

"Where's Mother."

Bursting in from school or play,
This is what the children say,
Trooping, crowding, big and small,
On the threshold, in the hall—
Joining in the constant cry,
Ever, as the days go by—
"Where's mother?"

From the weary bed of pain,
This same question comes again:
From the boy, with sparkling eyes,
Bearing home his carliest prize,
From the bronzed and bearded son,
Perils past, and honours won;
"Where's mother?"

Burdened with a lonely task,
One day we may vainly ask,
For the comfort of her face,
For the rest of her embrace,
Let us love her while we may,
Well for us that we can say,
"Where's mother?"

Mother, with untiring hands,
At the post of duty stands,
Patient, seeking not her own,
Anxious for the good alone,
Of the children as they cry,
Ever, as the days go by,
"Where's mother?"

PROMOTED.

A Story of the Zulu War.

By SYDNEY WATSON.

Author of "The Slave Chase," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

A PUZZLING PROBLEM.

"Attention! Take up arms! Fours, right! Quick march!" Boom, boom from the drum; then, amid the lively strains of "The Campbells are Coming," the men marched off from the troop-ship, putting their feet for the first time on "Africa's coral strand."

Corporal Harris had just bidden his friend farwell; and, as Teddy Jones looked over the ship's side at the newborn soul, he cried in his heart, "Oh, Lord Jesus, he is thine; keep him, and use him for thine own glory."

How strange everything seemed to these young Englishmen, these soldier lads, as they landed; and they knew, from all they heard, that the war-cloud was blacker than ever, and that they must expect, before long, rapid marches, and an early initiation into the horrors of battle life.

Willy Wilson, the little fair-haired, blue-eyed drummer-boy of the company to which Corporal Harris was attached, was a general favourite. There was a child-like winsomeness about the boy, besides the fact that his voice was singularly strong and sweet, and that he had quite a store of songs—soldier-songs, and touchingly sweet little home ballads, that used to move mightily upon the hearts of these men.

Who shall say how much of open vice and flagrant sin many of these men were kept from by the restraint of pure sentiment, sung sweetly, when added to the memory of some personally pure, home-life associations? Anyway, all among them felt the better for the presence of that boy and his songs; and now, on this first evening in a foreign land, as they lounged, or laid, or sat about in their temporary barrack-rooms, tired out, most of them, with the unusual bustle and work of that busy day, they heard the boy's voice, as the familiar notes and familiar words floated upwards to their ears from the quadrangle below:

"Home! home! sweet, sweet home,
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home."

And then, in the fast-gathering gloom, a hush fell upon them all, as they listened, and as they thought of their homes far away, and their loved ones; and, as face after face came up before their minds, many a sigh was heaved, as the possibilities of death, amid shot and shell, spear or lance, arrow or assegai, came in rapid and telling thought upon them, and more than one wished he was "sure" as Corporal Harris was.

The silence and gloom became almost painful, till a careless, merry-hearted young Scotchman—a general favourite in the ranks, because of his light-hearted gaiety and his queer pranks and antics—suddenly sprang from his iron bedstead on which he had been lying, and with the "chanter" of his bagpipes, commenced to play in wildest manner the merry strains of "Weel may the keel row," accompanied by such mad capers as he danced about, that in a moment the rooms echoed with peals of laughter, and as lights were lit more than one four or six joined in Scotch reel or Irish

jig and thoughts and cares were flung to the winds.

Jem Harris turned away with a sigh. How his heart yearned over these careless, light-hearted, frolicsome fellows; how earnestly he longed to see them "enlisted" under his Captain. He took a turn in the open quadrangle, flooded now with a brilliant moonlight, and listened for a few minutes to the music of the stringed band that was playing in the officers' mess-room, at a late dinner.

Little did he think that he himself was just then the subject of an earnest and animated conversation between two of the officers of the regiment. Dinner was over; they had drawn aside from the table, and with coffee and fruit, or smoking, they were engaged in little knots talking and laughing together. Two of them appeared to have a difficult subject under discussion, a subject, too, on which there was an evident slight difference of opinion; and as we draw near we catch an impatient exclamation from one of them.

"Pshaw! Fiddlesticks! All bosh, I tell you! Of course as a youngster I was brought up to go to church, and was confirmed, and all that sort of thing; but did that help me at all in such matters as you speak of? Not a bit of it. There are just two things that our family has been noted for for hundreds of years: pride and temper. Well, now, you say you believe there is something in religion that will cure these things. Come now, old boy, that won't wash. Why, there's my old 'mater,' the marchioness, she has turned awfully religious this last three years, but her temper gets worse and worse; and as to her pride, why, Satan himself couldn't be stuck more full of it. Not that I mean any disrespect to her, dear old soul; but truth is truth. Well, now, here's the problem I want solved: if religion will cure, and is supposed to cure, how is it that the most religious people I know appear to be the most incurable in reference to these things?"

His companion officer was a handsome, aristocratic-looking man, about forty, with a rare physique, over six feet in height, straight as a lance, with muscles of iron, marvellous nerve and powers of endurance; with an eye keen and penetrating, and that firm look about the mouth that speaks so much; and yet withal there ever hovered about that mouth and those eyes a certain expression which always betokened a readiness to smile, and the power to appreciate quickly the bright and the beautiful.

For a moment he was silent; then, taking the cigar away from his mouth, and slowly allowing the smoke to escape from half-closed lips, apparently watching the ever-changing form and hue of its floating, blueish, grey cloud, he slowly and thoughtfully said:

"Well, Gus, you know I don't go in for these things, and don't profess to understand them any more than you do. I confess I have just the same sort of difficulties that you have about the matter. I was only telling you what is an evident, undisputed fact; that is, that ever since Harris' wife died so suddenly, and he took up with those religious notions, he has been another man altogether."

"How do you mean, Hal?"

"Well, first of all, he has completely lost, or conquered, or something else, that abominable sulkiness he had. You know, as well as I do, we often talked of getting him shifted, or else brought before the Colonel, for the contempt he showed for all rule or order when these sulky moods were upon him."

"That's so, Gus, it used to be awfully aggravating."

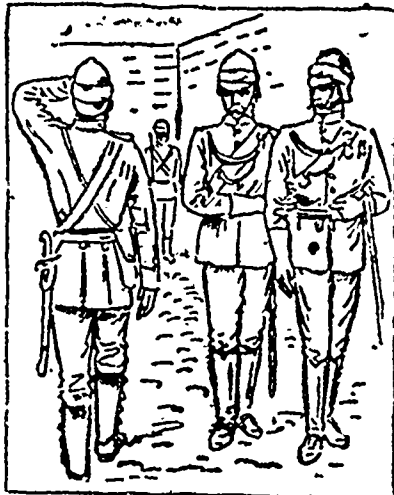
"Then, again, Hal, he was the foulest-mouthed man in all the detachment, and when he commenced to swear it fairly made one tremble. But all this is completely changed; and I confess that, after watching him most carefully for the past month, I am puzzled to know the secret of this life of his. Then, too, he is now so thoroughly trustworthy; and, if I mistake not, he will come into some prominence over this campaign, unless he gets 'popped off,' which would be a thousand pities."

"By-the-bye, Gus, do you know anything about his early life? What has he been? I never saw in my life such a fearless and perfect rider as he is, and he seems to be so thoroughly handy at anything he has to do. You see he is quite young yet—not more than thirty, I should think, eh?"

"Yes, that's about his age," replied his companion; "but, my dear fellow, he has just the sort of training that will stand by a fellow, and which will be likely to make him a most useful hand amid the wild bush-fighting we are all destined to know pretty much about before we are any of us many weeks older. I asked him once about himself, and he told me

he had been rather wild in his boyhood, and that he found his way to America, and there, in the South, among the Reds and wild cattle, he learned to keep his seat in a saddle so marvellously. Did you ever see him do that handkerchief bit? I remember once, at some of the garrison sports, he astonished every one with it. He was mounted on a fiery little horse, that no one hardly dared to mount, but on which he seemed as much at home as if he were sitting in an arm-chair. He first rode about half-way round the course very slowly, shaking out of their folds, as he rode, four white handkerchiefs at about equal distances. As he dropped the last one, he sprang out of the saddle to the ground, undid the girth, and took saddle, and girth, and all off, then leaping across the bare back of his fiery little animal, he touched her sides with his spur, and while she rushed round the course at a mad gallop, he leaned over her side, till it seemed as if his face almost touched the ground, and picked up each handkerchief with his finger and thumb; then, amid the cheers of the fellows, he quietly slid from the back of the horse as if it was the most ordinary thing in the world he had done, instead of a feat that not one of us, either officer or man, had perhaps ever dreamt of."

"Really, old man, is that so? I should



"HARRIS, ARE YOU BUSY?"

think it's likely, if this is known at 'drum-head,' he is likely to be made use of, unless his religion is that sort that makes a milksop of a man."

"No, I don't think that. I believe he would recognize a higher motive than even the military discipline and the soldier's duty. But we've got right away from our problem: what is the power of this fellow's religion? for, 'pon my soul, after all, a fellow ought to be prepared to go somewhere safe if he got popped off. 'Every bullet has its blivet,' we sing, and, as for me, I feel to-night that if my life came to an end now, I've nothing certain to think of in the future. But, I say, this room is awfully hot, shall we take a turn out of doors?"

"I don't mind if we do, old boy."

Together they strolled out, just as Corporal Harris crossed the quadrangle. He was passing them with the salute, when, as if a sudden thought had struck the officer who had been addressed as "Gus," he stopped, and said:

"Harris, are you busy?"

"No, sir," replied the man.

"Come here, then, a few minutes. Captain Elcombe and I have been talking about you, and we were just trying to solve a problem: how it was that you had altered so in temper, and speech, and—and—well, in fact, every way. Of course we've heard that you've turned religious. That's so, is it not?"

"Well, no, sir; I don't think that is it exactly. You see, sir, I did try to turn, ever so many times, but 'twas no use, till a young chap on the ship that we came out in—you may remember him, sir, he used to sing so sweetly, and play the concertina. Well, it was just as I was in such awful grief over my wife's death, and I was trying to turn—but I did not seem to make much of a job of it, for the more I thought about myself, the worse I seemed. But I believe God sent that seaman gunner to me, as much as he sent Philip the Evangelist to the eunuch that I was reading about this morning in the Acts of the Apostles. Well, this sailor upset all my notions of 'turning religious, and he showed me that the very first step was for me to look right away from myself, and look at Jesus Christ as having borne my sin, and pledged his life, as well as his word, to give me eternal life through himself. But I hope you don't mind my speaking like this to you, gentlemen?"

"Not a bit of it—not a bit, Harris. Go on; I am intensely interested."

And, in truth, both officers appeared

so their eager looks, seen in the powerful southern moonlight, helped the corporal to open his heart fully.

"Yes, sir, I found out that salvation wasn't steady ways, or Bible readings, or saying prayers, or turning over new leaves, but it was just simply believing what God said—first, about myself, that I was a sinner, and then what he said about his Son, that he was my Saviour. The fact was, gentlemen, I had always had a God, but I had no Saviour."

"But, stop a minute, Harris! How do you mean, you had a God, but no Saviour?"

"Why, sir, I believed in a general way in God's existence; and, of course, I knew that Jesus Christ had died upon the cross, but it never occurred to me that personally I could have no benefit from that death unless I believed with all my heart what God said about my sins, and his Son's atonement for them. This was the first thing, and then, with a power I cannot describe, yet so simply, the truth came to me, that though my sins 'did as mountains rise,' yet that the Lord had laid on his Son Jesus my sin, and that, if laid upon him, and I would by simple faith accept that work, they could not rest on me."

"Well, 'pon my word, Harris, this is a strange story. Do you mean to say that you had nothing to do to get this peace—this rest, as you call it?"

"No, sir; nothing. That's just where I was making the mistake. That young sailor laughed at my doings. He asked me what I had been doing, as I called it, for my salvation, and I told him, reading the Bible and praying, making good resolutions; and even crying a little; and he said to me, 'My Father is a King, he gives, he does not sell; you have been dealing with him as a pedlar might deal with you; you have been saying, Here, Lord, I want salvation, I want pardon for my sin, I want peace, and if you will give me this great gift I will give you all these works and tears of mine.' And then he quite laughed at me, but at the same time he showed me Christ's wondrous love—his death upon the cross for me, his last words, 'It is finished, and God did for me, through that sailor's personal dealing with the simple word of God, what all the sermons I ever heard failed to do for me!'"

"Well, Harris, we are both very glad of your good fortune, I am sure, and rejoice in your improved temper, etc. And now, I suppose, you feel at perfect rest as to your future, even if you should be shot or die of fever?"

"Oh, yes, sir! But, pardon me just a moment," (for he saw they were turning away, and would soon bring this conversation to a close), "I hope you won't be offended, but these are ticklish times, some of us may soon be killed. I you do not know Jesus as your Saviour please turn to him, so that, come life or death, all shall be well."

Just at this moment, an orderly crossed from the mess-room, where he had been to seek the officer known to us as "Gus." Recognizing him, the orderly saluted him, and then said: "The colonel wishes to speak to you, Captain Morgan, on urgent business."

"All right, orderly; tell him I'll come at once," and only waiting to say to Corporal Harris, "Well, Harris, I will talk with you again of these things," he turned quickly, and followed the messenger.

(To be continued.)

The deeper Christians we become, the more profound and rich in its associations and suggestions becomes Christmas Day. The more Christ is to us, the more this day, which gathers his whole life up and holds it in the light, must mean. Each year, if that figure in history becomes more central, the first appearance city of David was born a Saviour must grow more interesting. Each year, if our salvation by the Saviour grows more complete, the day when unto us in the city of David was born a Saviour must break upon our lives with more mysterious and gracious power—Phillips Brooks

It is not uncommon to hear the devotion and liberality of Roman Catholics, in the spread of their religion, highly lauded in contrast with what is said to be the apathy and parsimony of Protestants. But what are the facts? The annual giving for missions by 210,000,000 Roman Catholics is \$3,500,000, while 160,000,000 Protestants give nearly \$15,000,000

Green Apples.—"Do you make much out of your apples?" asked the visitor. "Oh, pretty considerable," answered the farmer, "but I've got a son up in the town who makes more out of the apples in a month than I make the whole season." "A farmer, is he?" "No; he's a doctor. I'm talking about green apples now."