

THE BEST WEAPON.



THE above is the title of one of the new series of "Earlham Tracts," recently issued by Messrs Partridge, by whose kind permission we are enabled to reprint a portion of the tract, with its illustration. This "Earlham Series," a packet of which was sent to us in the ordinary way for review, surpasses anything in the tract form we remember to have seen. Each tract consists of sixteen crown 16mo pages, well printed on good paper, with an original illustration in a similar style to that at the head of this article. The reading matter, if not entirely original, is exceedingly well chosen, and when we add that twelve of these books, neatly bound and enclosed in a coloured wrapper, may be had for *sixpence*, we think nothing more should be necessary to induce our readers to read for themselves—and freely distribute them as their means will permit.

"Old David" is an aged citizen of Western North Carolina. Fifty years ago he determined to travel through the trackless wilds of the great and sparsely-inhabited West. His route lay along the borders of Missouri and Nevada, infested at that time with more numerous clans of highway robbers than at present. He knew all this very well; and, although urged by his neighbours to procure a couple of revolvers to defend himself, he took only his pocket Bible, and, armed thus, set out on the perilous journey. He had passed some of the clans on the northern border of Missouri, and was nearing the resort of one of the most formidable ones, headed by a notorious desperado, Jim Stevens, when he met a gentleman, who by some extraordinary tact had escaped the vigilant eye of the robber captain. The first question that he propounded to old David was,—

"Are you armed?"

"Yes," was the aged Christian's reply, as he produced his pocket Bible.

"The gentleman, who was almost weighed down with bowie-knives and pistols, laughed outright at what he considered the old man's folly, and, with considerable ridicule in his tone, remarked,—

"If that is all the weapon you have, you had better be saying your prayers. The den of Jim Stevens is about ten miles farther on, just where you will get by night, and he cares as little for Bibles as a rattlesnake."

"They exchanged names, and each went his own way; the one surprised at the other's apparent folly and recklessness, the other undiswayed, and his faith in the protecting power of his Bible undiminished.

"Night had thrown her dark mantle around the earth, and the chilling blasts had begun to pierce the somewhat feeble frame of old David, when he descried a light far down in a glen a short distance from the road. He was sure that it proceeded from a robber-den, but he must have shelter, and, impelled by almost boundless faith, he directed his course thither. He halted when within a few paces of the door, and,

being coarsely greeted by some uncouth, mean-looking men, was invited to alight. When he entered the humble habitation he saw significant looks pass between the inmates, and each chuckled to himself, and he knew that he was at the head-quarters of a road-committee, among a desperate, relentless, and murderous clan of banditti. Nothing daunted, he occupied the proffered seat. Having partaken of a rough meal, which they furnished him at his request, he began conversation, which was continued till far in the night, when it was interrupted by the return of the captain, Jim Stevens, and a couple of his comrades in crime, from a plundering raid. Stevens, advancing within a few feet of him, asked jeeringly,—

"Old man, aren't you afraid to travel in this section among the robbers, alone and unarmed?"

"No," was old David's bold and fearless reply, as he again produced his Bible, continuing, "This is my weapon of defence. I always read a chapter, and pray too, before I retire. I know you are robbers, but I shall read and pray, here to-night, and you must join with me."

"The roof of the shabby hut shook with loud, taunting peals of laughter at this expression of the old man; but, nothing dismayed, he began to read. Gradually all became silent, and when he knelt to pray every knee was bowed. That was a strange sight—murderers and plunderers of their fellow-men kneeling, and attentively listening to a prayer. Long and fervently the humble servant of God prayed; nor did their interest in the solemn scene and supplications abate. When he had finished he was conducted to a hard pallet, where he slept the live-long night undisturbed, and even free from haunting fears.

"He arose very early in the morning, and read and prayed before breakfast. They refused to receive ought for his entertainment during the night, and, instead, cordially thanked him for the interest which he had manifested in their behalf. Asking for them the light of divine grace and the purification of their hearts, he bade them adieu and departed. He pressed onward, strengthened in faith and the goodness of God.

"At the next settlement he learned of the death of the gentleman that he had met on the road, who ridiculed his Bible. This incident confirmed him in his belief of the superiority of the Bible as a weapon of defence.

"He prosecuted his journey successfully, and soon returned safely to his home, family, and friends. Often now he gathers around him his grandchildren and the juveniles of the neighbourhood, and relates to them his adventures among the robbers. With his face animated, and his eyes glowing with superhuman light, he dwells upon the prayer scene in the banditti's hut, ecstatically exclaiming: 'My Bible palsied their arms, unmoved their hearts, and bowed their knees. He always concluded the relation of his adventure with the solemnly-spoken exhortation: 'Children, you need not fear the most perilous dangers of life, provided you are armed with the Bible, and have an abiding faith in God's power of protection.'"

BRING JESUS MORE AT HOME.

THE little loving charities of daily life preach loudly for Him who went about doing good. Bring Jesus unto your home and your circumstances more than you have hitherto done. Things do not go on well in your household, perhaps, nor in your circumstances either. You wonder why it is. Wonder not. It is because you bring the Lord so little into them. How can it be otherwise, with Him so little acknowledged? How can it be otherwise, when you are not cast upon Him in all that pertains to you? Change your plans. Bring Jesus more into home, and plans, and duties, and circumstances. Live not on as you have done, realising His presence so little. The name of Jesus is no mere fancy. He is a reality. He is a bosom Friend, a tender Physician, a loving Father, a gracious Saviour, a very present Helper. Oh, make Him so to you. Live not outside of these pleasant relationships. How strangely will all things change then! How you will be lifted up above things that once fretted you and hung heavily on your mind! How little will appear the things which men are struggling after and panting for around you! You will rise above them into a new element. Try it! Bring Jesus more into everything. Tell Him everything. Make Him your constant friend and companion. Make Him a reality. Only then will you begin to know Him as you should. Only then will the unutterable preciousness of Jesus begin to unfold itself in your heart.