

WELCOME AND SCHOOL

Do unto others
As Ye Would
That They
Should
Do unto
You.

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Nazareth.

BY CANON FARRAR.

THE hills which form the northern limit of the plain of Jezreel run almost due east and west from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean, and their southern slopes were in the district assigned to the tribe of Zebulun. Almost in the centre of this chain of hills there is a singular cleft in the limestone, forming the entrance to a little valley. As the traveler leaves the plain he will ride up a steep and narrow pathway, brodered with grass and flowers, through scenery which is neither colossal nor overwhelming, but infinitely beautiful and picturesque. Gradually the valley opens into a wide natural amphitheatre of hills, supposed by some to be the crater of an extinct volcano, and there, clinging to the hollows of a hill, which rises to the height of some five hundred feet above it, lie, "like a handful of pearls in a goblet of emerald," the flat roofs and narrow streets of a little Eastern town. There is a small church; the massive buildings of a convent; the tall minaret of a mosque; a clear, abundant fountain; houses built of white stone, and gardens scattered among them, umbrageous with figs and olives, and rich with the white and scarlet blossoms of orange and pomegranate. And that little town is *En Nazirah* (Nazareth), where the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, spent nearly thirty years of his mortal life. It was, in fact, his home his native village for all but three or four years of his life on earth; the village which lent its



NAZARETH.

then ignominious name to the scornful title written upon his cross; the village from which he did not disdain to draw his appellation when he spake in vision to the persecuting Saul.

And along the narrow mountain-path which I have described, his feet must have often trod, for it is the only approach by which, in returning northwards from Jerusalem, he could have

reached the home of his infancy, youth, and manhood.

Here the boy Jesus prepared himself, amid a hallowed obscurity, for his mighty work on earth. His outward life was the life of all those of his age, and station, and place of birth. He lived as lived the other children of peasant parents in that quiet town, and in great measure as they live now. He who has seen the children of Nazareth in their red caftans, and bright tunics of silk or cloth, girded with a many-coloured sash, and sometimes covered with a loose outer jacket of white or blue—he who has watched their noisy and merry games, and heard their ringing laughter as they wander about the hills of their little native vale, or play in bands on the hill-side beside their sweet and abundant fountain—may, perhaps, form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when he too was a child. And the traveller who has followed any of those children—as I have done—to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, happy patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those houses, with the doves sunning themselves on the white roofs, and the vines wreathing about them. The mats, or car-

pets, are laid loose along the walls; shoes and sandals are taken off at the threshold; from the centre hangs a lamp, which forms the only ornament of the room; in some recess in