

Family Reading.

GOLD IN THE SKY.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Quick! now, quick!" he cried, loudly and abruptly; and half frightened, half indignantly, she answered, "If you show me clear proof of what you assert I will get the reward for you, if I can, of course."

"All right! well, excuse me, but there is no time to lose; one can't tell when one may be disturbed. Now, do you know whose house this is?"

"I thought it was to let," she said.

"So it is; but Mr. Egerton's steward let Jem Sawyers live in a room of it till it's let, on condition of his having a fire to keep the damp out. So you can call this Jem Sawyers' house for the time being."

"Jem Sawyers," she repeated, musingly; "the under-keeper. I thought he lived at Milton's."

"No; he was only there a week, and then he moved here. Now, time's precious, as I said. Now, I happen to know something of Jem, and where he keeps his curiosities; perhaps you'd like to see some of them?"

Saying this, her host mounted on to the oven of the fireplace. The chimney was one of the old-fashioned country ones, wide and large, and his body almost entirely disappeared from view. All at once something fell down from above and on to a poker, which it knocked down with itself, on to the hearth, making considerable jingle. With a muttered curse the man hastily descended, and paused and listened whether the sound had disturbed any one, or been heard outside; but all being apparently quiet, he picked it up impatiently, saying, "Now, what did you want to tumble down for? Who wanted you?" Then, addressing Gwendoline, he added, "Since it has come you may as well see it."

And he held out for inspection a rough-looking jacket much the worse for wear. There were dark marks on it, and pointing to these, he said, "I don't know what Jem would say if he knew his jacket had come to light. You see it bears his own marks of the tussel; tell a tale, don't it?"

A light broke over Gwendoline; she started in horror as her eyes rested on the stained jacket. Who? Who? Jem Sawyers? she gasped. "His own servant?" "Never!"

She turned pale as she realized it, and all that the jacket told. Her host, however, leaving it on the table before her had again disappeared up the chimney. This time he appeared again with an old box, which he opened before her, disclosing some bank-notes, and something glittering in the centre of them. "There, did you ever see that before?" he said.

"Oh! Claude's watch!" she gasped, breathlessly, catching it in her hands. It was a valuable old watch, which had been his mother's, and which he had worn ever since he had worn a watch at all. There was a diamond monogram of "C. J. E." at the back of it; the case was rather cumbersome, and heavily chased. She knew how Claude had valued this watch; he had often said that, as far as "going" was concerned he would match it against any new watch in the kingdom. To see it thus again, and to have it in this wise restored, was strange indeed.

"Now, you see, Jem didn't send this off with the rest of the things at once, and then came the offering of that reward, and he didn't quite see the fun of letting this out of his own hands; they have a bad plan of giving numbers to all the watches, and when five hundred pounds is in the case you can't tell who is a friend or who isn't. Now, as I was saying—oh, about them notes. Hark!"

A decided knock was now heard on the entrance door of the cottage, and whilst they listened it was repeated, but with force and determination, as if

the person knocking demanded instant admittance.

With one glance of suspicion at Gwendoline, her host seized her by the wrist, and rapidly dragged her from her chair. Unable to resist, she yielded to the firm strength of his grasp, and was half-dragged across the kitchen to a cupboard.

"There, get in there, and be still for your life!"

Poor Gwendoline found herself unceremoniously thrust into darkness, and immediately she had the satisfaction of hearing the key turn on her.

Very shortly afterwards another voice penetrated the darkness. The first words which were said appeared to be inaudible, but they appeared to be a remonstrance at being kept waiting. Presently the same new voice added, "How comes them there things out?"

"I was just havin' a look at them," was the answer.

"I should like to know why you was havin' a look at them," said this voice, which Gwendoline now recognized as belonging to Jem Sawyers. "I don't like these games; and what's more, I don't like the look of things anyhow. Ned Blades. I should like to know what you mean by stoppin' here; but I know well enough what you're stoppin' here for, but you needn't try that on; with all your cunning you won't throw it on to me."

"Shut up, will you!" cried Mr. Blades, bringing his fist down on to the table with some sound.

"I shan't!" was the reply; "and the sooner you're off the better!" Fierce and high rose the quarrel of the two men; for what seemed ages, Gwendoline, shut in the darkness, was forced to listen to it, and to hear over again the horrors of the night of Christmas Eve; and gradually she became aware that whilst Ned Blades had been the chief assailant, Jem Sawyers had rendered able assistance to his attack on poor Claude Egerton. It was dreadful to her to feel herself at the mercy of two such men, and over and over again she wondered what would eventually be her fate, when, all at once, a loud crash at the back of the cottage effectually silenced the men; it was instantaneously followed by another, when Basil Crawford, accompanied by four constables, entered the room.

Mr. Ned Blades had had another listener, of whose presence he was unaware, that evening. Basil Crawford had watched Gwendoline with this man, and had seen them enter the cottage, and, by means of the keyhole, he was enabled to see and hear what was passing, and he was just in time to see the jacket exhibited.

He was somewhat puzzled at the situation, but he arrived at a pretty accurate idea of the state of things, and then he stopped to think. Gwendoline's position was doubtless an unpleasant one, but for the time being she was safe enough, he therefore found his way back into the highroad. Once there he ran as he had never run in all his life before, in the direction of the Atherton police-station.

The run was a short one. On their appearance, Ned Blades and Jem Sawyers made desperate efforts to hide the notes and the jacket, and to resist capture, but resistance was useless; in a short time both gentlemen were comfortably encased in handcuffs; and then Basil Crawford said to Ned Blades, "Just hold up your head, man, whilst I get a good look at you; don't turn away, you've seen me before. Did you ever hear of Mr. Jamieson, of Bayswater? Did you ever happen to hear that this coachman was a very bad man, and ran away, and that we have been looking for him ever since?"

Ned Blades' only answer was to shake his fist at the cupboard door, and to say, "So you played false, did you?"

Basil Crawford looked up, then unlocked the door, and Gwendoline fell forward, fainting, into the room, still,

however, unconsciously clasping Claude's watch in her hand.

(To be concluded.)

CHRISTIAN DUTY.

It is the duty of every Christian person to be all the time aiding in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and aiding after the full measure of his power. By a holy life with its good example, by devout care of his own spirit, and sanctifying influences in his own household, and by helping in all works of his parish, and by a ready will to bear his full part in contributions for the maintenance of Divine service therein; by these things and by such as these deepening the gracious work, is a large part of the Christian believer's duty discharged.

But his duty does not end here. It is not enough for a society of the faithful to combine to provide for themselves and their families the ministrations of religion. They must have thought also for their brethren scattered in the midst of this naughty world, that they too may be saved through Christ forever. We must not forget the regions around, and our Master's command, "Go preach the Gospel to every creature."

In brief, a part of our personal religion, a part of our domestic arrangements, a part of our life, must be plans for having something to set apart to the unselfish work of missions—the unselfish work of publishing the glad tidings everywhere.—Bishop Niles.

PRACTICAL SYMPATHY.

In one of our sleeping-cars in America there was an old bachelor who was annoyed by the continued crying of a child, and the ineffectual attempts of the father to quiet it. Pulling aside the curtain, and putting out his head, he said "Where is the mother of that child? Why doesn't she stop this nuisance?" The father said very quietly, "The mother is in the baggage-car in her coffin; I am travelling home with the baby. This is the second night I have been with the child, and the little creature is wearying for its mother. I am sorry if its plaintive cries disturb any one in this car." "Wait a minute," said the old bachelor. The old man got up and dressed himself, and compelled the father to lie down and sleep, while he took the babe himself. That old bachelor stilling the cries of the babe all night was a hero. And the man who, for the sake of others, gives up a lawful gratification in his own house or in the social circle, is as great a hero as though he stood upon the battlefield.

THE GREAT HELPER.

Every person is conscious of lacking something in his daily effort to live well. It may be an uneasiness as to the future in view of the past. It may be a spirit of doubt that disturbs every effort toward faith. It may be practical ignorance of the real duties of daily life. It may be the want of some example such as we have never seen in our fellow-men to pattern after, or the lack of a positive assurance that religion is real, that God is real, that eternity is real.

Now if one or all of these longings of humanity can be met and satisfied by any being, that one is the Great Helper. In Christ the world has one that answers to this human call. His grace is all-sufficient to lift any man up out of the dreadful past and the anxious present to full assurance of the better future. The fact that such a being as Christ ever lived on earth, a mystery to those who lived with Him, yet a blessing to them for good,—something of a mystery to those who have read His life and death in the gospel since He passed away from earth, yet a greater power in the world to-day than ever,—this fact ought to satisfy any sane man that religion is a reality, for Christ lived religion; that God is real, or Christ was so much above the high-

est conception of a man. He reflected the best idea that man has of what God is; that eternity is also real, for Christ talked as familiarly of eternity as He did of time. The only explanation that can be given of such a Being is the solution of these great disturbing questions.

His practical life likewise enlightens our ignorance of the duties of living. His life, so pure, so true, so perfect, is the outline for our life, and the infallible guide in life. What He said and did under the varying circumstances of His earthly being, as far as they touch our lives, we may say and do. The way Christ acted among men we may safely act. And as He came from God and was of God, we may know that Christ's life is the life God wants man to live.

Christ, then, is the Great Helper, and not to any one class or race of men alone, nor to any one condition of life. He is the universal friend, brother, Saviour. Why will any one try to live without seeking help from Christ?

"I am the way, the truth, and the life."

REV. WILLIAM TYNDALE.

PUT TO DEATH BY THE PAPISTS, 1536.

Few men more essentially promoted the cause of Reformation in England than did Tyndale, by publishing his translation of the New Testament from the original Greek into English. With Miles Coverdale he commenced translating the Pentateuch, and subsequently the book of the prophet Jonas, which, with the New Testament previously translated by him and others, formed the whole of his labours on the Scriptures; for which good work he was strangled, and his body burned.

Towards the close of his life he retired to Antwerp, where he reserved or halloed to himself two days of the week, which he named his days of pastime, and those were Monday and Saturday. On Monday he visited all such poor men and women as were fled out of England; and those he did very liberally comfort and relieve, and in like manner provided for the sick and diseased persons. On the Saturday he walked round about the town, seeking out every corner and hole where he suspected any poor person to dwell; and where he found any who were overburdened with children, or were aged or weak, those also he plentifully relieved. And thus every week he spent his two days of pastime, as he called them.

The dreadful spirit of the times would not leave Tyndale unmolested at Antwerp, where one Philips was employed to betray him to the Emperor's procurator, by whom Tyndale was taken to the castle of Filford, eighteen miles from Antwerp. He refused to employ any advocate, saying that he would answer for himself; and so he did: although he deserved no death, he was condemned and put to death.

We may use as a precept what Tyndale himself wrote concerning the efficacy of Faith in the day of temptation, and at the hour of death: "Above all things, take unto you the shield of faith, wherewith ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,—that ye may be able to resist in the evil day of temptation, and especially at the hour of death."

If every person would be half as good as he expects his neighbours to be, what a heaven this would be!

We, who look into the grave filled with the Cross, do not know how dark it is for the heathen.

THERE was a promise of a thorough going Pharisee in the little boy who was heard to say, "Lord! make brother Bill as good a boy as I am!"

I BELIEVE the want of our age is not more "free" handling of the Bible, but more "reverent" handling, more patient student study, and more daily prayer.—Canon Ayte.