

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT.

Among those puzzling things which baffles reason, and are settled only by the Christian when he leaves them with his Master, resting securely on the promise, What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter, we have to reckon the early death of such a missionary as McLaren. Reading the sketch of his labours and their sudden close in a recent number of the "Interior," my eyes were blinded with tears, and the question came to my lips, "Wherefore this waste?" Looking at it from the earthly side, wherefore is the precious ointment so lavishly poured forth, and the alabaster box so often broken, in the history of that most heroic of all crusades, the modern missionary work of the Christian Church? Under the palms of Africa, on the slopes of the Himalayas, in the jungle shadows, in the islands of the sea, and in the crowded cities of China, are sleeping our beloved, who fought the good fight, and finished their course, it seems to us, all too soon.

We think of the costly preparation of the complete equipment, of the high resolve, of the perfect consecration, and of the self-denial of friends and kindred, and then we think of the strong young lives quenched, the blade struck from the hand, the dying before anything has been accomplished. The mystery deepens, and we fall back on that firm standing-ground of the divine sovereignty, and our full surrender to the will of God, for comfort and re-assurance.

Perhaps it is not for us to know just how much or how little has been done in any given case. The Master has had the full day's work from His servant, of that we may be sure, and has made no mistake, when He has bidden them come up higher. More still than this, we have a right to infer from the teachings of the Bible. The Master has work to do for those who have gone yonder, and employs them on His errands, in that home as in this, and whether they toil here in the absence of the body, or there are in the presence of the Lord, they are equally in the way of this appointment.

Nor can I believe that the Lord, who, in His material economy of the universe, suffers no waste, and whose gracious ordering is so complete that no destruction of any atom is possible anywhere, but that every physical particle, in some form or other, is always serving His purpose, allows any loss in His spiritual economy. The waste is apparent only. One of these days we shall see that it is not real. From the early grave of a missionary, therefore, there comes a clarion call to us who remain to be more generous in giving, more earnest in prayer, more thorough in consecration, and more determined to lift up the banner of Christ in the midst of those who sit in darkness—

"Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King."

If I were a minister, and had a missionary sermon to preach, I think I would go for illustration to the life of such a man as Lord Lawrence, who saw the hope of India in the devotion of Christian missionaries. I would go to the books of travel, which fall from the press like the leaves from the trees in autumn. For instance from "The Golden Chersonese," that picturesque book by Miss Isabella Bird, I would cull the description of the dreadful prison at Naam-Noi at Canton, with its horrors exceeding those of Dante's hell, its fearful every-day cruelties, and monstrous tortures, and its crosses, on which poor wretches are evermore bound with tight cords, and slowly hacked to death.

Miss Bird says of the crosses she saw here: it was a rude gibbet of unplanned wood, roughly nailed together, barely eight feet high, and not too heavy for a strong man to carry on his shoulders. Most likely it was such a cross, elevated but little above the heads of the howling mob of Jerusalem, which Paul had in view when he wrote of it: "But made Himself obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Not until we are ready to tell that old story of Calvary, ceasing not till the idols fall, and men's hearts are changed by the touch of the atoning blood, may we reasonably hope to see the triumph of foreign missions which we have a right to expect. Religion has science and civilization for her handmaids. What she lacks is a thoroughly aroused and vitalized conscience on the part of professed Christians.

When morning and evening at the family altar the

missionary is remembered, when the broken ranks are filled up without delay, when the money is poured in golden streams into the Lord's treasury, not doled from reluctant purses which tremblingly count the cost, and when parents joyfully give their sons and daughters to this grandest place in the van of the Redeemer's army, then may we look to see the Lord's kingdom come. Let the precious ointment be lavished at the feet of Him whose feet were pierced for us.—*Mrs. M. E. Sangster, in Interior.*

"CONSIDER THE LILIES."

Not gold, nor diamond-flash of dazzling brightness,
No costly thing of earth Thou gav'st for thought,
But these sweet, simple flowers, beside whose whiteness
The great king's glory all would seem as nought.

Thou knewest how soon must fade all earth's poor splendour,
Worthless her wealth to Thine all-seeing eye;
The short-lived glimmer of her pomp and grandeur,
Fleeting and transient—only born to die.

Thou would'st not give our love to earth's frail treasure,
But to the lilies, beautiful and pure.
They toil and spin not, yet their lips' full measure
Thou metest, and their day is kept secure.

Oh lilies, well I love your snowy pureness,
That once the Master, deigned, while here, to trace—
Pledges of His dear love, whose truth and sureness
Are faintly mirror'd in your beauty's grace.

Meek teachers! Could I learn this lesson given—
If God so clothe the grass with beauty rare,
Shall he not guard us all the way to heaven,
And guide our footsteps till we enter there?

Lord, give to me a soul of lily-whiteness
Washed in that blood that Thou hast shed for me;
Thy Spirit's light to gild earth's gloom with brightness,
And show the path, through mist and cloud, to Thee!

And give me faith, that on Thy love relying,
From doubt's dark thrall I may be ever free;
And clothe me, Lord, that in the hour of dying
Thy righteousness, fair robe, my dress may be!

So would I walk, by Thee, my Guide, befriended,
Joyous with joy that knows not sad decay;
That when earth's sun has set, her brief day ended,
My morn may break and shine to cloudless day.
Moosomin, N. W. T. M. A. NICHOL.

CHRIST-LIKE BROTHERLINESS.

There is a very common religious living which strengthens selfishness. It climbs the mountain-top and there builds its tabernacle, sitting and singing its hymns about heaven, and crying deliciously over them. It cannot think how anybody can like to go down among those dreadful lepers and frightful demoniacs and outcast women and the noisy and vulgar people. Be quite sure that the highway of holiness does not lead us up there for a dwelling-place. It takes us down into the market-place and teaches us to do our business there, honestly and generously, as we would be done by. It takes us into the lanes and by-ways of the city and teaches us to see in every want and every sorrow a claim upon our pity and help. It takes us home and helps us to remember how the children feel, and to consider the neighbours and servants. This is what we are to set before us as the outcome of our faith and prayer—a *gracious considerateness for other people*. And that not as busybodies, much less as patrons, but with a simple Christ-like brotherliness, a considerateness that does not only concern itself about men's souls, and that which helps them heaven-ward, but which runs through all the commonest round and ways of daily life. We are to carry such a sense of indebtedness to our dear Lord and Master that we shall be always trying to find opportunities and outlets to bless others; we are to live finding in all the daily intercourse with men a hundred fresh channels by which the Father's love may flow into their midst.

For His sake, for the sake of others, for our own sakes, let us strive after this as the fairest and only satisfying token of a holy life—this unfailing brotherliness.—*Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, in Illust. Christian Weekly.*

THE SILENT POWER.

We are apt to be most deeply impressed by those forces in nature which manifest themselves to our outward senses in prodigious and awful forms. But the cataract, the cyclone, and the earthquake are only manifestations of the power of hidden forces whose silent processes and operations we cannot see; but upon which depend conditions necessary to our

existence and to the stability of the earth itself. The rose and the lily, the glowing hues of sunset, the dreamy cloud-flecked summer sky, the fragrant morning "when jocund day sits lightly on the mountain-tops," the refreshing dews and showers—all these are the beneficent results of combining forces whose operations are not apparent to the merely sentient eye; and truly these phenomena are not less wonderful to the understanding mind than Niagara and Etna. This hidden working power is the love of God, which

"Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms on the trees."

In human society we have parallel forces and results. Revolutions and wars strike us as the greatest exhibition of the power of moral forces. We hear their thunders, we see their lightnings. But there is a silent, active, persistent, ever-augmenting, irresistible force in the world, which is love. Fragrant as the rose, modest as the violet, beautiful as the lily, this trinity of love found its sweetest and highest form of expression in the person, life, and teachings of Jesus. No region of darkness, nor cold, nor danger, is inaccessible to it. No power or obstacle can successfully resist its progress. It has penetrated the "dark continent," traversed the frozen wastes of the north. It overthrew the barbarous despotism of the Cæsars, and has survived storms and floods, and the wreck of nations, to blossom out in this latter day all over the earth where the Gospel of Christ is taught—in hospitals and missions, and schools and homes, for the poor, the oppressed, the ignorant, the afflicted and sinful.

How beautiful! how wonderful! how mighty! is love—the love of God.—*Christian Home.*

SOMETHING TO CRY OVER.

Dr. John Hall, in an article entitled, "A Thing to Cry Over," touches in a pathetic manner the common habit of laughing at drunken men. Dr. Hall stood on a boat in New York harbour. Not far off was a well-dressed but tipsy young man. Beside the doctor was a plainly dressed man. When Dr. Hall saw the people laughing at the drunkard, he saw in his neighbour's eyes such a sad, pitying look that he said to him: "They should hardly laugh at him." Said the man: "It is a thing to cry over." Then he told Dr. Hall of his own wife, who took to drink in Scotland, and who promised to reform if he would come to this country, but did not, and died of drunkenness, and when the doctor hoped that he had comfort in the children, he said: "One, the second, is; she is a good child. The oldest is not steady—I can do nothing with her; and the youngest, a boy, can't be kept from drink. I've sold my place, and am going to a town in Ohio where, I am told, no liquor can be had—to try to save him." Dr. Hall closes as follows: "Who would not wish for abstinence societies, tracts, books, ministers, sermons, young people's pledges, humane laws? One almost cries out for anything that will stop this slow, cruel murder of home love, of men, of women, of little children, of hope, of peace, of immortal souls."

A BEAUTIFUL TESTIMONY.

This character, of which Christ was the perfect model is in itself so attractive, so altogether lovely that I can not describe in language the admiration with which I regard it; nor can I express the gratitude I feel for the dispensation which bestowed that example on mankind, for the truths which He taught and the sufferings He endured for our sakes. I tremble to think what the world would be without Him. Take away the blessing of the advent of His life and the blessings purchased by His death, in what an abyss of guilt would man have been left! It would seem to be blotting the sun out of the heavens—to leave our system of worlds in chaos, frost, and darkness.

In my view of life the teachings, the labours and the sufferings of the blessed Jesus there can be no admiration too profound, no love of which the human heart is capable too warm, no gratitude too earnest and deep of which he is justly the object. It is with sorrow that my love for Him is so cold and my gratitude so inadequate. It is with sorrow that I see any attempt to put aside His teachings as a delusion, to turn men's eyes from His example, to meet with doubt and denial the story of his life. For my part, if I thought that the religion of scepticism were to gather strength and prevail and become the dominant view of mankind I should despair of the fate of mankind in the years that are to come.—*William Cullen Bryant*