

Perhaps the glamour of the past is on me, perhaps a lad was but a poor judge, but it seemed to me good reading—slow, well pronounced, reverent, charged with tenderness and pathos. No one slept or moved, and the firelight falling on the serious faces of the stalwart men, and the shining of the lamp on the good gray heads as the Gospel came, sentence by sentence, to every heart, is a sacred memory, and I count that Mr. Spurgeon would have been mightily pleased to have been in such meetings of homely folk.

It was harvest time, when Manasseh was read, and there being extra men with us, our little gathering was held in the loft, which is the place where corn is placed which is to be threshed in the mill. It was full of wheat in heavy, rich, ripe, golden sheaves, save a wide space in front of the machinery, and the congregation seated themselves in a semicircle on the sheaves. The door through which the corn is forked into the loft was open, and, with a skylight in the low dusty roof, gave us, that fine August evening, all the light we needed. Through the window we could look on some stacks already safely built, and on fields, stretching for miles, of grain cut and ready for gathering, and beyond to woods and sloping hills towards which the sun was westerling fast. That evening, I remember, we sang,

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes,"

and sang it to "French," and it was laid on me as an honour to read "Manasseh." Whether the sermon is called by this name I do not know, and whether it be one of the greatest of Mr. Spurgeon's I do not know, nor have I a copy of it; but it was mighty unto salvation in that loft, and I make no doubt that good grain was

garnered unto eternity. There is a passage in it when, after the mercy of God has rested on this chief sinner, an angel flies through the length and breadth of heaven, crying, "Manasseh is saved, Manasseh is saved." Up to that point the lad read, and farther he did not read. You know, because you have been told, how insensible and careless is a school-boy, how destitute of all sentiment and emotion . . . and therefore I do not ask you to believe me. You know how dull and stupid is a ploughman, because you have been told . . . and therefore I do not ask you to believe me.

It was the light which got into the lad's eyes, and the dust which choked his voice; and it must have been for the same reasons that a ploughman passed the back of his hand across his eyes.

"Ye'll be tired noo," said the goodman; "lat me feenish the sermon," but the sermon is not yet finished, and never shall be.

Who of all preachers you can mention of our day could have held such companies save Spurgeon? What is to take their place, when the last of those well-known sermons disappears from village shops and cottage shelves? Is there any other Gospel which will ever be so understood of the people, or so move human hearts as that which Spurgeon preached in the best words of our own tongue? The goodman and his wife have entered into the long ago, and of all that company I know not one now; but I see them as I write, against that setting of gold, and I hear the angel's voice, "Manasseh is saved," and for that evening and others very sacred to my heart I cannot forget Spurgeon.—*British Weekly*.

THE STAR OF HOPE.

BY THOMAS H. BENEDICT.

Just a gleam through the darkened by-ways,
Just a rift in the clouds of life,
Sweet light to the eyes so tired
Of battle and turmoil and strife.

Just a staff held out to the weary
Dim seen in the shadows grey,
Just a something to help you onward
To give you the strength to obey.

For despair is a sorrowful valley,
And the cliffs round about it are steep,
And no one seems there to counsel or share
Your griefs in that dungeon so deep.

Yet you know there are voices about you
Trying to place the key,
That will open the heart to admit the dart
Of light and let you see.

Sometimes it is not a light at all,
But a glance from a loving face;
Or a soft low note of harmony,
That finds for the key its place.

It may be but one, or it may be all
That into your heart will fly,
It is offered in plenty at every hand
For it's God, and it lives for aye.