

the least important gift is a little bag of the sacred earth itself, highly valued as a precious remedy for mingling with potions for the sick.

And what will be the end of it all? Will it not be the sad failure and disappointment which must inevitably come, when living men and women with human nature's old, yet ever new needs and trials and temptations, trust to the help and intercession of dead saints, however pathetic their sufferings were, or however worthy their lives may have been to excite the interest or imitation of posterity?

It would not be surprising, then, if the pilgrim's transient glory all too soon fades away, and the unlovely fruits of self-righteousness and spiritual pride by-and-by begin to appear. Jealous neighbors and cynics will even describe him as 'worse than before.'

Still, for all this, long years after that auspicious day of the pilgrim's return, as long, in fact, as a forgetful posterity keeps his name in remembrance, he will be spoken of, especially when it is desired to do him honor or win a favour from him, as 'Kerbela'—the man who has visited the holy shrine of the blessed Imam, the pilgrim to Kerbela!

Kerbela is sixty miles from Baghdad. The chief shrine in the city contains the tombs of Husain and his son Ali Akbar. The shrine sacred to Abbas, the younger step-brother of Husain, is also there.

The yearly number of pilgrims to Kerbela from Ispahan and the surrounding districts is very large; I have heard it estimated at 20,000. If infectious sickness is prevalent either in Ispahan and the country districts, or in the neighboring Turkish territory, the pilgrimage is occasionally prohibited by the Persian or Turkish Government for fear of the pilgrims spreading the disease.

Both men and women make pilgrimages to Kerbela often under circumstances of great hardship and poverty, in the belief that all their sins will thereby be forgiven them. It involves a journey of about twenty-eight days, 450 miles as the crow flies, through a country where there are no made roads, much less railways, and those who cannot afford to keep a pony, mule, or donkey to ride, must perforce go on foot. To the privations and fatigues of long marches and the severity of the weather must be added the more real peril of attacks by robber bands.

The corpses of the dead are often exhumed after remaining buried for some time to be sent to Kerbela, to find their last resting-place in that sacred spot. But the practice of sending the relics of the dead to Kerbela has been found liable to grave abuse, the muleteers to whom they were entrusted too often finding it more convenient to deposit their burdens in some lonely desert and save themselves all further trouble.

### How He Found it.

Among the benefactions to a popular church is a liberal endowment from a man whose name is well known, but not in connection with churches or with Christian work. The interest of this endowment is to be devoted to the fresh-air fund of the church.

The pastor, in showing to a friend the long list of subscribers to the fund, said:

'What do you think of that name?'

'It is a surprise to know that such a man had a tender spot in his heart. How did you find it?'

'In this way: I often passed his elegant residence, and one winter the face of an old Irishwoman grew familiar to me from seeing her gazing out, sometimes from one window,

sometimes from another. She was always dressed in black, with a lace kerchief and a stiff white cap, but it was such a restless, weary, longing face that I could not help being attracted to it.

'She grew at length to distinguish me in the throng, and whenever I passed I touched my hat to her, feeling repaid by the smile of satisfaction that gave a glimpse of her kindly nature.

'One sunny morning in early spring, as I came up the avenue, I saw her sitting on the marble steps of the elegant house with her knitting, and as I drew near I said:

"Good morning, mother."

"Good morning, son," she said. "And sure it was you I was looking for. Will ye be sitting?'"

"Thank you," I said, but as I remained standing, with my hat in my hand, she went on:

"It is not your way, but what are such foine door-steps for, if not to sit out on? Only this morning my son said,—that is my son's name on the plate,—and he said, 'Mo'her, what will make you happy?' for he knows I'm not contented, though I was wild, after my old man died, to come from Ireland to live here. And I said:

'To sit out on the steps with my knitting and see the folks go by.' And he said:

"Well, mother, do it, then," and here I am. You may be sure his wife is mad, and is scolding the poor lad this minute. Ah, but I must ask him to send me back to Ireland, for it is lonesome that I am, with not a cow, or a pig, or a chicken, or a goat even to care for."

"Ask him rather to buy a little country farm, with all the fowls and animals you want, and let poor mothers and their children go out to you for a good time."

"I will," she said, "faith, that I will," and the next day she was waiting on the steps to ask me in to talk it over with her son.

"It is a good thought," he said, "and it gives me joy to carry it out. My mother shared with me in my infancy. I will share with her in her age."

The farm was bought, and while the poor mother lived she was perfectly happy living upon it. At her death the man gave the property and a fund to my church, but with the request that his name should never appear in connection with it, for fear it would cast a reproach upon the charity.

Kindness and address will somehow find the good in human hearts. The clergyman's greeting to the lonely woman was a 'cup of cold water' that received its reward.—'Youth's Companion.'

### Kaffir Children.

A minister at the Mount Arthur Mission Station, among the Kaffirs in South Africa writes as follows:—

'When I was staying at Mkapuse a little mite of eight summers came to me and said: "Minister, I love Jesus, although I have a black skin. He has washed my heart, and He has given me power to overcome Satan, so that when mother tells me to mind the baby, which is very tiresome, I don't murmur and grumble now. Yes; Jesus has taken the grumbling spirit from my lips. I hope He will keep me now—will He, minister?" Another little mite stood up and said, "My Saviour does love me, but I am afraid my heart cannot be of much use to Him; and yet, when I see He takes care of my little trees and the wee, wee flowers, I am encouraged. Please pray for me, minister."

'And yet another said: "Minister, when coming to church this morning, knowing you would ask how we were getting on inside,

I began to think a little of something to say; but it has all gone, so I will just say, 'Jesus is mine.'" Another one said: "Minister, I cannot say the same as the last one, 'Jesus is mine,' because I think He is so holy and so dear; I don't know where He could stay in my heart, it is so little, but I feel I can say, 'I am his.' You know, minister, my mother died last week. I am motherless now. But before she died she called me to her side, and whispered, 'Gracie, always love Jesus, and come to me, by-and-by.' I want to be with mother and Jesus soon, minister, because the house is so lonely. Her seat, too (pointing to a seat in the church), looks lonely." And the poor little girl wept. So you see, far away up in these regions, Jesus is claiming the little children for Himself. Oh, it is a blessed work to point these heathen to the Good Shepherd.—The Christian.'

### A Sunday-School Superintendent's Mistake.

There was a change made in the superintendency of a Sunday-school which was the largest in a town of a little over five thousand inhabitants, and every one was pleased, for the superintendent who now had charge was a spiritual man, full of interest in the scholars, and in brief was unanimously said to be just the man for the place.

The Sunday-school prospered under his hand, the number of scholars materially increased; teachers came in almost without solicitation and the school was in a prosperous state. By-and-by it became evident that a great many in attendance were interested regarding their soul's salvation.

Several of the teachers, upon seeing this, went to the minister to express their belief that there should be some special meetings held and a chance given to the scholars to make a public confession of Christ. The pastor agreed with them, but from the very first the superintendent opposed it because he did not believe in urging or forcing the scholars into anything; or in any way, whatever, leading them, however gently, into taking a decided stand, for fear they would not realize the magnitude of such a step, as they were too young. But upon the interest becoming more marked he finally fell in with the idea of having a series of meetings, but only on condition that on no account should personal invitations be given to, or personal acceptances be asked from the scholars; and so strong did he put it in the light in which he saw it that his wishes were carried out.

The meetings were held. There was much interest. The scholars seemed to be alive to the occasion, but as there were no open confessions of Christ asked the interest gradually died away, and with the exception of a few in one class, none of the scholars accepted Christ publicly. Nor was this the end of it. The interest manifested by the scholars gradually declined. There sprang up a coolness and lack of interest that appeared to affect teachers and scholars alike; and finally the school dwindled down and down until it became one of the smallest in the town. And those who were acquainted with the facts fully believed that this was due entirely to the mistake of the superintendent who so strongly opposed an expression by the children for fear that they were too young to fully realize what they were doing.

Children who are old enough to understand right from wrong, are old enough to be saved; and any one is taking a very serious responsibility who denies them the privilege of openly confessing Christ, and uniting with God's people.—'Union Gospel.'