

being drowned, then of scaling the perpendicular shaft, when one stone dropped from the top would probably be certain death, and afterwards of penetrating into the fortress through the narrow passage, which two or three could easily hold against a hundred?

Desperate indeed the attempt seemed, but there was no alternative plan; David therefore issued a proclamation to his army that whoever first got up the "gutter," or Tzinnor, which was the name of this aqueduct or subterranean passage, and smote the Jebusites, should be commander-in-chief.

Great was the reward offered, but immense was the risk. David had plenty of heroes about him, who were not to be deterred from venturing on the most hazardous exploits; but, eager as they were to grasp the prize, only one attempted this most daring feat. That one (and sacred history justly records his name) was Joab.

He was a man of boundless ambition, who could brook no rival. The supreme command of David's army was the object on which his heart was set. This and his life he now staked on one throw. He made the venture and won.

Sacred history relates but the simple fact that "Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first and was chief."

It might seem idle, therefore, to speculate how the deed was performed; how he drew off the water in the channel, or got through it without being drowned; how he scaled the rocky shaft without falling; how he clambered through the low passage (and perhaps at last opened the gates to his comrades); and in all this how he escaped the notice of the Jebusites.

The second Joab, an Englishman, ten years ago found it no pleasant work to follow the track of his predecessor even in time of peace. One cannot read the account of his ascent of the Tzinnor ("Jerusalem Recovered," pp. 244 to 247) without coming to the irresistible conviction that Joab never performed such a feat without aid from within it, that some confederate among the Jebusites helped him in what was nevertheless a dangerous exploit. That such were to be found is clear from the history of Jericho and Bethel, while, again, great as was Joab's valour, his craft was greater. Who, then, was the traitor among the Jebusites? With whom did Joab tamper about the secret surrender of the stronghold of Zion? What "bucksheesh" was given for the betrayal of the impregnable fortress?

Years after this, at the close of David's reign, we find a Jebusite (a man of rank, too, it is probable) by name Araunah, actually in possession (strange to say) of the threshing-floor just outside the city of David; and not only of the threshing-floor, which was naturally the common property of the city, but also of lands adjacent, which he sells to the king for the enormous sum of 600 shekels of gold by weight.

How any Jebusite came to be left in possession of so much valuable property in such a situation, the sacred history does not tell us.

Josephus says "Araunah was not slain by David in the siege of Jerusalem, because of the goodwill he bore to the Hebrews, and a particular benignity and affection which he had to the king himself."

I have no doubt it was something particular, yet not particularly creditable to Araunah, though, fortunately for him, we have no Jebusite account, nor, indeed, any professed account at all, of the transaction, otherwise there might be a revulsion of popular feeling as to his noble character. Araunah was the (but *nil de mortuis nisi bonum*) one who lost nothing when Zion fell, neither life, nor goods, nor, so far as we know, even character.

One word in the Hebrew (Tzinnor), followed by Captain Warren's wonderful discovery of the secret passage leading from the Virgin's Fountain, has enabled us to understand a most obscure and baffling passage in the Old Testament, and to follow the very track by which the adventurous Joab gained access to the stronghold of Zion.

Who will say that a great discovery is not recorded in chapter ix. of "Jerusalem Recovered?" Who will question about the Bible being the most accurate and truthful of all books?—Contributed by Mr. A. F. Birch to a Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

LIGHT 'T EVENTIDE.

BY THE REV. C. DUFF, M.A.

At eventide 'tis light:
The dusky dawn hides from my view
Earth with all its objects bright;
And then, like stars, the good, the true,
Beam forth upon my sight.

At eventide 'tis light:
Though clouds the moon and stars do hide,
The moral heavens, bright,
Stand forth in lustre, clear, to guide
My onward steps aright.

At eventide 'tis light:
Affliction draws us curtain o'er
My earthly visions bright;
Then these vanish; but evermore
God's glory seems in sight.

At eventide 'tis light:
This life is done; its sun gone down;
I pass into the night;
But, through the darkness, see the dawn
Of day's eternal light.

PUTTY AND PAINT.

Stepping into a new building the other day I saw a carpenter finishing some work, but there was one joint that would not go together as he desired. After working with it some time, and not finishing it to suit him, he left it, remarking, "A little putty and paint will make it all right." Ah, yes, thought I, how many defective places in our characters are only covered with "putty and paint," and when the wear of the years shall remove these, how broken, how defective, and how repulsive will we appear to those who shall then see our sadly disjointed lives.

There is a young man full of noble pride and hope, friends are on every hand to help him, and he makes many earnest efforts, success is within his grasp, but, unknown to those who love him, he is allowing some improper habit, some wrong indulgence to lead him. It may be the sparkling glass that has the adder's sting in it; or the strange allurements of the gamblers' halls, when these are covered by the darkness of the night, and shut away from the sight of all good men, and when warned by his conscience and all the teachings of his better life of the wrong and the danger, he only puts on more carefully the outward look of innocence, and the attitude of goodness, while he does not change his habits; he is only covering them with "putty and paint." Wait until years shall pass, and deep-seated habit shall assert its sway, then all the "putty and paint" of his deception will be worn off, and the black deformity of his vices will stand out so prominently as to mar and destroy all the beauty and excellence of his other attainments. One confirmed bad habit disjoins and spoils the whole of life.

There is a young Christian; his soul is burning with intense desire to live a grand life-work; he makes the start, and for the time all is clear and bright before him; but by-and-by discouragements cross his path, he is disappointed in the lives of other Christians, he does not find the helps at hand that he had fondly hoped for and expected to find; duty now demands of him entire faithfulness, but he falters; he makes up his mind to hold on to an outward form of worship and of faith, while his life relaxes into the easy-going, careless life that is like those around him in the church. How my heart saddens when I see him, for I know that his forms of worship and nominal faith are only putty and paint, and they cover and hide for a time a backslidden life; but when the hour of anguish and death comes the "putty and paint" of his formality and dead faith will have all worn off, and the sad spectacle of a backslidden Christian is presented to meet the fearful demands of that dread hour. Is this a picture of your life, reader?

There is one glorious power that can take these lives of ours, and so thoroughly go through and through them that from the centre to the circumference of our being we will be filled with light and might, with truth and righteousness; then we are made so beautiful in life and character that we shall need no "putty and paint" to cover our defects; for the all-healing and all-cleansing blood of the Lamb

shall have washed our sins away, and we through Him be made "whiter than snow." Then we stand the tests of life, the trial of death, and the flash of judgment life, and will gain the secure triumph of heavenly bliss forever.—Rev. T. L. Tomkinson.

PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

A very important meeting of the Protestants of Paris was held during the second week of February in the Temple of the Oratoire. The great audience room was crowded. A number of unusually earnest addresses were made. Those by Dr. de Pressensé and M. Fourneau, a converted Romish priest, and M. Riveillaud, were especially impressive. The first, who had just returned from a visit to Alsace, and who has an accurate knowledge of the state of opinion in all France, among other things, said this:

"Without disguising from myself any of the difficulties and obstacles presented to the progress of religion in our day, I am fully convinced that never since the age of the Reformation, was there so favourable an opportunity for the propagation of our faith. Circumstances have aroused us to special activity; an open door is before us, the people are most favourably predisposed to give us a fair hearing. Go where we may, if we can secure a large room for meeting, and call the people together to hear an exposition of the Gospel and a vindication of the principles of Christian liberty, we get eager and crowded audiences. Often when I have been asked to speak in such assemblages, I have felt myself thrilled, electrified as it were, by the sympathetic attention of the throng of earnest faces. This movement, which is drawing the mass of the people towards Protestantism, is to be explained by causes both external and internal. First of all, many thoughtful minds are impressed with the idea that our great democracy needs a ruling principle for its maintenance even as a social institution. There is nothing but religious principle which can have this salutary effect. Men turn to Catholicism, and they perceive at once from its often repeated anathemas, that no union is possible between it and the social conditions of modern democracy. It is vain, therefore, to look to it for the religious direction of the Republic. It is equally futile to appeal to the free-thinking school, which, at least, in its present predominant form—the materialistic—gives no recognition either to liberty or thought. Hence, enlightened and earnest men are drawn to the Gospel, and begin to perceive that religion may be an end, not a mere means and instrument of government.

"It must be ours to give to these inquiring minds the response they seek. Keeping as far as possible from the arena of party strife, we must shew them that here, in the liberty of the Gospel, is the ruling principle they desiderate. We must endeavour to set before them that fundamental principle of all true freedom—the freedom of the soul—justification by faith, the great lever of the Reformation.

"Our nation has been prepared for the Gospel, moreover, by the discipline of suffering. There are furrows in the Gospel field made by the plough which, in God's providence, has been allowed to cut deep into our light soil. And yet the atheism which lends fresh strength to the superstitions of Romanism is more busy than ever in its work of destruction. It is indefatigable in its propagandism, not only among the cultivated classes, but among the ignorant and the poor. Let this be to us only a fresh reason for putting forth all our energy, for the triumph of atheism would be infallibly the ruin of France.

"There is one more influence at work in our favour. We are enjoying a new, and, in France, an unexampled, freedom of action. We possess for the first time absolute liberty of speech, and the right to assemble ourselves without restriction or restraint. Who can say how long this may last? Let us use the golden hour; let us work while it is day. Every barrier is removed; there is nothing to hinder our progress but our own indolence and cowardice. We must organize our Home Missions on a broad and courageous scale. God himself has opened the way, and He will be our Leader."