

THE SPENDTHRIFT.—A FAITHFUL MOTHER'S REWARD.

BY REV. T. D. WITHERSPOON.

Evening service was over and the congregation was moving slowly down the aisle, when my eye rested upon the form of a man still seated, with his head leaning upon the pew in front as if in silent prayer. Not wishing to disturb his devotions, I resumed my seat in the pulpit and was soon lost in thought. The service had impressed me as a failure. The sermon on the text, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" had been intended for a full congregation. It had been preached to a little handful of zealous workers, who had braved the exposure of an inclement winter's night. A sense of disappointment oppressed me. I had a fearful attack of the "pulpit-blues."

From this unpleasant reverie I awakened after a little to find the congregation gone and the mysterious stranger still sitting as before with head bowed upon his hands. I approached him, fearing that he had been overcome with strong drink or sleep, or both; but as he heard my footsteps he raised his head, cast a searching glance upon me, and while his whole frame quivered with emotion, uttered in an excited tone the words, "Had ye a letter from her?"

I recognized at once the broad Scotch accent which told the nationality of the speaker, a man apparently of thirty years of age.

"A letter from whom?" I asked as kindly as I could.

"From my suld mither," his voice fairly choking with emotion. "Has she na' written you a' about me?"

"No, my friend," said I, "I have not received any letter from your mother."

"From our minister, then," said he; "for aweel I know some one has written you a' about me."

"And why do you think some one has written to me about you?"

"How could ye a' preachit about me as ye did, and told the folk how I had left my hame, and braken my mither's heart, an' wandered away an' a' that? Asure I am the man, the wretched God-forsaken man, ye were telling of. Ach, sir," said he, almost convulsed with agony, "ye never met sic' a spendthrift before—my time, my money, my friends, my health, my good name, my character, a' a' squandered and gone. I am forsaken of my God and deserted of men. The pit is before my feet. I have wasted it all. I have nothin', nothin' left."

As soon as he became calm enough to listen, I said,

"No, my friend, it is not all gone. You have something priceless left yet."

He looked up as one who in his despair grasps at a straw, as he asked,

"And pray, sir, what can it be?"

I answered slowly, looking him in the eye to see what impression would be made,

"You have a mother to love you and to pray for your forgiveness and reformation."

The words were like a talisman. The deep currents of the soul were opened up. The warm emotions gushed forth. The hot tears chased each other down his cheeks as he said,

"It was her prayers that brought me here to-night. If anything could save me from this awful pit, it would be the answer to her prayers."

Subsequent conversation revealed the fact that he was reared in Edinburgh, the son of a pious mother, who was left a widow in his early childhood. He had come to this country, found profitable employment, accumulated money, with the old story of evil companionship, intemperance, card-playing, descent from one step of degradation to another, until he had reached the lowest pitch of humiliation and shame. Meanwhile years had rolled on. Communication with home had ceased. The sanctuary and the Sabbath had been forgotten. All early associations had lost their power save one—the memory of a mother's love and a mother's prayers. He had changed from city to city only to repeat his course of dissipation and folly. A few weeks before he had come to the city in which I ministered, had secured profitable employment, lost his situation because of drunkenness, spent his money in a gambling-hell, been arrested for vagrancy, served his time in the chain-gang, been released the morning before that of the night on which we met; had walked the streets from morning until night seeking employment but finding none; had roamed through the Sabbath-day penniless, friendless, cursing God in his heart, and as the shadows of the evening gathered over the city had determined, under the gnawings of hunger and the more fearful gnawings of despair, that he would resort to burglary as a last means of supplying his wants. Truly his feet were upon the very borders of the pit.

But God's time to answer a mother's prayers had come. As he passed under the eaves of the church, his ear caught the notes of a hymn sung to his mother's favorite tune. He stopped for a moment to listen. The hallowed memories of the past crowded upon

him. He turned almost involuntarily and entered. The text followed the hymn, and was driven like a nail in a sure place by the Master of assemblies. The Holy Spirit brought every word of the sermon home as though it were meant for him. His whole secret life was uncovered to him, and, as he believed, to others, too. Out of the agony of that night, such spiritual agony as I have never witnessed elsewhere, it pleased God to evoke the light and joy of reconciliation and peace; and through long years of consistent Christian living and faithful Christian service, Robert A. approved the genuineness of the change which came in answer to a mother's prayers.

A few weeks later, it was my privilege to read the letter which he received from his aged mother, in reply to one announcing his entrance upon the new life. That letter revealed a life that through long years had been given almost exclusively to importunate prayer for an erring son, and a faith that had never, even in the darkest hour, despaired of a gracious answer from above.—*Christian Weekly.*

THE FUNERAL OF A SULTAN.

BY HENRY O. DWIGHT.

Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, of Turkey, had brought his country to the verge of destruction by his extravagance, and by his intractableness he had prevented any recovery of strength. Hence, when he was dethroned on the 30th of May, joy was general among the people. It was rather a matter of surprise that the dethroned monarch had not been made away with, but no one pitied him when it was known that he had been locked up with his family, among the ghosts and ghouls of the old Seraglio. There was even a little wonder expressed when the new Sultan graciously allowed the old one to leave those blood-stained halls for a bright new Kiosk on the Bosphorus. But, frantically crying out against the fate which had dashed him from the height of despotic rule over 40,000,000 of people to the depth of nothingness, the poor old man opened the veins of his arms, and so killed himself; and then there was a relenting among the people and a genuine burst of sympathy. The orders of the Sultan Murad that Abd-ul-Aziz should be buried with the same pomp as if he had died on the throne met this reaction of sympathy on the part of the people, and accorded with it. The ex-Sultan committed suicide on the 4th of June. According to the Turkish custom the funeral must follow death with all possible haste. Custom in Turkey, so often exactly the reverse of custom in Europe, is in this case also diametrically opposed to our ideas, and stigmatizes as indecent delay of even twelve hours in the burial of the dead. So, as soon as an inquest had been held, a small steamer from the arsenal called at the quay in front of the palace and removed the body to the old palace of the Seraglio, known to all travellers as the place where the Treasury and Library are found. Here a number of religious teachers and Imams had gathered to lay out the body, and the Ministry had also gathered in the reception rooms to take part in the funeral procession.

The body was taken to a special room in the Treasury building. This room has been used for more than a hundred years, perhaps even from the first days of Turkish rule, for the performance of the last offices to dead royalty. Many a bloody corpse has been laid out in that room. From this place the procession moved about 4 o'clock p. m., on its march by the "Gate of Happiness," through the courtyard where the heads of fallen favorites used to be exposed, by the porphyry sarcophagi under the walls of the Church of St. Irene, through the "Auspicious" Gate into the street which circuits St. Sophia, and thence across the end of the hippodrome, to and up the broad Divan Yoli, to the mausoleum of Sultan Mahmoud.

The troops moved hastily, almost shuffling along, at a route step. Following them were a hundred or two of men in black broadcloth coats buttoned up to the chin, functionaries about the late court, and very ordinary-looking officials from the public offices, easily recognizable anywhere, I imagine, as parasites. Then came several portly gentlemen in military uniform, with many orders on their breast and with much gold on collar and sword belt. These were the Ministry and high functionaries of Government—Abdi Pashi, the Minister of the Police, a benevolent looking old man with a flowing white beard; Hussein Avni Pasha (since assassinated) the Minister of War, a large strong man with full face and iron-gray beard; Mithad Pasha, the soul of the recent revolution, a man with close cut gray beard and moustache, prominent nose and piercing black eye; and, finally, Mehmed Rushdi Pasha, the Grand Vizier, a small, rather feeble man with sunken cheeks and short-pointed beard as white as snow; and after these were many others of the official circles. Crowding close upon them came a motley crowd of ulema and Softas, the

religious teachers and theological students of the Moslem system, and as they marched they chanted, in a full baritone, prayers, keyed to a minor strain, for the repose of the departed one. The chant stopped now and then for the great chorus of "Amin," recited in tones which seemed to come from cavernous depths in the chest. All these were also singing, according to the particular fashion of each group, wild songs—unwritten and unwritable, as to the music of them—appropriate to the occasion, or simply ejaculating "Allah! Allah!" while they foamed at the mouth from emotion. Then came more white-turbaned ulema, dervish sheiks in black, white and green turbans, dignitaries from Mecca in green robes, and finally the chief expounder of the holy law—the great Sheik-ul-Islam, dressed in green and gold, and supported by his lieutenants, the Cazi Askers. He had signed, six days before, the *ferva* or rescript authorizing the dethronement of Abd-ul-Aziz, and now, directly behind him, was borne by ten men the rough bier of unplanned cypress-wood boards, which contained under its roof-like cover the mortal remains of the fallen monarch. At the head of the bier was a sort of post bearing the fez of the Sultan, and from this post hung suspended the great jewelled star of the order of Mejdide which the dead man had worn in life. The rough boards of the bier were hidden from view by costly Indian shawls; and there seemed to be a continual scramble among the bystanders for the privilege of bearing the corpse: the bearers were constantly thrust to one side by new aspirants for the honor. After the body were more officials, more servants and more guards; and last of all came a man on horseback with a sack of silver coin, which he scattered to the right and left as he went. The whole street was a solid mass of people, and when this scatterer of money appeared there ensued a scene defying description. The rabble behind the procession and the rabble on each side became involved in fierce fighting over the little coins, and women and children were thrown down and trampled upon, coats were torn, hats, and even shoes, were lost, and the cries, "Where is my hat?" or "Where is my shoe?" were more vehement than the screams of the bruised and wounded, and mingled with childish wails of "Where's my ma?" Leaving a chaos like this behind it, the procession moved calmly on.

Arrived at the beautiful octagonal mausoleum, remembered by every traveller who has visited Constantinople, the troops formed in line to hold back the mighty crowd of Turkish women and sight-seers, and the procession passed into the grounds of the mausoleum, talking about the building, while only the chief dignitaries entered. An opening had been made in the floor of the mausoleum, and underneath, by the side of his illustrious father, they buried the poor old man who had been a Sultan. The Turkish funeral exercises at the grave are few and simple, the same for king and slave. The prayer was quickly said, and before the grave was half filled the great concourse had melted away. The windows of the mausoleum were closed and barricaded from the inside, and until late in the evening could be heard the voice of the solitary priest by the side of the grave, alone with the spirit of the dead man, exhorting the departed one to be of good cheer and to answer truly the questions of the recording angel who within three days according to Moslem belief, comes to the grave to examine into the deeds done in the flesh. A weird, unearthly voice it was which thus rung out upon the air, rising sometimes almost into a shriek, then falling into a low moaning wail of inexpressible sadness.

And so ends the history of the reign of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz of Turkey.—*Christian Union, June 6th, 1876.*

WHICH?

BY MARY B. LEE.

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another."

"Good morning, Mr. Anderson; pleasant weather for this climate. I've called on a little business,—in fact, to give you an opportunity to devote some of your means to a good work."

"Indeed, what is it?"

"A new church for the English residents. You know we worship in a very mean building, and if the prosperous merchants, like yourself, will subscribe, say £200, and other smaller amounts, we can have a fine building, an ornament to the town. Come I know you'll put your name down for £200. There's Tuttle & Wood, £200; Robinson & Sons, £200; Wheeler & Co., £200. Just write Anderson, £200."

"I must think over the matter first. I cannot put down my name for £200 as easily as those gentlemen you have named."

"Well, then I'll call again."

"Let me see," said Mr. Anderson, when his visitor had departed, I don't like to appear mean, and the church is needed, but whenever I wish to be generous that old text comes

up 'Owe no man anything,' and I feel bound to be honest first. I must look at my list of debts. Ah! there's that old one of Nat Kirby's. How kind he was about it! He told me not to worry, but to pay it when I was able. He has never written, so I have left it till the last. I wonder if I had better subscribe to the building fund or pay Nat. I don't like to refuse when all the merchants are contributing; Nat is a rich man and can afford to wait. I believe I'll subscribe and let the debt wait."

Still Mr. Anderson was not satisfied. The subject tormented him all that afternoon and the next morning. "Owe no man anything;" "Be just before you are generous," whispered Conscience. "Do as your neighbors do," said Pride. "Thou shalt not steal. That money is Nat Kirby's. You have no right to use it," answered Conscience.

Mr. Anderson made up his mind to pay what he owed first, help the church afterwards. He took Kirby's account, and calculated the interest and found the amount to be nearly £200. He wrote a note thanking Mr. Kirby for his forbearance and telling him of the draft inclosed.

Of course Mr. Anderson could not subscribe to the building fund of the church. He had the moral courage to appear mean rather than to be mean.

Some years before he had failed in business, and left England to retrieve his fortunes in the West Indies. He was prospering, but the payments of old debts prevented him from having anything to spare.

While the draft directed to Nathaniel Kirby, London, England, is lying in the mail-bag, with many other messages of joy and sorrow, Mr. Kirby was passing through a very sorrowful period of his life. He too had failed and left London for the United States. Times were bad and Mr. Kirby soon exhausted his means. Still he struggled and toiled and hoped for better days, till sickness laid hold of him and the strong man gave way. The terrible heat was very hard on Mr. and Mrs. Kirby, both weak and ill. There was no money to buy fruit or needful food. Everything valuable had been parted with, and debts had been incurred for the necessities of life.

Mr. Kirby lay very still. Jessie Kirby, the oldest daughter, was fanning him. Mrs. Kirby lay in the next room, the second girl attending her. The small, close rooms were stifling, and Jessie sent her brothers and little sister out to find a shady place to sit. She kept fanning her father and weeping. She was startled by the postman's loud impatient knock, and ran down, little dreaming of what awaited her.

The postman handed her Mr. Anderson's note to "Nathaniel Kirby, London, England." It was re-directed to Dey street, New York, United States. It had been across the Atlantic twice.

"What is it, Jessie?" asked Mr. Kirby, in weak tones.

"A letter for you, father. See, it was directed to London first, and then to New York."

"Open it quickly. That first direction is like Will Anderson's writing. I have been thinking of him all the morning. The money he owes would be a fortune to us now."

"Yes, father, it is from Will Anderson."

"Read it, I can't see."

"My dear Friend,—With many thanks for your great kindness and forbearance when I was in such trouble, I enclose a draft for £150 with interest to date, amounting to £195. Hoping you and family are well, I remain your much obliged friend."

"WILL ANDERSON."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mr. Kirby fervently.

If Mr. Anderson could have seen the Kirbys after the receipt of his draft, he would not have had the least doubt about the wisdom of the text "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." He had honored God more by paying a just debt than he would have done by contributing money which was not his, to the building of a church.

Good news is a great invigorator. Unseen, intangible, it affects the nerves. The Kirbys forgot the heat and began to improve. When the doctor came, he found his patients decidedly better. Mr. Kirby was soon up and about. Small debts were paid, food and clothes bought and a few hundred dollars invested in business.

It is astonishing how much a small amount of money accomplishes at critical periods. The payment of a small debt saved Mr. Kirby from ruin.

So Mr. Anderson felt that he had decided justly, and was repaid for being honest first, generous afterwards.—*Demorest's Monthly.*

Be not conformed to this world.
Rom. 12:2.