

Pastor and People.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

[Mr. Aubrey de Vere, in a poem on "The Death of Copernicus," in the *Contemporary Review*, places in the mouth of the great astronomer a poem of prophetic triumph at the progress to be made in science and theology:—]

"Lift up your heads
Ye everlasting gates," the Psalmist sang,
"So shall the King of Glory enter in."
Lives there who doubts that when the starry gates
Lift up their heads like minster porches vast
At feasts before a marvellous nation's eyes,
And show beyond, the universe of God—
Lives there who doubts that, entering there, man's mind
Must see before it far an entering God
Flashing from star to star? Lives there who doubts
That those new heavens, beyond all hope distant,
Must sound their Maker's praise? Religion's self
That day shall wear an ampler crown; all Truths
Now constellated in the Church's Creed,
Yet dim this day because man's mind is dim,
Perforce dilating as man's mind dilates,
O'er us must hang a new Theology,
Our own, yet nobler even as midnight heavens
Through crystal ether kenmed more sharply shine
Than when mist veiled the stars! Let others doubt—
My choice is made.

THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

RIGH NA SORCHA.

"The Light was the light of men."—John 1: 9.

There was a pleasant path through the woods they traversed, woods of oak trees and beeches, of pines and firs, tall and stately and widely branching. The oaks and beeches were breaking into leaf, and from bough to bough leaped the merry, chattering squirrels, to look for last year's acorns and nuts, while noisy jays and little birds of sweeter pipe warbled their notes of welcome. Now, also, the flowers appeared—daisies were at the children's feet, and wood anemones, and sweet-scented violets, and cowslips and primroses, and many more that beguiled the forest way. From a brook that ran beside them, bubbling over stones, they drank fresh water and washed their tear stained faces. But to their hungry gaze was the sight of the leaping trout, at which the young men set the little ones down and prepared to fish. One went ashore to where the stream was narrow, and another below to where it was very shallow, and they built in each place dams of stones taken from its bed. The upper one was high and complete, so that no trout could overtop it, but the lower one was left open at one little point, which a single good-sized stone could block. Up came the sportive fish to ascend the stream, and passed through the opening. Six, twelve, twenty, thirty and more passed through, and then, swimming as far as the upper dam, saw their mistake, and tried to get back, but too late; the stone was put over the opening, and the trout were caught in a fish pond. It was easy work to wade in the water, and, with a stick broken from a tree, kill the silly but pretty speckled fish. Then, the fire stones and the tinder were got out, some dry stones gathered, and a fire made. On the hot coals the trout were laid, and when they were cooked all the children gave thanks to their Father, the King of Light who was guiding them, and partook of their hot and savory meal. When it was over they opened the dams, and let the remaining imprisoned fish go; then they washed again in the stream, resumed their burdens, and went on their way in strength and joy.

They had need of all their strength, for there was a hill to climb, a hill that shut out all the southern prospect save the distant light. Before they reached the summit they felt the air cold, but bracing and healthful and little patches of sand lay in the hollows. But as they raced together down the other side, it was among flowering yellow broom and purple heather. The children got down from their brothers' arms and backs, and let go their sisters' hands to gather the blueberries just ripening, and, further down, the wild strawberries, dark red in hue and sweet as honey with the fulness of their growth. In the plain below there were roses and many other blossoms on plant and shrub and tree of every colour and of delightful fragrance. The birds became more numerous and their songs sweeter. Rabbits scampered about playing with one another and scattering in and out of their burrows, and, now and again, a slender roebuck would raise his head from a thicket and then bound away into the distance. The air was warmer and the sky was brighter than before, so that the children's hearts were full of gladness, though as yet they had seen no human form but their own. Yet the country had inhabitants, for in a leafy grove, to which they were attracted by the flash of falling waters, they saw a summer-house beside a fountain, the work of men's hands. They entered the house in doubt and with a little fear, but found no one in it. There, however, was a table spread with dishes and goblets for all, and an abundance of wholesome food. Once more they tasted bread and meat, and knew that they could not be far away from the Kingdom of Light, where there was always enough and to spare. They rested a while after the welcome refreshment, and when they left the house they left in it the outer seal-skin coats and cloaks that had shielded them from the bitter cold, now a thing of the past.

The next stage in their journey was a sunny hill, easy of ascent, which led them to a scene of wondrous beauty, for there were flowing streams running like silver threads through green meadows, all bespangled with loveliest flowers. Between the meadows were plantations of palms and myrtles, of pomegranates and almonds, of orange and fig trees. Swarms of honey bees hovered about the fragrant blossoms, and butterflies of gorgeous hues flashed through the warm atmosphere from shrub to shrub and from flower to flower. The very beetles on the ground were clad in shining mail, that looked as if it had been dipped in the different tints of the setting summer sun. The cooing of turtledoves, the full, rich notes of the southern thrushes, the entrancing song of the nightingale, filled the borders of orchard and woodland with melody, till the children were carried away by it, and sang:—

We are going home to our Father's house,
To the land where the Light is King.

They could eat of the fruit by the way and smother one another with flowers. Tame birds of marvellous plumage perched upon their shoulders and upon their outstretched hands. No weed or poisonous plant appeared, no serpent or beast of prey. There was nothing to mar the scene. The travellers passed flocks of curious affectionate sheep and goats, some of which rubbed against them as if asking for a caress, and herds of quiet, patient cattle that cropped the rich grass of the pastures. The next building they saw was one of larger size and greater beauty, a palace fit for a king. Within it also a table was laid in gold and silver, and beyond the banquetting hall were chambers all prepared for those who would sleep, inviting the tired traveller to safe and pleasant repose. So they supped right royally, and slept the sleep of peace and innocence to prepare them for the journey which still lay before their feet.

When morning came there were clothes for all beside their couches, clothes fit for the climate and for the journey, and for their rank as a great King's children, so they gladly left the old patched things behind, after bathing in the fountains provided, and arrayed themselves in their new attire. Spotlessly clean, with dressed hair and sandalled feet, they met around the board, hardly recognizing each other because of the change, and joyfully anticipating the pleasures of the day. Fortified by their repast, and strong in hope as confident in new-found safety and peace, they bade farewell to the palace and journeyed on to even lovelier scenes, the light before them ever growing larger and brighter. What they saw and heard and felt in their hearts and thrilling through all their being from oldest to youngest no human pen could write nor human tongue tell. Then, when the glory was heavy upon them, so that even their new garments were a burden, they came to the border of a mighty forest of giant trees that seemed to toss their leafy tops towards the sky and spread all round about a cool and grateful shade. The path led through the forest, and the little ones feared as they entered in, for they could not see its end, and their terrible experience of Lochlyn made them dread the darkness. The path was a path no longer, but a great highroad walled in by the massive trunks, a road wide enough for all the earth's armies to pass along, high enough, up to the overarching dome of dense foliage, for the world's loftiest pride and pomp and glory. They seemed to each other so small, that little company, for so vast an avenue, the floor of which seemed as if it had been trodden by million feet.

The youngest wanted to be carried, those a little older to take their sisters' hands. They kept very close together, a compact company of twelve. "There is the big light coming!" cried a little fellow on his tall brother's shoulder, where he could see above the gently rising ground. Soon the ground began to descend before them, and the light became visible to all. "It is coming fast," cried a toddler, grasping her sister more tightly, and hiding her face in her dress. "The light has brought us good all the way, dear," answered the King's daughter; "we must not be afraid of it now." So they journeyed on through that great dark tunnel with the bright light shining at the end. Yes, the light was coming, ever larger and brighter as it approached, but it neither burned nor blinded; it was a blessed light. The pilgrims kept up a brave heart, although darkness was behind and on either side of them, and there was no escape from the light that came steadily on, till it reached up to the leafy canopy, and its reflection could be seen beyond its matted tree-tops, and till it filled the whole breadth of the bordered road, and shone among the trunks on either side. On, on it came, and, as they stood and gazed, it took from before their eyes, not the form of a devouring fire, nor of the round-orbed moon, nor the brighter scorching sun, but of a man who seemed to fill all the world that lay before them, a man in shining royal robes, with crowned head and a face of wonderful love. "It is our Father, it is the King of Light," they all cried, and ran forward to meet the approaching figure. As they all knelt before him, young and old, he came near and bent over them, and gathered them all up into his arms and to his heart's embrace; and when they opened their eyes again the vaulted road was gone, and the unspeakable glories of the Kingdom of Light brought to their spirits the fulness of joy. They never left that land again, and never will; for a day is coming when the King will send His light, and His warm south wind to break the frozen fetters and dispel the hideous darkness of the far Lochlyn. Then the evil heart will depart from the mother, and she will come home to the

King she left, and the children she treated so cruelly. That is the story of Righ na Sorcha, the King of Light.

The King of Light is our King, dear children, who is called the Father of Light and the King of Glory, for God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But our mother earth went away from the light of knowledge and purity and happiness into the darkness of ignorance and sin and misery, away from the life which is in that light into a region of the shadow of death, away from the warmth of God's sun of love into a cold, dreary land of heartlessness and cruelty. The life is the light of men, the Bible says. We know there can be no life without some light, but the wisest men in the world cannot tell us which of the two stands first, although it seems natural to think that that which is necessary to life and fosters it should have its origin in life. But I think of a house, your own house at home, and of the light that is there. It is not what comes in through the windows when the shutters are thrown open or the blinds are pulled up in the morning, nor the lights that are kindled when night comes on, or even the ruddy blaze of the fire in the winter time. All these lights may be there, and yet the house be very dark with gloom and sorrow, with suffering and death. Yes; it may be dark with selfishness and other sins. But in your homes, I trust, and in many many more, there shines a light, perhaps there shine many lights, and these lights are human lives—a mother's, it may be, always thoughtful and kind and motherly, diffusing gladness and wiping tears away, or a father's, strong and cheerful, and tender, shedding abroad a hopeful radiance. Is it an unselfish sister caring for all and scattering sunbeams in her songs, an affectionate brother full of Christian manliness, that shines a steady, unflinching torch to guide the younger and feeble steps, a patient sufferer on a bed of sickness to whose couch young and old repair to learn how God's light shines down into the very midst of darkness, or a little child that, all unconsciously, is the light of the house! The true earthly light is the life, the human heart and mind and strength, and the greatest light of the world that ever appeared, greater than the sun in all his strength and glory, was the lowly Jesus, who called Himself by that name, "I am the Light of the world." So, when we find ourselves and our mother earth away in the darkness, the cold, the cruelty, we will turn our faces towards the Father whom He came to reveal to us, and in the ship of faith, with His Spirit to waft, and His word to guide, will float away to Light's fair kingdom. And when the light that gives back life and warmth and wealth and blessing comes, we will see that it is a person full of glorious life, our own Father and King of Light, who takes us to His arms forever.

(To be Continued.)

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

Let only one soul in any community become deeply awakened on account of guilt, and with an absorbed gaze look away from self to Christ to find peace and pardon in His name. What an influence will be exerted upon others! No form of opposition can effectually resist it. No secret scepticism abroad can withstand such an example of conquering grace. Other souls will be led to sober reflection and genuine repentance. Many widespread revivals have originated in the regeneration of a single individual—possibly an obscure person, without worldly position and brought to Christ through the agency of some individual equally unknown.

This is just as true of a soul earnestly seeking a clean heart. The spirit dwelling in such persons is quickly contagious. The silent prayer will be lifted all around: "Create in me a clean heart," the meetings for prayer will be forthwith enlivened, the awakened attention of believers to their high privilege in the Gospel will soon become general—all the results of the new life of faith wrought by the Holy Spirit in a single soul. Who has not seen all this again and again illustrated in his own community? And if this be God's method of bringing in the fulness of His kingdom upon earth, every Christian should enquire: "Am I all that God would have me to be in inward purity and outward life?"

REST.

Rest is an important factor in the success or usefulness of every working life. It is a wrench sometimes to tear one's self away from congenial occupation, but it pays—from every point of view it pays. We come back invigorated and refreshed, bringing new thoughts and new inspirations with us, which bless others as well as ourselves. And because of that, it is our duty to take a rest. Whether it be in the city, or by the sea, or among the everlasting hills, it will give us new and sweet views of life, and will, also, if we allow ourselves to be gently led, bring us nearer to the kingdom of heaven.—Annie S. Swan.

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