

There is the word of God which is the seed, there is meditation by which the word is watered; there is prayer by which the seed germinating is brought out where the sun can shine upon it; the brightness of God's reconciled countenance as revealed in Christ. The scientists are making much of environments; by this plants are what they are, and animals and man. Change the environments of these and they change. Lent gives opportunity to alter our environments for a short time. We surround ourselves with an environment of holy reading and meditation and prayer, and these environments will change us. We have been nursing our house plants during the winter, they are alive, but as the spring advances we put them out where the pure air of heaven can blow upon them, and they grow with increased life and beauty; we have done this by simple change of environments. Lent gives opportunity to change some of our environments; can take our sickly lives and put them where God and Christ can shine upon them. And this will we do if God permit.

Let us understand the matter. Lent is not a fetish to make us more devout. Lent is a time we may be more devout, and that not for forty days but for life. Lent has no meaning, if it do not help us to be better for three hundred and sixty-five days of every year, nay for three hundred and sixty-six as during this present leap year. It comes; it has meaning; it has helps; shall we use them so as to be kinder of speech, patient of temper, active in goodness, more honest and truthful, and pure and devout? Shall this Lent help us to be better men, better women, better children?—*Southern Churchman.*

THE HERO OF THE SOUDAN.*

General Charles Gordon is now in the fiftieth year of his age. He began his military career in the Crimean War, hardly having attained to manhood. He earned the decoration of the Legion of Honor, and a promotion which he valued far more, the right to further service, which he rendered to good effect as one of the commission appointed to fix the new boundaries of Russia, Turkey, and Roumania. A few years later finds him in China, where he earns the soubriquet, which he has ever since retained, of "Chinese Gordon." The Tai-Ping rebellion was one of those phenomena in history which illustrate at once the cruelty of ambition and the folly of credulity. Hung-tsueschuen, a Chinese schoolmaster, declared himself a heavenly descended prophet, commissioned by God to exterminate the Manchoo race and reinstate the Mings. Fanaticism gathered some adherents about his banners, and hope of plunder added many more, until at last he and his warrior kings who conducted the campaigns in his name found themselves at the head of an army, or rather an armed mob, some hundreds of thousands strong. Like the plague of locusts this army swept over large districts of the Celestial Empire, leaving famine and desolation in their track—famine so terrible that the corpses of the dead, in many places, furnished the only food for the living. As the rebel horde neared Shanghai English interests took alarm, and at length, yielding to the combined urgency of English merchants and the Chinese Government, Gordon was appointed to a command over the forces which the Chinese, with characteristic modesty, designated "The Ever Victorious Army." Under his generalship it earned its title. He drilled and disciplined his raw levies; converted what was little better than a mob into an army; with a strong hand put down plunder; put into practical execution the lesson which many a human skeptic has puzzled over in the story of Archan; won such reputation for honor and fair dealing that deserters from the rebel army swelled his own forces and became his best reliances; by his military strategy again and again defeated forces three and four times as great as his

* *The Story of Chinese Gordon.* By A. Egmont Hake. (New York: R. Worthington.)

own; betrayed, and brought into captivity, vanquished his captors by the mere moral power of his own personality; by his victories brought the rebellion to an end—so complete an end that the cruel and crazy Celestial Brother and Heavenly King hung himself and all his wives in despair; and was rewarded with the highest honor which the Celestial Empire has ever conferred upon a foreigner, the bestowal of "a yellow riding-jacket to be worn on his person, and the peacock's feather to be carried in his cap," a decoration which made him the equal of the twenty highest Mandarins in the Empire, and one of the Emperor's sacred body-guard. Returning to England, where he refused all ovations and declined all honors, he settled down to six quiet years of retirement at Gravesend as Commanding Royal Engineer. Here he found abundant opportunity for that Christian philanthropy which has been at once the mission and the delight of his life; busy by day in his official duties, at night in his Christian charities; living on the most meagre diet and giving nearly all his salary away; teaching classes of ragged urchins; conducting services for the poor; visiting the sick and the dying; bestowing his garden upon the needy to cultivate in plots for themselves; refusing all public demonstrations, but never refusing to render a private service.

The next chapter of his life finds him in the Soudan under appointment of the Khedive. The Soudan is an ill-defined district on the Upper Nile, sixteen hundred miles in one direction, thirteen hundred in the other; inaccessible from the sea, unpierced by railways, canals, or navigable rivers, with camel tracks its only roads, groups of mud huts its principal villages, and wild beasts and wilder tribes of men its chief inhabitants, and a slave trade its only great commerce. Over this vast territory Egypt had established what was called a sovereignty, the only exercise of which was the collection of exorbitant taxes from the oppressed and plundered people, the only representatives of which were corrupt Pashas and plundering Bashi Bazouks. The slave trade had already grown so powerful as to threaten the Khedive's supremacy, and the Khedive grew moral and philanthropic. He set himself to chastise back into submission the recalcitrant slave kings; but his officers were no match for the Black Pasha. General Gordon was asked to undertake the suppression of the slave trade and the re-establishment of government. He warned the Khedive that if he undertook it, he would render it forever impossible for the insupportable Turk to govern the Soudan again. He fulfilled his word. Of some of the rival chieftains he made friends, others he scourged into submission. The intermeddling of Cairo was reduced to a minimum; the expenses of administration were reduced; the receipts of the treasury were increased; robbery, though not wholly prevented, was greatly lessened; religious teachers were appointed and paid out of the public funds; civilization was introduced; money was substituted for beads, and at least in Khartoum, brick houses for mud huts. In one sense General Gordon's administration is responsible for the present uprising. Six years of approximately decent government made this people restless and uneasy when he departed, and a horde of corrupt Pashas and Bashi-Bazouks were once more let loose upon them. The rising in the Soudan, like the rising some years ago in Eastern Europe, is the protest of humanity against the insupportable and intolerable cruelty of the "unspeakable Turk."

Of his subsequent brief experiences as Secretary of Lord Ripon—a position ill-fitted for this man of action, and one which he resigned almost as soon as he reached India—and subsequently in Basuto land, where he was asked to assume the duties of administration and then denied administrative powers, we need not speak here. His real life has been in these four chapters—in the Crimea, in China, at Gravesend, and in the Soudan.

We have been thus brief in telling the story of General Gordon's life, because it is not the life, but the man that is chiefly interesting. A man of rare

martial courage and rare statesmanlike sagacity, it is yet the man far more than either the soldier or the statesman who attracts the attention and compels the admiration of England, of Egypt and even of America. Pre-eminently is it true of him that greatness has been thrust upon him; for never did man labor so assiduously to win fame as he has to escape it. His mother shows her friends a map torn through the middle and pasted together again—a relic of his boyhood days at Woolwich Academy. She was exhibiting it one day to admiring friends, when he suddenly entered the room, saw the admiration, snatched it impetuously from her hands, tore it in two, and flung it on the fire, from which she rescued it, henceforth, in her eyes, more sacred than before. The Journal of the Tai-pings rebellion, sent home to his own family, was in an evil hour lent to a Minister, who ventured to send it to the press, that his colleagues—perhaps the public also—might have the privilege of reading it. Gordon, returning home, learned the fact, went to the printers, demanded his manuscript, and required every copy printed to be destroyed, and the type distributed. Philosophers tell us that pride is the antidote to vanity. General Gordon is too proud to be vain. "It is the superior," he said to an interviewer, lately, "who praises his inferior"—a remark which is as profoundly true as it is singularly significant of the character of the utterer. Morbid this hatred of praise may be; probably is. But one cannot help wishing it were contagious in this ostentatious age of ours.

Plunder and ambition are the two master motives of war; General Gordon is as indifferent to gold as to glory. In the Soudan he is offered a salary of £10,000, and will take but £2,000; in China, with his cane he flogs from the room the servants of his Majesty the Emperor who have brought him bags of gold to pay him for his service. In England he lives chiefly on bread and salt meats, and gives his salary away in charity. When the cotton famine brings special distress on Manchester, he erases the Chinese inscription from a gold medal given him by the Emperor of China, and sells it, and gives the proceeds anonymously to the distressed operatives. "I have no right to possess anything," he says, "having once given myself to God." We have seen that sentiment before in books of devotion, and heard it on platform and in pulpit. But to see it in a life is rare—and eloquent. It was this spectacle of a Governor-General who was making nothing out of his generalship which made his mastery of the Soudan so easy before, and which makes his presence in Khartoum to-day more than the presence of a battalion.

Piety is a word that has been so much debased by cant that we dislike to use it; but what other word can take its place to indicate that deep and almost fatalistic faith in God which is the secret of this extraordinary man's extraordinary character and career? We are inclined to the opinion that no egotist ever exerted a profound and permanent influence on human destiny; that all truly great men have believed in a Power not their own; with Mohammed in a Destiny; with Napoleon in a star; with Cromwell in a God ruling over us. General Gordon is a Christian fatalist. He is a nineteenth century Cromwell, an English Joshua. "I am but a chisel in the hands of a carpenter," he says to a friend; "if I am dull he sharpens me; if he pleases, he put me aside for a different tool." This is the secret of his wrathful putting away of all praise. "No man," he says, "has a right to be proud of anything, inasmuch as he has no native good in him; all is given him." This is the secret of his calm acceptance of disaster, real or seeming. "We have nothing further to do when the scroll of events is unrolled than to accept them as being for the best. Before it is unrolled it is another matter; and you could not say I sat still and let things happen with this belief." A hint here for theologians in their disputes about decrees and free-will; to be an Arminian before things happen and a Calvinist afterward is a good practical compromise, however ill it may suit philosophy. This is the secret of his

con
in r
exp
an l
and
inde
is hi
know
eral
Gen
habi
the
time
of hi
for tl
am a
wone
have
whor
a tru
troop
like t
Hi
divin
Chin
battl
ing a
cane
troop
a fait
cham
secret
a Tai
struc
tempt
he at
Gord
has b
himse
reads
swelle
came
is so s
In the
the ba
ceived
dais, t
lower
was to
his ma
him th
treat h
asked
you or
Gener
on me
what I
doing
the no
quite c
by the
which
to go
the de
and wh
acy of
though
and of
withou
Souda
hood a
Gen
mystic
a Ken
Christ
may be
blacks
sense c
giveness
can be
tice wh
out am
to marc
issued,
threat