

Pastor and People.

FAR AND NEAR.

From every point on earth we are equally near to heaven and the infinite.
—HENRI AMIEL.

Out of the depths that are to us so deep,
Up to the heights so hopelessly above,
Past storms that intervene and winds that sweep,
Unto thine ear, O pitying Lord of love,
We send our cry for aid, doubtful and half afraid
If Thou, so very far, canst hear us or canst aid.

Out of the dull plane of our common life,
Beset with sordid, interrupting cares,
And petty motives and ignoble strife,
We dimly raise our hesitating prayers,
And question fearfully if such a thing can be
That the great Lord can care for creatures such as we.

Up from the radiant heights of just-won bliss,
Achieved through pain and toil and struggle long,
We raise our thanks, nor fear that God will miss
One least inflection of the happy song.
Heaven seems so very near, the earth so bright and dear,
The Lord so close at hand, that surely He must hear!

But the great depth that was to us so dark,
And the dull place that was to us so dull,
And the glad height where, singing like a lark,
We stood, and felt the world all-beautiful,
Seen by the angels' eyes, bent downward from the skies,
Were just as near to heaven and heaven's infinities.

So out of sunshine as of deepest shade,
Out of the dust of sordid every-days,
We may look up, and, glad and unafraid,
Call on the Lord for help, and give Him praise;
No time nor fate nor space can bar us from His face,
Or stand between one soul and His exhaustless grace.

Susan Coolidge, in *Sunday School Times*.

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THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

THE SLAVE GIRL OF NEW GRANADA.

God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.—1 Cor. i. 27.

One of the most beautiful places in all the world for natural scenery is the table land of Bogota in New Granada. It lies in the heart of the Andes, that great range of mountains which runs sheer through South America on its western side from the Isthmus to the border of Patagonia. Men suppose that at one time there was a great mountain lake, six thousand feet above the sea level and covering a space of six thousand square miles, with mountains rising all round it from three to six thousand feet higher. The lake sank away into the depths or flowed out through passes made by earthquakes, leaving behind it the great table land of what is now called New Granada. The land is rich and fertile. It is the native land of the potato and of the sweet potato: corn grows freely, and the ground yields melons and gourds of every kind; the Yucca lily or Spanish bayonet dots the plain and yields nutritious food; while the native banana and fruit trees and shrubs of every description make it the earthly paradise of the young lover of sweets. Cotton is there, and gold, and woods of every kind, and stones both common and precious. The people who dwell there know no scorching heat such as burns down in the countries that are little above the sea level; and, then comes no bitter cold, unless one climbs the mountain barrier, clad here and there with everlasting snow. The land of the lover of nature, the land of the artist, the land of the poet, is the heart of the Andes.

Hundreds of years ago, the Chibchas dwelt there, and their descendants still live on that pleasant table-land, but the Chibchas were masters then, not slaves of the Spaniards. They were a civilized people, lodging their kings in lordly palaces, and building great temples of wood and of stone. They knew how to spin and weave, and dye their mantles and tunics in fast and beautiful colours. They coined both gold and silver with square holes in the centre of the pieces for stringing them like the Chinese and the Japanese. They studied the motions of the heavenly bodies and made calendar stones, engraved with signs that told the days and weeks and months of the year. Great fairs or bazaars they held, at which they sold their beautiful cloaks, their salt, their emeralds, their cunning work in gold, for sea-shells, and pearls, and fish, and parrots, and all kinds of birds of gorgeous plumage, which did not nest in their mountain land. They were so rich, so contented, so happy, up among their hills, that they had no thought of going anywhere else in the world, or of conquering an empire down under the scorching sun; but many tribes envied them, and longed to drive the Chibchas out of their mountain home. It is a sad, sad thing in this world we live in, that to be happy and prosperous is quite enough to make some people envious and hateful. God keep you, dear children, from envying and grieving at the good of your neighbour. If God chooses so to bless him, why should we be angry with God?

For a long time the Chibchas had only one king, who dwelt at Himsa and was called the Zaque, but in the sacred city of Iraca lived the high priest of the nation, who was much respected and had a great deal to do in the making of laws. The country was enjoying a time of perfect peace and prosperity, when suddenly some hunters and traders, who had been away in the north following the course of the Magdalena River towards the ocean, arrived in haste to tell of a new

enemy that was marching towards the mountain kingdom. Nobody knows where they came from, these strong savage warriors with artificially flattened heads which gave them a terrible appearance. They were called the Panches, a name new to the peaceful dwellers of Bogota. These Panches were as much at home on the water as on the land, where they fished and hunted, but they wore little clothing, cultivated no ground, lived in the open air or in huts of saplings and boughs hastily thrown together, and plundered the natives of the countries through which they passed. Great was the terror of the Chibchas when they learned that the Panches were coming. Before an army could be collected the savages had climbed the mountains and were already descending to the fertile table land. Refugees from the northern part of the country came pouring into the fortified towns, telling of the cruelty of their new enemies, lamenting the loss of all their possessions and more than all that of the lives of their friends and neighbours at the hands of the Panches.

The Zaque acted promptly. He sent messengers all over the land calling the young men to arms, and ordered the chief of Bogota to select from among them twenty thousand of the bravest and the fleetest of foot to go with all speed against the enemy. The twenty thousand were soon chosen, and armed with bows and arrows, with slings and javelins, with spears and great war clubs, set off at a run towards the north, while the Zaque, the high priest of Iraca, and the rest of the people followed the warriors with their blessings and their prayers. Now the Panches were moving forward so rapidly towards Bogota, and the twenty thousand went so quickly to meet them that, in a few days, the rival armies were within reach of one another. So far no nation had been able to stand against the Panches, their heads were turned with their success and the enormous booty they had taken with which they loaded thousands of unwilling slaves whom they had made captive for this end. They set no watch, sent forward no scouts, but moved forward like a great savage mob. More fugitives told the Chibcha general where to find the enemy. Young men swift and sure of foot as mountain goats went forward under cover of bushes and trees, of rocks and boulders, to spy out the land. Near nightfall they returned with the news that the Panches had halted for the night some ten miles away. The chief of Bogota halted also and bade his men prepare food and take a short sleep. At midnight when the air was cool and perfect stillness reigned, the army arose, took a hasty meal and then marched forward at a swinging trot, the spear and club men in front, the archers and slingers in the rear. Before daybreak the Chibchas were before the camp of the enemy. The Panches had brought dogs with them, and they set up a furious barking. Some of their masters awoke and seized their arms, but it was too late. Ordering his drums to beat and the trumpet shells to blow the charge, the general led his warriors into the midst of the plunderers. There were terrible cries as the barbed points went home and the jagged clubs fell upon the flat heads, and the Panches, who had never feared before, were terrified with the incessant roar of twenty thousand warriors, with the rattle of the drums and the peals of the conchshells. Many who tried to flee were set upon by their own slaves, glad for the opportunity to avenge their wrongs. When the retreat began the archers and slingers came into action, and laid thousands low with arrows through their muscular backs, and the dint of stones in their misshapen crowns. It was a terrible defeat for the Panches.

The chief of Bogota followed up his victory. He pursued the little remnant of the enemy away beyond the limits of the kingdom to the shores of the Magdalena, and so terribly wasted them and their country that they ceased to be a nation. Then he returned to the beautiful land of the Chibchas with such spoil as never had entered within its mountain walls. All the plunder that the Panches had taken from the people between the sea-coast and the mountain table-land was taken from them. Every soldier had as much as he could carry on his back, and thousands of friendly natives also acted as bearers. At last the victorious army came back to Bogota, on its way to Himsa where the Zaque dwelt. On the night that followed its arrival at Bogota there was a great feast at which quantities of chicha, a strong drink made from corn, were drunk both by the officers and by the men. All joined in praising their skillful and brave leader, the chief of Bogota, and some went so far as to contrast his conduct with that of the stay-at-home Zaque. Thereupon, one officer who had taken too much chicha cried aloud, "The chief of Bogota is the greatest general in the world: he alone is fit to be king of the Chibchas!" The rest applauded this saying, crying, "Long live the new king!" The soldiers took it up, and all Bogota was full of sedition.

Meanwhile the general, to whom from this time the name of Zipa was given, had sent forward the slaves with a quantity of the richest spoil to the Zaque, and along with them several prisoners taken in war who were to be sent on to the priest of Porras. The Zaque received the spoil and the captives, and, having heard what had happened at Bogota, ordered the general to report himself immediately. The general delayed, however, and raised his army to forty thousand men, which he separated into four divisions, and sent off by four different routes towards Himsa, bidding them to march by night to avoid detection. The Zaque suspected mischief and collected an army, which he commanded in person, for he did not lack courage, although he had allowed the chief of Bogota to expel the Panches. But his warriors had had little experience, while the veterans of the Zipa were

flushed with the pride of a great victory. From four different quarters the men of Bogota fell upon the king's army, overcame it, and compelled the king to take refuge within the walls of Himsa. Yet the Zipa did not dare to remain longer in that part of the country, for the people were attached to their monarch, and were rapidly arming and preparing to come to his help. So the Zipa marched his forty thousand back to Bogota and then had himself crowned as an independent king. Henceforth two kings ruled in the land of the Chibchas, the Zaque at Himsa and the Zipa at Bogota.

The Zaque was in great grief. It was true that the terrible Panches could trouble him no more, but he had lost half of his kingdom, and what was worse for one who loved peace and the people's good, the land would never be free from civil war. While thinking of these things, he went to see the captives whom the Zipa had sent to him. What were they sent for? Now the Chibchas worshipped Bochica, a good, humane god, but like most people who are idolaters, they were not content with one object of worship, and had a black god whose wrath they sought to appease by offering human victims on his altars. I have spoken before of these dreadful sacrifices, once common in every part of the world. In ancient Egypt and Palestine, in Greece and Italy, throughout all Europe and Asia, Africa and America, these were once found. What a terrible idea these darkened minds must have had of Divinity, when they thought that it could be pleased with blood, with cruel sufferings and death! There is one, a great spiritual being, who is pleased with such things, but he is not a god; he is God's great enemy, the devil. The priests of the black idol came to the Zaque, saying, "Our god is angry, he must have blood." Now the Zaque worshipped Bochica, whose priest was the chief priest of Iraca, and had no love for the black idol of Porras. He looked upon the trembling captives whose blood the priests were seeking, only three or four men, for the Panches died rather than be taken, and a dozen women, some of whom carried little children or led them by the hand, and one girl who seemed about twelve years old. The Zaque's own misfortunes made him feel for those of the poor creatures before him. He dismissed the priests with some indignation, and they slunk away. The captives could not understand what was said, but they knew from the look of the priests and of the king that their lives were safe for the present. After their fashion they showed gratitude by prostrating themselves at the Zaque's feet.

He sent for the high priest of Bochica at Iraca, and asked him, "What shall I do with these prisoners, what would Bochica have me do?" The priest answered, "When Chibchacum turned our land into a lake and drove the people to perish on the mountains, Bochica heard their prayer and with his golden sceptre cleft the rocks, so that the waters passed through the chasm, and the land was made fit to yield the children's bread. These are not Chibchas, but they are Bochica's children too. Their homes are desolate, their friends killed, their liberty taken away. Perhaps, like our forefathers in their trouble, they are calling in their hearts to Him who hears above. Will the Zaque answer for Bochica, as Bochica answered his people?" The Zaque bowed his head in silence for a few moments, and then commanded his attendants to remove the coarse rope by which a heavy piece of wood was fastened to the right leg of every prisoner. The ropes had been so tightly tied that, when they were removed, the blood flowed. This further roused the king's compassion and he ordered food to be placed before them. After they had sat down and partaken of the food he sent to enquire among the spoil bearers, who came of many tribes, if there was anyone who could speak the Panche language. One man was brought who could speak two or three coast dialects, though not the Panche. He began to address the prisoners in one of them, but there was no response. Then he tried another, and the girl replied to him with a look of intelligence. When her tribe passed through the country in which that dialect was spoken, she had been left behind because of sickness, and had thus picked up enough to be able to answer simple questions. "Tell her," said the king to the porter, "to ask her people what they would do, should I set them free to go back with the spoil-bearers?" She turned eagerly to the men, whose faces lit up with joy as they answered, and then bowed themselves to the ground, as she replied for them, saying, "Go home, think of great chief, no more war."

So the prisoners were dismissed and the burden-bearers were told to treat them kindly and help them to return to their friends. But the little girl would not go away. Once more the interpreter tried her with words, telling her to go with the rest of her people, and she answered, "No father, no mother, people all killed, girl stay here." The man interpreted to the Zaque in the same broken fashion, and he good-naturedly said, "Let her stay, if that be her wish," and bade an attendant take her to the apartments of the queen's servants. There she was dressed in Chibcha costume, and given by signs some light duties to perform which pleased her very much. "What is her name?" the queen asked, and the Zaque replied, "We will give her a new one. The priest of Porras wanted to dedicate her to their dreadful god, so we will dedicate her in a better way. Call her Bachne." Now Bachne was the name of the Chibchas' first woman or Eve. The little Eve soon grew to know her name, and "Bachne" would bring her in a moment before the Zaque with downcast eyes and folded arms. Bachne was not pretty. Her complexion was much darker than that of the fair women of the mountain kingdom. She was well formed, with small hands and feet, her eyes were large and dark, her hair black and glossy; but her mouth was large, although its teeth were white and regular, and to crown all, was she not a flathead? She was conscious of her defects and magnified them, for, like many girls, she did so want to be beautiful. This was from no coquettish love of admiration, but because she felt the want of love and saw nothing in herself that would make people love her. In her own tribe, the flat head had been looked upon as a sign of superiority, even of beauty, but among the Chibchas, she knew that it was a deformity. It was no fault of hers that she had been made as she was, so like a wise girl, she did not add to her troubles by brooding over them, but strove to be useful since she could not be very ornamental.

(To be Continued.)