

The Home Mission Journal.

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previous labor. We are bidden by the Holy Spirit to labor to enter into the rest of God; it is the way thereto. Idlers are unrestful, fidgety, worried and worrying, fretful and fanciful, troubled and troublesome. They are happiest who are most completely consecrated to the service of God, and most fully absorbed in obedience to His will.

C. H. SURGEON.

Our New Serial,

A Little Loving Life.

By ELEANOR LESUEUR MACNAUGHTON.

CHAPTER I.

AS you drive northward out of Fordham, the road, after you pass the outskirts of the city, is one of the most beautiful imaginable, being for ten miles shaded by magnificent trees, whose branches in many places meet overhead, but which do not grow so closely but that one can see the rich pasture and grain fields on the one side gently sloping down to the great river, and on the other climbing towards pine crowned heights dimly seen in the distance. From these heights many streams come tumbling down and hurry across the road on their way to the sea. Over some of these, rustic bridges are thrown; others run beneath the road with a musical gurgle very refreshing to a tired traveler.

At about ten miles from the city the road approaches the river, and for some distance runs right along the beach. On the west side the farming lands here give place to well wooded terraced slopes which gradually become rocky in character, and now the road winds uphill for more than a mile, then there continues a long treeless stretch before it plunges down a steep hill, crosses the Jaune, so named from its beautiful amber waters, and enters the region known as "The Hardwoods."

On a certain hot afternoon in early August, a man might have been seen descending this hill. His clothing was of the poorest description—a pair of rough serge trousers, much the worse for wear, an old gray flannel shirt, and a battered straw hat, comprised the whole of it, if we except a pair of much broken shoes into which his feet were thrust. He was apparently past middle age, for his hair was thickly streaked with gray and his face deeply lined, yet, on a second glance, one saw that the marks on his face betokened dissipation and hardship rather than age. He had the bleared eye of the habitual drunkard, and when coming presently to a small stream, he stooped, and, with the tin can he carried, dipped up a draught of water, his trembling hands could hardly carry it to his lips. After drinking, he glanced warily up and down the road, but seeing no one within sight he sank down on a stone by the wayside, and leaned against the grassy bank behind in an attitude of utter weariness and dejection—a pitiable object truly; and yet there, was about him an indescribable something, which in spite of drink and dirt and rags distinguished him from the common tramp. A man whose early years have been passed in a home where manners are gentle and speech refined, where clean bed and table linen are matters of course and necessity, will retain traces of this to the last; and such had been the case with Mark Torrington; but this bunting something which neither poverty, wretchedness or vice had been

wholly able to efface, only served by its suggestion of a higher life to heighten the present degradation.

There was nothing remarkable in his story. What it most illustrated was the importance of the little things of life and the tremendous power of the aggregate. In his case there had been no sudden plunge into vice, no terrible downfall at any time, but almost from his earliest days there had been little yieldings to temptation, little stiflings of conscience, little tamperings with truth and honor, and almost unconsciously he had entangled himself in a network of bad habits whose meshes he had never been able to break. One day had not seemed much worse than that which had preceded it, but the end of a year found him capable of committing actions at which he would have shuddered at its beginning, and now, as he sat at the roadside a friendless, penniless outcast, there was scarcely depth of wrongdoing he he not sounded.

He leaned his head wearily on his hands, and, in a dazed sort of way, tried to survey his past. He had that morning been turned away from a low saloon where for weeks he had been granted a kind of living in return for doing menial tasks. But his strength proving latterly unequal to these, the saloonkeeper had speedily rid his place of an object not likely to attract customers, as Mark had turned away with a fixed resolve in his heart. He would walk while his strength lasted, and would likely reach the river Jaune about dusk. There he would hide in some quiet spot among the trees till night came, and then plunge into one of the deep pools beneath the overhanging rocks and all would be over. He would be free from the sinful habits that had coiled round him with ever-tightening clasp; and as for the future life, it could not, he fancied, be worse than this. But how had he, Mark Torrington, come to this pass? This was the question his liquor-befogged brain was feebly pondering as he sat by the roadside.

(To be Continued.)

"Elijah's God: Where is He?"

REV. A. J. HUGHES, EAST BOSTON, MASS.

"And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and to the waters, and said, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?'—II Kings, 2:14.

(Concluded from last issue.)

(a) The prophet's question will not down when sinful tendencies are rampant in the Christian's life. It is right and proper under such a condition of things that the prophet's query should with insistence propound itself. When the lamp is aflame there is light. When the stove radiates heat there is warmth. So in the life where God is professed sinful tendencies should be in leash. If they are unleashed and uncontrollable, the inquiry is most pertinent. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

(b) The prophet's inquiry will not down in the face of an impotent gospel. The gospel today is like Samson when shorn of his locks. Its power is a reminiscence. It evinces a twofold weakness. There is the weakness to attract. Where are the people? The majesty of the churches are more than half empty, when they ought to be full. I am aware of the attraction of the bicycle, and the Sunday newspaper, and the Sunday excursion and Sunday visitation, and the Sunday dinner, and other things; but the story of the love of God, as set forth in the gospel, should be a more powerful factor than any, or all, of them.

Then there is the weakness to save. Some are being saved, and in that fact we all rejoiced. When a vessel is wrecked on the destructive reef we are glad for the few who are saved from a watery grave, but we are pained for the many who miss deliverance and are lost. So we are glad for the few to whom the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but we are pained for the many to whom it is an ineffective message. So small is the number savingly responsive to the gospel at the present time that the prophet's plaint is on many a preacher's lips—"Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" In view of these difficulties, let us not seek to silence Elisha's inquiry as it wells up from the heart. Rather, let us make it our own, with deep and relentless searching into

our own inner selves.

3. Let us notice what preceded the prophet's inquiry:

(a) It was preceded by a request. The two men are walking onward to the spot where their earthly converse is to close, when the older man, with face already luminous with the light of heaven, says to the younger man, "Ask what I shall give thee before I be taken from thee." And the younger man answers, "Let, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit rest upon me." "Thy spirit," he asks. What does he mean? Elijah's zeal? Elijah's courage? Elijah's courage? Elijah's loyalty? No, for these were distinctively personal qualities, possessions which one man may not leave to another, but which go with him, and form the staple of his manhood in the Beyond, as well as here. Then what does he mean? He means the Holy Spirit, with whom Elijah was anointed, and by whom he was qualified for his splendid service to Israel. This spirit, by the prevalence and the power of his intercession with God, Elijah might secure, even in double portion, for the man who was to succeed him as the chief prophet among his people.

Look out for the man who asks for this gift! Eleven men asked for it in Jerusalem, many centuries ago, and receiving it they shook the world by their power. A generation ago an unlettered man locked himself up in a room in a New York hotel, and asked for it, and receiving it, he shook Christendom. Let us ask for it, earnestly, persistently, and something will happen. We may not produce a shock by the power that shall come to us, but we will certainly produce a blessing.

(b) The prophet's inquiry was preceded, too, by a bestowment. As the elder prophet ascends to God, with the retinue of chariots and horses of fire sent to attend him, he lets his mantle fall to the earth. The younger prophet standing below, watching that ascend with startled gaze and desolate heart, and the cry, suggested by heaven's pageantry, "My father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof?" subsequently stoops and picks up the fallen mantle from the earth. It was a wonderful mantle. Ten years previously it was cast upon him while ploughing in the field, and it invested him with the spirit of prophecy. Now it falls at his feet from the person of his predecessor translated to glory; he picks it up, and it is invested with the spirit of power.

Thus was Elisha's inquiry, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" preceded by a request and a bestowment.

How is it with us? Our inquiry is that of the prophet's. Sometimes it is questionably made, as the spirit of unbelief takes hold of us, and we ask ourselves, whether, after all, God is in His world, or if He be in the world, whether He is in His church, making it potent and resistless by His presence. Sometimes it is impatiently made, as the spirit of censure takes possession of us, and we complain of the forces of the church, from the minister down to the person who toils unnoticed in obscure places, and we charge them with trifling with their responsibilities, instead of assuming them with serious and earnest purpose. Now, it is pertinent to ask, as we have enquired, sometimes doubtfully, sometimes impatiently, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

4. Let us notice what followed the prophet's inquiry.

After the translation of the older prophet, the younger man rent his raiment in token of the lost sustainer. Then he took up the fallen mantle of Elijah, and proceeded to the brink of the Jordan. Standidg there, he does three things; he rolls the prophets mantle together in the form of a rod; then he asks "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" then he smites the waters with the mantle, and they part, and he crosses the Jordan on foot.

In the performance of this miraculous feat, the prophet was not an unnoticed figure. On the farther side of the river there was a company of the sons of the prophets watching him, and when the dividing stream were crossed they came and laid themselves at his feet in lowly obedience, saying "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

There was no empty adulation in the tribute paid the prophet, and a simple recognition of fact. Elijah's God was with Elisha. It was made clear by the clearuance of the water, as well as by the whole of his subsequent career.

But why was this man favored so conspicuously with the presence of God? Because the prophet desired Him more than all things else. This is