

EARLY DAYS

another city firm, Messrs. Ashurst, Morris and Company, with whom he remained about two years. While here a catastrophe occurred in the failure of a great company, involving ruin to unnumbered families. The harrowing spectacle of the poorer shareholders who brought their claims into court, having lost their all without remedy, was a terrible strain upon the young man's nervous system, which had been weakened by a severe illness but a short time before. This, together with strenuous labour, brought on a second breakdown, and early in 1858 he was forced to give up work altogether. He declared that it took him three months to learn to do nothing. During his year of inaction the Greek Testament was his constant companion. Change of scene became necessary, and he spent some time at his mother's home, Broughton, Hants, and later with his sister visited the Normandy coast.

"The summer after his illness," writes his brother, Judge Bompas, "we went on a walking tour to Scotland; and one evening it got dark before we had reached our destination, and we had to sleep out in the mountains with no shelter, and amidst frequent showers of rain. William, though in his weak health, was perfectly fearless and in great spirits, repeating part of Macaulay's 'Lays' and other poems for much of the night."

As his strength returned, his mind turned more and more to his early desire of entering the ministry. Leaving the communion of his early associations, he decided to seek ordination in the Church of England, and in 1858 was confirmed by the Bishop of London at St. Mary's, Bryanston Square. His remarkable linguistic ability enabled him soon to add by private study a good knowledge of Hebrew to that of Latin and Greek, which he already possessed.

In 1859 he was accepted by Dr. Jackson, the Bishop of Lincoln, as a literate candidate for Holy Orders, and was