

Our Contributors.

A VERY UNLOVELY KIND OF CHRISTIAN.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Have you read "The Little Minister" by J. M. Barrie? If so you will remember that one of the most interesting passages in that intensely interesting book is the conversation between the retiring Auld Licht pastor, Mr. Carfrae and his youthful successor, Mr. Gavin Dishart. Among other things the venerable ex-pastor told the young man that Thrums was not nearly as quiet a town as it looked. The Chartists had put mischief into the heads of the Thrums' weavers and the weavers had armed themselves with pikes, formed themselves into a military company and had drilled in the mist in order to be ready for the next lowering of their wages. The good old man was deeply grieved because the weavers of the town in which he had laboured so long acted in that way. One misty day he happened to be out on a neighbouring hill and was startled by a voice crying sharply, "Shoulder arms." A brief examination convinced him that the body of men in the mist were not "shadows" as he had at first supposed; "they were Thrums weavers drilling with pikes in their hands." That, however, was not all, nor was it the worst. It gave additional pain to the good man to see among the others, "our precentor, Lang Tammass, who seems to watch for backsliding in the congregation as if he had pleasure in discovering it."

The new pastor was a little startled to hear that his precentor drilled in the mist with a pike and when off duty watched for backsliders. A little experience would have taught him that the man who watches for backsliding and rejoices when he finds it is pretty certain to be at some mischief himself when he gets into the mist.

LANG TAMMAMAS,

the Auld Licht precentor of Thrums was a typical man. He represents that unlovely class to be found in most communities, who are always mousing for sin and who shout for joy the moment they find it. Nothing pleases them so much as to find that some unfortunate fellow creature has fallen. To them nothing smells so sweet as the mouth of a moral sewer. They revel in scandal and hunt instinctively for filth. They are never so happy as when they hear that some unfortunate mortal has been disgraced.

Experts of the Lang Tammass school sometimes get badly caught. Their scent for evil is so keen that they occasionally scent it when it is not there. Thinking, like the detectives, that they have a clue when they haven't, they tell the neighbours that somebody has done something awful. Mr. Somebody hears about it and threatens Lang Tammass with criminal proceedings. Lang Tammass wilts like a cabbage leaf and sneaks into his den. Nobody can back down more quickly or apologize more humbly than a Lang Tammass if you take him squarely by the throat.

In a world like ours it frequently becomes the sad duty with a considerable number of people to deal with the sins and shortcomings of their fellow men. Judges, magistrates, constables, church courts, elders, ministers, dispensers of charity, lawyers, doctors, superintendents of prisons and asylums, and a lot of other men are constantly brought into contact with people who have fallen or wandered more or less from the right course. But do these men who see sin doing its dreadful work rejoice over its effects? Does the judge chuckle over the prisoner he has to send to the gallows? Does the magistrate enjoy sending an unfortunate fellow creature to prison? Does any man fit to be an elder or minister gloat over the shortcomings or lapses of weak humanity?

There are two points of difference between Lang Tammass and a decent Christian. Lang Tammass was an amateur. As precentor in the Auld Licht church in

Thrums it was no part of his duty to hunt for backsliding. His business was to lead the singing through his vocal or nasal organs—through the nasal most likely—and leave dealing with backsliders to the elders ordained for that among other purposes. But Lang Tammass liked to hunt for backsliders and he hunted.

The other point of difference is this. A really good man grieves to see backsliding or any other form of sin. Like his Master he sorrows over the fallen and tries to raise them. Lang Tammass didn't grieve. He chuckled and ran to the manse and told the minister in tones that made the good man suspect Lang Tammass was glad because he had discovered some backsliding.

When Lang Tammass was handing in his amateur report on backsliding it never occurred to him that some day the Old Pastor would find him in the mist drilling with a pike and qualifying himself to stab a few of the manufacturers of Thrums. Ah, Tammass, how the chickens do come home to the men who chuckle over the sins of their neighbours.

Lang Tammass was of course, a rare stickler about non-essentials. He would not worship with the U. P.s, because they sing paraphrases. How he would denounce the Free Church because they did not expel Dr. Dods and a number of other alleged heretics. It would make one's hair stand on end to hear Tammass denounce the Kirk. A Methodist or Episcopalian Tammass could not stand within a ten acre field, but yet Tammass could leave the precentor's desk of the Auld Licht Church and drill with the Chartists, so that he could be ready for the manufacturers with some cold steel the next time they reduced the price of the web; ah Tammass.

Tammass could shoulder his pike at the bidding of the Chartists readily enough, but his conscience would not allow him singing, "Jesus lover of my soul," or "Nearer my God to Thee."

The best way to have kept Tammass from drill would have been to procure a small melodeon and play a hymn tune on it as the drill proceeded. The moment Tammass heard the little instrument he would have struck for Thrums.

DISCOVERY OF A FIFTH GOSPEL.

The Preussische Jahrbucher, the Prussian annual (writes a Berlin correspondent), contains an exceptionally interesting and valuable contribution from Professor Adolf Harnack, entitled, "The newly discovered fragments of Saint Peter's Gospel, and of the revelation of Saint Peter." The discovery was effected in the following manner:—

A few years ago Monsieur Bonriant, of the French Mission Archeologique at Cairo, had a mediaeval tomb opened at Ahk-mim, and found therein two Greek manuscripts. One was written on papyrus, and proved to be a ready-reckoner for merchants. The other was a small parchment code of thirty-three pages, evidently containing religious matter. The latter was submitted to Professor Harnack for inspection, and this learned theologian, whilst perusing what was supposed to be merely a translation of some part of the New Testament, recognised a passage quoted by the early fathers in their works as coming from St. Peter's Gospel—a Gospel which from its mention by Eusebius, Origen, and Serapio, was known to have once existed, but never seen by writers for some centuries. It was reckoned as absolutely lost.

The contents of the code are quite new, and though only a fragment of the Gospel is there, it is of great value, dealing as it does with the narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The text is as follows, omitting the sub-division into verses made by Harnack:—

Of the Jews, however, no one washed his hands, nor Herod either, nor any of his Judges. And when they were about to wash themselves, Pilate stood up, and King Herod gave orders that the Lord should be seized, saying to them (that is, to the soldiers), "What I have ordered you to do to him, that do." But Joseph was

there, the friend of Pilate and of the Lord, and when he learnt that they would crucify Him he went to Pilate, and begged the body of the Lord for burial.

And Pilate sent to Herod, and asked for His (Jesus') corpse, and Herod said—"Brother Pilate, even if nobody had asked it, we should have buried him (here comes a dash in the print before the next words). For the Sabbath is nigh at hand for it is written in the law the sun shall not set upon a dead person—(another dash)—before the first day of unleavened bread—that is to say, of their festival. But they seized the Lord and butted him as they ran, saying, "Let us drag the Son of God now that we have power over Him;" and they put upon Him a purple robe, and set Him on the judgment seat, and said—"Judge righteously, O King of Israel," and one of them brought a crown of thorns and put it upon the head of the Lord, and others standing by spat in his face, and others struck him on the cheeks, others butting him with a cane, and some scourged him, saying, "Thus have we done honour to the Son of God."

And they brought two malefactors and crucified the Lord between them; but he remained silent, as if he felt no pain, and when they had lifted up the cross they wrote upon it, "This is the King of Israel."

And they laid out his garments before him, and distributed them, casting lots for them. But one of the malefactors rebuked them saying, "We have suffered this because of the evil deeds that we have done; but this man, who has become the Saviour of mankind, what harm hath he done you?" And they were angry with him, and ordered that his bones should not be broken, that he might die in agony. Now it was noon, and darkness covered the whole area of Judea, and they became uneasy, and were afraid that the sun had set whilst He yet lived, for it is written for them that the sun shall not set over a dead person.

And one of them said, "Give him gall and vinegar to drink." and they mixed it, and gave Him to drink.

And they fulfilled everything, and consummated the sins on their own heads, and many went about with torches thinking that it was night, and fell down. And the Lord cried aloud, saying, "My Strength, my Strength, thou hast forsaken me!" And having said this He was taken up. And in the same hour the veil of the temple of Jerusalem was rent in twain; and they drew the nails out the hands of the Lord, and lay Him on the earth, and the whole earth trembled; and there arose a great fear. Then the sun shone (again.)

And it was the ninth hour, but the Jews were glad, and gave to Joseph his corpse that he might bury it, as he had seen all the good that He (Jesus) had done. He took, therefore, the Lord and washed Him, and bound Him round with linen, and brought him into his own grave, that was called Joseph's garden.

Then the Jews and the elders and the priests saw what evil they had brought upon themselves and began to smite their breasts, and to say, "Woe to our sins; the judgment is at hand, and the fall of Jerusalem."

But I mourned with my companions, and with our hearts pierced through. We hid ourselves, for we were being sought for by them as evildoers, and as such who wished to set fire to the Temple. Because of all this we fasted, and sat mourning and weeping night and day until the Sabbath.

But the scribes and Pharisees and elders assembled together, and when they heard that the whole people murmured and smote their breasts, saying, "If at His death these mighty signs have taken place, see what a just man he is."

Then the elders feared, and came to Pilate, begging him, and saying, "Give us soldiers that we may keep watch over His grave for three days, lest perchance His disciples come and steal Him, and the people believe that He be risen from the dead, and do us harm."

Pilate then gave them the centurion Petronius with soldiers to watch over the grave, and with them came the elders and

scribes to the grave, and they, together with the centurion and the soldiers, raised a huge stone, and all of them together who were there placed it at the door of the grave, and they sealed it with seven seals, and after they had set up a tent they watched it (the grave.)

But early when the Sabbath had dawned, people came from Jerusalem and from the country round about to see the sealed grave; but in the night which ended with the dawn of the Lord's Day, whilst the soldiers were keeping watch in pairs, a great voice sounded in the heavens, and they saw the heavens open and two men descending therefrom in radiant brightness and approaching the grave.

And that stone which was laid at the door rolled of itself away, and moved aside, and the grave opened, and the two young men stepped aside. Now when those soldiers saw this, they woke up the centurion and the elders, for they too (the elders) were present as watchmen; and whilst they were telling what they had beheld, they again saw three men stepping forth from the grave, and two of them supported the one, and a cross followed them; and the head of the two reached to heaven, but the head of the one that was led by them overtowered above the heavens, and they heard a voice from the heavens that said: "Hast thou preached obedience unto them that sleep?" and from the cross was heard, "Yea." These, then, considered with one another whether they should go away and report this to Pilate, and whilst they were still deliberating the heavens appeared opened again, and a man descending and entering into the grave. When the centurion and his men saw this they hastened by night to Pilate, leaving the grave they were watching, and they told all that they had seen in great fear, saying, "In truth He was the Son of God." Pilate answered and said—"I am clean from the blood of the Son of God. It pleased you to do so." Then they all approached him, and begged him and persuaded him to order the centurion and the soldiers to say nothing of what they had seen, "for it is better," they cried, "that we should charge the greater quiet before God upon ourselves than that we should fall into the hands of the people and be stoned."

Pilate then ordered the centurion and the soldiers to say nothing, but on the morning of the Lord's Day came Mary Magdalene, the disciple of the Lord—for fear of the Jews, who were burning with rage, and she had not done (as yet) at the grave of the Lord what women generally do at the graves of the dead and of those loved by them—with her friends to the grave where He had been laid, and they feared lest the Jews should see them, and said, "Although we could not weep and mourn on the day on which He was crucified, we will at least do so now at His grave. But who will roll us away the stone that has been laid at the door of the grave, so that we may go in and sit by Him, and do what we ought to do, for the stone is large, and we fear lest somebody shall see us? And if we cannot do it, let us at least lay before the door what we bring in remembrance of Him, and let us weep and lament until we again come to our home." And they went away, and found the grave opened; and they approached, and stooping down, they entered, and saw there a young man sitting in the midst of the grave, fair, and clad with a radiant garment, who spoke to them—"Wherefore come ye? Whom seek you? Surely not Him that was crucified. He is risen, and has gone away, but if ye do not believe it, stoop down and behold the place where he did lay, that He is not. Therefore He is risen, and has gone thither whence He was sent."

Then the women were frightened, and fled. Now it was the last day of unleavened bread, and many had left Jerusalem in order to return to their homes, as the feast was over, but we, the twelve apostles of the Lord, wept and lamented, and each went mourning over what had happened to his own home. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went to the sea, and Levy, the son of Alphaeus, was with us.