

that, little as Astyrius had been absent from his friend's sick-bed, during that absence he had made a further acquaintance with the elderly man whom they had met on the mountain. He was a Christian, as the Roman senator had discovered. He and his wife Miriam, quite a young woman, were converted Jews, and although poor and despised were steadfast in the Christian faith. The first day of the week after the adventure on Hermon, Astyrius met them again, as under the escort of Marcus he was returning very early in the morning from a cavern amongst the hills, where the true believers met in secret for fear of the heathen, so uncertain was the safety of Christians in those days.

Rough and bare as the interior of the cavern was, yet every care had been taken fittingly to celebrate Divine service, and the Roman senator was rejoiced to find how many followers of our Lord there were to assemble together. It was a very solemn, thrilling service; the torchlight reflected by stalactites which hung from the roof, itself arched and curved and rising to an undistinguishable height. Such a cave on Hermon is said to have been capable of holding 400 men. Kneeling on the damp, rugged stones, were the absorbed congregation, losing sight of everything but the solemn service going on.

Daily did they thus assemble, strengthening themselves for the fiery trial which was coming upon them.

The service was ended soon after daybreak, and cautiously the congregation dispersed to their own homes; as they went, Astyrius recognized Pudens, and with him his pretty, young wife, who led by the hand a boy of about eight years of age. Both parents often regarded this child with a look of grief, and the Roman soon discovered the cause. He stopped to speak to them, and noticed almost immediately that the poor little fellow was imbecile; his face wore a vacant expression, and the words which he was addressing to his mother were quite unintelligible to any other ear.

Miriam saw at once the look of compassion which the senator cast on the lad; as she did so, Pudens recognized Astyrius, and the two Christians greeted one another.

"Little did I think, noble Ro-

man, that I should find in you a fellow-servant in Christ."

"My heart rejoices at finding that even in this terribly heathen place there are so many to bear witness to the faith. How different our use of this temple of nature and that of the heathen at the Pan grotto!" said Astyrius.

Miriam shuddered slightly, and drew the boy's hand closer in her own; both Astyrius and Pudens marked the action. The latter said,—

"My wife has many fears about the grotto, most excellent Roman; she fears that some misfortune will come upon us through it."

ened up with the light of reason; he snatched his hand from his mother, and picking up a pebble from the ground flung it at the building. It was much too far for his feeble hand to send it, nor indeed could he throw straight, but his mother seized his hand in terror, and shaking her head tried to show the boy that he must not go near the temple. Evidently he understood more than might have been expected, for he began some uncouth gestures, meant to imitate the grotesque figures of Pan which he had seen, whilst with his fingers he pretended to blow on a pipe. These strange

pipes, and fearing that it might be great Pan and his nymphs she fled breathless, nor halted till she fell at my feet on our cottage floor. Soon after her son was born, but ever since he could walk he hath been drawn toward this Pan temple, yet with a sort of rage, since he knows, but knows not why, his mother dreads the cave."

"But you do not fear Pan now?" said Astyrius, turning toward Miriam: "you were weary that day, and surely it was but a party of grape-gleaners whom you saw in the dusk?"

"I do not know about that, most excellent Roman," said Miriam, timidly; "they seemed to me no human forms: but what they were I know not, and though I believe not in Pan as a god, yet is my fear of him and his priests still great. Once I was at a sacrifice in the grotto. I was but a young maiden then, and with others I had gone to hang my wreaths up in his temple, and it was the day of the sacrifice. There were lights burning outside the grotto, and they threw strange shadows into the cave, till one could almost fancy there rose up dark forms from the black water. Then the priests drew near and threw in the victim bound hand and foot; his shriek is still in my ears, and the songs which the priests raised to drown them."

(To be continued.)

THE STRAIGHT PATH.

"The Bible is so strict and old-fashioned," said a young man to a gray-haired friend who was advising him to study God's Word if he would learn how to live. "There are plenty of books written now-a-days that are moral enough in their teaching, and don't bind one down as the Bible does."

The old merchant turned to his desk and took out a couple of rulers, one of which was slightly bent. With each of these he ruled a line, and silently handed the ruled paper to his companion.

"Well," said the lad, "what do you mean?"

"One line is not straight and true, is it? When you mark your path in life, don't use a crooked ruler!"

H. L. T.

HE WHO MAKES an idol of his interest will make a martyr of his integrity.



THE CHRISTIANS AT WORSHIP.

"The most High has afflicted us, noble stranger," said Miriam sadly; "for this is our only child, and, as you see, he is not quite right in his head, and he doth nothing but haunt the temple, as though drawn thither against his will. Last week he brought thence one of the Pan-pipes, and I fear me if the priests see him evil will befall the child; already they say he hath a devil."

At the sight of his mother, who pointed as she spoke to the white, glistening walls of Pan's temple, which had just come in sight, the idiot's face seemed suddenly wak-

anties were followed by a burst of rage, although he scarcely seemed conscious what it was which angered him.

"Thus hath he ever been," said Pudens, sadly. "Before the child's birth, whilst his mother and I were still heathen, she worked for the Governor's lady at the castle. One night as she was returning thence a strange fear seized her; it seemed to her that from the deep shadows of the tides came forth figures, shadowy shapes like those figures in yonder grotto, and from their midst came a sound as of shepherds'