

drawn up in front of a new house he was building, not yet sufficiently complete for occupation.

We were not the only wayfarers thus received under his hospitable roof, for already a retired military officer with his wife and little ones, who, like ourselves, had come to grief by the way, had found quarters in one room, whilst we were assigned to another, Mr. G. being offered a shake-down elsewhere.

"I'll do the best I can for you," said our host, as he laughingly helped to make us as comfortable as circumstances permitted. Up went an iron bedstead, down went some skins upon the mud floor, planks cost £1 a piece, so here they rank as amongst the luxuries of life. "You must make shift with your own cushions and rugs by way of bedding—but I can spare you a candlestick!"—this was said somewhat triumphantly as the necks of bottles and such like usually serve their turn in the wilds of South Africa.

An inverted bucket provided us with a seat, and our mackintosh bath and folding basin each served its own comforting purpose.

After our last night's shivering and cramp how nice to have a roof over our heads, space to wash in (I had never numbered that amongst my mercies before!), and a bedstead to lie upon, to say nothing of a comfortable meal without needing to give a thought to its preparation, or of the warm welcome which was its best sauce.

Soon after daylight the top-half of our door was opened and a black paw hands us in our morning coffee. "Tink-tink-tink-a-tink" are the sounds which come in with it from outside. Sir Morrison is himself tinkering away at our poor old wagon, lying at full length under it, at work like any son of the soil, and as the hammer falls, its regular stroke and sonorous sound shows that it is at no play-work either. Sir Morrison had burnt up his last precious bit of packing-case to give us a cheering blaze to warm us last night, the fuel of the country, the "drift" upon which we should have to depend for some time to come, being too damp and soddened by the late rains to be available for the purpose.

The 22nd was the morning of our reluctant departure from Leon Kopje. Breakfast over, a couple of fowls, retrieved for us by Sir Morrison's big dog (such a magnificent fellow), some potatoes, some flour, one loaf and half a sheep victualled us royally for some days to come.

"Your traps are ready," said our host, "and I think the wagon is good for as far as Pretoria."

Up came our six fine oxen. John learnt off their names rapidly—Colbert, Potbert, Uppermann, Vefort, Romann, Vedermann. Not to know the names of your oxen would render driving them almost impossible. Each animal responds to its own name, and to the word of command, going to the right or to the left at the bidding of its driver, its only other guidance being the touch upon its flanks of the long whip, reins being no part of the equipment at all.

As I watched the steady pad, pad of our oxen, with their intelligent comprehension of their driver's orders, it was with a very real sense of thankfulness that, come what may in the shape of road obstacles, these strong, clever big things, would go steadily at their work and "slow but sure" might be relied upon as our motto henceforth.

JOHN KILLS A BUCK.

"Look at that cloud of birds," cried one of us at early dawn on the 23rd. "They're vultures," explained John; "there's a wounded buck for sure; if he was dead they'd have pitched upon his carcass instead of hovering about him as they're doing." Throwing the long whip upon the ground, ordering a halt and bidding Jim mind the oxen, John, seizing his huge clasp knife, bounded to the ground and like an arrow from the bow was off to the spot where the poor helpless creature lay with broken leg and gaping wound awaiting a more cruel fate than befell him by means of the one blow of our driver's weapon.

John reached us dragging the dead buck with him. The men ate voraciously of the venison, cutting the meat into strips and drying a very large portion of it in the sun for later consumption. I need not say that we infinitely preferred our mutton, of which we could now have a larger share. This night was very cold, although by day the sun had scorched us terribly. We camped by the Vaal river, which is really an affluent of the Orange river, and the boundary pass between the Free State and the Transvaal.

On the morrow we found ourselves in the Transvaal at last, although many a weary mile from our destination.

H. A. B.

(To be continued.)

The Windrow.

In the Isle of Man every woman, widow or spinster, whether she be owner, occupier, or lodger, enjoys the Parliamentary franchise. Every widow enjoys half of her husband's personal estate, and she cannot be deprived of this by will. The sale of cigarettes and intoxicants to children was forbidden in Man for years before such a prohibition was enforced elsewhere. The highest interest that can be charged for a loan in the island is six per cent., and that has been the law for over 200 years.

Miss Jean Addams, of "Hull House," who at

the Convention of the National Progressive Party in Chicago, seconded the nomination of Col. Roosevelt for a third term as President of the United States, is the Miss Addams who has for so long been associated with "settlement work" in the slums of that city. Her speech in seconding the nomination has been described by most of the newspaper correspondents present, as the most noteworthy address given at the convention.



Miss Jane Addams.

[The noted social worker, of Chicago, who seconded the nomination of Colonel Roosevelt for a third term as President of the United States, at the recent National Progressive Convention.]

The Panama Canal is now five-sixths finished. Not later than January, 1914, it will be ready for the passage of merchant shipping. On the day of the opening, says Emory Johnson, Special Commissioner on Panama Traffic, "a fleet of men-of-war, representing the navies of the world, will pass in imposing procession from Christobal to Balboa, followed by another equally large fleet composed of assembled passenger and freight vessels flying the flags of all maritime nations. Thus will stately ceremony mark the final achievement of the hope of centuries." The total amount required for the construction of the Canal is \$375,000,000.

"Every Atlantic and Gulf port," says N. Y. Independent, "is to-day enforcing strict precautions against the spread of the bubonic plague into this country." Nearly all the cities on the Atlantic Coast of the United States have been ordered to urge the destruction of rats, mice, squirrels and fleas—the most common means of spreading the disease. Should we, in Canada, not help in the work by exterminating the rodents on our own premises? There has been a remarkable increase in the number of rats and mice in many parts of the Provinces during the past two years, and should the bubonic plague, "the Black Plague," once gain ingress it would, without doubt, spread with incredible rapidity, as it has done in the Old World at many times in its history. Precautions cannot be taken too soon.

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Excuse-Making.

They all with one consent began to make excuse.—S. Luke xiv.: 18.

How well our Lord understands the ways of men. We have high ideals, but are very quick to make excuses for ourselves when we have done wrong or when we want to shirk some plain duty. Once, when our Lord was eating a Sabbath-day meal in the house of a rich man, one of the guests said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Perhaps he was quite sincere in his professed admiration for things religious, perhaps he was—almost unconsciously—trying to say something which the company at the table would approve. But He Who knew the human heart answered with the story of the great supper, where all the invited guests—who had evidently sent no refusal when first invited to the feast—began at once

to manufacture excuses when they received the summons: "Come; for all things are now ready." They did not openly say that they were not interested in the good things provided for them, but each one explained with careful politeness that it was impossible for him to leave his property, his work, or his home just then. God provides exactly what our weak and hungry souls need—but we must go to Him when He invites us to meet Him in His House. We need courage and strength to meet every-day difficulties and temptations, we need the Love of God to fill our hearts with joy in the darkness, we need the Life of Christ within us, so that we may grow more like Him, and so that men may see something of His beauty of holiness in our faces and our lives. The door is open, day after day we are invited to enter the open Treasury and come out with our arms full of the best gifts for ourselves and those we love. Week after week we are invited to be fed by God Himself with the Living Bread. We do not refuse the invitations so freely given. We know that earthly pursuits are unsatisfying, and that God above can pour life and joy into our souls; but we are so busy that prayers and church-going are crowded into odd corners. Even if our bodies are forced by a strong sense of duty into the attitude of prayer, our hearts are too often wandering off after the work or pleasure we have unwillingly interrupted for a short time. Even when Christ offers Himself to us, in the holiest feast on earth, distractions too often come between so that we only catch a glimpse of His face. We make plenty of excuses for ourselves, as though God were asking a favor of us, when He is longing to fill our tired and hungry hearts with lasting strength and sweetness.

Do you remember the beautiful legend of the monk who was praying in his room when he saw the Vision of Christ beside him? The bell called him to go out and attend to his daily duty of feeding the poor, and he unwillingly turned his back on his Guest because he felt that a God-given duty must take first place. But he desired no excuse for escaping the interview with his loved Master. Back he hurried, at the very first opportunity, and enjoyed its sweetness with a clear conscience. When we kneel before our Lord, at home or in church, He is really close beside us; but too often we hurry through our prayers, making the excuse that there is so much to do, and not really caring for His disappointment and for our own great loss.

Then there is another kind of excuse-making which we are usually very good at—making excuses for our own sins. This is a tendency very deeply rooted in our race. Adam knew he had done wrong when he disobeyed a plain command of God, but he said not one word about his own sin, and threw all the blame on Eve. It is an instinct with us to try to cover up our sins, but it is a poor way of curing them. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; but, if we refuse to own that we have done wrong, His forgiveness would only make us comfortable in wrong-doing, and would harm instead of helping us.

There is a story told of a city down South which had a most disreputable row of houses. Dirt and squalor reigned unheeded for years; but the President of the United States was about to pass that way, and it was felt that something must be done to prepare for him. Did the "committee on arrangements" clean up this "festering nest of squalor?" Not at all. A fence was swiftly built to hide all unsightliness from the distinguished visitor; and things were made far worse than before, because the filthy shacks were no longer an eyesore, pleading for improvement from every passer-by.

Sometimes a soul acts like that. There is some ugly, deliberate sin, which is slowly but surely poisoning the whole life. Instead of bringing it to the Good Physician, asking Him for cure, and then faithfully taking the remedies He prescribes, a fence of reserve is maintained about the matter. Other sins are frankly confessed, but this one is a shame and disgrace—and, besides, the sinner does not want to give it up. He would like to be rid of the misery of the secret sin, but does not care enough about the cure to go through all the

pain and difficulty which must be faced and endured. It is so easy to make excuses, to refuse even to look honestly at the ugly, festering spot. A man has told a lie which is an injury to someone else. He hates lying, and has a reputation as a truthful person to maintain, so he makes his very truthfulness an excuse for refusing to right the wrong. The matter cannot be set right without lowering him in the respect of his neighbors. So he builds a fence in front of the living lie and does his best to forget it himself. Yet it is not cured, it is a festering wound which makes him weak in his efforts after holiness. He dares not kneel at the feet of Christ and place himself unreservedly at His disposal. He knows that if the order should be given to right the wrong—to the best of his ability—he is not prepared to obey orders. The sin cannot be forgiven until it is repented of—and confessed—confessed to God, and, if necessary, to man. The manufactured excuses would look very poor if held up to God and told out before Him in plain words, therefore they are held in reserve, and the secret sin is not mentioned when the daily prayers are said. The publican in the parable was justified because he frankly acknowledged his sins. The thief on the cross publicly owned that his dreadful punishment was justly deserved. These men offered no excuses, but they did not—like some hardened sinners—defiantly and without shame, acknowledge their sins. The sinner who was ashamed to raise his eyes to heaven, lifted his heart there, and the Lord drew near to the humble one, as St. Augustine says.

Let us throw away our excuses, which build barriers between our sick souls and the Good Physician, and tell Him without any attempt at justification the sin which we have tried to forget. Conscience is too faithful to allow us to forget, though we may hide it for a time under the threshold of consciousness. A man who once had the terrible experience of lying in a hollow between the rails while a train ran overhead, said that his past life was present to his memory with wonderful distinctness during those awful minutes. Things which had been apparently forgotten for years, were as vivid as if they had only lately happened. Memory is like a huge storeroom. Thoughts and acts of long ago are packed there, and may come to the light any day, with or without our consent. We can't forget by trying, and probably we never really forget anything. It is wise to throw open to the Master of our souls the door of that storeroom, and deal as He shall advise with all the secrets stored there. No wrong done to another can be really forgiven—the dark spot washed out in the Fountain God has provided for sin and uncleanness—until all possible steps have been earnestly and honestly taken to right the wrong. Confession to God—Who already knows the sin—may not be nearly as difficult as confession to the wronged brother. But, if the latter is a straight duty, it must be faced; otherwise the sinner dare not ask repentantly for God's pardon.

Too many lives are wrecked or desperately weakened by an old sin which has never been honestly shown to the Good Physician. Those who treat an earthly physician so insincerely can hardly gain much help from his skill. When a cancer is destroying the body, it is not hidden from one who may be able to cure it, why do we care less about diseases of the soul? The body will decay in a few years, anyway, but the soul must go on living—can we endure to be diseased in soul, and only make excuses to try to hide our condition from Him Who still has power on earth to forgive sins?

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." Outward respectability is worth little in His eyes, if it is only a fence put up to hide foulness from sight. No fence is thick enough or high enough, no untrue excuses are plausible enough to shelter us from the gaze of our Divine Lover. He loves us too well to let us be comfortable in secret sinning, or escape wholesome correction.

"That punishment's the best to bear,
That follows soonest on the sin;
And guilt's a game where losers fare
Better than those who seem to win."

DORA FARNCOMB.