

Pastor and People.

AFTER COMMUNION.

BY W. H.

Lord, I fain would be
A runner in the race,
In the I lag, and do but gain
The lowliest place.

I fain would lay aside,
Every sin and weight,
And press with steadfast patience on
To heaven's gate.

Riches, pride, and ease,
Lord, let me not know,
Lead me, for I do long to walk
Where Thou didst go.

I would not strive in pride
To take the highest seat,
For Thou, the Master, once didst wash
Thy servants' feet.

I would not love to feast
Just those who ask again;
For Thou, the King, didst visit most
The poorest men.

I would not seek for wealth,
Nor slothful lie abed;
For Thou, the Lord, hadst never where
To lay Thy head.

I would not flee from pain,
Nor count each petty loss;
For Thou wert in Gethsemane
And on the Cross.

But Christ, be Thou at hand
That I may run my race;
Weights and sin oppress when I
See not Thy face.

Come as Thou didst of old
To holy men of God,
That I, tho' weak and faint, may climb
The heights they trod.

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THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

THE MAGIC RING.

Gyges told the bereaved father the awful story. He would not believe it: he was sure that his little girl was a priestess of the great mother. Yet he went to the grove, where he met the arch priest who deceived him, and said that it was against the rule for parents to see their children who had been devoted to the service of the goddess. After this more children disappeared, and their parents were not allowed to enter the grove at all. Then Gyges called the shepherds together, all who had lost children or those dear to them. He told them that he was Gyges, the heir of the ancient Lydian line, that he had with his own eyes seen Thomace slaughtered by the cruel priests, and that the goddess to whom she was sacrificed was no goddess at all, for he had seen the true God, the Lord of Heaven, and He had said, "How long?" The simple shepherds believed his royal word. They took their crooks to the anvils, and the smiths were busy that day turning them into spears. Even Thomace's father was convinced at last and joined the band. They elected Gyges their leader, and he led his spearmen straight to the grove. His words were found all too true. Two poor children they were in time to save, but of the rest nothing remained but charred bones. The priests fled to Sardis, all but the chief sacrificer. Him the old shepherd pursued while the rest were looking for the children. He overtook the priest, and wrenched from his hands the knife with which he had killed his little Thomace. Then he plunged it into the wretch's breast, and came back to the band to be Gyges' lieutenant.

On marched the avengers to Sardis and found all the gates shut. They waited till night and fled silently under its high walls, only to find sentries posted at every opening. Gyges turned the stone of the ring inwards and became invisible. He waited till the officer came to relieve the sentry, and as the guard was changed he entered the city. Then, throwing his long cloak over the inside guard's head, he opened the gate, gave a long whistle, and the shepherds poured in. They uttered no cry, made no needless noise, so that their steady tramp was taken for the return of the old guard. By the steep street they marched towards the citadel. There the outer sentry cried to him within that an enemy was coming, to open the gate and let him in. He did so but Gyges, still invisible, entered too. While the two soldiers ran to give the alarm, he opened the citadel gate and the avenging spearmen stood within its walls. Sadyattes heard the noise, met the appalled sentries, came forward to see what was the matter. At once the old shepherd, wrought to frenzy, dashed upon him with his knife, crying, "My master and my daughter!" Sadyattes fled through the open gate but Thomace's father overtook him, and at the very place where Dascylus had fallen, they rolled over the rocks together, but not before the knife of the sacrificer had found the heart of the perjured king.

Gyges allowed no more blood to be shed. When day broke he called the people of Sardis together and they, tired

of the tyrant's rule, proclaimed the son of Dascylus their lawful king. Then came a happy moment for Gyges, for his mother in her retirement heard the shouts which told that her enemy was dead and her son was King of Lydia. Who can paint the meeting between the young monarch and the still beautiful but humbly dressed lady, now to be recognized by all as queen-mother. Gyges was a great king, but he was not lifted up. Whenever he was tempted to be proud he looked above and saw the face of the King of Kings. He put away the cruel tax-gatherers that oppressed the people. He had the groves cut down and the idols burned, and declared that any priest who took a human life should be punished as a murderer. So the cruel worship came to an end, and the girls and boys were able to play in peace. Happy years came round again, and the people of Lydia enjoyed prosperity. No more summer droughts dried up the pastures, nor winter frosts killed the young lambs and cattle. Many people wanted him to kill all the priests of the great mother and the taxers, and the servants of Sadyattes who had flogged him when a boy. But he answered: "No, let us try to make them better. See how the great God bears with them; and if He does, why not we?" Then they wanted to see this God, so he lent the ring to thousands all around him, that they might see God, who is invisible.

One day when he was an old, old man, and a happy old man, too, he turned the bezel of the ring inwards, and because he was so old, memory left him so that he forgot to turn it back, and was seen no more. Now he saw the far-off city clearly, and heard with open ears the song ascending. And he saw the great God's face, the Father face so plainly, with no cloud drifting over it, majestic, glorious, loving, and with a smile of infinite tenderness. A golden step was there, and at once his foot was upon it to begin the heavenly ascent. But as he did so, the step moved and carried him, without aid of his own, up into the blessed land.

We are all king's sons and daughters deprived of an inheritance. We have been harshly treated by the powers of evil in body and soul, in friends and outward estate, till, with King David and the Psalmists, we are tempted to hate with perfect hatred and count as our enemies, not only these evil powers but all who serve them as well. Then the darkness leads us to seek for light, and find it in that Light of men whom the world slew, and whose death rent the rocks asunder. The ring is on His hand. It is the sign of God's unspeakable gift, and by it we see the Father who is invisible. "He that hath seen Me," says the Christ, who laid His hand on the head of little children, "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The same ring shows us good and evil fighting all around us in a world of Spirit, and we learn to love the good.

By the power of this ring we shall know the evil heart. But it also will bring us strength to overcome the evil that is in the world, as Jesus overcame. Then we shall become God's just men on earth. It is a fine thing, you think, to be earth's great men and women. Alas! the world takes many in order to sacrifice them on its many altars, to very cruel goddesses, as cruel as the great mother of the story. Even children it takes and decks them out for the slaughter. It is a greater thing to have it said with truth, "He does what is right and good," to know that God is approving. Such an one shall at last have a great reward.

Will you not have this ring? It will show you many things you cannot see with the eye. It will show you that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save it; and the faithful saying worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and the wonderful saying that Jesus and the Father are one. Then it will reveal to you this God-man, bidding you come. And your hearts will be lifted up towards Him, saying, "Lord Jesus, come quickly." What will you see, the eye? Yes, the eye. God sees. Now does He see? Is He looking for faults in us, angry with us every day? The good people that wrote parts of the Bible call God's feeling and the feeling of Christ once, by the name of anger, because they used to be angry themselves, and did not know how to express it. But when we read Christ's life or look at the pictures good men have made of Him we know what the feeling is. It is grief, sorrow and sadness. He was grieved for the hardness of men's hearts, and wept over wicked and doomed Jerusalem. So you see the great face, the human face, that covers all the heavens sad because of the world's sin and misery. You would not willingly grieve the heart of a loving mother or father, add the burden of your wrong doing to all else they have to bear. And God the Father bears like Christ the Son, and so does God the Holy Ghost all the evil of every kind that abounds in a world lying in the wicked one. Shall we not also bear and suffer with God, that we also may reign with Him hereafter? Shall we not endure as seeing Him who is invisible?

PERDICCAS OF MACEDON.

And the day star arise in your hearts.—11 Peter i. 19.

Caranus, who belonged to the great race of Temenus, had been king in Argos. Its chief city of the same name wherein he had lived was the oldest in all Greece. Its walls were built of huge stones, that the cyclops, one-eyed giant masons of ancient days, are said to have put together, as were its lofty towers. But it was not a rude city; very far from it! Music with sculpture and many an art beside found a home within its gates. Caranus had done no wrong, but the

Argives were fickle, and said that he should be no longer king. So they banished him and his family away to Sicyon on the Gulf of Corinth. It broke his heart to leave his beautiful kingdom, and of a broken heart he died, leaving three sons, Gavanes, Eropus and Perdiccas. As the last words of those we love are dear, the boys asked such a word from their father before he left them. He feebly said, and it was a strange thing for one to say who had well nigh lost everything: "Thankfully accept what God gives." "How shall we know what He gives?" they all asked, and with his last breath he replied: "God has His ministers."

They buried the dead king in a strange land, and, as their tears fell fast, Gavanes and Eropus murmured at their cruel fate and looked for darker days to come. Not so Perdiccas he wept too and his heart was no less deeply moved than theirs, but he called to mind his father's dying counsel. When all was over, the three lads walked along the shore of the Corinthian gulf. The air was clear and the sea gave back the blue of the sky. There was a boat on the beach, a good serviceable boat, but no sign of any owner nor any appearance of a house for miles around. "Here is one of God's gifts," cried Perdiccas; "let us thankfully accept it, and see where it will lead us to." So they entered the boat, hoisted the sail, and sped away across the gulf with a southern breeze. When they came to land on the other side they found themselves in Phocis. Passing away from the shore on to the highways they fell into a large concourse of people, all moving in one direction. "Whither are you all bound," they asked, and the people answered: "We are pilgrims going to the shrine at Delphi." "Let us go too," said the youngest, and at once the three lads joined the band on the way to Delphi. There they arrived in course of time and would fain have remained unnoticed among the throng. But the prophet singled them out with his eye, and called out: "Approach, sons of the royal Caranus." Gavanes and Eropus stood where they were, but Perdiccas drew near and bowing said: "Have you a message for us, O holy man?" Then the prophet pointed his finger at him and gave the oracle's response:—

Who doth his sire's command obey
Is loved of God, o'er men shall hold the sway.

Perdiccas returned to his brothers, repeating the couplet to himself so that he might remember it. "Well," they said, "you did not get much of a gift that time." "We shall see," Perdiccas answered, and so they went on their way.

They journeyed northward and came to a wondrous land, the beautiful land of Thessaly. It was a country of cornland and green pastures, of vineyards and orchards, well watered by the hundred streams of the broadly flowing Peneus. The fruit trees by the roadside furnished almost all the food they needed by the way, and at night they could sleep out in the open air or seek the shelter of a hospitable farm house. Then when asked to recite something, Gavanes and Eropus would gather the people about them and keep them pleased for hours with extracts from blind old Homer's wonderful poem about the war before the walls of Troy. But when it came the turn of Perdiccas he would ask to be allowed to speak to the boys and girls. So the children came together and he made them repeat after him:—

Who doth his sire's command obey
Is loved of God, o'er men shall hold the sway.

The elders listened to the words their children repeated, and were much pleased, more even than with the story of Troy's downfall. But Jason, King of Thessaly, named after the hero of the Golden Fleece, was a tyrant. He learnt that the sons of Caranus were in his dominions, and, fearing lest they should seek to rob him of his kingdom, he ordered them to cross the border and betake themselves to some other land.

They were loath to leave the pleasant land of Thessaly, but the tyrant's command was urgent, so they passed westward to where the mountains of Epirus raise their peaks to heaven. There were no houses or plantations on these mountains, no fruit trees growing by the way. The young travellers hungered and there was nothing to satisfy their hunger. They had seen the wild goats leaping from crag to crag all day. Towards evening a kid that they came upon unexpectedly arose at their approach. It was a graceful little creature and Perdiccas was sorry to wish it harm. But he and his brothers were hungry, and hunger has no compassion. He had no weapon but the staff that all travellers carried. This he flung at the kid and felled it to the ground. Then he flayed it with his knife and cut it up. Striking a spark from a stone with the same knife on some timber and dry leaves, he lit a fire and cooked the goat's flesh. Part of it he and his brothers ate that night with great relish. The rest they kept for future use. Their sleep that night would have been pleasant, had it not been for the baying of wolves and the cries of other wild beasts.

(To be continued.)

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