

since the time of the Captivity. It comes in four other passages which throw light on the word. James begins his Epistle with a greeting to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion. In St. John's Gospel (7³⁵) we are told, 'The Jews therefore said among themselves of Christ, Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?' In Zephaniah (3¹⁰) we read of the daughter of my dispersed, and in Isaiah (11¹²) of the dispersed in Judah. Now in Asia Minor Jews had been domiciled from an early date. In the fourth century B.C. Aristotle had met a Jew who was Hellenic not in language but in soul. Antiochus the Great had settled 2000 Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylon in Phrygia and Lydia. This we learn from Josephus. In 138 B.C. the Roman Senate wrote on behalf of the Jews to the kings of Pergamos and Cappadocia. A reference to this is in the First Book of Maccabees (chap. 15). Agrippa in a letter to Caligula says there were numerous Jewish settlements in Pamphylia and Cilicia. Petronius says that Jews abounded in every city of Asia and Syria. What, therefore, do these facts signify? Surely that the Christian congregations to which Peter writes would be drawn largely from the Jews of the Dispersion in Asia Minor. The privileges which God allowed to the chosen people would pass on in the natural course to the Christian brotherhood. On the other hand some of the primitive Churches may have been exclusively Gentile—composed of

those who had no knowledge of the Old Testament. This in no way minimizes the importance of the distinction between Judaism and Christianity.

The elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion then would mean those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who were called by God to be Christians. Men and women, whether Jews or Gentiles, dwelling in Asia Minor, chosen by Christ to leave their earthly home and become members of the Christian congregation.

One final question may usefully be asked before we end this exposition on the first verse of the Epistle. At what date did the news of the Christian faith find its way into these regions of Asia Minor, such as Pontus? Was there much knowledge of Christ in Asia Minor before, for instance, Paul started on his first missionary journey. No doubt the dwellers in Pontus and Cappadocia, when they returned to their native towns and villages after Pentecost, would spread the Gospel. As Bigg pointedly remarks, 'Among the 3000 souls who received baptism at the time of that great outpouring of the Spirit there must have been many who went home and preached the new faith. Very much good work must have been done by obscure missionaries of whom we have no record at all.'

Pilgrims, chapmen, traders of all kinds, soldiers, and subordinate officials played a part in the dissemination of the gospel, and there was probably no corner of the empire where Christianity had not been heard of within a very few years.

In the Study.

Rizpah.

A STUDY IN MOTHERHOOD.

'And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.'—2 S 21¹⁰.

RIZPAH is one of the great tragic figures of the Old Testament narrative. Her story is the last chapter of a blood-feud, such as often went on from one generation to another among the Eastern races of long ago; such indeed as may still be found in lands where men's blood is hot and their

instinct of revenge deep and passionate. There are two elements in the situation, both of which are strange to us.

1. *The judicial death of the innocent.* A modern situation requires that the man who dies shall at least have violated the law. But the sons of Rizpah are perfectly blameless; they die, not because they have broken a law, but in response to a grim and mysterious demand that comes from a dark superstition, victims to the stern and unethical powers which, like the Greek Até and Nemesis, sit and work behind the arras of history.

2. *The refusal of rites of burial.* This was one of the favourite tragic themes of the ancient world.

It was the theme of the *Antigone* of Sophocles : Polynices by a tyrant's decree was left unburied outside the walls of Thebes : Antigone, his sister, defied the decree, and finding none to help her, went forth alone to do the deed, though the penalty of disobedience was death. In that case, a larger issue is wrapped up in the story—the age-long problem of the relation of decrees of state to the conscience of the individual. But apart from that, in the ancient world, the doom of lying unburied was one of the deepest dishonours that could be inflicted, and the duty of giving honourable rites of burial one of the obligations that pressed most urgently upon the nearest and dearest of the dead.

I.

1. Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, was a maiden who by her beauty and charm had attracted the attention of Saul the king. She was brought into the royal harem. It was the humiliation of the Eastern woman, and is still wherever Christ is unknown, that a man might possess her body without possessing her soul, without even seeking to win her affections.

¶ Slave concubines were entirely at the mercy of their master, whose right over them was absolute, and 'the begetting of children by their master was desired rather than otherwise' (Maspero, p. 735). Kings had several wives as well as concubines, and sometimes the son of a favourite slave might be nominated as the successor to the throne. They had also the right to take any female slave from her master as a concubine. In such a case the seller of the slave undertook all responsibility incurred by such a claim (*ib.* 708; Sayce, p. 77). There existed among the people irregular marriages, in which the father's consent was not required, and no purchase price was paid for the woman, though cohabitation, terminable at will, took place. Such a woman, however, was regarded by the law as a mere concubine, and had to wear a stone with her own and her husband's name and the date of their union (Maspero, p. 738).¹

2. The girl gave birth to two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth. And as we are enabled from the last tragic scene to interpret the earlier scenes about which the history is silent, we gather that the strong and tender nature lavished all its devotion upon the boys. The man who stood in the relation of husband to her she could hardly love; to love him would have been presumption. There was enough in the heroic, but melancholy, character of Saul to enchain a good woman's pity

¹ *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, iii. 811.

if not her devotion. But how dare a humble concubine entwine her affections about the king? The boys, however, were her own. She could watch their growth, nourish their bodies, train their minds, embrace them, lean over them in their sleep, wait for their dawning reverence and love, draw them closer to her as the years passed, and look forward to the time when her eyes would be closed by them in death, and her body would be buried by their hands. They were all in all to her.

¶ Orientals rejoice exceedingly over the birth of a son, for he is not only to perpetuate the memory of his father, but is expected to be the support and defence of his mother and of the rest of the family, in a country where unprotected woman is most cruelly oppressed, and the widow and the fatherless even of the wealthiest are often reduced to penury and want. The same feeling existed among the Hebrews. Hagar despised her mistress as soon as she found herself the mother of a son. When the hated Leah had given birth to Jacob's first-born she rejoiced, saying, 'Now, therefore, will my husband love me.' And when she had borne him six sons, she exclaimed, 'God hath endued me with a good dowry: now will my husband dwell with me.'²

3. But a great tragedy was to come. Let us look more closely at Saul's family. The rightful heir of Saul, Ishbosheth, was a weakling, but he had a strong and capable general and adviser in the person of Abner, first cousin to the king. On the death of Saul, Abner espoused the cause of Ishbosheth, and through his counsel and management the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan remained loyal to his house. David reigned over Judah in the south, but the rest of the tribes, not only on the east but on the west side of the Jordan, continued faithful, generally speaking, to the house of Saul.

And one could hardly say what might have been the issue if Abner had remained at the head of affairs. But Rizpah becomes the unconscious instrument of a further change in the fortunes of the royal house. It is an additional testimony to the personal charm of Rizpah that the brave and valiant Abner came under her influence. He even proposed to make her his own wife, and that might seem to us a very innocent and sensible proposal now that the king was dead and those ladies of the court had no protector, but it was not so regarded in Israel. A similar request on the part of Adonijah in the time of Solomon cost Adonijah his life; and Ishbosheth, rightly or

² H. J. Van-Lennep, *Bible Lands and Customs*, 568.

wrongly, saw in this proposal the first step towards the usurpation of the throne. Such action as Abner's was so regarded (as we find in other examples of Scripture), and Ishbosheth did not scruple to charge Abner with this design.

And so king and counsellor quarrelled over Rizpah, and the contention was so sharp between them that, like Paul and Barnabas, they separated, Abner going over to the house of David and leaving the house of Saul to its fate.

4. It was after the fall of Saul's house and the establishment of the throne of David over all Israel that the tragedy took place in the life of Rizpah. The twenty-first chapter of 2 Samuel, which narrates the facts, is one of those passages in the Old Testament that force the hand of the interpreter. One has to choose between the credit of Scripture and the credit of God. If the facts here narrated are true, it is impossible to believe that God, or let us say the Yahweh of the Israelite, is just and merciful, as we now understand the terms. But if the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be identified with Yahweh, nay more, if Ezekiel's conception of the Lord is correct, that He demands the death of the criminal for his own sin, but not the death of the children for the sins of the fathers, and if the Lord is and always has been unchangeable, the same in the period of the Gospel-revelation, in the time of Ezekiel, and in the time of David—then we have nothing for it but to maintain that the theology of this chapter is false. Or let us rather say, the chapter faithfully represents the facts of the situation, but the facts represent only the superstitions of the men of that day.

The facts of the case were as follows. The Gibeonites, of the old guilty Canaanite race, had escaped extermination, and been made over to the priests, to assist the Levites in some of the rougher work connected with the Tabernacle: they were hewers of wood and drawers of water; slaves, especially assigned to the service of the sanctuary. They had now for centuries enjoyed the protection of the Lord God of Israel, when Saul, who had, in a spurious liberality, declined to execute God's wrath on Amalek, rushed to the opposite extreme, and, courting popularity by unauthorized fanaticism, sought to slay these inoffensive Gibeonites in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah. We may

suppose that this was not his own sin alone, but that too many of the nation shared his intolerant and cruel feelings; for retribution came in the shape of a famine, three years, year after year.

The famine was but one of many similar occurrences in the arid and parched land of Palestine. Such had been before, such might be again; but in the province of faith it had its special significance. It was understood to be a scourge sent by God on Israel, because of Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. It appeared to David that, now that he had discovered the secret cause of God's wrath, the nation must humble itself to these Gibeonites whom it had injured, and who were so manifestly under God's protection. So 'he called for them, and said unto them, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?'

The Gibeonites made answer, 'We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give them.' So in fulfilment of this promise, 'the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she bare to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholahite: and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the Lord, and they fell all seven together: and they were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of barley harvest.'

5. Upon the manner of this atonement, the nature of the satisfaction demanded, the sacred historian makes no comment. He tells us the fact, and adds nothing to it. According to the law of Moses it was the right of the injured party in some cases to fix the penalty that should be paid. And this the Gibeonites were permitted to do. They seem to have considered stern justice

and retribution, rather than any recompense to themselves. Silver and gold they refused, but seven lives of the children of Saul's family they demanded.

That the custom of balancing, or cancelling, a blood account by a payment in money, was well known in ancient Palestine, is evident from the record of David's conference with the Gibeonites, concerning their claim for blood against the house of Saul, in 2 Samuel 21¹⁻⁹. When it was found that the famine in Israel was because of Saul's having taken blood—or life—unjustly from the Gibeonites, David essayed to balance that unsettled account. 'And the Gibeonites said unto him, It is no matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel'; which was equivalent to saying: 'Money for blood we will not take. Blood for blood we have no power to obtain.' Then said David, 'What ye shall say, that will I do for you.' At this, the Gibeonites demanded, and obtained, the lives of the seven sons of Saul. The blood account must be balanced. In this case, as by the Mosaic law, it could only be by life for life.¹

II.

1. 'And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.' Surely if this had been a heathen tale, its memory would have been immortal.

The Old Testament is full of love stories; and the stories are of all kinds—not only of lover and lover, husband and wife, but of father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister, friend and friend. In all these relations love finds in the Old Testament of all literature its best illustration, because of all literature it is in the Old Testament simplest and least self-conscious. When we read its books with this idea in mind, we find love flashing out from many a page, and softly lambent in many a character, where we have hardly been aware of it before. Fierce or gentle, cruel or kind, selfish or devoted, all the men and women of Israel are lovers. Sometimes their love is so pure and flawless as to seem almost worthy to be a type of the divine reality; sometimes it is but 'broken lights' of that reality, yet still the stories of these loves suggest, and in their own way interpret, that perfect love which is 'more than they.'

2. It has always been the hardest task which

¹ H. C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, 324.

theology has had to face, to be rid of the idea that God, sharing our vengeful passions, delights in the death of a man, as man in his savage state delights in the death of his brother. No one questioned that those gaunt bodies, wet with the dew, and parched with the gathering fervours of the sun of June, excruciated, emaciated, ragged, stained, and verging to corruption, were an acceptable sacrifice to the God Yahweh. Rizpah herself did not doubt it. This is the deep tragedy of the situation; but, like all the bitterest fruits of human woe, it contains at its heart a certain core of comfort. She believed that her sons were an offering by which the vengeance of Heaven was averted. Like the Mater Dolorosa at the cross, though a sword pierced her heart, she was not without dim and eager surmises that the deaths were an expiation, and that these were they who had redeemed Israel. It was the absorbing thought of the day and the night to keep those precious bodies from violation. She might not bury them; the authorities would not allow it. Perhaps in some obscure way she acquiesced in the harsh decision, from a feeling that if they were decently buried they would cease to be an effectual atonement. She would therefore leave the sacrifice complete and unimpaired. But there was one thing which she could not endure—that the vultures should peck out the eyes which she had loved and kissed, or that the lions and the jackals should tear the limbs which to her imagination were still the tender and helpless limbs of infants. Therefore the woman, in the sacred exaltation of a hungry and imperishable love, took up her station by the gallows, nor would she move by day or by night. All through the summer, till the autumn rains should come and wash the bodies, preparing them for the legal burial long delayed, she camped on that ghostly ground. The great birds wheeled, screaming, in the air by day, but she scared them from the bodies of her dead if they approached. And in the solemn and fearful night, when strong men might fear to be abroad, this delicate woman, strong with the supernatural strength which is the dower of motherhood, watched by her solitary fire, unafraid of the roaring and yelping beasts, subduing them perhaps by her silence and immobility into a kind of awed tameness in her presence, but rising even from the snatched slumbers to drive them away with her feeble hands if ever they ventured to come near to her beloved dead.

This is the atonement that must surely atone—
this prolonged sacrifice of love in the heart of a
mother.¹

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
*Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*²

¶ In what is one of the greatest of Tennyson's poems he has taken the theme and *motif* of the Rizpah narrative, and given it a comparatively modern setting—A rustic dare-devil has robbed the mail, flinging the purse which he took among his comrades—for he had committed the felony because 'they dared him to do it.' Condemned to be hanged, his body was left as a warning to highwaymen. His mother was haunted by the last cry of her son as she left the cell. She went mad and was kept under restraint for a time. When at last she was released, her one thought was to steal out to the gallows by night and gather up the bones as they fell one by one from the rotting skeleton, that she might bury them.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em,
I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the church-
yard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment
'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy
ground.

Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone
to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may
leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as a
stone.³

III.

1. Before Easter (according to our own calendar) Rizpah's watch began, in a land where the ripe barley may be gathered in before Easter Day. From Easter, through seven long weeks to Whitsuntide; from Whitsuntide, which is there the end of wheat harvest, and we know not how much longer, while the grapes ripened, and the olives were gathered, and at last the ingathering, the joy

¹ R. F. Horton.

² Rudyard Kipling, *Songs from Books*, 237.

³ *The Works of Tennyson*, 503.

of the harvest of all the fruits of the earth is come; all this while Rizpah the daughter of Aiah remained with her sackcloth under the gallows on the naked rock. And at last David and all Israel were shamed out of their neglect, for their ears rang with the fame of that which Rizpah the concubine of Saul had done. Then they sought for the bones of Saul and Jonathan which had been buried under a tree in Jabesh-gilead. They put the law of God in force against the law of the barbarous Gibeonites; and at length they 'gathered the bones,' when nought else was left to gather, 'of them that were hanged.' They buried the royal dead in the sepulchre of their father, 'and after that God was entreated for the land.' And where was Rizpah the daughter of Aiah? We have told all that has been said of her, and we know no more.

How far God instructed and comforted her we know not (we may trust that to His goodness), but men could not help honouring her. 'It was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.' His noble heart was touched by her faithfulness and unwearied love. Her brave spirit kindled his; and he recognized and completed the gallant deed of the men whose city had been saved by Saul in his early heroic days.

The men of Jabesh-gilead had shown their gratitude to Saul by rescuing his remains from insult. David was still true to his friend Jonathan: he had extricated his son from the vengeance of the Gibeonites, and now he entombed the remains of Saul and of Jonathan, and of these the expiatory victims, in the country of Benjamin, in the sepulchre of Kish, Saul's father. So did these, that died on the hill before the Lord, not only restore plenty to a famished land, but indirectly obtained honours for their kin, immortalized their mother, and prefigured our salvation.

2. When all was done that love could do, Rizpah earned her two boys nothing but a grave. For herself she won unfading glory, but who could suppose that her own glory was ever for a moment in her mind? It was desperate, unreasoning, overpowering love, love that she gave for nothing, pure, disinterested, unrequited love. There could be no voice, no answer, nor any that regarded. Love, and love only, seems to have been the motive of that which Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, hath done.

Many tears cannot quench, nor my sighs extinguish, the flames of love's fire,
Which lifeth my heart like a wave, and smites it, and breaks its desire.

I rise like one in a dream when I see the red sun flaring low,
That drags me back shuddering from sleep each morning to life with its woe.

I go like one in a dream, unbidden my feet know the way
To that garden where love stood in blossom with the red and white hawthorn of May.

The song of the throstle is hushed, and the fountain is dry to its core,
The moon cometh up as of old; she seeks, but she finds him no more.

The pale-faced, pitiful moon shines down on the grass where I weep,
My face to the earth, and my breast in an anguish ne'er soothed into sleep.

The moon returns, and the spring, birds warble, trees burst into leaf,
But Love once gone, goes for ever, and all that endures is the grief.¹

3. It takes God to account for Rizpah. Is there not a gleam of the heavenly in Rizpah's rugged heart? Is there not in every form of true human love a kind of converging testimony to the Heart of the Eternal, who has put a piece of His own divinity within our very being, to save our human nature from being altogether clod and clay?

¶ All the love-stories of Israel are in some degree parables of divine love. One after another, as they pass before us, they leave with us some elementary lesson of the great truth that the highest of all relations is the love-relation, and that this, therefore, must be the relation between God and man.²

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

Bees.

'And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain came out against you, and chased you, as bees do.'—Deut. 1⁴.

There is at least one little word you understand in this verse. When I read it my thoughts went back to a June afternoon long ago, when I happened to be one of a party standing at the top of the ruined tower of an old castle. A swarm of bees had alighted there, and we were trying to entice them into a hive.

I am sure that nearly every one of you has at some time or other seen a swarm of bees. You may have met one. You treated the bees like enemies; you tried to fight them with your cap, and in the end only succeeded in making them very angry. If you have ever come across wild bees and robbed their byke you must know what a real bee fight means.

Moses thought of bees pretty much as you do. To him, as to many another traveller, they were simply a savage and dangerous annoyance. His words to the Israelites recall an incident in the travels of Mungo Park. Some of his people having met with a populous bee-hive imprudently attempted to plunder it of its honey. The swarm rushed out in fury and attacked the company so vigorously that man and beast fled in every direction. The horses were never recovered, and several of the asses were so severely stung that they died the next day.

I believe it is not generally known, but it is true, that in the recent operations in German East Africa, when the troops under General Smuts arrived at a certain place they were suddenly attacked by great swarms of bees. The Germans had placed their hives in the way and attached them to wires so that when the soldiers trod on the wires the hives were overturned.

1. Nowadays it is a very common thing for people to make bees a study. They look into their homes, and learn all about them. And these

wonderful insects teach many fine lessons. Not very long ago, a lady in speaking of a young farmer said to me, 'He is somewhat rough on the surface, but there must be a finer side to his nature—he makes a special study of bees.' How could that be, do you think? One of the greatest of our present-day writers on the subject says that the first time we open a hive there comes over us a feeling that we are profaning a sacred place where at any moment some terrible surprise may meet us, and that is a good experience for any one. A bee-hive is quite dark. There the bees work; and there they not only make those wonderful honeycombs, but produce the sweet honey you like so much.

2. Have you ever examined a honeycomb carefully? If you have, you must have noticed how perfectly each cell is formed. The cells are six-sided and built with such marvellous accuracy that the hand of man could make nothing to equal them.

When you are a little older, you will, I hope, read Maeterlinck's book on *The Life of the Bee*. It is full of interest from beginning to end. What he tells us reads like a fairy tale. He describes the hive as a busy, busy city, governed by laws as fixed as those of the proverbial Medes and Persians. Above those laws there seems to be a great principle. I do not know if we can call it a principle—rather is it a spirit—an atmosphere. Let me explain what I mean. Once a girl was out spending an evening at a friend's house, and about eight o'clock she said to her hostess, 'I cannot stay longer—I must go.' 'Why?' she was asked. 'There is no rule in the boarding school,' she answered, 'but there's an *atmosphere*, it's more binding than a *law*,' and she laughed. (The lady at the head of the school had a great power over her pupils.) Well, one of the chief things that the spirit or atmosphere of the hive says is that no bee must think simply of itself—self-interest must be sacrificed for the good of the whole. It is by frequent and careful watching that this has been found out.

3. There are wonderful palaces in the hive; and though you will scarcely believe it, there are love-stories; and sometimes these become tragedies, for bees are often so devoted to each other that if they become separated they pine away and die. Then, do you remember that I spoke of the hive as a dark city? The tiny

inhabitants of it work in the midst of mystery and hope. They go on working and just perish. They would live longer if they were only a little less forgetful of self. Think of it all, boys and girls. I shall not tell you about the faults of bees; I dare say you know that they are bad-tempered. Try, however, to find out more about bees for yourselves.

4. The other day I took up a book. It was called *In Tune with the Infinite*. That means being so near to the spiritual world that one can almost hear God speaking. The bees are so in tune with Nature that they know exactly the time when on some bright summer's day they must leave the old home and seek for a place in which to build a new one. So they go on. Can't we learn from them? Do we not get to think so much of our lessons, or our daily work, or our sport, that we have no time for thoughts of Nature or of God? To the young farmer of whom I told you, a summer without bees would be dull indeed—as dull as one without flowers would seem to you. He was a better man for thinking about them. When Robinson Crusoe saw the footprint in the sand, he felt he was not alone; he could not help thinking about God. And behind the wonderful spirit of the bee-hive there is surely some Great Mind—the same indeed that makes the trees bud and the flowers blossom. Yes, and that gave you your own home, and the father and mother who care for you. If you but allow yourselves to think of some of the wonders of Nature you cannot help praying; and, boys and girls, when you pray in earnest you are not far from the Kingdom.

II.

The Right Kind of Hands.

'Clean hands.'—Ps 24⁴.

Did you ever stop to think what very powerful things hands are? It is with our brains that we think, and it is with our tongues that we speak, but it is with our hands that we act. They can be used for doing good, or for getting into mischief; for giving, or for stealing; for creating beautiful things, or for destroying; for healing, or for hurting. And so it is very important that we should have the right kind of hands.

Now if you look through the Bible I think you will find that the right kind of hands are 'clean

hands.' But what does the Bible mean when it speaks about 'clean hands'? Well, perhaps you will understand better if I tell you a story which I read the other day.

There was once a Russian princess who lived in a wonderful palace of ice. Her parents were very wealthy and she had lots of fine toys; but she loved best of all to play in the beautiful garden which lay round the palace. She was quite content and happy until one day she peeped through a hole in the high hedge which surrounded the garden. And beyond the hedge she espied some flowers which looked far more gorgeous than those in her own garden. She was just going to squeeze herself through the hedge when her nurse pulled her back and told her that, although the flowers looked so fine, they were really poisonous and if she pulled them they would for ever stain her hands.

* Well, the princess was rather like a great many people who are older and wiser. Just because the flowers were forbidden they seemed all the more desirable. And the more she thought about them, the more she wanted them. So at last she found an opportunity to escape from her nurse. She broke through the hedge and gathered a great bunch of the gorgeous flowers, and she carried them back in triumph to show her nurse how foolish she had been to forbid them. But when she laid down her bouquet and looked at her hands, she saw that they were all stained just as if they had been burned black. Moreover, the fumes rising from the flowers had darkened her face and dimmed her eyes. And the worst of it was that she was never quite the same afterwards. Her face never became really white again, and she always sat with her hands hidden in her lap, palms downward, to hide the ugly stains that would not come off.

Now there are two kinds of stains we get on our hands. The first kind comes off, and the second kind does not. The first is the kind we get when we go out to play or to dig in the garden. Generally we come in with very grimy hands, but a good scrub with soap and water soon puts them right again. But the second is the kind that we get when we do anything mean or unworthy or dishonest, and that is the kind the Bible means us to avoid when it talks about 'clean hands.' No amount of washing or scrubbing on our part will take those stains away.

Like the flowers of the Russian princess they soil and spoil our hands for life.

Would you like to know the names of some of the things that make our hands black and ugly?

1. First there is *stealing*. That puts a very black stain on them. Perhaps most of you think that at any rate you haven't got that mark on your hands. But are you quite sure about it? You know there are more ways of stealing than one. You can steal just as much by taking little things as big things, by taking lumps of sugar or bits of cake or marbles. And you can steal other things besides money or goods. You can steal time by being idle when you ought to be busy. You can steal another boy's brains by copying his exercise instead of taking the trouble to write your own.

2. And another thing that stains our hands is *greed*. Now although greed isn't quite the same as stealing, it is a very near relation—a first cousin I should think. When we steal we take what belongs to somebody else by right; when we grab we take something that somebody else has an equal right to with us, and we take it quite regardless of their share of the right. The grabby person takes the biggest cake and the rosiest apple and the best place in a game, and when he grows older he grabs the best position and doesn't mind how much he pushes to get other people out of it. And the worst of it is that grabbing is so very near to stealing that sometimes we can scarcely tell when we go from one to the other. When we are trying to take all we can get it is so easy to take a little more than we are entitled to have. Well, I'm not going to say anything about how greedy people get disliked, but I want you to remember that greed not only stains our hands but twists and deforms them, and nothing we can do will put them straight again.

3. Another thing that stains our hands is *cruelty*. And I think that puts the blackest mark of all on them. It is the mark which shows that we are no better than the beasts, that in fact we are a great deal worse, because the beasts have not brains to invent forms of torture, nor consciences to tell them they are doing wrong. Now I think you will notice something if you read the lives of really great men, of our great soldiers and sailors and leaders; they were nearly

always kind to dumb animals and little weak things. God has made some things helpless and dependent on us. We could all use our superior strength to torment them. That is easy. What is not so easy is to care for and protect them and keep ourselves from hurting and oppressing them when we feel tempted to. That shows real strength.

We have thought of three particular ways in which we blacken our hands—by stealing, by grabbing, by cruelty. But indeed every kind of wrong-doing soils our hands, so we can't help getting them more or less stained as we go through life.

Now if you read the Psalm from which our text is taken you will see that nobody is fit to enter God's presence with soiled hands. And we have seen that no amount of scrubbing on our part can take away the stains. Then what are we to do? Shall we never get rid of those stains, and shall we never be fit to stand in God's holy place? Yes, there is one way. We can take them to Jesus, and we can ask Him to wash them and to keep them clean. He alone is able to do it, and He will do it if we ask Him.

Point and Illustration.

The Name of Jesus.

ONE of the most interesting of the books which have been written by Chaplains to the Forces, and these books are now not few, is a book entitled *On the King's Service* (Hodder & Stoughton; 2s. 6d. net), which has been written by the Rev. Innes Logan, M.A. There is no 'writing-up' in it, none whatever. Yet it is not too much to say that every chapter has its thrilling narrative. Without controversy Mr. Logan has the gift. Any chapter could be quoted to prove it. Take this from the chapter entitled 'A Clearing Station.'

'There is not, and never has been a religious revival, in the usual sense of the term, on the Flanders front, and I am afraid it is true that modern war knocks and smashes any faith he ever had out of many a man. Yet in a hospital there is much ground for believing that shining qualities which amid the refinements of civilization are often absent—staunch, and even tender comradeship, readiness to judge kindly if judge at all, resolute endurance, and absence of self-seeking, so typical of our fighting men—have their root in a genuine

religious experience more often than is, in the battalions, immediately evident. It has been my experience, again and again, that with dying men who have sunk into the last lethargy, irresponsive to every other word, the Name of Jesus still can penetrate and arouse. The hurried breathing becomes for a moment regular, or the eyelids flicker, or the hand faintly returns the pressure. I have scarcely ever known this to fail though all other communication had stopped. It is surely very significant and moving.'

The Ideal and the Actual.

Dr. Herbert B. Workman, President of Westminster Training College, has the gift of exposition. And he does not confine it to the Bible. He is not a commentator of Old Testament or New. He is an expositor of the Church. His particular field of study is the History of the Church in the Early and Middle Ages. And just there where accurate and interesting exposition is so much needed, he is a masterly expositor.

Dr. Workman's new book contains six lectures, delivered under the Cole foundation of the Vanderbilt University, and now published with the title, *The Foundation of Modern Religion* (Kelly; 3s. 6d. net). Their subject is the Mediæval Church, its history, its character, its contribution. We have described the book in describing its author. Let us confirm our estimate by a characteristic quotation. If it is somewhat long it is very significant.

'We pass from the study of the penitentials, as an illustration of the nature of mediæval conventions, to the consideration of another matter, the right understanding of which lies at the root of insight into all mediæval matters. We allude to the discrepancy in mediæval life between its ethical and spiritual ideals and the spotted actualities of its daily life. Practice, it is true, in every age must always drop below the ethical standard, unless indeed the ethical standard is of a low average. Certainly Christian practice, save for the saint, can never attain the ideal as it is in the great Exemplar. Even in Greece and Rome we see the contrast of practice and precept. But in neither Greece nor Rome could there exist the abysmal contradictions which we find abound in mediæval Christianity.

'The reason, of course, is obvious. The ethical standards of Greece and Rome were finite and

human. They were the results of the introspective thoughts of its philosophers, and could not rise higher than their own source. But the Christian ideal of conduct involved the supernatural and infinite; the source and example was the perfection of the one Divine Life on earth. With the Greek time was of the essence of the ideal; the ancient demanded a standard that could be fulfilled on earth. With the Christian the ideal was from the first brought into relation with the great Beyond; the will of God as it is done in heaven is the daily rule for men's will on earth. With the Greek or Roman,—for instance, the noblest stoic of them all, Marcus Aurelius,—ethics were limited to present-day duty; the other world had no message of hope. With the Christian this life was but the schoolhouse. For him, as for Browning's grammarian,

"Actual life comes next.
Man has Forever."

He sums up its possibilities both for the now and the hereafter in the golden thought: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when it shall be made manifest we shall be like him."

'Contradiction therefore between the ideal and the actual in Christianity was sharp and inevitable, and only could have been avoided by a Christianity that came down to the level of human nature itself. The gospel of salvation was necessarily, both for the individual and the race, a gospel of contradiction between the ideal upheld and life's common cravings and passions. Such contrast every man feels within his own heart; and this law of the microcosm has ever been the law of the world at large. But never has the contradiction between the ideal and the actual been more vivid than in the Middle Ages. And this for a double reason. The contradiction would have been less sharp and painful had the ideal been lowered, or had human nature been worthier. But, to the eternal glory of the mediæval Church, whatever its practice, it never lowered its standard. On the contrary, the very simplicity of an age that knew nothing of introspection or higher criticism gave to the ideal a literal sharpness of outline, inexplicable to a more complex generation. Nevertheless this literalness produced such mighty saints as St. Bernard, St. Francis, or St. Catherine of Siena. The mediæval saint, in fact, towers above all other

saints, simply because he knew nothing of twentieth century adaptations of the Gospel to the need of business, pleasure, knowledge, politics, and imperialism. But while the mediæval saint thus set before himself an ideal far more difficult and transcendent than those in vogue to-day, on the other hand the ethical capacities of the average mediæval man were far lower than those of to-day. For it is the weakness of the twentieth century, as well as its strength, that between the ethics of the street and the pew there is not an overwhelming difference. In the twentieth century, therefore, we are not troubled by the glaring contradictions between ideal and practice; if anything it is the ideal that needs raising; it is too much smirched with the dust of what is deemed practicable. But in the Middle Ages the average man was but a savage once removed, the long centuries of whose superstition and vicious practices could not be eradicated by a few years of sacraments and teaching. The student, therefore, will make but little progress in the understanding of the early mediæval Church who does not sympathetically bear in mind the inevitable contradiction between the ideals, sublime beyond measure, of the saint, and the pit, noise-some, dark and barbarous, from which the actual life of men was digged. Religion, in fact, was revered as a thing external, the special concern of a priestly class whose merits the community vicariously shared. The application of inward religion by the laymen to the round of life in the castle, in the camp, in the shop or in the field, was an ideal of whose realization the Church only slowly began to dream. Not until St. Francis founded his order of Tertiaries do we find it taken up in any organized form.'

In Good Company.

Mr. Coulson Kernahan has found manifest pleasure in recording his recollections of Swinburne, Lord Roberts, Watts-Dunton, Oscar Wilde, Edward Whympier, S. J. Stone (the author of 'The Church's one foundation'), and Stephen Phillips. And he has given pleasure to other men and women in multitudes. The note of the book is sincerity. You can trust him. Whatever his memory may be for facts (we have no reason to doubt it), his memory for impressions is never at fault, and his impressions are without fear and

without reproach. He calls the book *In Good Company* (Lane; 5s. net).

Let us tell one of Mr. Kernahan's stories after him. Its special title might be 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.'

'Edward Whympier (the mountain climber) was a "marked" man wherever he went; and in all companies a man of masterful personality, who inspired attention and respect in every one, and something like fear in a few, but who, except in the case of children, rarely inspired affection. That he was aware his manner was not always conciliatory—was in fact at times forbidding—seems likely from a story which I have heard him tell on several occasions and always with infinite gusto.

"I was walking up Fleet Street one day," he began, pursing his lips, mouthing and almost smacking them over his words as if the flavour were pleasant to the palate, "when I chanced to see a sixpence lying upon the ground. Now according to the law of the land, anything we find in the street is in a public place and must be taken to the nearest police station. I wasn't going to be at the bother of picking up a sixpence merely to take myself and it to the police station, so I cast an eye around and walking just behind me I saw a poor ragged devil without so much as a shirt to his back or a pair of shoes to his feet. I didn't require to speak or even to point to the sixpence. I just caught the fellow's eyes and looked with my own two eyes at the sixpence upon the pavement. That was quite enough. He followed my glance, saw the coin lying there, knew that my glance meant 'You can have it if you like,' and my good fellow was down on it in a moment. Well, I didn't stop to let the fellow thank me, but just walked on. It so happens, however, that I'm peculiarly sensitive to outside impressions. If I'm in the street and some one is taking stock of me, even though I can't see them, I'm conscious of it in a moment. If I'm in a hall, listening, say, to a lecture, and some one behind me has recognized me, or is interested in me for any reason, I'm just as aware of it as if I had eyes in the back of my head. Well, I passed up Fleet Street, and along the Strand till, approaching Charing Cross, I became suddenly aware that some one behind was watching me as if for a purpose. I turned, and there was my ragged, shirtless, bootless devil of a tramp, who had followed me all that way, poor devil, I

supposed to thank me. So I thought it decent to slow my pace, and when he was just alongside of me I half turned to give him the chance to speak, and waited to hear what he had to say. What do you think it was? To express his thanks? Not a bit. When he was level with me, he hissed, almost spat in my ear, 'You blank, blank, blanky blank, blank! too blanky proud blank, are you? to pick up a sixpence—blank you!'

"That, I said to myself at the time," continued Whympier, "is all the thanks you get for trying to do a good turn to the British vagrant. But, on thinking it over, I've come to the conclusion that there was something unintentionally offensive or shall we say patronizing, in the way I looked at the man and then at the sixpence—something which he resented so bitterly that he had to follow me all that way to spit it out."

Quotations.

There is always a demand for books of quotations if they are good. If they are not good they are nothing. The ability to discern the right words to quote is not a mean one. It is next to the ability to write the words. But the good book must also be appropriate and accurate. If it is outside the range of one's interests one has no interest in it. If it is inaccurate it is the veriest fraud.

One objection only is to be made to *Forty Thousand Quotations*, compiled by Charles Noel Douglas (Harrap; 12s. 6d. net). It does not give the book (or poem) from which the quotation is made. It gives the author alone. Now very often we want the context. Let this be considered for a future edition. Otherwise all is well. It is accurate so far as tested; it is appropriate for all ordinary speakers or preachers or students of life. Its scope includes a great many passages (single sentences) from Scripture (besides those that are scattered throughout the book under their own title), and a great many (ten columns) on Washington's Birthday. As for the wisdom of the selection, it is a marvel of consistency and success. We should like to quote a complete section, but it is difficult to find one short enough. Take

ECCENTRICITY.

Eccentricity is developed monomania.—BAYARD TAYLOR.

Who affects useless singularities has surely a little mind.—LAVATER.

Even beauty cannot always palliate eccentricity.—BALZAC.

Men are of necessity so mad, that not to be mad were madness in another form.—PASCAL.

Often extraordinary excellence, not being rightly conceived, does rather offend than please.—SIR P. SIDNEY.

Oddities and singularities of behaviour may attend genius; but when they do, they are its misfortunes and blemishes. The man of true genius will be ashamed of them, or at least will never affect to be distinguished by them.—SIR W. TEMPLE.

Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigour, and moral courage it contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of the time.—JOHN STUART MILL.

The Practice of the Sermon on the Mount.

'A Korean came into the study of a missionary one day and said, "I have been memorizing some verses in the Bible, and thought I would come and recite them to you." The missionary listened while this convert repeated in Korean, without a verbal error, the entire Sermon on the Mount. Feeling that some practical advice might be helpful, the missionary said: "You have a marvellous memory to be able to repeat this long passage without a mistake. However, if you simply memorize it, it will do you no good. You must practise it." The Korean Christian smiled as he replied, "That's the way I learned it." Somewhat surprised, the missionary asked him what he meant, and he said: "I am only a stupid farmer, and when I tried to memorize it the verses wouldn't stick. So I hit upon this plan. I memorized one verse and then went out and practised that verse on my neighbours until I had it; then I took the next verse and repeated the process, and the experience has been such a

blessed one that I am determined to learn the entire Gospel of Matthew that way." And he did it.'

The anecdote is quoted from a pamphlet by Dr. George Heber Jones on the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is quoted in a book entitled *Popular Aspects of Oriental Missions*, which has been written by Mr. L. O. Hartman, Ph.D. (New York: Abingdon Press; \$1.35 net). Mr. Hartman's object is to show how the teachings of the various religions of the Far East actually work out in life. He has travelled in the East; he has read many books on the religions of the East; and he can write. Thus his equipment is complete. It would be difficult to find an easier introduction to the study of Eastern religion.

Another Life.

Elizabeth A. Hayes feels keenly, even bitterly, the agony of the War, and in her *Thoughts on Many Themes* (Scott; 2s. 6d. net), especially in its poetry, speaks out about it. But the Thoughts are not all of the War. This is her faith in Providence:

'Many of the disappointments in this life will doubtless be appointments in the next.

'When Providence deprives us of one good thing, we may rest assured it is to bestow upon us something better; yea, in the end, when the heart-strings which have quivered and vibrated to that strange tune of human life are still, to offer us heaven in exchange for earth.

'There is no explanation of this life except it be found in one to come. It is like a mysterious nut which has never yet been opened. Some men spend their earthly existence in examining a few of the wonderful markings on its outer shell, others bore straight for the kernel, becoming convinced that there is one. But the nut still remains unopened, the secret of its heart unknown. Yet, if ought should persuade man of the existence of another world, surely it is the fact of living in this: so full of enigmas, brimming with sorrow, and containing so much joy.'