

Choice Literature.

BOB AND HIS TEACHERS.

A GLASGOW STORY.

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CHAPTER XXVII

BOB STILL IN LONDON—HOMESICK—MEETS WITH PHIL
MARTIN ON HIS WAY TO AFRICA.

One would suppose that amid the sights and the splendours of the great city of London that Bob would have no time for despondency. Still he did get despondent and really homesick.

It is said that a youth at the close of the last century was incarcerated in the Bastille in Paris for a political offence and that he did not obtain his liberty till fifty years afterwards. He entered that great prison which has such a history with a bright eye and an agile step, but now the snows of seventy years were upon his head and the youthful fires of passion and ambition were burning low. Still the natural desire for liberty, for mingling with his fellowmen, for breathing the air vocal with the song of birds and redolent with the ozone of the mountain and the river, for reviving the sweet fellowships of former days (so far as that was possible now) was yet strong. He had long felt the sickness which comes from hope deferred, and much he longed for the day when the prison doors would be opened to him. This high day at length came; but alas, when he opened his eyes upon his new surroundings, when he entered the streets so changed that he once knew so well, when he looked into the faces of men and women hurrying to and fro all strangers to him—not one to recognize or extend the hand of welcome, his heart failed him, and he felt more lonely than ever. Two or three days of such wandering up and down in the streets and visiting the old places of former resort sufficed to satisfy his desire for such liberty, and so he was ready to return to the old prison where he had spent so many years that he might lay himself down and die.

Such was the feeling of this aged man in going through the streets of Paris in spite of all the bustle and business, the dashing of calashes, the splendour of the windows, the shouts of noisy hucksters selling their wares; and similar, though not to the same extent, was the feeling of Bob after the first few days he spent in London. He was really homesick. What did he care about the British Museum or St. Paul's or the Tower or the Royal Academy? Sweeter to him was the memory of the past, with all its shadows and sunshine, than all the excitements and splendour with which he was surrounded. But judge Bob's surprise in meeting with Phil Martin on the Strand on one of his moodiest days.

Bob: "Why, Phil, is it really you?"

Phil: "No doubt of it, Mr. Armstrong, I am here arranging with the London Missionary Society in view of going out to Africa."

Bob: "And you have made up your mind to go?"

Phil: "Certainly. Nothing earthly could restrain me from taking that step now, and there is no one thing—no other employment—could yield me half the satisfaction as that of the missionary working in the lines of a Moffat, a Livingstone and the brave men of like precious faith who have preceded us to glory."

Bob: "When I hear you speaking in that way it makes me feel small. My mind, I fear, is running too much on earthly glory."

Phil: "Do you think I am insensible in that respect? If you do you make a great mistake. Ever since I won distinction in my classes and got the gold medal for natural science I have felt the pleadings of an earthly ambition to a far greater extent, I believe, than you ever have."

Bob: "Yes, there is a glory that can fill the mind though it never rises higher than this world, and it is very sweet."

Phil: "Aye, and I am not insensible to it, but there is a glory that excelleth—one ray of which is better than all the splendour of this world. Many a one has been disappointed that worked hard for the one, but who was ever disappointed that worked for the other—that sought by patient continuance in well-doing for glory, honour and immortality? Who ever repented of such service?"

Bob: "Let me call a cab; it is hard to speak amid the roar and bustle and business of the street. I have had sad times, moody times I mean, and I am so glad to see you."

(Scene—Bob's room) Bob: "And when do you leave, Phil?"

Phil: "In about a fortnight. Some uncertainty as to steamers. I am bound for the port of Loando, if that port can be managed."

Bob: "When did your mind first turn to the work of the missionary?"

Phil: "Oh, I could hardly tell. The thing grew on me, I may say, ever since that saintly girl, Mabel Brown, on her deathbed, used to speak to me about the heathen world and the great missionary that came to seek and to save. I tell you, Mr. Armstrong, those paper clippings and pictures which she prepared for me, giving me the shape of islands and continents and groups of heathen worshippers, did a great deal for me. What a lovely girl she was! How patiently she instructed me standing at the side of her bed from day to day as long as she had strength. How foolish and ignorant I was then! I was as a beast before her and—"

Bob: "Ah, Phil, it was not her paper clippings and pictures that did the great work for you, but the spirit she breathed. She was a living poem. She took hold of the great doctrines of the cross, and her pictures and parables and efforts put forth in your behalf were the forms which those doctrines assumed. Here was the Spirit of all grace revealing to you the deep things of God, warming your heart with celestial fire."

Phil: "Well, explain it as you may, she was the best teacher I ever had, and I am free to say that I learned ten times more from her than ever I did in the Sabbath school—than ever I did in the university or the great teachers that sat in the old historic chairs of that ancient seat of learning."

Bob: "And I learned this great lesson from Mabel that when God reveals Himself to the soul all things become new and when the soul has once got a vision of God—when in His

light it has learned to walk in the light—how small does the world seem! Mabel was in communion with the eternal God. She was in touch with all that is highest and best. This I saw in looking at her as a stranger, and I could not help saying to myself in her last days: 'Surely she sees what I don't see and hears what I don't hear. Surely Christ is to her a constant companion—a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the storm and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'

Phil: "But they say, Mr. Armstrong, that you and she were lovers—secret lovers. Have you ever heard that?"

Here dinner was announced, and Bob, glad to get away from such questionings, immediately rose. At the table the two young men met with Bob's associate in the Balfour business—looking after new patterns and preparing designs for chintzes, dresses then much in vogue.

"Anything to-day?" said the associate to Bob.

Bob: "Yes, I have got two little things which I think I can improve. I'll show you them by and by. And you, have you succeeded to-day?"

Associate: "Oh, I have got one lovely thing, which I would like to send off to-night. And so," addressing himself to Phil, "you are bound for Loando—a gold medalist of the University of Glasgow bound for Loando—to bury yourself among savages that may one day shed your blood and drink it from a calabash! Had you been a failure in this country I could understand that, but—well—there's no use talking. How foolish some people are!"

Phil: "Ah you are looking at things temporal. I am looking at things eternal. You are looking at the moon, but I am looking at the sun. The moon walking in her brightness in a cloudless sky is indeed a beautiful object to behold, but what becomes of her when the sun rises? One ray from the excellent glory is better to me than all the fading splendour of this world. One soul rescued from destruction clothed in the beauty of holiness is worth all the sacrifices that we can offer. Don't think that I am insensible to the honour that cometh from man, but one that has seen the King in His beauty and the land that is afar off, such honour is nothing, and less than nothing. Even that which is glorious has no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth."

Associate: "Well, well, I must be off and attend to my n. adane things. But when shall we three meet again?" So saying he departed, taking Phil warmly by the hand.

Bob: "You spoke just now to our friend who has left of seeing the King in His beauty as if you had had an actual vision of the Lord. Would you explain? I have never had any such vision."

Phil: "Easily. There is in the Word of God a light—a self-evidencing power to which the conscience of the believer seeking light instantly and reverently responds. The spirit of all grace that inspired holy men to write those pages seems to dwell in them, as in the mystic recesses of an everlasting sanctuary. There, like an electric current, he is ready to come forth—to reveal himself to every one *en rapport*. And, as a matter of fact, the believer is often startled by coming on this text and that as if he were coming in contact with an electric wire. There is nothing more common than that. Hence the scrupulous are said to be a witness for themselves. Light carries its own evidence; so does heat; so does the wind; so does salt and everything else appealing to the senses. Now if the believer coming on certain texts and truths feels himself startled, refreshed, filled with light and cheer, is it unreasonable for him to say God is here of a truth? If he is filled with a sense of the glory, the rich loveliness of Him that was fairer than the children of men, is it unreasonable that he should say, I have seen the King in His beauty?"

Bob: "That reminds me so much of Mabel. She was taught of God. She had the witness of the Spirit."

Phil: "How different the position of the agnostic—the position of one who maintains that God cannot be known? Take that position and how easily a man or woman slides into sin—how all moral distinctions fade!"

Bob: "The most remarkable case that I know is that of George Eliot, the gifted novelist. 'The God of the Bible,' she said, 'cannot be known. The law has no authority save that which conscience gives it. The marriage sanction, whether by Church or State, is a fiction.' And so she entered the marriage state without the marriage sanction—lived with a Mr. Lewis, a *litterateur*, who held the same views. In view of her death she committed to him these touching lines:—

Sweet evenings come and go, love,
They came and went of yore;
This evening of our life, love,
Shall go and come no more.

When we have passed away, love,
All things will keep their name;
But no life on earth, love,
With ours will be the same.

The daisies will be there, love,
The stars in heaven will shine;
I shall not feel thy wish, love,
Nor thou my hand in thine.

A better time will come, love,
And better souls be born;
I would not be the best, love,
To leave thee now forlorn.

—George Eliot.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BOB'S BENEFACTRESS—MISS CARRUTHERS—AND HER WORK
—THE GOLDEN LOCKET—ENTIRE CONSECRATION.

We have read in the life of one of our distinguished female missionaries how that in a dream, or in a vision of the night, she fancied herself drawing near to the pearly gates of heaven, and that as she drew near she heard strains of surpassing sweetness, and beheld forms of splendour—the spirits of just men made perfect—whose glory outshone the sun in his strength, and how that every one carried a palm of victory in his hand and a crown of glory on his head, and that in the crown there were stars that shone with surpassing brightness. She stood for a long time at the gate surveying the scene before her as if entranced, for such glory she had never seen before nor had it ever entered into her heart to conceive of such glory. At length she ventured to

speak to the guardian angel and say: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" "These," said he, "are they which came out of great tribulations, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"And these palms which they carry in their hands?"

"These," said he, "are significant of the battles which they had to fight with the world, the flesh and the devil, and of the victory which they won."

"And these crowns of glory which they carry on their heads?"

"These crowns," he said, "are significant of their high rank—that they live and reign with Christ forever, although some hold higher rank than others in the kingdom."

"And those stars in their crowns?"

"These stars," he said, "are significant of the souls that have been saved through their instrumentality. Some have one, some two, some hundreds, and having turned many to righteousness they now shine as the firmament and as the stars forever and ever."

"But I see one bright spirit somewhat solitary, keeping in the rear but no less profound in his adoration, and he has no star at all in his crown. What does that mean?"

"It means," he said, "that his life was a barren life—that he suffered the years of his probation to pass unconsecrated and unimproved till the awful close, and then, in an agony, laid hold of the great salvation, and was saved as by fire. No sacrifice did he ever make for the sake of suffering humanity; no heavy heart did he ever cheer; no poor child did he ever clothe or teach the way of life; no precious soul ever blossomed into the new life under his ministrations."

This was the burden of the dream which this lady had in the visions of the night, and in it she received instruction which she did not fail to improve. Miss Carruthers, no less zealous in spirit, though moving in a lower sphere, had no such vision or dream, but she had read again and again that solemn passage in Matt. xxv. concerning the great assize—how that the Lord, sitting in judgment upon all men, took to Himself those only that had followed His steps here below—doing good as they had opportunity—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that were in prison and identifying themselves with the Lord in the great work of salvation. She felt this Scripture to be the representation of a great reality, and it was before her mind as a constant vision. And along with this passage there kept sounding in her ear that kindred utterance from a far-off age: "If Thou for bear to deliver them that are drawn unto death and those that are ready to be slain—if thou sayest: 'Behold I knew it not,' doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it; and He that keepeth the soul doth not He know it? and shall He not render to every man according to his works?" Then apart from this was the constraining love that many waters cannot quench, that made all duties light and all sacrifices easy.

But who was this Miss Carruthers whose name has appeared so often in these pages? What of her history—her antecedents? The answer is that she was an unmarried lady residing with her mother, the widow of Major Carruthers, late of the East India Civil Service, Bengal. She had one brother in India who occasionally made a visit to them and who had amassed a large fortune. She with her mother had once resided in a more fashionable part of the city, but in order to be near her work—her sphere of usefulness—moved to this locality. There was considerable curiosity in the neighbourhood on the part of some, at least, as to who this lady could be that had lately taken up her abode amongst them. It was noted that she was benevolent, much engaged in good works and that she had always some hard case in hand like that of Pat Heenan. Further, it was noticed that for one in her station in life she dressed very plainly, that she wore no jewels except a locket with a golden chain, and that her manner of life was very quiet and simple; but, affable and cheerful, she soon became a favourite, and all who approached her felt an unusual charm in her presence and conversation.

The history of the family at length became pretty well known, but what was the history of the locket with the golden chain that she always wore around her neck—so unlike her in all other respects? Nobody could tell and nobody cared to ask, believing that back of that ornament there was some tender story of love too sacred for common conversation. But at length it leaked out that she had won, long years before, the heart of a brave young Englishman in the city of Calcutta, that fell beneath the sabres of the Sepoys during the rebellion in 1857. Many a letter had passed between them, many a token of fealty had been exchanged, and no little happiness had been enjoyed; but this sad event put an end to all and closed her heart against every suitor that approached her.

This brave young officer, it seems, had sent her this golden locket enclosing his photograph, and asking that she should wear it till they should meet again; and seeing there was an action just impending in which it was supposed many a precious life would be sacrificed, he added: "If not in time, in eternity." A few days more and the glad tidings of victory were flashed along the wires carrying joy to thousands, but a victory, like all other victories, followed with a death-roll—followed with lamentation and mourning and woe in many a home, and to hers among the rest. Hence the golden locket which she always wore, however plainly dressed, and hence her entire consecration to the Lord. The death of her lover was the death of her love to the world and its vanities. Nature was still as fresh and sweet to her as ever, rising and setting suns as glorious, the spring flowers as welcome and the carol of birds as bright and joyful as when he was by her side; but the social world, the garish splendour that so soon fades, the vanities of fashion, the flatterings and flirtations in which so many take delight had lost their charm for her and temptation its power, and so in consecrating herself anew to Christ she felt that the deed involved but little self-denial on her part. But in order to make the event as a memorable epoch in her life, she covered the face of her lover with a neatly-fitting slip of paper with these words inscribed: "Whom having not seen I love, in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory—December 25, 1857." This was the date of her entire consecration to the Lord, and the golden locket her badge and never-failing memento.

Yet this is not the whole history of this jewel. If you wish to know it in its fulness go forth with me a few years in that lady's life, and you will learn something additional. Smitten