

ness of the country also furnished these with the means of hiding and defence. They took refuge in caves in the face of steep cliffs, and could be dislodged only by the Romans lowering, by chains, great wooden boxes bound with iron and full of heavily armed soldiers, who pulled the robbers out of the caves with hooks on the end of long poles and dispatched them or hurled them over the precipices. In the larger caves, they smothered them by fires of brushwood at the cave's mouth. All through the Middle Ages,

and down to very recent times, Palestine was exceedingly unsafe for solitary travelers, and even yet every party that visits the Jordan takes an armed Bedouin escort along. And on the east of the Jordan, the Arab lurks like a wolf among the sand hills, jumps out and in a moment strips a traveler of everything valuable, and disappears as quickly as he came, whither it would be folly to try to follow him. The prevalence of robbers caused the villages to be built in strong positions on the hills.

APPLICATION

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They know not the voice of strangers, v. 5. A man in India was arrested for sheep-stealing. When he was on trial, his accuser, who declared himself to be the owner of the sheep, was present in the court room. Each of the two claimed the sheep, and each had witnesses to support his claim, so that it was difficult for the judge to decide to which the sheep belonged. Knowing, however, the ways of shepherds and the habits of the sheep, he adopted the following means of getting at the facts. He had the sheep brought into the court room. Then he sent the accuser out of the room, while he told the prisoner to call the sheep and see if it would come to him. But the frightened animal, not knowing the voice of strangers, would not go to him. In the meantime the other man had grown impatient and, probably knowing the nature of the test that was being made, gave a kind of "cluck", at which the sheep bounded to the door of the room where he was, bleating in delight. The sheep was given to him, and the other man was punished for false accusation.

I am the door of the sheep, v. 7. The story is told of a widowed mother whose daughter, an only child, left her home and went into an evil life. The mother could only pray for her lost child, and this she did constantly. After a time, one dark night, at midnight, the girl came home. Creeping to the cottage in the storm, she found the door unlocked, and entered. At once she was lovingly welcomed by the overjoyed mother. When she

heard again and again that she was forgiven, she asked how it came that the door had been left unlocked: "You were always careful to have it fastened, mother." The mother said, "Never, my child, since you left me, has that door been fastened day or night. I prayed God to send you back to me, and I left the door unlocked, that, when you came, you might find entrance at once." Christ is the Door of God's love. No one ever comes to it to find it shut. The door is always open, when we would come to God by Christ.

By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, v. 9. There is a thrilling story of some Russians who were crossing the wide plains of their country one wintry day. The hungry wolves were hunting, and had scented the horses of the travelers. Before long the race for life had begun. Leaving the beaten track, the men turned aside to a house they saw, and had only time to cast off the tackling of the horses and get them, with themselves, inside the house, when the pack overtook them. They tore at the door, leaped against the sides of the house, howling as only hungry wolves can. But the men were safe.

Life . . . more abundantly, v. 10. Dr. Alexander McLaren tells how, when he was in Australia, he saw wretched cattle trying to find grass on a yellow pasture, Fulness of Life where there was nothing but here and there a brown stalk that crumbled to dust in their mouths as they tried to eat it. But six weeks later after the rains had come, he saw the same pasture covered with high, rich, juicy, satis-