

Kitty," she said, "until I came to try. I've always said the Lord's Prayer every night, and the Belief and the Commandments on Sundays. But when I came to want something and ask for it, it seemed as if I could not pray at all; pray, of course, I might, but it seems as if there were no one there to mind."

"Betty," I said, "I think you really do know our Lord's pity and grace as little as the Indians. Ye speak as if you were all alone in your troubles, when all your troubles are only the rod and staff of God bringing you home."

"Maybe, Mrs. Kitty," she said; "but I can't see it. I only feel the smart and the bruises, and they worry me to that degree I can barely abide Roger, or Master Jack, or you, or Missis, or anybody. I even struck at old Trusty the other day with the mop—poor, harmless, dumb brute—as if it was his fault. But he knew I meant no harm, and came crouching to lick my hand the next moment."

"Oh, Betty," I said, "the poor beasts understand us better than we understand God! They trust us."

"And well they may, Mrs. Kitty," said Betty, "for they never did any sin. But the Almighty never made us to bury our souls in pats of butter and pans of milk, and forget him, and fly into rages about a bit of dirt on a kitchen floor. And until that can be set right, I don't see that anything is right, or that I can think with any comfort of the Almighty."

I should make a bad historian. I have never said a word about our journey home from London.

Not that there is much to tell, because, after all, we came from Bristol by sea, father and Hugh Spencer and I, and I was so full of the thought of home, that I did not observe anything particularly. The chief thing I remember is a conversation I had with Hugh.

It was a calm evening. Father had rolled himself up in his old military cloak with a foraging cap half over his eyes, and Hugh and I were standing by the side of the ship watching the trail of strange light she seemed to make in the waves. There was no one else on deck but the man at the helm and an old sailor mending some ropes by the last glimmerings of daylight, and humming in a low voice to himself what seemed like an attempt at a psalm tune.

"Do you know what he is singing?" Hugh asked.

"Not from the tune. I do not see how anyone could; but the quaverings seem of a religious character, like what the old people sing in church."

"It is a Methodist hymn," Hugh said. "He said it through to me this morning." Hugh always has a way of getting into the confidence of workmen, especially of seafaring people. The old man had been in the ship which took Mr. John Wesley and Mr. Charles Wesley to America. Several religious people were there also from Germany, going out as missionaries. They called themselves Moravians. At first he despised them all for a Polish psalm-singing set. But they encountered a great storm on the Atlantic, and the old sailor said he would never forget the fearless calm among these Christian people during the danger. "It was," he said, "as they had fair weather of God's blessing around them, be the skies as

foul as they might." He could never rest until he found out their secret. When he went ashore he attended the Methodist meetings everywhere, "and now," he said, "thank the Lord and Parson Wesley, my feet are on the Rock aboard or ashore."

"These Methodists find their way everywhere, Hugh," I said. "It does seem as if God blessed their work more than anyone's."

"And what wonder," he said; "who work as they do?"

"But so many people—even good people—appear to be afraid of them," I said. "Are they not sometimes too violent? Do they not sometimes make mistakes?"

"No doubt they do," he said. "All the men who have done great and good work in the world have made mistakes, as far as I can see. It is only the easy, cautious people who sit still and do nothing who make no mistakes, unless," he added, "their whole lives are one great mistake, which seems probable."

And then he told me something of what he had seen in the world and at Oxford; how utterly God seemed forgotten everywhere; how scarcely disguised infidelity spoke from the pulpits, and vices not disguised at all paraded in high places; how in the midst of this John and Charles Wesley had stood apart, and resolved to live to serve God and do good to men; how they had struggled long in the twilight of a dark but lofty mysticism, until they had learned to know how God had loved us from everlasting, and loves us now, and how Christ forgives sins now; and then, full of the joyful tidings, had gladly abandoned all the hopes of earthly ambition for the glorious ambition of being ambassadors for Christ to win rebellious and wretched men back to him.

"Morning, noon, and evening," he said, "John Wesley goes about proclaiming the tidings of great joy in Ireland, America, throughout England, among colliers, miners, and slaves; in prisons, to condemned criminals; in hospitals, to the sick; in market-places, pelted with stones; in churches, threatened with imprisonment; reviled by clergymen, assaulted by mobs, and arraigned by magistrates. They go on loving the world that casts them out, and constantly drawing souls out of the world to God to be blessed."

"It seems like the apostles," I said. "It is wonderful."

"Kitty," he said fervently, "when I think, I can not wonder at it. The wonder seems to me that we should wonder at it so much. If we believe the Bible at all; if not now and then by some strange chance, but steadily, surely, incessantly, the whole world of living men and women are passing on to death, sinking into unutterable woe or rising into infinite inconceivable joy; and if we have it in our power to tell them the truths, which, if they believe them, really will make all the difference to them forever, if we find they really will listen, what is there to be compared with the joy of telling these truths? And the people do listen to Whitefield and Wesley. Think what it must be to see ten thousand people before you smitten with a deadly pestilence, and to tell them of the remedy—the immediate remedy, which never failed. Think what it must be to stand before thousands of wretched slaves with the ransom-money for all in your hand,

and the title-deeds of an inheritance for each. Think what it must be to see a multitude of haggard, starving men and women before you with the power such as our Lord had of supplying them all with bread here in the wilderness, and to see them one by one pressing to you and taking the bread and eating it, and to see the dull eye brightening, colour returning to the wan cheek, life to the failing limbs. Think what it would be to go to a crowd of destitute orphans and to be able to say to each of them, 'It is a mistake, you are not fatherless. I have a message for every one of you from your own father, who is waiting to take you to his heart.' Oh! Kitty, if there is such a message as this to take to all the poor, sorrowing, bewildered, famished, perishing men and women in the world, and if you can get them to listen and believe it, is it any wonder that any man with a heart in him should think it the happiest lot on earth to go and do it, night and day, north and south, in the crowded market-places, and in every neglected corner where there is a human being to listen?"

"I think not, indeed," I said; "but the difficulty seems to me to get people to believe that they are orphans, and slaves, and famishing."

"That is what Whitefield and the Wesleys do," he said. "Or rather they made them understand that the faintness every one feels at times is hunger, and that there is bread; that the cramping restraint, the uneasy pressure we so often feel, are from the fetters of a real bondage, and that they can be struck off; that the bewildered, homeless desolation so many are conscious of is the desolation of orphanhood, and that we have a Father who has reconciled us to himself through the blood of the Cross."

As Hugh spoke, a selfish anxiety crept over me, and I said,—

"Shall you go then, Hugh, and forsake everything to tell the good tidings far and wide?"

"If I am called," he said, "must I not go?"

There was a long silence, the waves plashed around us and closed in after us as we cut through them, with a sound which in the morning light would have been crisp and fresh, and exhilarating; now, in the dimness and stillness of night, it seemed to me strange, and dull, and awful.

Then Hugh began to be afraid I felt the night air chill, and brought me a little seat, and placed it at father's side, and wrapped me up in all the warm wraps he could find. And we neither of us said anything more that night.

I have had a great pleasure to-day. A letter from Cousin Evelyn, the first letter I ever received, except two from mother in London; and the very first I ever received at home from anyone.

It would have reached me before, only it had met with many misadventures.

The King's mail had been robbed on Houndslow Heath; the postman had been wounded in the fray, and this had caused a delay of some days. Then there had been a flood over some part of the road, which had swept away the bridges; and finally, when the letter reached Falmouth, the farmer's lad, to whose care it had been committed, forgot for whom it was meant, and not being able to read,

judiciously carried it back to the post-office nearest him.

The unusual clatter of horse's hoofs had brought father into the court, and nothing would satisfy him but that the bearer should have his horse put up and remain to dinner with us. And then he had much to tell that interested father and Jack.

Father heard his narrative with very mingled emotions. He was cheered to think that the Duke of Cumberland had put down "those canting Scotch;" but his satisfaction was diminished by the military successes of those "rascally French."

He sympathized with the London mob who, when the Hanoverian court-lady deprecated their wrath by explaining in apologetic tones from her carriage-window, "My dear people, we come for all your goods," retorted, "Yes, and for our chattels too."

But his spirits were again depressed by hearing of Methodist lay preachers, who drew crowds around them in every country, from Northumberland to the Land's End. "Sir," he said, "in my time we should have made quick work with idle fellows who left the plough, or the mason's trowel, or the tailor's goose, to preach whatever canting trash they pleased. We should have dispersed the congregation, sir, at the point of the bayonet, and set the preacher in the stocks to meditate on his next sermon. Sir, the Papists manage to keep down such seditious fanatics; and shall we be outdone by the Papists?"

"No doubt, sir," replied the stranger; "but would you believe it, on my way here I met a fellow who is reported to be one of the worst among them, John Nelson, the Yorkshireman, who told me he had met Squire Trevelyan, and that he was a most hospitable gentleman; for he had given him the pasty he was carrying for his own dinner, and had invited him to take his bread-and-cheese and beer at his house whenever he came that way."

Father looked perplexed for a moment at the contrast between his fierce denunciations against the Methodists in general, and his tolerance of the only Methodist he had encountered in particular, but he soon rallied.

"Sir," he said, "that fellow is a true-born Englishman, as true to the Church and King as you or I. A fellow, too, with such a chest and such muscle as would be worth the King's troop of those beggarly Hessians you spoke of. And he had been knocked down and trampled on by a mob of cowardly ruffians just before I saw him. Sir, they knocked him down, and beat and kicked him till the breath was well-nigh out of him; and his head bleeding; and then they dragged him along the stones by the hair of his head, and would have thrown him into a draw-well; but for a high-spirited woman who stood by the well and pushed several of the cowardly bullies down. I would take off my hat to that woman as soon as to the King. And then he got up, and very soon mounted his horse again, and rode forty miles that very day as if nothing had happened.

(To be continued.)

If we take care of the present as we should, there is no occasion for worrying about the future. The present is ours, the future is God's.