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A True Knight of Jesus Christ.

(‘Silver Link.’)

Thirteen years ago there died at Sheikh Othman, in the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, a young Scotsman named Keith Falconer. He was thirty-one years old when he died, the same age at which Henry Martyn ‘burned’ out for God. Perhaps there is scarcely any other young man who can be so confidently held up before the young men of this day as a true knight of Jesus Christ.

Keith Falconer was the third son of the Earl of Kintore. He was born in Edinburgh in 1856. When he was five years old



YOUNG KEITH FALCONER, IN HIS YOUTH.

he was accustomed to read and explain the Bible to the other children. At the age of seven he used to go out secretly among the cottagers on his father's estate to read to them from the Bible. He got the nickname among them of ‘the angel.’

As he grew, he was a very outspoken Christian boy, and in his preparatory school where he was almost head of the school, he hung a roll of Bible texts on his wall, so that all might see his colors. He was as sincere and whole-hearted as he was outspoken. He wrote from Harrow, when he was seventeen, to a friend, that he did not care to go to theatres and certain kinds of parties, because Christ always seemed to be left out, and he did not wish to go where he could not take Christ.

At the age of eighteen he went to Cambridge University, and he soon gained a great reputation as a bicyclist. On Nov. 10, 1874, he won the ten-mile race, in thirty-four minutes, the fastest time on record then. In writing of that race he said he intended the next day to ride a big bicycle he called ‘The Leviathan,’ eighty-six inches high, and with several steps up the backbone. He got great amusement from the terror this monster wheel inspired as he rode along, and he enjoyed the pleasure of the risk connected with it, for he knew he would break an arm or leg if he fell off. In April, 1876, he won a four-mile race at Lillie Bridge, breaking the record again. On Oct. 23, 1878, in a five-mile race, he defeated John Keen, the world's professional

champion then, in the time of fifteen minutes, eleven and two-fifths seconds. Four years later, on July 29, 1882, he won the fifty-mile amateur championship at the Crystal Palace, beating all previous records by seven minutes. But his most interesting bicycle feat was a ride this same year of 994 miles in thirteen days, from Land's End to John o' Groats. It was bad weather, but he rode through the rain, and was the first man to make on a bicycle this continuous journey from the south-western end of England to the northern extremity of Scotland.

But to be the best bicycle rider in the world was not enough for Keith Falconer. He determined that he would excel in shorthand. So he taught himself. At Harrow he practiced by taking down sermons. Later he came to know Isaac Pitman, the inventor of phonography, who had a great admiration for him, and to whom Keith Falconer wrote a letter regarding his great race with Keen. Keith Falconer wrote the article on shorthand in the ‘Encyclopaedia Britannica,’ when he was only twenty-eight.

But to be, perhaps, the best shorthand writer in Great Britain was not enough, either, to satisfy this young Scotsman. At last he thought he had found his place in the study of Semitic languages, which he took up, resolved, as in everything else he touched, to be at the top. In 1881 he went to Leipzig to study especially Arabic. Two years later he became lecturer on Hebrew at Clare College, Cambridge, and it was one of the testimonies that his students gave to his fairness that he took as much pains with the most stupid as with the most clever. Professor Noldeke spoke of him as a young ‘master’ in many lines, and before long he won the place in Arabic scholarship that he had been accustomed to win in all he undertook; and in 1886 he was elected Lord Almoner Professor of Arabic in Cambridge University, to succeed Professor Robertson Smith.

Now surely this should have satisfied a man, but Keith Falconer was not satisfied. There was something beyond all this. He had always been a Christian worker. At Harrow he was ever on Christ's side, and at Cambridge he was one of the little band that stood by Mr. Moody on his visit, when his welcome was not very encouraging. Later, he was one of a little company to buy a theatre in one of the worst parts of Cambridge, and turn it into a Christian meeting house. After this he threw himself into mission work in London, on Mile-End road. And he was always having talks with men, trying to bring them to Christ. And he was ever writing hopefully, too. ‘Remember sinking Peter,’ he wrote to one poor fellow. To Carrington, with whom he was working in London, he wrote regarding the inevitable choice between making self or God the centre of life. Chinese Gordon heard of him, and invited him to go with him, but he declined.

His own plan was maturing. Why had God given him such a constitution, such strength, and such rounded knowledge, such acquaintance with Arabic, such wealth as he and his wife possessed, such a company of strong friends? To use for self? Not in Keith Falconer's judgment. All must

be used for God. How could they be better used than in a mission to the Mohammedans in Arabia? So Keith Falconer went out and looked over the ground. Then he came back, saw the Church of Scotland Missionary Committee, got a medical missionary for a companion, visited the Scotch universities to arouse interest in the work, and then set out on his hard task.

The people were fanatical, but he knew their minds and hearts, and he had tact and love. The climate was hot and full of fever, but he was strong, and he did not count his life dear to himself. The foundations of the mission were laid, and Keith Falconer was soon mastering Hindustani, because he thought a knowledge of that language also would help. And then the fever seized him.

Not to be dismayed he kept up a cheerful heart, and read books by the dozen while he was lying sick—Scott, Rider Haggard, Besant, Pressensé, Blaikie, Bonar, Dr. J. Brown. He did not complain of the heat, which was fierce. He only wrote, ‘Read Bonar's ‘Life of Judson,’ and you will see that our troubles are naught.’

And then at last he fell asleep on May 10, 1887, having, as the quaint wisdom of Solomon says, though ‘made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time.’ One of his last words on the day of his death was, ‘How I wish that each attack of fever had brought me nearer to Christ—nearer, nearer, nearer.’—Robert E. Speer.

The Story of An.

(Robert E. Speer, in ‘Forward.’)

His name was An, and he was a blind man. The first time I saw him he was coming up the path from the gate to the house of a college classmate of mine, a missionary,



‘IN HIS FRESH, WHITE CLOTHES.’

at Pyeng Yang, Corea. He did not carry a cane, but felt his way along with his great wooden shoes with turned-up toes. There was no light in his eyes, but on his face was the peace of God, and he brought an air of quietness and rest into the room, where he sat down and clasped his hands, and lifted his sightless eyes to the two visitors from