

Choice Literature.

BOB AND HIS TEACHERS.

A GLASGOW STORY

BY REV. DUNCAN MORRISON, D.D., OWEN SOUND.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

Brown "It is not the only case that might be mentioned. What do you say of Buddhism? For a thousand years this myth dominated the Indian mind, but there sprang up a teacher, Buddha, 600 years B.C., that overthrew the ancient faith and in less than 200 years it became what may be called the State religion; and, inspired by a proselytizing spirit, its missionaries went everywhere preaching the word. Ceylon, Kashmir, etc. Its conquests have been greater than any other religion, Christianity not excepted; and now 2,400 years after the death of its founder it is the religion of five hundred millions! Christianity is not up to these figures yet! And what are we to say of Confucianism, the religion of the unnumbered millions of China; and Mohammedanism that is still a mighty power in the East? This power has had a brilliant history. It is a great power still. Its missionaries are everywhere,—even in darkest Africa, e.g., on the shores of Victoria Nyanza. Strange that that whole kingdom of Uganda with its two and a half millions should have become one of its trophies, some years ago—that at the bidding of some Moslem missionaries, they should have abjured their ancient faith and become adherents of the false Prophet! Don't say that Brahminism is the only system of religion that can be compared—than can furnish a parallel to Christianity. Now all these were myths—all had their origin in a fancy."

True, but how poor is the fruit of Brahminism or any of the other false systems that can be named. Water never rises higher than its source, and the morals of a nation will never rise higher than the great ideal that is set before the nation. You cannot raise hyacinths in a cellar. You cannot expect that man will put on the graces of the Spirit and clothe himself with the beauty of holiness, unless the source of his religion be at once uplifting and transforming—in short, supernatural.

Brown "As to the morals of any one of the systems of religion that can be named, there is nothing to boast of even in our Christian land. I don't speak of individuals, but of nations. Think of the morals of millions that bear the Christian name—the morals of thousands in Glasgow, Liverpool, London, New York, Chicago, Berlin, Paris, Rome. Christianity has done much for woman, but in many a case she is better off in the harem of the Turk than on the streets of the great city. These Indian religions are not without their code of morals. You have, doubtless, heard of the five prohibitions of Buddha. He has put them on record—prohibitions against murder, lying, theft, unchastity, and intemperance; and so throughout the East an intemperate man, reeling on the streets is all but unknown. I am not claiming a morality for these systems higher or so high as that presented in Christianity, but I claim for those Eastern religions a morality higher than that which is usually accorded them. I claim that we often meet with a morality among those we call heathen that would put to shame our boastful civilization."

It will be hard to make me believe that the morality of Christian lands is not far in advance of anything that can be found in the grovelling systems of India. But the great issue between us is this. Is the Christian religion supernatural—supernatural in its origin and supernatural in its history? Is Christ what He claims to be and the Holy Spirit the great factor in our illumination? What is wanted is not simply reformation, but regeneration, the cleansing of the very fountains of thought—the bringing of the soul in communion with the Eternal. You may point me to such lofty forms as those of Aristides the Just, that shed such a lustre in Athens in a dark day, and Antonius the noble Roman to whom the nation looked up to in days of peril and Ramahun Roy, the splendid Bengalee who stepping down from his high place did so much good among the poor in his time. But all such cases are cases of men better than their day—exceptional cases, taken hold of by that good Spirit that leads into all truth, and presents as headlights to grovelling nations. It is not of man as an individual that I would speak in this regard, but of man collectively.

Such is a specimen of the conversations I had with this remarkable man—a man distinguished for his high sense of honour, and who prided himself in standing well with the world. It was not the fear of God he had in view in all his efforts to maintain an unspotted name, but the fear of man—not the honour and glory of God, but his own honour and glory. The motive was low and the attitude to which he rose was comparatively low. Who would say that the moral development to which a man can reach by his own unaided exertions is his highest? There is a standard morality in every country and every neighbourhood to which all are expected to come up—to which everyone is expected to conform, and, failing to conform to it, he brings down upon himself the frown of society and meets with the averted look and the cold shoulder of those that pass by. Ostracism is the penalty of falling below the common standard of morality which every country sets up for itself. This is the whip that society uses to keep men in order—to make them walk straight, and woe be to the man that comes under the lash; for he will neither have the peace of this world nor the world to come.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BOB A LOVER!—THE GREAT CHANGE THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE DURING THE LAST SIX YEARS. FORCES WORKING IN THAT DIRECTION—LOVE ONE OF THESE.

Bob, the sheep, a lover! Bob, the speechless, the kiff that knew not how to blow his nose or to open his mouth in the presence of a stranger, playing the part of the lover, the gallant! Think of such a one carrying himself with the air of a knight and the phrase of a courtier approaching his lady love! Could there be anything more absurd? So we might say were he still a boy and his mental powers still in a state of stagnation. But a great change has taken place since the

day that he and old Chubb set out to seek the office of "Alexander and Alexander." His mind had developed wonderfully and every year there was a richer unfolding, and the end was not yet. Surely if there be anything corresponding to this in the future life—in the heavenly state, the result must be glorious. If in the course of a few years such a soft piece of humanity should ripen into a lovely form of manhood, what may we expect in the case of the penitent thief that entered into Paradise nearly nineteen hundred years ago?

Bob, I repeat had opened up wonderfully during those six years. And then what a transformation had taken place in his personal appearance! Instead of the soft, sheepish, limping boy that could not speak in the presence of a stranger, there was the goodly stature of opening manhood, the bright eye of intelligence, the firm step of consciousness of power—power that had been fairly tested and tried, together with the enthusiasm of youth with all its buoyancy and abounding energy. All now was bright within and beautiful before. The future was golden and I doubt not that his uppermost thought was. Is there any one in my line that I may not rival—any position to which I may not aspire?

Yes, he had developed wonderfully during those six years, and certainly one of the forces that had been working in this direction was his conscious power, his real success, his diligence in business, and here I take leave to say that of the two, school education and business education, the latter is the more important to the man that means to follow it as a means of living. Neglect in the school may be made up to some extent in the shop, so that the man after all may win his way to distinction; but let an apprentice neglect his business; let him be careless about getting into the secrets of his art and dilly-dally through the years of his apprenticeship, and, no matter how well he did in school, how well he may be up in figures, in history, geography, etc., he will be a botch for life.

Another force which had been working in the same direction was his growing intelligence. Without speaking of the excellent training he had received from his mother, he had done much for himself. He had mastered the ordinary branches of learning and what with books and lectures and diagrams publicly provided for the youth of the city, his knowledge was both extensive and exact, and depend upon it these are the very elements in knowledge that make for force, that inspire a man with confidence and win the respect of those that hear. Who are the leaders in public business whether in Parliament or in the General Assembly? Glibness, bluster, even scholarship go for little in such places. The true leader is the man who has probed the subject to the bottom, and is prepared to speak on details, who has verified the truth of his statements, and is able to throw fresh light on the subject in hand, and expose the weakness of an adversary and the danger of yielding readily to a specious argument. This was the character of Bob's knowledge and this gave him power.

But there was another force at work more potent still, in the way of developing character touching the heart, extending its scope and opening up the fountains of the great deep. I refer to his affection for Mabel Brown, the dawn of which was to him as well as to her so strange and sweet and new. He and Mabel had been thrown much together from childhood, and like brother and sister they kept much together; but the fraternal feeling by degrees changed into something higher and stronger, though that strange, sweet feeling, which Mabel as well as he shared to some extent, was never expressed either by the one or by the other; but though never expressed to each other or to any one, it was not the less real, others noticed it and were pleased. The Browns noticed it and did not frown, and good old Chubb and his wife were delighted, for they thought nothing could be too good for Bob. It is true Mabel was far from being strong and never likely to be; but on that very account the young artist loved her the more tenderly, and pled her sickness as the occasion for visiting the Browns so frequently!

Love is a great power and goes a long way to lift up even a degraded man; that is, providing the object is worthy and regards his approaches with favour. No sooner does he fall under the spell than he begins to rise. He says to himself: "I must make my self worthy of aspiring to such a hand. How wonderful that I should ever have got the least of encouragement!" And he gives up drinking, gives up his coarse language, his idle ways and rough companions. He takes to reading and looks to his dress, his appearance and his entire demeanour, denying himself in many ways respecting which there was formerly indulgence. The change that takes place is great and his old chums say: What has come over our old friend? See how he walks, how he carries himself, and how studious he has become! What is the matter? But in the case of Bob whose life had always been correct, whose intelligence was recognized and whose profiting appeared unto all, the change produced in such a case was not so conspicuous. Still it was very marked and I doubt not that more than the inside circle of friends in which he moved were raising the question: What has come over Bob? See how he carries himself! And how happy!

Now here we raise the question how did this mutual attachment that had grown up between these two young persons reveal itself? Certainly not by words, for, as we have said, no word on the subject either by the one or the other was ever breathed. Neither by word nor letter to each other did it ever become known.

How then did it become known to each other. The answer is by looks. Strange how the eye is often more eloquent than words, what a revelation of the soul it is! We are all familiar with the fact that a grand thought, a joyous feeling, a pure love, for something worthy and noble, will show itself in the face, and lend to it for the time being something like a transfiguration beauty. Who does not know that even a piece of good news, filling the mind with light and touching the imagination, will make the outer man resplendent? Still more is this the case with the glance of affection between two kindred spirits. You can see this every day, in the look of admiration, in the fair young face of womanhood when he whom she loves comes near. Men call that glance, fancy, sentiment; I call it the glance of the soul in its better moments, giving us a hint of the glory to be revealed when every disturbing passion has been laid and every grace has fully blossomed. I call it a glimpse of the glorified spirit that is yet to be. Pity that it is only a glance! Pity that the curtain should fall so soon, but while it lasts who would not say that it is beautiful? It is surely a ray from the excellent glory! Now all this was plain enough in the case of these

two young people, especially in the case of Bob, in the radiance of his expression, in the brightness of his spirits, in the princely way in which he carried himself; but most of all you could see it when the lovers met in the house of the Browns, where poor Mabel had her weary days and nights appointed to her. True, the young man only came from time to time to see—to enquire for Mabel, and that was something to her, and something to him to; and if sometimes he was permitted to come into the room where the pale invalid lay and look into her face, meet her glance and hear her speak, he felt more than rewarded. This was all the length their affection was ever carried. They said nothing on the subject either to each other or to any one else, but evidently they mused much, and while they were musing the fire burned. But back of all this there was a work of grace going on both in the one and the other, purifying and ennobling their common affection, cleansing the very fountains of thought and fitting them for that higher life where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God being the children of the resurrection. All love short of this is scarcely worthy of the name. All love short of this is purely animal, not one bit higher than that of the seal which interposes her bleeding side to defend her calf from the murderous harpoons of our northern sailors. Depend upon it there is no love like that which is kindled at the altar of God. No man loves like a Christian man. No woman loves like a Christian woman. No wife loves like a Christian wife. No mother loves like a Christian mother, because taking to do not only with the interests of time but eternity. All other love is doomed. All other love has its roots in corruption and the grave, and in thousands of cases is not good enough to stand the shocks and strains of this life. But they whom God and holy love have united—whom the Spirit of all grace has covered with the beauty of holiness—know of no such failures. In the worry of life, in the hard battle which they may have to maintain in the world for bread, there may be occasional friction when high principle is tested and affection is even wounded; but these defects pertain only to the surface and only to time. These defects gradually disappear in the affluence of that fuller light in which they shall yet see all things clearly. In early life, it may be, they start out together, with little furnishings and less experience, but true and loyal to each other as the stars in heaven. Onward and onward they go, more loving, more tried and trusted still. Onward and onward, hand in hand they go growing nearer to each other and nearer to God, till they sleep together at the bottom of the hill, beneath the long grass of the village churchyard, and there under the wings of the Almighty their bodies sleep till the morning of the resurrection, while their spirits mingle with those of just men made perfect and summer high upon the hills of God!

CHAPTER XIX.

MABEL BROWN AN INVALID—HOW SHE FILLED UP HER TIME IN TEACHING A RAGGED BOY—HER DEATH.

A great change, as has been seen, has lately taken place with the Browns. They have been obliged to surrender their pleasant home, deny themselves their wonted enjoyments, take a rented house, and worse still, poor Mabel who had only seen sixteen summers has become a helpless invalid and has to spend the most of her time in a recumbent position. But in spite of her weakness she found work to do and many things to occupy her thoughts—thoughts productive of good to others: In her heart was the secret of a blessed peace and this made her face radiant and her temper beautiful. Her eye was upon a far off land. Her thoughts ran much on Christ and the Kingdom, and from her thin lips, once like a thread of scarlet but now pale, fell many a precious word and glorious hymn that told how truly her fellowship was with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Often she wished she could be more useful in her little day, but where was the chance for one so weak that she could not walk? However, where there is a will, it is said, there is a way. And it was true in the case of Mabel. Her window overlooked a wretched house in which John Martin lived, an Irish labourer who with his wife and children had a miserable existence. Drunkenness, untruthfulness, dishonesty were notorious faults of the Martins. Small was the comfort they enjoyed and few were the friends they could number.

"I think," said Mabel, "if I could tell John Martin how good the Lord has been to me it would help him," but Mr. Brown forbade the attempt. "John's wife then?"

This also was sternly forbidden both by Mr. and Mrs. Brown. "Send me little Phil; at least he can do me no harm."

This was agreed to reluctantly.

Phil (Philip) a bright, mischievous urchin, nine years of age or thereabouts, with his unkempt head and red bare feet, was brought to her bedside. Induced by sweet bites which she kept for him, and taught to come with clean hands and face, he returned day by day. She showed him pictures; she cut marvellous groups in paper; told him stories and sang hymns to him day by day till she won his confidence. Then she introduced him to Bible subjects; showed him pictures, some in paint and some in paper shapes—pictures of the Ark, of Abraham and Moses and Sampson; David and Goliath, Joseph and his brethren, and Daniel in the lion's den, etc. Then came "the old, old story of Jesus and His love," with all its amplification in Gospel, epistle and song. Phil had nearly two years of such teaching—lessons in the Old Testament and lessons in the New, lessons of love that he could never forget, the best, the holiest he ever received in this world. It was an unspeakable benefit to him to have such a teacher, one who had such patience with him, who had the art of presenting the great truths of the Bible and simplifying them for his untutored mind. But this could not always last. Mabel's health rapidly failed, and there were days in which she could not see Phil, and over those lost days no one grieved more than Phil himself. Now the end of Mabel drew near—her death, and a happy death it was—a euthanasia!

(To be continued.)

Every tissue of the body, every bone, muscle and organ, is made stronger and more healthful by the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla.