

Booth's Corner.

THE OLD OPTICIAN AGAIN.

(See last Number.)

The youth, who had made the old optician's acquaintance so unexpectedly during the rain and thunder on the journey to Nuremberg, had grown to be old enough to go to College. Five years had made some change in him. He still continued to be very well behaved, and bore a high character as a scholar; but inwardly he was longing for the time when he should be free from the restraints and watchfulness of home. He felt very confident that he could take care of himself, and that he might safely keep more company with young people of his own age than his parents allowed him. Thus he was delighted at the prospect of going to the university of Erlangen which is, indeed, only six miles distant from Nuremberg, but he had to live in lodgings there, he would have to be furnished with money for his expenses, he would regulate his own time, choose his companions, and, as he thought, be a free man at last. There was no other intention in him than to use his liberty in the most profitable manner conceivable; he meant to convince his parents that they needed not to have watched over him; and kept him out of harm's way, with so much care and anxiety as they had done.

Now it went much against his wishes that his father engaged lodgings for him at a friend's house in Erlangen—a serious old Christian who, the lad was well aware, would endeavour to act a father's part towards him, with love and fidelity. His expenses for board and lodging were thus a matter with which the young student had nothing to do; and it displeased him that thus the trust reposed in him was so much the less extensive. He knew at once that a watchful eye would take notice of the kind of company with which he associated, the hours he kept, the recreation he sought, the time he gave to study, and so on. This was not liberty enough for him. He envied those students whose friends lived farther off, and had no acquaintance at the university, so that the young men had to select everything for themselves, and had no one to look after them. He was sullen, and did not make himself very agreeable at his lodgings. The kindness with which his old friend sought to win him, served rather to irritate him; and at the end of a month he began to listen to the advice of some bad companions with whom he fell in, who told him he had better just put on a bold face, engage other lodgings, and remove to them without asking leave. His father, they said, would not be able to help it, and it would be the same to him in the end, if his son did not live more expensively than he was doing with his father's old friend.

Full of eager desire, and yet kept back by serious misgivings, the young man sallied forth, alone, one afternoon, to take a walk, and on he went, forgetting the time and the weather, till the rolling of thunder roused him out of his deep thoughts, and he perceived that it was a long way from town, and that a heavy rain was coming on. He knocked at the door of a neat little cottage not far off; and to the question from within: "Who is there?" he replied: "May I come in for shelter till the storm passes over?" The answer: "Yes, by all means" was given; the door opened at the same moment, the young man entered, and found himself in the presence of—the old optician.

The old man smiled at him quite familiarly, but his eyes were so piercing that the student wished himself far away. He perceived at once, that he could hide nothing from the optician, if he chose to ask what was passing in his heart; and at the same time he felt that the designs within him would not bear being told. But there was no getting out of the cottage now. "Come, sit down, young friend," said the old man, "this is a snug, dry cottage, and we can have a chat together, while the rain spends itself. It will do the farmers a deal of good, though it comes against the mind of travellers. We must not have all things according to our mind—we could not bear it." The optician's eyes seemed to go right through the young student, as he said that; but he did not pursue the remark, for he had to open the window and take in a squirrel with its cage, which was standing outside. "Look at my pretty squirrel," said the old man, as he held a nut to coax the little thing out of its cage. The student was only too glad to change the conversation; so he took it up with eagerness: "Come, little fellow, come, let us see you;" and then he began to tell about a squirrel he once had at his father's house, and how it came by its death by strangling. "Its cage was fixed outside our window," he said, "and a nut-tree stood not far off. It was quite safe there for a month, but I got a present of a new chair for it which was longer: I put that on my poor squirrel, and meant nothing but kindness by it; but the foolish thing was not satisfied with the liberty it had—off it was, with a jump, for the nearest branch of the nut-tree; the chain got entangled in the twigs, and the squirrel was found hanging dead under the branch, the next morning. I ought not to have given the poor thing such a long chain as that."

The old optician had his pleasant smile playing around his lips, while the young man was talking; but his eyes became fixed upon him like two burning coals, and the student began to feel that he had pronounced his own condemnation. "You are right," said the old man, "if you are right, my young friend; it does young squirrels no good to have the chain made so long that they can jump into their own ruin. You meant only kindness; but it proved the poor thing's destruction."

"A HOME FOR MOTHER." Business called me to the United States Land Office; while there, awaiting the completion of my business, a lad, apparently about 16 to 17 years old, came in, and pre-

sented to the receiver a certificate of purchase for 40 acres of land. I was struck with the countenance and general appearance of the lad, and inquired of him for whom he was purchasing the land; the reply was, "for myself, sir." I then inquired where he got the money; he answered, "I have earned it by my labour." Then, said I, you richly deserve the land. I then inquired, where do you come from? "New York," said he. Feeling an increased desire to know something more of this lad, I asked him whether he had parents, and where they lived; on this question he took a seat, and gave me the following narrative:—

"I am from New York State—have there living a father, mother, and five brothers and sisters—I am the oldest child. Father is a drinking man, and often would return home from his day's work drunk, and not a cent in his pocket to buy food for the family, having spent all his day's earnings in liquor with his drinking companions; the family had to depend chiefly on mother and myself for bread; this distressed mother much, and had a powerful effect on my feelings. Finding that father would not abstain from liquor, I resolved to make an effort in some way to relieve mother, sister, and brothers from want; after revolving things over in my mind, and consulting with mother, I got all the information I could about the far West, and started from home for Wisconsin with three dollars in my pocket. I left home on foot; after spending my three dollars, I worked occasionally a day; and renewed my travel so long as money lasted. By labour occasionally, and the charitable treatment I got on the road, I landed in Wisconsin. Here I got an axe, set to work, and cleared land by the job—earned money, saved it, till I gathered \$30, which money I now pay for this 40 acres of land."

Well, my good lad (for by this time I became much interested in his history,) what are you now going to do with this land? "Why sir, I will continue to work and earn money, and when I have spare time, prepare some of my land for culture, raise myself a log house, and when prepared, will write father and mother, brothers and sisters, to come to Wisconsin and enjoy this home. This land, now bought by me, I design for my mother, which will secure her from want in her declining years." What, said I, will you do with your father if he continues to drink ardent spirits to excess? "Oh, sir, when we get him on the farm, he will feel at home, will work at home, keep no liquor in the house, and in a short time he will be a sober man." I then replied, young man, these being your principles so young, I recommend you to keep to them, and the blessing of God will attend you.

By this time the receiver handed him his duplicate receipt for his forty acres of land; rising from his seat to leave the office, he said, "At last I have a home for my mother!"

LIBRARIES FOR SEAMEN.

After detailing a successful movement for providing the men of the Coast Guard with libraries for their own use and that of their wives and families, in which Mrs. Fry, the Quakeress, was the principal mover, the author of her Memoir (Rev. Thomas Timpson) proceeds thus:—

Several attempts had, from time to time, been made, by intelligent and pious Captains, to get the ships of the Navy supplied with useful and religious books; and in 1821, there was one ship, "a frigate, on the South American station, which, for good discipline and efficient order might have challenged the whole service. She was what a seaman would wish to see; all worked together and well; but the officers had a bond of union amongst them not generally known, which the zeal and intelligence of the Captain had made it his duty to arrange and establish. He had held out to them the advantages of knowledge, and by his regulations had facilitated to them the means of attaining it. Amongst other plans, a catalogue of all the books on board, on which two thousand volumes were to be found, was compiled, a temporary reading-room was opened during certain hours, and in this place the Captain himself, the Lieutenants, Midshipmen, and others assembled, and certainly lost none of their dignity by this praiseworthy association. It would, perhaps, be invidious to point out the invariable success which has attended those who have come out of this school, or the esteem in which the author of so much good is held in higher quarters. It is a pleasure, however, to add, that the approbation of the Admiralty has been evinced to this officer in a form the most pleasing to him. He has constantly been employed in the highest offices of the service, and is at this moment (1830) in active furtherance of his beneficial schemes."

Complaints had, however, been made against some of the "evangelical, praying Captains," of introducing "fanatical religious books and tracts" among their men; and this complaint was regarded as so serious, that it was laid before His Majesty, King William IV, before he ascended the throne; when he was Duke of Clarence, and Lord High Admiral of England. An order was, therefore, issued from high quarters as follows:—

"Admiralty, 22d May, 1827. "His Royal Highness the Lord High Admiral, having appointed the Rev. Samuel Cole, D. D., the senior Chaplain of Greenwich Hospital, to superintend the issue of religious books to the fleet, and to correspond with the several Chaplains of His Majesty's ships on the subject of their clerical duties, it is His Royal Highness's direction to the Captains and Commanding Officers of His Majesty's ships, that they do not suffer any tracts or religious books to be received on board the ships of the fleet, except such as shall have been approved and pointed out by Dr. Cole; and that they order their respective Chaplains to correspond with Dr. Cole on all matters relating to the religious instruction given by them to the ships' companies, and generally regarding their sacred duties."

By Command of His Royal Highness, "J. W. Croker."

"To the respective Flag Officers, Captains, Commanders, Commanding Officers, and Chaplains, of His Majesty's ships, and Vessels."

This order was regarded by many Captains and officers, as not only unnecessary, but a serious interference with their religious liberties. Some of the Chaplains, too, looked upon it as a grievance: but it had the force of law. How far Dr. Cole was favourable to evangelical truth, or qualified for the fulfilment of his duties, in this responsible office, may be evident from the selection of religious books and tracts, which he is understood to have made for the royal navy. The following is the "List of books and tracts selected from the printed lists of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, for the use of seamen of the line-of-battle ships, in His Majesty's navy:—

Table with 2 columns: Book Title and Price. Includes titles like 'Common Prayers, 2mo demy, nonpareil, without Version of Psalms, sheep, 1s. 2d.', 'Great Importance of a Religious Life 1s 1d.', 'Bishop Wilson's Knowledge and Practice of Christianity Made Easy 1s 6d.', etc.

A frigate to have only half the number of the same. They were scarcely ever regarded when sent on board; and many were the expressions of shame and sorrow on the part of the religious captains, at so "meagre, worthless, and unsuitable a supply for 600, or 800, or 1,000 men!" But "the fear of Dr. Cole," and of the jealousy on this subject which had been evinced by the Lords of the Admiralty, through the emuity of certain ungodly officers, induced the friends of seamen to discourage and dissuade Mrs. Fry from making any attempt in the business, assuring her that all endeavours on her part would certainly meet with the most decided opposition in high quarters.

Reflecting, however, on what had thus been done for the minor branch of the service—the Coast Guard—it was then resolved that every means which could possibly be adopted should be employed to bring the subject before the Lords of the Admiralty; thus was the noble mind of this benevolent lady, in a measure, relieved for the present. Various requests were, however, made to naval officers of great influence; and the case was strongly presented to these high personages, that such a provision should be made for seamen generally in the royal navy. And after grave deliberation, it was resolved, that a library for each ship of war should be provided as a necessary part of its stores. This order from the Lords of the Admiralty for supplying Her Majesty's ships with libraries of entertaining, useful, and religious books, was issued in September, 1838. The lists of books furnished in the Coast-Guard libraries were examined, many of the books on those lists were selected, and the ships were supplied in July, 1839. "All ships, great and small, are now supplied with valuable libraries," as recently stated by an estimable naval captain, in a letter on this subject addressed to the author.

We have now lying before us an interesting document, "A List of Religious and other Books for establishing a Library on board each of Her Majesty's Ships, for the use of the Crew;" and many will be gratified to learn, that besides "The Life of Nelson, abridged," and instead of the trifling tracts in the list of Dr. Cole, this list contains the following, with others of a truly Christian character:—the Companion to the Bible. Sailors and Soldiers' Friend. Anecdotes of Holy Scriptures. Anecdotes of Providence. Baxter's Call to the Unconverted. Baxter's Saints' Rest. Dr. Bogue's Essay on the New Testament.

Dr. Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion. Dr. Keith's Evidence of Prophecy. Dr. Watts's Scripture History. It is not pretended that this wise and well adapted provision was made by our lamented philanthropist, to whom the credit of the Coast-Guard libraries is altogether due; but it is evident to those who know the manifest history of these things, that no small portion of the honour of having originated this arrangement belongs most gratefully to Mrs. Fry. Nor is this provision of libraries, so worthy of our name as a professedly Christian nation, all that has been done for the benefit of our seamen of the royal navy. Several other plans for their intellectual and moral welfare have grown out of it, especially the appointment of a number of officers, liberally educated, under the denomination of "Naval Instructors," as a kind of school-masters. Some clergyman act in this capacity; and it is considered as greatly in

favour of the youths on board the ships of war. All these measures are found to be beneficial, and reflect honour on the national character of Great Britain.

IDOLATROUS FESTIVALS IN SOUTH INDIA.

From the Rev. H. W. Fox's Journal in the Church Missionary Record.

Cullapilly.—I am now out on my first excursion to the villages, since my return to India. I have commenced by coming hither to the great annual bathing-festival, which occurs on "Siva-ratri," or "the Siva-night." Cullapilly is a considerable village, about twelve miles due south of Masulpatam, on the most easterly branch of the river Krishna, and contains a considerable pagoda devoted to Siva, under his common name of Nagaswara Swamy, or the Lord of snakes. It is curious that the bathing in the river Krishna, a personification of Vishnoo, should be held in connexion with, and in honour of, the rival god. It is a festival of three days' continuance, the main features of which are the religious bathing of thousands in the river, and their repairing to the temple of Siva to make their obeisance and offerings to the idol.

I left my house at four o'clock in the morning, and proceeded through the entire length of the native town on to the open country beyond it. When the sun rose, I had still three or four miles of my journey before me. By this time crowds of people were streaming in from all directions along the main path, and for the last two miles I was continually passing a string of people trudging to the festival, the majority on foot, and a few in common bullock carts. There were old and young, the tottering and bent figure of the old woman, and little children toddling alongside their parents, or carried on their sides: there was about an equal number of men and women, but nearly all were of a poor and shabby appearance.

On reaching Cullapilly I found the pagoda very prettily situated on the side of a tank full of water-lilies, both red and white, and the whole place alive with the visitors to the festival.

After giving directions about the pitching of my tent about a quarter of a mile from the pagoda, I rode toward the river, which is about half a mile from the village. There was a solid stream of people the whole distance, a few returning from the water-side, but the majority on their way thither; and already I could hear the roar of the voices of the multitude engaged in their ablutions, and the occasional screechings and drummings of music. As we drew near to the river we passed several small raga-shows, each consisting of a box gaily painted with mythological figures, and opening with folding-doors, so as to display inside the tax-dry image of either Vishnoo or Siva. These were placed in the road by their owners, who stood by, begging for money, and reaping a rich harvest from the piety of the people. When I asked some of them why they provided mere toys for worship, instead of serving God, they made the common answer by patting their stomach, to show that it was their livelihood. There was a large number of clamorous beggars, lining one side of the road for the distance of about a quarter of a mile; each beggar had spread out a long cloth or mat by the roadside, and, as the people came back from the river, they threw a few grains of rice, or now and then a single chili, or less frequently, a cowrie shell (in value about one-fiftieth of a farthing) on each cloth; so that there was a prospect of two or three handfuls of rice being gathered from each cloth.

I found the crowd of bathers lining the river-side for a distance of 600 yards, or half a mile: the river here, though the smallest of the main branches of the Krishna, varies from a quarter of a mile to a mile wide, and at present is about seven or eight feet below its banks. On the higher bank were collected the crowds of visitors; some sitting, some standing idle, some engaged in preparing their food, but the majority in changing their wet clothes, or rubbing the coloured powders on their foreheads, or preparing their diminutive amount of alms: in the river itself stood hundreds in the act of bathing. The process appeared to be generally of this kind—The party, after scrambling down the steep and slippery bank, proceeded into the water till it reached a little above the knees, of course without removing any part of their dress. Some friend then commenced the ceremony by pouring a number of potsful of the water over the head and back: then there was the raising of a little of the water to the mouth in the two hands and drinking it; then the throwing two or three handfuls of the water upward, by way of libation; then some over the head backward; and then plunging the whole body several times in the water. Men and women were mingled together promiscuously. The noise of so many voices was sufficiently great to render conversation of scarcely any use, so that I was a silent observer of many hundreds going through a ceremony which all believe acquires for them a great amount of religious merit, and which many believe removes their sin. I saw two or three men with little baskets, which they took into the water with them, and dipped in the water: on inquiry, I found that the basket contained the little household god of the party, an image a few inches long.

On my return, I found a boy going about chanting and begging, with a long piece of wire run through both his cheeks. Siva is the bloody deity, and it is in honour of him or his wife that cuttings and mutilations are made. This is the only one, I have seen to-day; but I am told, this evening, that near the temple there are some men cutting themselves, and piercing their flesh.

As I returned, I found the same close streams of people still moving down to the river; there could not have been fewer than 4000 or 5000 in all, either on the river banks or on the way thither, during the three quarters of an hour that I was there. There were about twenty bullock-carts covered with mats, in which women of the wealthier class changed their dress, and about a dozen palanquins in which those who could afford the expense had come to the festival; but the mass were on foot. A considerable part of

the road leading to the temple was lined with temporary booths for the sale of toys, bangles, ornaments, or simple articles of food. The booths reminded me, as indeed did much of the scene beside, of the outskirts of an English race-course.

I was glad to take rest, and get my breakfast in my tent. It was not long before all the neighbourhood was covered with groups of people cooking their food, eating it, or lying down to sleep after it: for, of the 6000 or 7000 strangers, who have come for this occasion, none seem to have any place to lodge in: the open field is their parlour and their bedroom. The continual noise of their talking, and the incessant hammering of the drums at the pagoda, have been far from agreeable all day.

MANGALAGHERRY.—I had a pleasant ride hither on the afternoon of the 27th, arriving at the close of the first day of the great annual festival. Mangalagherry is a small, but, for India, a well-built town; it probably contains 3000 or 4000 people. There is a large temple, with a handsome gopuram (tower over the gateway) about 120 or 150 feet high; and just beyond it rises the hill, to the height of 600 or 700 feet. Half way up this hill is a small pagoda, where the most sacred idol is kept. It is a stone one, about two feet high, called Narasingha, and represents an uncouth incarnation of Vishnoo, half man, half lion. There are several miracles connected with it.

The festival consisted in nothing more than certain nightly processions. On the night of the 28th, the Lord's-day, an indecent representation of one of the scenes of Krishna's life took place in the public street, by means of figures about two feet high. The next night was the marriage: this consisted of a procession of an image of the god, so wrapped up in swaddling clothes that I could make out nothing of its shape, seated upon the folds of an enormous cobra de capello, and overshadowed by its outspread hood. Along with this image—and, like it, borne aloft on men's shoulders—was a small shrine containing two brass idols, which represented the two wives of the god. The procession moved slowly about the town, pausing every now and then, while music was played before the idols, rockets were let off, guns fired, and a firework or two burned. The great day was Tuesday; but nothing else took place beyond the dragging about a great car, in which was seated a little idol.

The crowd was enormous: on Sunday the town was crammed; but on Monday all the ground round about was also covered with people, and on Tuesday it was still more closely and widely crowded. The poor people came from all directions; many of them twenty or forty miles, and some even more. Of course there was no room in the town for them, so they just lived day and night on the open plain. Each night, about seven or eight o'clock, I saw numerous groups of women and children, worn out with the excitement and heat of the day, lying all round about the temple asleep: the men were still moving about. All the main street and neighbourhood were crowded with booths, where ornaments, toys, food, or sweatbands, were to be sold: indeed, in many respects, allowing for the difference of customs, it was like a great English fair, without its riot or drunkenness, but, instead of that, defiled with idolatry. In the place of mountebanks and wild-beast shows, were a number of people whom I might call fire-dancers. A man, three-fourths naked, would take two thick torches made of cotton rags with oil on them, and, having lighted them, he would dash them one against the other until he was enveloped in the cloud of sparks which flew from them. All this while dancing about violently, he would vary the spectacle by bending his naked breast and back with the burning end of the torch, or by holding them both before him in such a position that the flames passed close by his breast and face. Sometimes he would sit down on the ground, take a roll of rags about an inch thick, light one end of it, and put it into his open mouth, holding it on his tongue without extinguishing it. Meanwhile another man, fantastically dressed, would be beating a small gong. I saw four or five sets of these characters in the space of 100 yards. Another man varied the amusement by mounting on stilts, and running through the skin of his back and arms four skewers of wood, the further end of which terminated in small flaming torches. On inquiring, many times, the cause of all this outrageous and unmeaning self-torture, I was assured that it did not arise from religion or devotion, but was simply an expedient to collect a few pence from the by-standers.

On the Lord's-day I was alone, and spent the greater part of the day quietly in the travellers' bungalow, just outside the town. In the morning and evening I spent more than an hour on each occasion, in disputing with, and preaching to, large numbers of listeners. Unlike the people of Cullapilly, they everywhere, and at all times, treated me with great respect and civility, the immediate cause of which is probably the well-known good will of the excellent Collector of the district to the Missionaries. On the morning of Monday, the 1st inst., I was joined by an American Lutheran Missionary from Guntoor; and morning and evening we sallied forth into the crowd. I pitched my tent in a grove of tamarind trees, in sight of the great temple, and just outside the crowd. Here I had rooms of listeners. As many as could find room sat down in my tent: the rest crammed all the space round about the doors on each side of the tent, and looked in through the windows. I must have had from fifty to sixty people at a time, most of them attentive, and continuing for a length of time; among them were a good many women; at a time, to preach to them about idols, sin, and Jesus Christ, the one sacrifice for sin. When I was tired I read to them the Ten Commandments, explaining and applying them, or else a "Tract;" commenting on it as I read. The crowd being great, the noise from the distant crowd reaching

to the tent, and my audience not being so much before me as at my right hand, and left, I had to exert myself much, and to shout loudly: this, with a temperature of about 94°, was exhausting; and when the two days were over I was greatly fatigued, and my throat very sore. But it was a subject of great rejoicing that I had been permitted to preach Christ to such great numbers, who had never heard of Him before, without obstruction or opposition.

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