

The Maister and the Bairns.

[Those not familiar with the Doric will lose the great beauty of this rendering of one of the Gospel episodes.]

The Maister sat in a wee cot hoose
Tae the Jordan's waters near,
An' the fisher fowk crushed and crooded roon'
The Maister's words tae hear.

An' even the bairns frae the near-haun' street
War mixin' in wi' the thrang,
Laddies and lassies wi' wee bare feet
Jinkin' the crood amang.

An' ane o' the Twal, at the Maister's side,
Rase up an' cried aloud—
"Come, come, bairns, this is nae place for you,
Rin awa' hame oot the crood."

But the Maister said, as they turned awa',
"Let the wee bairns come tae Me!"
An' He gaithered them roon' Him whar He sat,
An' liftit ane up on His knee.

Ay, He gaithered them roon' Him whar He sat
An' straitit their curly hair,
An' He said tae the won'erin' fisher fowk
That croodit aroon' Him there—

"Sen' nae the weans awa' frae Me,
But rather this lesson learn—
That nae'll win in at heaven's yett
That isna as pure as a bairn!"

An' He that wisna oor kith and kin,
But a Prince o' the Far Awa',
Gaithered the wee anes in His arms,
An' blessed them ane an' a'.

O Thou Who watchest the ways o' men,
Keep our feet in the heavenly airt,
An' bring us at last tae Thy hame aboon
As pure as the bairns in heirt.

WILLIAM THOMSON.

OCCULT INSTANCES.

—Do you understand how it is that you shudder?

—How is it you can blow hot and cold with the same breath?

—Did you ever observe how your breath changes from one nostril to the other?

—Have you ever dreamed that you were flying, and are you quite sure it was an illusion?

—When you were about "falling asleep" did you ever come back to your body with a start, and with the impression that you had fallen down a precipice?

—Have you ever failed to catch a remark at first, and then gradually have the meaning spread itself through your consciousness until it became unnecessary to have it repeated?

Zoroaster: Persian Reformer.

ZOROASTER, one of the world's great religious reformers, has around his birth and history that veil of mystery and uncertainty which is characteristic of the Saviours of mankind.

His period is fixed by Aristotle at 6400 B.C. By others it is given a far more recent date; but, as we ordinarily understand history, he evidently belongs to a prehistoric period. Three of his followers came to the cradle of Jesus. We find them mentioned in the Bible as the Magi, or Wise Men, who came from the east. The home of this religion was the Perso-Iranian kingdom, lying east of Palestine.

In the later and more corrupt scriptures Zoroaster is invested with supernatural powers such as humanity seems prone to heap upon its religious heroes. At his appearing all nature rejoices. He enters into conflict with demons and rids the earth of their presence. Satan approached him, as tempter to make him renounce his faith. The Zardusht-Nama, which belongs to the thirteenth century, is full of miracles and miraculous deliverances wrought by him.

But it is quite otherwise in the Gathas. These writings alone, within the Avesta, make any claim to be the very words of the prophet. In them he is the very opposite of the miraculous personage of later legends. He is a mere man, standing always on the solid ground of reality, whose only arms are trust in his God and the protection of this powerful Ally. He had to face, not merely all forms of outward opposition and the unbelief and lukewarmness of his adherents, but also the inward struggles of his own heart, nature and intellect.

It is well to approach the life and teachings of these religious teachers from that point of view in which they appeared to the body of their followers, or that view of them which is held by those who lived the nearest to their own time. For this reason I will not dwell upon the fact—for fact it is stated to be—that the Zoroaster of history was the thirteenth of that name and the last of them all, notwithstanding that his greatness served to illumine the pages of the world's moral and spiritual thought for thousands of years and still