

PROSPEROUS, RIGHTEOUS,  
UPRIGHT & CO.

By E. Donald McGregor.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

At the head of a flight of stairs the boys found an open door, and just inside stood a pleasant-faced gentleman who beckoned them to a seat at the back of the room. It was a large hall, and a great lot of people had gathered to hear the music as Tom and Pete supposed, but when a gentleman at the front stood up and began to read from a book, they felt sure it was the wonderful story that had brought such a crowd.

"Let not your heart be troubled," the gentleman read, and in another moment he went on, "I go to prepare a Place for you."

Tom slipped forward on his chair, and Pete clutched his brother's arm, whispering excitedly:

"Tom, listen, it's the Place he's talkin' about."

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Verse after verse read the gentleman, but though Tom and Pete listened eagerly, they could hear nothing more about the Place. Another gentleman spoke for a few minutes about "peace," and after that there was some more singing, that Tom and Pete thought very beautiful. Then all the people bowed their heads, and covered their eyes, and the first gentleman began to ask someone for a lot of things.

"It's a lord he's axin'," whispered Pete to Tom.

"Some rich un," answered Tom, "for he's just axed him to take care of all these folks."

"I can't see him," said Pete, peeping through his fingers, "maybe he's upon the front seat."

"More like he's on the platform; big uns don't sit down here," said Tom.

"But what makes him call out so loud if he's right close to him?"

Tom didn't answer, for just then everybody got up, and the people began to leave the Hall.

"Let's foller that man, an' ax about the Place," said Tom.

Pete looked as though he thought this a very risky thing to do, but Tom was seldom frightened of anyone, and in the end Pete usually caught some of his courage.

"It's all right, old chap," Tom said cheerily. "In course he'll tell us if he can, an' what's to hurt us? Come, there he is, just goin' out of the door!"

Hurriedly picking their way through the crowd the boys were soon close behind the strange gentleman, and Tom said:

"Please, sir, will you tell us where's the Place you was talkin' about to-night? We wants to go there."

The gentleman seemed startled at the question. He hesitated, then said earnestly:

"God grant that you may, my lads. I must take this car," he added, hastily, "but I will show you the way if I can."

He began hurriedly feeling in his pockets.

"I haven't a single tract—here, you must have sister's Bible," and taking out a small, old-fashioned book, he said:

"This book is very precious to me, my boys, but I dare not let you go without a message, so here it is. It is a chart to show you all about the way to the Place where the Lord Jesus lives. Get someone to show you how to read it, and may God bless you, my children."

In another moment the boys' new friend had swung himself onto a car that carried him swiftly out of sight, and Tom found in his hands a book that was declared to be a chart to guide Pete and himself to the Place.

Do you think he shouted? No, indeed, he did something very different.

CHAPTER III

MOTIONING Pete to be silent, he led the way into a dark alley. On and still further on into the darkness he went, until stumbling against some empty packing-cases he suddenly halted.

"Creep round into one of them boxes, Pete," he whispered; "maybe there'll be some straw."

Pete quietly obeyed orders, and sure enough in the bottom of a big case, that rested on its side, he found a tempting nest of warm, clean straw.

Tom followed him, and then, listening to see that all was quiet, he whispered:

"I knowed there'd be some boxes here, 'cause there was a lot of big shops to the front, an' then an alley, and now Pete," he continued earnestly, "I'm goin' to set up to-night, an' watch the chart. If folks should find out as we had it they'd rob us sure."

"What's a chart?" Pete asked suddenly.

"Why, a thing to show the way, like the

captain had. This kind shows the way to the Place."

"Maybe everyone ain't so very eager to find the way to the Place," Pete said doubtfully.

"Ain't they then," Tom answered, with a touch of scorn in his whisper; "folks is not all fools yet, an' if they knowed where to find the way to the Place, I know they'd find it pretty quick."

Poor little Tom, he would have been surprised had he known that there really were people who owned charts for the Place, which they seldom troubled to examine. To him this Bible chart was a priceless treasure, and all through the long, cold night he watched it as though it had been some rare casket of gold and silver. He had wrapped it in his ragged jacket lest a spot of damp might mar its beauty, and there he sat, fighting off the sleepy feelings that would come, and trying to make believe that he wasn't cold. Just as the dingy-coloured dawn was beginning to creep round the edge of his queer bed-chamber, a bunch of bright red something was thrust right in at the door, and a voice said, "Hello there."

Tom was very much frightened. For a moment he felt sure that he was about to be robbed of his treasure, and he tried to slyly push it under the straw. Then remembering that bravery was a good defence against most foes, he sat straight up, and answered in a loud voice:

"Well, what's up with you?"

"Nothin's up, only I slept next door to you last night, an' I heard such a stirrin' this mornin' that I reckoned I'd get up an' see."

By this time the owner of the bunch of red hair had pulled himself into the box, and Tom saw that he held under his worn coat a mite of a shaggy dog.

"Where'd you get the dog?" he asked curiously.

"Maybe same place where you got that book."

Tom looked down, and sure enough, in his struggle to hide his treasure, he had unwrapped one corner. Three things flashed through his mind. The first was that the new boy had very sharp eyes; the second, that he was a good deal bigger than himself; and the last, that possibly the best way to protect the chart was to share it.

"Stranger," he said, seriously, "I've got a secret here. If you've a mind to tell me who you are, an' what you does for a livin', an' if you're real decent, maybe I'll take you in."

"Wall," the new boy replied, with a grin of amusement, "yer a queer un, but I like yer way though, an' I'll tell you. My name is Jinks. I work for old Joe Spence, an' I stay round anywheres at night. I guess that's all."

Tom listened and looked, then after he had thoroughly inspected the new boy, he said slowly and impressively:

"Jinks, I'll take you in."

When Pete awoke a few moments later, Tom said:

"Pete, this feller is Jinks, an' I've let him inter the chart, an' he's goin' to take us to a man as will learn us to read it."

"We'll have to be sly," said Jinks, "if we find Mr. Black afore I goes to work. You know I has to be at the stall by half-past six, (that's the rushin' time), an' it ain't so very far off six now."

In another ten minutes three rough-looking boys stood outside a large but dingy old book-store. They peeped curiously in through the window, then opened the shop door, and walked straight up to a man who was stirring something on a small coal stove behind a screen. "Good mornin', Mr. Black!" Jinks said, with the air of an old acquaintance.

"Oh, good morning, Jinks." Mr. Black lifted the spoon from his porridge, and looked at his visitors. "I'm not opened up yet," he said; "in fact I haven't breakfasted."

"Well, sir, we'll tell you about it," said Jinks. "These two boys has just come from Liverpool, an' they got a book as they wants to learn to read, afore they can find the Place."

"What Place?" asked Mr. Black.

"Why, a Place where no one's ever sick or hungry or any of them things—they've heard of it, an' this book tells the way. Will you please show us how to read it (they let me inter the secret) an' we'll be awful much obliged."

Mr. Black set his pot of porridge onto the top of the stove. Then he took the chart from Tom, and began to slowly turn over its pages.

"Do you believe in this Place?" he said, glancing sharply at the boys.

"Why, sir," Tom answered in surprised tones, "the man with the red vest, an' the captain, an' the gentleman as gave us the chart, all said as they knowed the Place."

"An' they wasn't the kind as lied, neither," Jinks added, assuringly. "These fellers know a straight man when they sees him."

Mr. Black looked back at the book, and his eyes fell upon these words underlined in red ink: "Whosoever shall offend one of these

little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."

He hesitated a moment, then said: "You may come to-night, and I will see what I can do for you."

The three boys who walked out of Mr. Black's shop were still dirty-faced, but they looked so very happy, that I fancy you would have noticed the happy, shiny look before even the grime and dirt.

"Come on down to the stall," said Jinks. "We'll buy our breakfast there," Tom said to Pete, and he felt for the captain's dimes as he spoke.

"We're pretty near late," Jinks said, as they came in sight of Joe Spence's little coffee-stall, then he added wonderingly, "Why it ain't opened up yet."

"No," said a big, burly policeman who stood by, "and it won't be Joe Spence that'll open it up again. What's your name, boy?"

"Jinks, sir."

"Well, Jinks," the policeman said kindly, "this stall is yours. Joe Spence died right here while he was mixing coffee this morning. I was standing close by, and when I picked him up, he said: 'Jinks is to have the stall an' the money, I guess I'm agoin' to die. Will you tell him?' and of course I promised, and—well, my lad here's a chance for you to set up for yourself."

Jinks said not a word. He stood staring blankly first at the policeman, and then at the stall.

"Jinks," said Tom, after a moment, "the men are wonderin' where's the coffee. Hadn't you better make some, for fear they get to goin' somewheres else?"

Jinks understood this business-like suggestion, but he was dazed, and I fear, had not Tom and Pete helped, there would have been small business done that morning. When the busy time was over Jinks turned to Tom.

"Tom," he said, "how old be you?"

"I'm eleven!" Tom answered, promptly. "Grannie told me so, not long afore she died."

"An' how much is the little un?"

"Pete's eight, I think."

"Wall, then," Jinks said slowly, "I'm thirteen, as near as I can reckon it, and I want you to be my pardners in this business, will you?"

Tom looked serious, but he answered very promptly.

"Why, yes, if you'll let us!" and the compact thus sealed, the new firm began their work by washing up a great pile of dirty dishes.

(To be continued.)

SHECHEM—THE CITY OF REFUGE.

THE town called Shechem in the Bible, obtained under the Roman dominion the name *Neapolis*, which means new city, from the circumstance of having been rebuilt or restored. This name, in the abbreviated Arabic form of Nablus, it has retained to the present time. This is worthy of special note as one of the few instances in Palestine in which the Roman name of a place has permanently superseded the original Bible name. Shechem is thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem, and is situated in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, about a mile and a half west of its mouth at the plain of Moreh. It is situated on the southern side of the valley, extending from the precipitous face of Mount Gerizim down to the bottom of the valley, and for a short distance beyond it. The town is 1,870 feet above the sea level, with Gerizim towering 1,000 feet above it. It is on the watershed between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. Springs east of the town flow into the Jordan. Those in town and to the west run into the Mediterranean Sea. The present population of Shechem is estimated by Europeans at 13,000, but by intelligent natives at 20,000. It is solidly and compactly built of stone. It drives a thriving business, and it bears evident marks of growth, prosperity, and recent improvements. The principal part of its ancient wall is still standing, though the town has outgrown it. The people of the city are all Moslem except about six hundred believers in Christianity, chiefly Greek Catholics, and one hundred and thirty Samaritans.

In addition to the ordinary traffic of a large town of Palestine, the inhabitants of Shechem are largely engaged in the manufacture of soap made from olive oil. The town is said to contain over twenty soap factories. It has a large trade with the villagers around, and with the wandering tribes of Arabs which live east of the

River Jordan. It is also the seat of the Turkish Government for that side of the river. In 1818 the Baptists had a mission at Shechem under a native preacher who was educated in England. He was conducting two schools, and also holding religious meetings for the instruction of adults in his own dwelling. This mission was established and supported by Baptists in Great Britain. Of the two schools, one was for boys and the other one for girls. The chief obstacle in the way of these and all other schools of the kind where missionary work is attempted in connection with the education of children, is the almost total indifference of parents on the subject of education, added to the fear that their children may be led to adopt the religious faith of their teachers. In 1878 there were only one hundred and thirty Samaritans in the world, and they all lived at Shechem. They had a synagogue in the south-west part of the city, in which were deposited several ancient Samaritan manuscripts, among them the celebrated Samaritan Pentateuch, supposed to be one of the oldest manuscripts in existence. It was at that time very difficult to obtain a sight of this ancient manuscript, as the priests were in the habit of deceiving visitors by showing them one of later date.

Shechem is probably the best-watered town by living springs in all Palestine. Fountains of fresh water from these springs are abundant on all the streets of the city. It is said there are about seventy-five never-failing springs within the town and its immediately vicinity. There is an extensive burying ground in the valley immediately north of the city. This graveyard extends to the very foot of Mount Ebal. Below this, toward the west, the valley descends rapidly, grows narrower, is abundantly watered, and is verdant with trees and shrubs and gardens. Besides the usual fruit trees in the towns of Palestine, Shechem has many white mulberry trees whose fruit is large and sweet. Jacob's Well is at the foot of Mount Gerizim, near to Shechem. In the fourth chapter of John this well is referred to as the place at which Jesus held the famous conversation with "a woman of Samaria." The town is here called Sychar, but this is evidently the same as Shechem. The well is still there, and there is little doubt that Jacob dug it and "drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle." This plain is first mentioned in the Old Testament as the camping place of Abraham when he first came into the land of Canaan. (Gen. xii. 6.) In this plain also Jacob bought a piece of land from the prince of Shechem when he returned from Padan-aram, and here he resided till after the slaughter of the Shechemites by two of his sons on account of their sister Dinah. (Gen. xxxiii. 18; xxxv. 5.) The well, which is still known as Jacob's Well, is on the principal highway through Samaria, only a few steps to the right of the road. This location conforms exactly to the requirements of the account given in the fourth chapter of John. A church was built over the well in the fourth century, and its water was drawn up through the floor of the church near its eastern end. Nothing now remains of the church but its foundation walls and the arches or vaults which supported its stone floor. The top of the vault which stood over the well has partly fallen in, and in order to reach its mouth one must climb down through the opening in this vault. The stones of the vault lie in a confused heap about the well's mouth. The top of the well is arched over like a cistern, and a round opening is left about twenty inches in diameter. Another opening of irregular shape has been broken through it. The wall of the well is built of stones of good size, smoothly dressed, and nicely fitted together. The workmanship is like that of the wells at Beersheba. The well is a perfect cylinder seven and one-half feet in diameter. In 1878 it measured sixty-six feet in depth, and earlier writers give it a depth of one hundred and five feet. At the latter depth it contained twelve or fifteen feet of water the year round, but at sixty-six feet it was dry except during very wet weather.—*School Visitor.*

A MAN who will not reflect, and, if necessary, repent, is a ruined man.