forward with much pleasure to the visits of these friends. He was struck with their earnestness; and frequently was he moved to tears, not so much by what they said to him, as what they said to God about him. There was a fervour and reality in their prayers, that was quite new to him; they seemed dead to the world's vanities,—and their life—their all—devoted to the glory of God in the conversion of souls.

Here, then, was the turning-point in the lieutenant's life, and the time whence he dates his "new birth."

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD.

A poor man, unable to read, who obtained his livelihood by mending old shoes, was asked by an Arian minister, how he knew that Jesus Christ was the Son of God? "Sir," he replied, "I am sorry you have put such a question to me before my children, although I think I can give you a satisfactory answer. You know Sir, when I first became concerned about my soul, and unhappy on account of my sins, I called upon you to ask for your advice, and you told me to get into company, and spend my time as merrily as I could, but not to go and hear the Methodists."—"I did so," answered the ungodly minister. "I followed your advice," continued the illiterate cobbler, "for some time; but the more I trifled, the more my misery increased: and at last I was persuaded to hear one of those Methodists ministers who came into our neighborhood, and preached Jesus Christ as the Saviour. In the greatest agony of mind, I prayed to Him to save me, and to forgive my sins; and now I feel that he has freely forgiven them,—and by this I know that he is the Son of God."