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Richard Weaver's Conversion

(*'Christian Herald,' London.*)

Richard Weaver, the celebrated English Evangelist, who died about a year ago, was born in Shropshire, at the village of Asterley, nine miles from Shrewsbury, on June 25, 1837. His father and mother were about as ill-matched a man and woman as could possibly be—the former being a reckless profligate, and the latter a sincere and devoted Christian. Referring to his early days, Richard Weaver once said: 'I could tell some sad tales of sorrow that I witnessed when quite a child. Many a time I have clung to my mother, and cried to my drunken father, "Don't kill my mother!" Yes; I think, as I write this, of the days of my childhood, when the praying mother has been down on her knees asking God to help her in her distress. My eldest brother was always kind to her. The Lord reward him! But we others were a burden to her night and day. She told her Father in heaven all her sorrows and our sins.' It was from her lips that Richard learned the first hymn he ever knew:

'Happy the child whose tender years
Receive instruction well;
Who shuns the sinner's path, and
fears
The road that leads to hell.'

'How her face beamed with joy,' says he, 'when she took me to a friend's house and put me to stand on a chair to say that hymn. The soft kiss from her lips on my cheek, and a short prayer breathed to God, "The Lord bless my boy!" I shall never forget.'



RICHARD WEAVER, Evangelist.

The still, small voice of God, uttered in the tones of that loving mother often touched Richard's heart, even during the thoughtless days of childhood and youth.

On one of these boyish days, while working in the coal-pit, something roused his anger, and he uttered an oath. It was his first oath, and the wickedness of it so shocked him that he dropped on his knees at the end of the wagon and prayed for pardon, promising that, if spared till manhood, he would serve the Lord. Instead of turning from his evil ways then and there he only promised future amendment, and allowed the temptations that surrounded him to drive away all the good impressions he had



AN ARAB ENCAMPMENT IN PALESTINE.

'The Arabs pitch their tents as the wants of their flocks require. Twenty or thirty long, black tents, open in front, and sloping

down at the back, are set up close together, each containing two apartments; one for the women and children, and the other for the men.—Dr. Geikie.

received. As he grew up, drinking and fighting, balls and dances became his favorite amusements. At this time he was saved from a fearful death. Standing at the mouth of a pit, his foot slipped, and he fell over. As he slipped down, he instinctively clutched the rails of the tramway over the pit, and there he hung with a hundred yards of empty air beneath him. He truly says, 'If I had fallen, I must have been dashed in pieces, and my soul have gone to hell.' But his cries brought a man to his rescue, and he was saved. Yet, though he had cried out in terror in that moment of anguish, the merciful escape produced no lasting impression. He passed night after night at the ale-house, where his joviality and gifts as a singer made him a welcome guest.

One scene Richard probably never recalled without feelings of the deepest remorse. He had been spending a night of drunken carousal at a public-house, where he quarrelled with one of his mates, with whom he soon came to blows. Bruised and bleeding, Richard reached home as the day was breaking. As he approached the cottage, the first sound that fell upon his ears was the voice of his loving mother tenderly interceding with God

on his behalf. This hurt him more than the blows he had received in the fight, and found its way to his heart. As soon as the knock was heard, the poor woman ran to the door, and beheld, with feelings which no language can describe, his disfigured and sodden face. When she had given him a chair, and washed away the dirt and blood, and ministered to him as he needed, she knelt down and prayed again that God would save her boy, and pleaded with the lad himself that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

But while she prayed, the lad cursed, swearing that he would murder her if she did not leave off praying and preaching to him. He went up to bed, but the mother's love constrained her to follow him; and, kneeling down by his bedside, again she besought her heavenly Father on his behalf. But her reprobate son, in a rage, sprang out of bed, and, grasping her grey hair, shook her while on her knees. She took hold of his arm with trembling hands and said, 'This is hard work, Lord, to nurse and watch our children till they begin to be men, and