

Pastor and People.

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

All common things, each day's events
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds
That have their root in thoughts of ill,
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will—

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore,
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

THE GOSPEL IN LARGE CAPITALS.—V

DR. PATON'S STORY OF A CHRISTIAN
ADVENTURE.

BY FIDELIS.

Dr. Paton, however, lost little time in rest at Sydney, and we find him in the second volume proceeding from Ancey (where he had been landed by the *Blue Bells* at the request of the missionaries there) to Sydney in order to bring the needs of the mission before the Australian Church. *En route* he gives us a glimpse of the brutal conduct of the captain, one of those depraved and cruel sandal-wood traders, who disgrace the name of our Christian civilization among those poor heathen. He describes, most touchingly, the condition of some unhappy islanders who were being conveyed to Sydney as slaves for the infamous "labour traffic."

If Dr. Paton, after all his sufferings, expected a warm and brotherly sympathy from the representatives of the Australian Church he was painfully disappointed. Some were too busy fighting controversial battles with other Christians, and almost all showed extraordinary apathy to the missionary who had so long been risking his life in the Master's cause. Not even one pulpit was open to him on his first Sabbath, although he had duly presented a note of introduction from the missionaries on the islands. On the second Sabbath afternoon he was, no doubt, providentially guided into a church where the Sabbath school was assembled to be addressed by their pastor, and here he first obtained an opportunity to unfold his errand. From this time his difficulties were at an end, and he now began to put in practice his plan of interesting the children in a missionary ship. It will be remembered how the *Dayspring* was bought and supported by the children of the Scotch and Australian Sunday schools, aided by our own in Canada, as the *John Williams* was by other children under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. How useful she and her successor, the second *Dayspring*, have been to the New Hebrides Mission we all know, or should know very well.

Misunderstanding and calumny seem to have clung to Mr. Paton all his life, and he had much of both to encounter during his laborious rounds in Australia, an experience among nominal Christians probably little less hard to bear than the sufferings and perils he had been enduring among the heathen. Having, however, triumphed over these by faith and patience he left Australia for Scotland, after having added by his efforts about £5,000 to the mission funds. He was received with a grateful welcome by his Church in Scotland, and at once accorded the somewhat unwelcome

honour of being appointed Moderator, a position from which he shrank with characteristic modesty.

During this visit to Scotland he married his second wife who is still laboring faithfully and devotedly at his side. He returned with Mrs. Paton to Sydney in January, 1865. Arrived there he was at once confronted with financial difficulties in connection with the *Dayspring*, which, with his indefatigable zeal he at once set himself to meet, and secured the required amount—nearly £2,000—through collections in Tasmania and South Australia. At Sydney, on his return, he had another painful experience. Before leaving for the islands a gross slander had been published regarding Dr. Paton's action in going as interpreter with the *Curacoa*, which had visited Tanna and other islands in order to overawe the natives who had so violently ill-used the missionaries. No punishment had been inflicted on them beyond the destruction of some property necessary to reduce them to subjection, and Dr. Paton's presence was, undoubtedly, instrumental in preventing bloodshed. Yet he was represented as having been in some measure a party to a purely fictitious scene of carnage, in an island where he had been exposed, many times, to instant death without hurting one hair of a native's head. Having vindicated himself from this, he had next to meet a new slander as to the condition of the *Dayspring*, which had been falsely represented as useless. These damaging reports also having been proved groundless, he tried and dauntless missionary at length proceeded on his way, not to his beloved Tanna, as he longed to do, this being regarded as still unsafe, but to a smaller adjoining island called Aniwa. In passing by he paid his old home a short visit, and had to undergo the painful experience of refusing the touching entreaties of his old friend Nowar, who could not understand why "Missi" should refuse to settle among them once more. When he found that his pleadings were vain, he took from the Aniwan chief the white shells—the insignia of chieftainship—and by these pledged them to protect "his missionary, and his wife and child, while they remained on Aniwa."

On the little coral, reef-girt island, some ten miles by three in size, Mr. and Mrs. Paton received a kind welcome from the natives, and were conducted to a temporary home in a native hut, built of sugar-cane leaf and reeds with a snowy floor of broken coral. Here, on a pleasant slope, Mr. Paton built his cottage with coral foundation and verandah in front and rear. For assistance he had to depend on the kind Ancey-mese helpers who had come with him. The Aniwaes would scarcely work at all, even for payment, naively remarking: "The conduct of Aniwa is to stand by or sit and look on while their women do the work." The language being different from Tannese, had to be learned in the same manner as the former tongue, getting word after word from the natives. The house having been completed, and thatched with reeds, Mr. Paton with great labor procured blocks of coral from the sea, at a distance of three miles, and broke it up for plaster. It so happened that "Missi" had been allowed or encouraged to build his hut on a sacred spot, and the fact that he could live there and eat bananas off the sacred trees without harm, led the superstitious people to believe that the God of the missionaries was stronger than the gods of Aniwa, and the old chief Namakei led the people in a broken, heart-rending cry to the Christian's "Heavenly Father."

The adventures of Dr. Paton and his wife in Aniwa—the gradual winning of the natives to listen to the tale they had to tell, the translation of the Scriptures by Dr. Paton into the language of the island, and also, better still the translation of the "Gospel into LARGE CAPITALS which all can read," as Dr. Paton truly remarks of the changed lives of the people themselves, must be briefly noted, without entering into much detail. The printing of the first Aniwan

book, through Dr. Paton's unassisted labors, of course was a great event, and the delight of the old chief Namakei at getting a book which could "speak to him in his own language" is very touchingly described, and might well serve as a rebuke to those who treat their Bibles with careless indifference. These first books were an Aniwan hymn-book, a portion of Genesis in Aniwan, as well as a second book in Erromangan for the second ill-fated Gordon missionary. Namakei, however, had to receive spectacles before the book could "speak" to him, and very grateful he was to get these "glass eyes," sent to him by Jesus, which enabled him to learn to read. The power of music to "charm the savage breast" was also most effectively used by Mrs. Paton, who led the songs of praise in the Aniwan tongue, thus opening an avenue whereby the gospel could glide easily into their hearts. It is worthy of note, in passing, that these islanders, in their savage state, possessed traditions of the Creation, the Fall and the Deluge; traditions, grotesque, it is true, but unmistakably recording their belief in the reality of such events. The building of the neat and spacious church (sixty-two feet by twenty-four) and the hanging of the bell on a tall iron wood mast are events not less interesting, and most picturesquely told.

But perhaps the most striking event described, as well as the most important in its effects, was the sinking of the well, excavated by Dr. Paton's own hands. Previous to this achievement the islanders had had to depend on a water-hole filled from the scarce rains, and in drought, on the "milk" of the cocoa-nut, and on the juice of the sugar-cane. When Dr. Paton declared his intention of sinking a deep well, to seek "rain from below," the amazed people regarded him as going mad, and pitied his delusion, especially the old chief, who was really distressed at the danger to which he thought "Missi" was exposing himself, the danger of being buried alive, even if he did not "drop through the hole into the sea." But when the missionary's perseverance had secured its reward, the result to the simple people seemed miraculous, and when they found that the water was to be their very own, that they might come and drink and carry away as much as they liked, their delight and gratitude were irrepressible, and there was then no scarcity of volunteers to build up the well, in order to secure it against caving in. Nay, more, the success of the enterprise proved the turning point of their acceptance of the worship of Jehovah. We cannot refrain from giving, in Dr. Paton's translation, a portion of the old chief's vigorous and striking speech:—

"My people, the people of Aniwa, the world is turned upside down since the Word of Jehovah came to this land! Whoever expected to see rain coming up through the earth? It has always come from the clouds! Wonderful is the work of this Jehovah-God! No god of Aniwa ever answered prayers as the Missi's God has done. Friends of Namakei, all the powers of the world could not have forced us to believe that rain could be given from the depths of the earth, if we had not seen it with our eyes, felt it and tasted it as we here do. Now, by the help of Jehovah-God, the Missi brought that invisible rain to view, which we never before heard of or saw, and something here in my heart tells me that the Jehovah-God does exist, the Invisible One, whom we never heard of nor saw till the Missi brought Him to our knowledge. The coral has been removed, the land has been cleared away, and lo! the water rises. Invisible to this day, yet all the same it was there, though our eyes were too weak. So I, your chief, do now firmly believe that, when I die, when the bliss of coral and the heaps of dust are removed which now blind my old eyes, I shall then see the Invisible Jehovah-God with my soul, as Missi tells me, not less surely than I have seen the rain from the earth below! From this day, my people, I must worship the God who has opened for us the well, and who fills us with rain from below. The gods of Aniwa cannot hear, cannot help us, like the God of Missi. Henceforth I am a follower of Jehovah-God. Let every man that thinks with me go now and fetch the idols of Aniwa, the gods which our fathers feared,

and cast them down at Missi's feet! Let us burn and bury and destroy these things of wood and stone, and let us be taught by the Missi how to serve the God who can hear, the Jehovah who gave us the well and who will give us every other blessing, for He sent His Son Jesus to die for us and bring us to heaven. This is what the Missi has been telling us every day since he landed in Aniwa. We laughed at him, but now we believe him. The Jehovah-God has sent us rain from the earth. Why should He not also send us His Son from heaven? Namakei stands up for Jehovah!"

THE CONSECRATION OF THE NATURAL.

What is the difference between the third day of creation on which the divine command was spoken, "Let the earth bring forth grass . . . whose seed is in itself upon the earth," and the previous days? It is that for the first time there is a consecration of self-help. Hitherto, all help had come from above—from the light and the firmament. Here the earth itself is to be the agent. Everything is to be "after its kind"; everything is to have "the seed in itself." What is meant is that for the future the natural shall be counted Divine. It is a lesson which we all need to learn. We often reject the providence of a thing because we say we can explain it. "Oh," we cry, "it all happened quite naturally." Why should a thing be un-Divine because I can explain it? The mystery is not how it comes, but what comes out of it. The marriage of Rebecca and Isaac was quite natural; it was, humanly speaking, accidental—the result of an act of passing courtesy; but the house of Israel came from it. The meeting of Ruth with Boaz was quite natural—it came in the way of business; but it was the human origin of Jesus.

My soul, believe in the consecration of the natural. Uncover your head in the temple of the commonplace. Bow down to the harmony God weaves out of trivial things. You meant to visit a house on Tuesday, but some impulse made you go on Monday. Reverence that impulse; you met one that day who became your life-friend. In a throb of human pity, you took in a blind man from a thunderstorm. Reverence that human pity; the man you preserved was Paul. You took the road to Emmaus from a motive you could not define. Reverence that undefined motive; you met on that road the man that made your heart burn—Jesus. It is with thee, my soul, as with the bee; it flies from flower to flower for its own ends, but all the time it is making a hive. Even such is thy work below. Thou art pursuing thy pleasures, sometimes without a thought of God. Thou art flying from flower to flower in search of idle vanities; thou art building for a day and for the dust. But thou art doing what thou knowest not. Thou art rearing a mansion for the skies. Thou art making a tabernacle for the mount. Thou art constructing a tower whose top shall reach to heaven; and one day, thou thyself shalt wonder at thine unconscious workmanship. Thou hast designed to plant a row of cottages, and there has emerged the city of God. Thou hast sown thine own seed; but it has issued in God's tree.—*Rev George Matheson, M.A., D.D., in the Christian World*

In an interview on his return to England the Rev. E. H. Hubbard, of the Church Missionary Society, who has been engaged in Uganda for five years, stated that the progress made in the British Protectorate under the present administration was remarkable, the native chiefs and people showing an apparently united and sustained effort to repair the destruction caused by warfare and pillage in the past. There was a growing tendency among the people to adopt European methods, and the Prime Minister and other chiefs were constructing permanent stone houses in place of the huts they had previously been content with.