

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL.

BY T. T. HEADLEY.

THE eventful life of the great leader was drawing to a close. Since the distribution of the land, he had enjoyed for many years that rest which was a foretaste of his eternal rest. His last blessing and fatherly advice, which he gave to the trans-Jordan tribes, as he dismissed them to their inheritance, had in it a tone of prophecy of future rest; and now, as the infirmities of age reminded him that he would soon be gathered to his fathers, he called all "the elders, judges, officers, and heads" together, and, after reminding them that he was "old and stricken in age," he gave them a short address that breathes the very atmosphere of heaven, on the threshold of which he is standing. He then assembled all the tribes at Shechem, and, after recounting the past mercies of God, exhorted them to cleave unto Him; and taking a stone, set it up as a pillar to stand as a witness between them and him, for all time, that they swore to "obey and serve the Lord God."

He then dismissed them to their inheritance. His work on earth was done. No more with his flashing spear will he lead his gallant host to the onset and to victory; no more will the shouts of the people greet his coming; no more will he gather round him the elders of Israel in solemn council. He has assembled and dismissed them for the last time—and turns back to his home to die. There is something inexpressibly sad, as well as grand and majestic, in thus calmly calling the tribes together to hear his last words, receive his last solemn charge, and take his final farewell of them. Equally sublime is his serene bearing, perfect resignation, and lofty faith. The Samaritans, who had no record of any of the Jewish heroes after Moses, except Joshua, were accustomed to point out the place of his sepulchre; but the Mussulmen, who reverence him next to Moses, declare it is on the Giant's Hill that overlooks the Bosphorus; and there they have actually erected a magnificent tomb to him, worthy of Mahomet himself. Jews and infidels both claim him, which shows what power he wielded, and how widespread was his influence.

Of his bravery and ability as a general we have abundant evidence. That he was possessed of indomitable energy and activity is clearly shown in the forced marches he made on Gibeon, and afterwards on the allied kings encamped at the waters of Merom. He was cautious in his preparation, prompt and rapid in his movements, and terrible as a thunderbolt in his onset—three prime qualities in a great general. But his moral qualities were still more illustrious. Of unswerving integrity, single-hearted, and possessing strong affections, he never fails or falters from first to last. Though a young man when in the wilderness, he never was contaminated by either the fear or passions of the multitude. The vast encampment might roar like the sea around Moses, and the shouts of the infuriated populace drown every note of remonstrance: he always stood firm beside his great leader. He might be stoned to death and trampled under foot, but his heart would never swerve from its attachment or its duty. As we go over the meagre narration of his actions, we unavoidably become impressed with the loftiness of his character. He rises by his own inherent greatness far above all who surround him. But his crowning glory was his unwavering attachment and fidelity to his God. No act of disobedience mars his bright career. No rebuke from Heaven makes us mourn for his downfall or forgetfulness of duty. The noble language he utters has been the motto of his life: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Moses and Joshua stand amid human history peerless and unmatched. God had chosen many instruments, and some illustrious ones to carry out His plans; but on none has He placed such exalted honours as on these two men. They belong not merely to the Bible and the Jews, but to the race. Other names become dim with time, while theirs will grow brighter with every succeeding age. Joshua was the Jesus of the Jewish nation, while Jesus is the Joshua of the world."—*From "Sacred Heroes and Martyrs."*

"That is a false humility which, acknowledging itself unworthy of the gifts of God, dares not confidently expect them. True humility consists in a deep view of our utter unworthiness, and in an absolute abandonment to God, without the slightest doubt that he will do the greatest things in us."

MEETING AT THE TOP.

NORMAN Macleod tells the following story of the members of two rival Scottish sects:

"I mind," said David, "two neighbours of ours, and ye'll mind them too, gudewife; that was Johnnie Horton and Andrew Giebbie. The one was a keen Burgher, and the tither was an Anti-Burgher. Baith lived in the same house, though at different ends, and it was the bargain that each should keep his ain side of the house aye well thatched. But they happened to dispute so keenly about the principles of their kirks, that at last they quarrelled and did'n't speak at a'. So one day, after this, as they were on the roof, thatching, each on his ain side, they reached the top, and looked over face to face. What could they do? They could na flee. So at last Andrew took off his Kilmarnock cap, and scratching his head, said:—'Johnnie, you and me, I think, has been very foolish to dispute as we hae done about our kirks, until we hae almost forgot His will about ourselves; and so we hae fought so bitterly for what we ca' the truth, that it has ended in spite. Whatever is wrang, it is perfectly certain that it can never be right to be uncivil, unneighbourly, unkind; in fact, to hate one another. Na, na, that's the devil's work, and no God's. Noo it strikes me, that it's wi' the kirk, as wi' this house. Ye are working on one side, and me on t'ither, but if we only do our work well, we will meet at the top at last.—*Gie us your han', andl neighbour.*'"

NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN.

SOCRATES, at an extreme old age, learned to play on musical instruments.

Cato, at eighty years of age, learned to study the Greek language.

Plutarch, when between seventy and eighty, commenced the study of Latin.

Boccaccio was thirty-five years of age when he commenced his studies in light literature; yet he became one of the greatest masters of the Tuscan dialect, Dante and Petrarch being the other two.

Sir Henry Spelman neglected the sciences in his youth, but commenced the study of them when he was between fifty and sixty years of age. After this time he became a most learned antiquarian and lawyer.

Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few years before his death.

Ludovico Monaldesco, at the great age of 115, wrote the memoirs of his own times.

Ogilby, the translator of Homer and Virgil, was unacquainted with Latin and Greek till he was past fifty.

Franklin did not fully commence his philosophical pursuits till he had reached his fiftieth year.

Dryden, in his sixty-eighth year, commenced the translation of the Iliad, his most pleasing production.

We could go on, and cite thousands of examples of men who commenced a new study, either for livelihood or amusement, at an advanced age. But every one familiar with the biography of distinguished men will recollect individual cases enough to convince him that none but the sick and indolent will ever say, I am too old to learn.

AFFLICTIONS.

THE physician attacks the disease, and not the patient; his object is to cure him whom he causes to suffer. It is thus that God, whose mercy is infinite, chastises us only to bring us into the way of salvation, or to confirm our course in it. You are not angry with your physician, when he applies the cautery or the knife to your gangrened limb; on the contrary, you can scarcely find language adequate to the expression of your gratitude; you keep repeating that he has saved your life by preventing the disease from spreading, and you pay him liberally for his attentions. Yet you murmur against the Lord, who tries us only for our good; and you are unwilling to acknowledge that the afflictions with which He visits us, are the only means capable of restoring health to our souls, or of securing the continuance of it, when it is restored to us.